

11th Sept 2020

Ps 122.

I rejoiced with those who said to me,

“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,

I will seek your prosperity.

Dear friends, I am writing to you to bring you up to date with our plans (DV) to re-start public worship in the WEC building. We now have all the new audio-visual equipment but need to complete installation, to make sure it works well and to ensure we have enough people trained to use it. This has set the dates below. There are several key issues to get across followed by lots of detail which we have put in appendices so you can read them if they apply to you. You should all read Appendix A. The bullet points below are the main summary:

- We have followed the most recent COVID-19 Government Guidance for “places of worship” in drawing up our plans, including a risk assessment. This will define the social distancing controls we employ. We have also looked at other guidance related to it as well as the most up to date general guidance limiting groups to 6.
- We will not be able to have everyone back into the building but will continue to provide the live internet broadcast of the morning service for anyone who does not wish to attend.
- The first service back in the building is planned from Sunday September 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am (note the new time). This is planned to be for under 70s only.
- There will be Sunday School available from the Sunday September 20<sup>th</sup> 11:00am service onwards. All schools have now returned. See Appendix C.
- A new early morning service back in the building is planned from Sunday October 4<sup>th</sup> at 09:00am to 10:00am. This is planned to be for over 70s and for the clinically / extremely clinically vulnerable. If anyone in a household is over 70 then you fall into this category. Appendix B explains the guidance.
- Sunday Evening services are planned to commence on Sunday October 18<sup>th</sup> 18:30. Due to limited resources this will not be broadcast, and no provision will be made for over 70s or for the clinically vulnerable. The sermon will, however, be recorded and made available online later.

- To comply with Social Distancing guidance:
  - There will be no congregational singing.
  - No refreshments after the service.
  - You must sanitize your hands on arrival and departure and wear a face covering in the building (unless you have an appropriate exemption);
  - Maintain 2m from others.
- This is the current plan but may need to be changed based on government guidance or our needs.

If there are any changes, we will communicate them to you as soon as we reasonably can.

We all have a different perception of risk. COVID-19 is a new risk and the “unknown” generally makes us uncomfortable. Most of us drive and in doing so accept a level of risk for ourselves and other road users when we get behind the wheel. Almost all human activity involves some form of risk. We only want you to come back when you are comfortable to do so - if you are sat in church worried about being there and so distracted from worship and listening to the preaching, then it would be better to watch on line.

We hope the above is clear. If you have any safety related questions or think I have missed something I am happy to discuss this with you. If you can't access any of the web sites and you would like a hard copy, please ask either myself or Liz.

My apologies for the length of this document - I am trying to provide you with the basis for the decisions we have made and sufficient practical information to avoid confusion.

Yours in Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Craig". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

Deacon for health and safety (on behalf of the Trustees).

## **Appendix A Details of COVID-19 general risk control measures**

This Appendix provides more details on the general risk control measures we will employ. For those interested the government guidance (most recent is dated August 14th 2020) can be found at:

<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>

The risk assessment is in Appendix D, but all the detail is in this appendix. So now for the detail. This has been presented as a series of questions and answers.

### **Is the service different in any way?**

Applying the government guidance means some things will be different. Until the guidance changes, there are a couple of things which we will **not** do:

- Singing regrettably is not advised but we will listen to songs during the service. Sylvia (one person only, at least initially) will sing (behind a screen). Although we have a large main hall, we could still have up to 72 people present and so singing may pose a significant risk. Various scientific organisations are studying this but until the government advice changes, we must remain cautious.
- There is no tea / coffee after the service. This is in the guidance to limit the level of social interaction in a large group. It is not core to a Christian act of worship. You will no doubt want to chat to people outside after the service - remember to maintain the 2m social distancing rules.

However, we will still congregate together for prayer, preaching and praise (“singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” Col 3:16). Those to whom I have spoken who have been to services elsewhere have appreciated the service despite these limitations.

### **How many can we accommodate in the church?**

We have considered the size of the different households (or bubbles) in church - so the Bruins are a household of 6, the Craigs are 5 etc. Arranging the seats around these household groups maximises the number that can be accommodated. We have arranged the seating around the church directory and can get 60 in the main hall with 12 in the activity room with a 2m social distance between the different households. So, we can get a maximum of 72 in the building with 2m spacing. An early morning service will have smaller household groups so will have a lower number.

As a result, we cannot accommodate everyone back in church at a single service and hence why we have purchased and installed new cameras, lights etc. so we can continue to broadcast live with a small congregation present.

