

Pantygwydr Baptist Church

Assessment to allow the church to open for Services

Currently Rate of Transmission of Covid19 in the community is 1.2 to 1.3 (Swansea, July 2021)

This Risk Assessment is based on guidance from the Baptist Union of Great Britain in association with Health and Safety Consultants from Ellis Whittam. This version (August 2021) is updated in conjunction with Welsh Assembly Government Alert 0 guidance for employers/businesses and organisations updated 7th August 2021. Level 0 removes the mandatory 2 m 'social distancing' requirement for Wales; however, we are required to keep the environment 'safe' for employees, worshippers and visitors

During the Covid 19 pandemic, before controls are implemented, the Likelihood of Transmission of Covid 19 in a church service setting is High = 5 (likely to occur at least once in any 12 month period)

The consequences of infection are potentially death of an individual or multiple individuals = 5.

It is unlikely that neither the likelihood of transmission nor the consequences will reduce until such time as there are effective treatments or a vaccine and the community incidence of infection is much reduced.

Control measures will be put into place to reduce the likelihood of transmission but these are still unlikely to reduce this to below a rating of 5.

Reduction of Risk will be achieved by the following additional Covid19 controls:

Individuals who fall into the vulnerable, clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable categories will be assessed and provisions made accordingly.

Arrangement of Church facilities to reduce transmission of Covid 19 to an individual direct from an infected person

1. Worshippers will be encouraged to 'respect and consider the needs of others' with regard to maintaining a 'safe environment' around entry to, and within the church.
2. A suggestion of 3 empty seats between family 'bubbles' can be made to assist in the maintenance of a 'safe environment'.
3. Background music prior to the service should at a level such that attendees do not need to use raised voices.
4. Welsh Assembly Government legislation is that face coverings should be worn; this will be instituted with the exception of those who are exempted due to certain medical conditions .
5. Communion may be served and a separate Risk Assessment has been prepared for this.
6. Baptism by immersion may take place in compliance with BU guidance.

7. Sunday school activities will recommence in compliance with WAG and BU guidance.
8. Cooling fans may not be used
9. Direct Bank Transfer is encouraged for faithful giving; for those who wish to give cash/cheques at the service, these may be dropped into a receptacle and the donations will then remain untouched for 72 hours.
10. The Music Group comprising musicians and singers and will perform in line with current advice to the performing arts. Microphones may not be shared.
11. Arrangements can be made for those who desire prayer ministry in a 'safe environment'.
12. To reduce risk of aerosol dispersion to those in the sanctuary, the front 2 pews in the balcony will not be available for seating.
13. At the end of the service, worshippers will be encouraged to leave directly and not congregate outside the church.

Arrangements to reduce transmission of Covid 19 to an individual via a contaminated surface/item (excluding toilet facilities)

1. Doors will be kept open where possible to reduce contact with handles etc. This will include the red front doors and internal doors into the Sanctuary and the right hand pulpit door. All Fire doors will remain closed for safety purposes.
2. Hand sanitiser will be supplied.
3. Bibles, song books and newsheets will not be distributed. Worshippers will be asked to bring their own.
4. The collection bag will not be passed around; any collection given will not be counted for 72 hours.
5. Microphones and any other equipment will not be shared.
6. Any surfaces likely to be touched regularly will be cleaned regularly with appropriate sanitiser spray.

Arrangements to reduce transmission of Covid 19 to an individual via working in the church building

1. A 'safe environment' will be maintained during in-person meetings and these will be held in well ventilated rooms where possible
2. Pens and other objects will not be shared
3. Hand sanitiser will be available in meeting rooms
4. All deliveries into the church building will be cleaned externally prior to opening.
5. Contractors working on site will be Risk Assessed individually according to needs to keep all personnel in safe working conditions.

Arrangements to reduce transmission of Covid 19 to an individual via toilet facilities

1. Children under 11 will be accompanied by an appropriate adult.
2. Each person using the toilet facilities will be requested to clean all surfaces likely to be touched after use with appropriate sanitiser. Relevant signage will be displayed in each area.
3. Disposable hand towels are supplied to be placed in a black bag which will be replaced prior to each service. All towels to be disposed of as contaminated waste.
4. The toilet facilities will be thoroughly cleaned each week.

Arrangements to reduce transmission of Covid 19 to an individual via contaminated waste

1. All attendees should take waste home with them if possible.
2. Waste left should generally comprise only paper towels in the toilet facilities
3. Waste bins will be lined with disposable liners; all waste will be double bagged prior to disposal and kept for 72 hours prior to disposal in the general waste.
4. All waste will be handled with suitable PPE
5. A record will be kept of who has carried out cleaning and waste disposal.

Information and Guidance

1. A notice will be displayed on the church doors stating:
 - i) attendees will be advised that they should not enter church buildings if they have Covid 19 symptoms or have been asked to self isolate by NHS Wales Test Trace Protect Service.
 - ii) WAG advice on the wearing of face coverings in enclosed public spaces to help reduce spread of Covid 19.
2. Signage will be displayed in the toilet facilities requesting that the area is cleaned after each use

Good Hygiene

1. Hand sanitizer will be available on entry to the Sanctuary and hall .
2. WAG advice on the wearing of face coverings in enclosed public spaces to help reduce spread of Covid 19 will be displayed.
3. Attendees will be requested not to touch anything unnecessarily and no bibles etc will be available.
4. Frequently touched areas will be cleaned with appropriate anti-viral sanitiser after each service.

Cleaning of Visitor Accessible Areas

1. The stewards for each session will be responsible for cleaning all potential high contact areas e.g. door handles etc. after each service using regular cleaning products.
2. Each person using the toilet facilities will be requested to clean the toilet after use.
3. The toilet facilities will be thoroughly cleaned after each week.

Singing during Services (from 27th June 2021)

Studies suggest that singing quietly may result in up to 30 fold increase in the generation of respiratory droplets which may carry covid 19 virus. WAG consider that this risk is manageable when community transmission is low (<50 /100,000) where suitable mitigations are in place. To allow for congregational singing, the following mitigations will be in place:

1. Worshippers should sing quietly
2. Face coverings are to be worn at all times
3. Natural ventilation will be maintained through the sanctuary by keeping external doors open during the service.

WAG consider that

It is considered that adoption of the above controls will reduce the risk of transmission of Covid 19 within the building to as low a level as is possible; however there is still the potential that transmission may occur within a 12 month period.

Hence, likelihood of transmission of infection within an enclosed space with additional controls as above will remain at 5

Severity of infection for most persons is medium = 5

Risk rating for opening the church is $5 \times 5 + (2 \times 5) = 35$ (severity x likelihood + (2 x severity))

It is considered unlikely that those with underlying health conditions which render them at greater risk if infected with Covid 19 would attend the church at this time. However, if they should wish to attend, all arrangements possible will be made for their personal needs.

Risk Assessment updated on 9th August 2021 by Catherine Shepherd, Church Secretary, Pantygwydr Baptist Church, Swansea.