

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 8 **May 10th 2020**

From your Minister

I hope everyone is managing to stay safe and well as the lockdown continues. We are all finding that our routines, indeed our way of life, has changed in the last few weeks. With our access to one another severely limited, it's easy to find ourselves becoming more introspective. I can't speak for everyone, but I have certainly found myself reflecting more on my priorities, my pre-occupations, my pattern of daily living. Some of the things I used to do have stopped completely, but there are other things that I have started to do during lockdown that I was unable to engage with previously, either because I didn't have the time or the focus.

This is observable in society too. I was reading an article this week by Dr John Wright of Bradford Royal Infirmary, who speculates that many of us are actually becoming healthier as a result of the lockdown. Some people with normally busy stressful lives have slowed down a bit, and their stress levels have reduced. The effect of being confined to our homes has caused us to want to go outside more, and the Government's encouragement to take daily exercise has resulted in many of us going out for a walk or a run much more than we used to. In addition, we are benefitting from cleaner air as a result of a reduction in traffic, and our general slower rate of living may be having surprising health benefits.

The Fitbit health and fitness tracking device, which so many people are keen on these days, is currently producing data to indicate that in general terms our resting heart rates have fallen; and that the number of minutes of activity in our average day has increased. When I've been out in my local area I have noticed that there are fewer vehicles on the roads, but many more people than usual out for a walk, running or cycling. The local "Worth Way" along the disused railway line in East Grinstead, seems particularly popular.

There also seem to be a lot of middle aged men in particular, who have resurrected an old bicycle from their garage and are now wobbling around everywhere as they try and remaster their skills. Refreshingly they haven't had the opportunity to invest in proper Lycra cycling gear (praise God!), so they are just doing it in their normal clothes. Brilliant!

If our lives have slowed down a bit, we now also have the opportunity to improve our spiritual health. 1 Corinthians 10:12 has been underlined in my Bible for many years now: "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" So many of our material securities have been undermined in recent weeks, it's good to take time to reassess that which gives us confidence and equips us for the challenge of life under lockdown. Our confidence is in the Lord – He is our fortress, we will never be shaken.

A prayer...

Lord, we put our trust in You

You are our fortress, we will never be shaken

When troubles come our way, you guide and you sustain us

You are unchanging, the Alpha and the Omega

When we are tempted, you are faithful

You give us the strength to stand firm

In all of the challenges we face.

When the pain comes, when hope is lost

You are the joy in our hearts

We will praise you. Amen.

What's On This Week

Sunday 10th May

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

10:45am live worship with Rev Ralph

Wednesday 13th May

2pm live half-hour prayer and bible study with Rev Ralph

Links to the services will be on St Paul's Facebook page and website and also sent by email so that everyone who has internet can participate.

Funeral arrangements

For Irene Ludbrook, Rev Ralph is conducting Irene's funeral service on Wednesday 13th May at 9.45am at the Crematorium. Please remember Irene at that time, give thanks for her life and pray for her son, Ian and the family.

For Janet Ockwell, The cremation service for Janet will be conducted by Rev Ralph at 11am on Wednesday 20th May at the Crematorium.

A message from Janet's brother Ron; Sadly, due to the current restrictions, attendance will be by invitation only. Family flowers only please but, for those who wish to remember Janet, contributions may be made to the British Heart Foundation which she herself supported. Thank you for your understanding. Arrangements for a memorial service will be made when it becomes possible.

Prayers at 6 & 8

During this week we expect some easing of the lockdown but that most restrictions will remain in place for some time. Pray that everyone respects the 'rules' and continues to behave in ways to keep us all safe. Continue praying for the NHS and all support workers who keep our services running.

Please pray for

The family of Irene Ludbrook and Janet's brother, Ron. Continue praying for Emma, Ron, Bamini and her daughters, Uvonne, Linda, Daniel, Jean and Geoff, Maureen and others with needs known to ourselves.

Send your prayer requests to enquiries@crawlmethodistchurch.org.uk

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.

If you need a prayer but you don't have the internet

Dial-a-Prayer



FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to news: 0808 281 2478

Content is updated weekly on Thursday afternoon

Barry's Isolation Diary week 5 – A few hairy moments

This week I feel I have to raise a somewhat sensitive subject. How's your hair looking. Is it getting shaggier by the day, hanging over your ears and developing into a really thick mullet at the back.

So what to do? Do you cling to the hope that hairdressers will be allowed, with suitable PPE, to resume cutting hair shortly, or do you feel very brave and have a go yourself.

I know men have it much easier as in the limit they can just shave it all off, look like a lollipop and hope that they'll only need to do it once before normality returns.

Last week it was some ten weeks since I had my last haircut and with the prospect of not being allowed out until mid-June I felt it necessary to give it a go. Now, given that Sheila is not allowed within 6ft of me, I was going to have to do it myself. Fortunately, I have a set of electric clippers capable of cutting from 1mm to 19mm in 1mm increments so what could go wrong?

