

Liverpool (North) Circuit
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To members of and regular worshippers at Maghull Methodist Church (by email or post to each household)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

It is just over six months since we had to cease public worship and most other activities in our church building. Over the summer, the prevalence of COVID-19 and the harm it causes were significantly lower. Now, however, infections and hospital admissions are rising again and there is renewed concern about what will happen through the autumn and winter. More of the north-west of England, including Merseyside, has additional COVID-19 related restrictions and on 22 September the prime minister announced new measures that will remain in place, perhaps, for six months.

In my letter on 2 July, I encouraged you all to contact one of the members of the COVID-19 group about your thoughts and feelings, hopes and concerns about the reopening of our building for public worship. The feedback we received helped shape our report to the Church Council on 30 July and the Council accepted that we could not open for public worship at that time. The Council met again on 3 September, noted that Lesley Echlin felt unable to continue on the group, and appointed Janet and Dave Ecott to the group because they offered to take on one of the required roles; we are very grateful to both of them.

As the group again considers the reopening of the building for worship, it would be very helpful to know how many of you would be likely to attend worship. As you know, due to the requirement for physical distancing, there are limitations on how many could attend any particular service so we may not be able to accommodate everyone every Sunday. As you consider this matter, please remember the following:

- a. certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions;
- b. individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household; and
- c. the communal nature of places of worship make them particularly vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19.

We are also conscious that some of you are unable or, at least for the time being, not wanting to attend worship in the current situation; you may, however, like to share in it in one way or another. I know that many of you have appreciated the joint-circuit phone-in service at 10:30 on Sunday mornings over the last few months. There are various other ways of sharing in worship and each would require particular equipment and appropriate licences. We need to know which ways would be of interest to you so that we can consider how to proceed. It would, for example, be possible to produce an audio and/or an audio-visual recording of a service and distribute it on CD, DVD, or via the internet. It would also be possible to live-stream the service through the internet and for those without an internet connection to listen via a phone.

If you have a pastoral visitor, please let that person know whether you would be likely to attend worship; similarly, if you would be likely to want to share in worship in one of the ways I have indicated above (or another), please let your pastoral visitor know. If you do not have a pastoral visitor (or do not know who that person is), please contact the Secretary of our Pastoral Committee, Lesley Echlin (0151 526 4914; lesley.echlin@hotmail.co.uk).

There are three other things I would like to share with you.

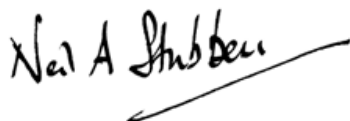
First, at the recent Circuit Meeting, The Revd Luke Smith reported that he had indicated to the Circuit Invitation Committee that he wished his current period of invitation to be curtailed. It was also reported that the Circuit Invitation Committee had agreed to the request so he will be leaving the Circuit on 31 August 2021. Please remember Luke and his wife Vivienne in your prayers as they and the Church discern where they will serve from next September; and please remember our Circuit Invitation Committee in your prayers as it and the Church discern who will be our next Superintendent.

Secondly, when I last wrote, I included a paragraph about offerings. I have now seen the draft annual accounts and am very pleased to see the on-going commitment to the financial dimension of our church; I am sure that the whole Church Council will be very grateful.

Thirdly, Ken Nayler has asked me to let you know that you are all invited to an online Macmillan Coffee Morning, using Zoom, on Thursday 15th October, 10 am to 12 noon. Log on details, further information and how you can donate to Macmillan will be posted out, emailed and available on our website.

I continue to hold you all in my prayers.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil A Stubbens". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Neil A Stubbens