



Gathered Worship And Scattered Worship into 2022

For some time now we have been talking in PCC and Parish Teams about what church will look like once we emerge from COVID and the shadow that it has cast over our worship and church life. We must emerge smarter and stronger from this season.

As we look at new ways to share the Good News across our large Parish the PCC voted to move towards **one** gathered Parish worship service on Sunday Mornings. There has been little decision or action taken on this issue and we'd like to have a Parish forum to talk thoughtfully and prayerfully about how the PCC decision for one service might best be implemented.

We've scheduled this for **Sunday 19th September at 11am** at the time of our usual service. We will meet at St Martin's Church Hall – Haworth Road. Please can you make every effort to attend this important discussion.

Any decisions taken in the coming 12 to 18 months will all be temporary and reversible. We don't want to move quickly with such large change. We will test the waters at every turn and keep asking whether we are fulfilling our mission to show the world the love of Jesus.

Where?

We don't know yet. Each church has its own strengths in both the building and the location in the city. We have been meeting in St Philip's for 'Pandemic Parish Worship' due to the space being suitable for social distancing.

Why?

Before lockdown, worship in four centres with occasional joining together, both for worship and socially, gave us time to explore, learn and understand what it was to be one parish of GHM. Worshipping together over lockdown has joyfully introduced variety of voices, faces and ideas and has freed up energy in the leadership team to creatively think about and engage in how we share the gospel with those in our communities during the week. We have the capacity to have a vibrant, gathered worshipping congregation on a Sunday that equips and enables us as individuals and as a parish to reach out to those we encounter through our families, work and everyday life through the week. We believe maintaining four separate worshipping communities will **take** energy, creating one, larger worshipping community will **give** energy.

Part of this energy creation is about investing in our future generations. We **MUST** cultivate our children and youth work, and young people thrive on numbers. Having one, gathered

worshipping community on a Sunday will help provide a viable Sunday School and Youth Group with enough helpers, teachers and resources.

Another part of this energy creation is investing in our separate localities within the parish during the week, each of which has its own 'flavour' and history and story of relationship with the church. Committing to engaging well and creatively with each locality we can invest in people in a spiritual way, not just socially, meeting the needs of the lonely and vulnerable and creating safe spaces within our buildings for those on the margins, places where they encounter life changing formation and make friends with us and with Jesus.

We want them to be worshipping communities too! This may not look anything like what has gone before but we want to join in with what the Holy Spirit may be doing as we seek to meet peoples spiritual needs as well as practical needs.

Scattered Worship

The key reason for Gathered worship is to give GHM energy, time and resources to plough back into our scattered locations in the week.

Our plan is that GHM will worship five times per week. Once per week Gathered as a Parish and four more times in each of our four centres.

These acts of worship will almost certainly be very different to what we're used to and may well need to develop and evolve depending on who attends and what else is happening on site.

We plan to operate all of these four 'scattered worship' occasions under the working title of "Places of Welcome plus". This will further the community work that we were involved in before the Pandemic, including Sharakat, Heaton Hub, Mustard Seed and Maryam Project. We hope each centre will find what works well there as we offer a 'menu' of events, services and activities.

Community Pantry, Drop in Café, Shared Lunches, Library, Coffee and Chat, Food Parcels, Toddler Group, English lessons, Asylum seeker advice etc. We hope to have a new name for this soon.

What?

Most of our families with children live in the vicinity of St Paul's Manningham and we have seen little of them during the pandemic. Another key area of our ministry that we've missed for 18 months is Breakfast Church which is the service most accessible to those who aren't used to traditional church services. COVID restrictions permitting we'd like to hold a Breakfast Church at St Paul's for the 1st Sunday of October. We'd then like to have the whole of October still at St Paul's unashamedly focused on Young People, children and families. Each service being experimental and 'different'. This will give us a chance to see different sections of our Parish and to meet each other.

Forum Topics

We do not want to talk about creative ways of 'going back to how it was'. Or argue out ways for dividing our time between our centres and services. We don't want to make a carousel rota or a revolving pattern of worship. We want to make radical decisions that will impact future generations in this Parish. Effectively we want to come together spiritually, geographically and numerically so as to prepare for planting back out into each of our centres.

We would like to challenge each person in the Parish. Can you spare time twice a week. Once to meet together as a Parish for encouragement, discipleship, worship and 'family'. Also can you come to one of our 'scattered' events in the week – to give, serve, help and pray?

What can/will you offer?

Rev Chris Chorlton
1st September 2021