



Newsletter

United Reformed Church on wearing face coverings during worship

Whilst the government in Wales does not require those in places of worship to wear face coverings, it is the policy of the United Reformed Church that everyone attending worship in our churches should do so, unless they are medically exempt or under the age of 11, regardless of the jurisdiction in which the church is set.

However, for those involved in leading worship, it is possible to remove the face covering under the guidance issued in both Scotland and England.

The Synod Moderators with the agreement of the General Secretary are therefore amending policy for the URC as follows.

A person leading worship may remove their face covering to aid communication provided always that they are at least 2m from other people. Before and after worship, when maintaining less than 2m distancing is not possible and whilst moving through the building, Ministers and other worship leaders must continue to wear a face covering.

When their face is uncovered, worship leaders might consider using a visor or standing behind a Perspex screen to reduce or eliminate any aerosolised virus particles being spread.

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Churches must remember that none of this removes the importance of good hand and face hygiene. Wearing a mask that does not cover the mouth and nose is ineffective, and masks must never be moved, even temporarily, around the throat or onto the forehead.

Churches are further reminded that maintaining social distancing at 2m is still vital, and maintaining that minimum distance is even more important when people attend who are exempt from wearing a face covering.

Finally, it is possible that locally, regionally and nationally imposed restrictions may alter overall guidance at any time. If official guidance is altered to tighten policy, that will always supersede any denominational policy.

The URC Synod Moderators, September 3, 2020

For free, downloadable posters and other resources for your church, visit www.urch.org.uk/coronavirus-resources



Covid -19 Update 14 September 20

Following the Government announcement last week relating to the Covid-19 restrictions, we have continued to review all the information available to us; we have also sought further guidance from the Synod legal advisor.

Update from URC web site:

- **New restrictions on social gatherings in England will come into force on 14 September.** Places of worship are allowed to stay open (see below) and are permitted to have more than six people meeting together. However, churches must ensure that all those who meet for an act of worship stay in groups of six or less - social distancing measures must be in place to keep groups of six or less apart.
- **From the GOV.UK website: Venues following COVID-19 secure guidelines will be able to continue to host more people, such as religious services in places of worship, as long as people visit in a group of no more than 6. More than six people are allowed to visit if they all live together or are in the same support bubble.**
- Churches can consider asking larger groups to break into smaller groups to avoid confusion and concern from other worshippers.
- Those attending acts of worship should avoid social interaction with anyone outside the group they are with, even if they are people they know.

All attending an act of worship should provide contact details to the church so that they can be contacted if needed by the NHS Test and Trace programme.

- In England, a group of six can come from multiple household
- Read the latest advice from the URC about [face coverings during worship](#).
- Churches offering activities for children and young people need to be clear about whether they should be classed as worship, education, organised sport or social. Anything that legitimately falls into the social category, for example toddler groups, youth clubs etc, must abide by the restrictions for social gatherings, even if they are happening in a place of worship.

In summary the Synod legal advisor has recommended

All the guidance is on the assumption that the building being used is Covid -19 secure and you are following all normal health and safety legislation.

It is the occupier that has the duty of care to those who visit the premises. That duty falls to the trustees i.e. elders as occupier and the trust as owner. If a claim was brought it would be the trustees who were named and need to defend any claim. If therefore elders are in any doubt of the safety of the building and cannot conform to either the H&S or government guidelines they should remain closed.

The decision to remain closed will need to be communicated to the church members, anyone involved in your services, and those who use your facilities, explaining the reasons why.

Those that run activities are responsible for the people they provide for, they must ensure their activities are carried out safely and in accordance with government guidelines and local restrictions, this may include guidance from their national organisation.

As you know the advice for groups meeting has changed and is likely to change again, in order to keep up to date we suggest you keep checking the appropriate web sites, below is a list of links for your information. In particular please check your local restrictions as this is penitent to your local church.

Reference	Link
Guidance regarding multipurpose community facilities	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities
Out of school settings for children	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

What has changed?	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-what-has-changed-9-september
Meeting with others and social distancing	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-
North West government guidance	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/north-west-of-england-local-restrictions-what-you-can-

General comments

Whatever the changes are regarding numbers and locations for meeting the **core principles** remain the same:

- Stay at home if you feel unwell
- Wash hand on a regular basis
- Wear face covering when meeting people especially indoors
- Regular cleaning of all touch points
- Maintain a 2 m distance where possible or 1 m with mitigation
- Use track and trace

For groups using your buildings you will need to satisfy yourselves that **they are adhering** to the guidelines, they will need:

- Complete a detailed risk assessment which you are happy with
- Complete the hire agreement which states they will adhere to government guidelines
- Be sure what category the group falls into i.e. education, out of school (please note that social groups are restricted at the moment)
- Ensure you have all signage in place to keep the buildings Covid-19 secure

We hope this will answer some of the questions you have and will continue to answer any specific questions not covered above.

