



## Chalmers Memorial Church Newsletter



September 2020

Dear Friend,

It is almost impossible to comprehend that when all Churches had to close their doors in March of this year that those same doors would remain closed the best part of 6 months later. Who could have imagined that the Covid 19 virus would have had the impact upon public worship and the use of church buildings that it has? And, of course, that same virus that caused all of this is still not away. It has caused tragedy and heartache across the land. We have had to learn how to adapt our lives and to try, as best as we can, to keep ourselves safe during this time.

I know that some of you have been shielding for several months now because you were advised to. I have spoken to a number of you on the phone and you have my (our!) admiration for the way in which you have dealt with the restrictions. An even bigger number of you have lived with other more limited restrictions, perhaps through the encouragement of your family. You have learnt online shopping, avoided buses, public places. You might have learnt to how use Zoom or Facetime to keep in touch with others.

And, of course, all of us – until more recent days – have had to deal with not seeing our loved ones. Again, imagine having to social distance from our own families? What a strange world we live in just now.

Worship, too, has been a miss. The Podcasts have been well received and used but we have all missed the joyous singing and the sense of fellowship that only being together brings. Chalmers Church has done well through these last few months though. I am in awe of the way that you have continued to support each other and for that you have my deepest thanks.

It is now time, however, to consider those first tentative steps back to the Church building and I am happy to announce that on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020 the Kirk Session agreed to what we hope will be the **first phase** of a re-opening of our premises for worship. This will take the form of a short **4-week series of midweek** services in the **Church Hall** commencing on **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm**. Our sincere hope is that Sunday worship will not be too far behind, perhaps within the first fortnight of October when we will probably move to a pattern of two identical weekly services giving a choice of time for attendance.

There are things we need to make you aware about, however. In all our discussions we have been guided by the extensive guidelines, indeed rules, that the Church of Scotland has negotiated with the Scottish Government to allow public worship to happen.

- Numbers attending worship will be limited.
- We will need to use a pre booking system to ensure that we do not exceed capacity.
- We have put in place an extensive cleaning regime hiring a contract cleaning company.
- We need to organise stewarding.
- **Most importantly of all**, we need to ensure that, in so far as we can, that we make our premises as secure and safe as we can. That will mean social distancing and good hygiene practices.

The rest of this “newsletter” aims to give you the sort of information that you will need to decide if you wish to come to one of these services, or indeed other services as they start up soon. The following also explains how we intend to assess your own wish to return to Church at this time, as we re-open with the two identical services – Sunday and Wednesday. We will follow your lead here.

There’s a fair amount to read for you to know what to expect, but we hope it helps. Please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be contacted at the Manse by phone on **01875 812225** or by email [rallison@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:rallison@churchofscotland.org.uk).

Your friend and Minister,  
Robin Allison (Rev)

## Deciding whether to come back to Church – Questions and Answers.

### What services are planned?

**The Midweek Service** will take place on the **16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> September** and on the **7<sup>th</sup> October**. Each service will begin at **2pm** and last approx. 30 minutes.

This will **not be a repeat** of the weekly podcast but rather a brand-new reflective service with responses, reflection, bible reading(s) and a short message.

Unfortunately, due to Government regulations there will be **no singing** of hymns.

We may use pre-recorded music for contemplation but not singing which will seem odd for our congregation which has a reputation for excellent singing!

### How do I pre-book my place at this service?

You can contact the Minister at the manse by:

- Telephone - **01875 812 225**
- Email - **rallison@churchofscotland.org.uk**

**You must book by 5pm on the Tuesday** before the Wednesday service. We are deeply apologetic that, once bookings reach capacity, we will be unable to reserve your place at the service. **However**, you will be allocated a guaranteed space at the service the following week.

Services will be held in the hall rather than the sanctuary for ease of cleaning.

We thank you for your patience and understanding at this time. These temporary changes are necessary as we cannot exceed capacity, which would breach social distance spacing.

### What is the maximum number that can attend?

To comply with Government regulations, seats will be set 2 metres apart. The maximum number that can attend the service, therefore, is **36 people**. We thank you for your understanding in these difficult times.

### Will I have to wear a mask?

Yes. The Government has stated that **everyone** attending public worship will have to wear a mask **except from** those who fall into the **exemption categories**. The worship leader will not be required to wear a mask during the leading of worship but will be required to wear one before and after worship. We will have an emergency supply of masks for those who have forgotten to bring theirs.

### Will you need to keep a register of those attending?

Yes. Government regulations require us to keep a register of **everyone** attending. The information collected will include your **name** and a **contact telephone number**. This ensures that, if required, we can supply to the national **“Test and Protect”** scheme the information of those who attended worship. All information will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act and securely destroyed after 21 days.

