

Dear Friends,

There are times in our lives where God seems silent. Where discerning the voice of God and a way forward has been hard to fathom. The pandemic may have been such a time for you? I have had it said to me why does God allow this to happen? A good question and a question around whether this is about a God in control who manages the world or a God who exists in a world where we are free to make our own choices? I believe in a loving God just as I believe my parents loved me. Being loved by my parents did not stop difficult things happening to me and as much as they might have wished to have removed certain events from my life they could not but together we saw things through. If God in his power took away my choice and removed from my life all those things that have shaped and moulded me would that be a loving God or a dictatorial God wherein I became a puppet?

As for the absence of the voice of God in this pandemic, I am not so sure God has been silent. I do believe that God has spoken to and is speaking to us as church communities. The question is are we listening?

Bricks and mortar played a large part in the life of our church and across the Circuit we have varied church buildings some fit for purpose others less so. They have served people over the years in a great way and yet for these past 3 months their doors have been locked. Has the church disappeared in that time? No of course it hasn't we have kept in touch over the internet, by phone calls and with cards and letters, but has it been missional?

This is where I begin to struggle because for a church to fulfil its calling it needs to reach out beyond its doors. We have found ourselves with no walls and no doors through which to pass. We have found ourselves in the community and of the community. How have we been church? The easy answer is to speak about those acts of thoughtfulness and kindness that have kept us going and they are of course so important but are they enough to sustain us?

I have a hunch and it is this that God wants us to remain a little longer outside of our church walls and to begin to explore how we might be more church without walls, for to be a church without walls means that we rely not on our own ingenuity but on power of the Holy Spirit to give us the strength to move forward. I dread a return to church that looks just like it was before and much as we might long for that I am not sure it is right.

The early church and even Methodism itself met originally in small groups, they met regularly and they supported, encouraged and yes even admonished each other. Has the time come to once again take up that charge for the present age? Will it be in small groups that the churches new way of being will be birthed?

There are greater minds than mine working on this and thinking all of it through. We need to be prepared to be changed not only by this pandemic but by God who is I believe doing a new thing. We may be in danger of being left behind if we are not prepared to listen, and explore and invite the Holy Spirit in to lead us forward to who knows where? All that will take courage, brave hearts and a touch of imagination and of course there is always the possibility that I have got it all wrong. Depends on whether you want to take a risk or return to how it was. Whichever way it is I feel confident that in some shape or form God will eventually have God's way with or without us.

Stay safe Ruth



You may have heard that churches are opening from July 4th. Certainly that has been intimated by our government. I want to just state that the advice presently from the Methodist Church is that all Methodist churches are closed for the time being. This may of course change and a small team of folks are looking into how and when this might be possible within each of the churches. There is much to consider least of all how we stay safe. It would seem that overall Covid-19 appears to be in retreat for the time being. That is good news. When we return to our buildings it will I am sure look and feel different, some of the activities that we enjoyed before lockdown might not be possible. We will have to take it slowly and steadily and at all times ensuring the safety of everyone. So please watch this space. In the meantime I hope you have filled in the questionnaire which went out with the last mailing so that we can gather a clearer picture of how we progress forwards and what the needs are of the people of The Airedale Methodist Circuit.

CIRCUIT MEETING REMINDER

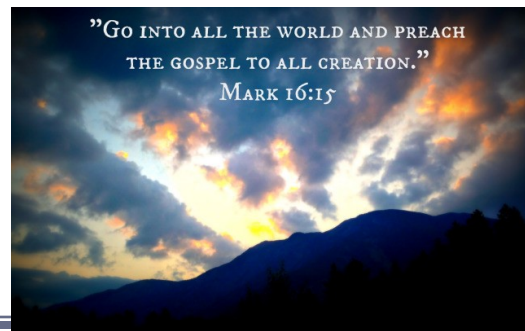
Wednesday **July 8th** at 7pm Circuit meeting to be held over ZOOM – details will be sent out

JULY 26th

Here is a date you might wish to mark in your diary. In the morning Deacon Jackie Fowler will be leading us in worship and it will be her last service with us. We will have the opportunity to say farewell and thank you to her for all she has done in the past four years. Jackie is preparing to move to the Drifffield-Hornsea Circuit and we wish her well. That service will be virtual and at 10.30am via ZOOM, You Tube or phonline.

Later on that day at 6pm in the same format we will be sharing in a service where Jo Dolman will be accredited as a Local Preacher. This service will mark a point in Jo's journey into this ministry.

Please be part of both these important services if you can.



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SILSDEN CELEBRATORY SERVICE FOR THE 72nd BIRTHDAY OF THE NHS

Churches Together in Silsden are holding a service on July 5th at 6pm to celebrate the 72nd Birthday of the NHS and to give thanks. It will be a service of testimony and thanksgiving over Zoom. Details of this event have also been emailed. Everyone is welcome to this service.

Celebrating the NHS

Time: Jul 5, 2020 06:00 PM London



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85725260784?pwd=MUIMT3p6N3NXa3BZK2FzK245dEdlQT09>

Meeting ID: 857 2526 0784

Password: 268132

MID WEEK WORSHIP

Please join other circuit members for our mid-week zoom worship fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7.00 pm.

The next meetings dates are as follows. Zoom details will be emailed out prior to each meeting.

1 st July	Rev Barbara Fairburn
15 th July	Rev Susan Greenhart
29 th July	Glenda Coogan and Jo Dolman
12 th August	Susanne Platt
26 th August	Rev David McAloon

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF DISTRICT

Rev Kerry Tankard has some very thoughtful words for us regarding opening of our churches following the pandemic. The Facebook link has been emailed out as widely as possible but if you have not received it, please have a look using the link below. You do not need to have a Facebook account to access it.

<https://www.facebook.com/257814050916522/posts/3257211234310107/?vh=e&d=n>

Please send items for the August newsletter by 31st July 2020 to Penny Moon, Circuit Administrator office@airedalemethodists.org. Please send email to Penny if you wish to receive the Newsletter by email.