For the first two morning services (and repeated for the first two evening services) we ask that people either e-mail or phone the office by Friday 10:00 to say they will be coming. This is so we can check that we have sufficient space to accommodate those who come and do not have to turn people away because we are full. Hopefully after this a regular pattern will appear and we will be able to accommodate all who wish to come.

### **What are the social distancing and COVID-19 rules for attending church?**

We have drawn up the following rules which will be familiar to you if you have been to a shop or most other indoor venues. As a church we all know and love each other and have a high level of compliance to rules. We all know the building well. So, we have limited the amount of COVID-19 signage. We do not want to change the “feel” of the church by plastering the place with unnecessary signs as it may distract some from worship. We should be able to apply the rules in a caring common-sense manner.

So here are the Rules:

- **If you have any symptoms or if you are self-isolating (this includes anyone in your household / bubble) you must remain at home and not attend the service.**
- Outside and inside church follow current general COVID-19 guidance:
  - Face Covering **MUST** be worn in the building (unless leading the service) - (unless you have an appropriate exemption). Children under the age of 11 years are excluded.
  - Social Distance 2m
  - Minimise physical contact with other people & surfaces.
- Please use the hand sanitizer provided when you come **into** and **leave** the building. This is provided. If you have skin problems and cannot use sanitizer, please wash your hands thoroughly immediately before leaving your house.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach.
- Bring your own bible (and take it away with you).
- If you have young children, please bring your own soft toys / books.
- Toilets are fully available but please use them only if necessary – again to reduce risk. Maintain social distancing of 2m.
- As much as possible donations should be done electronically – contact Steve Housley or the Office.
- Visitors will be asked to provide contact details, although they are not legally required to provide them. Data will be held for 21 days. This is for track and trace reasons only. If visitors come with a household for which we already have contact data, then they will not be asked to provide any contact details - they can be contacted through the household.

Some of the things church will do / not do are:

- We will clean contact surfaces: e.g. chairs & door handles & toilets after each service. So, between morning and evening services there will be cleaning undertaken.
- We will open the main hall and activity room doors for additional ventilation but only if the weather permits. Improved ventilation reduces the risk. However, there is no specific guidance on either the benefits or the ventilation requirements. (For example, there is no specification for how much ventilation is required to give a percentage reduction in risk). If the weather is cold, we will close the doors to maintain a reasonable temperature for comfort, so we can focus on the sermon, and not increase the risk from colds / flu etc. Our services are short compared to 8 hours in an office where ventilation may be more significant.
- We will keep an attendance record of the households that attend for 21 days - this will be done by a steward. This is for track and trace reasons only. We have the church directory which contains all the necessary information. We need you to confirm by e-mail (or phone call) that you are happy for us to provide it to the NHS for track and trace reasons - this could be done the first time you notify the office that you will attend a service. Anyone who regularly attends but has not provided their data using the GDPR form will be asked to either complete a GDPR form and bring it when they come to church for the first time or we can treat you as a visitor and simply request temporary contact details.
- We will not provide any hymn sheets / notices / handouts etc. This reduces risk of transmission. These will be available through e-mail as they are at the moment.

