



NEWS UPDATE

August 2021

whitfieldparish.org

As the impact of COVID lessens, we're in a time of transition. Here's an update on what's happening in the life of our church, how to get involved and what to pray for...

Re-Gathering

- * **Sundays** It's great that we are now able to worship more freely, but with COVID levels high, we need to keep being careful. So, we will be making changes step-by-step. Rather than just responding to the **law**, we want to respond out of **love** for one another – 'not looking to our own interests, but each to the interests of others' (Philippians 2:4).
- * **The Next Step** You can now come any week to either building (9:30am St Luke's, 11am St James'). To start with, we've increased our capacity to about 100 in each – which keeps some extra distancing. Please wear facemasks inside – especially when singing, which we've reintroduced at the start and end of services to allow people to come late and leave early if they prefer. We are also continuing to live stream the 11am service on YouTube. You can find more details and updates on our website at whitfieldparish.org

The Big Restart

- * **In September** we want to restart many of the activities that we have halted during COVID, as well as starting some new ones. However, this will only happen if we have teams of people to do it. A lot has changed during lockdown – some people have joined us or moved on; others have more or less time to give; some have discovered new gifts. So, this is **a great opportunity** to get involved! Please don't wait to be asked – let us know how you can help (via the office).
- * **Giving** As well as giving time, it's also important that we give money. Whilst this has been a year of low expenditure due to COVID, we have a major shortfall for the year ahead if we want to sustain or grow our mission to all ages. Please do think and pray about what you can give. There's a form you can use on the **church website**. Thank you.

Growing Together

- * We are continuing to explore how we can use our finances and buildings better for expressing our love to God, our unity together and sharing God's love with our town. As we consider moving our congregations to one worship building, people have asked

questions and made suggestions about how we could use St Luke's building. To help imagine this, the PCC (Church Council) has agreed how we would aim to use the building IF we decide to move to St James' building for worship:

- * We would seek to create a **'community hub'** - dividing the building into different areas with a focus on serving the needs of our town. An example is shown opposite. We would keep the chancel as a small chapel for mid-week worship and as a community prayer room. We would rent out some spaces to long-term tenants – local charities/groups who serve our community. Other rooms we would use ourselves or for hourly rental – to build relationships and meet local needs (eg cafes, toddlers, debt advice etc)
- * We have conducted a study that shows the need in the town, and enthusiasm in the community for this idea. It also showed that the income could cover the full ongoing costs of the building. Of course, there would also be a major capital cost to convert the building – and we will need to find funding for this, including using agreed appropriate external sources.
- * **Making the Move** If we do decide to move our congregations to St James' for our worship services, how would it look?



We have agreed that we would continue with 3 distinct styles of services (2 Sunday, 1 Wednesday) with refreshments between on Sundays to encourage mixing of congregations. We would continue to be 'St James' & St Luke's Church' across all buildings, teams and leadership – not a merge into St James' way of doing things. We would all need to adapt – for example by serving on teams or helping with transport – so that we care for one another and handle the transition well.

Over the next few weeks, we will be giving you an opportunity to hear more about this and to express your thoughts and ideas. Whilst we will have different feelings, let's all pray and act to both **do God's will and grow in love** – so that our church is increasingly known by our love for God, our love for one another and our love for our community.

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