

Nuthall Methodist Church



**SPECIAL
MESSAGE**

September 2020

Dear Friends,

On Thursday 3rd September we held an emergency Church Council over zoom to discuss the possibility of re-opening the church for worship over the coming weeks. I know this has been a very difficult time for everybody in so many different ways. At this meeting the preliminary decision was taken to work towards re-opening for worship on Sunday 11th October. We will obviously be monitoring the transmission of the virus over the next few weeks and of course any re-opening will be subject to the Government or Methodist Church advice in force at that time.

Although this will be a significant moment and one I hope that people will look forward to, I feel it is important to stress that this will be far from a return to normal. Church will continue to be very different for a long time to come.

Firstly, I want to be clear that re-opening for worship does not mean that the risk of the virus has gone away. Gathering together indoors, for a prolonged period of time with other people is inherently risky in the middle of a pandemic and individuals will need to make their own decisions as to whether attend worship at this time. God is with us both inside and outside the church and we will continue to provide alternative worship material (written/online) for those who do not feel able to attend. The government advice remains that those who are at a higher risk, including those over 70 years of age, should remain at home as much as possible and take particular care to limit contact with other people.

We will of course do everything we can do to reduce the risk of transmission in church. This will mean that worship will be different from a usual Methodist hymn sandwich. We will need to limit the numbers who are able to attend any given service and a booking system will be established, with contact details collected to support NHS Track and Trace. People will need to socially distance as they arrive at church, chairs will be spaced 2m apart and at the end of the service people will need to leave

the church promptly and be reminded to socially distance with other people at all times, including in the car park and when travelling to and from services. The church building will need to be well ventilated and the stewards will be carrying out appropriate cleaning to comply with government and Methodist Church guidance, as identified in our risk assessments. We will not be able to sing, people need to wear masks throughout and the services will last no longer than 30 minutes. We will not be able to offer refreshments after the service. We will, however, be able to share communion together with further restrictions in place and we hope that people will feel blessed by being able to share in some form of worship shared with other people.

We will not be able to offer a Sunday School at this time, but we will continue to monitor the developments with children returning to school and maintaining bubbles. Late Risers will continue to meet digitally via zoom.

We will share further details about the plans in due course but I just wanted to take this opportunity to update you on our current plans and to set the scene for what will hopefully be to come. After the lockdown and the disruption to all of our lives it will be a special time to gather together in worship once again and we hope and pray that circumstances will enable these plans to come to fruition.

Love, peace and joy,

Andrew