



St John's News

St John's Methodist Church, Baker Street, Potters Bar EN6 2DZ
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Registered Charity No 1130633

SERVICES

St John's will be re-opening for Sunday Morning Worship services from this Sunday 26th July at 10.30am.

Please see back page for full details of the precautions that will be in place for the time being to allow that to happen.

Sunday 26th July

10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev David Chapman (Chair of District)

Duty steward: Dave Best

Sunday 2nd August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev Rosemary Fletcher

Duty steward: Chris Humphreys

Sunday 9th August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev Gareth Powell

Duty steward: Myra Sloper

Sunday 16th August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev Rosemary Fletcher

Duty steward: Robin Burns

Sunday 23rd August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev Ali Facey

Duty steward: Dave Best

Sunday 30th August

10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev Ali Facey

Duty steward: Helen Jeckells

August 2020

The return from exile!

As we prepare to return to worship in church it is a good time to reflect on what we have learned from this strange period of social isolation.

Our time in lockdown has been compared to the Israelites experience of being in exile in the sixth century BC. We were not carried off into exile by an invading army, but, like the Israelites, we have had a significant experience of dislocation and isolation and being cut off from our usual place of worship.

When the Israelites first went into exile they had a massive sense of loss and they asked "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Psalm 137.5). However, as the years passed, the experience of exile turned out to have many positives: they repented and turned away from idols, they studied the law and wrote down much of the Old Testament in its present form.

In the same way, there has been a great sense of loss for people in our communities who will emerge from this pandemic battered, bruised, and financially weakened, and will need a chance to lament properly the trauma and loss that they have experienced.



Alongside this is an acknowledgement of the positive values that have been rediscovered, such as the value of community and caring for those in need, seen in neighbours doing the shopping for those in their street who are shielding and self-

isolating.

Just as for the Israelites, for whom returning from exile involved a lot of hard work and the eventual rebuilding of the Temple, we are grateful to Chris Humphreys and to members of the Fix It Group who have been moving the furniture in church and establishing hand sanitiser stations, among other things, to make sure the church is as safe as possible for people to return to worship. As a result of their hard work I am pleased to say that the Church Council unanimously decided to reopen the church on 26th July, and so, like the Israelites who returned to Jerusalem from exile, it is with great joy that we will be able to return to worshipping in the church. I look forward to welcoming as many of you as feel able to come. May we together once more:

Worship the Lord with gladness.

Psalm 100.1-2

Rev Ali Facey

EMERGENCY CORONAVIRUS APPEAL

Pray. Give. Save lives >>

The Methodist Church



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 Ireland 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. That's why we're asking: **please do all that you can to help save lives today.**

Please donate by browsing to www.allwecan.org.uk/coronavirus/ or by ringing All We Can on 020 7467 5132.

Thank you!

Many of us would like to thank all those involved in the production and delivery of weekly orders of service together with the St John's Weekly news. These have been sent out by email or posted through letterboxes by a diligent team of helpers since March. The contact between the church family has been very important particularly to those who have remained at home during this time. We are all grateful.

The pastoral team have been absolutely wonderful during this period and I am so thankful for all they have done. Phone calls, letter writing, shopping and latterly social distancing in gardens which have been lovingly cared for - and may well be blooming better than they have in previous times!

Helen Barlow

News of the church family

As some of us look forward to being able to get together again, we are very much aware that others wish to continue self isolating at home. We want to make sure that no one is forgotten. Therefore at this time we pray for everybody but especially those in our congregation and their families who are unwell, recovering from surgery, awaiting results from tests or due to have hospital stays soon. Please remember them in your prayers.

We celebrate with **Robin Burns** that he was given a surprisingly early date for his operation. That went ahead and he is now back at home. We pray for him, and for those whose operations or treatments are delayed.

If you would like to include any future news, please contact Helen Barlow (Pastoral Secretary) on 01707 662254 or foodtech16@hotmail.co.uk

A Methodist Way of Life

A Methodist Way of Life is a way of living. It is how we try to live our lives in response to God's love, made known to us in Jesus. Like the early Christians (Acts 2.42-47), we seek to express what it means to follow Jesus in the regular, practical actions of worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism.

In this sense, A Methodist Way of Life is both new and old. It is new, in that Methodists first discussed such a way at the 2018 Conference, although it is based on Our Calling, agreed in 2000. That, in turn, was built on what Methodists have always done, since the days of John Wesley, in trying to follow Jesus and live out the Christian faith – just as those first followers in Acts did. The commitments of A Methodist Way of Life remind us of, and provide a compass for, Christian living.

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

Worship

- We will pray daily.
- We will worship with others regularly.
- We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

Learning and Caring

- We will care for ourselves and those around us.
- We will learn more about our faith.
- We will practise hospitality and generosity.