As the situation remains fluid it is vitally important that you to check the guidance regularly and take appropriate action.

Lessons from Lockdown: using Zoom

Learning from lockdown

Lockdown has taught us that it's not only *possible* to move church online, but also that doing so gives us the opportunity to *include* people who cannot get to church. We're not just talking about services, but other events too: prayer meetings; Bible studies; church meetings; Elders' meetings and social events. These are things we don't want to lose as we look beyond lockdown. To do that effectively, we need to adapt what we do to the medium, if we're not simply going to do what we do offline less well. So we're offering 2 sessions with Lawrence Moore and Dan Morrell on how to adapt to whatever the "new normal" might look like.

The sessions assume that you are preparing to host meetings as effectively as possible, but will also be suitable for those of you who will be joining Zoom meetings primarily as participants, and wish to become comfortable with the environment.

Who's who

[Lawrence Moore](#) and [Dan Morrell](#) are members of the Yorkshire Synod IT Task Force, working to help churches respond positively and creatively to the "new normal" brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic. Lawrence has authored *Using Zoom securely* and *Zoom Breakout Rooms*. Dan has authored booklets on social media for churches (see <https://urc.org.uk/information-guides.html>). Both have been extensively involved in running Zoom services, meetings and conferences, including the Northerly Synods *Life After Lockdown* conference.

The sessions

These sessions are not about "treading water" until things can get back to "normal". Rather, it's about maximising the medium to do new, exciting, more effective church and open up new possibilities for a post-pandemic church. The sessions and dates are:

1. An introduction to Zoom

- Why Zoom? (Genuine meeting online: limitations and possibilities)
- A tour of the features (Speaker/gallery view; muting/unmuting; video; participants; chat; reaction buttons; polling; waiting room)
- Screen sharing (PowerPoint; using videos/music; whiteboard)
- Breakout rooms: Zoom's USP
- Security: creating a secure space online
- Licensing

2. Getting the most out of your meeting

- Using Zoom (services, Church Meeting, Elders' Meeting, coffee mornings etc)
- Setting up for hosts: (passwords; waiting rooms; breakout rooms; muting; polling)
- Preparation (camera set up; lighting; AV checks)
- Timetabling: "Less is more"
- Using presentations
- Streaming music/videos
- Maximising interaction/reading the virtual room
- Zoom etiquette
- Recording meetings

Lawrence Moore & Dan Morrell
September 2010

Learning from Lockdown: Using Zoom

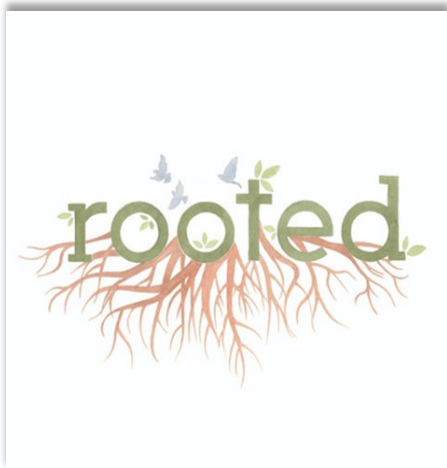
2-SESSION INTRO TO ZOOM FOR HOSTS & USERS

With Lawrence Moore and Dan Morrell
7/8 October: Introducing Zoom
14/15 October: Getting the most
out of meetings

Choose a 2-3.30pm or 7-8.30pm slot.
Register: office@nwsynod.org.uk



Rooted in God, rooted in creation and rooted in the here and now



The season of Creation-tide, also known as the Season Of Creation, has its origins in the Eastern Orthodox Church which in 1989 declared September 1st as a day of prayer for creation. Over the following decades, as awareness of the present ecological challenges facing our world grew, this single day of prayer developed into a liturgical season running from September 1st to October 4th, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi (the patriot Saint of Ecology). This season of Creation-tide has been embraced ecumenically and Christians around the

world are encouraged to pray for, and care for, God's good creation. This is also when we celebrate Climate Sunday & Harvest services in our churches.

With this in mind, podcasts were created, based on the Scripture reading: Stand firm and be deeply rooted in love. (Eph.3:17). Ten minute meditations (mindfulness, scripture and prayer) to stop, breathe and make a space. To be "rooted" in nature, in God's love and in the here and now.

