



The Methodist Church
Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit
Newsletter

Issue 33

July 2020

Superintendent Minister's Letter:

Summer 2020 and the future of worship in our circuit

Dear Friends,

As we enter the summer months, many of us would normally be looking forward to the end of the school term, to summer holidays and an opportunity to get away from home for a week or two, perhaps to a warmer clime. This year, life feels so very different. Lockdown has meant that for a number of months, many of us have been unable to travel, or even to spend time with family and friends. At the moment, the Coronavirus epidemic appears to be coming under control in London, and lockdown restrictions are being gradually lifted. However, as summer arrives, rather than planning flights to sunnier climes, many of us will instead be looking forward to 'Staycations' possibly spent at home, possibly travelling to see loved ones we have not seen for some time.

All of us need the chance to get away from our work and take a well-earned rest from the daily routine of our lives. We all need the chance to recharge our batteries and prepare ourselves physically, psychologically, and spiritually for the challenges of the year ahead. The Bible certainly talks a lot about rest, for example, we read in Genesis that when God created the world, he rested on the seventh day and he blessed this day and made it Holy. So it is that from the earliest of times, people of faith have always kept one day a week as a Sabbath, a day of rest to worship God and thank him for his goodness. In the New Testament, Jesus tells his friends, 'Come to me all who are weary and whose load is heavy; I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). The Bible encourages us to believe that taking periods of rest is a healthy part of being the whole people that God wants us to be.

So don't feel guilty about taking a holiday this summer. Holidays or 'holy days' as they were originally called are a God given opportunity for us all to re-charge our physical and our spiritual batteries. They allow us to stand aside from the

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hustle and bustle of our daily routines to reflect upon our lives and God's place within our lives.

So when we come back from our holidays, what does the future hold for the churches in our circuit? When our Circuit Leadership team (CLT) met by videoconference on Wednesday June 3rd we discussed the possible resumption of worship and/or opening churches for private prayer once the Government and the Methodist Connexion allow this to happen. We realise that 'lockdown' has been a difficult period for everyone. We have all suffered financially, emotionally and spiritually. Our ministers and lay leaders have worked hard to keep in contact with as many people as possible, and our weekly circuit on-line services have been well received. However, we all miss the face to face fellowship of public worship that lockdown has quite rightly prohibited in the government's attempts to bring the Coronavirus pandemic under control.

We are mindful that the Government has announced that places of worship will be allowed to open for private prayer from June 15th as long as they meet certain hygiene and social distancing regulations. There is also the possibility that public worship may be allowed to take place after July 4th if similar conditions are met. We are also aware that our Methodist Connexion has announced that the resumption of neither of these activities should be planned on our premises until the Methodist Conference meets and reaches a mind in its sessions between June 25th and July 2nd. We currently await publication of guidance following Conference, and will circulate this as and when appropriate.

In the meantime, a prayerfully informed discussion took place in our recent CLT meeting. We received feedback from Local preachers and church officers across the circuit, and we studied a number of documents that explained what re-opening our buildings would involve. The conclusion of our meeting was that we in the Blackheath & Crystal Palace Circuit are not ready to return to our places of worship yet. There are too many difficult issues that need to be considered before we do so. This means that we will be not opening any of our churches for worship or private prayer during July or August 2020. The one exception may be the Welcome service for Revd Charles Ilunga on the afternoon of Saturday August 29th. Venue and time to be announced.

Pending further advice from the government and the Methodist Connexion, it is hoped, however, that some form of public worship might be allowed to restart in September. The CLT will meet again by Videoconference on August 4th to

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review the situation. We will of course keep you undated but in the meantime, if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your minister.

Please continue to support and encourage your church communities in this difficult time.

Kind regards

Richard

What Makes a Methodist?

