

BACK TO THE BUILDING

A roadmap for the return
of in-person gatherings



Dear MBC members and friends,

As you are no doubt aware, for the last few weeks the elders have been praying about and planning for the reopening of the MBC church building.

Last week Ray and Wayne put together an incredibly thorough and detailed risk assessment (which we will circulate before our official opening and publish on our website).

This document is an effort to 'translate' the official risk assessment into plain English for us all to make sense of! It will give you an idea of what to expect at a church service and how you can best prepare for it.

One thing that has become clear from doing the risk assessment is that it would take a mammoth (and, ultimately, unrealistic) effort to get every activity of the church up and running at the same time.

Our priority and first aim is to enable all those who are willing to attend a safe and simple church service each and every Sunday. As our familiarity with 'the new normal' grows and the government's restrictions on church services relax we can add to this simple service all the elements of church family life that we currently miss: communion, baptisms, congregational singing, Sunday school, creche, refreshments and many, many more.

Finally, while we had hoped to hold our first Sunday service on 6th September, it is looking increasingly likely that the building work will over-run by just a couple of days. Therefore we've pushed our plans back a week to accommodate. Thanks for your understanding and for prayers as we have worked on these challenges together. We so look forward to seeing as many as possible *face-to-face* in just a few weeks.

God bless,

Jimmy, Ray, Phil, Wayne, Stuart & Neil.

Timeline

Week One (Sept 13th)

A handful of people will meet for a live church service. This will act as a kind of 'dress rehearsal', giving the stewards an opportunity to practice taking people's details, directing people to their seats and maintaining a covid-secure environment. It also offers the opportunity for us to make any changes to procedure before we welcome everyone back to church.

Week Two (Sept 20th)

If you are a regular part of MBC you will be contacted during this week to ask if you and your household are ready to return to church. If so, you will be invited to attend an 'in-person' service either this week or the week after. On September 20th we will welcome the first half of those wanting to return..

Week Three (Sept 27th)

On September 27th we will welcome the second half of those wanting to return.

Week Four (Oct 4th)

From this week on we will run two services each Sunday, with a 'deep clean' of the building in between. Both services will be identical, the first running at 11am, the second at 4pm. This means that everyone who wants to attend in-person church services will be able to do so each and every week from this point on at either the morning or the afternoon service (provided they are healthy and the government restrictions don't change).

What to expect

The rest of this document sets out what you can expect from a church service. We hope to produce a 'walkthrough' video so you will be able to **see** as well as read about what church will be like. The walkthrough video will be sent round on **14th September** - after our 'trial run'.

Before coming to church

- If you are in a high risk group or are aged 70 or above, please consider carefully if you ought to attend in-person gatherings at this time. The official government line is that "people in 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."
- Of course, if you're feeling ill in any way, we would ask that you stay at home rather than attend an in-person gathering.
- Before you come to church, please ensure that you use the toilet (and wash your hands)! While we will have the facilities available at the church building, it is important that we minimise the number of people going in and out of the toilets.
- If it's likely that you're going to need a drink while at the church building please bring a bottle with you. There will be no facilities to get a drink at the church.
- It may also be wise to bring a jumper even if it's a relatively warm day. We will have some of the windows open in the main church hall to increase ventilation.
- At the moment the government requires everyone over the age of 12 to wear a facemask when inside the church building for the entire duration of the service. Please bring yours with you!
- If you would like a bible at church please bring one from home as we will be unable to hand out church bibles for the time being.

Arriving at church

- Please don't arrive more than 15 minutes early for the service (or be prepared to wait in your car/outside the building for a moment). We'll open the doors at 10:45am ready to receive members and guests - this is to ensure that the stewards are in place and the final checks have been made before we allow people to enter.
- Please put on your facemask before entering the building.
- Entry to the church will be via the access ramp in the car park. Having everybody come in through the same entrance allows us to operate a 'one way system' inside the church building.
- Once inside the building a steward will be ready to take a record of your name and telephone number. We are required to take this information to comply with the government's track and trace scheme. These details will be held for 21 days and then destroyed.
- Please use the hand sanitiser on your way in.
- For the first few weeks we will not have a Sunday school running. Instead, if your children are Sunday school aged, please take some of the activity packs from the check-in desk and give them to your children during the sermon.
- Once you've signed in, please enter the main church hall where another steward will show you to your seat. If you need a chair moved to make up a larger group, a steward (wearing PPE) will move the chair for you.

The church service

- Once you're in your seat you should aim to stay there for the duration of the service. If you need to leave for any reason, please observe the one way system; if you're facing the back of the hall, please go out of the door at the back right and come in the door at the back left.
- If you or your children need to use the toilet at any point in the service please leave the hall observing the one way system. Only one adult (or household) should use a set of toilets at any time. Once you've used the toilet, please follow the wipe down instructions which will be displayed on the toilet wall.
- At 11am (or 4pm) the service will begin and run almost as normal. The notable exception being that, for now, we are unable to have congregational singing. Instead songs will be played instrumentally with the lyrics being displayed on the screen for us to think about and pray through.
- Parents are to accompany children throughout the building. Please help your child to maintain the necessary social distance from other church goers.
- There is no creche service available and you are welcome to keep young children with you in the main church hall - nobody will mind the noise. However, if you would prefer, you are welcome to take preschool-aged children next door to the small hall where the service will be relayed. Please bring your own toys as toys from the creche toys will be unavailable and do your best to maintain the required social distance between households at all times.
- As far as possible, please avoid touching doors. There will be stewards ready to open them for you at any time.

Leaving

- There are two ways to leave the church building at the end of a service. The first is through the side door that opens directly to the outside. The other is to leave through the back right doors of the church hall - as you're facing the back of the room - and then through the main front door. Again, stewards will open these doors for you, so no need to touch anything yourself.
- Please use the hand sanitiser on your way out.
- If you would like to give an offering to the work of the church you can do so by putting your gift into the offering box. There will be one available at each of the two exits.

After the service

- You may chat briefly outside but please make sure that you are not blocking any exits or walk ways for others. Please also maintain the required social distance between you and anyone not in your household.
- We will continue to make our time of after-service refreshments accessible via zoom, but will look to phase this out over the coming months as we enjoy more and more face-to-face fellowship.

Questions, feedback and next steps

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this little guide. We hope it was helpful in explaining the road ahead. If you have any questions at all or any feedback, please get in touch with one of the elders.

If you're a regular part of MBC you (or someone from your household) can expect to be contacted at some point in the week beginning 14th September to discuss with you whether you'd like to return to physical gatherings at this time.

Either way, we are praying that God will bless you as you follow Him and that he may grow our church family in faith and fellowship in the months that lie ahead.