There I was last Monday morning standing in front of the bathroom mirror with the clippers in my hand. It turns out that the main body of hair on the top of my head was by far the easiest, set the cutter to the desired height (start long and get shorter till it's the length you want) and just cut from front to back all over. But this doesn't really trim the back and sides unless you are going for the US Army buzz cut look.

How do you achieve the necessary contortions to hold the clippers against the right part of your own neck and, then move them up your head to the same level with each stroke. I eventually solved this problem but the sides were even more of a challenge. Trying to achieve a neat and even degree of layering, the results of which are in full view whenever you look in the mirror, was extremely difficult. As a result, the next two mornings found me having a further go to remove the obvious wavy step line along either side of my head.

Fortunately, none of you will have to see my handiwork and hopefully I'll have got to the barbers before I see you next.

Keep Safe and God Bless, *Barry*

Christian Aid Week is here

We've raised a quarter of our £1,000 target to send to Christian Aid this year. Next Saturday we should have been enjoying each other's company at the Coffee Stop and stocking up with plants for our gardens at the Big Plant Sale. Instead, please help us achieve our target through our appeal on *Just Giving* by using this link



<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/st-pauls-methodist-church-crawley>

If you don't have internet, perhaps you could ask a friend or relative to make your donation on your behalf. Thank you for your continued support, *Ruth*

When will our church be open again?

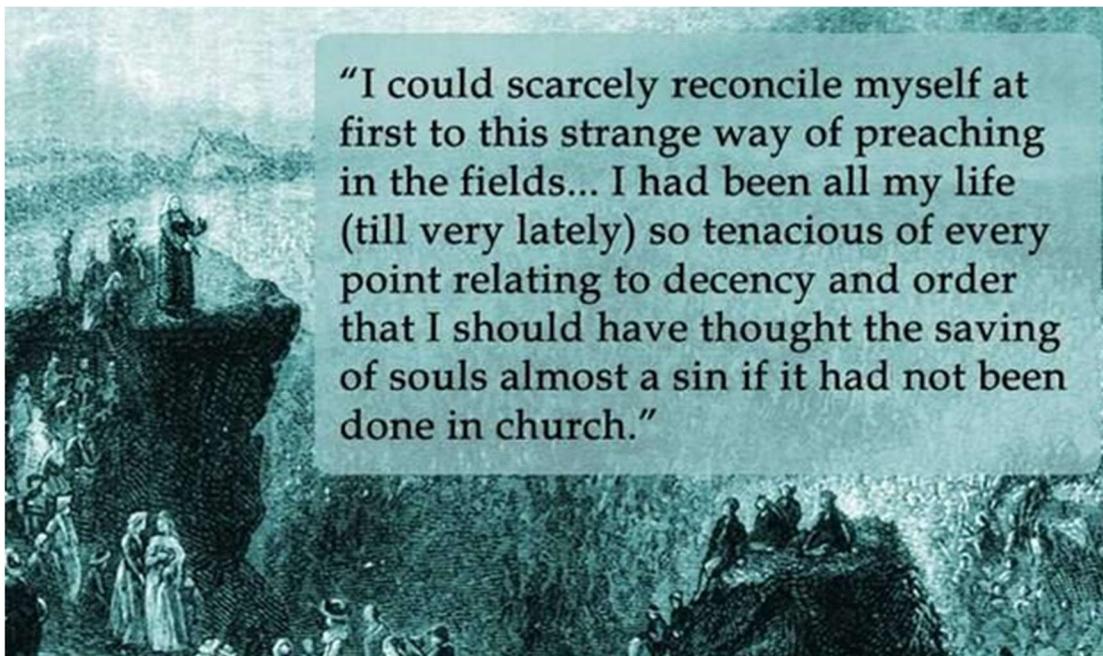
With the possibility of lockdown soon being lifted a little, we inevitably start wondering when our church can re-open and we can start meeting again.

The Methodist Church has issued this statement on their position:

"The Government is due to give an update on its lockdown guidance on Sunday May 10. We will consider any changes carefully and update our own guidance as necessary. The Secretary to the Conference will meet Ecumenical colleagues later this week and District Chairs and the Warden of the Diaconal Order on Monday May 11 and will discuss any possible changes with them."

We await their conclusions with interest.

John Wesley on preaching outside



We always associate John Wesley with preaching in the open air, but in Bristol on 31st of March 1739, this is what he recorded in his Journal. Imagine him today preaching to a socially distanced crowd! And what would he have made of the opportunities offered by the internet and social media?

Congratulations

to Sue and Brian Poole whose 30th Wedding Anniversary is on 12th May. They were married at St Paul's and their children, Alex, 23 and Kallisti, 21 were baptised at St. Pauls.

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