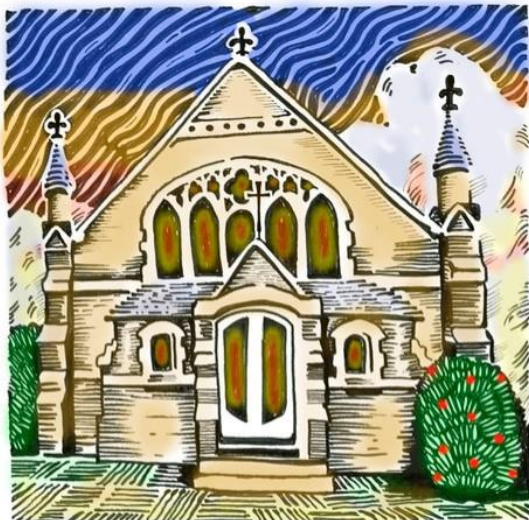


The Link



h e N o t i c e s



Welcome to this occasional
newsletter, keeping you in contact
with Hockley and Hawkwell
Methodist Church

March 2020

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Minister – Rev Dr Michael Moon

This isn't quite The Link and it isn't quite The Notices, it's an occasional bulletin to keep you in contact with Hockley and Hawkwell Methodist Church whilst we're closed. It'll be an electronic version except for the few paper copies produced for our members and friends who don't have e-mail.

The format will be very loose as it's going to be produced quickly (and cheerfully) by whoever's available and the frequency will depend on what we have to tell you – and whatever you have to offer – personal news, interesting information – send it to

hmethsLINK@gmail.com

The content of this edition includes some information about the closure of the premises because of the Coronavirus epidemic and about how you can read, watch and listen to Church services while we're closed. There's also a reflection from our Minister Rev Dr Michael Moon and a message from our Circuit Minister Rev Pete Moorhouse plus some contact details.

The Church Council

Because it couldn't meet physically the Church Council has tried to make some decisions about the closure of the Church via e-mails. Some of the decisions were overtaken by events (e.g. the government advice on self-isolation and social distancing but this is a summary:

- The Council formally agreed to close the premises to all activities
- Pastoral visitors will keep in contact with members and friends
- Members will be asked to continue their weekly giving
- The gate will be kept locked with a limited number of keys
- Cleaning will be reviewed
- Heating will be reviewed
- The relaunch of The Link will be postponed
- Notices will be displayed at Church and on the website confirming closure and giving contact details
- Service sheets and links to live church services will be made available via e-mails

The Proposals for Service times

At the Annual Church Meeting proposals by Rev Calvin Samuel for revisions to Sunday Service times to either 9:30am or 11:15am were considered. The proposals aim to allow Rev Samuel to preach at each of his three churches twice every month.

The meeting welcomed this objective and indicated, by a single vote, that 9:30am was its preferred option but the final decision was up to the Church Council. Unfortunately, the Church Council's email vote was a dead heat. The Church Council is now considering how to respond to the proposed changes, in the light of current circumstances.



A Reflection from Rev Michael Moon “God’s Megaphone” (C. S. Lewis)



In times like these: The world has turned upside down so quickly. Despite spring brings its magical power of the resurrection to the world, here and now, we are in a global pandemic. Day after

day, the cases of the infected and the dead are mounting up. I cannot imagine how many people in the world are confined to their homes at this time. By the time of writing this piece, Jane and I should have been on the island of Iona! The island of Iona seems too far to reach at this time. And we are unable to see our grandchildren as they live only a couple of hours away from us. Jane only sees the flowers delivered from her daughters for Mother's Day. Thank God the world invented the internet that we can see each other on the screen at this time!

It is realistic to be fearful: Affirmatively, we are scared, anxious and fearfully paranoid as we may feel we are walking in a minefield today not knowing how to navigate the path.

This current invisible power challenges our health services, workplaces, vital national infrastructure, and the social and communal fabric of our lives. There is a risk over our job, business, studies, sports, travel plans, events...needless to say, indeed, we are unable to see each other in the church. This virus is robbing our Sunday service and fellowship. Such the necessary formalities in our life have been arrested and snatched by this hidden enemy. With its enormous power, the coronavirus is crumpling the world economy by building a web of infection worldwide. The extensive effect on global life and the world economy is yet unknown as the battle has only just been triggered.

