

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19

Final Issue no. 68

July 25th 2021

From the Minister...

After a bumper message last week all about my activities on sabbatical, my final message this week is going to be a bit shorter. I finish my duties on July 31st and will move on to Cornwall in the days that follow.

I really just want to take the opportunity to say what a joy and a privilege it has been to serve as your minister at St Pauls. It's only been for three years, which is not long enough really. But I've come to the end of my 5 year invitation in this circuit, and it's clear that I must move on.

I'm grateful to God for your love and friendship, which I've experienced from everyone. Without exception you've been warm and accepting, respectful and good-natured. There's never been anyone at St Paul's that I haven't looked forward to seeing. No matter what challenges you've been facing, you've always had a great sense of perspective and an awesome sense of humour, which shows in the smiles that are never far from your faces. You are real people, without pretension and with a heart for each other. You value your fellowship, you are so keen to reach out to your community and show them the love of Jesus. Many of you work so hard, so You deserve to be blessed. So I pray that you do indeed receive a great blessing in the years to come. I pray that St Paul's grows and thrives, not just in numbers but in faith. I pray that the bond between you will be strong, and that nothing and no one may ever threaten it.

This is a time of significant change in the Circuit. All five of our circuit churches will start September with a new minister, which is something I've never encountered before. We have three new members of staff starting all at once. I'm pleased to hear that new deacon is arriving in September, and that she will be living in the St Paul's manse. I really hope and pray that she becomes a joyous and active part of your fellowship and vision; I know you will be making her welcome.

With such big staffing changes all happening at once, plus our emergence from the challenge of the pandemic, it feels like a new start, a new opportunity. Our God is the God of new beginnings. We need to listen to His voice and follow where He leads. We need to be bold, to have the courage of our convictions. We need to stand strong together as one body in our church, and not to allow Satan to divide us in any way.

Like you, I'm going to keep Jesus front and centre in my vision for the work and that lies ahead of me in Cornwall. And when I look back and remember you, I shall do so with great fondness.

God bless, *Ralph*



Welcome back to St Paul's

We would like you to feel safe and comfortable returning to worshipping at our church. Here is how:

- You may sit where you like and with whom you like. If you would like to sit with others, please sit towards the front, leaving seats at the back for those who prefer to remain socially distanced.
- Please continue to wear face coverings including, for the time being, whilst singing.
- Please continue to sign in and sanitise hands. (The signing in sheets are kept for 3 weeks for track and trace).
- You are welcome to use the Welcome Area to chat in, but please leave exits and entrances clear.
- We are encouraging congregational singing within the services, but there will be slightly fewer songs to help make the service a bit shorter.
- There will be some activities for children in the Kid's Corner, but we ask that it is kept tidy.
- The windows and doors will be left open for air flow throughout the service.
- You can hug each other or shake hands to greet each other, if you feel comfortable doing so. The minister/preacher will make their own decisions about shaking hands at the end of the service.
- We will continue to celebrate Holy Communion each month, but we will continue, for the time being, using the small individual Communion cups, which you can collect on your way into the church.
- The newssheet will continue to be sent out fortnightly via email.
- At the end of the service, we ask, if you are able, to wipe your chair and stack it, no more than 4 high, at the edge of the church.
- Please let us know if you would like to read the Bible during the service. You will be given your own microphone, or asked to use either the pulpit or a band microphone

What's On

Sunday 25th 10:30am in church and on-line with Rev Melvyn Cooke

Sunday 1st Aug 10:30am in church and on-line with Miss Lorraine Valler

6:30pm 'Picnic in the Church' circuit service at Redhill (see below)

Sunday 8th 10:30am in church and on-line with Mrs Jill Brooks

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

For Kids and young people

Note that Friday Funday and Young People's Singing Group are taking a summer break. They will restart in September.

A message to all World Church and JMA collectors

Please return World Church and JMA boxes to Ann Brown for annual emptying. If you have any problems with this, please phone Ann.

In your prayers

Pray for our church as we come to worship a little more freely, including singing together. Ask God to help us set aside our personal desires and anxieties and to put Jesus at the heart of our worship.

Continue to pray for Neil who is still in hospital, for Pam, 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

'Picnic in the Church': Circuit Service 1st August 2021 6.30pm hosted by Redhill Methodist Church

All are welcome to join us as we say farewell to Rev Felicity Al-Hassan and reflect on her contribution to the life of the circuit over the last 7 years. Join us, with your own nibbles and drinks (the church will not be able to supply anything at the moment) for stories, songs and informal worship as we 'picnic in the church'. You will need to have a face covering while you are not eating or drinking. Please bring a pen or pencil to take part in the activities that Rev Melvyn Cooke is planning for us.

We will sit in small groups around tables which will be separated. Please book your places at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/circuit-farewell-service-1st-august-registration-161911518711>

The event will be live-streamed onto YouTube and the link for that is: <https://youtu.be/LhUdZgxz3H4>

Vice-President sends condolences after floods in Germany, Belgium and Austria

Recent rainfall events on July 15 brought terrible flooding to Germany with over 160 deaths, hundreds more injured or missing, homes lost and infrastructure destroyed. Flooding also affected parts of Belgium and Austria. Barry Sloan, the Methodist Church in Britain Partnership Co-ordinator for Europe has been in touch with the leaders of the partner churches in the United Methodist Church - Germany, the United Protestant Church of Belgium and the United Methodist Church in Austria.

Letters expressing prayer and condolences were sent from the Vice-President of the British Methodist Conference to the head of each church. This letter was sent from the Vice-President of the British Methodist Conference to Bishop Harald Rückert, the head of the United Methodist Church in Germany.

In reply, thanks were expressed for the gift of being part of the Methodist family and for the support shown through prayer. The UMC Germany is a member of "Diakonie-Katastrophenhilfe" an emergency relief-agency of all evangelical churches in Germany which is providing relief. In Belgium, President Pastor Steven H. Fuite, expressed how this was probably the largest natural disaster in Belgium in recent history and his thoughts still with the families of those who were missing. There was acknowledgement of the part of climate change in these events and the need to address the wider climate issues. Please continue to pray for the leaders and churches in Germany, Belgium and Austria as they respond to this disaster.



*Congratulations to Lyn and Richard Gorringe
who celebrated their Silver Wedding
Anniversary on July 20th*

Farewell to Extraordinary Times

Now that times are becoming rather less extraordinary, this is the final issue of *Extraordinary Times*. From the beginning of August, I shall produce a fortnightly *St Paul's Newsletter* which will be sent to the majority of our congregation by email as well as being posted on the St Paul's Facebook page and website. Members and friends who do not have internet or use email will receive it through the post as usual. In between the 2-weekly newsletters, any extra important news and information will be sent by email and posted on Facebook and the website.

As editor of ET, I'd like to thank everyone who has been so encouraging and supportive over the past 16 months. Your messages have been much appreciated. In March 2020 I never dreamt that ET would get to issue number 68! *Joyce*

Finally, as we can now sing together again, some thoughts about hymns

"Hymns are the poetry of the people." John Betjeman

*"Being part of a community with a church at its centre and singin' hymns
is a great thing to do." Vivienne Westwood*

*"Charles Wesley's hymns are forceful because they contain so many words
which are physical: for him the life of a Christian was to be experienced
in the body as well as in the soul." J.R. Watson*

*"Paul commands the Church to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly when we
meet together, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. It seems clear that
style is not the important issue as much as the depth of content." Keith Getty*

*"Good hymns are an immense blessing to the Church. They train people for
heaven, where praise is one of the principal occupations." J. C. Ryle*

Contacts

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General enquiries, prayer requests & newsletter items

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

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