

Wilson Memorial Church

At The HEART of the Community we serve

JULY 2021

ONE MORE STEP TOWARDS 'NORMALITY'

There is an ancient Chinese proverb that translates roughly as '*journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*'. Our journey through COVID-19 has involved a whole series of *single steps*, but with each one we are getting closer to what has been described as a '*new normal*'.

On July 19, in accordance with the decision made by the Scottish Government, the whole of Scotland was moved into Level 0 of the COVID-19 restrictions. This is a huge step forward, and hopefully is a sign of even great advances to come, albeit with a sensible degree of caution. While the COVID-19 vaccine is doing its job at protecting the most vulnerable in society, the daily cases of COVID-19 is still very high. As a Church, we welcome the greater freedom that Level 0 affords us, but we are also determined to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each one of us as we worship and minister together.

So, what will change for us in Level 0 in regard to Sunday worship? The most significant change is that the physical distancing (social distancing) has been reduced from 2 meters to 1 meter. This means that we are able to move from holding two services on a Sunday to holding the one service. The Session have agreed that this single service will be held at 10:30am, at least until the end of August at which time it will be reviewed. The Session have also agreed that regardless of any further alterations to the COVID-19 restrictions that may be made on August 9, we will continue with the new arrangements as of July 25 until the end of August.

Congregational singing is also permitted in Level 0, and we are hoping to reintroduce some congregational singing on July 25. However, we will still be required to wear a face-covering, even when singing. Some of us have tried this and it is quite difficult. Therefore, congregational singing will be limited to two hymns/praises, at least for the foreseeable future. We will also continue to use the Television for the music videos, and for the presentation of the words to the hymns/praises, as it is still not advisable to use communal hymn books etc. This also applies to the presentation of the Offering, which will continue to be placed in the offering plates at the door at the entrance/exit to the sanctuary.

Track-And-Trace will still be required, which means that you will still need to book your seat in advance. This will be particularly important now that we are moving back to a single service. If you have not booked your seat in advance, please do not be offended if you are asked by the stewards to wait until those that have booked are seated. The seating configuration will reflect the new physical distancing requirements, and we have re-introduced the centre aisle, so the layout will look a bit more like 'normal'. However, the rows are more spaced in order to accommodate the 1 meter rule. You will be shown to your seat by one of the

stewards, and so please understand that you will not be able to return to your 'favourite' seat...we're not there yet!

While it is the case that Level 0 allows greater freedom in meeting others in cafes etc., it will be some time before we are able to enjoy an 'after-church' cuppa and a chat on a Sunday. This is because there are different guidelines to be followed when it comes to serving refreshments. We are hoping that we will be able to resume the provision of refreshments in the autumn.

In summary:

- **One service at 10:30am beginning Sunday, July 25.** (Doors will be open from 10:15am)
- **Physical distancing reduced to 1 meter.**
- **Congregational singing is permitted, but with face-coverings/masks.**
- **No communal use of Books of Praise/Bibles/etc.**
- **Offering will still be received at the entry/exit to the Sanctuary.**
- **Face-coverings/masks to be worn whilst in the building, unless exempt.**
- **Hand-sanitiser still to be used when entering the building.**
- **One-way system will remain in place** (separate door for entry/exit).
- **Stewards will direct you to your assigned seat.**
- **Pre-booking of seat still required** (for Track and Trace)
- **If you have not booked, you may be asked to wait until everyone is seated.**
- **These new measures will remain in place until at least the end of August.**

These changes, when compared to what we new pre-COVID-19, may seem small, but they signal the hope of better days still to come. They are another *single-step* in our journey of faith together. These past sixteen months have not been easy, but we have faced the challenge together, and for that we are a stronger part of the Body of Christ. If you have not felt able to come to worship in a while, we hope that the changes outlined above will give you a greater degree of confidence that your safety and well-being is our top priority. For those still not ready to join us, please be assured that we will continue to provide an online worship experience via the recorded services, and hopefully in the not too distant future, live-streaming of the services. We will also continue to provide paper copies of the services/sermons to those who do not have email.

Thank you for your continuing support, as together we pass another milestone on our journey of a *thousand miles*.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Mike and the KAIROS TEAM.

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