

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 20 **August 2nd 2020**

From the minister...

Hi everyone, and I hope you are keeping well, staying safe and hanging in there during these difficult times. One thing that has become apparent to me in the past couple of weeks is that it is a lot simpler to impose lockdown on our churches than it is to lift it! We have a raft of ever-changing guidelines and regulations from both the Methodist Church and the Government regarding the reopening of our buildings for worship, and your church stewards are in the process of sifting through it all, applying the necessary measures, and doing risk assessments. We would love to reopen our building on a Sunday morning for worship, but I can completely understand that there may be reluctance amongst our congregations to start attending services again, particularly if you are in a "vulnerable" group. So I'm inviting you to contact us and let us know how you feel about this. If church reopened for Sunday worship, would you come?

In answering this question, you might like to bear in mind the following:

- Upon arrival for a service, you would be required to register your attendance and give your contact details (a phone number is sufficient)
- This registration process will inevitably produce a queue, which would be properly socially distanced. Entry to church will be via a one way system
- Handwashing will be required on arrival and departure
- Seating in the church would also be socially distanced and marked as such. Individuals would be seated 2 metres apart, and there will be provision for members of the same household to sit together
- The wearing of masks is not currently compulsory, but it may be recommended by the leadership team
- No singing is currently allowed in our services, which are suggested to be no longer than 45 minutes
- After the service everyone must leave immediately via a one way system, and no refreshments may be served
- No books or notice sheets can be distributed, but you are allowed to bring your own books and bible providing you take them home again
- Sorry, no hugs or handshakes!

Now, you can be forgiven for looking at that list and thinking, "Is it worth it?". And that is what we'd like to know. These new measures, whilst annoying and restrictive, are there to prevent the passing on of a deadly infection for which there is no known cure. The church stewards and myself take our responsibility for your welfare and safety very seriously.

But we dearly want to meet together in fellowship again. So, if we opened on a Sunday morning with the above measures in place, would you come?

You can email me on rphwrd@gmail.com, or ring on 01342 325877. Or you can email the church leadership team on ask.stpauls@gmail.com - Joyce Jordan may have further contact details and advice if you get in touch with her.

Do look after yourselves, don't be anxious, put your trust in the Lord. We will defeat this enemy together

God bless, *Ralph*

Ralph's Prayer...

*Lord we pray for all who are vulnerable
Either due to the pandemic or for any reason
Be their strength and shield
Be their fortress and their strength
We pray for those who are isolated
For those who are shielding
For those who are ill or in hospital
Deliver us we pray
According to your great goodness
May we see the light of hope
And tread wisely the road to freedom AMEN*

What's On This Week

Sunday 2nd

10:45am live worship with Rev Ralph

Tuesday 4th

During the afternoon sometime Live message from Rev Ralph in St Paul's

Wednesday 5th

2pm Wednesday worship with Rev Ralph

All will be linked on St Paul's Facebook page and website

Prayers at 6 & 8

Please pray for our minister and the leaders of our church as they plan for the safe re-opening of the building.

Continue praying 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

A sacrifice in a really good cause

I have decided to donate my hair once again to *Little Princess Trust*, to be used to make a wig for a child with cancer, in memory of my god-daughter Abbey who died of cancer aged just 8. She was a twin; her twin sister Aileigh is now 23. It seemed a good idea as, due to lockdown, I was unable to get my hair cut for a while and have only had it trimmed once by my daughter Kallisti. This will be my second hair donation, you may remember I did this back in 2014.



I am planning to get my hair cut short in September. I would like to raise a total of £550.00 as this is the cost to have just one wig made, but obviously more than this would mean more children who are suffering hair loss would be able to get wigs. I have set up a JustGiving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sue-poole5> where you can make a donation to support this worthwhile cause. You can see more about *Little Princess Trust* at <https://www.littleprincesses.org.uk/> Many thanks, *Sue Poole*

Barry's Isolation Diary week 17 – Swansong

And so the time has come, the final curtain.... When Joyce started producing "Extraordinary times" many weeks ago and I discovered that I was considered to be at "extreme risk" if I caught the virus, she asked me if I would be prepared to write a diary of my experiences of being "shielded". Then of course, shielding was extended from twelve to eighteen weeks, although with some relaxations along the way. When it was announced that shielding would be paused on the first of August, Joyce and I agreed that it would be a suitable time for my diary to stop.

