



David Heynes

14 July 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Return to Church Summer 2021

It is with great joy in my heart that we are in a position to open the majority of our congregations and welcome you back to church in the next few weeks. The property team has been working hard to fulfil all the many legal requirements and health and safety checks so that the churches and rented halls are made ready. As the circumstances differ across the UK and Ireland, please contact your local ministers for information on the opening dates of your congregation.

Reflecting on the past months I am deeply thankful for all the many labours of love and acts of kindness to arrange and manage the online divine services and activities. These many national, regional and local events have been a lifeline for our brethren but also visitors and guests and I have heard many times over how much these efforts have been appreciated.

However, the importance attached to attending a divine service in person to bring praise and worship; to accept the offer of absolution and Holy Communion and to gather together in fellowship remains a key part of our doctrine. Please see below an excerpt from a recent letter by our district apostle on this topic:

The divine service plays an especially important role in the preparation of the believers for the coming of the Lord by enabling the believer to detach themselves both physically and mentally from their daily lives and have an encounter with God. The Holy Spirit inspired sermon strengthens the faith in the imminent return of Jesus Christ and in praying together the Lord's Prayer the believers express their wish to be in fellowship with God in the words: "Your kingdom come". The absolution frees the believer from the burden of sin and the worthy partaking of Holy Communion strengthens hope and nourishes the Godly life. Participating in a divine service also prepares the soul to live in fellowship with the saints in the kingdom of God.

The chief apostle referred to the 'authority of the keys' which is a part of the duties of the chief apostle ministry. This includes ensuring the purity of the doctrine (CNAC 7.6.6) and our chief apostle therefore sees it as his responsibility to remind all New Apostolic believers that participating in the divine services is an essential component of our preparation for the return of Jesus. To consciously and regularly abstain from attending divine services when it is otherwise possible to do so, can be detrimental to our salvation.

Rüdiger Krause July 2021

I therefore encourage us to once again accept the invitation of the Lord Jesus: *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matt 11:28-29)."*

At the time of writing, I am aware the delta variant of the virus is widespread across the UK and Ireland and that the infection rate, hospitalisation and death rate are expected to increase. It is however widely accepted that the vaccines have played a major role in reducing the risk of severe illness and there is now the capability to test more widely. The wearing of face masks, sanitising hands and reducing contact are also generally accepted to reduce infection.

It is therefore important for us to listen to the advice and legal requirements of the applicable authorities and proceed with caution as we return to our congregations. The emphasis is on us all as individuals to accept personal responsibility to ensure our own safety and that of others. We therefore should behave according to the example given to us by the Lord Jesus in His parable of the Good Samaritan. It was out of his compassion for his fellow traveller that he first of all recognised and then acted on the greater need of his neighbour and by doing so put his own plans and wishes to one side. Based on this teaching I recommend that when attending divine services in person and out of love for those around us we observe the guidelines as per the attached document.

I hope that by following these guidelines we can feel reassured and encouraged to come to church and share in the joy of being together in the Lord's House once again. I do however recognise that for some of our brethren the easing of the restrictions cannot be celebrated in the same way due to your health or your distance from the congregation. I would like to assure you, dear sister and brother, we will continue to provide online divine services and activities. Please do keep in contact with a minister so they know if this applies to you and can provide you with pastoral care as well as the all-important connection details.

With great anticipation of hopefully seeing you again soon, I send love and greetings

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Heynes', written in a cursive style.

David Heynes

Guidelines for attendees and ministers

- Do not attend if you are feeling in any way unwell or have knowingly been in contact with the virus.
- Wear a face mask throughout the divine service.
- Sanitise and clean hands.
- Continue to offer online or cheque by post rather than deposit cash in offering boxes which then needs to be handled and processed.
- Request permission before sitting next to someone and have understanding if they would prefer to have space.
- Refrain from singing but rather arrange for individuals or small groups in the congregation to sing dependent on the size of the room and how crowded it is.
- Keep in contact with those who are not able to attend in-person, so they don't feel isolated from the congregation.
- Refrain from close contact such as handshaking.
- Leave the building immediately following the divine services.

For our ministers and facilities managers, I ask that the following is observed:

- Churches are cleaned and frequently touched surfaces such as chairs and door handles are sanitised before and after a divine service.
- The church or room is well ventilated before the divine service and where possible windows are opened wide during the divine service e.g., at a call up or hymn of repentance.
- Masks to be worn at all times other than when preaching. See existing guidelines to ministers on dropbox.
- Hands to be sanitised before serving Holy Communion.
- An announcement to be made after the divine service for attendees to immediately leave the building.

In all of the above please follow the guidance of the local ministers on how this can be applied in the congregation.