

## Whiddon Valley Evangelical Church

Change of usual practice to ensure the safe recommencement of the Lord's Table.

28/09/20

For the consideration of how to conduct the Lord's Table in as safe as way as practical during the time of the COVID 19 pandemic the UK government guidance has been consulted.

Each part of the "Food and drink" section that has relevance to the Lord's Table has been listed here followed by the practice [in Red] we will adopt to ensure compliance with this guidance.

In doing this and giving consideration to our specific circumstances, it is hoped that the purpose of risk reduction will be achieved.

From the GOV.uk website: COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic Updated 24 September 2020

- Where food or drink ('consumables') are essential to the act of worship, they can be used, however the sharing of food should be avoided, as should the use of communal vessels.

Bread and wine (or grape juice) [referred to here as "the elements"] are essential to the Lord's Table – they can therefore be used.

Pre-prepared pieces of bread and pre-prepared individual small cups of wine (or grape juice) can be used thereby avoiding the sharing of food and avoiding communal vessels.

The elements will be prepared on the day of the Lord's Table by one person who will gloves and a face-mask whilst doing so. They will be covered and remain so up to the moment of use.

- If it is necessary to handle consumables as a part of a faith practice, those giving and receiving food items should wash their hands thoroughly before and after consumption, or wear gloves.

Hand sanitisers are readily available to enable this requirement to be met.

The minister (in our case Pastor David Kay or in his absence our Elder David Berry) would sanitise their hands immediately before coming to the Communion Table and WILL HAVE NO NEED TO TOUCH the elements as they are pre-prepared.

- The person distributing the consumable should release it, into the hand only, in such a way to avoid any contact between them and those receiving it, or wear gloves. If accidental contact does occur, both people should cleanse their hands immediately.

The practice of “releasing into the hand” is a practice found in some traditions but is not something we have used.

The minister will approach each participant but remain at arm’s length and offer the elements to the participants. The participants will take a piece of pre-cut bread from a tray that has the pieces distanced sufficiently from each other so only the piece that person is about to eat will be touched. The cups will be spread out in a tray to similarly make only the touching of one cup necessary.

By this action there will be no opportunity for physical contact between two people.

- Other actions taken to reduce the risk of transmission should also be considered, for example, foodstuffs should be prewrapped, and a system should be in place to prevent individuals from coming into contact with consumables and any dishes and/ or cutlery other than their own (for example the use of shared bowls).

Both elements will be pre-prepared and covered over with a clean cloth until the point at which the minister distributes them.

Individuals will only come into contact with their own bread and wine/ grape juice.

- Speaking, singing and chanting should not happen across uncovered consumables (other than consumables to be used by the celebrant alone). Instead consumables should be securely covered, and prior to the receptacle being opened, it should be cleaned, hands should be washed or gloves worn.

Our communion table is sufficiently long for the elements to be placed covered at one end of the table so that the Minister, in the centre of the table, does not speak across them.

The Minister will symbolically break a small chunk of bread, but this will NOT be distributed or consumed.

Further consideration:

Another way to reduce risk is to decrease the frequency an activity takes place. With this in mind at a meeting of the Church council on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020 the Church Council decided for the duration of the restrictions to hold the Lord's Table once a month instead of the usual weekly service.

Also as a means of reducing risk only the Minister will preside at the Table and he will distribute the elements alone without assistance.

Members of the congregation attending the Table will remain seated in their seats which are socially distance.

No one should feel pressured to take part in the Lord's Table during the period of the pandemic if they feel uncomfortable in doing so.