So this is it, my swansong. What to write about? I could make a list of all the topics I have covered, but hopefully you have at least read, and maybe remembered, some and enjoyed a few of them. On reflection and re-reading. I realise that I may have revealed more about myself than you ever needed or wanted to know.

Word count shows me that I have written some 7000 words. Mr East, my excellent English Master, would be proud of me. He might not be quite so pleased, that, despite his efforts, even now some sixty years on, it has still been necessary to ask Sheila to check, or rather add punctuation to my ramblings. I well remember him proving to me that my lack of punctuation was sufficient, at half a mark per error, to result in my failing English Language "O level" the first time I sat it (along with my appalling spelling). Mark you, I am not sure of the legality of his actions when I resat it the following autumn. He was the invigilator and came and stood in front of my table near the end of the exam, as he had said he would, and waited whilst I read through my essay and added some commas and full stops. Even then I only just achieved the required pass mark, which curiously was set at forty seven out of one hundred (note to the younger generation, in the dark ages of the 1950's our exams were marked from zero to one hundred, with a simple pass fail mark and no grades).

Surprisingly, I have enjoyed the challenge of thinking of something to write about each week and I hope it has not proved too boring for you all. I am not sure when I will feel confident enough to meet up with more than a few people at a time in an enclosed space (see last week's diary). This is not so much for my own personal safety, but wishing not to appear to act irresponsibly, as one who was shielded, and possibly causing an unnecessary load on the NHS. Especially as it seems more and more likely that a second wave may occur. I will have to see what my oncologist and cardiologist advise in the next few weeks and months.

So as always, keep safe and well. *Barry*

Easy money

If you're not supporting St Paul's yet on #easyfundraising, please get involved! You can shop online with over 4,200 retailers and raise free donations for us at the same time! Sign up now:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stpaulsmethodistchurchcrawley/?invite=LRZ7K6&referral-campaign=c2s>



Applause for National Theatre at Home

Way back in April, Joyce suggested in E.T. that we might enjoy watching National Theatre at Home. I am so grateful for that nudge as I have watched a dozen plays. I always used Joyce's link because I realised that there were many spurious links to the National Theatre, many of them insisting on me paying them. I did not intend to be scammed, thank you!

I have enjoyed every single play that I have seen on N.T. at Home. In fact, for 12 weeks I made Saturday my "watch the play" day, giving a structure to my Lockdown Week.

The April plays were *One Man Two Guvnors* and *Twelfth Night* - what a contrast! The May plays were *Antony and Cleopatra* (heavy going) and the Young Vic's *A Street Car named Desire* which was rather bleak. I was sorry to miss *This House*. In June I watched Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* with Tom Hiddlestone and Mark Gatiss. This was very powerful and thought provoking.

Then there was *The Madness of King George III* - Mark Gatiss again and he gave a superb performance in a very entertaining play. Good old Alan Bennett! Then I watched *Small Island* which was topical. I recognised Aisling Loftus from ITV's *Mr Selfridge*.

The very best play of all was Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I had already seen it at Cineworld last year but I LOVED IT!

In July I watched *Les Blancs* - great to see James Fleet and Siân Phillips again. A very powerful play was Rattigan's *Deep Blue Sea* which I saw live on stage ten years ago. Helen McCrory was stunning as Hester. The last N.T. at Home was *Amadeus* by Peter Shaffer which had professional musicians acting superbly as well as providing Mozart's music. Again, I had seen this before but absolutely loved this version.

I am extremely grateful that I managed to see so many of these plays online, completely free. I have only one complaint. Three weeks ago, I wanted to make a donation to the National Theatre but had problems with their website. Just two days ago I had an email from them. 'Try again', they suggested. I did; this time it worked. So *All's Well that Ends Well!* Ann Phillipson



Double congratulations are due to Katie Fernando (Karen and Shehan's daughter) who celebrates her 21st birthday on the 7th August and, this week, starts a permanent position as a children's nurse in Glasgow. Katie has been working full time in the wards as a student nurse since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis so her family have not seen her since February. They are hoping for a family reunion soon so that they can celebrate properly.

Contacts

Rev Ralph phone 01342 325877 email rlphwrd@gmail.com

Deacon Irene phone 01293 38512 email deaconirene@gmail.com

Prayer requests & newsletter items ask.stpauls@gmail.com

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

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