The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love



The Church exists to help people grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care

The Church exists to be a good neighbour and to challenge injustice



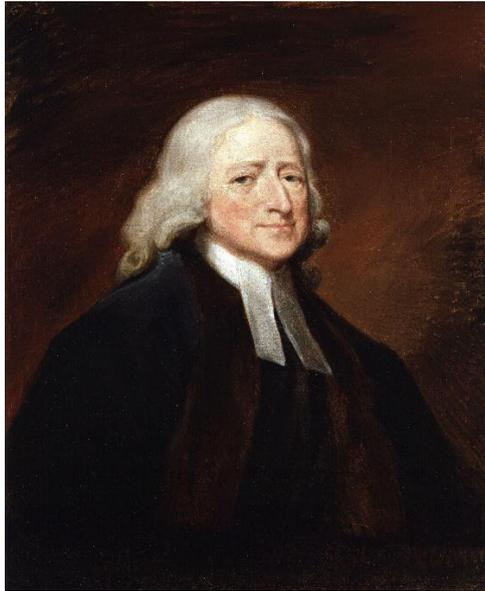
The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ

James Thorpe, the young Sierra Leonean man who played the piano and sang at Richard's welcome service, is now training as a local preacher in the Southwark and Deptford circuit. He has asked whether there is anyone in our circuit who could send him a 'short note, audio or audio visual explaining why are they are Methodists' He says they could explain whether it's through parents influence or self-choice. This is a project which will form part of his LP studies.

Please contact Richard if you are able to help. Thank you.

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John Wesley Evensong (Virtual)
Oxford, Friday 19 June 2020



300 years ago, in June 1720, John Wesley matriculated at Oxford University, entering Christ Church. On Friday 19th June there was a commemorative 'virtual' Evensong at Christ Church Cathedral (6.00pm, Oxford time). The link to access is below.

As an invitation the Dean of Christ Church, Revd. Prof. Martyn Percy, has written:

Three hundred years ago John Wesley, founder of Methodism, arrived at Christ Church as an undergraduate. It is a special pleasure and privilege to be welcoming our Methodist friends and colleagues to celebrate this in our Service of Evensong. Methodism is a bright star in the Ecumenical firmament, and has given us some of the most remarkable exemplars of social activism, liberation and reconciliation movements, work with our poorest and most vulnerable, poetry, hymns – and powerful, engaged theology. We are delighted to be celebrating John Wesley in this special Evensong. Wesley was an undergraduate in this college, ordained in our cathedral, and began his journey of study, prayer and discipline as a member of this university. We celebrate his substantial, deep and wide-ranging contributions to Christian life and faith, and his continuing significance to Christians around the world.

<https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/oxfords-cathedral/online-worship>

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Dear Friends,

This summer is very different, isn't it? If we go to Parks, pools and beaches, we may be distancing from our most vulnerable friends and family members. Our children finished school at home, and now many of their summer programmes are cancelled. We are in painful insecurity. We never thought that one virus will cause so much suffering for so many in our lifetime. Even though we hear in the news that the coronavirus outbreak is shrinking now, but the reality is, we are all worried and afraid still.

When we come across with the words, 'Don't worry', two small alien words in our world in these days. Everyone is worrying at the moment. We are worried, and we are fearful. Especially right now with all the current events we see, hear in our news and experience in personal lives. So how in the world can we not worry? We have never had a season like this before. Many of us are looking for comfort and solid truth we can cling to, and reminders of peace and hope.

With all that in mind, we can't think of a better place to go to except coming to God and his word of truth and comfort. In the book of Psalms, we have lots of words that will inspire our heart and help us live our faith. The Lord wants us to share our life with Him! He complexly formed us in our mother's womb. Psalm 139 is one of my favourite Psalms because it speaks of God's omnipresence and his knowledge about his people.

"You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me."

Psalm 139:5 (NIV)

God knows and loves us completely. He already knows what makes us feel happy or sad, excited or scared, loved or rejected. God is with us through every situation, in every trial, protecting, loving and guiding us. Alongside this, He still desires that we bring our successes, fears and failures to Him in prayer.

Prayer makes the impossible, possible. Our prayers are not effective because of our own doing or our own strength. They are so powerful when God meets us in our prayers. The power and strength of our prayers are in the One who hears our prayers, not the one saying them. God works through all things, and all things are possible with Him.

