

## **Guidance arrangements for public worship at Trinity Baptist Church, Maryport; in the light of the Covid-19 constraints**

You should not, according to government health guidance, be attending church if you have the symptoms of a dry cough, high temperature or loss of taste or smell. Neither should you attend if a member of your household has such symptoms, nor if you have been ordered by the NHS to shield or self-isolate.

If you are well, and free from Covid-19 constraints, we encourage you to meet regularly with God's people for the worship services on the Sundays and the Bible study & prayer meeting on Tuesdays.

The government has advised or imposed constraints that should be followed before, during and after the services. Whilst we desire to resume familiar practices without restrictions, we must apply the limitations placed on us whilst these are in force. The primary constraints that apply to churches are:

- Ensure you maintain social distancing from people outside your social bubble
- Wear face coverings (that cover both nose and mouth) inside the building (unless you have a medical exemption)
- Use hand sanitiser before entry to (or exit from) the building
- Minimise potential for cross-infection (by sanitising contact surfaces)
- Ensure that heating and ventilation is proportionate
- Do not consume food or drink in the building (unless this is part of the worship activity)
- Keep a record (for at least 3 weeks) of everyone present at meetings
- Encourage conversations between attendees to take place outside the building in groups of no more than 6 people (maintaining the 2m distance between people from different social bubbles)
- Whilst tier 2 or 3 restrictions apply, do not gather in close proximity with people inside the building with people who are not in your household or social bubble

A social bubble consists of people who normally reside in your household and those from another household with whom you have routine social contact. A social bubble should not normally exceed 6 people.

At Trinity, to comply with the constraints of social distancing (ideally keeping a gap of 2m between people from differing social bubbles) the seating capacity within the building is currently reduced to 26 households.

The main church assembly room (including the alcoves), the hall, and the entrance porch will be used for seating, with the following constraints being applied:

- The right-hand side alcove (facing the front). Only the front and back rows are available, with 3 sets of acceptable seating locations being defined. This alcove should be filled first.
- The main body of the church (long pews). Acceptable seating is available at alternate ends of these pews on both the right and left sides of church.

- The main body of the church (short pews). Acceptable seating is only available on the back pews which are earmarked for households of 3 or more people but can be occupied by people from smaller households if other seating in the main body of the church is occupied.
- The left-hand side alcove (facing the front). This is reserved for the person doing the recording and the organist and those of their household.
- The hall. Several acceptable seating locations are identified either on blue chairs or pews (about half of these locations can see the pulpit). Seating in the hall would normally be used once the main church has been filled.
- The entrance porch. Two seats can be used in the entrance if needed.

To reduce the potential for cross-infection, some windows in church will be open to improve ventilation. Additionally, use of the heating system will be minimised. In warm weather the heating will be switched off. In cooler conditions, the building will be heated prior to meetings and then switched off prior to the services. In cold weather, the heating will remain on, but ventilation will be maintained. Please remember this and dress accordingly.

Please note that Government guidance and legislation can change quickly in response to the changing situation nationally and locally. Please be aware of these changes as they occur in the news, but you will be notified of any changes that materially affect us in our ability to open the church and hold services.

### **Before and after the services**

1. We will seek to disinfect the contact surfaces, as necessary, after all the services that take place
2. You are asked to minimise use of the toilet facilities at the church (only using the disabled toilet if this is necessary), and only use the kitchen if this is essential.
3. Travel by car should normally be restricted to people within your social bubble. If you do provide a lift to someone outside your social bubble, the passenger(s) should sit in the back as far away as possible from the driver, and both driver and passenger(s) should wear appropriate face coverings.
4. There will be no prayer meetings prior to the Sunday Services and no refreshments after the evening services.

### **Arrival at the building**

1. A hand wash sanitiser is available at the main entrance and the side entrance, please ensure you have sanitised your hands as you enter the building. Certainly, seek to wash your hands (as the last thing you do) prior to leaving home. Also seek to use the toilet just prior to leaving home, as the fewer that use the toilet facilities at church the better. Please minimise touching surfaces as you arrive to reduce the risk of spreading any potential infection.

