

Information for Returning to Church Services in High Kirk

After almost six months of being unable to meet together for worship as a church family, we're so pleased that our Sunday Services are able to recommence. We would stress that no-one should feel under pressure to attend our services if you do not as yet feel comfortable about gathering with others in public spaces. While we aim to do all that we can to make in-person gatherings as safe as possible for our church family and wider community, we urge you to evaluate your own risk and make the best decisions for yourself and those closest to you on when to attend. We will be continuing to show our services online at 11.30 am each Sunday.

Gathering as church will look somewhat different for the next few months and there will be the need to make changes as we learn along the way. Therefore we thank you in advance for your patience and co-operation. We do hope that, despite the measures in place, our services will be as meaningful and as personal as possible and a source of much encouragement to you. Here's what to expect...

BEFORE YOU COME

Of course, if you are displaying any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or have been in close contact with anyone displaying such symptoms, or are in quarantine for any reason, do not attend ANY church activities. We will continue offering worship services Online for those unable to attend in person.

REGISTRATION

Due to social distancing measures there is a reduced capacity in our church building. Therefore, in order to safely maximise our capacity, we will require everyone to register in advance of attending services. Guests are very welcome to attend our services but they too need to register in advance.

- Registration for each week will open on Monday and close on Tuesday, for everyone over the age of 18. You can book in one of three ways:
 - by responding to the ChurchSuite email invitations (closes end of day Tuesday)
 - by signing up using "My Events" in the ChurchSuite App (closes end of day Tuesday)
 - for those not on email, by telephoning the Church Office (028 2564 4834) on Monday or Tuesday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm.
- If we have your email address on ChurchSuite, please wait until you receive an invitation from us for that week, which you can accept or decline. You should not book by telephoning. This way it helps us to gain a better balance of adults and children each Sunday. (Please also check your spam/junk folder in the event that the invites go there).
- Booking is per each individual but you need to give the number within your household that will be sitting together. If registering on behalf of a friend who doesn't come from the same household, this will be a separate registration to that of your own household. This can be done using "Add additional ticket" on the email invite or calling the church office.
- You are advised to register as early in the week as possible to ensure a place. Remember that you have to register for each week that you wish to attend.
- Those who book through ChurchSuite or accept the invite will receive a confirmation email containing a QR code which they need to bring with them on the Sunday to assist with checking in at the door. It can be printed out or displayed using your mobile phone.
- Please only register if you fully intend to come – if you register and don't come you may be denying someone else the opportunity to come but who didn't manage to get a space. If you have

registered and for some reason are unable to come, please let us know in good time, by calling the church office or emailing office@highkirk.org.uk.

- If your chosen service is full by Tuesday, we will place you on a waiting list and give you first option for the next week. If spaces become available throughout the week we will be in touch to offer you a place.
- There will be a separate children's programme, for p2 to p7, and they will also be pre-registered and checked in on arrival.
- While we are not having a staffed crèche facility there will be a part of the foyer and creche room where parents with babies and children up to p1's can stay and watch the service on the screens. There will be separate booking for the foyer area by email invite. In the event that either parent wishes to sit in the Sanctuary, then accept the invite for Sanctuary and decline the one for Foyer.
- The Birney Room may also be booked for those who need a quieter environment to worship (max 10 persons).
- When registering you will be given the option to choose your preference for time of service.
- Café Explore will be meeting on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 pm from now on. Please contact Willis McDowell regarding booking for this service (arranged separately through *WhatsApp*).

NOTE: If we do not have your email address, you will need to call the office to make the reservation. If you would prefer to receive an email invite then please contact the office or email office@highkirk.org.uk so your details can be updated.

PREPARATIONS

It's good as we come to any worship service to prepare our hearts and minds for worship and to hear God's Word. However, in this season of COVID-19, there are a few additional practical preparations to make before coming to church.

- Please help us by planning to arrive in good time (20-30 minutes early) in order to allow time for us to get everyone seated. You may have to queue for a short time outside so be prepared for that.
- The ushers will direct people to their seats, filling from front to back and after the service will direct people to leave in order.
- While face coverings are not mandatory in churches, we are strongly encouraging people to wear their own mask to worship for the well-being of others and for your own protection. Please bring your own face covering although we will have a small supply of face masks available.
- We will have a separate programme for p.2 - p.7 children. Each child should bring a small mat or rug to sit on. Children are of course welcome to remain in the service with their parents if they so wish but coming in and out of the service is discouraged.
- Toilet facilities will be available but due to restrictions in the number of people who can access these facilities at one time, we suggest these be used only if absolutely necessary.
- Please bring your own Bible with you as church Bibles are unable to be used at this time.
- Depending on weather conditions, you might want to come prepared with a coat / umbrella in case you need to queue outside for a short time.

AS YOU ARRIVE

- While we will be making people feel welcome as they arrive, unfortunately handshakes, hugs and coffees are on hold for now.
- The entrance for worshippers will be through the main entrance off the back car park (not the Thomas Street entrance).
- Those with children p.2 to p.7 for *HK Kids* should register the children at the Pre-school door (the old office entrance) and then re-join the main queue. Exit after the service will be through all the exit doors.

- As you arrive please comply with social distancing requirements. As you enter into the church building there will be a hand sanitisation point, followed by an area where you are 'checked in' for the service. Have your QR code ready for scanning, either from a printout or on your mobile device.
- You will then be shown to your seat – all pews have been spaced to allow for 2 metre social distancing.
- While we appreciate that some people have a 'preferred' pew or area that they sit in each Sunday, this will not be possible. In order to safely maximise the number of people who can attend the service we need to configure the seating arrangements and therefore your places will be allocated. Please cooperate with the ushers as they show you to your allocated seat.
- While we all love to have a chat and catch-up with each other, please avoid hanging around entrances or circulating around the inside of the church building. People may converse more freely in the car park.
- There will be no copies of the Bulletin distributed to the congregation. Instead, these will continue to be available on the screens and sent by email.
- Despite all the differences you will experience, do arrive with an attitude of desiring to encourage others and encounter God.

DURING THE SERVICE

- Services will begin sharp at 9.30 am and 11.30 am and last approximately 45 - 50 minutes.
- The service will contain much of the content of a normal service. There will not be a children's address but Stephanie will be preparing material to be accessed online by the children each week who are unable to come based, on the HK Kids lesson that Sunday.
- The service will include music and praise and you can either just listen to the praise or sing along quietly.
- Singers and speakers will be at least four metres from the first row of the congregation.
- There will be no offering collected during the service but there will be a plate/box at the exit points for you to leave your gift. We encourage you to continue to give by bank standing orders / transfers where possible.

AFTER THE SERVICE

- Please exit the building as soon as possible as directed by the ushers. Keep all the exit ways clear and ensure that you practice appropriate social distancing. We recognise that a big part of being together is being able to chat with and encourage each other. Where possible, conversations with others should take place outside. While we love having the energy of children near us, please don't allow your children to run freely around the buildings.
- Please be aware that we have homes surrounding our church premises and wish to maintain a positive witness to the community. Please bear this in mind by remembering to continue with social distancing practices as you leave the building and car park.
- Our church premises will be cleaned thoroughly before and between each service (disinfected with fog treatment between the services and all hard services cleaned).
- While the practicalities of the service will be a topic of discussion, make sure you leave considering the question, "What has God been saying to me today?"
- Make sure you take up the various opportunities during the week to engage further with others and with God's Word.

We appreciate that, for a season, this is not church as we know it. However, these measures are required to keep people as safe as possible while enabling us to worship God and encourage each other as meaningfully as possible. We look forward to welcoming you soon as we gather again for worship.