

## St. Matt's Midweek Update – 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021



Psalm 46: 1-3 and 10-11

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.

.....

He says, 'Be still and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth.'

The Lord Almighty is with us;

the God of Jacob is our fortress."

I just felt like God put this verse on my heart today - no explanations needed, but I pray it speaks to you and blesses you.

## Notices

### How is church changing as restrictions have eased?

As you know, most legal Covid restrictions have now gone in England, but the government and the Church of England are still advising caution and gradual progress forwards.

We want church to be a safe place so that people feel able to come back if they want to.

We are also very aware that there is a wide range of feelings and emotions about moving forward out of restrictions. We will be continuing our hybrid services indefinitely, so Sundays will stay online as well as in church as we move forward.

Therefore, from this Sunday, this is how church will look:

- **hands** - hand sanitiser will still be available as you enter and exit the building and will be asking people to still use this.
- **face** - face masks are no longer a legal requirement, but we know that people may still want to wear one. We are asking that we all wear a mask when entering the building and leaving the building but are happy for people to take their masks off when they are seated for the duration of the service. Equally, if you want to keep your mask on for the whole service, that is absolutely fine! We would also ask you to wear your mask if you move around the building, for example to go to the toilet. Our welcome team and hospitality team will be wearing masks in their roles.
- **space** - the chairs are now laid out in a more row-like formation, but there are 2 wide aisles down the church, so any group of chairs only has a maximum of 6 chairs in it. That means you won't need to squeeze past anyone to sit down. The rows are much more spaced out than they were, with 1m between each row. There are some chairs with low tables in front of them - these are aimed at families with children so that they can bring their own activities to do and have a table to use for colouring, etc. Parents, please keep bringing your own things for your children to do over the summer.
- we are keeping a one way system in the building, to try and reduce congestion in the aisles and at the back of church. So please continue to enter the building through the main doors on Gordon Road, and leave through the church centre doors (unless you need the church centre disabled access).

- you no longer need to sit only with your household, you can sit with whoever you would like to. As you come into church there will be cards that you can pick up which say, "Please leave this seat free." If you would like to have some space around you, feel free to pick up a card or two, and put it on the chair next to you so others don't sit there. These cards can be left on the chairs at the end of the service, so no-one else needs to touch them for a few days!
- **singing** - the congregation are now allowed to sing, so from this Sunday we will be joining in with the band. It is up to you whether you wear a mask to sing.
- **ventilation** - one thing that makes indoor spaces safer is having good ventilation. The church building is a fairly well ventilated (or drafty!) space anyway, but during the summer we will be keeping all available doors open during the service, to keep the air flowing through. If you are coming with small children, you just need to be aware of this!
- **social contact** - we know seeing people and chatting is an important part of church that we have missed, so we want to be able to do that again. During the summer and all the time the weather allows, we will be asking everyone to go outside at the end of the service to chat, as outside is so much safer. We have amazing gardens at the moment, and we can use all the grass areas as well as the courtyard area outside the church centre to mingle.
- **refreshments** - another thing that we want to get back to is having drinks at church. Once we have a team in place, we will serve these from the church centre to start with, to spread people out, and we will ask you to take drinks outside after the service. We won't have drinks this Sunday, as we haven't got a team and we are also meeting for our picnic in the park!

That is a lot to take in! I will try and make a little video before Sunday, so you can see what the church will look like before you come. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak to Chris or I and we will try and help.

### Picnic in the park

This Sunday we will be meeting in Grosvenor and Hilbert Park for a picnic from 12pm.

We would love to see you, whether you have been at church or not. We might just need to pray the thunderstorms stay away!!

Bring your own food and drink and something to sit on, and we'll have time to chat and reconnect. We are going to be on the lower football pitch, under the trees near the Hilbert Road entrance.



## **Get involved!**

As I mentioned above, most of our volunteer teams have really reduced or stopped altogether over the last 18 months. Church has been running very differently, but as we move back to having more things happening in church, we will need volunteers to run things. Could that be you?

We would love for you to think about where you might be able to serve in church going forwards. There are so many teams that need people with a huge range of skills and personalities. A lot of the things we would like to restart in church are going to be dependent on having the volunteers to make them happen.

We have put together a page on the website with all the different roles and what they entail - please do have a look and sign up if you think you could help. Even if you were serving on a team before, please could you sign up now if you are willing to continue, so we know who we have got all in one place? The link for the page is <https://www.stmattschurch.org.uk/whats-on/get-involved/>  
We really appreciate all our volunteers and the time you all put into making church what it is, so thank-you!

## **Youth volunteers meeting**

We will be having a meeting for our youth volunteers on Monday evening, to plan for the autumn. If you would like to join our youth team, or if you used to be on the team pre-covid but haven't been for a while and would like to come back, please let me know before Monday evening if possible, so we can factor you into our planning. That might be for Ignite midweek or for Sundays. Thanks!

## **New Wine United**

New Wine is all online for free this year, with a whole programme of sessions for adults, kids and youth. You can find all the information here <https://breaksout.new-wine.org/>  
It's from the evening of Thursday 29th July to the evening of Tuesday 3rd August. You can dip into whatever you want or do the whole New Wine experience in your garden or with friends. It's a great resource to access, so do have a look.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend. Please do be in touch if you need any help or support.