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## Update on Our Mid-Morning Service: Unity and Space for Growth

### Dear Church,

I wanted to share an update following the latest meeting of the task group that is helping to shape our new mid-morning service, which will begin in September and bring together our two current 10.30am congregations.

At our most recent meeting, we spent time reflecting on the thoughts and feedback of our children and young people, following a conversation Matt and I had with them on Sunday. It was clear that they deeply value the culture and atmosphere of *Family Church* and have concerns about how moving upstairs will impact this. While most of the children and young people do not like the idea of having separate groups on a Sunday morning some are open to the idea.

As a group, we have greatly valued the conversations, emails, and feedback we have received from across the church. This has been invaluable in helping us begin to shape a possible pattern for our time together from September.

It is important to say that what follows is **provisional**. We expect this to grow and develop as we learn together what best serves the whole church family in the months ahead.

### Proposed Monthly Pattern

- **Week 1 – All Age Sunday**  
Gathering together as one church family.
- **Week 2 – Options Sunday**  
Beginning together in sung worship, followed by a choice of ways to engage:
  - Sermon (remain in main worship space)
  - Craft activity (in the Arches)
  - Bible study/discussion (in the Arches)
  - Other creative options (e.g. drama, guided reflection)
- **Week 3 – Communion Sunday**  
Gathering together for Holy Communion.
- **Week 4 – Sermon+ Sunday**  
Beginning together, with the option to:
  - Stay upstairs for an all-age talk
  - Move downstairs for a longer-form sermon

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- **(Week 5 – Occasional)**

In months with a fifth Sunday, we may offer additional options and explore age-specific provision.

Our hope is that this pattern will help us **grow into being one united congregation**, while still holding onto the strengths and values of *Family Church*, particularly the importance of being together across generations. Over time, we will continue to review and adapt what we offer, especially for children and young people, as we learn what works best.

We also discussed how our physical space might better reflect these values. A small group will now begin to explore this further and bring forward ideas.

From September, we are planning to serve tea, coffee, and juice upstairs from 10.30am, with a welcome and sung worship beginning at 10.45am.

At our next meeting, the task group will focus on shaping our sung worship and building teams to support this new pattern.

I wanted to share a picture that came to my mind while I was praying about the process last week. It was of an old-fashioned ridge tent, the type with a central pole where you can only really stand up in the centre. I saw the wind blowing into the entrance of the tent, the sides of the tent started to stretch and expand and then it transformed into a polytunnel! Suddenly a space that was restricted, where only a few could stand, became much larger, now many people could stand and move. A restricted shelter was transformed into a place of growth.

Please do keep praying for the process and if you have questions or comments, please contact me or any of the other task group members: Matt Davies, Alison Montgomery, Dan Metcalfe, Dianne Thew, Claire-Lise Harrison, John Rutter & David Bakes.

God bless

Phil