

# St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley

## *Extraordinary Times* *a magazine to help us through COVID-19*

**Issue 4**

**April 12th 2020**

*From the minister...*

Given that we're not allowed to meet up in person now, I've been encouraged this week by the amount of people who have been getting in touch either by phone or email. I'm also encouraged by the amount of prayer requests I've received, more than usual certainly. But the really big one has been Facebook, where not just people from our church but from churches in different parts of the country have been making contact, and there have been many positive and encouraging messages flying backwards and forwards. I appreciate that if you don't normally bother with social media you may be resistant to getting involved – but it does seem to me that social media of this type is proving to be a real blessing in such a time as this. I urge you to engage in Facebook if you can - it is a great way of keeping in touch with people from our fellowship during this period of lockdown and social isolation.

Some of us have been on a steep learning curve in recent times getting to grips with new technology, myself included. I've heard of people continuing to meet in homegroups via the medium of "Zoom" (whoever had heard of "Zoom" before Coronavirus arrived?!). Our online live streamed services on Sundays are produced via Skype, which is something I had barely ever used previously. My wife Adele is staying in touch with our children via "Houseparty"; and with her other family members via "WhatsApp". Both of these involve people appearing on her phone screen all together and talking endlessly for ages.

Speaking as someone who not only doesn't own a smartphone but hasn't ever owned a mobile phone of any kind, I probably qualify as a bit of a technophobe. I find all this videoconferencing very intrusive, and when I first came to live here in 2016 I had got so fed up with Facebook that I came off it completely for nearly a year. So I do sympathise if you find all this stuff tiresome. And I am very aware that some of you reading this might not have internet access and as a result will be feeling more isolated than the rest of us.

So if this is you, don't be shy of using the telephone or the good old fashioned hand written letter. I have had a significant number of letters and phone calls from people from both of my churches in the past couple of weeks, and I am very appreciative of them. I've also received messages on behalf of others who are isolated and unable to make contact – let's continue to look out for one another as much as we can, and please alert me to any pastoral concerns. Let's all stay clear-minded, self-controlled and alert, as Peter tells us in his first letter.

God bless *Ralph*

*A prayer...*

*Lord Jesus,*

*Who went willingly to a cross to pay the price for our sins*

*We thank you that you are acquainted with grief and suffering*

*You know how it feels to be isolated from your people*

*To be scorned and rejected*

*To endure so that love may prevail.*

*Be with each one of us, we pray;*

*Be present in our homes*

*Be our constant guide and support*

*Fill us with your confidence*

*Because you have beaten sin and death*

*And your love endures for ever. Amen*

## What's On This Week

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April

**10am *Taketime Live*** join in a meditation in real time from St Paul's Facebook page, or later by pasting <https://mixlr.com/taketime/> into your Web browser

**10:45am Easter Day live worship** with Rev Ralph linked from St Paul's Facebook page, or watch later at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAYxoqWmbeGjTnYBLpEo65Q/>

Ralph is taking some of his annual leave this week, so there will be no Wednesday afternoon worship or any daily songs. He will be conducting Jean Franklin's funeral at 10:15am on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April at the Crematorium.

Sadly of course, no one from church will be able to attend due to the Coronavirus outbreak and limited attendance at the Crematorium. However, the plan is that once this crisis has run its course, we will organise a proper service of thanksgiving for Jean at the church.

Please pray for Vince, Jean's son, and remember Jean if you are able, at 10.15 on the 15th.

### Prayers at 6 & 8

**During this week** please pray for people at greater risk of domestic violence and abuse during this lockdown and for the agencies trying to support them. Pray for CAP (Christians Against Poverty) as they try to give support to their clients by phone instead of their usual face-to-face way. Pray too for CAP's clients depending on this support and the food parcels CAP are able to deliver.

