

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 21 **August 9th 2020**

From the minister...

Thank you for all of your emails and phone calls regarding the question I asked you last week, namely, "If church reopened for Sunday worship, would you come?" It's been very useful to look through all your thoughts and reflections, hopes and fears, confidences and insecurities. It helps us plan together for the future.

I have to say that overwhelmingly you are telling me that you have reservations about attending a church service at the present time. There are two main reasons for this:

- Some of you, particularly those in vulnerable categories, feel that it is still too early to consider returning to public worship
- Many of you seem to be of the opinion that under the current restrictions and guidelines, you wouldn't enjoy the experience of church whilst wearing a mask, not being allowed to sing, and not being allowed the time to properly fellowship with one another

Those of you who normally come to church as a family, with children, are quite understandably wary about how church under the current restrictions would work with young ones. We are looking at what the options might be for this and would value your parental input on it.

But despite all of these reservations, everyone is saying how much they miss church, and how much they are looking forward to returning when the time is right and the lockdown restrictions have been eased a little more. And I feel the same. It's all very well having online services, but it's no substitute for all being together as a fellowship, singing and praying together. Plus, of course, not everyone is able to join in online for various reasons. I look forward to soon being able to welcome you back to church, and I will keep you posted with every new development. There are plans afoot to make this happen.

In the meantime, look after yourselves, keep praying for everyone, and stand firm in the faith!

God bless, *Ralph*

A prayer...

Father, we love to seek your face

We love to hear your voice

Father we love to sing your praise

And in your name rejoice

Father, we love to walk with you

And in your presence rest

For we know we always can trust you

AMEN

What's On This Week

Sunday 9th

10:45am Live worship from St Paul's with Rev Ralph

Tuesday 11th

During the afternoon sometime Live message from Rev Ralph in St Paul's

Wednesday 12th

2pm Wednesday worship with Rev Ralph

All will be linked on St Paul's Facebook page and website

Prayers at 6 & 8

Please pray for areas of the UK where lockdown measures are being brought back as infection numbers rise. Ask God to keep everyone patient and safe.

Continue praying for our minister and the leaders of our church as they plan for the safe re-opening of the building, for Geoff and Jean as well as others we know who have needs known to ourselves.

Send your prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list

Beirut explosion emergency appeal



Methodist
relief and
development

On 4 August, a devastating explosion occurred at a warehouse in the Port of Beirut, causing widespread casualties and catastrophic damage throughout the area. More than 135 people were killed, and 5,000 people were injured. Action is being taken to find many more, who are missing. The Lebanese Government estimates that more than 300,000 people are homeless. Hospitals have struggled to cope with the number of casualties, with many intensive care units already near capacity with the impact of Coronavirus.

All We Can is working with a local partner in Lebanon to help provide the support needed to those in greatest need. As we cannot at this time use our usual ways of responding to emergencies with a special Sunday collection, please give generously on the *All We Can* website to help save lives today.

<https://www.allwecan.org.uk/give/current-appeals/beirut/>

A prayer for Beirut from the Methodist Church

Gracious God,

*We pray for those who live and work in Beirut that
the bereaved may be consoled and the injured comforted and healed.*

*We pray for the rescue services and the hospital staff
giving thanks for their commitment and skill.*

In the midst of catastrophe we pray for peace, truth and justice.

*As the sound of explosion fades and the smoke clears
give wisdom to those who lead, courage to those who serve,
and hope to all.*

Amen.

A sacrifice in a really good cause



I have decided to donate my hair to *Little Princess Trust*, to be used to make a wig for a child with cancer. I am planning to get my hair cut short in September. I would like to raise £550.00, the cost to have one wig made, but more would mean more children suffering hair loss would be able to get wigs. I have set up a JustGiving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sue-pooles> where you can make a donation to support this worthwhile cause. You can see more about *Little Princess Trust* at

<https://www.littleprincesses.org.uk/> Many thanks, *Sue Poole*

Getting fellowship groups up and running again

It's been quite a while since our fellowship and house groups have been able to meet together and many of us are missing the contact with friends as well as the stimulating discussions and studies. There are still restrictions in place limiting how many people can meet together indoors and outside so we are wondering whether to take up the following recommendation from The Methodist Church:

Virtual House Groups and Church Gatherings:

"House Groups and other forms of fellowship are strongly encouraged to continue to meet in online forms and to keep in contact in other ways. This is not only a safer way of meeting, but also enables those who may be vulnerable, shielding or unable to travel to still have access to pastoral support and encouragement through their church family and set up some online groups using Zoom".

Yes, we are aware that not everyone would have the technology to take part, but many of us do and are already using this way of meeting with family and friends, taking part in quizzes, and attending meetings. We possibly have a long future ahead without the present rules being changed, so how about giving it a try?

If you like the idea of restarting your familiar group, or starting up a new one, please let us know by email to ask.stpauls@gmail.com or by contacting Peter Jordan.



