

## Sandyhills Parish Church

I want to begin by thanking you for your incredible patience as we as a Kirk Session have tried to navigate our way through what has been such a strange and uncertain time. There has been so many restrictions on us over the past year and a bit.



Can you believe it has been about 17 months since we all gathered together physically in our church building to worship the Lord. What struck me as I was writing this was I have been the minister in Sandyhills for almost 34 months which means half of my time as your minister has been outside of our church premises. As crazy as that is, God has been so faithful towards us. He has provided for us in incredible ways. It is easy to say that God has provided for us financially and He has and for this we give Him thanks. However, I want to talk about the provision of our amazing church family. I want to thank you for loving one and other and supporting one another so incredibly well. God has blessed us with so many gifted people: pastorally gifted people who have cared in practical and emotional ways, people who offered a befriending telephone service at the beginning of the pandemic, people who offered a foodbank and dropped off food and shopping to those self isolating and socially distancing, people who have adapted amazingly well with dealing with our finances during covid, people who understand tech who have installed and developed live streaming, dial-a-sermon, CDs and DVDs of our services, people who have continued to teach and engage with our youth online, people who have lead small groups, house groups, prayer times and courses, people who have dealt with our building and helped us become Covid compliant, people who have helped us lead worship through recordings and other means, people who have lead the service and preached while I took some time off and people looking out for each other and many, many other ways.

It has been some 17 months we have now been outside our church building for but with the Covid restrictions lessening on the 19th July I think it is now the correct time for us to be able to gather in our building to worship the Lord together for those of us who feel comfortable and who are able to do so. There are two main reasons why I believe now is the correct time: we are now allowed to sing (albeit behind masks) and the physical distancing has dropped from 2 meters down 1 meter which means that we can now get (depending on households) about 80-100 capacity for a worship service. **So, it is our plan to reopen the church on Sunday the 1st of August** for our first physical gathering in over a year. As well as our church services we will be able to run our creche, X-groups and our youth group Alive which is such a blessing to us as a church and also the children and young people.

I understand that some of you might not feel comfortable or able to come back to worship physically at this time and that is ok. We will still be live streaming our church service on youtube at the same time on a Sunday so you will still be able to engage

with us online if that suits you better. Also, we will still be able to offer the CD's of the sermon for those who cannot engage with worship online, and still be able to offer the dial-a-sermon on the telephone if that suits you better.

In following Government & Church of Scotland guidelines, there are several measures and procedures we have put in place to ensure everyone else's protection & safety from COVID-19 infection. Details of these are below:

- We are working to a capacity of approximately **100 people** for each service. It would be helpful if those who intend in coming to church **pre-booked** before the service. The link to enable pre-booking for the services will go out on Tuesdays. Pre-booking will ensure we are within the permitted numbers and it will give us your details for track and trace and will help us logistically with seating. Please be assured that your details, in line with Data Protection Guidelines, will only be kept for 21 days, and always locked away in a secure place. You will need to pre-book each week you intend on coming to church and you will be able to do so by going to the church website or facebook page. The link will go live every Tuesday for the following Sunday. Please do not worry if you are not able to book online, you will also be able to let us know you are intending on coming by phoning Filipe on 07729771941. Again, while we are working at restricted capacity you will need to phone Filipe each time you intend on coming to church.
- **Please arrive at the Church no later than 15 minutes before the service is due to begin.** We will have Welcome Team ready to greet you and assist you with finding a seat.
- Use the **hand sanitiser** provided as you enter & leave the building.
- We will be operating a **one way system** for entry and exiting the church.
- **Wear a face-covering** at all times in the building, unless you are exempted.
- Follow our social distancing arrangement (1 metre) as instructed.
- Please **remain in your seat once seated** until the end of the meeting (Toilet exception).
- **Singing with mask** is now **permitted** during the service.
- If you have any **Covid-19 symptoms**, please remain at home.

I am so looking forward to being able to gather with those of you who feel able to do so for our first in person service on the 1st of August. Please if you have any questions or require further help contact Filipe on 07729771941 or [youthpastor@sandyhillchurch.co.uk](mailto:youthpastor@sandyhillchurch.co.uk) or myself on 0141 778 1213.

Yours In Christ,  
Norman Afrin.

**Registered Charity Number SC094640**

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