

The Methodist Church



North Yorkshire Coast Circuit

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www.northyorkscoastmethodist.org.uk

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

This Lent, I am feeling very much as though I am in the wilderness in a way that I have never felt in a previous Lent. I am receiving telephone calls and emails from others, also in the wilderness, wanting to know the way out. When can we get back to church? When can we hold services again?

When our CLT met last Saturday, it was our desire to be of one mind with the district regarding the reopening of our churches for worship. Having met since with the district superintendents it is clear that coming to one mind at the present time is not an easy thing to do. Some circuits are thinking that they would like to aim to reopen their churches for Pentecost, others between Easter and Pentecost. What is clear is that no one is of the mind that we should be rushing towards reopening.

In consultation with the CLT I bring the following recommendation

The churches in the North Yorkshire Coast circuit aim to reopen for worship on Easter Sunday. That means that Lent can be for each of us a time of preparation, both personally and as churches.

What we need to bear in mind is that current restrictions: the wearing of face coverings, social distancing, no singing, no refreshments and no social mixing will still be in place on Easter Sunday and for some time afterwards.

In the last year we have prepared our plan of services, most of which have not happened. Moving forward, I would like to think that we can prepare a plan from Easter onwards where services will take place but, no church should feel that they are under pressure to reopen and should only do so when they feel that it is right and safe to do so.

Those churches wishing to reopen on Easter Sunday must do two things.

Risk assessments must be up to date and the Circuit Office must have copies of the latest versions.

Managing Trustees (Church Council Members) must be consulted regarding reopening. A simple majority 'for' or 'against' reopening is all that is required.

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There may be some churches who feel it is right to open before Easter Sunday. In such cases, the two steps above must be taken and worship will be Local Worship until Easter Sunday when the circuit will once again produce the circuit plan.

Once a church has made the decision to reopen, it would be helpful if Esther could be informed in the circuit office.

It is clear from telephone calls and emails that there is a wide range of views, some will welcome the above, some will be frustrated by it. Whatever our thoughts and feelings, let us seek the common good and may our love of God and for one another move us forward.

Every blessing,
Graham

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