We don't know when things will start to feel normal, and it may be that things will keep changing and we have to adjust with them. Our hope is not attached to what was or what will be. Our hope is in the One who is with us here and now,

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through sleepless nights and wonderful days. He, who is unseen, sees us in all our weariness and grief. He holds us and our children close, and tells us to rest in His embrace.

Through Psalms, we see God's love, compassion and unshakable commitment to His people. We see God's nearness and God's with-ness. We know we are not alone. Psalm 139 is full of God's promises — that before we even speak, God knows our thoughts and hearts (v. 1-6), that no matter where we go, God's Spirit is with us (v. 7-10), and that darkness will not swallow us up, because darkness is like light to God (v. 11-12).

We need to hold onto this promise, that even in the darkest places, God knows us fully and is with us completely. For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

Has your view on COVID-19 changed with time?

God's Word reminds us He doesn't intend for us to live in fear. He assures us with His promise that;

“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!” Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)

Trust Him and hold onto this promise now: God is an anchor of peace when nothing seems certain. May God bless you with His peace, hope, and presence.

Every blessings,

Rohama Asif



YOU WILL KEEP
IN PERFECT PEACE
ALL WHO TRUST IN YOU
ISAIAH 26:3



The sad news has reached us that one of our former Ministers at Anerley & Upper Norwood – Rev. Peter Coates passed away last week. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Kathleen and to Peter's children Jenny & Christopher and to other members of the Peter's family and friends.

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A Psalm of lament and praise in a time of coronavirus:

The Revd Kenneth Howcroft

How shall we praise you, Lord, our God?

When we are locked down,
how shall we praise you?

When the doors to your house are barred,
and your people cannot assemble?

When those desperately in need of money and work
cannot even wait in the market-place?

When we have to circle round people in the street,
and to queue for shops maintaining safe distance?

When we can only communicate by hearing on the phone,
or seeing on the screen; or digitally messaging,
or even just waving through a window?

When we cannot meet our parents and children,
grandparents and grandchildren,
or other family members and friends?

When we cannot touch them in their flesh and blood,
to know they are really alive?

How shall we praise you?

How, like Thomas, shall we not see yet believe that your son is raised among
us? How shall we praise you?

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How can I praise you, Lord?

Are you plaguing us with this virus to punish us because we have all done wrong,

or thought wrongly, or felt wrongly, or just been wrong?

If so, why do only some die, and those, apparently, the ones who are the least worst or most caring amongst us?

Or are you trying to teach us a lesson?

If so, why is it so hard to learn?

And how are we to find the answer when we do not even know the question?

Or are you still the same loving God, coming to us in our sufferings and opening up the way to new life in Jesus?

Lord, I will try to praise you.

Through gritted teeth, I will try to praise you.

I will try to remember that you have created all things, and this virus is part of your creation.

I will try not to hate it but seek to mitigate its harm.

I will try to keep myself and others safe.

I will work to pray for them and seek to help in whatever way I can.

Lord, when I cannot pray or worship help me be aware of all your people and your saints and angels hovering around me, lifting me up.

When I feel alone, let me feel you near me, even if only for a moment that enables me to go on.

Let me hear you say "Peace be with you".

Lord, I will praise you.

Let all the peoples praise you.

Amen

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DONATE

We want to make sure that no one in our local community has to go hungry, but we need your help to make this happen. Your gift of financial support, time, business partnership and food can make a real difference. Big or small, every gift you give helps transform lives.

Our foodbank is run by local people for local people – we rely on the community's support to ensure we can continue to stop people going hungry. Can you invest in the future of our project and help us provide much-needed support to people in crisis in our community?

Lewisham Mayoral Appeal:

To give specifically to support us during the Covid-19 crisis:

<https://www.lewishamfoodbankappeal.co.uk/>

REGULAR GIVING WITH STANDING ORDER & GIFTAID:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8cjxkfpbbtj05xv/Foodbank%20Standing%20Order%20form.pdf?dl=0>

ONE-OFF GIFTS:

Check on the link to donate online with **JustGiving**

Text lewishamfood5 to 70085 to donate £5. This will cost £5 plus your standard rate message charge. You can give any whole amount up to £20.



