

Warwick Methodist Church
Keeping in Contact During Covid-19
Number 32 – 15th September 2020

Dear Friends,

At the time of writing, the church building has been open for prayer and reflection on 5 occasions. We thought you might like to know how it has gone. A total of 32 people have come through the doors, of whom 6 were not part of the church. Several more people walking by have commented that it was good to see the doors open again. On the basis of that, the Leadership Team have agreed to continue with it for a while longer. However, the Saturday session will be moving from the afternoon to the morning, in the hope that there may be more footfall past the door as more people visit the market in the morning than the afternoon.

So, the new times are: Saturdays 10-12, Wednesdays 2-4 with the first hour on Wednesday reserved for people who consider themselves vulnerable who have been avoiding mixing outside their household as much as possible.

In addition to these times for private prayer, I am happy to announce the limited resumption of Sunday worship, as follows:-

1st Sunday of the month: 10:30 am. This will last approximately 30-40 minutes, and in line with current guidelines there will be no singing, no touching and please no mingling with people outside your household, unless you are part of a support bubble with them. Chairs in the church will be laid out in 1's and 2's, please don't sit in a 2 if you are on your own. If you come as part of a larger family group, the stewards will move chairs together for you on request, please do not move them yourself. The current plan is that Sunday 4th October will be a Harvest service (more on that later), Sunday 1st November will be a service of Holy Communion.

On the third Sunday of the month, we want to take the opportunity to explore different ways of worshipping together. These will be held at 3pm, and will carry the label Not Your Normal Church, or NYNC for short. The first of these on 18th October will be led by me, the one on 15th November by Graeme Russell. These will explore two different approaches to meditation, but the intention is that if we decide to continue beyond November, it is an opportunity to try new and different things.

The question of Remembrance Sunday (8th November) was raised. I am going to contact the Scout leaders to ascertain whether they would welcome an opportunity to be involved by recording or live-streaming a contribution. Once we know their wishes, we can decide what type of commemoration we hold on that day.

Future arrangements will be reviewed in the light of experience, and of course how the situation with the pandemic develops. The Rule of Six has come into force – it is now against the law to hold a social gathering of more than six people, indoors or outdoors, unless it falls within one of the specified exceptions. Happily, places of worship are one of those exceptions, so the numbers who can attend worship is determined by the ability to socially distance safely within the space available. This exemption assumes that everyone continues to be appropriately cautious and observe the rules on face coverings, sanitising, social distancing and so forth. We are still being advised NOT to take cash collections, but cheques can be sent to the treasurer, and he will be delighted to help you with other ways of giving.

For our Harvest service, we are inviting your involvement in the following ways:

- **Photos** – we hear that gardeners old and new have been hard at work during the pandemic, and some have a glut of produce. Please take a photo of what your garden/allotment has produced and send it to the church email address, northgatemethodists@gmail.com so they can be used in a physical display and/or projected onto the screen during the service. For the non-gardeners among you, a picture demonstrating the way you have been using your time and talents would be most welcome – baking, sewing, carpentry, painting, whatever you have used your gifts for. If you can't take and send a photo by email, feel free to post a print (preferably a large one) to the church or drop it in at some point **before October 3rd**.
- **Gifts** – we like to support the work of Warwick and District foodbank and their website gives a list of the items they currently need: <https://warwickdistrict.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/> They are also happy to accept donations of money, or you may wish to donate the Methodist Church's relief charity, All We Can, or to one of the national or international appeals relating to Coronavirus. There will be a collecting box for food donations at church, you can either bring your item to the service and place it there on arrival, OR drop it in while the church is open for prayer.

In a previous newsletter I referred to the word Coronacoaster. We are still riding it. Although we have decided to open up some more, we are conscious that another peak may be coming, which may cause us to reverse our decisions, possibly at short notice. As Proverbs 6:9 puts it: "The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps." We still don't know what is around the corner, we have to take this one step at a time and be ready to change course if necessary. We trust that God is with us, every step of the way.

Keep safe; keep caring; keep praying.
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