



2nd July 2020

Dear friends,

Now that we have had a chance to read through the guidelines regarding worship, we have come to a decision, all things considered, to defer any regathering of a Sunday congregation until Sunday September 6th and to continue, meantime, with our livestream services. It must be said that this decision we have taken as leaders is contrary to every instinct we have. But given the impracticalities within the current guidelines; the effectiveness of the livestream as a way of ministering at this time; the need many of us have for a proper summer break; and, more positively, the huge possibilities that await us in September with the new Millmead centre, we believe this is the best way forward for us as a church. It is not ideal, but we feel it is realistic and may, in fact, create a great sense of anticipation about coming back together at Millmead on Sunday September 6th. What shape that will take, and how we will be able to operate, particularly with regards to children and young people, is not entirely clear yet. But, certainly, this is our intention, and indeed our prayer.

A few more details:

We will be introducing from this Sunday more people into the live stream ministry team – such as the all-age team, worship bands, etc.

If you would like to join us in the Riverside Rooms, simply to be present for the live stream, you will be most welcome. Numbers will be limited, so please do check before coming, by contacting the office via email or telephone, in the weekdays leading up to the Sunday, if you would like to come.

Throughout August we shall just have the one live stream in the morning but shall make other resources, devotional material etc., available.

Starting from Sunday July 19th, we shall be exploring in our teaching the core values of Millmead. We feel this would be a great time to do this before we start back at the Centre.

Make note that the morning live-stream on Sunday July 26th will be an all-age service. Really looking forward to that.

And we are exploring the possibility of an Open-Air service on the morning of Sunday August 30th. Watch this space.

Meantime let's take every opportunity to meet up. Although there are significant limitations on how we can *gather together* for a church service, we now have quite a lot of freedom *to meet* in small groups:

Up to 6 people from multiple households can meet outdoors, whether in a garden or a public place.

Two households can meet together, indoors (as of 4th July) or outdoors, no matter how many are in each household - and it doesn't need to be the same household each time. So, you could meet with one household on one occasion, and a different household on another occasion.

This summer is therefore a time for small group fellowship, with Jesus' own promise that He will be in the midst, even if only 2-3 are gathering. Two households can book to come to pray in the chapel together; two households can meet up on Sundays to watch the live stream service together; parishes can divide into groups of 6 and meet in gardens; and everyone now has several options for praying together in small groups.

Finally, of course, there is our Garden Hospitality Sunday on 19th July, when we can meet up for tea as two households or up to 6 people. Do sign up. And do keep looking out for one another. It has been a privilege to serve you during this time.

Looking to the future with faith, hope and love.

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