God's megaphone: As Christians then, what should our Christians response be to such fear of the pandemic? How can we practice our faith in this time of confusion? Recently, John Piper, an America preacher stated that this pandemic might be 'God's thunderclap' to the world. For C. S. Lewis, this kind of pandemic which plunges the whole world in a global fear could be 'God's megaphone.' In a way, this world has encountered a significant time to reflect on the modernity of our life. Since the attack of the invisible virus, the

noise of modernised movements has been on hold. However, I believe there is a genuine opportunity in the middle of this challenging time. What possible things could eliminate such unprecedented gaps in our demanding agendas?

Plagues remain nothing new! We can observe various cases of the pandemic in the Bible. For example, God permits the ten devastating plagues upon the people of Egypt in the Bible; the message was “Let my people go!” And I recall the story of the Bronze Serpent at this time (Numbers 21:6-9). The fiery serpents bit the people, and so many people of Israel die in the wilderness. And Moses makes a ‘Bronze Serpent’ for healing from the fatal bites. The bronze serpent seems to be the magic wand we are desperately hoping for at this time—the vaccine or the treatment from the COVID-19. Possibly, it is time for the world to listen to God what he tries to say to the world. One word, if I may, could be the message of ‘Repent’ in the Season of Lent 2020. Thus, I believe there is a genuine opportunity in the middle of this worrying time.

Prayers during this Pandemic: To us, this global crisis is to pray on our knees for the suffering world. The crisis is urgent, and we feel vulnerable. But perhaps feeling small is the best reminder to pray. In this manner, let us call upon God asking his mercy and guidance: *For the sick and infected—For God’s healing touch and sustaining strength. *For our vulnerable populations—For God’s protection on our elderly and those suffering from chronic disease. *For our local, state, and federal governments—For God’s help on our officials, as they allocate the necessary resources for combatting this pandemic. *For our scientific communities—For God’s knowledge and wisdom on the worldwide clinical scientists to discover the virus and invent vaccine and treatment.

God maintains the whole world in his hands. Therefore, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:6–7, NIV). With love and concerns.

Michael Moon



A message from Rev Peter Moorhouse

Tuesday 17th March 2020.

1 Peter 5:7 - "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you".

Southend and Leigh Circuit Response to Corona Virus

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It seems we are as a nation heading into unprecedented times. None of us have ever seen anything like this. Over the last weeks we have watched and prayed as nation upon nation has fallen to the virus. With more and more cases being reported and tragically more deaths in the UK we have seen the governments response increase. Yesterday many of us watch our Prime Minister a usually confident man look worried and introduce more restrictions in the battle to stop this virus spread.

Today our President and the Senior Leadership team of our Church joined our Brothers and Sisters in the all the major Churches in Britain to cease Worship Services and all activity in the churches. Kathy as Circuit Meeting secretary and myself had already made the decision to cancel Thursdays Circuit Meeting. Which is a shame for as well as our usual business I had some really exciting news to share about the experience project which we are running at Whittingham Avenue. All business will now be transferred to the June meeting.

So, what next? Like everyone else the Methodist Church is taking one day at a time. There is regular advice and updates daily on the Methodist Church website. **The Churches are to shutdown all church activities until further notice.** All services, groups and gatherings. Some services may have to take place, Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms but numbers will have to be limited and where possible postpone. I'm presently taking advice about the Night Shelter.

I will contact the senior steward of each church and staff members when we can reopen. If you let your premises to outside lets it is their responsibility and insurance whether they stay open but bear in mind the church council members remain the trustees of the building and are liable. You may want to decide if you're willing to take the risk in the present climate or at least check each lettings insurance. All members should decide for themselves what is the best way forward to protect themselves in this present time.

Let's remember first and foremost we are a church. We exist too worship and give thanks to God and secondly to serve one another. While it may be impossible to meet together for a short while we can still worship together. Every week there be a service provided via

Southend and Leigh Circuit is part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain

either live stream on the Methodist Church Website or a downloadable sheet also on the Website. Some of the bigger church within the country are also live stream Service, i.e HTB, Hillsong, etc.

We should also take care of one another, all churches have directory, lets ring one another up and keep a watchful eye out. Those well enough and not at risk help one another as well. Unfortunately, we have to limit face to face pastoral visits from the minister's but we are all at the end of the telephone.

We do not, at the moment have any reported cases within the membership of the circuit.

On a personal note some of you may know that my wife Natalie had pneumonia at Christmas. Unfortunately, due to a long-standing life condition (intracranial hypertension) she hasn't recovered yet. So, it is with much sadness we as a family have decided to self-isolate. I myself have asthma and we decided that puts us very much at risk. If every situation has a silver lining, then at least you will be able to get me hold of me by telephone or email. Details of which at the top of this letter.

Finally, be assured of our prayers at this difficult time.

