



The Methodist Church

Longmoor Lane Methodist Church

22nd March 2020

Dear friends,

I remember in the aftermath of September 11th in 2001 feeling that we were living through “strange times”. After the shocking news 18 ½ years ago, the churches I had pastoral charge of gathered to pray. We prayed for peace, healing and a sense of calm.

Here we are in March 2020 living through “strange times” although we are not able to gather for prayer, we are able to pray, keep in contact with God and keep in contact with each other. We are able to keep in contact with God through personal devotions. To help with that the Methodist Church is producing a weekly service sheet for us to follow on a Sunday when we would normally be at church. Vivienne and I are also producing a weekly short act of worship which can be emailed to you. In terms of keeping in touch with each other please do remember to call each other by telephone or letter or card (if you are able to get out to the post box) or text or email. This letter will be a weekly publication as well. If you wish to receive the Methodist Church worship sheet or this letter by post or email or the act of worship by email to contact either myself or Bernard (on 07913 909137 or admlivnc@gmail.com). Both Bernard and I are now based at home. I can be contacted on 01942 665654 or 07376248147 or luke.smith@methodist.org.uk. I am practicing “social distancing” largely because Vivienne is in the “vulnerable” category as most of our congregation are.

This has been a “strange” week. On Sunday I preached in Hull, I was with a congregation I used to be the minister of. The church is due to cease to meet in July, but in the light of the current situation I was described as “probably the last preacher we will have”. On Monday I had the first of two conversations with Doreen Patterson about the Breeze In then I prepared for a talk at the Salvation Army as part of the series of Lent talks for Churches Together in Bootle. As I drove into Liverpool, I listened to the Prime Minister giving the first of his daily press conferences where he explained the steps that had to be taken to avoid further spread of Covid 19. In the evening I spoke and it was decided that my talk would be the last one. On the way home I spoke to Lesley, our scout leader who told me scouts had stopped meeting. On Tuesday I spoke to Doreen again and told her we needed to close the cafe. Later I sent round a preliminary email around the circuit explaining that we would not be meeting for worship for the foreseeable future. On Tuesday afternoon I compiled a letter to go around the circuit following government and Methodist Church advice which was emailed out (if you haven't received it please do get in touch with Bernard who will email or post it to you). On Wednesday I spent a lot of the day explaining to people my understanding of some of the practicalities of the situation we find ourselves in. Also recording the first of my little services (again if you haven't received it please do contact either Bernard or I, I'm afraid this can only be sent via email). I also held a supervision session with a colleague (by telephone). On Thursday I wrote this letter and recorded the recording for Sunday. I also took my dog (Henry) to the vet. I think he's going to be OK.

I think I also need to mention that Radio 4 and BBC local radio are broadcasting services on Sunday mornings.

How has your week been? Feel free to get in touch with me, although I am based at home I'm still “working” and am available for conversations or if you want someone to pray with.

Although our activities are not taking place (including worship) we still have financial commitments. If you are able, could I ask you to put aside any financial gifts you normally give on a Sunday so that they can be made when we re-start worship.

In your prayers could I ask that you remember the following:

Those people who have lost their jobs or had their wages cut, Foodbank beneficiaries, the lonely and isolated, the people who usually come to the Breeze In, those suffering with the symptoms of Covid 19 and those many many people who are putting their health at risk to serve others.

Finally, I offer a prayer written by the President of the Conference:

Loving God
If we are ill, strengthen us
If we are tired
Fortify our spirits
If we are anxious
Help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.
Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders!
Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves
Fix our eyes on your story
And our hearts on your grace
Help us always to hold fast to the good and see the good in others.
And remember there is just one world, one hope,
One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.
In Jesus we make our prayer,
The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,
In whom we trust, these days and all days. Amen

God Bless you,

Luke

P.S Here is a photo of our Communion Table to remind you of life in our little bit of Gods kingdom:

