

Seventh-day Adventist[®] Church

NORTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

RSJ/yjc

30 April 2021



TO ALL NEC CHURCH MEMBERS

Dear NEC Church Family

Re: COVID-19 and Re-opening of Churches

March 2021 saw us enter into 1 year of lockdowns and restrictions due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Like us, many of you will have been watching the developments of the pandemic across the globe as well here in the United Kingdom with much sadness.

Like you, we are pleased to note that on the 17th May, the roadmap set out by the Government will hopefully enter into its 3rd phase should the below tests be met.

These are -

- the vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern

The Government's guidelines relating to places of worship permit the reopening of churches so long as their guidelines are followed (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december>). In light of these guidelines and also the current statistics relating to the COVID-19 infection and death rate across the North England Conference region, we now feel that we are able to move to a place where our churches can reopen for face to face services, only in line with the above government guidelines and after the satisfactory completion of the North England Conference risk assessment.

We are aiming to be able to confirm that all churches can reopen for face to face services on the 22nd May 2021. This will align with the Government's announcement on the 3rd phase of the roadmap and also provide each church with sufficient time to make the necessary preparations to reopen.

When we had hoped to open in the late summer many churches completed a risk assessment however the government moved the country into another lockdown and our plans for reopening did not take place. As these risk assessments are now, in many cases several months old, we are asking that all churches submit a risk assessment prior to re-opening for services. This is to ensure the health and wellbeing of all those attending any of the churches in the North England Conference. Your Pastor will be able to provide you with more information regarding the risk assessments and how to complete them.

Whilst we are moving to a place where all churches within the North England Conference can reopen for face to face worship, we wish to admonish each of you to remain vigilant and mindful of your health and wellbeing and that of your family, friends and colleagues. In order to this we encourage each of you to read the COVID-19 government guidance.

We also ask that you remember those and their families who were physically impacted by the pandemic in your prayers. We also ask that you remember other countries including as India and St Vincent, where families are dealing with not only the pandemic but also the impact of the volcanic eruption, in your prayer. We know that God "will respond to the prayer of the destitute, he will not despise their plea" (Psalms 102:17).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Jackson', written in a cursive style.

Pastor Richard Jackson
Pastor & President
Extending God's Kingdom – Nurturing Each Other and Winning Another