

**St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley**  
*Extraordinary Times*  
*a magazine to help us through COVID-19*  
**Issue 52** **March 28th 2021**

From the minister...

We all noted an anniversary of particular significance this week as we passed the "one year of Covid" milestone. Wind back the clock to March of last year: little did any of us anticipate that the lockdown would last as long as it has. I remember being shocked back then to hear the Prime Minister predict that the pandemic may cause up to 20,000 deaths – how would we have felt knowing what we know now, with an ongoing total of 126,000 deaths and counting. We really didn't anticipate the scale of the challenge that was coming. I remember thinking, naively and optimistically, that I would probably catch Covid 19 at some point – but I was certain, given that I am reasonably fit and healthy, with no underlying medical conditions, that it would just be like having the 'flu. As it turned out, Covid is far more menacing, and far less respecting of age and general health.

My heart goes out to all who have suffered and succumbed, and if you have lost someone you love to this terrible virus then my prayers are with you, as are all of those in our church. But if you have successfully made it this far, and received the first (maybe both) of your vaccinations, then perhaps you share my feelings currently that we have been delivered by the grace of God, and also by the skills of our scientific community, medical and nursing staff, and all who work as part of the ongoing vaccination programme.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey on the day we now celebrate as Palm Sunday, he alone knew the full implications of the challenge which lay ahead. The disciples were naïve and clueless (despite Jesus having told them three times what lay in wait for him once they arrived at the capital). The crowd who had followed him down from Galilee, growing in numbers constantly as Jesus passed through their towns and villages along the way, were even more naïve. Optimism was running enormously high – they firmly believed that Jesus, the Messiah, was on route to reclaim the nation for God. They believed him to be in the line of King David, and that the Golden Age of Israel was about to be restored, both spiritually and politically.

Yet Jesus was the only person in that triumphal entry into Jerusalem who knew what truly lay ahead. He was to share pain and suffering, to fully embrace the human condition. That he did so willingly, expresses to us now in 2021 the extent to which he understands the pain and suffering which all of humanity has endured during the Coronavirus pandemic. He has been there – he is not detached or aloof. He is connected with our pain because he has felt it himself.

As Springtime starts to arrive, we are able to look forward with a little more hope to the end of our present tribulation. The cross reminds us that even when all hope appears to be gone, the Lord can still bring about our deliverance. Stand firm in Jesus.

God bless, *Ralph*

## What's On

**Palm Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March 10:30am** online worship with Rev Ralph Ward

**Maundy Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 8pm** online worship with Rev Clive McKie

**Good Friday 10:30am** online worship with Pat Oakley

**Easter Sunday 9am in the church** Communion with Rev Sue Conroy  
(note change of time to 9am)

**Easter Sunday 10:30am** online worship with Helen Greaves

**Wednesdays 2pm** Rev Ralph's Bible study – one more to go

**Find all online services** on [St Paul's Facebook page](#) and [website home page](#)

## For Kids and young people

**Sundays 12noon** Zoom sessions for King's Kids and King's Teens. If you haven't had your invitation please contact Carol or email [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com)

**Fridays 7pm** Young Peoples' Singing Group (not Good Friday)

## In your prayers

**Give thanks to God for prayers answered:**

**Stephanie R** is recovering well from the infection that briefly hospitalised her. She thanks all her friends for cards, emails and prayers.

**Lyn's mum** is now much better and is being prepared to go home. Lyn thanks you all for your care and asks us to continue praying.

**Please pray for** Neil Roberts who is currently in hospital, Kaanji's friend Mithy & her daughter Rosy in Sri Lanka grieving the loss of their husband and father and continue praying for Pam and others you know who need our prayers.

**Karen and Shehan Fernando**, who moved up to Scotland last November, ask for our prayers for Shehan's cousin Chrysanthi who is seriously unwell in Sri Lanka, and family. Chrysanthi's late father was a Methodist minister in Sri Lanka and the prayers will be much appreciated by the family.

Karen also says, "We are settling into life in Kilmacolm and are now enjoying seeing spring arriving in the village. We've had some wonderful sunsets and are still being kept entertained by our neighbour's donkey! I will be thinking of you all as you open St Paul's doors again for Easter. I am hoping that we will be soon able to explore the churches here."

