

Dear Church Family

We will be restarting our Sunday Worship service on Sunday 23rd May 2021. Some restrictions of course, remain in place, and affect us both as hirers of a public building and a religious group meeting for worship. The information below outlines the precautions we MUST observe, as these reflect the current legal situation.

It will take a little getting used to these limitations, but I am hopeful they will be eased over the coming weeks, especially as we approach the all-important date of 21 June. Can I encourage you to each to do three things with this information – read it, use it, and help each other to put it into practice.

Many of our ‘normal’ activities as a church will have to change to reflect current laws and some of our old ‘normal’ ways of doing church will be changed to position our church for spiritual growth on the inside and numerical growth from the outside.

As C. S. Lewis remarked in a sermon he gave during the second world war, ‘favourable conditions never come’ and as our church name suggests, we are bearers of eternal hope and need to live this out wisely and with great boldness.

What Is Changing?

- When we start meeting again in-person from 23rd May, Sunday messages will no longer be recorded. The old Sunday messages will remain available on the church website.
- For now, there will not be any congregational singing during our services, although the band members will be permitted to sing (without masks) and play their respective instruments.
- Everyone will need to maintain social distancing of 2m. People from the same household may sit next to one another.
- The number of people who we either believe will attend, or have confirmed they will, totals in excess of 25. The small hall that we will be hiring at Buckingham Park has a strict capacity of 25. We will therefore be using a free online booking system called Eventbrite to facilitate the issuance of ‘tickets’. These will be issued on a first-come-first-served basis and should only be booked for members of your own household. Only those who have booked online will be allowed to enter the building (including me!). Information and a link will be messaged through WhatsApp, Messenger, email, and via the church website for you to access this service. If you have any problems booking, please contact Tim on 07894 228 798.
- You will only be able to access the small hall we hire through the outside doors. Please do NOT attempt to access the building through the main doors. No one, except those one or two people who have arranged to help stay and tidy/clean will be able to go through into the main building.
- We will not be serving any refreshments on Sundays. If you need water, please bring your own bottle. Whoever brings a drink onto the premises will also be responsible for removing from the premises when they leave.
- All surfaces and equipment used during a service will need to be disinfected after use before being returned to their respective storage areas.
- We will not be able to take cash donations/tithes during the service. All giving will have to be done either through the Giving page on the church website or through a Stewardship account. Details of this are on the church website.

- We cannot hand out church Bibles and would therefore ask everyone to come with their own Bible. If you do not have one, please let Tim know so you can be supplied with one **before the day**.
- Various individuals will be participating in the service through prayers, readings and notice-giving.
- You will need to provide your name and a contact number and this record will be kept securely and only used to contact you in the event that someone who attended or who was in contact with the church group on the day in question tests positive for Covid.
- You will need to leave the building promptly immediately after the service has finished.
- **Mingling should not take place inside the building**. Outside you can mingle in groups of up to six people or two households. Please be mindful of those who are more vulnerable or are nervous of infection, even if you have been vaccinated.

What is staying the same?

- The place we meet will still be at Buckingham Park Community Centre
- The name of the church will be remaining as Hope Baptist Church
- I will still be your Pastor
- God

In all this let us remember and act on the belief that this church only exists to bring glory to the Name of Jesus Christ by sharing His great love, inviting others to be changed by His gospel and learning how to live as His disciples in this world.

It is not clear how long these restrictions will need to remain or at what point any of the rules will be relaxed. But let us each remember that this church does not exist just to perform in accordance with the legal requirements of this country but ultimately to serve and bring honour to the Name of Jesus.

What should I bring?

1. Bible
2. Mask
3. Drink
4. A jumper/top as we will have to keep the windows open
5. Your friends (but don't forget to book them a seat)

Whatever you bring, you need to take back home with you.

In what ways should I serve?

- Helping to set up (cannot be more than two others plus Tim)
- Door greeter (taking names/numbers and directing people to seats)
- Leading the church in prayer
- Reading the Word
- Playing/singing in the worship band
- Announcing notices to the church
- Helping to take down/store away (we cannot allow anyone to touch or move anything unless they are designated to do so)