***Safely Returning to the Christ Church Sanctuary for Worship from Sunday 20th September 2020***

16th September 2020

Dear All,

As we are all aware, we are re-opening the Sanctuary for Sunday Worship Services. Our first Sunday back is this coming Sunday, 20th September. It will be good for some of us to gather again and I look forward to seeing those able to come on Sunday morning at 10.45am. Sadly, quite a number among us cannot return yet due to the risks of COVID-19. We look forward to the time when we may all gather again and, in the meantime, we will do all we can to be as inclusive as possible.

We will continue the Service sheet format and the Service will be the same whether in the Sanctuary or in our homes. We are also hoping to make an audio file, and possibly even a video, of the Service in the Sanctuary, available later on in the day by email. For those without internet access, if you have a member of your family who you see in the week who might help you access an audio or video file, please let us know or ask them to email Rob or me. We will try and achieve this as soon as possible.

For those coming to the Church Sanctuary, we need to let you know what the key guidelines are for Places of Worship. We have carried out Risk Assessments for our buildings and staff and the Church building has been fully cleaned and prepared to be ‘COVID-19 Secure’. There are now quite a few things that we all need to adhere to for the Sunday morning Service to be a safe event for us all.

**Car Parking**

The car parking arrangements will be as before lockdown. The Church forecourt car park will be available to those who usually park there on Sunday mornings and our Sunday arrangement with the NCP in the Cox Lane car park has been re-commenced for all those who had arranged to park there December 19 – May 20.

**The Guidelines**

We must not come to church if we are showing symptoms of COVID-19, (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, our normal sense of taste or smell), are self-isolating because of possible or actual COVID-19 in our home or because we have been told to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

If we are clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable, Government advice is that we should not attend a Place of Worship. This is advisory and the Government accept that individuals may choose to manage their own risks. We trust and respect that careful thought has been given to this by each of us with the help of the URC personal risk assessment previously provided.

Before and after the Service, as well as maintaining social distancing, we must limit our interaction with others to within one group of no more than six people and cannot then move on to form a different group of six people. As we will be aware, this is now the law.

As we mentioned before, there are specific guidelines for Places of Worship. The links to these guidelines can be found at the end of this letter. As part of our love and care for one another, we should:

* Make our own way to Church as sharing lifts should be avoided.
* Bring and wear our own facemasks in the Church. (We have a limited supply).

Children under 11, those exempt on medical grounds, and those leading our worship or briefly for a bible reading are not required to wear a mask.

* + Maintain social distancing of at least 2 metres and where this is not possible, certainly never less than 1 metre with mitigating measures like wearing masks or being outside.
* Not enter the Sanctuary too early. (Doors will open at 10.15am at the earliest).
  + Use the main front doors off Tacket Street. If disabled or with mobility difficulties, or if sitting in the gallery, use the door / staircase nearest Cox Lane.
  + Those of us sitting in the gallery should, if at all possible, ensure there’s no need to leave the gallery once seats have been taken.
  + Queue socially distanced, 2 meters apart when waiting to enter the building if necessary.
  + Please note: there will be Deacons serving as stewards at all three entry points who will advise where necessary, help maintain social distancing, check whether we have any symptoms of COVID, invite us to sanitise our hands and sign us all in for NHS Test and Trace purposes.
* Use hand sanitiser on entry and again on exit - available at all three entry/exit points.
  + Consent to our presence at Church being recorded, stored for 21 days and if required, our contact details being made available for NHS Track and Trace purposes. (Please see attached)
  + Take a seat as directed by the stewards please.
  + Please note - many pews are marked on the floor as closed and only pews with white taping on the hymn book shelf are in use. We have a seating plan in use to help us safely seat everyone who comes. Folk might not be able to sit in their usual areas and when full downstairs, some might be asked to join those in the gallery. In the gallery, the first two lower pews are not in use.
  + Not participate in congregational singing. We will have an opportunity to reflect on the words of our hymns as Stephen plays the organ for us. Some members of the choir may sing for us on occasions. The words of the hymns will be on the screens. We may join in with The Lord’s Prayer and The Grace and any prayer responses provided that we do not raise our voices.
  + If we require the toilet, follow the one way route from the internal sanctuary door to the toilets and then return through the Langston Hall. If there is a queue, social distancing is required - there are markings on the floor. Please wipe down the toilet, the flush handle and the taps after use with the wipes and spray provided in each toilet. Please do avoid using the toilets if possible! But they are in use if needed.
  + If at all possible, support the work of Christ Church by giving by bank transfer or cheque. There will not be the normal offering in the Service but for those unable to give in other ways, there will be offering baskets available at all three exit points in the Sanctuary.
  + Please wait to be ushered from our seats in turn by the stewards at the end of the Service.
  + On leaving the Sanctuary, please limit our interaction with others and certainly we may only socialise in one group of up to six people. We cannot then join a new group. I will hope to say a brief ‘good-bye’ to as many folk as possible at a very safe distance on the forecourt.

**Use of the Church Buildings**

Over the coming weeks and months, the Diaconate will carefully consider what else might safely take place in the Church’s buildings, whether that be our own activities or those of our building users. We will update the Church as necessary.

The security locks will be kept locked during the week. For any urgent need for access, please make contact with Jayne Hughes to discuss. The Church Office is available if it is needed (but not on Mondays). We would very much like to limit its use as much as possible but if access is required please arrange this with Jayne. Jayne’s number is 07505 129389. Until further notice, the School Rooms are not to be accessed or used as they are not currently COVID-Secure.

Many thanks for taking the time to read these guidelines. If anything is unclear or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Rob, me or one of the Deacons.

Every blessing to you all,

*Neil and Rob*

*On behalf of all the Christ Church Deacons*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july?fbclid=IwAR3A46TZvvPmhHBFvQ5MOzmVUxr1hjCWwJuOX2t6b25YO4Hlm9vu-2yp2QA>

<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=258760>

<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=257882>