

Guidelines for attending gathered meetings at Swindon Evangelical Church

Please do not attend if you are unwell or show symptoms of COVID-19

It is really important that you do not attend the church if you feel unwell and have any of the following COVID-19 symptoms:

- a new continuous cough,
- a high temperature or,
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

In such circumstances you should self-isolate at home immediately (with other members of your household) and get tested as soon as possible.

Note that this advice applies to everybody, whether you have a role in the service/meeting, or are attending it.

Please do not attend if you or anybody in your household is self-isolating

Where individuals are self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the household, or because they have been requested to so by NHS Test & Trace, they should not attend a church service or meeting.

Specific advice for the vulnerable

If you have any specific health conditions, you may be clinically vulnerable, meaning you could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus.

Guidance outlining who those deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are, and advice on associated additional precautions can be found [here](#).

Booking process: attendance limits and arrival times

Because of social distancing measures, capacity is severely constrained, with attendance limits governed by the requirement to maintain two metres distance between each household group.

To manage attendance limits we run an online booking service. The booking form is available [here](#). **Bookings should be submitted by the Thursday before the Sunday service.**

You will receive confirmation of your attendance, your seat numbers, and details of your specific arrival time. We cannot guarantee acceptance of all bookings – if you cannot be accommodated one week, we will prioritise your attendance the following week that you are available to attend. **We request that members do not attend if they are not booked in to a service.**

If your booking is confirmed, but you are subsequently not able to attend, please let us know as soon as possible as we may be able to offer your place to somebody else.

Transport restrictions

We draw your attention to the legal requirement to wear face coverings on public transport.

Social distancing restrictions means that we do not encourage private car lifts for individuals outside of your household/social bubble.

We may be able to provide support for private taxis if there is a genuine need.

Car parking

We are pleased to confirm that we do have permission to use the car park at Lethbridge Road Primary School. Drivers are asked to park sensibly and all individuals should maintain the 2 metres social distancing; both in the car park and whilst walking to the church building.

Social distancing rules

We ask all attendees to keep a safe distance of 2 metres between yourself and anybody else outside of your household/social bubble. This should be observed at all times, and applies to all individuals, including children (with parents responsible for their children).

Currently, household groups are not permitted to interact with one another indoors or outdoors. You should therefore not mingle with anybody outside the household/social bubble group you arrive with before, during or after the service. This applies throughout church premises. Please do not congregate on the pavement outside the church gate.

Face coverings

It is a legal requirement to wear a face covering when inside the church building and on church premises. There are some [limited exemptions](#), e.g. for young children under the age of 11 and those with certain medical conditions.

We do have a small supply of disposable face coverings if required, but we would encourage you to bring your own.

Handwashing and Building Hygiene

Tables have been set up in the foyer with hand sanitiser. You should wash your hands thoroughly with the hand sanitiser as you enter the building.

Hands should also be washed as you leave the building, with sanitiser also available by the exit.

We will try to ensure the room is well ventilated, with all the windows opened and the extraction system on.

Internal doors will be left open as much as possible and you are requested not to touch surfaces unless absolutely necessary. Please keep your belongings with you at all time.

Certain areas of the building, such as Church House toilets and the kitchen, will be clearly marked out of use and you should not attempt to gain access to these areas.

Taking contact details

We are asked to assist the government's Test and Trace service by holding contact details of those that have attended each meeting, and to provide this to the Test and Trace service if requested.

During the booking process for a church service (outlined above) you will be asked to provide your contact details. These will only be used for the purposes of contact tracing and will be deleted after 21 days. As people arrive to the meeting, a deacon will note attendance against the individual contact details provided in advance.

In addition, codes for the NHS Test and Trace app are displayed in the foyer and in other walkways. Please also scan these if you use the app.

Bibles

We are not able to easily lend Bibles out during the service, so we strongly encourage you to bring your own.

All hymn books and other literature from the foyer has been removed.

Seating

When you arrive at a church service/meeting, you will be directed to where you will be seated to ensure that 2 metres social distancing is maintained. We will be filling the building from the front, and you will need to sit where requested – even if this not in a location where you usually sit. You should not leave your seat unnecessarily during the service.

Whilst we will accommodate most people in the main hall, additional seating is provided in the School Room where the service will be relayed using a large screen. Your booking confirmation will indicate if you have been allocated to the School Room and the duty stewards will direct you to your seats upon arrival via the side door.

Format of service

The service will be based on what we have been doing online, with prayer, Bible readings and a sermon. Unfortunately singing is prohibited, so instead we will be playing videos of hymns and songs.

Unfortunately there will be no separate children's meetings or crèche facilities at the moment. However the Church House lounge is available for parents with very young children, and the service will be relayed to this room.

End of service and departure

At the end of the service you are asked to leave fairly promptly. We will be asking people to leave one row at a time from the front (pulpit end). You should leave via the door to the right of the pulpit, via the garden path and the linkway door. The route will be clearly signposted and directions will be given from the platform. Please ensure that the 2 metres social distance is maintained at all times. You should wash your hands using the hand sanitiser provided before you leave the building.

Unfortunately there will not be time for refreshments or after-service discussion. Regrettably there will not be an opportunity to greet the preacher after the service, however we will clearly indicate how he can be contacted should you wish to discuss any issue.

Toilets

Only the toilets by the School Room will be open. Only one person (unless they are in the same household/social bubble and therefore two people) can enter the toilets at any one time. It is vital that you wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds using soap and water after you have used the facilities.

As you exit the toilets you should turn left, following the clearly sign-posted one-way system via the School Room and garden path, re-entering the main hall via the foyer doors.

Obviously you should only use the toilet facilities if absolutely necessary. Toilet hygiene will be regularly inspected by the duty stewards.

Food and drink

Please do not bring food or drink items to share beyond your household.

Cleaning

We have established a list of frequently-touched surfaces which will be cleaned with the appropriate cleaning materials before and after a service. The toilets will also be cleaned before and after services, and inspected every 30 minutes. Disposable gloves and face coverings are to be worn whilst undertaking cleaning activities.

Risk Assessment

As part of the re-opening process we were required to produce a full risk assessment. This document is published on the church website. We will continue to monitor and update this document.