



The Good News Letter

COULSDON METHODIST CHURCH

www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org

Facebook: @coulsdonmethodist

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From our minister

Dear Friends

Another month, another Good News Letter, and another time when very little has changed for most of us. We can now meet in slightly bigger groups as long as we are outdoors – and maintaining social distancing, 2 metres apart. We will soon be able to go to a wider range of shops, but for many of us I suspect that we will want to be cautious about coming into close contact with people while shopping. I am conscious that most of us fall into vulnerable groups in relation to this pandemic – for a variety of reasons (but including our age).

There is still no word from the Government concerning churches – apart from permission to start doing repairs and maintenance – and to allow nurseries to begin meeting again – with social distancing. I am glad that we do not have to face that latter issue – as it would require a great deal of work from the church to allow such a reopening; particularly in risk assessments.

Information from other countries suggest that when Churches are allowed to reopen, singing may not be permitted – and the social aspects of church will be very limited to say the least. Singing runs the risk of propelling droplets into the air, which can spread the coronavirus; and there is information from one church in Germany where the virus was spread significantly during the social gathering after the service. Even living with constraints like that, I am still really looking forward to the time when we can meet again. It may have to be according to a “new normal” – no singing, no coffee and no touching - but I am sure it will be good to worship with others.

Until there is news of a reopening, we will still try to offer services to share in. Each week there will be a Sunday service and our Thursday prayers. They will be available on Facebook and our web-site.

These are at:

<https://www.facebook.com/coulsdonmethodist>

and <https://www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org>

With love and prayers

Stephen

A letter from our Superintendent Minister, Revd. Faith Nyota

Dear Friends,

We are now in the tenth week of lockdown and the Government has announced the current restrictions will be eased from Monday 1 June - I want to assure you that the Circuit Leadership Team is praying for you and are working to support you and your families as best we can in these difficult times. We miss seeing each other face to face, praising God together as a family, the hugs, the smiles, the tears, just time in each other's company.

There is likely to be a phased return to meeting in our church buildings. As a circuit leadership team, we are now planning for this time.

Yet in these times God is moving. As stated in a national newspaper report, a quarter of adults in the UK have watched or listened to a religious service since the coronavirus lockdown began, and one in 20 have started praying during the crisis, according to a new survey. The findings of the poll reinforce

indications of an increase in the numbers of people turning to faith for succour amid uncertainty and despair.

Sunday services and other church activities have switched to online: we have a Zoom service every Sunday at 10.30am led by me, which is open for those in the Circuit who are able to join, and Revd. Stephen Mares' service every week via Coulsdon's website www.coulsdonmethodistchurch.org (Worship page). It is easy to invite friends and family to join a live-stream service from the comfort of their own home. If you need help joining, let me know please.

For those not able to join, the weekly Vine service is distributed on email and hard copies are distributed locally to those who have no emails. Please let me know if you are not getting any of this and we will make sure you receive them every week.

The Circuit Staff Team is holding each one of you in prayer. We continue prayer breakfast on Zoom every second Saturday of the month at 9am with Warlingham and last Saturday of the month with Sanderstead. Please email your prayer requests - both needs and encouragements - to me or join us if you can. Prayer is a great way to support each other during this difficult time.

On a practical note, we know that it has been much harder, especially for those who have struggled to find slots at the supermarket. Please know that you are not alone. The Circuit Leadership Team has been so encouraged by what most of you have been doing to reach out to others, including shopping for those not able to do so during this time of challenge and opportunity. So, if you need practical help, please do contact your minister.

Some of you have experienced the pain of bereavement - whether from family or friends, and the added pain of not being able to grieve and comfort one another because of restrictions of social distancing. We are praying for you that you will know the Lord's comfort and that He is present with you.