## **What are the plans for entering / leaving church? Where can we sit?**

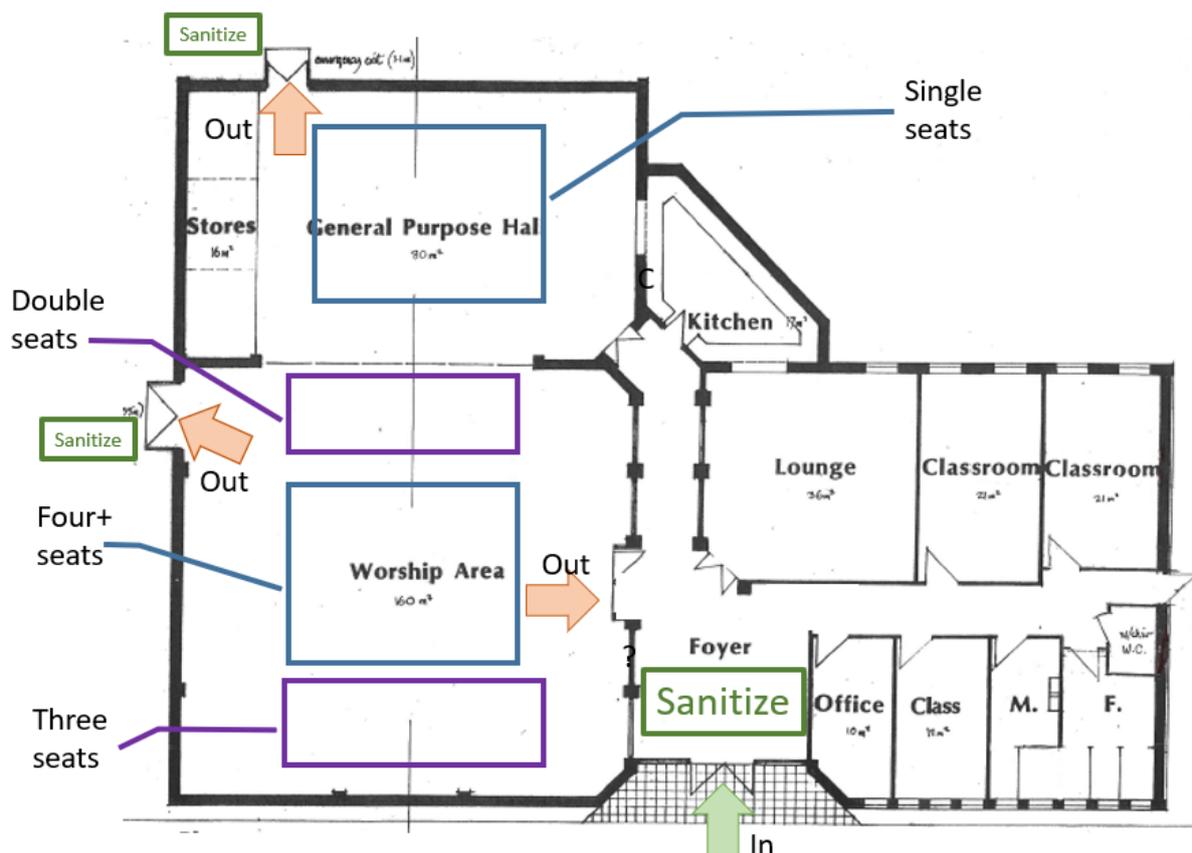
As discussed above we have arranged the seating to maximise the number of people present. We have also seated the bigger groups in front of the minister as this helps him focus on the middle of the room. So, the plans are:

- Enter through the main entrance. People will naturally arrive at different times and should social distance while entering the building. If queues become a problem, we will amend this arrangement.
- The seats are arranged in “household sizes” (6, 5, 4, 3 .. persons) and 2m apart. Please only sit where you use all the seats. Please try and sit in the same seats each service. For the first couple of services a steward will be on hand to support finding a seat.
- Please exit through the main entrance / fire door of the room you are in - use the one nearest you. This will minimise congestion / queues. Once the service is finished please leave in sequence starting with those closest to the exit, to reduce risk of contact. In the main hall the front two rows should exit via the fire door and the back two rows via the main entrance. At the end of the first service you will be reminded of the plan.
- As you leave and meet with people outside please keep the social distancing rules. The general government advice is that we should avoid social interaction but if you do, you must follow the social distancing rules<sup>1</sup>:
  - maintain 2m / good hygiene etc.
  - meeting people outdoors is safer than meeting people indoors because fresh air provides better ventilation. This would apply at Somersall park.
  - when meeting friends and family you do not live with you must not meet in a group of more than 6, indoors (e.g. if you invited some-one for tea and cake) or outdoors. The police can fine you £100 if you break this rule.

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<sup>1</sup> Found at (dated 9 Sept 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>

The following graphic gives a general approximate idea of the current plan for seating so that you know what to expect.



### What happens if somebody at church gets COVID-19?

This we hope is unlikely as it has not happened to date as far as we know, at least no-one has experienced significant symptoms.

If someone has COVID-19 then we will:

- Co-operate with NHS track and trace and follow their instructions. We will provide them with the contact tracing information for those in attendance at the same time as the individual who has contracted COVID-19.
- Send an e-mail out to inform people as soon as we know. You can pray for the individual concerned. You can self-isolate as required - the guidance on isolation requirements is best provided by NHS track and trace and may depend on the exact circumstances.
- We will return to broadcast only services for one or two weeks again dependent on the circumstances.

## **Appendix B Over 70s and Clinically / Extremely Clinically Vulnerable**

We are providing a service solely for this group first thing on a Sunday morning. It is fully in line with government guidance. We would love for you to be able to attend but you need to decide for yourself if you wish to come. To that end we have provided the following which we hope helps although we understand that you need to fully take into account your own circumstances.

### **What is the guidance for over 70s?**

The government considers that there is an increased risk for over 70s even if they are healthy. We have extracted the exact wording so that you can make your own considered opinion.

