

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley

Extraordinary Times

a magazine to help us through COVID-19

Issue 27

September 27th 2020

From the minister...

As I hope you are already aware, we are using the month of September to gradually reopen our churches for public worship. The five churches in our circuit are undertaking this in various ways, using various service times and schedules. Here at St Pauls we hosted our first two services on Sunday September 6th and Sunday September 20th. **Please note that there is no service at St Paul's this Sunday September 27th.**

If you are wondering how the Government's new "Rule of Six" affects our worship, the good news is that there is no impact on church services as a consequence of the new regulations. When you come to church you may sit alone, or with a partner, or as a household or "Bubble". Up to six members of your household are permitted to sit together.

During September our services have been fortnightly, but from the beginning of October there will be a service every Sunday at St Pauls, and we will be returning to our more usual start time of 10.30am. The first of these services on October 4th will be a communion service led by myself, the first one since lockdown began in March. October also sees a return to the circuit preaching plan, which means that we will begin to see our services led once again by Deacon Irene and the circuit local preachers as well as myself.

Please note that a return to the 10.30am slot for services in October does not mean, sadly, that it will be "business as usual" once again. The singing ban will still be in force, the service length will continue to be 30 minutes. We would love to welcome families with children back into church, but we are not yet able to host Sunday school activities. So if your children or grandchildren are of an age where they are able to maintain social distancing and sit with you in your household group then by all means bring them with you. For the smaller children this might not be possible, but I don't want to discourage parents from bringing children if they feel comfortable to do so.

Reading through the current Government regulations, I discovered the following: *There are exceptions where groups can be larger than 6 people. These include:*

- *supervised activities provided for children, including wraparound care, youth groups and activities, and children's playgroups*

This means that we are able to host activities for children at St Pauls where they are allowed to mingle together. As a result, whilst we are currently unable to provide Sunday school activities on a Sunday morning, we are planning to return to our practice of holding a service specifically for children (with their parents) at 3.30pm on Sunday October 11th and Sunday November 8th. I will be leading both of these services, which as usual will not feature singing and will be of a 30 minute duration. Nevertheless, we're planning on them being fun! More info to follow.

I am aware that there are still people who are shielding, or feeling too vulnerable at present to consider venturing back to church. Let us all continue to pray for one

another and support one another as best we can. Do make me aware of any prayer requests or situations where I may be able to provide help.

Finally, don't forget that I am starting an online Alpha course on Facebook from Wednesday October 7th at 7.30pm. Everyone is warmly invited to participate in this course, which features 11 weeks of one hour sessions, with the opportunity for live discussion and questions. In order to subscribe to the course (which costs nothing), simply go to the St Pauls Facebook page, scroll down the page and click the box which says "Try Alpha Online". Then click the button to join the group. You may leave at any time if you wish. The reason this is in a private group and not just publicly available is so that you can ask any questions in the sessions without the whole world seeing it!

I would urge you to consider Alpha if you have never done the course before, even if you have been attending church for many years. It is a wonderful way to explore your faith and become confident in your understanding of the Lord.

God bless, *Ralph*

*A prayer As we reopen our churches Lord
Prepare the way, we pray
Keep us safe, increase our faith and confidence
May we not be afraid, but put our trust in You for everything
We place our church, our families, our friends and ourselves
In you complete love and care
Thank you that you never leave us or desert us
That you share in our joys and our sorrows
That You shelter us in the shadow of Your wing
In Jesus name AMEN*

Continue to pray for Geoff and Jean as well as others we know who have needs known to ourselves.

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

What's On

Sun 27 Sep	10:45am Online worship from Trinity with Rev Ralph
Sun 4 Oct	10:30am Worship and Communion at St Paul's with Rev Ralph
Wed 7 Oct	7:30pm Online Alpha course with Rev Ralph (see Ralph's letter)
Sun 11 Oct	10:30am Worship at St Paul's with Deacon Irene 3:30pm All-age family worship with Rev Ralph
Wed 14 Oct	7:30pm Online Alpha course with Rev Ralph
Sun 18 Oct	10:30am Worship with guest speaker from Christian Aid
Wed 21 Oct	7:30pm Online Alpha course with Rev Ralph
Sun 25 Oct	10:30am Worship with Rev Clive McKie
Wed 21 Oct	7:30pm Online Alpha course with Rev Ralph

Please remember



Why no Harvest Festival?

In normal times we would now be looking forward to decorating the church ready for Harvest Festival on the 4th October, when we would sing the familiar harvest hymns and bring our gifts of produce and money in thanks for God's goodness to us. Inevitably this year must be different. We will not be asking you to bring produce but we will be asking for donations of money for the *All We Can* appeal for victims of the Beirut explosion and, more locally, *Christians Against Poverty*.

World Methodist Council on migrants



In a joint statement, faith groups and churches around the world, including the World Methodist Council and the World Council of Churches, have called for governments to reject the discourse and politics of fear and deterrence around migrants and to adopt a principled stance and compassionate practice. You can read the statement at

https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/joint-declarations/advocacy-statement-on-situation-of-migrants-and-refugees-in-europe/view?utm_source=Methodist%20Church%20House&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11843422_The%20Methodist%20News&dm_i=BVI,71UFY,3A7QOJ,SGY78,1

The Story Project – everyone has a story to tell

The Methodist Church, in association with Cliff College, has launched *The Story Project* to chart the rise and fall, ebb and flow of faith, growth, healing and sometimes even the pain and struggle that people have journeyed through.



"It's in our nature as humans to tell stories. It's also in our nature to listen to them. Stories are the way we communicate our feelings, emotions, beliefs and values. Stories impart truth and reveal our heart. Each of us has a story, and our story is worth sharing. An important part of that is our story with God, which is what *'The Story Project'* is all about." You can find it, and read some stories, at <https://thestoryproject.org.uk/>

New school resource at The New Room

The toppling of Bristol slave trader Edward Colston's statue has sparked the creation of a new resource for schools at the New Room, Bristol with an online workshop called '*A Tale of Two Statues*' which contrasts the lives of Colston and John Wesley. Read more at



https://www.newroombristol.org.uk/schools/?utm_source=Methodist%20Church%20House&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11843422_The%20Methodist%20News&dm_i=BVI,71UFY,3A7QOJ,SGPC3,1



Yeliz and Constantin Rusu on their 14th (Ivory) Wedding Anniversary



to Skye Njinyam who turned 9 this week and to Deacon Irene

You can raise TRIPLE donations for St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley when you shop the John Lewis and Partners home collection via #easyfundraising. So if you're planning on buying anything from them, make sure to get it this week to make the most of this offer! Shop now:



<http://efraising.org/NkMYEex2Wn>

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

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