

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March

Dear friends,

I think I might borrow from Paul's letter to the Ephesians to begin this letter when I write, 'Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

The circumstances we find ourselves in are not ones that we could have imagined even a few weeks ago. The number of COVID-19 cases and deaths are going up daily, borders around the world are being shut, movement is being restricted, new phrases are entering our vocabulary like 'social distancing' and 'self-isolating', shop shelves are emptying and people are genuinely worried for their wellbeing and that of others.

It feels in many ways that we're in the middle of some dystopian future type movie and that it's all doom and gloom. And yes, things are not great, and the situation is serious. However, as always God's grace is to be seen in so many ways; neighbours going out of their way to help each other, Facebook sites popping up offering all kinds of help and the selflessness of our NHS staff, to name but a few.

On the advice of both Government and Connexion, we have suspended all services and activities in our buildings for the foreseeable future and ministers are working from home, but that doesn't mean that we have ceased to be church. Rather we're just having to do it slightly differently and I'd like to outline some of what that looks like now.

### **1. Worship**

Although gathered worship in the church has temporarily stopped, I hope and trust worship will continue individually in our homes.

To help with that we have uploaded daily prayers on our circuit website. There are different prayers for each day of the week and on Sunday there will be a link to follow the live stream from Wesley's Chapel in London at 11am. If the live streaming isn't for you (we appreciate some folks have neither the band width nor the data to do this) then on the website there will be a Sunday Service liturgy and written reflection for you to follow.

All this worship material will be developed by ordained staff and Local Preachers/Worship leaders over the coming weeks to keep it fresh and seasonal.

Here's the link;

<http://www.swalesmethodists.org.uk>

For those not online then we will endeavour to get a printed service sheet to you each week. We attach this week's and would ask that you think who you might print one out for and deliver it to. (Perhaps church stewards could have a chat about this with eh ministers?) Please do also remember the Daily Service on Radio 4 and I believe that the BBC plan to start televising services soon.

### **2. Bible Study**

We know many of you love to come to bible studies particularly during Lent. We will be starting short virtual interactive studies next week. There will be one a Tuesday evening at 7pm and one on a Friday morning at 10am. These will be different from one another and be led by different people. If you would like to be part of one or both of these then please email Emily and let her know which one(s). She will then send you instructions. [ejamesmethodist@outlook.com](mailto:ejamesmethodist@outlook.com)

### **3. Pastoral care**

This will continue throughout this crisis, but mainly over the phone. Ministers will be making regular phone calls to church folks and I know that many churches have already set up pastoral

phone groups where every member will receive a call each week. As you would do normally please let the ministers know if there are any pastoral situations and we will deal with them.

#### 4. **Children's and Youth Work**

We are looking at what we can do with this, and will inform you with developments in the weeks to come. However, I can tell you that e-Baby Boogie will be happening on Mondays at 10am. If you have a little one who would like to be a part of it then email Emily who will then send you instructions. [ejamesmethodist@outlook.com](mailto:ejamesmethodist@outlook.com)

#### 5. **Property and Finance**

Please can I remind you that Methodist Insurance will want the church to be visited each week so please can stewards arrange someone to check the building at regular intervals? Unfortunately, the fact that we've suspended services at the moment doesn't stop the bills coming in so could I ask you to continue your regular giving please? I know many people give cash in the collection plate which won't be possible at the moment but maybe you could ring the church treasurer about alternatives. A couple of ideas include sending a cheque by post every month or maybe setting up a standing order.

#### 6. **Church Business and Meetings**

We will be looking at how this can be conducted over the coming weeks and will inform you of decisions on how it might happen.

*Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us  
from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
**Amen.***

Please be assured of my thoughts and prayers during the coming weeks.

Yours in Christ

Rev Flis Randall

 The **Methodist** Church

**South West Wales Circuit**

Rev. Felicity Jepson Randall

Superintendent Minister

[flis116@live.co.uk](mailto:flis116@live.co.uk)

01267 236004/07753 266599

[swwalesmethodists.org.uk](http://swwalesmethodists.org.uk)