

Ministers:

<http://centralhall.info/>

Rev Stephen Willey
Deacon Sheila Dawson

July 2020

Dear Members of Central Hall Church Family,

The letter is being sent to all connected with our Church at Central Hall. Many of you may be in touch with one other, making contact on the phone or by other means, but we want to remind you again that each one of you is a valued member of our church family.

The time since the lockdown began has come with many ups and downs. We want to remind you that God gives the assurance that on the journey we will be fed like Elijah (1Kings 19:5-7) we will be accompanied like Jacob (Gen 28:15) and with God in our family (Rom 8:14-17), God on our journey (Nehemiah 9:12) and God giving us a vision of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1) we can know God's blessings both now and eternally.

We know that many of you are concerned about the reopening of the Hall. The church leadership team [comprising Elaine - Senior Steward, Naumi - elected Steward, John - Treasurer, Christine - Church Council Secretary, Mark - Property Secretary and us two Ministers] continues to meet on Zoom to talk about the changing situation for our church.

As we write this we are thinking about testing out worship with those who have a special responsibility for church affairs and worship, e.g. Stewards, Church Council members. By trying this out, our hope is that we can start to reimagine Sunday worship for the coming months despite the fact that the virus continues to cause problems.

We hope that we can begin to offer worship from the Hall, also available on the internet (live streaming) in the next few weeks and months, so keep an eye on our website. If you feel you could contribute towards streaming equipment (we will need to spend a few hundred pounds, and already have a generous donation of £100) or if you can offer expertise, please let Stephen or John know.

We are not through the woods yet, and this letter/email comes with a risk assessment (from the URC church) which shows the risks we are up against and gives clear guidance about the levels of risk you may face if attending worship. If we can manage the risk effectively as a church, then we may be able to invite a certain number to worship each Sunday in the coming months (probably after 1st September.) When we open we will ask you to think about carefully and prayerfully about those risks.

Turning to the City of Culture plans, many of you will have seen an email which talks about our plans, and members of Church Council and other groups will have seen the full grant application to the Circuit. We would be happy to share the application form with anyone who is interested.

Over the City of Culture year we will take the themes of **hope, faith and love** (1 Corinthians 13) and explore them with the help of three artists, themed events, and in worship. We hope to include events involving spoken word, music, drama, dance, artwork and craft. Celebrating together, we want to mark significant cultural events and special days.

The people of our church will provide the backbone of Central Hall's City of Culture celebrations. Participation in events and our support of events will be very important and rewarding too. If you can think of any special days or cultural events you would like to organise or contribute to please let us know as soon as you can. To help you, look out for the survey coming from the City of Culture strategy group.

We will have to do an enormous amount of work on our plans in order to be ready for the year, but as the year is now not starting until May 2021, we are fortunate to have a bit more time to plan and make things happen. One very pressing thing, if we get a grant towards it, will be work on the building, to make it more useable and feel more welcoming. Of course the real welcome in a church comes from the people, not the building.

Having said that, some of you will know that the work we are proposing on the property is significant. Here some of the key things:

- ◆ Lift for back of building ◆ social room refurbishment ◆ toilet improvements
- ◆ automated doors at front of building ◆ new office/vestry/breakout space ◆ place ministers and staff downstairs ◆ improve main hall worship area: eg, staging, IT, sound and lighting ◆ clean outside back of building ◆ reduce the building's carbon footprint ◆ Improve frontage, including lit up cross and mosaic

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.

Please remember, if you feel isolated or you'd like one of us to get in touch, you can contact our pastoral secretary, Doreen, or our senior steward, Elaine or Deacon Sheila, or Rev Stephen.

This comes with love and prayers from us both,

Stephen

Sheila