



Bon Accord Free Church Services in the Church v.5

COVID-19 Interim Update | Effective 27th December 2020



Changes relating to COVID-19

Due to the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 virus, the Scottish Government and the Free Church of Scotland have published guidance to assist churches in the safe return to gathered congregational worship. Bon Accord Free Church has implemented several new processes to ensure the safety of visitors to the church building and have now returned to gathered congregational worship services on Sunday mornings (11.00am) and evenings (6.00pm). For those watching online, links for the live-stream of both services can be found on the [Bon Accord Free Church website](#). This document will outline the new processes for anyone accessing the church building.

Capacity

In line with Scottish Government guidance, Bon Accord Free Church has taken measures to only allow small numbers of people to access the building at any one time to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained between individuals from different household or extended household groups. **Present government guidelines stipulate that in local authorities with Protection Levels/Tiers 0, 1, 2 and 3 there should be no more than 50 people, including children and infants in the building at any one time. In any Level/Tier 4 area, the applicable limit is reduced to 20 people.**

Where Level/Tier 3 or 4 is applicable, it should be noted that travel is permitted to or from Level 3 local authority areas, but not to or from Level 4, to attend your normal place of worship.

Please note, at times it may be necessary for the preacher to conduct services remotely. On such occasions, this shall be shown on the screens within the church.



Booking system

To enable us to monitor the numbers at congregational worship services, Bon Accord have implemented a pre-booking system. Individuals on the mailing list should receive an email at the start of the week (Sunday) with a link to a registration form for the following Sunday. For weeks that have identified as family services, the form will also have space to indicate whether Sunday school or crèche facilities would be required.

As spaces are limited, please only register if you can attend the service. Once you submit the registration form, it will show "Thank you - your request has been recorded". On the Friday of that week, you should be notified by an email if a place is available. A text message or phone call can be arranged if you are unable to receive email. If the numbers have reached capacity, we will let you know and ensure you are able to attend a service on a future date.

If you are on a duty rota, please indicate this within your registration. All those on duty must still register for the services.

Please note, if you are submitting the registration form using an iOS device (iPhone, iPad etc.) using the Safari browser, please close the tab once you have received the acknowledgement. If the tab is left open, the next time you open Safari, open tabs refresh automatically which can trigger a re-submission of the form.

Test and Protect

Bon Accord Free Church are required to keep a temporary register of contact details for those in attendance for a period of 21 days for [Test and Protect](#). This is to support contact tracing as part of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system, in the event of an outbreak linked to a particular venue. Collecting contact details is voluntary, but cooperation with Test and Protect measures will be crucial to national efforts to suppress the COVID-19 virus.

We also recommend you download the Government's Protect Scotland app (if compatible with your phone). More information is available [here](#).

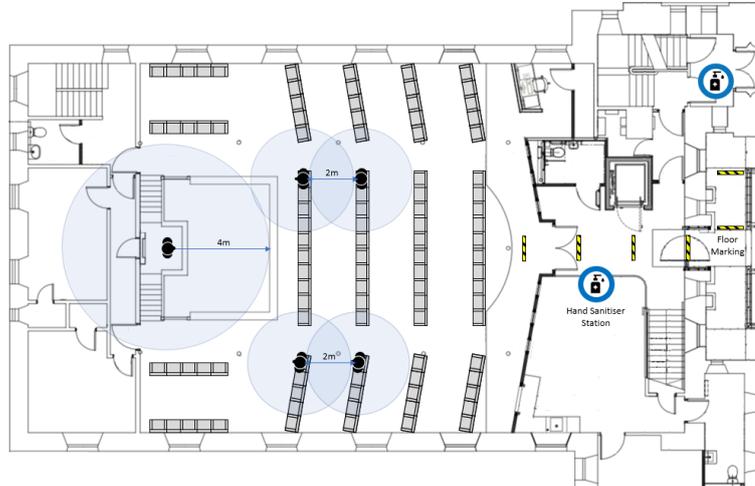
Physical distancing

Several changes have been made to the layout at Bon Accord Free Church to ensure that people can maintain a safe distance of 2 metres whilst they remain in any part of the church building, including on entry:

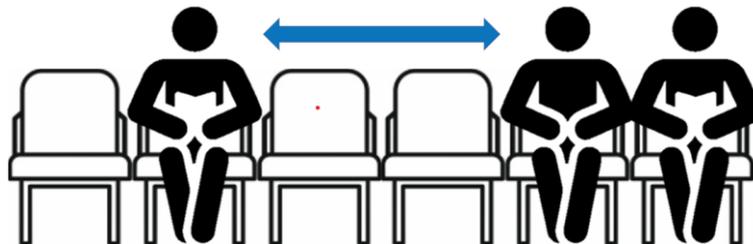
- Floor markings have been added as part of a safe queue management system to ensure the flow of people in and out of the building can be carefully controlled.
- The layout in the church sanctuary has been significantly altered to create greater distance between rows of seating during the congregational worship service on Sunday morning



(11.00am) and Sunday evening (6.00pm) to allow people to maintain a safe distance of 2 metres. The upstairs gallery is also accessible for seating in selected rows.



- Members of a household group should be seated together, with a minimum distance of two empty seats or an aisle separating different household or extended household groups. There will be members of the Welcome Team on duty during each service to assist with the seating process when you enter the building.



Hygiene

Hand sanitiser stations have been added at key locations in Bon Accord Free Church for everyone to use when entering and exiting the building. Individuals are encouraged to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene (e.g. for coughs or sneezing), including frequent hand washing/use of hand sanitiser to kill viruses that may be on hands. Signs and reminders are visible throughout the building to communicate information about how to minimise the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus and the rules on physical distancing and hygiene safeguards.