### What if I don't feel well but have a place booked?

We ask that, if you feel unwell on the day of a service, even if you have a booked place, that you do not attend. Whilst it might turn out to be just a sniffle or a bug, we must take extra care at this time. This is why we are using social distancing and have adopted a heightened hygiene regime.

## **So, I've booked a place. What do I do when I arrive at Church?**

We ask that you enter the Church Hall via the **Gosford Road** entrance **only**. In the vestibule will be two stewards - one to welcome you and the other to mark your attendance and receive any offering you have brought with you. **Please use the hand sanitiser when you arrive.**

A further two stewards in the hall will be available to show you to your seat. The hall will be filled from the front to the back and we ask that you **remain in your seat** for the duration of worship.

At the close of worship those at the **front of the hall** will exit via **Gosford Road** and those to the **rear of the hall** will exit to **Osborne Terrace** via the emergency exit.

It is essential that those attending the service **do not** gather in groups at the close of worship in the street and maintain social distancing. Due to the guidelines there will unfortunately be no tea and coffee after the service.

None of this will feel normal but we hope that the joy of being able to worship together again will still bring that sense of fellowship we need.

## **When do you think a Sunday service will begin again?**

*The Kirk Session are holding a review meeting on **Thursday 1st October**. Before that date, your elder should contact you directly to ask if you intend to come back, at this time, to an act of worship held either on a Sunday or on a Wednesday under the restricted circumstances we are describing. Your input is invaluable here.*

*Once we have collected this feedback, the decision on how we move forward will be made. We will write to you again about this.*

## **Can I bring an offering along? What if I won't be in attendance but want to give an offering?**

We have greatly appreciated your continued support of the Church through lockdown.

If you are attending an act of worship then, by all means, bring your offering with you and it will be counted and banked. If you are not attending worship, but wish to hand in your offering, then please ask your elder for help and they will arrange to uplift it for you or be able to advise to whom you could give your offering.

If you have a lot of cash to hand in, one suggestion is that you might wish to *convert* that cash into a cheque. This is because there's likely to be a fair number of envelopes needing sorted through. We understand if that is not possible.

If you wish to make your offering by monthly standing order, then please contact **John Murdoch** on **01875 812 469** and he will be able to help you.

## **Will the Podcasts continue?**

**Absolutely!** These midweek services are not a replacement for the Sunday Podcast. We will continue to produce the podcasts and will likely do so even when Sunday worship has restarted.

As always there are several ways to access the Podcast or the script for it. Each week the script is sent to your elder and they can deliver it or email it to you. The podcast script is also being posted on the Chalmers Church website at <http://chalmerschurch.co.uk/services.htm>. Back copies of all the Podcast scripts can be found there.

If you have internet access, then you will find the Audio Podcast at: <https://chalmersmemorialchurch2020.podbean.com/> or you can dial the following local rate number - **01875 444 495** – and the most recent podcast can be heard via the telephone.

## **Can you help me to decide whether to come back to public worship?**

First of all, whatever you decide to do please know you have our support and understanding.

The Church of Scotland has, however, created a self-assessment tool that uses a scoring system to help people make their own informed choices. A copy of this follows:

Risk Factor		Total Score
<b>Age</b>	50-59	1
	60-69	2
	70-79	4
	80 and over	6
<b>Sex at birth</b>	Male	1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Caucasian	0
	Black African	2
	Descent Indian	1
	Asian Descent	1
	Filipino Descent	1
	Other (including mixed race)	1
<b>Diabetes &amp; Obesity</b>	Type 1 & 2	1
	Diabetes Type 1 & 2 with presence of microvascular complications or HbA1c $\geq$ 64mmol/mol	2
	Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 35 kg/m <sup>2</sup> online BMI calculator: <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator">http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator</a>	1
<b>Cardiovascular disease</b>	Angina, previous heart attack, stroke or cardiac intervention	1
	Heart Failure	2
<b>Pulmonary (lung) disease</b>	Asthma	1
	Non-asthma chronic pulmonary disease	2
	Either of the above requiring oral corticosteroids in the last year	1
<b>Malignant neoplasm (cancer)</b>	Active malignancy	3
	Malignancy in remission	1
<b>Rheumatological conditions</b>	Active treated conditions	2
<b>Immunosuppressant therapies</b>	Any indication	2
<b>Total Score</b>		

The assessment 'tool' above is the one produced by the National Church of Scotland in line with guidance supplied by the British Medical Association. We need to state clearly that **we cannot claim** any medical expertise in sharing this table with you. Circle the score next to each one that applies to you and add up your score. A **score of under 3** indicates a lower risk, but you should still be following the guidance for staying safe. A **score of 3-5** suggests a greater risk and you should consider ways of reducing your risk by taking additional precautions or avoiding some activities. A **score of 6 or more** suggests a high risk and indicates that you might continue to work or participate in church activities from home.



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