

# Reopening Bearsden Cross Church

19<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear friends,

I am pleased to be able to write to you with our plans to re-open the church building in line with Scottish Government (SG) and Church of Scotland guidance. **The Kirk Session has agreed to reopen the sanctuary for worship from Easter Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 10.30am**, subject to the approval of Presbytery that all appropriate safeguards and hygiene protocols have been put in place. The church will be cleaned and disinfected before and after every service.



A Reopening Task Group has been re-established and they are hard at work to minimise risks and to make worshipping as safe as possible during this time. As with any activity in these days, the risk of infection still remains real and present and therefore we all need to be as vigilant as possible. We remain under social distancing restrictions as we begin to move out of lockdown, and so worship and the sanctuary will be different in the following ways: -

- Entry will be via the Halls door. Exit after the service will be from the rear of the sanctuary. As you enter and exit, please maintain a physical distance of 2m from others and use the contactless hand sanitizers.
- Your details will be taken for NHS Track and Protect purposes, and these records will be destroyed after 21 days to ensure adherence with GDPR regulations.

- We will have a one-way route in the church – once you have entered, sanitised and registered you will be led by a Duty Elder to a designated seat. We are not allowed to use the Balcony at present, and with the 2m social distancing rule we only have 36 ‘spaces’ for seating. Some of these ‘spaces’ can seat 2 or 3 people from the same household grouping, however we are bound by having a maximum of 50 people in the building per SG regulations.
- Clearly we do not wish to turn people away from worship and so it will be necessary to put a ‘Reservation’ system in place to ensure that this doesn’t happen. Details of how you can reserve a place are at the end of this note. If you have an email address we will take that and send you an Order of Service in advance so that you can follow on a tablet or phone. A limited number of printed Orders will also be available.
- Please note – due to limited numbers it may only be possible to attend worship every second or third Sunday at this time.
- Under SG regulations you will be required to wear a face covering throughout the time you are in the church building. We will have a supply if you need one.
- We will collect the offering at the entrance door – please place this in an envelope (provided) and place in the box provided for this. If you have a number of free will offering envelopes, you may wish to write a single cheque for the total amount to place in the freewill envelope.
- Again, due to SG guidance, the pew cushions, Bibles and Hymn books have been removed from the Sanctuary at this time.
- There will be music in the service, however singing is still not permitted at this time.

It is my hope that some of these restrictions will be lifted as we continue to move out of lockdown and eventually be removed entirely – enabling us to return to worshipping in the way that we are accustomed to.

If you are unwell or should be isolating because of contact with a positive Covid-19 case or live with someone with symptoms, please stay at home and do not come to the church putting others at risk. Indeed, I perfectly understand why some people might not wish to return to worship at this moment in time.

In this regard, I wish to reassure you that the worship will continue to be livestreamed online at 10.30am as at present to ensure that we are all able to worship together, wherever we are. Online worship is not a second best to in-person worship – rather it is just another way of us offering our praise to the God who is with us wherever we are.

We will continue to distribute DVD's and USB sticks of the worship service each week to those who wish them. If you wish a DVD or USB stick with the service then please contact Anne in the Office by email at [secretary@bearsdencross.org](mailto:secretary@bearsdencross.org) or by phone at 0141 942 0507.

The Dial a Sermon phone line service will also continue going forward and this can be accessed at the cost of a local rate call on **0141 483 7770**.

If there is a sufficient level of demand for attendance in person at church then consideration will be given to offering a second Sunday service going forward. Equally, if the R rate begins to rise again then consideration will be given to pausing in-person worship once again.

## **Summary**

Everyone is welcome! But no-one should feel that they have to be physically present at worship at this time, and should feel comfortable in doing whatever is best for them health-wise.

Online worship will continue alongside in-person worship at 10.30am each Sunday. This can be accessed through the church's Facebook page and website as at present.

We are required to do as the SG and the CofS advise us to do.

So please:

- Reserve your space through the Office, giving your name, telephone number, and email address if you have one
- arrive at the church around 10-15 minutes before the service
- follow hand hygiene protocols
- wear a face-covering (we can provide this)
- follow our social distancing arrangements
- refrain from singing during the service
- stay at home if you have symptoms of COVID, or if self-isolating
- stay at home if you feel that you or someone you live with is particularly vulnerable to COVID

Above all else, please continue to know God's peace in these difficult times. This is not forever. You can continue support the congregation and the community in prayer at home, in church, and indeed anywhere. For, to quote the hymn, "the Church is wherever God's people are praising."

Stay safe and healthy. God bless,

**Rev Dr Graeme R. Wilson, Minister**

Email: [gwilson@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:gwilson@churchofscotland.org.uk) Tel.: 0141 942 0507

**How to reserve a 'space' at worship**

**Phone the Church Office (0141 942 0507) between 9.30am – 11.30am on Thursday and Friday for that coming Sunday.**

**PLEASE NOTE: The Office remains closed to visitors at this time.**

If we are oversubscribed for the coming Sunday you will go on to the list for the following week. Please let us know how many there are of you if you are in a household grouping, or if you have special requirements in terms of the 'loop system', mobility, etc.