Face masks

In line with other public indoor spaces, anyone entering Bon Accord Free Church must wear a face covering at all time in the church building- **this includes children above the age of five**. For these purposes, a face shield is not considered to be a face covering.



Due to adapted seating layout for congregational worship services allowing a minimum safe distance of 2 metres to be maintained from the congregation, the minister is not required to wear a face covering during the course of the service. Other exemptions to the wearing of a face covering, including for health reasons, can be found in the [Scottish Government guidance on the use of face coverings](#).

Singing and music

Singing is not permitting in the church building due to the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission. This will be replaced with audio from pre-recorded psalms and hymns at identified points of the congregational worship service to ensure that this important element of worship is still featured.

Other safety measures and changes

Several other safety measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of everyone accessing the church building. These include efforts to control the amount of touch points in the church building to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission through surfaces, and reduce the demand for cleaning and disinfecting between uses:

- **Building flow** - Most of the doors in the building, except for fire doors, will be propped open, meaning there will be minimal requirement to touch door handles.
- **Limited access to shared facilities in the building** - During the worship services, toilet access will be limited to the toilet facilities in the church foyer. The use of kitchen facilities is not permitted at this time.
- **No food and drink permitted during or after service** - The normal process of meeting together for tea and coffee after the service has been suspended at this time.
- **No gathering in the church building after service** - Once the congregational worship service has ended, the congregation are requested to leave the building promptly through the main entrance/exit onto Rosemount Viaduct.
- **Restricted Sunday School or Bible Class** - The decision has been taken that, while there is a limit on the number of people allowed in the building, Sunday School will only take place on certain Sundays (notified in advance). Bible Class will remain online for the time being.
- **Restricted access to creche facilities** – Having young families return to gathered worship at Bon Accord Free Church is very important, so Creche will be open on certain Sundays (notified in advance).



- **Offerings** – Individuals are encouraged to give their offering by electronic means. For those who are unable or who do not wish to do this, a closed donation box is located in the foyer next to the sanctuary entrance.
- **No church Bibles or loose paper materials** - All Bibles and paper materials have been removed from use, with all Bible readings visible on the church screens. You are welcome to bring your own Bible.

Before leaving for a church service

Anyone planning to attend a service at Bon Accord Free Church should ensure that they have received a notification that they have a space booked for them. If you are no longer able to attend the service, it would be appreciated if this could be communicated at the earliest opportunity to backtobuilding@bafreechurch.org.uk. Anyone experiencing medical symptoms relating to COVID-19, or who has been in contact with anyone experiencing symptoms, should not attend the service. The main symptoms to be aware of relating to Covid-19 are:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- a loss or change to sense of smell and/or taste

Entry/exit for morning service (11.00am) and evening service (6.00pm)

You should aim to arrive at Bon Accord Free Church in good time for the start of the morning service, as there may be queuing to enter the building. A face mask should be worn, and physical distancing should be maintained between different household groups.

Entering by the **main door on Rosemount Viaduct**, attention should be paid to the floor markings added as part of the safe queue management system, and the hand sanitiser station available for use. Everyone will have their attendance recorded by a member of the Welcome Team, before being directed to the sanctuary where another member of the Welcome Team will assist with the seating allocation to ensure physical distancing is maintained between different household groups. Gallery seating is also available in select rows.

After the conclusion of the service, the congregation should leave the sanctuary promptly by the main doors to the rear, sanitising their hands before exiting onto Rosemount Viaduct.

We would ask that nobody congregate in the aisles, foyer or on the pavement outside before or after the services.

Safety during the service

Anyone displaying the main symptoms of COVID-19 will need to return home immediately, and are



advised to follow [guidance on what to do if you develop symptoms](#) at NHS Inform (or call 111 if no internet access and need clinical advice). In an emergency, 999 will be called.

In the event of a fire, please leave the building as quickly as possible. It will not be necessary to maintain 2 metres physical distancing in this instance.

Protocols for Crèche and Sunday School (certain Sundays only)

- Families should aim to arrive at Bon Accord Free Church in good time for the start of the morning service, as there may be queuing to enter the building.
- Entering by the **front door on Rosemount Viaduct**, attention should be paid to the floor markings added as part of the safe queue management system. Household groups will have their attendance recorded by a member of the Welcome Team and be directed to hand sanitise before proceeding inside the building.
- Families wanting to access **crèche** should use the Tower staircase (turning right on entering the main foyer) to proceed downstairs to the lower floor to drop-off children at Crèche and then return to the main foyer by the same staircase.
- Welcome Team members in the sanctuary will assist with the seating allocation to ensure physical distancing is maintained between different household groups. Families should remain seated together, as children will not be invited to move to the front of the church for the children's address by the minister.
- After the address, the children will be led downstairs by Sunday school teachers to the large hall area using the normal route via the doors at the front of the sanctuary.
- There will be **no singing** during Sunday school as this is not allowed at this time. Instead, the children will watch a video on the birth of Jesus and then split into 2 classes - **Pre-school to P3**, and **P4 to P7** to work on some worksheets and discuss the video we have just watched on what Jesus's birth means and what should our response be.
- After the service ends, **parents of children in Sunday school** will remain in their seat and the children will be escorted back upstairs. Once children have returned to their families, they leave promptly via the main door and ensure that social distancing is maintained.
- **Parents of children in creche** should leave the sanctuary by the rear doors after the service ends and proceed down the same stairwell that had been used during drop-off to collect their children. The lower floor exit onto Stevenson Court or the stairwell exit onto Rosemount Viaduct may then be used to leave the building.