“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.”

Churches can provide “set days or times when places of worship are open solely for those particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, such as those over 70 or clinically vulnerable.”

So, the ADVICE is to stay at home - you are not breaking the law if you do not take that advice. However, the guidance is clear that we can also provide a set time solely for those over 70 to attend. Therefore, we are planning that the early morning service will be for over 70s / vulnerable and the later morning service for under 70s. It is not a good representation of the church to be split like this but is necessary in the short term to manage the COVID-19 risk.

If someone in your household or “bubble” fits this category, then you should generally consider your household falls in this category. However, you should not treat this as a firm rule but think through how it applies to your specific circumstances.

### **What is the guidance for the clinically vulnerable?**

Those who are clinically vulnerable are those who are<sup>2</sup>:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson’s disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- a weakened immune system as the result of certain conditions or medicines they are taking (such as steroid tablets)
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant women

If you fall into one or more of these categories, you should follow the guidance above for those aged 70 and above.

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<sup>2</sup> Found (dated 9 September 2020) at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july>

## **What is the guidance for the extremely clinically vulnerable?**

Again, we have extracted the exact wording so that you can make your own considered opinion.

“The NHS has written to around 2.2. million who are considered to be extremely clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, advising them to shield<sup>3</sup>. Shielded patients are currently advised not to meet more than one person from outside of their own household, and therefore not currently advised to attend places of worship. Those shielding individuals may choose to gather in groups of up to 6 people outdoors and form a support bubble with another household, they will therefore still be advised not to attend places of worship indoors. Advice for both the clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable is however advisory and they can choose how to manage their own risks.”

So, the ADVICE is to stay at home - you are not breaking the law if you do not take that advice. So, we are proposing that should anyone fall into this category and wish to attend, then they should join the service with the over 70s even if they are not over 70.

If someone in your household or “bubble” fits this category, then you should generally consider your household falls in this category. However, you should not treat this as a firm rule but think through how it applies to your specific circumstances.

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<sup>3</sup> Note this first sentence above is from a slightly earlier version of the guidance but it explains the term “extremely clinically vulnerable”.

## Appendix C Sunday School

This appendix explains what the plans are for Sunday School. It should be noted that the BBC reported (25/8/2020) the following:

“According to the Office for National Statistics, there were 10 deaths recorded as "due to Covid-19" among those aged 19 and under in England and Wales between March and June. There were 46,725 deaths among those aged 20 and over.”

**It is clear from this one statistic that children themselves are exposed to a very low level of risk from COVID-19 when compared to the population at large.** This puts into context the government guidance. Again, for comparison ONS data is that in 2018 the number of fatalities for those aged between 1 and 15 years was 973.

The places of worship guidance refers to the following for guidance (dated 20 August) on activities such as Sunday School:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

The following extracts have helped frame what we plan to do:

“The scientific evidence suggests that there is a moderate to high degree of confidence that the susceptibility to clinical disease of younger children (up to age 11 to 13) is lower than for adults. However, it remains important that protective measures as outlined in this guidance are put in place to help reduce the risk of transmission.”

“maintain small groups of no more than 15 children.”

It also refers to the guidance (dated Sept 7th) on schools opening in full:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Again some extracts include (bold added):

“Based on current evidence and the measures that schools are already putting in place, such as the system of controls and consistent bubbles, **face coverings will not be necessary in the classroom even where social distancing is not possible.** Face coverings would have a negative impact on teaching and their use in the classroom should be avoided.”

**“The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in ‘bubbles’) and through maintaining distance between individuals.** These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on:

- children’s ability to distance
- the lay out of the school
- the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary)”

**“It is likely that for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older children it will be on distancing.** For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff where possible.”

“Points to consider and implement:

## How to group children

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of pupils and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group. They have been used in schools in the summer term in recognition that children, and especially the youngest children, cannot socially distance from staff or from each other and this provides an additional protective measure. Maintaining distinct groups or ‘bubbles’ that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate and keep that number as small as possible.”

“At primary school, and in the younger years at secondary (key stage 3), schools may be able to implement smaller groups the size of a full class. If that can be achieved, it is recommended, as this will help to reduce the number of people who could be asked to isolate should someone in a group become ill with coronavirus (COVID-19).”

“We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.”

“It is strong public health advice that staff in secondary schools maintain distance from their pupils, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other, and from children. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger children, but if adults can do this when circumstances allow that will help.

For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest children and some children with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow. Schools doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time, will help.

When staff or children cannot maintain distancing, particularly with younger children in primary schools, the risk can also be reduced by keeping pupils in the smaller, class-sized groups.”

