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The Presbyterian Church of Wales

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**For the attention of:
Ministers, Leaders and Elders**

Eich Cyf:

Ein Cyf:

Dyddiad:

30/12/2021

Dear friends,

Re: Moving to Level 2 - Welsh Government

As you probably know, the Welsh Government has responded to the latest increase in the number of cases of Coronavirus by moving from Level 0 to Level 2. We are again grateful to the Revd Gethin Rhys for providing a summary of the implications this, and the update can be viewed by visiting the Cytûn website, or by clicking here -

<https://www.cytun.co.uk/hafan/en/covid-19-briefing-paper/> .

As you can see, the implications do not change significantly what we do as churches, however, it is useful to be reminded of some of the elements that should be addressed. I note the following:

- i. All events require an up-to-date Risk Assessment.
- ii. Face coverings must be worn indoors, and although singing in worship is not restricted yet, consideration should be given as to how to do this in a 'safe' way given that this virus is transmitted by droplets.
- iii. The 2 meter rule must be reinstated in the services, and this applies for communion / baptism services. This distance should be achieved between each individual, or family unit, or group of six.
- iv. As it is a criminal offence not to work from home where reasonably practicable, a sentence should be included in any risk assessment setting out why it is necessary to conduct our activity together.
- v. There is no limit of 30 on the number of people attending a chapel, any figure is subject to how many people can attend by following the 2 meter rule, but, if you hold your service in a Community Centre, the rule is applicable, and you must not exceed 30, other than those leading / stewarding.
- vi. If you are attending a wedding meal or funeral tea, a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) must be taken. There is no requirement to take a test to attend a service, but the Welsh Government strongly suggests that you do so before meeting others.

In the midst of all this, we are well aware that knowing what is appropriate to do is a very difficult question for many congregations. We are well aware of families affected by this latest increase in cases, and even if the symptoms of the new variant may be less severe, especially for those who have been vaccinated and have received a booster, again, having to self-isolate etc can bring its difficulties. As Christians, we want to be good witnesses at a time

like this, not on the one hand over-reacting, or on the other hand unfeeling with respect to the concerns of many. I like you, live in a local church week to week, and know how difficult it is to decide what is appropriate. Having said this, one of our greatest strengths is having people around us with whom we can discuss and decide.

As we approach the first Sunday of the New year, I am reminded of one of Philip Doddridge's hymns. In the hymn which opens with the lines -

*Great God, we sing that guiding hand
by which supported still we stand*
he goes on to sing –

*With grateful hearts the past we own;
the future, all to us unknown,
we to your guardian care commit,
and peaceful leave before your feet.*

For the season which we are now in, and for all seasons, our strength and wisdom lies in acknowledging the God who remains our God, even in such a season. We pray therefore that all our churches will know what it is to discuss and decide well, and to commit all to His guardian care.

In the bonds of the Gospel,



Revd Evan Morgan
Moderator



Revd Brian Huw Jones
Chair of Trustees



Revd Meirion Morris
General Secretary