

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 63 **June 20th 2021**

Singing – a vital part of Methodist identity

by Richard J Teal, President of the Methodist Conference 2020-21

I have been fascinated travelling the country virtually and preaching just about every week of this Presidential year. Most Sundays have been on Zoom from a whole variety of churches and circuits. One interesting observation has been how churches have used hymns and worship songs week by week and how we have sung along with them or remained silent and listened to a whole variety of musicians and singer. The lack of congregational singing has been for me a huge negative of the pandemic. I love to sing with others, even though I may not be very good at it. For me it is one of the doors into the divine presence.

The presidential theme this year has been Wesley's final words, '*The best of all is, God is with us*'. I am grateful to the Revd Andrew Pratt for his many splendid hymns but in particular this year for his hymn of the same title, number 610 in Singing the Faith. I have sung it in worship, at least once a week during the year and its words have taken on a richer meaning as the year has progressed. It has sustained and enriched my faith during this concerning year. This has made me think 'why are hymns and songs so powerful? Here are just a few thoughts:

- They are individual. Using the words for personal use in private devotions are a powerful way to absorb the lifeline of the Christian Faith.
- To sing them with others gathering for worship provides a unity for the congregation and a unity of faith and belonging which is powerful. There is deep joy in singing together.
- The differing moods of music and words enable hymns and songs to reach the depths of human experience, just like the Psalms as they express lament, sadness, joy and thanksgiving.
- In singing hymns and songs, we learn biblical truths which because of the rhyme, rhythm and pattern are helpful tools which enable memory.

During this year I have had the privilege of meeting Christians in churches which have adapted to being church in new ways. It has been a joy to hear all the exciting stories. But what will we do with hymn and song singing after the pandemic? I do hope and pray we will revisit them in a new way, and see them as real part of our worship, liturgy and spiritual life. *Rev Richard Teal*



What's On

- Sunday 20th** **9:30am in the church** Communion service with Rev Clive McKie
10am A short General Church Meeting, dealing only with essential business, will be held in the sanctuary after the 9:30am Communion service. Everyone welcome, but only members of the Methodist Church may vote.
10:30am online worship with Rev Clive McKie
- Sunday 27th** **9:30am in the church** spoken service with Mr John Starling
10:30am online worship with Mr John Starling
- Sunday 4th July** **10:30am** back in church for worship and Holy Communion with Rev Ralph Ward. This service will be live-streamed on Facebook
- Find all online services** on [St Paul's Facebook page](#) and [website home page](#)

For Kids and young people

- Fridays 6-7pm** Kids and Young People *Friday Funday*
Fridays 7pm Young Peoples' Singing Group

Good news about our services

Starting on Sunday 4th July, the 9:30am spoken services will cease and we will return to having one service at 10:30am on Sundays in the sanctuary at St Paul's. This service will be live-streamed for those unable to attend. Songs will be pre-recorded and projected to the screen but the rules still prohibit congregational singing. We'll continue to sing together after the service outside the building until the rules allow us to sing inside.

The first of these 10:30 services will be conducted by Rev Ralph Ward, who will be newly returned from his sabbatical leave, and it will include Holy Communion. Sadly, it will be Ralph's last morning service with us before he moves to his new appointment in Cornwall.

As we must still limit attendance, if you intend coming, please let us know by email to ask.stpauls@gmail.com, or by phoning Joyce Jordan or Carol Ofield.

In your prayers

Pray for this year's Methodist Conference which will meet at the National Conference Centre in Birmingham, from Thursday 24 June to Thursday 1 July. The agenda will cover crucial aspects of the mission and ministry of the Church and key decisions will be made in the areas of marriage and relationships; equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); and oversight and trusteeship. Conference will formally elect the Revd Sonia Hicks as President and Barbara Easton as Vice-President, who begin their year of office on 26 June.

Pray for all affected by the present rise in Covid cases due to the Delta variant, for those who are ill and for all medical and care workers.

Continue to pray for Lyn and Richard and for all others you know who need prayers at this time.

