



First Antrim // Getting Back to Church

At our Kirk Session meeting on Tuesday 18th August, we decided to reopen our building for public worship on **Sunday 6th September**.

We're grateful for the phenomenal amount of work which has been done by our Health & Safety Sub-Committee working through both government and Presbyterian Church in Ireland requirements and guidelines providing us with practical arrangements to meet safely. I'm sure even without these being outlined here you'll have a fair idea of what is in store; however over the next week or so they will be communicated in greater detail.

Those particular practicalities aside, what I want to address at this point is public worship arrangements.

Starting Sunday 6th September there will be 2 morning services, 10am and 11am.

10am service // Majury Hall

This service will last 30mins. It is tailored for children and teenagers so effectively we are asking that if you have anyone within this age range living in your house you attend this service with them. It will focus on a short Bible talk as well as featuring other creative means one might encounter at a Holiday Bible Club.

11am service // Church Building

This service will last 40 mins. It will more or less follow the "Church at Home" format. There will be no children's talk. If you do not have children or teenagers living in your house you must attend this service.

Attend only one service. It will be the same focused Bible theme in both services.

A system will be in place for you to register and book your attendance. You cannot turn up without indicating so through this arrangement.

There will be no congregational singing at either service, but we will endeavour to provide some engagement with music-praise as part of worship.

It is strongly advised you wear a face-covering.

The 11am service will be livestreamed, so don't worry if you are not in the position to physically attend. As this service will also be recorded those who attend the 10am service and who want a little bit more 'in depth' Bible teaching can so avail.

If for whatever reason the 10am service does not work for you, you may attend the 11am service but please be aware the service content will not include any specific engagement with children. Remember too that those who may fall into a more 'vulnerable' category might be present at 11am. However we are not encouraging a reciprocal arrangement: do not seek to attend the 10am service if there are no children or teenagers living in your house.

There is no doubt these arrangements carry with them certain deficiencies (yet who knows, some benefits!) but such is life at the moment. We've got to start somewhere. Kirk Session are keeping such arrangements under review even as all of us are aware circumstances could force our hand to enact a different plan.

We are assured that God promises to show himself in a particular way when we meet together to worship (we know that experience don't we?) and at the end of the day he is big and kind enough to carry us through what is unfamiliar, unsettling and unwelcomed by way of gathering together. So we look forward with Good News anticipation to Sunday 6th September!

Stephen Lockington