**A note from Revd Stephen and Revd Malcolm 13 September 2020**

**Almost Daily Changes...**

Sometimes it seems the best we can do is to stand still while everything else rushes by. Late on Tuesday 8th September came the "[Rule Of 6](https://suttonparkcircuit.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9824c2fe1ec335b5560caec51&id=fbe3187d77&e=28109fba71)" announcement from the Government, due to come into force on Monday 14th September. News the following morning hinted that funerals and weddings would still be OK, but tweets, emails, social media posts, and even phone calls were soon alight with the question of whether gathered worship in churches would survive the cut. There has of course been the news that Birmingham will need to have further restrictions. However at the time of writing as I hope you are by now aware, church worship can indeed continue. Here's the guidance from the Methodist Church:

You will have seen that the Government has confirmed that, from Monday 14 September, the number of people legally allowed to meet socially, both indoors and outdoors, will reduce from 30 to six. This will apply to gatherings in private homes and gardens, public outdoor spaces and venues such as pubs and restaurants.

As the Prime Minister confirmed in [his statement](https://suttonparkcircuit.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9824c2fe1ec335b5560caec51&id=56d5f85c55&e=28109fba71) , places of worship will be able to stay open for communal worship - as is currently the case - and will be able to host numbers larger than six for communal worship. The capacity limit for each place of worship should be set by what is possible within COVID-secure social distancing guidelines for that building – as explained in [our places of worship guidance](https://suttonparkcircuit.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9824c2fe1ec335b5560caec51&id=3514f4def6&e=28109fba71).

**Place of worship**

The main change for places of worship is as follows: if you are attending with others, then the group you are attending with should not exceed more than six people. This group of six can be made up of people from outside your household, but strict social distancing must be maintained between members of different households at all times.

The Prime Minister was clear today that everyone should limit social contact as much as possible and minimise all interactions with those they do not live with. Therefore, when travelling to, entering and inside places of worship, people should observe strict social distancing from anyone not in their household - even if they are attending as a group of six.

To be clear, from Monday 14th September, the new limit for any group attending communal prayer together in a place of worship will be six people. Social distancing must be maintained between members of different households at all times.

The only exception to this new rule is where a single household (or support bubble) contains more than six people, but the same rules on social interaction should apply. No person who lives separately to this household or is not included in the support bubble is permitted to accompany this larger group. This replaces previous rules where groups could be larger than six people if they were made up of two households.

**Life cycle events**

Life cycle events such as weddings, wedding receptions, funerals and religious life-cycle events will continue to be allowed but are subject the current limit of 30 people. As above, whilst up to 30 people can attend the event, people attending these events must remain within their groups of six and observe strict social distancing between each separate group.