

7th January 2021

Dear friends,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Synod to draw to your attention the advice that was issued yesterday by the Synod Moderators, **strongly urging Churches not to meet in person** (see attached). I think we are all aware that we are both in the most dangerous phase of the current pandemic with a dramatic rise in numbers diagnosed with it and yet at a hopeful time with the roll out of the vaccines.

It is a very serious concern that hospitals in our area have more COVID patients than in the first wave and there have been a number of incidents in churches where those attending have tested positive. I am sure that those churches which have been open will have taken strenuous precautions to ensure the safety of those attending **but the new strain poses a much greater threat** which can be avoided if people observe the 'stay at home' message from the Government.

I appreciate that attendance at Church for many is important for their well-being, but of course the current guidelines precludes the opportunity for **any** social interaction before and after services. It is naturally tempting to have a chat before or after a service, but that is not allowed and poses a real danger to each other. We hope that it won't be too long before we can return more safely to face-to-face worship. May God grant us patience in this waiting period, know his peace and presence with us with the anxiety we may feel and use us to encourage one another.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George".

Revd George Watt
Synod Council Convener