

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 24 **August 30th 2020**

From the minister...

I was blessed to have a week's holiday last week and went down to Dorset with Adele. Suitably refreshed I'm now back to face a new challenge: not the challenge of continuing with lockdown, but the significantly greater challenge of enabling us as a church to emerge from it safely during the coming weeks.

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts on reopening. In the light of all the comments we have received, we plan to reopen our church for Sunday worship from Sunday September 6th.

Now, before you get too excited, I need to tell you that this will not be "church as we know it", at least not initially. Here are the details:

- The service will commence at 9am and last for approximately 30 minutes
- Please bring a face mask, which must be worn throughout the service I'm afraid
- This will be a "spoken word" service, since we are currently not permitted to sing
- You will be required to register upon arrival for track and trace purposes.
- There will be hand gel provided
- Social distancing will be maintained during the service

More about this next week, but if you've been missing church and feel confident enough to return, it will be wonderful to see you again. Whilst we're not allowed to sing together, it will be a great joy to pray together after so long.

Providing the service on the 6th is successful, we plan to host another one a fortnight later on September 20th. Both of these will be led by myself as your minister. The hope is that at the beginning of October we will return to the circuit preaching plan, and this will enable us to welcome local preachers and other circuit ministers back into our church to lead services.

A 10.45 service will continue to run live on Facebook each Sunday during September; it has proved extremely popular during lockdown, and reached an audience far beyond our usual attendance. As we come back onto the circuit preaching plan we will restore our usual 10.30am service at St Pauls, welcoming back the whole church family; and the plan is for us to start live streaming our morning service in due course.

Thank you for bearing with us through this difficult time of isolation. Please pray that we are able to follow through with our vision to reopen church and welcome our whole fellowship back to be together again.

God bless,
Ralph

Ralph's prayer...

*Lord Jesus, we long to meet in fellowship again
To worship you and bring our prayers together in our church
To greet one another and resume our friendships and relationships
To restore and renew our work of mission and service
Lead us we pray, out of the darkness and isolation of lockdown
To the freedom of living as your people, your family
Give us the strength and confidence to achieve this
In your blessed name Amen*

What's On This Week

Sunday 30th 10:45am Online worship from Trinity with Rev Ralph

Tuesday 1st During the afternoon sometime Live message from Rev Ralph in St Paul's

Wednesday 2nd 2pm Wednesday worship with Rev Ralph

Prayers at 6 & 8

Pray for all children, students, teachers and support staff as schools re-open this week, and for colleges and universities preparing for the new academic year.

Pray for victims of Hurricane Laura which has devastated the coast of Louisiana

Continue to pray 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

MHA Memorial Day 2020



On Friday 4 September MHA are asking us all to take a moment to reflect by joining together for a Memorial Day to remember those who were sadly lost during the pandemic. The day is to honour everyone who has passed away during this time, be it from coronavirus or not. Read more [here](#).

Latest news from the Lewis-Browns



It's all change as the younger generation move on to pastures new. Last Wednesday Christopher passed his viva exam for his PhD! His next step, starting in September, is a teacher training course at Reading University. Becca will be starting a job nearby. Last Saturday Jonathan left Crawley for Utrecht in the Netherlands to start a two year Masters

Course in Climate Physics at Utrecht University.

Ruth and David remain at home! *Ruth*

A way to make up for lost income

Since the start of the pandemic and the closure of the church building, St Paul's has lost a substantial amount of lettings income which would normally provide almost half of our income. The pandemic has also reduced income from pledges and donations; and has removed income from loose cash offerings, contributions from organisations and income from Loaves and Fishes. If the loss of income continues at the current rate, we will rapidly approach a financial crisis.

The good news is that we are now able to re-open the building. However, many of our lettings customers cannot return to the rooms they used previously because the rooms are too small to allow the required social distancing. If we cannot offer them suitable larger spaces they will not be able to return and we will continue to lose substantial amounts of lettings income. However, we could use the Sanctuary to accommodate many of the groups if the pews were replaced by chairs.

The replacement of pews with chairs has been approved by the Church Council and the Leadership Team originally planned to implement this decision when the Sanctuary roof replacement and refurbishment had been completed. In the light of the present circumstances, and the pressing financial imperative, the Leadership Team has decided to bring this forward and replace the pews with chairs immediately. This will have the additional benefit of making social distancing easier to implement when Sunday services resume.

It will not be necessary to purchase new chairs immediately as there are enough unused chairs presently available. When we reach the stage of purchasing new chairs for the Sanctuary, the Leadership Team wishes to engage the congregation in making the choice. When more of the congregation are able to return to church, the Leadership Team plans to make sample chairs available for people to test and comment on.

The Leadership Team appreciates that replacing pews with chairs at this stage will add to the disconcerting strangeness of social distancing, mask wearing and no singing at services. However, St Paul's, in common with many other churches, is facing a serious financial challenge and we ask for your understanding and support in these difficult and challenging times. *St Paul's Leadership Team*



To Nancy and Gates Vrooman who celebrated their 55th Wedding Anniversary on 28th August. Good friends of many of us at St Paul's, they are readers of ET and regularly join our online congregation on Sundays, with a five-hour delay, by watching the video from their home in North Carolina. If you watch carefully, you should spot them this week as the photo wall flashes past.



To Isaac on Sunday 30th August
And to me! 79 next Thursday! How did that happen?

Curiosities of language 2: Paraprosdokian

A paraprosdokian is a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence, phrase, or larger discourse is surprising or unexpected in a way that causes the reader or listener to reframe or reinterpret the first part. It is frequently used for humorous or dramatic effect, sometimes producing an anticlimax. For this reason, it is extremely popular among comedians and satirists such as Groucho Marx. Winston Churchill was also a fan. Here are a few examples:

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
3. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
4. War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
5. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
6. They begin the evening news with 'Good Evening,' then proceed to tell you why it isn't.
7. To steal ideas from someone is plagiarism. To steal from many is called research.
8. In filling in an application, where it says, 'In case of emergency', notify: I put 'DOCTOR.'
9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
10. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they look sexy.
11. Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.
12. A clear conscience is the sign of a bad memory.
13. I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not so sure.
14. Nostalgia isn't what it used to be. Nor is there any future in it.
15. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
16. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car.
17. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.
18. I am not arguing with you, I am explaining why you are wrong.

(Used with permission of Trinity Methodist Church)

Contacts

Rev Ralph phone 01342 325877 email rlphwrd@gmail.com

Deacon Irene phone 01293 385124 email deaconirene@gmail.com

Prayer requests & newsletter items ask.stpauls@gmail.com

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

Extraordinary Times is published weekly 'for the duration'

© St Paul's Methodist Church

Crawley Methodist Church is Registered Charity No. 1127744