

Re-opening of St Mark's Methodist Church, Cheltenham, Summer 2020

Minister: Rev Rachel Leather

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Dear Friends

I am very happy to tell you that we have had permission from the Gloucestershire circuit of the Methodist Church to re-open for worship after the special working group from the circuit reviewed our risk assessment. Many thanks must go to Stephen, Matthew and David P. for their work on getting us to this stage. I would also like to thank our minister, Rachel, for leading us into new and exciting ways of worshipping over the last few months.

We started our services at St Mark's by having a short morning service on Sunday 26th July at 10.30 am. This was led by Rev Rachel Leather.

Future services will be held **once a month. Please see the website under 'latest news' to find out when we are opening. The services held in church will be 'live streamed' and these can be accessed via a link given on our website.**

Please contact the stewards by email or Rev Rachel Leather by email or phone if you would like to come to future services.

We can only accommodate 25-30 people at a service. If you express an interest in coming we will get back to you. We hope you will bear with us as we work out a new 'normal'! On the remaining Sundays of the month on-line materials, Zoom services and paper copies of services will be available as in the last few months. Also, some materials for worship will still be accessible for those who, for whatever reason, can't come to the once a month services in our building.

We have been asked by the circuit to draw your attention to the following Government guidelines about the advisability of attending worship.

Individuals aged 70 years and over attending the place of worship

- Certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions.
- Individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household.
- Here is a link to the symptoms of COVID-19 and [current stay alert and social distancing guidance](#).

Please read the guidance given in the following pages as it is vitally important that we are all kept safe and well.

It will be wonderful to be together for worship. It will be very different from before and we might feel frustrated by the limits put on our experience. We have been encouraged to open only if we feel the time is right and we have been assured by the Methodist Church that we don't have to open and we mustn't feel under any pressure to do so.

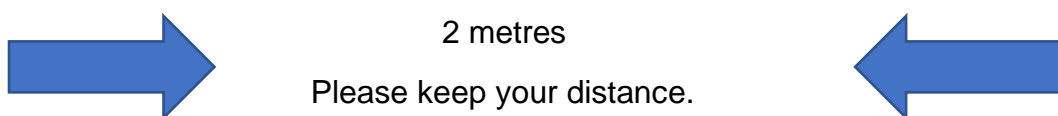
How will things be different at a service in our building?

- **We will need to be sure who would like to come to the services at the church** as we will be limited to between 25 and 30 people (depending on how many people are from the same household). Once there, we will need to keep a register of your name and contact details to aid Track-and-Trace, if that becomes necessary. This register will be destroyed after a month. If you develop any symptoms of coronavirus after being on the church premises please inform the stewards or Rachel.

Name	1 st Line Address	Postcode	Contact No.	Email

Worship Attendance Register

- Please use the hand sanitizer provided as you come into the building and again as you leave. Thank you.
- It is important that we know how many households will be hoping to come and use the Family room as this can only accommodate one household per service.
- There should be no car-sharing outside of one's 'bubble'.
- There will be a one-way system in place. We ask that you enter the church at the front door and you will be guided by stewards as to the way out (see attached plan from the Chairman of the Property and Finance Committee).
- When seated please keep a 2-metre gap (not 1-metre) between everyone (ie 2 empty chairs). Some chairs will be next to each other to allow members of the same household to sit together. Households are asked to keep two empty chairs between themselves and the next household. Stewards will show you to your seats. Please do not attempt to move any of the chairs



- It is now mandatory to wear a mask in church unless this is not medically possible for you.



- We will be very tempted to use handshakes and hugs when we see friends again but we must not do this.
- It will feel strange not being able to sing together, but this is not possible at present.



No singing today please!

- At the moment we will not be having Holy Communion during the service nor will we be having refreshments afterwards.
- The screens will be used instead of books. If you do need to use a book then we will provide the book and ask you to keep it as 'your book' until all this is over. Please take it home with you and bring it each time you come to worship.
- Please stay in the church only and do not attempt to access any other rooms as they will be locked. The Family room will be available for one household at each service. Please leave the door open to avoid unnecessary contact with doors / handles.
- Toilets - The only exception to the above is that the toilets will be available. Please use the hand sanitizer provided before going into toilets and use hand washing facilities in the toilet blocks before leaving. Paper towels will be available to dry hands and these need to be put in the bins provided. Electric hand dryers will not be switched on.



You can check dates of future services on the website or in The Messenger. Paper copies of The Messenger should be available for those not on-line from mid-August.

The Stewards.

St. Mark's Methodist Church
SEATING ARRANGEMENT AND WALKING ROUTES DURING COVID

