

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 44 **January 31st 2021**

From our Minister

Are you finding this lockdown tough? I certainly am – tougher than the first one, and mainly because it's Winter this time. The weather is cold and damp, the nights are long. We can't go out except for shopping or exercise, and people are getting into trouble for travelling unnecessarily. Now is the Winter of our discontent, and it is proving challenging.

I appreciate that January has been another month of challenge and anxiety for many people in our church. But for all of us it is the sheer monotony of trudging along day to day that is exacting its toll upon us. We feel like exiles in our own land, longing for deliverance. The pressures of working from home (for those able to do so) along with the responsibility for home schooling and childcare are sometimes almost too much to bear. It feels like we are squashed together in a domestic pressure cooker, unable to let off steam. There are others amongst us who live alone, and the solitude is really getting to us now. The road is long and seems to be getting longer.

Yet there is hope on the horizon – we just can't get an accurate grasp of where the horizon lies. I am hearing of more and more people from my churches who are receiving their first Covid vaccination, which is a cause for joy and I'm sure brings a great sense of relief to the recipients. Let us keep praying for the vaccination programme, this astonishing achievement that is being rolled out in our country. Mistakes may have been made along the way over how the pandemic has been handled, but as Christians let us focus not on the negatives but on the positives. Let's not waste our time by giving in to the desire to point the finger and accuse (this is the work of Satan). Let us instead celebrate the victories, small though they may be. Let us not grow so weary of following the rules that we decide to flaunt them and do as we like. Admit it, sometimes we enjoy the feeling of schadenfreude which we get from hearing about people being handed penalty notices for breaking lockdown regulations.

Instead, let us follow the example of scripture:

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things". (Philippians 4:8)

Matt Hancock expressed that "vaccination is our route out of this". He's right: but so also are the eternal gifts of God, expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:13. *"These three remain – faith hope and love"*. Let's make sure that we stand strong on these for our deliverance.

God bless,
Ralph

What's On

Sundays 10:45am online worship with Rev Ralph Ward

Wednesdays 2pm Rev Ralph's Bible study on Mark's gospel

Find these live on [Trinity's Facebook page](#) and [St Paul's Facebook page](#) with videos available afterwards

In your prayers

Please pray for Daphne Ford's son Lester, who has been in hospital for more than 2 weeks suffering from Covid-19. Pray also for his family at this anxious time.

Continue praying for Geoff Manning, Geoff and Jean Rose, the NHS, hospitals, medical workers and vaccinators.

Continue in prayer for members of our church community and others you know who need our 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

President calls for prayers of lament and hope

A statement from the Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference and Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference:

"We know that many millions of people across the country have taken refuge in prayer during the pandemic. We join with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in their call to set aside time each evening at 6pm to pray. There is a very great need amongst us to be able to lament the horrific loss of life and to find solace and hope during these dark days. Our prayer is that each of you will know that God is with us, sustaining us through our grief."

Carolyn Lawrence offers this prayer following the announcement of 100, 000 deaths in the UK due to Covid-19.

Lord Jesus,

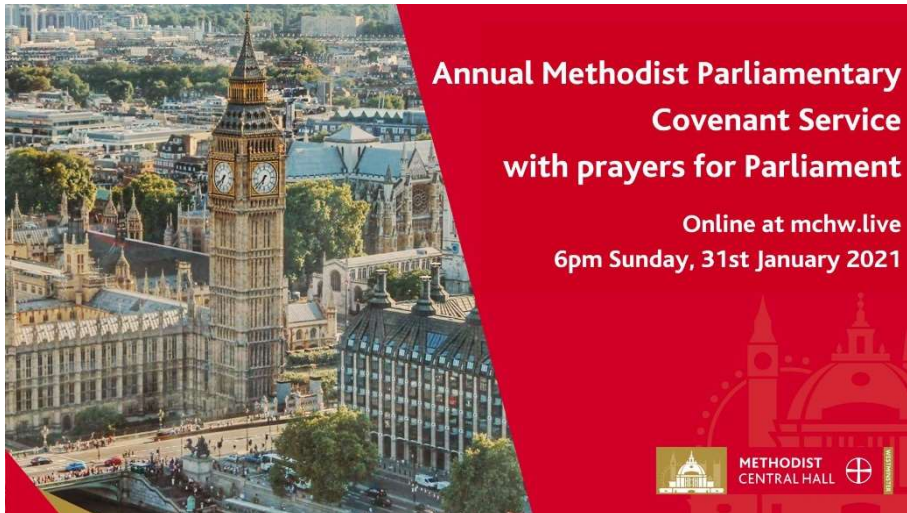
As we reach the sad milestone of 100,000 deaths from Covid we bring before you our sense of grief. We pray for all those who have suffered over this past year and pray that the families who have lost loved ones will know your peace, comfort and strength at this time. We continue to pray for all those working to care for those who are sick and those who are seeking to comfort the dying and bereaved. Help us to remember that even in these difficult days, God is still with us. Amen

