

Ministers:

Rev Stephen Willey
Deacon Sheila Dawson

June 2020

Dear Friends

We continue to hold the church (that is you - the people) in our prayers. If you feel isolated and you'd like one of us to get in touch, please contact our pastoral secretary, Doreen, our senior steward, Elaine, or Deacon Sheila, or Rev Stephen (phone numbers above).

The letter is being sent to all connected with our Church at Central Hall. Many of you are in touch with one other, communicating via the phone and other electronic means, but we want to remind you again that you are all part of our church family.

As the Government starts to lift some of the restrictions on movement and contact, the church leadership team (Senior Steward, Treasurer, Church Council Secretary, Property Secretary and Ministers) are meeting on Zoom to talk about the church and the changing situation. As we write this Central Hall is still closed, even for individual prayer. Our reasoning is that it would be hard to get up the stairs to the worship area without holding a bannister or using the lift, both of which would not be safe unless they were cleaned between every use. We are also aware that, for Methodists, individual prayer in church does happen but is unusual. We usually get together to pray and to worship, and we often socialise before and afterwards. If we were to open for individual prayer, it would simply be that – we could not have social gatherings in the building. We would, therefore, be interested to know people's feelings about us using the Hall for private, individual (non-social) prayer.

At some point we will start to reopen – even if that is still months away. Before that can happen we will have to do a thorough risk assessment. We also have to take into account that the Hall is home to our caretaker, Marcus, and we need to be aware of infection control.

As we consider our use of the Hall for prayer, two of the businesses who use the building are expected to return soon. They will be responsible for social distancing and the welfare of their employees, but this will mean a considerable amount of additional work for Marcus, especially as Michael continues to be on furlough. Please hold all our employees, Jayne, Amanda, Marcus and Michael in your prayers.

On a very positive note, looking ahead to 2021 and the City of Culture, the strategy group is in full flow! We have been having weekly meetings on Zoom and will find ways to consult widely to focus on events and projects suggested by church members, and delegate responsibility for events and projects to small project groups. We expect to have three artists in residence over the period of a year (not living on site). In order to make all this happen, we will be making an application to our Circuit for grant support.

As part of the legacy of the year we would love to refurbish the back of the Hall. It would be great to make the back accessible to all and to open up the community room and vestries so that they are more available for church and community activities – especially those involving the arts and music.

Talking of the City of Culture year and making our church building more fit for purpose, it might be worth having a look at the website (<http://centralhall.info/>) which is also being “refurbished.” If you are able to access the website you could look around and see if there’s anything you’re interested in. You might like to look at the City of Culture [page](#) or the resources for worship [page](#) and maybe the news and events [page](#). Ideas for site improvements are welcome. Please let Stephen know.

We’d be happy to have reflections from you about any of the above, or any issues you feel are impacting on our church. It is hard to measure how the church is doing in the current crisis, and it may be many months before we can get back to something more normal.

Once again we would like to say thank-you to all of you who have been keeping our church alive and rooted in God’s love during the crisis by your care and prayers for one another.

This comes with love from us both,

Stephen

Rev Stephen

Sheila

Deacon Sheila