



# The Good News Letter

COULSDON METHODIST CHURCH  
[www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org](http://www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org)

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## **From our minister**

Dear Friends

You do not need me to tell you that these are unique times. Our country is in what the press are calling “Lock down”. This is the result of the Coronavirus – COVID-19 – and the Government’s strategy for containing it to avoid the NHS being overwhelmed. We are all being encouraged to “Stay at Home” as much as possible and to keep “Social distancing” when we do have to leave our homes. That is applying to everyone, while those with serious health conditions have to be even more careful.

The Church is included in these strictures – and all Methodist Church buildings are all closed. That means that Church life is very different – which makes it all the more important that we find ways to support each other. We are still the Church – the body of Christ – in our dispersed state. We still want to worship, to care for each other and to be of service to the world – in whatever ways we can.

Some of you will have seen the weekly newsheet, which we are producing during this time of closure. (If you haven’t yet, the latest edition is included with this Good News Letter.) There are many things on offer from the wider Church to help us through this time – but we are seeking to offer something locally, which reflects our common life and (sadly) features my face.

If you are on Facebook, please follow our page @coulsdonmethodist. Some things will be offered “live”, including Thursday prayers at 11.45am. each week. If you are otherwise “on line”, please keep checking our church web-site, [www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org](http://www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org), where some form of Sunday worship will be offered.

Please do your best to keep yourself, your friends and family, and the wider community safe.

With love and prayers,

**Stephen**

P.S. Somebody has commented that they didn’t think that what they would be giving up for Lent was their social life. But that’s what’s happened.

## **Part of a blog by Ruth Gee, Assistant Secretary of Conference**

*(Full blog on the Methodist Church website)*

I was standing washing my hands and singing the Lord’s Prayer to myself on the day the churches issued the guidance that there should be no public worship. London like other cities was getting quieter every day, physical greetings were unwelcome, shop shelves were being stripped of items thought to be essential and we were entering a strange new world. This was a world of self-isolation chosen or imposed, a world where we were being separated from loved ones in order to protect them, a world where our physical gathering to worship, pray and share bread and wine was forbidden. This felt like exile from the world I knew and I began to think about the exile of the people of Israel.

*(Long section omitted)*

We may feel that we are in exile, certainties have been stripped away, we are facing an unknown future. For some of us, the fact that we cannot share together in services of Holy Communion is a cause of sorrow and a great loss. Holy Communion is a central and distinctive part of our worshipping community and it is not possible for this to continue at this time. We are forced to accept this, perhaps to grieve and certainly to look forward to the time when we will come together around the Lord’s Table again.

We regret what cannot be but we should also look to those parts of our life that can be continued, enriched and even transformed. There is much that we can do together through social media and other forms of communication, new ideas are being shared on a daily basis among the churches. We continue to pray and will find ways of praying together at particular times and in different ways. Our Methodist Prayer Handbook and other prayer disciplines enable us to retain a sense of community even when we are not in the same place. At a time when we could become completely absorbed by the coronavirus outbreak, prayer schemes and set liturgies encourage us to look beyond our immediate circumstances and to engage with the wider context.

The call to care for others, to be aware of the needs of our neighbours and to offer hope in the desert place of fear and despair is another distinctive of our faith and we are finding many ways to share God's love with those around us. In exile we still respond to the calling of the Methodist Church to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. We are a people in exile and a people of hope, **we are a people for such a time as this.**

### **Purley Food Hub**

With the greatest regret Purley Food Hub closed temporarily on Saturday 28th March. Trevor Jones, Chair of Trustees, and Helen Harris, Chair of the Management Committee, wrote:

"It is with much regret that, for a variety of reasons and to keep everyone safe, the Food Hub in its current format will be suspended after Saturday 28th March until further notice. The principal reason is that significant numbers of our volunteers are vulnerable or they have immediate family members who are vulnerable. This has made a serious reduction in our experienced volunteers who manage the regular Wednesday and Saturday distribution sessions.

"The decision to resume operation will be regularly reviewed, but when we reopen the Food Hub may work in a restricted way in terms of timings and the amount of food we can share until the current crisis passes. After 28th March we will review our stocks and consider how best we can share what God has blessed us with. We are exploring ways in which we will still be able to assist in specific instances of local need which are not being met in other ways."

### **404 bus route and timetable**

I know this is a funny time to announce this, but it is good news for when we are all out and about again, so just store the information away until then! The 404 bus has at last started on its new extended route and its new timetable – I have seen it running round empty... The good news is:

- the route now includes the Goodenough Way estate and the new Cane Hill estate
- the frequency is doubled – it is now running half-hourly
- it now runs on Sundays

I can think of several members who might find this useful.

### **A little fun while on Lockdown**

Rearrange the letters to find the names of books in the Bible...

(No cheating - don't check your Bible!)

1. Used ox
2. hi, mac
3. O, I had B.A.
4. coins a loss
5. to my hit
6. me, Saul
7. metal nations
8. O, Sam
9. no Oslo fogs on 'M'
10. cats

11. sew herb
12. money due to 'R'
13. Ben's rum
14. threes
15. Mt. Wheat
16. hurt
17. raze
18. I select cases
19. a shoe
20. shines on a salt

*For example:* 15. Mt. Wheat = Matthew

##Bible scholars, where are you? 1,2,3...GO! NO CHEATING!

*(Contributed by Maureen C.)*

### **Streets of Croydon**

Did you know that Ralph McTell's song *Streets of London* was originally titled *Streets of Croydon* (where he grew up)? Georgina pointed me towards <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-52046893> where he talks about and sings the new verse which he has written for our current crisis.

### **A few reasons to be cheerful**

The daffodils and primroses are still out and trees are in blossom

Nobody has told the birds about social distancing

Strangers are starting to smile and greet each other (usually at the same time as trying to keep as far apart as possible!)

It's not so noisy and the sky is clearer

-----oooOOOooo-----

### **Loving God,**

If we are ill, strengthen us.

If we are tired, fortify our spirits.

If we are anxious, help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.

Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders.

Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves.

Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your grace.

Help us always to hold fast to the good,

See the good in others,

And remember there is just one world, one hope,

One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

In Jesus we make our prayer,

The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,

In whom we trust these days and all days

### **Amen**

*Revd Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference*

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