

Bowden and Melrose Parish Church



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Moving Forward Newsletter

August 2020

The Manse
Tweedmount Road
Melrose

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Dear Friends,

Back in March, almost overnight, we had to learn how to worship in new ways, how to be a congregation without buildings, and it's amazing how we have adapted. Now we have to adapt again as we prepare to return to our church buildings.

We are following the advice of the Scottish Government and guidelines prepared by the Church of Scotland. The advice and the guidelines are ever changing so our plans are under constant review.

Currently the maximum number permitted in a church building, with appropriate distancing, is 50. We can accommodate between 38 and 50 in Melrose, 10 and 20 in Bowden, depending on whether single attendees or couples. We have decided to have a phased return to our buildings, beginning with opening Melrose Church for worship at **11.00am on Sunday 6 September**. We will take a few weeks to learn the new protocols and gauge response before opening Bowden Kirk.

Coming to church will be a very different experience. You will be encouraged to reserve a seat for worship by phoning or emailing the church office during the preceding week and giving your name and telephone number. A list of attendees will be drawn up to use as the register of attendance on the Sunday. This will be our record for 'Trace and Protect' which is compulsory. It will be possible to turn up 'on spec' on the day but if / when we have reached our capacity you will be turned away. If you are able to enter the church your name and telephone number must be given.

You must wear a face covering at all times. I must wear a face covering except when leading worship from the chancel area.

2 metre distancing must be observed and will be marked both outside and inside. This means you may have to queue outside so come prepared! You will be entering the church through the main entrance. Here you can make your offering. You will be asked to use hand sanitiser.

Inside the church there will be designated seating. This must be adhered to. The church will be filled from the front to the back using all 3 aisles. 'No go areas' will be taped off.

There will be no pew cushions, no hymn books or Bibles, no intimation sheets.

The toilets will be closed. The disabled toilet will be for emergency use only!

There will be no access to the hall, chapel, kitchen, office, vestry or the back door.

At the end of the service there will be no tea or coffee. You will leave by the Gattonside porch, aisle by aisle, back to front. Again, you will be asked to use hand sanitiser.

To start with the service will last for 30 minutes maximum with the same content as the online and telephone service but with the addition of music. Singing is not yet permitted. I am also hoping to broadcast the service using Facebook Live which you will be able to access live and recorded on our Facebook page and recorded on the church website.

What to do....

If you wish to come to Melrose Church to worship please phone Helen in the office during the preceding week. Her hours are Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.00 a.m. – 12 noon.

The office number is 01896 823339. You can also contact Helen using our Church e-mail - bowden.melrosepc@btinternet.com

PLEASE NOTE - The office is not open to the public.

You can watch the Facebook Live broadcast
On Facebook – Bowden and Melrose Parish Church

You can listen to the online service on Facebook, the website <https://www.bowdenandmelroseparish.org/covid.html> and by phoning 01896 808551 during the following week.

I look forward to joining with you in worship in whatever way is right for you. Please let your friends and neighbours know what's happening too!

Stay safe, take care, God bless
Rosie

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