These podcasts are designed and produced by Rev Daleen ten Cate (Missional Discipleship Mentor and Green Apostle for the NW Synod, Claire Maxwell (Moravian) and Christine Goddard (Methodist) . They met and studied Theology at Luther King House, Manchester and have enjoyed being reunited whilst making this.

Please find the podcast link: <https://anchor.fm/rooted-together> or on the NW Synod Eco webpage. We will release one podcast per week during the next month. These podcast can be used during zoom coffee mornings, your daily devotion, on your daily walk etc.

URC's Pilgrimage in a Pandemic!

Please sign up for this URC online Pilgrimage to Bethlehem, before Tuesday.

URC's Pilgrimage in a Pandemic!

Travel with us to Bethlehem Online!

See the sites, visit the
shops, drink coffee with
locals!

Special Guest

Jack Issa Giacaman live
from his shop

Sept 22

6 PM (BST) Zoom
kevin.snyman@urc.org.uk



Commitment
for **Life**

Press release from St Peter's House Chaplaincy



BOLD MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS RETURNING TO UNCERTAIN TIMES ON MANCHESTER CAMPUS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 09.09.2020

PRESS CONTACT: Hannah Skinner, hannah.skinner@manchester.ac.uk 07912556790

ALL WILL BE WELL... this 5-metre message will tower over Oxford Road and the University campus' this year, the massive poster installed just as this year's students begin their experience of life within the 'new normal' of global pandemic.

It's a hopeful but also challenging message as now more than ever we're learning to live with uncertainty, and 'All Will Be Well' can feel more of a question than a statement. For students – many of them young people living away from home for the first time – this question will become all the more important as the realities of covid-19 take effect on their lives and finances.

The enormous banner takes centre stage on the front of St Peter's House, chaplaincy to the Manchester Universities, and its installation will mark the start of a year of support for students and locals exploring 'All Will Be Well' in covid-19 times. Central to this will be a new project called 'The Well', a holistic project offering food, online cookery classes, mindfulness and yoga, in-person and virtual support - all at no cost to anyone on or around campus in food or financial crisis, often made worse by the social isolation caused by covid-19.

"Installing 'All Will Be Well' marks a moment to pause as we prepare to launch 'The Well'," says Hannah Skinner, Director of Development and Engagement at St Peter's House, "but we're actually only passing on a medieval message. The words come from a woman, Julian of Norwich, writing in social isolation having lived through the bubonic plague. She, like us, didn't know that everything would be OK, instead hoping in a different, deeper idea of 'well'. We want to bring that message to the 21st century – hope for the future but questions about what being 'well' means now." For graphic artist Micah Purnell, who designed the banner, 'All Will Be Well' has been a chance to communicate on a big scale. "My dream is to create a world where a city's visual landscape offers hope," he explains, "and there is no better time to see life affirming messages, than now."

Student wellbeing is a serious concern for all those supporting them at this time. "Developing this project has led to many conversations with partners in university support services who are braced for the impact of covid-19 on students, especially the most vulnerable", explains Hannah. Whilst some students have always sought financial assistance it's now anticipated that food and financial crisis will significantly increase as students return to campus, with those with the highest levels of existing needs the worst affected. Social isolation and increasing mental health concerns within this age-range lead to good food and nutrition becoming more significant, alongside wider the wellbeing practices offered by The Well. "'All Will Be Well' brings a green shoot of fresh thinking," says Hannah, "we hope it will make people stop and think as they pass by."

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1166935



CHAPLAINCY TO THE UNIVERSITIES OF MANCHESTER AND THE RNCM
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Where are our Frontlines in the New Normal?

Webinar 23 Sept, 7pm



Where are our Frontlines in the New Normal?

LICC's Mark Greene explores how to be fruitful and make a difference in the midst of a pandemic



For Zoom code contact
mde@urcmerseysynod.org.uk

Zoom into Stepwise

The south area stepwise group that has been meeting throughout lockdown on Zoom has completed the first stream of Stepwise 'Faithfilled life'

Seven participants from across the south area completed the course supported by a floating team of 4 facilitators anchored by Dave Fraser and their own mentors.

Although it may have taken a little longer than expected because we found that, on zoom, a full stepwise session was too much to tackle per fortnight the group appreciated the new friendships formed and the opportunity to meet in lockdown and discuss matters of faith.

We ended the last session recognizing that the experience had been enriching and fun and that some form of further study and exploration whether by stepwise or another format..... would be both possible and enjoyable.

Alison Termie and Dave Fraser.

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