Service

- We will help people in our communities and beyond.
- We will care for creation and all God's gifts.
- We will challenge injustice.

Evangelism

- We will speak of the love of God.
- We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.
- We will share our faith with others.

May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church, for the transformation of the world.

A Methodist Way of Life encourages us to grow together. Make time to discuss these questions regularly with others.

Worship

- What is the pattern of your prayer life?
- How easy or hard do you find it to pray?
- What has spoken to you recently in worship or in the Bible?
- When, lately, have you felt close to God or distant from God?

Learning and Caring

- How have you practised generosity since we last met?
- How have you shown hospitality to others recently?
- How are you caring for yourself?
- How and what are you learning now?

Service

- How are you seeking to serve others in your communities and beyond? What has helped or hindered you in your service of others?
- How are you caring for God's creation?
- How are you using God's gifts (including your financial resources)?
- What issues of injustice are you currently concerned about? What are you doing in response?

Evangelism

- When was the last time you were able to talk about God?
- What opportunities to share your faith have there been since we last met?
- How have you responded to opportunities to share your faith?
- Is there anyone you might invite to consider Christian faith?

How can we support each other in our Way of Life commitments?

Church flowers

We will be having an artificial arrangement in the pedestal at the front of the church which will be able to remain in place for the time being. Sadly, therefore, we're unable to distribute any flowers after the service. Hopefully we'll be able to have lovely fresh flowers again before too long.

Margaret Bland

St John's News

From 26th July, we will revert to producing the normal monthly St John's News rather than the weekly version that has been the pattern over the past few months of lockdown. Please ensure that items for inclusion in the September edition are sent to the SJ News email address (on p1) by Sunday 30th August.

A guide to praying the news

The news is terrible, every day. I can't even look at the headlines without dissolving into despair and rage. In this time of isolation, it's easy to feel like we can't do anything to help. But I have been working over the past few months to recognise the news as an invitation to embrace my connection to every other human being in the world, every single one of whom bears the image of God. Sitting down with the newspaper has become a beautiful way for me to remember that we are all called, through prayer and action, to participate in the great work of redemption of all creation.

I wrote this prayer guide, a **Meditation in six movements**, in the autumn of 2019, thinking of the refugee crisis, the Rohingya genocide, the Amazon wildfires. But I have been returning to it again and again during these days of pandemic, especially as a bridge to carry me over the river of impersonal numbers, to reanimate my connection to all who suffer, and to remind me that I can make a difference!

Cameron Bellm (adapted and used with permission), <http://krugthethinker.com>

First Movement:

Begin by acknowledging the presence of God, who created the heavens and earth, and who cares deeply and intimately about each and every human being, all of whom bear His image in the world. Ask Him to open your heart and your mind as you read, and to lead you to articles that spur your participation in the great redemptive work of God.

Second Movement:

Read the article. St. Ignatius teaches us that God speaks to us through our emotions, so pay attention to the places where your heart feels most engaged, whether it is a quote, a detail, an image, a person's name. Ask God to keep these moments aflame in your heart.

Third Movement:

Adopting a posture of prayer, begin by saying the names of each person mentioned in the article, for God knows all of their names and cherishes each one. Pray, too, for those whose names are not given. It is so easy to feel disconnected from large numbers of victims reported in the news. For those enduring unspeakable suffering (this is horrifically almost always the case), pray for relief, for comfort, for fortitude. Pray that God will place at least one person in their path to speak a word of



Join your voice with the millions of people of faith who have prayed the words of **Psalm 46** for thousands of years:

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should
change; though the mountains
shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and
foam,
though the mountains tremble
with its tumult.*

tenderness, of humanisation to them. Pray for an end to their suffering.

Fourth Movement:

Even though the news is often enraging, ask God to help you do something productive with your anger. Jesus tells us, no matter how angry we may be, to pray for our enemies. Let's get praying. Pray for those who inflict suffering to have a change of heart. Pray for inhumane policies to be changed. Pray for prophets and saints to be raised up during these dark days.

Fifth Movement:

Pray in your own words for justice. Take comfort, even for just a moment, in the knowledge that countless others are also praying for these people, this country, this situation, with their words and their hearts and their very lives.