A prayer from the Methodist Church:

*God of all hope we call on you today.
We pray for those who are living in fear:
Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's reactions to them.
May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.*

*We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.
For those people who are worried about attending worship.
For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other
For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.
Grant us your wisdom.*

*Holy God, we remember that you have promised that
Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.
Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.*

Amen

Yours in Christ.



Rev Pete Moorhouse

Worship While were Closed

We're looking at a couple of options for continued worship while you're at home.

Firstly, Rev Michael Moon is intending prepare a bundle of resources for the members to take time for their devotion each week. It would not be like a formal Sunday worship but with some suggested hymns and shortened message

Secondly, each week we'll try to send out a live Sunday Service from Wesley's Chapel in London by e-mail. You should have had the links to the services on 22nd March already – if not let us know at hmethsLINK@gmail.com

The services will also be available on the Church's website and FaceBook pages.

Wesley's Chapel videos several service each week and these can be seen on their YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA>

The Money - a message from your Treasurer



No collective worship means no offerings but **unfortunately not no bills - invoices and direct debits will still need to be paid.** Please read the

accompanying document, which explains how you can carry on giving your Weekly Offering and respond as you feel able.

Stan

Offers of Help

If any church member or friend needs help with anything over this period, the Elkington family and Adam and Becky Markham have offered to run around collecting and dropping things off. including going to the shops and leave it on people's doorsteps if they're staying in and can't get deliveries. Sally can be contacted at 01702 258288 or sally_elkington@yahoo.co.uk. Adam and Becky can be contacted at 07969522986 or adam.markham01@googlemail.com

Farmer tells of Fairtrade journey to a better future



TOUGH
TALKING
Speaker Cyr
Leocadie
Voho from
the Côte
d'Ivoire

'It's hard being a farmer' said Cyr Leocadie Voho. 'I get up at 4am each day and walk two kilometres to get water before making breakfast, sweeping the courtyard and washing the children. Then I walk three kilometres to

the field'.

In the evening, Leocadie returns to her village often carrying a heavy basket of cocoa pods on her head. A mother of seven who has farmed since 1985 she has done this journey many times while pregnant and with a child on her back.

Leocadie recounted her story while on a visit to the UK as part of Fairtrade Fortnight, which runs until 8 March She told guests at the Waitrose & Partners Cookery School in King's Cross, London

that before joining Fairtrade in 2015 she could not negotiate a price for her cocoa.

'I had to accept the price they were giving me' she said. 'But after I started selling to Fairtrade I got a better price and I could send my kids to school'.

As well as the premium paid to Fairtrade farmers, she has also had regular training in more efficient farming, increasing her yield and therefore her income.

Fairtrade money given to her co-operative in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire has also been used to provide classrooms at the local primary school along with high schools and a canteen.

The children used to have to walk three kilometres to school but now they don't have to walk so far and can have lunch there too she added.

'Before coming here I had not ever seen chocolate with my own eyes. And I felt hidden in the countryside but now I have the chance to tell people what life is really like for farmers
'I thank the shoppers for buying our chocolate - I hope they will look for the Fairtrade sign and fill up their fridges so that we can have a better life'.

Jemima Jewell, Partner and corporate responsibility lead for Waitrose & Partners, said: 'It is important to us that farmers are paid fairly, and we are proud to be able to offer the largest range of Fairtrade products of any UK supermarket'.

Julia Nicoara, Fairtrade Foundation's director of public engagement, added: 'People deserve to be paid fairly. Women such as Leocadie can work incredibly long hours and not be able to feed their children or afford education or healthcare. When you choose Fairtrade, these farmers earn more and an additional amount of money is invested in their communities

By Lucy Allen, contributed by Kay

If you don't use e-mail but have a computer or pc or laptop or tablet or smartphone



It's going to be difficult keeping in touch whilst Coronavirus restrictions are in place and it will get harder if more restrictions on movement are imposed. There's always the phone – please use it to keep in touch with your pastoral visitor – let them know if you have a problem, maybe Adam, Becky or Sally can help?

But if you have a computer or pc or laptop or tablet or smartphone yet don't use e-mail please think about using it – it's not difficult to set up, and it's easy to use, you just need to open an e-mail account. I can help you do that over the phone – give me a call on 07798948236.

Mike

Mothering Sunday Plants



You may have had a plant left on your doorstep. As the Mothering Sunday Service had to be cancelled and as Gill had already bought a greenhouse-full of plants it was decided to get them round to as many people as possible just to brighten up your day a bit.

Thanks to Gill and the Pastoral Leaders for all their efforts.