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Mental Health and Wellbeing
Support to help adults in Lewisham borough recover from mental ill health and maintain their wellbeing.

One-to-One Support: Tailored support, information and advice around your needs and interests, to aid your mental health recovery, help you stay well, and make use of local community services.

Peer Support: Meet with like-minded people in safe and supportive groups, run by people with their own experiences of mental health difficulties and recovery.

Courses, Groups & Workshops: Learn skills for life and looking after yourself, develop interests and hobbies, and make new social connections.

Access Support

Adults living in the London Borough of Lewisham can access support by contacting us directly or through a referral by a health and social care professional. <https://www.lewishamcommunitywellbeing.org.uk/>

Phone: 020 3228 0760

Address **Central Office:** Lewisham Community Wellbeing
c/o Bromley, Lewisham & Greenwich Mind, 91 Granville Park, Lewisham
SE13 7DW

Bromley Well Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
Find COVID-19 mental wellbeing support

We provide:

- A series of telephone appointments to help you first understand and then consider ways to look after yourself and practically manage your wellbeing
- Information and advice on appropriate services and therapies available locally and how to successfully access them
- Peer support activities to help you meet new people with similar experiences, share common difficulties and explore creative ways to maintain improved wellbeing.

Bromley Well provides help for you to stay emotionally and physically well and to remain independent.

9am-5pm 7 days a week ☎ **0300 330 9039** ✉ spa@bromleywell.org.uk

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CIRCUIT CONCERT held on Saturday 1st June 2019 at Forest Hill Methodist Church

Dear All,

As you will remember we held a Circuit concert at Forest Hill Methodist Church as part of a fundraising initiative for Summit Happy Home, an orphanage in Arusha Tanzania. The concert raised about £320 and a further £200 or so was raised through a table sale, and 2 coffee mornings. A total of £547 was sent to K2 Adventures Foundation. Their notes of thanks were posted in the Circuit newsletter at the time, but are worth repeating:

“On behalf of all the individuals we serve, at K2 Adventures Foundation, we are so grateful. Thank you for your loving support of the orphaned children that reside at Summit Happy Home. Donation’s like yours will serve the children with their education and meals.” *Kristen Salcito Sandquist K2 Adventures*

“Thank you so much for your amazing generosity and hard work to make all this happen!! Summit Happy Home is a sanctuary of growth, safety, love and care for these incredible kids.” *Blair Singer Mountain Leadership Experience*

Most of the concert was filmed and the participants have kindly agreed that we circulate the links (it is in 2 parts). This is so those who missed the concert can see it and those who were able to come along can enjoy it a second time. It is an example of the kindness, generosity, and unity that we need especially at times like this. I hope you enjoy it.

Taiwo Dayo-Payne (Forest Hill)

Concert part 1(47 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wa8tNefJKOg&feature=youtu.be>

Concert part 2 (14mins):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPvLX2k7AOM&feature=youtu.be>

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If you have missed any of the Circuit services on YouTube, details below, or available via the Circuit website

<https://bhcpmethodist.org.uk/>

The readings are taken from the Revised English Bible (REB)

Service for Sunday 28th June 2020: <https://youtu.be/LR14OfWY518>

Service for Sunday 21st June 2020: <https://youtu.be/LYDAmVFuiSU>

Service for Sunday 14th June 2020: <https://youtu.be/Nys42zaRWFQ>

Service for Trinity Sunday 7th June 2020: <https://youtu.be/bbURjUiKvTE>

Service for Pentecost, 31st May 2020: <https://youtu.be/xzy6VYZDMpU>

Service for Sunday 24th May 2020: https://youtu.be/e_f3o8RnBMM

Service for Sunday 17th May 2020: <https://youtu.be/-R6lhWDG4ZU>

Service for Sunday 10th May 2020: <https://youtu.be/zUfSV4H5jjk>

Service for Sunday 3rd May 2020: <https://youtu.be/IwxLVj2Kf7M>

In addition you may wish to view the following

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgY7_PJL9LgBkVGI3o0Jjiw/

which has been prepared by the London District Office

'Keeping the Faith during lockdown'.

Additional worship resources are available from the Methodist Church

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/>

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