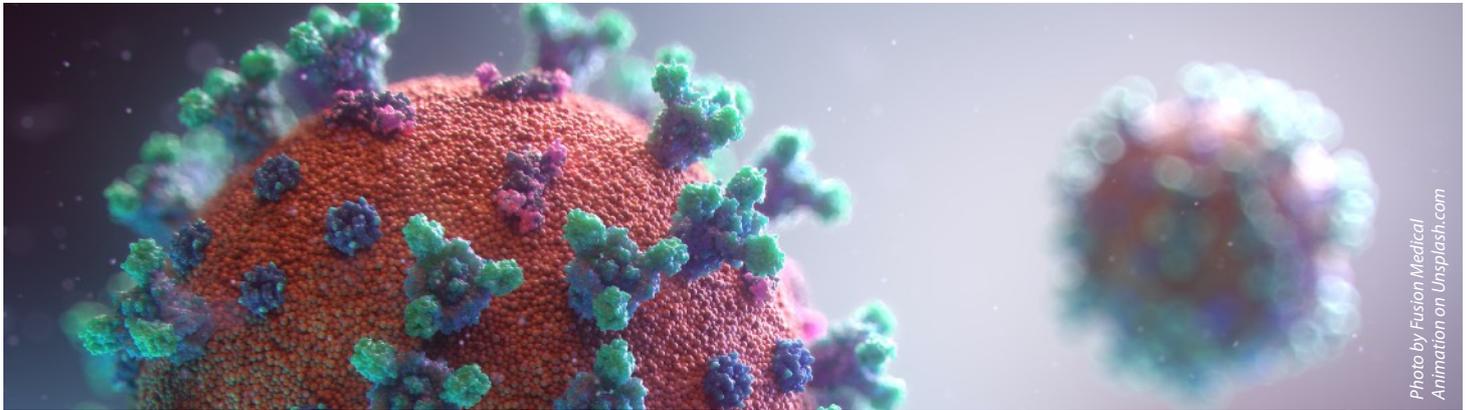
Sixth Movement:

"When you pray, move your feet." (African proverb). Remember that we are called, through our prayers, and actions,, to be part of the redemption of all creation. Get googling to find ways you can help,, whether it is a donation of time or finances, a letter to your MP, or a group you can join. Who are the modern-day prophets of the injustice about which you read? Make it a point to seek them out and listen to them. The beautiful thing about the Kingdom of God is that it is all around us: join the work begun by others, or, if there is a need not being met, begin your own. Ask God to direct you to the place where you may love the best, the most, the deepest.

Minister - Rev Rosemary Fletcher 01727 857826 rosemary.fletcher@methodist.org.uk
Senior Steward: Chris Humphreys 01707 851320 (seniorsteward@stjohnspb.org.uk)
Treasurer: Rob Ward (treasurer@stjohnspb.org.uk)
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Copy deadline for next issue is Sunday 30th August

Articles in 'St John's News' contain personal opinions of contributors and may not reflect the opinions of the Editors, Minister or Members



Details about re-opening for Sunday Worship with COVID-19 precautions

We are delighted to announce (following a unanimous decision by the Church Council*) that we will be re-opening St John's for Sunday Morning Worship services from this Sunday 26th July at 10.30am although, of course, there will be a number of differences from what we are all used to.

Please read these important details:

- ▶ Please stay at home if you have any of the symptoms of Covid-19 (high temperature, new continuous cough, loss of/change to sense of smell or taste)
- ▶ Everyone is welcome but please be aware of the government guidance relating to vulnerable people

- ▶ Please observe social distancing and be guided by the welcomers & signs
- ▶ The wearing of a face covering to a place of worship is strongly recommended
- ▶ Please use the hand sanitiser on entry to the building (only use the front door, except stewards)
- ▶ We will need to record your name for the Test & Trace service but this is only kept for the specified time
- ▶ Chairs have been spaced out and are in pairs. You may sit together only with someone from your own household or bubble.
- ▶ Presently there will be no singing during the service, although we will be able to listen to some of our

musicians and see the words of the hymns

- ▶ For the time being, there will be no after service chat or refreshments although toilets will be available
- ▶ Currently there will be no special provision for children although they are welcome to accompany their parents to the service
- ▶ We are continuing to provide the Circuit Service so that those who are unable to join us can still enjoy a service at home
- ▶ If you have any notices to be read out, these must be sent to the duty steward beforehand

These details and many more measures have been put in place for your safety. Although things will seem far from normal, we will be able to adjust and improve our experience as time goes by and we become used to our new way of worshipping.

St John's Leadership Team

*Note: In putting together these measures the Leadership Team has consulted Government guidance, Methodist guidance, our Health & Safety Officer, our Safeguarding Officer, our Property Stewards as well as our resident doctors.

CHURCH GROUPS AND REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Most of our groups and activities are still not operating as normal. If you are in any doubt, or need to contact those leading our regular groups and activities, please go to our website stjohnspb.org.uk to find the contact details for the relevant people.

COFFEE MEETING

By popular demand, we have decided to continue our weekly Zoom coffee meeting. So we invite you to join us for a chat at the new later time of 12.00 on Sundays. Details will be in the weekly update emails.