

Ministers:

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<http://centralhall.info/>

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Dear Members of Central Hall Church Family,

Our main Sunday services continue to attract worshippers online and in person. It is especially encouraging to see new people joining us since we reopened, alongside people returning after being away for 18 months. Next month at 4pm on the third Sunday of the month we will start a small service of healing and wellbeing in the Aldersgate Chapel.

Our 9am morning prayer supports our work as a church, keeping us alive to God's steadfast love and mercy, and enabling us to pray for any concerns we have. The prayer is held in the Aldersgate Chapel on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. You would be welcome to join us in person on those days, or any weekday online. Your prayers continue to express our desire as a church to follow where God leads.

We are aware that you may not have received the pastoral care you might have expected in ordinary times and we hope that you know that you are still loved! Our pastoral team aims to be in touch with those who are housebound, vulnerable and ill, and will continue to offer care as, hopefully, things begin to improve. However, the Covid crisis continues to affect everyone in many different ways. We are very conscious that that several church members were bereaved in the last year and a half. Please continue to pray for them.

As restrictions lift, could we begin a conversation about how each person connected with our church can be held in love and prayer? If you have thoughts about this please talk to one another and our pastoral secretary (Doreen), the stewards, life group leaders or ministers.

We realise that things will never be as they were before the pandemic, but we are beginning to see all sorts of green shoots in the midst of the many difficulties and griefs we have experienced. We are having to make organisational changes and have recently advertised for someone who work with us on the conferencing and events side of our church – the part of our church that brings in the income so other parts can thrive.

Green shoots can also be seen in the likelihood that a new café will be based at Central Hall. We are in advanced conversations with a Community Interest Company set up to respond to food poverty in our city, and hope that a café will start up in mid-September

Another developing conversation is about the Arts and Community hub mentioned in our last letter. We are in conversations with several groups but especially Sitting Rooms of

Culture (using art for health and wellbeing) and Fridays (working with young people to challenge gang culture and violent crime.) A new office will be popping up at the back of the building in order to further develop this work.

**Stories of Change: Hope Faith and Love** incorporating over 40 works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection will be with us during September and we could still benefit from more volunteers being present during the exhibition.

Our artists in residence continue to make Central Hall their home for the year. Nikki is coming to the end of her sessions of Batik, printing and enviro-art. Emily is preparing a visual display in our windows with the backdrop of the fountain and play area. Seb has many people signed up for the new orchestra and Emilie is offering a programme of events which lead up to December's show.

Talking of the fountain and play area, the Circuit event called The Gathering, supported by the youth pastors and Coffee Shop Sunday went really well. The music of the steel band from Earlsdon and the ukulele band rang out into the courtyard as the sun shone, people ate their picnics and went into our building to explore a labyrinth or just to sit and be still in the chapel.

Our building is attracting some attention these days with the artists in the studio space and its situation as part of the life of the city centre where families meet to go to the wave or just play in the fountain. On the negative side we did have a break-in this month and the Tutors and Exams office was badly affected. These things and our conversations about a café and an arts and community hub make our property project all the more relevant (part of its impact will be to improve security).

It is likely that we will aim to do work on the back of the building before the front of the building in order to make it possible to keep operating effectively when the building works on the front are in progress. Work on the back of the building will be focused on making the arts and community hub a reality, with plenty of space for community activities and also office space.

One last thing to note, please remember, if you feel isolated or you'd like one of us to get in touch, you can contact our pastoral secretary, Doreen, our senior steward, Elaine, or Deacon Sheila, or Rev Stephen (phone numbers above).

With love and prayers,

*Stephen*

*Sheila*