Pray for the Prime Minister as he receives treatment for the Coronavirus and for the Government working to keep us safe. Continue praying for workers doing essential work for us in the NHS, Ambulance, Fire and Police services, refuse collectors and workers in food shops and pharmacies. Pray for the safety of us all and for an end to this situation.

### Pray for

Please pray for Emma who cannot get back home from visiting family in another country, Judy, Uvonne, Linda, Jill, Janet, Daniel, Jean and Geoff, Maureen and others with needs known to ourselves.

**Please send** your prayer suggestions, prayer requests and ideas for ways to pray, to [enquiries@crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk) Don't forget: *Methodist Church Guidelines state that permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list. Please ensure that you have such permission.*

## Barry's Isolation Diary week 2

I know it's a cliché but what strange times these are. In many ways it must be what many people think retirement will be like. Endless days, free to choose what to fill the time with. Of course though, it's not true, as we are all restricted in our movement outside the home.

Since I ceased full time employment 22 years ago my days have been well filled with a combination of regular voluntary work and social meetings. Initially this was some part time paid employment then, increasingly, voluntary "jobs" including as a magistrate until I had to retire at 70, Local Council standards committee member, IT work with Victim Support and Age UK, and currently Chair of Crawley Scouts, Governor of a Special Needs School and Steward at the Hawth and the Museum.

Suddenly I find my days almost completely empty, all meetings cancelled and organisations in a state of suspended animation. There have so far been three virtual meetings via Zoom/Teams and virtual get togethers for coffee with our daughters via Duo.

Otherwise my days are settling into a routine of trying to improve my sight reading and keyboard playing, jigsaws, riding the exercise bike, getting the garden ready for the summer and a half-hearted attempt to clear off some of those jobs that I always meant to get around too.

Probably top of most people's list is that one all we oldies are nagged to do by our children, clearing up and throwing away all that sentimental junk we have been holding onto for years so that they are not left to deal with it. However, with the tip closed, not that I could go there anyway, and some doubt as to how much longer the Council will continue collecting recycling and green waste, this clearing may just be reduced to moving the "junk" from one pile to another. Oh well perhaps I 'll leave that for now.....

We took part in the online quiz again this week and improved from 5th to 7th from bottom, not sure how long our egos can take this humiliation; still, team names are all made up so no one knows it's us other than our children.

Keep safe and well and God's blessing to you all at this time. *Barry*



*Bluebells in woodlands near Ifield on 19<sup>th</sup> April.*

*Our beautiful world is in God's hands and so are we.*

## Free stuff from the Library

There's loads of stuff available from the library website. As well as plenty of e-books, e-magazines, and audio books, there's also free access (for now at least) from home to all sorts of family history resources normally only available at the library.

<https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/web/arena/currentoffer/family-and-local-history>

Maybe a good time to fill out that family tree! *Kevin*

## Something for Gruffalo fans

If your little ones enjoy the Gruffalo and other Julia Donaldson books these cartoons might help with explaining why we have to stay at home.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/gallery/2020/apr/04/gruffalo-axel-scheffler-and-julia-donaldsons-coronavirus-cartoons>

## Celebrations

Even now birthdays and anniversaries carry on, so let's share the joy.

★ **HAPPY** ★  
**BIRTHDAY!**

**to Fuschia** who will be 4 on the 11th April

**to Eddie** who has a birthday on 13<sup>th</sup> April (not admitting to how old!)

**to Destiny** who turned 14 on the 9<sup>th</sup> April

**Congratulations**

to Abigail, Sheila and Barry's daughter, and Paul who celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on the 15th April. They were married at St Paul's and Paul's parents are Pauline & Eddy, known to us from Redhill Methodist Church.

## Setting a good example of Social Distancing



***Extraordinary Times*** is published weekly 'for the duration'. Please send any news, prayer suggestions and requests and contributions of positive, up-beat bits and pieces by 10am on Thursdays to [enquiries@crawlmethodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@crawlmethodistchurch.org.uk)

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