

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 66 **July 11th 2021**

From the Minister...

This is my first letter since returning from a three month sabbatical. But, sadly, I'm only around now until the end of July, which is when my duties here in the circuit finish. Adele and I will be moving to Penzance in Cornwall during the early part of August, where I start as Superintendent of the West Cornwall Circuit on September 1st. Melvyn Cooke, who you already know as our circuit superintendent here, will become the minister of St Paul's from September 1st.

Due to fact that I have two churches, and also because the preaching plan moves me around the circuit to other churches sometimes, I have already led my final morning service at St Paul's last Sunday, July 4th. It was an emotional moment for me, to be honest, because despite the fact that I've only been able to serve as your minister for three years (including the period of the Coronavirus pandemic), I've experienced a real sense of love, loyalty and respect from everyone I've met at St Pauls. Never let it be said that you are anything other than a loving welcoming church; that's certainly my experience.

I will be popping up this Sunday though, for our afternoon "tea service" at 3.30pm. This will be a short all age service with the children in church, but everyone is of course most welcome to come along. I'm pleased to have this extra opportunity to share with you in fellowship and say goodbye.

You may have heard that Trinity were organising a farewell social event at the church on Saturday July 24th, to which St Paul's people were invited. You may have been planning to attend. But, sadly we have now taken the decision to cancel this event. It's just too close to July 19th, when the lockdown restrictions are expected to be lifted. We think it would be irresponsible of us to gather socially because of the rise in Covid cases and the prevalence of the new Delta variant. Which is a shame, but my colleagues across the Connexion are having the same issue. So please don't turn up on July 24th.

So, I'll hope to see you on Sunday afternoon, but if not, it's been a pleasure and a privilege to be your minister. I'm still around until the end of this month should you need me for anything. Next week I'll be telling you about the things I got up to on sabbatical.

God bless, *Ralph*

Watch this space for news of our services after the 19th July

What's On

Sunday 11th 10:30am in church and on-line with Mr Eddie Newton
3:30pm in church for all-age worship with Rev Ralph Ward

Sunday 18th 10:30am in church and on-line with Mrs Helen Greaves

Sunday 25th 10:30am in church and on-line with Rev Melvyn Cooke

Find all online services on [St Paul's Facebook page](#) and [website home page](#)

For Kids and young people

Fridays 6-7pm Kids and Young People *Friday Funday*

Fridays 7pm Young Peoples' Singing Group

In your prayers

Pray for Neil Roberts who is recovering from surgery in St George's Hospital

Continue in prayer for all affected by the present rise in Covid cases due to the Delta variant, for those who are ill and for all medical and care workers.

Continue to pray for Pam, for Lyn and Richard and for all others you know who need 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

'Picnic in the Church': Circuit Service

1st August 2021 6.30pm

hosted by Redhill Methodist Church

All are welcome to join us for this circuit service as we say farewell to Rev Felicity Al-Hassan and reflect on her contribution to the life of the circuit over the last 7 years.

Join us, with your own nibbles and drinks (the church will not be able to supply anything at the moment) for a time of stories, songs and informal worship as we 'picnic in the church'. Depending on the restrictions in place at the end of July you may also need to have a face covering while you are not eating or drinking. You might also like to bring a pen or pencil to take part in the activities that Rev Melvyn Cooke is planning for us.

It is hoped that some more restrictions will be eased at the end of July but, currently, the plan is to seat everyone around tables in small groups. The tables will be separated at the appropriate 'social distance' depending on the restrictions in place at the time and it is likely that there will be a limit on the number who can join. Bookings will open on 19th July 2021 at 8.00pm.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/circuit-farewell-service-1st-august-registration-161911518711>

If you would like to be part of the service but would prefer not to travel or be inside the building it will be live-streamed onto YouTube and the link for that is:

<https://youtu.be/LhUdZgxz3H4>

Climate justice - sufficiency

To complete his series of articles, the Revd Simon Topping encourages us to model the spirit of sufficiency or "enoughness" in our daily living and to actively challenge the "rich fool" economics which is leading to climate disaster.

I remember as a child being told (I think in jest!) that a polite way of declining a second helping of food at a meal was to say: "Thank you, but I have had an ample sufficiency". This may sound like a very old fashioned phrase today but the recovery of a sense of sufficiency is crucial in our struggle to achieve climate justice.

In an article I referred to Paul's desire for a "fair balance" between the abundance of some and the needs of others. In the same letter Paul goes on to talk about the sense of "sufficiency" that a Christian will feel when they are mindful of the blessings and abundant provision they receive from God. Feeling content with God's provision, they are able to be generous with any surplus, sharing it with those who have a lack – so that a fair balance is achieved (2 Corinthians 9:8).

St Paul also uses the same Greek word to describe his sense of "contentment", rooted in his relationship with Christ, no matter what life may throw at him (Philippians 4:11). In our Methodist Covenant prayer we aspire to this same contentment or sufficiency in our relationship with God when we say "your will, not mine, be done in all things" – we seek to trust in God's blessings and provision alone, no matter where we may find ourselves in life.

There is a direct link between catastrophic climate change and a global culture of "never enough". The pursuit of "more", whether in terms of personal wealth or national wealth (Gross Domestic Product), is pushing us well beyond the physical limits of our natural world. We have embraced the global economic model of the "rich fool" in the parable of Jesus, who builds bigger barns to amass ever greater possessions in the deluded belief that this will lead to long life and wellbeing. But God declares that storing up goods in this way does not lead to true richness.

In contrast to the rich fool's quest for more, the sufficiency which God seeks is emphasised by Jesus through his words in the Lord's Prayer: "give us today our daily bread". In other words, we ask God for bread sufficient for today's needs, trusting in God's providence for tomorrow.

As Christians we have the opportunity to model this spirit of sufficiency or "enoughness" in our daily living and to actively challenge the "rich fool" economics which is leading to climate disaster. For it is only through this spirit of sufficiency that will we achieve abundant life for all and a sustainable relationship with the whole of God's creation.

Today is Action for Children Sunday

In years gone by, pre-Covid, at this time of year we would have had a special collection in church and our AfC representative, Sheila Jones, would have hosted an 'Open Garden' to raise funds for the work of *Action for Children*. Looks like it will be back to normal next year but this year AfC still needs our support so please make your donation on their website

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/make-a-donation/appeals/donate-2/>



Congratulations

To Rev Melvyn Cooke and his new wife, Hazel, on their wedding last Monday. We look forward to Melvyn becoming our minister in September and to meeting Hazel when she visits St Paul's alongside him. We send them our best wishes and prayers for a happy life together.



And finally – some thoughts about football

"An atheist is a man who watches a Notre Dame - Southern Methodist University game and doesn't care who wins." Dwight D. Eisenhower

"The thing about football - the important thing about football - is that it is not just about football." Terry Pratchett

"In football everything is complicated by the presence of the opposite team." Jean-Paul Sartre

"Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I don't like that attitude. I can assure them it is much more serious than that." Bill Shankly

"Football is the ballet of the masses." Dmitri Shostakovich

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

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