This Sunday we celebrate Pentecost Sunday. It is the day that the Spirit, which Jesus promised His disciples, comes to earth. Not just to earth, but to our hearts and souls. As we celebrate, it's good to recall how simply the Christian Church actually began - with just a group of ordinary people who had no property, no buildings, but who had an openness and willingness to depend on God and trust Him to provide the gifts they needed. At Pentecost, we read how God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit as a source of great energy and power and in that power, the apostles immediately went out to proclaim Christ (Acts 2: 1-11).

I pray that you will be sustained and encouraged by this great hope we have, and that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to share this glorious good news with those who desperately need to hear it, especially during this time of crisis.

May God grant us an ever-increasing experience of His heart-warming and life-changing love.

Grace and Peace,

Faith

What is distinctive about Methodism?

(The eighth in a series of short articles, reproduced from the website of the Methodist Church)

8. Reading the Bible

Christians need to be familiar with the Bible and to immerse themselves in it. The books of the Old and New Testaments contain a wide variety of literature, including history, law, poetry, gospels, letters, polemic, stories and apocalyptic visions. The texts were written and gathered together over a long period of time, and it is important to find out as much as we can about the original contexts in which texts were produced.

At the same time, Christians read the Bible as part of a faith community, and read the Bible to put ourselves into the story of God's dealings with humanity. The Bible can be puzzling but it is continually a source of inspiration and direction in our lives.

“The Bible is the record of God's self-revelation, supremely in Jesus Christ, and is a means through which he still reveals himself, by the Holy Spirit.” *A Catechism for the people called Methodists*, Q. 52
It is good for Christians with differing approaches to the interpretation of the Bible to engage with each other and argue through how the Bible should be applied to issues in our contemporary world. There are many different resources online to help you make sense of the Bible and develop the habit of reading the Bible regularly and to find out more about biblical texts and stories.

The authority of the Bible: a Methodist Conference report [A Lamp to my Feet and a Light to my Path](#) identified a wide range of views among contemporary Methodists about the Bible's authority.

Bible Month

Coincidentally on purpose, June 2020 is Bible Month. This year's Bible Month is focused on the Book of Ruth. Online magazine and video resources can be accessed through the website www.preachweb.org/biblemonth

Emergency coronavirus appeal

Can you imagine having to face coronavirus without access to running water and soap? In cramped and unhygienic conditions, where social distancing simply isn't possible? This is the reality facing people living in some of the world's poorest communities right now. All We Can, the Methodist Church in Britain and World Development & Relief have launched an Emergency Coronavirus Appeal, to help equip vulnerable communities across the globe to combat coronavirus (COVID-19).

For communities with weaker healthcare systems, or who lack access to clean water and handwashing facilities, the impact of coronavirus will be catastrophic. If you are able to help by making a donation, please go to www.allwecan.org.uk

“Ten thousand reasons”

If you are feeling a bit low and you have access to the Internet, try doing a search for “Facebook Methodist Central Hall Westminster”. When you get to their publicly-available Facebook page scroll down to the video posted on 1 June and you will discover a lovely, uplifting rendition of *Bless the Lord oh my soul* (also widely known as *Ten thousand reasons*) by Matt Redman. Each singing from their own home, Central Hall's Sanctuary congregation of young adults combined to put together the video as part of the 'Aldersgate' Sunday morning worship service.

Sayings of 5-year-olds (*allegedly*)

“I wanted to be a teacher when I grow up, but my first name isn't Mrs.”

“My aunt is my Mum's sister – what a small world!”

“She said it was a piece of cake. But there was no cake at all. She lied about the cake. That is not something to be proud of!”

Bible quiz answers

(*from last month's GNL quiz*) 1, Curse; 2, Saul; 3, Lot's; 4, John the Baptist; 5, 350 years; 6, Gabriel; 7, The word 'God'; 8, Aramaic; 9, John Wycliffe; 10, Psalms; 11, Bethlehem; 12, Matthias; 13, Aaron; 14, Gopher wood; 15, Joshua

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The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never mastered it.

John 1:5