

A Notice from the Leaders of Upminster Baptist Church

19th July 2020

Review of Regathering in the light of the easing of restrictions

Our Minister Mark and the deacons have this week undertaken an in-depth review of the current restrictions, alongside a comprehensive risk assessment completed by Colin Blatchford. Our thoughts are outlined below.

Worship Services

We enjoy sung worship and freedom of movement during worship in a fairly informal style. We value children in our services and usually a number of people being able to participate by reading, praying, giving testimony, etc..

We encourage the sharing of private prayer if a person has a need after the service.

We believe that social interaction ('fellowship') is an important part of our gathering.

The Current Position

The current restrictions mean that we will not be able have worship services like this at present. Children would be asked to sit still for the service with no separate groups; there would be no singing, no talking with friends, nobody praying with individuals; a 'one-way' system would have to be put in place for entering and exiting the building; hand-sanitising on entering and exiting would need to be enforced, as would a record of all attendees for track and trace purposes; social distancing must be maintained. Services would be short, with possibly only one person leading from the front. These are just some of the measures which would have to be taken.

It is also likely that people would 'forget' to apply the restrictions, and put themselves and others at risk.

Exclusion

Because of the social distancing requirements, numbers are also clearly a major problem. At 2m we think we could accommodate 30 in the main church, 60 if the distance is reduced to 1m, but wearing masks. These figures might rise slightly with family 'bubbles'. Families with young children would probably not come.

The guidelines also advise that we have to actively discourage anyone over 70 from attending, anyone with underlying health problems, and any other vulnerable groups.

In light of this, it would be necessary to book to attend – so church becomes 'members only' - and then only for a restricted group of people.

This is not church as we know it, or would want it to be.

Our Conclusion

Because of this, we do not feel that we are able to hold services as we would wish at this time. And so *the leadership have decided that we will not open the buildings for*

worship at present. Our services and other meetings will continue online, using YouTube and Zoom.

We will continue to monitor the situation over the coming weeks, and review the position in early September. We hope that by then the restrictions will have further eased, allowing services to resume.

For now...

Thank you for praying for us and do continue to join us whenever possible online. If you are not receiving our twice-weekly emails and would like to do so, please let the church office know on office@upminsterbaptists.co.uk