

## **Because we love you!**

### **An update on covid mitigations for churches and church events in response to the public briefing from the Chief Minister, Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021.**

You are people of faith, patience and perseverance. We recognise the frustrations, griefs and traumas of the last 20 months as we have lived through the pandemic. Many have been separated from family support – and we have found much solace, blessing and encouragement in being able to continue to gather together in fellowship, to worship God and witness to the Kingdom of God in our midst. We know churches have worked hard to allow fellowship to continue safely and with mitigations to reduce the risks of infection. Thank you for your hard work and care for each other.

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November, the Chief Minister of the Isle of Man held a public briefing in response to a new virus variant. He announced temporary changes to try to reduce the risks to our community including upgrading the [Island's Winter Framework to Level 2](#). These are quite small changes but will have a significant positive impact.

- 1) the government is continuing to expect everyone to take lateral flow tests at least twice a week, especially before and after attending public events. These can be ordered free of charge online via the following link. <https://bit.ly/31eK1Hy>
- 2) the government is now expecting those attending public events, such as church gatherings, to wear face masks (unless there are medical reasons why you can't wear a mask)

### **The Methodist Church in the Isle of Man – our response:**

In common with the other Christian churches on the Island, we are asking all churches to add these government changes to their risk assessments and to promote this level of care for each other in your congregations. We don't know how infectious or deadly the new omicron strain will be – so until we know more – we are urging a cautious response.

#### **Specifically:**

- 1) Please take lateral flow tests before attending church or church events
- 2) We expect those attending Methodist church services, meetings or events to wear face masks unless they have medical reasons why they can't.
- 3) As in health and social care settings, take a lateral flow test before making pastoral visits to other people's houses – and wear a mask while visiting.
- 4) Continue with existing mitigations – hand sanitising, ventilation and social distancing.

### **Refreshments, communion, coffee mornings, Christmas events, funerals etc:**

- 1) Where you are welcoming others to Christmas events and busy services, make sure you have a supply of face masks and remind people of the

government guidance expecting everyone to wear a mask. Consider in your setting how to promote distancing where possible.

- 2) For funerals – again we expect everyone to wear face masks and we can remind congregation members to take LFTs before attending.
- 3) Continue with communion following existing safe practice – with all those handling the elements (both in preparation, blessing and distribution) taking care to sanitise hands and wear face masks.
- 4) For social events, coffee mornings and lunch clubs – consider your setting. Promote social distancing by the way you layout your tables and chairs. Table service is preferable to everyone queuing and collecting their own. Ask people to wear masks when walking around. If your venue is likely to get crowded and is poorly ventilated – please consider cancelling your event. We know some chapels have already taken this step – and commend their caution.

With Advent prayers and hope and blessings  
From – all the Circuit staff.