

Liverpool (North) Circuit

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Holy Week and Easter 2021

To members of and regular worshippers at Maghull Methodist Church (by post or email to each household)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

At the Circuit Service on Ash Wednesday, we recalled that, since early days, Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion, death and resurrection. We have now come to that 'time' and we will observe it in a variety of ways; one is through worship and so I want to share with you the details of the services that have been arranged for Holy Week and Easter Day. All of them will be available through Zoom so that as many as possible can share in them, whether by phoning in or through the internet.

On **Maundy Thursday**, there will be a Circuit Service at 7:30 pm: I will be conducting that service and The Revd Sue Edwards will be the preacher.

On **Good Friday**, there will be a Circuit Service at 2:00 pm: The Revd Luke Smith and I will be sharing in in that service. (Zoom details are the same as for Maundy Thursday.)

On **Easter Day**, there will be two services. The morning service will, as usual, be at 10.30 am when The Revd Luke Smith will be the preacher. (Zoom details are the same as for other Sunday morning services)

In the evening, there will be a Circuit Service at 6:30 pm with The Revds Luke Smith and John Thompson. (Zoom details are the same as for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.)

Here is a prayer for this most important week of the year:

Eternal God,
in your tender love towards the human race
you sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take our flesh and to suffer death upon a cross.
Grant that we may follow the example of his great humility,
and share in the glory of his resurrection;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sadly, since I last wrote, two of our members, Nerys Cooke and Dorothy Curran, have died; I invite you to remember them and their families and close friends in your prayers.

I also want to share with you an update from our COVID-19 Group. In the light of the government's 'Roadmap out of lockdown' and a statement from the Liverpool District of the Methodist Church issued on 3 March, we decided that it is not yet time for us to meet to discuss changing our earlier decision to keep our building closed for public worship. We will, as before, keep the situation under review and let you know of any change. Meanwhile, we continue to hold our services via Zoom on the fortnightly pattern.

I turn now to our **General Church Meeting** on Sunday, 18 April, to which you are all very welcome. The Church Council decided to hold the meeting then because I will be conducting worship that morning at 10:30. We will hold the meeting in the context of worship on Zoom. (Given that we will be on Zoom for more than an hour, we will be ready for those joining in by phone to drop out of the meeting and re-enter it in order not to incur a large phone-bill.)

As you know, the purposes of the General Church Meeting include the election of church stewards and representatives to the Church Council; since these appointments do not take effect until 1 September, it has been decided to leave these until later in the year in order to concentrate on other matters.

Another of the purposes of the meeting is 'mutual counsel respecting the condition of the Local Church'. This will include consideration of the Annual Report for 1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020 which was agreed by the Church Council last autumn. (A copy is enclosed or attached.) More significantly, it will include consideration of the present and the future, both of which are influenced by our experience of the last year.

The Church Council and Circuit Meeting have been discussing a number of relevant matters over the last few months and these need to be shared with you all so that the General Church Meeting can make an informed and prayerful response to the Church Council. To that end, I enclose or attach a copy of two more documents: 'Report to General Church Meeting April 2021' (on property and finance) and 'Your Circuit – Past, Present & Future'. One of the concerns across the Circuit is the shortage of people fulfilling what are very significant or even essential roles; I believe it is important to remind you that in our church some people have served us in particular roles for many years, we have only two church stewards (the minimum number required), we need more pastoral visitors, and we are still looking to appoint one or more people as property stewards.

The General Church Meeting will be asked to share hopes and aspirations for the future. As part of your preparation for that meeting, I hope you will join with me in an hour of prayer on Saturday, 17 April from 10:30–11:30. Although we are unable to pray together in the same place, it would be good, as far as is possible, to be praying at the same time; if, however, you are unable to do so at that time, please choose another one. Here are two prayers about for the Church of which we are part, both taken from the intercessions for Good Friday:

Almighty and everlasting God,
by your Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified.
Hear the prayers we offer for all your faithful
people,
that in their vocation and ministry
each may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

God our Redeemer,
who called your Church to witness
that you were in Christ
reconciling the world to yourself:
help us so to proclaim the good news of your
love
that all who hear it may be reconciled to you;
through him who died for us and rose again
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A blessed Holy Week and Easter to you all.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil A Stubbens". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a long, thin horizontal line that extends to the right.

Neil A Stubbens

Enclosed or attached:

Maghull Methodist Church Annual Report 2019-2020
Report to General Church Meeting April 2021 (on property and finance)
Your Circuit – Past, Present & Future