So the principal approach to limit contact is to reduce the class size for younger children (primary) and apply distancing with older children (secondary) within year group “bubbles”. For us years 6 to 8 will follow the practice for secondary school children.

The largest Sunday school class is 9 children plus teacher and assistant, so within the group size limit of 15 for “out of school settings”. This is smaller than the “small groups the size of a full class” which is the target size for schools. When compared to schools the children are being taught for a far shorter period of time and there is no lunch or break time where social mixing occurs. So we have the following classes in the following rooms:

<b>Class</b>	<b>School year in September 2020</b>	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Class One &amp; Two</b>	Years 2 - 5	Andy’s office	Primary school practice - so no social distancing rules within class, other than between adults.
<b>Class Three</b>	Years 6 - 8	Lounge	Secondary school practice - no moving around in class; maximum spacing as available in classroom.

The following rules are in place:

- Face coverings to be used for those aged 11 years and over only in the main hall but no face coverings are required in the classroom.
- No singing - so the children are the same as the adults.
- No food or drink.
- Class rooms will be cleaned before the service.
- Class room windows will be opened to give additional ventilation if this can be done and maintain a comfortable temperature in the room.
- Sunday school teachers and helpers will maintain social distancing from each other and the kids, as much as they can, unless they are part of the same household / bubble. This may not be possible with class one and two.
- Where possible children should leave for Sunday school by themselves, i.e. without an adult, but only where this is possible. This minimises the risk of contact among adults. They should return to their parent / guardian after class and before the household has left the building.
- Any adult with a child must maintain social distancing from other adults with children as this is the greater risk.

## **Appendix D Risk Assessment**

This appendix explains the risk assessment process. However, all that you need to know is in the main letter so you don't have to read on unless you are interested in the subject.

We have completed a risk assessment using the HSE workplace risk assessment format. It is provided at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>

The HSEs provide general guidance which gives very broad context on risk. "Safe" does not mean there is no risk it simply means that the level of risk to which an individual is exposed is sufficiently low to be considered "broadly acceptable". The guidance in full is provided at the link below for any who are interested:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/theory/r2p2.htm>

This gives historic information on generic fatality rates to put risk into context. For Chesterfield, the COVID-19 infection rate is 3 cases per 100,000 in week 25-31 August - the average for England is 9 in 100,000.

The legal requirement is to undertake a "suitable and sufficient" risk assessment. In the case of COVID-19, applying the controls in the activity specific guidance are broadly sufficient to control the risk to which an individual may be exposed. The risk assessment is intended to apply the controls to a specific activity and facility. There is no benefit in undertaking risk rating.

The risk assessment itself is a summary of most of the details in this letter and is provided on the following page.

# Risk assessment - COVID-19

All employers must conduct a risk assessment. If you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down.

We have started off the risk assessment for you by including a sample entry for a common hazard to illustrate what is expected (the sample entry is taken from an office-based business). Look at how this might apply to your business, continue by identifying the hazards that are the real priorities in your case and complete the table to suit.

You can print and save this template so you can easily review and update the information as and when required. You may find our example risk assessments a useful guide (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies>). Simply choose the example closest to your business.

**Organisation name: Walton Evangelical Church**

**Date of risk assessment: 5 Sept 2020**

The term "Household" below includes those in a "social bubble". Objective is to comply with current Government Guidance and apply it to activities at WEC. Guidance dated 14 August 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
<b>Main Church Services on Sunday</b>						
<b>Up to approximately 70 individuals. Early Morning service for over 70s and Vulnerable. Later morning service &amp; evening service for rest. Sunday School at 11:00 service following guidance. Further details are in letter issued to congregation on 8 September 2020.</b>						
COVID - Transmission by contact.	All attending & those in their households / social bubbles who do not attend.  Consequences of COVID infection can range from none (asymptomatic) through, self-isolation, illness and ultimately to fatality.	Sanitizing Hands on arrival and departure. Single Entry point as arrive at different times / three exit points to minimise queues on departure. Social distancing as per government guidance (2m). No Physical contact with others outside of households. Spacing of 2m for seating. Use of own bible. Avoiding use of shared items as far as is reasonably practicable. Ventilate where practical (i.e. warm enough). No food or drink or large group social activity. Cleaning of contact surfaces after each activity. Register of attendees for Track & Trace. Separate Services arranged for over 70s & Vulnerable.				
COVID - Transmission by aerosol.	As above.	No singing by those attending. Face coverings compulsory (unless children under 11).				