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

A prayer for freedom

written by Jude Levermore, Head of Mission at the Methodist Church in Britain

Dear Lord, I was so looking forward to the day they were calling Freedom Day, and now it's postponed.

I'm thinking of all those whose plans are more complicated, and whose lives are impacted, those on furlough dreaming of going back, those who long to dance at their wedding, those who live in fear of a third wave.

Lord help me to remember that my freedom is tied up only in You, that you are the God who sets me free. Help me to choose again that sort of freedom.

Help us to remember the promise that those who hope in the Lord will renew our strength. Then we will soar on wings like eagles; run and not grow weary, walk and not be faint.

Lord, give us freedom in you, and strength to wait patiently until the current restrictions end and we can sing your praises again, with our voices and our lives, like you made us to. Amen.

Friday Funday

For the past few weeks our children and young people have been getting together from 6-7pm on Fridays for half an hour of Bible teaching and related activities followed by half an hour of play and socialising. It's going very well. The kids are enjoying being back together again and they have decided to call this time *Friday Funday*. Thanks are due to Laura Tazob who has got this up and running. Laura says she is pleased with how it's going but she needs a few more leaders and helpers joining in. If you feel called to come and help on a Friday evening, regularly or occasionally, please email ask.stpauls@gmail.com. If you're not sure what being a leader means, you could just drop in any Friday evening and see what's going on. Please pray for *Friday Funday*, its leaders and all our young people.

Ralph's farewell

As you are aware, Rev Ralph will be moving on to pastures new in August. Ralph will be having an 'open' afternoon/evening between 5 - 9pm on Saturday 24th July at Trinity Church, East Grinstead to which everyone from the Trinity and St Paul's congregations is warmly invited. Save the date!

As is customary, we are inviting people to contribute to Ralph's leaving gift. This can be done in the following ways:-

- Make a payment directly into Trinity's bank account - referenced as 'Ralph leaving gift'. Please email ask.stpauls@gmail.com for the bank details.
- Put your contribution into the collection plate, labelled 'Ralph leaving gift', after the 9:30am service at St Paul's on a Sunday
- Post your contribution, labelled as 'Ralph leaving gift', to:
Trinity Methodist Church,
Lingfield Road,
East Grinstead,
West Sussex RH19 2HA

If you are paying by cheque, make it payable to Trinity Methodist Church and please make your contribution by Sunday 20 June 2021.

Wesley's Directions for Singing

Following the President's article on singing in church on the front page, here's a reminder of John Wesley's 1761 guidelines for congregational singing. In those days singing in church was a new idea and Wesley's directions now look archaic, but looking at them in the spirit they were intended, they have much to offer:

- 1:** Learn these tunes before you learn any others, afterwards learn as many as you please.
- 2:** Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.
- 3:** Sing All — see that you join the congregation frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.
- 4:** Sing Lustily — and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength.
- 5:** Sing modestly — do not bawl so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation that you may not destroy the harmony but strive to unite your voices together so as to make one melodious sound.
- 6:** Sing in time — whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before and do not stay behind it
- 7:** Sing spiritually — have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to attend strictly to the sense of what you sing and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so, shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Volunteer vaccination stewards needed at Crawley Hospital

As some volunteers return to their usual work, the NHS is looking for new recruits.

What you would be doing: Meet and greet the general public and guide them where to go inside the building; provide extra support on a 1:1 basis if anyone needs it; liaise with staff and other volunteers to ensure a smooth flow of members of the public; follow UK government advice on hand hygiene; maintain confidentiality at all times; be comfortable communicating while wearing a face mask; keep good time-keeping and show regular commitment.

What you wouldn't be doing: Giving clinical advice or medical advice; lifting heavy equipment; administering vaccines; no tasks outside this role description.

You need to be 18 years or older. You will receive some training. You will have a named person for contact. You will need to wear a face mask whilst volunteering. Travel expenses will be reimbursed. Tea and coffee will be available.

To find out more and apply go to <https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/work-with-us/covid-19-vaccination-programme-volunteer-application-form-2.htm>

Contacts

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

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

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