Melvyn is taking a break

A reminder that our Circuit Superintendent, Melvyn Cooke, is away on holiday and Sabbatical leave until May. Please pray that the next few months will be a time of renewal and refreshment for him.

In Melvyn's absence Rev Clive McKie will be Acting Circuit Superintendent. Please feel free to contact him; email clivewmckie@tiscali.co.uk phone 01737 77019

Annual Parliamentary Covenant Service



Did you know that Methodists in our Parliament have their own Annual Covenant Service? It takes place online this Sunday at 6pm. You can join in the service from Methodist Central Hall, Westminster via their website:

<https://mchw.live/>

Christian Aid to hold virtual conference for its supporters

This Supporters' Conference will be a great time to get and give inspiration for this year's Christian Aid Week coming up in May which will focus on the climate crisis in Kenya. There will be lots of different sessions focussing on a wide variety of subjects such as fundraising, theology, campaigning, prayer and being a part of a wider movement for change. As it's a virtual conference you can come and go as you please. Indeed, you could do the ironing or polish the silver while listening. This link will tell you more about it with the opportunity to sign up for the sessions of your choice: <http://caid.org.uk/supporterconference2021> Ruth Lewis

New! Online *Taketime* Sessions start this week

Rev Clive McKie's new style, 30-minute, online *Taketime Together* group for our Circuit (and indeed for anyone you want to invite) are up and running from this coming Wednesday.

They are run by Clive and Pat Oakley at 7.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings of each month, starting on 3rd February. The meditation will last about 15 minutes and then, for those who wish to stay, there will be a fifteen minute opportunity to share their experiences, facilitated by a trained Taketime Practitioner.

For details click [HERE](#) or email clive@taketime.org.uk

*taketime
together*

Have you tried Dial-a-Prayer?

Dial-a-Prayer



FREE phone lines for prayers, reflections and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to a pastoral message from the President and Vice President: 0808 281 2695

Listen to our Podcast: 0808 281 2478

Prayer updated every Thursday, Presidential message updated every Monday, Methodist Podcast updated on first and third Thursday of the month.

The Big Garden Birdwatch – it's this weekend!

Stephanie R. reminds us that the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch is this weekend, 29-31 January. Just spend an hour counting the birds you see in your garden or from your balcony, then tell the RSPB what you



saw. It really is that simple! You can do it on your own or get the family to join in – it can get quite competitive. It's a nice way to spend an hour in lockdown and a good excuse to sit down with a cup of tea. Details are on [rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch). Please let us know what you see



Daphne's Marmalade Cake

If you miss popping into Loaves and Fishes for a chat with friends over a morning cuppa and a slice of one of Daphne's wonderful cakes, here's one of her recipes you can bake yourself.

How about enjoying a slice while you do the *Big Garden Birdwatch*?

Set oven to gas mark 4, 350F, 180C, Fan 160

Ingredients

- 6oz soft margarine or butter
- 5oz caster sugar
- 8oz self-raising flour (sieved)
- 1 tablespoon thick cut marmalade
- 3 medium eggs

Topping

- 1 tablespoon warmed marmalade

Grease and flour an 8" cake tin.

Cream margarine and sugar together.

Add eggs and flour. Mix well.

Add marmalade. Mix again.

Place in prepared tin. Put in oven one shelf below middle.

Cook for 45 minutes then check to see if done.

When done, leave in tin for 10 minutes, turn out onto cooling rack and brush warmed marmalade over top. Leave to cool.

Eat and enjoy!



And finally – a thought about birds

Everyone likes birds. What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird?

David Attenborough

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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