**Send** your prayer requests to [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com)

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

**In this week**, just one year after the first lockdown was announced, Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference, offers this prayer:

*It is so hard, loving God, to express all that is in our hearts today.*

*So much has made us sorrowful, and we commend to you all who have died, all who mourn, all who are still ill, all who are separated from loved ones.*

*So much has made us anxious, and we bring to you all who are burdened by worries about their health, their jobs, their education, or their finances.*

*So much has made us thankful, the care of the NHS, the vaccine, work of so many in their communities.*

*It is so hard, loving God, to express all that is in our hearts today, but you know it all and we put our trust in you. Amen*

## How to get your Palm Cross this year



Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey with his followers spreading palm branches, symbols of victory and triumph, at his feet with cries of "Hosanna" as he passed by. Christian churches traditionally hand out palm crosses to their congregation as a reminder of Christ's victory over death.

This year we won't be in church to hand out the crosses but, if you happen to be passing St Paul's this Saturday, Sunday or Monday, there will be palm crosses in the porch so that you can take one for yourself and, if you wish, another to pass on to someone else. St Paul's people who receive this newsletter by post will have one included.

## All We Can appeal for the fire in the Rohingya camp

All We Can's partners in the Rohingya camps have confirmed that the fire which engulfed part of the Kutupalong mega camp, is estimated to have displaced more than 45,000 people and left 429 people unaccounted for. Those wishing to support the work of All We Can's partners in addressing the aftermath of the Rohingya fire, are invited to donate to *All We Can's* Emergency Relief Fund. You can make a donation on the *All We Can* website <https://www.allwecan.org.uk/>

## Methodist Church to start major new project on being a justice-seeking Church

The Methodist Church is to commit to a two-year project looking at how the Church speaks out on social issues and challenges injustices. The project will be led by Rachel Lampard and aims to make the Church more effective in speaking and acting for justice and transformation.

Rachel Lampard, who will shortly move to this secondment from her role as Team Leader of the Joint Public Issues Team said: "I am excited to be part of this project listening to Methodists and those beyond our church, including those who are sometimes unheard; discerning the values upon which our commitment to justice can be based; and acting to help Methodists use these resources to speak and act on issues of justice.

"I hope and pray that this will be a project which engages people from around the Connexion and leaves us all with a deeper passion for God's justice in the world."

The Methodist Church's Head of Mission Jude Levermore said: "The world is living in a time of huge change with domestic and global injustices being revealed and intensified. Methodists have long committed to working for justice. Now is the time for The Methodist Church to renew its voice as a justice-seeking church."

## Paintings, poems and prayers for Holy Week

This is a selection of works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection which can be used for meditation and prayer daily from Palm Sunday throughout Holy Week and Easter weekend. See the collection here

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21026/3512-mmacc-holy-week-content-2021.pdf>



Methodist Circuit 36/13  
United Reformed Church Area 11

## Operations Manager

Required from Summer 2021  
for a three year fixed term contract.

Salary £30,000.

The post holder will work in partnership with the lay and ordained staff team and 24 church communities, to help coordinate and facilitate the smooth working of the Ecumenical Area and aid us in our future planning. This will include assisting with our financial, legal and strategic responsibilities.

For details and information pack, please contact:

[CentralSussexArea@outlook.com](mailto:CentralSussexArea@outlook.com)

Closing date for applications: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021

The role is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

### **And finally – some thoughts on gardens**

*Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.*

*A A Milne*

*My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece.*

*Claude Monet*

*Flowers are restful to look at. They have neither emotions nor conflicts.*

*Sigmund Freud*

*I plant a lot of trees. I am a great believer in planting things for future generations. I loathe the now culture where you just live for today.*

*Penelope Keith*

*My neighbour asked if he could use my lawnmower and I told him of course he could, so long as he didn't take it out of my garden.*

*Eric Morecombe*

### **Contacts**

**(Until 31<sup>st</sup> March) Rev Ralph Ward** 01342 325877 [rphwrd@gmail.com](mailto:rphwrd@gmail.com)

**(From 1<sup>st</sup> April) Rev Clive McKie** 01737 770197 | [clivewmckie@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:clivewmckie@tiscali.co.uk)

**Prayer requests & newsletter items** [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com)

**St Paul's website** [www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk)

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