To Sandra and Terry Webb who celebrate their 57th Wedding Anniversary on the 10th August

Easy money

If you're not supporting St Paul's yet on #easyfundraising, please get involved! You can shop online with over 4,200 retailers and raise free donations for us at the same time! Sign up now:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stpaulsmethodistchurchcrawley/?invite=LRZ7K6&referral-campaign=c2s>

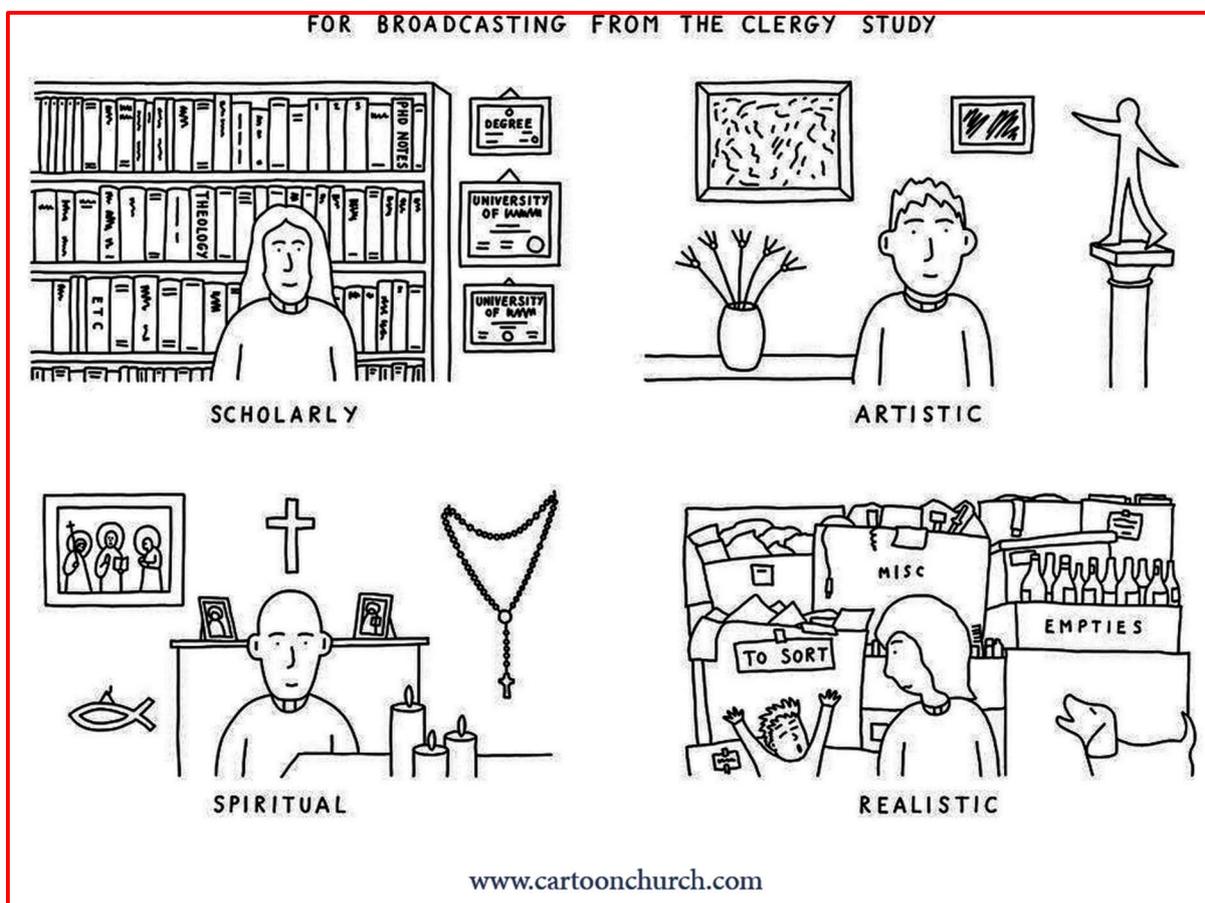


What's happening with Messy Church?



One of the things we have sadly lost during the pandemic is Messy Church. Those monthly Sunday afternoons were a joyous time for kids, their parents and carers and also for the team of helpers as we all learned about Jesus' teachings and the Bible through messy activities and worship celebration. The teatimes were something really special too! Since lockdown started in March we have sent out a monthly newsletter with themed activities to do at home and, for more material to do together, we also recommend Messy Church on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/messychurchBRF/> and Messy Church at Home <https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/messy-church-home-bible-beaches> which will be linked from St Paul's Facebook and website .

These provide some fun ways of continuing to explore our faith while we can't come to King's Kids and Messy Church. Have a great summer; we hope we can meet together again before too long. *Carol, Jill and the MC team*



Which is Rev Ralph's live streaming background style?

Contacts

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St Paul's website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

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