



The Good News Letter

COULSDON METHODIST CHURCH

www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org

No.312

January 2020

From our minister

Dear Friends

Happy New Year to you all. Let us hope for a good year for us all as individuals, for our church, for the nation and for the world in 2020.

I have never been good at making New Year resolutions. When I was a boy, I would find my good intentions – like keeping a Diary – would rarely last beyond the first week of January. By the time I became a teenager, I gave up with New Year resolutions. That didn't mean that there weren't times in the year when I attempted to make a new start, to turn over a new leaf – but it was easier without the pressure of calling it a New Year resolution.

The Methodist Covenant service – which many of you may have read about last month – is not quite a New Year resolution – but it is a way annually of reaffirming and (hopefully) renewing our relationship with God. It has traditionally been held at the start of each calendar year; though some churches have now moved it to September and the start of the Methodist year. That has the advantage of allowing time for Christmas and Epiphany to be properly celebrated.

For us, the first Sunday service of the New Year will be our Covenant service. It has been part of my tradition since 1966 – which is the first year that I definitely made my Covenant with God. I have done so every year since – and have chosen to seek God's guidance for my life. That became an issue for me when I believed I might have a Call to Methodist Ministry – and each year I had to consider whether I was following the path God had in mind for me. By the time I reached my mid-twenties, I was at Theological College training for ministry. But the Covenant service continued to echo through my life – especially in the traditional words of the Covenant itself:

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,

I have tried to find God's will and purpose for me – throughout my many years of ministry. However, I arrived here in the summer of 2018 thinking that was the end of my active ministry – that God was ready to "lay me aside". I have since discovered that was not the case – and believe I am still being "put to God's will". Exactly what the future holds I do not know but I will be saying again this year:

"I am no longer my own but yours"

I invite you to make the same affirmation and to discover just what God may have in mind for you.

With every blessing

Stephen

A New Year message from the London District Chairs

As we move from the glitz and the generosity of Christmas into a New Year – may we continue to be inspired by the story of God’s love poured into the world in Jesus and may we work for that fairer world that God longs for – that all might know love, justice and peace – not just on special days but every day. We are woven into God’s story – so let’s be bold and tell our story and God’s story with confidence and joy in 2020 and beyond.

Loving God
You made all creation through the power of love,
You save your people through the power of love,
You move in your church through the power of love,
May we live as those who are woven together by your love,
Sharing all we have with those in need,
Caring enough to work for change to systems that oppress
and loving our neighbours as ourselves.
In the name of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Week of prayer for Christian unity

In Coulsdon we are marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity together with other churches from 18 to 25 January. This year there will be no daily prayer services, but we will join for worship in a united service at 6pm on Sunday 19 January at St Andrew’s Church (on the corner of Woodcote Grove Rd. and Woodmansterne Rd.)

God, giver of life,
we thank You for the gift of Your compassionate love
which soothes and strengthens us.
We pray that our churches
may be always open to receive Your
gifts from one another.
Grant us a spirit of generosity to all
as we journey together in the path of Christian unity.
We ask this in the name of Your Son
who reigns with You and the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Church diary

Sun 5 Jan.	10am	Covenant service (Rev. Stephen Mares)
Thu 9 Jan.	10.30am	Open church (Prayers at 11.45)
	1.30pm	Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>)
Sun 12 Jan.	8.45am	Bible study breakfast (<i>Philemon</i>)
	10am	Morning worship (David Akuffo)
Mon 13 Jan.	8pm	Open to Question (<i>at Sanderstead M.C.</i>)
Thu 16 Jan.	10.30am	Open church (Prayers at 11.45)
	1.30pm	Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>)
Sat 18 Jan.	10am	Churches Together in Coulsdon:
	(<i>for 10.30</i>)	Annual Assembly (<i>at St Aidan’s RC Church</i>)
Sun 19 Jan.	10am	Morning worship (local arrangements)
	6pm	United service (<i>at St Andrew’s Church</i>)
Mon 20 Jan.	10am	Craft Club (<i>Cathedral window patchwork</i>)
Thu 23 Jan.	10.30am	Open church (Prayers at 11.45)
	1.30pm	Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>)
Sun 26 Jan.	10am	Morning worship (Doreen Wright)
Wed 29 Jan.	2.30pm	Time for Tea

Thu 30 Jan.	10.30am	Open church (Prayers at 11.45)
	1.30pm	Table tennis (<i>in church hall</i>)
Sun 2 Feb.	10am	Holy Communion (Rev. Stephen Mares)