



7 July 2020

Dear Friends,

Announcement of new services at Romford Baptist Church.

Please note, you will need to book to attend, details below.

It has been really good to keep in touch with everyone during the past few months, but we have really missed seeing each other. Many are desperate to come back together, whilst others are more apprehensive. As a church leadership we are seeking to find a balance as to how we can move forward.

You will be aware that the government has now said that churches are able to gather again, and last week we received the guidance as to how that can happen. Therefore, from this Sunday, 12 July 2020, we are going to begin having a short reflective service in the church building **starting at 9am**, whilst continuing to stream our usual services online as we have been doing over the last few months (10.30am and 6pm).

We have decided to start this additional service because many of you have been asking when we can come back to church, and we want to respond to your requests. However, the 9am service will not feel like church as we were used to before lockdown due to the number of restrictions that are in place. For instance, there will be no singing during the service, no hugs or handshakes, no activities for children or young people. There will also be no Bibles in the seats and you will need to pre-book a seat as we have a greatly reduced capacity and we also have to space people out across the room. This also means that you will have little choice on where you can sit as a one-way system is in operation so don't be surprised if you end up sitting on the front row or even upstairs (if you have no mobility issues)!

Three other services that we are planning to start are

1. Creative church. A fortnightly service for families, the first one is on Sunday 26 July at 4pm.

Minister Team Leader: Revd Ian Bunce

Romford Baptist Church, Main Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 3BL

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2. Midweek Wednesday service. A short reflective service at 12.45pm for about 30 minutes. The first one will be Wednesday 29 July.
3. Youth service. A fortnightly service for the youth, by the youth. The first one will be Sunday 2 August at 4pm.

Hopefully the ability to gather together, albeit in a different format and way, brings us hope that perhaps things are beginning to return to normal. To be able to see one another, to gather together as a visible body of God's family and to join in worship alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ is a wonderful opportunity even with all the restrictions that are in place. We hope this service will also provide a way for those who have not been able to worship online over the last few months to gather once again or you may choose to come simply because you want to try something new. All we would ask is that if you would like to join us at one of the services please read the guidelines overleaf before booking your place.

We equally recognise that many of you may choose to continue to worship in your own homes for the weeks ahead because we realise that for many this is not a style of service with which you are either comfortable or familiar and that is also fine. Anyone shielding and at risk should not even consider coming to any event as no-one should do anything to put themselves or their family at risk.

Whatever you decide we will continue to give pastoral support and an online presence to engage with you, but we continue to trust this is the start of a new chapter in the life of RBC. As things change, we too will seek to develop our response until we are all able to gather once again and sing our praises to God, using our hearts and voices in worship to Him in the way we are used to.

God bless you and do get in touch if you have any questions.

The Leadership Team

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If you would like to come to a service, please note the following:

1. Do not come if you have any of the symptoms of Covid-19, including high temperature, persistent cough, loss of taste or smell etc.
2. You need to book in advance, please do not just turn up and once we are at capacity, no one else will be able to come.
3. When you book you will be asked to provide us with your name, address and phone number as these details have to be kept for 21 days. You will also be asked how many seats you require. If you have booked and find you can no longer come, please do cancel so others can take your place.
4. The doors will not be open until 15 minutes before the service in order to reduce the length of time we are in contact with one another. This means that if you arrive early you can remain in your car rather than needing to stand and queue.
5. If you arrive after 5 minutes before the service, your seat may have been reallocated to someone who has noticed we are open for worship and who wishes to join the service.
6. Everyone will need to observe social distancing. There can be no handshaking, hugging, kissing or physical contact at all.
7. Stewards will direct you to a seat (you cannot necessarily sit in your favourite seat, please sit where you have been asked). There is also a one-way system in place in the church building. Please keep to it without exception.
8. The wearing of masks in the building is encouraged and there will be no singing, open prayer or shouted out comments or responses.
9. At the conclusion, there will be no drinks and you will be encouraged to leave the building relatively quickly.
10. There will be no children or youth programmes. Children/young people are under the responsibility of their parents/guardian and should remain with them at all times.
11. There are a number of hand sanitisers around the building including at the entrance and by all the toilets. Please sanitise your hands as you enter the building.
12. Please use the toilets as little as possible. Once you have washed your hands, any door out of the toilets can be opened with a shoulder push or with your foot.

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13. There will be fixed boxes for those who wish to bring their offerings and they can be placed in the box before or after the service.

We recognise that this may feel a bit daunting, but we are required to follow this guidance. The reality is that it will feel very familiar to you as this is what many of us have been doing in recent weeks. Yes we are people of faith and believe in the protection of God, but in the words of Jesus when tempted by Satan to jump, responded "we should not put the Lord thy God to the test." Along with faith, God also gave us common sense.

To book a place please email bookings@romfordbaptist.org.uk (this email only please) or telephone 01708 743382 (option 5). Please state which service and date you are booking in to. The deadline for booking is 1pm Saturday for the Sunday services and for the Wednesday service it will be Tuesday 10pm. If you do not hear from someone before Sunday (or Wednesday) confirming you have a place please try again.

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