2. You must wear a face covering (unless you have medical exemption) when you enter the building. We encourage you to bring your own face coverings, but disposable masks will be provided if you are without one.
3. Please ensure that your attendance is recorded by the door steward on Sunday morning and/or evening. On Tuesdays, the record will be taken by someone at the front of the building.
4. On arrival at church, **if someone else is arriving in front of you**, make sure that you remain at least 1 metre, but ideally, 2 metres behind them.
5. All people living in the same house should seek to arrive together and sit together. Everyone living alone should be sitting by themselves apart from others.
6. On entering the church make your way towards the front and take the next available seat nearest the front. The available seats will have a hymnbook on the seat and the unavailable seats will be marked with an 'X'. It is **important that we fill up from the front backwards** as this minimises the need to pass someone else.
7. If the main building fills, which is a possibility because of the distancing rules, then go to the hall via the outside door which is nearest to the toilets, and occupy one of the seats looking through the open sliding doors into the church (or if these are taken, sit in one of the other locations).
8. You will not need to pick up a hymn book as they will already be in the church at the places at which it is permissible to sit. We will be using the Grace Hymn Book on Sunday Mornings (red covers) and for the Tuesday Evenings (green covers) which will have been put in place several days before, so will be perfectly safe to use. On Sunday Evenings we will be using the Golden Bells Hymn Book which will be put in place on Sunday afternoon wearing surgical gloves so that they are once again safe to use.

### **During and after the service**

1. Unfortunately, we are not permitted to sing, not even a solo from the Pastor at the front! However, we will have hymns in various forms without singing. At the end of all services leave the hymn book you have used at that service in the pew as it will be removed afterwards. We would like you to bring your own bibles to the services and preferably, not to use the church bibles.
2. If the toilet is required during the service (hopefully not) then those in the front half of the church should access these via the hall, moving carefully and quickly past other people. Those in the back half of the church use the main entrance and access the toilet that way. The outside doors will all be kept unlocked until people have departed from the building. **Only the disabled toilet will be available** (to minimise the number of facilities that need cleaned after use). Please sanitise your hands before entering and before leaving the toilet.
3. At the end of the service, exit the church from the back, one row at a time, staying 2 metres behind those in front of you. Please sanitise your hands as you leave.

4. If people want to speak to one another, then do so once you are outside the building, but please move away from the doors to allow others to exit the building unhindered. If you do converse with people, please maintain the social distancing of 1m (preferably 2m) from people from other households. Please also limit any groupings of people to no more than 6 persons.

### **Christmas cards and periodicals**

1. If you wish to give Christmas cards to others in the church, then please place these in the allotted box on the table (left hand side) in the entrance. These will be sorted after the Sunday or Tuesday evening services and placed in piles on the other table (right hand side as you enter) in the entrance porch. Please take your cards when sorted (without touching any other piles). **Please do not sort out your own cards** to piles on this table.
2. Periodicals for others to collect should be placed on the table (left hand side) in the entrance porch. **Please do not hand out periodicals** to people in the building.

### **Additional arrangements for communion services**

The mandatory requirement to wear face masks inside the church makes it difficult, but not impossible, to hold the service of communion. The government's guidance allows for the consumption of food and drink where this is essential as part of the worship activity. When we resume communion services at Trinity, the following arrangements will apply:

People are to enter the building as per current guidance.

The service will begin at 5:30 pm as people will be expected to remain in their seat at the end of communion until the end of the evening service. The bread and wine will not be served. **People will be required to bring their own piece of bread for the service**, and disposable communion cups (beakers for those with mobility issues) will be used. The cups will be prepared in the afternoon on the Sunday (by the Pastor wearing a mask and surgical gloves and placing them near the available seats in church). The cups are to be disposed of by the user after the service (a bin is available in the entrance porch).

If you are wearing a face covering, this would have to be temporarily removed to partake of the bread and wine and replaced immediately afterwards.

All control measures are in place as required by law and recommended best practice guidelines by Public Health England.