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(Part of Norwich Area United Reformed Church)

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Dear Friends

The Elders and Minister would like to let you know the good news that our church building will reopen for worship on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August at 09.45am. It will however be “worship with a difference” as you will see below. There will be no evening service for the time being.

We are sorry that it has taken a while after the government restrictions were eased to open our doors once more, but we have been working hard to ensure that everyone who comes to worship can do so as safely as possible. This has involved hours of careful consideration and planning as well as the on-going adjustments to seating and the installation of extra hygiene equipment. We have also been taking careful consideration of the government regulations and also the thorough guidance from the United Reformed Church.

### **So, what will worship be like?**

- It will be rather different from what we have been used to, especially as we are not allowed to sing, and services have to be shortened to improve everyone’s safety.
- John will be preaching 3 weeks out of 4 at Ipswich Rd and once a month at Fairland unless he is on leave. He will continue to make video recordings of worship available online, in the way we have been used to in recent months, as a resource for those who are unable to attend in person. Printed material can still be provided for those who are unable to access worship in either of the above ways. (Please let Audrey know).
- There will not be a communion service in the building until we have ensured all other safety aspects are working well. John will continue to host a holy communion service on-line
- We cannot use the offertory bags, so there are offertory baskets by the entrance and exit doors in the Sanctuary. (Don’t forget the envelopes you may have been saving during lockdown). Part of the advice we have received is that handling of cash donations be kept to a minimum, so to help this situation it would be good to both continue to give and to try and do so through your bank account if at all possible.
- We are unable to restart Junior Church until September at the earliest but young people are welcome to attend normal worship.

Alongside changes you will find when you arrive, there are **several pieces of guidance which you need to consider before you leave home:**

- Firstly, if you are feeling unwell or think you may have the symptoms of Covid 19, please stay at home.
- Secondly, If you are isolating, as advised by the government or a health professional, please stay at home.

- Thirdly, we recommend that you carefully consider the personal risk assessment on the following page that will help you decide if it is safe for you to come into the church building. It is based on one produced by the BMA and recommended by the URC.
- Fourthly, the building needs to be well ventilated during use, therefore windows and possibly doors will need to be left open during the service, so please be aware that it may be a bit cool.
- Fifthly, current guidance about wearing masks is changing. We currently recommend that you wear a mask in the building but by August 9<sup>th</sup>, it may be mandatory.
- Finally, if you wish to follow any of the Bible readings, please bring your own Bible and take it home with you afterwards, as church Bibles are unavailable at present.

### **So, what will it be like coming to worship in the building?**

To meet with current guidance, if you wish to come into the church building, then we ask that you observe the following protocols:

1. Please remember to social distance as you wait to enter the building
2. You will be greeted by a steward (wearing a face shield and possibly a mask) who will direct you to the hand sanitiser units for use as you enter. Unfortunately, they cannot shake your hand or give you a hug. The government rules are quite clear that there must not be any singing, handshakes or hugging. It may be against our instinct not to do these things that are a normal part of getting together, but please refrain as these are unusual times.
3. Another steward will take your name (and contact details of anyone not on IRURC church list)
4. You will then be ushered into the Sanctuary where you will find
  - that we have had to change the blue chairs for the orange ones-so that they can be wiped down easily.
  - We have also “turned” the seating round to face the cross, so that we can get more seats in “socially distanced” Elders decided that each pair should be 2m apart from the next.
  - There are only seats for 30 people. All are arranged in pairs, but each pair of chairs will either seat 2 people from the same family or one person plus a note to say that the other chair is out of use.
  - If chairs do need moving, only the stewards can do so.
  - There is a “One-way system” through the Sanctuary. Entrance is in the usual way, but exit is through the fire door. There will also be a sanitiser unit at the exit as it is advised that people sanitise their hands on both entering and leaving the building
  - You will be asked to fill up seats from the front and sorry, you can’t move around and chat to people in the Sanctuary, but you can of course, chat outside before or afterwards, always maintaining social distancing
  - At the end of worship please leave using the one-way system and don’t remain in the building for a chat. But this could be done outside in groups of no more than 6, whilst keeping a safe distance.
  - To save having to clean the whole building after each service, you will only be allowed to access the Sanctuary and toilets-where there will also be special precautions in place.
  - Similarly we have been requested to remove any pieces of paper, books etc which one person may pick up and then leave, thus potentially transferring the virus, so all Bibles, leaflets etc have been cleared away and a blind will be installed in front of the hymn books.

The reasoning behind all these changes is to keep everyone as safe as is reasonable as we emerge from the worst of the pandemic. Apologies for the number of notices which you will see around-they are all part of the advice which we have been given. We also have a new policy as to what we have to do if someone comes to church with the virus.

Please do not hesitate to contact John, Audrey or your Elder if you have any further queries.

Every Blessing

John, Audrey, Cindy, Gareth, Kirsty, Louise, Peter, Richard and Rick

### **Guidance on using the risk assessment chart:**

Please circle any score in the right-hand column that applies to you and then add them together to make a total score for you. Then refer to the following for guidance:

A score of 1 or 2 indicates a lower risk, but you should still be following the guidance for staying safe.

A score of 3 – 5 suggests a greater risk: consider ways of reducing risk by taking additional precautions or avoiding some activities.

A score of 6 or higher suggests a high risk and indicates that you should continue to participate in church life from your home.

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Risk score</b>
Age	50-59	1
	60-69	2
	70-79	4
	80 and over	6
Gender at birth	Male	1
Ethnicity	Caucasian (white)	0
	Black African descent	2
	Indian Asian descent	1
	Filipino descent	1
	Other (inc mixed race)	1
Diabetes	Type 1 & 2	1
	With complications	2
Body mass	If overweight with a body mass of 35 or more (you can look up how to calculate this on the NHS website)	1
Heart problems	Angina, previous heart attack, stroke	1
	Heart failure	2
Lung problems	Asthma	1
	Non asthma chronic pulmonary disease	2
	Either of the above requiring oral corticosteroids in the last year	1
Cancer	Active	3
	In remission	1
Rheumatological conditions	Active treated conditions	2
Immuno-suppressant therapies	Any indication	2
	<b>Total score</b>	