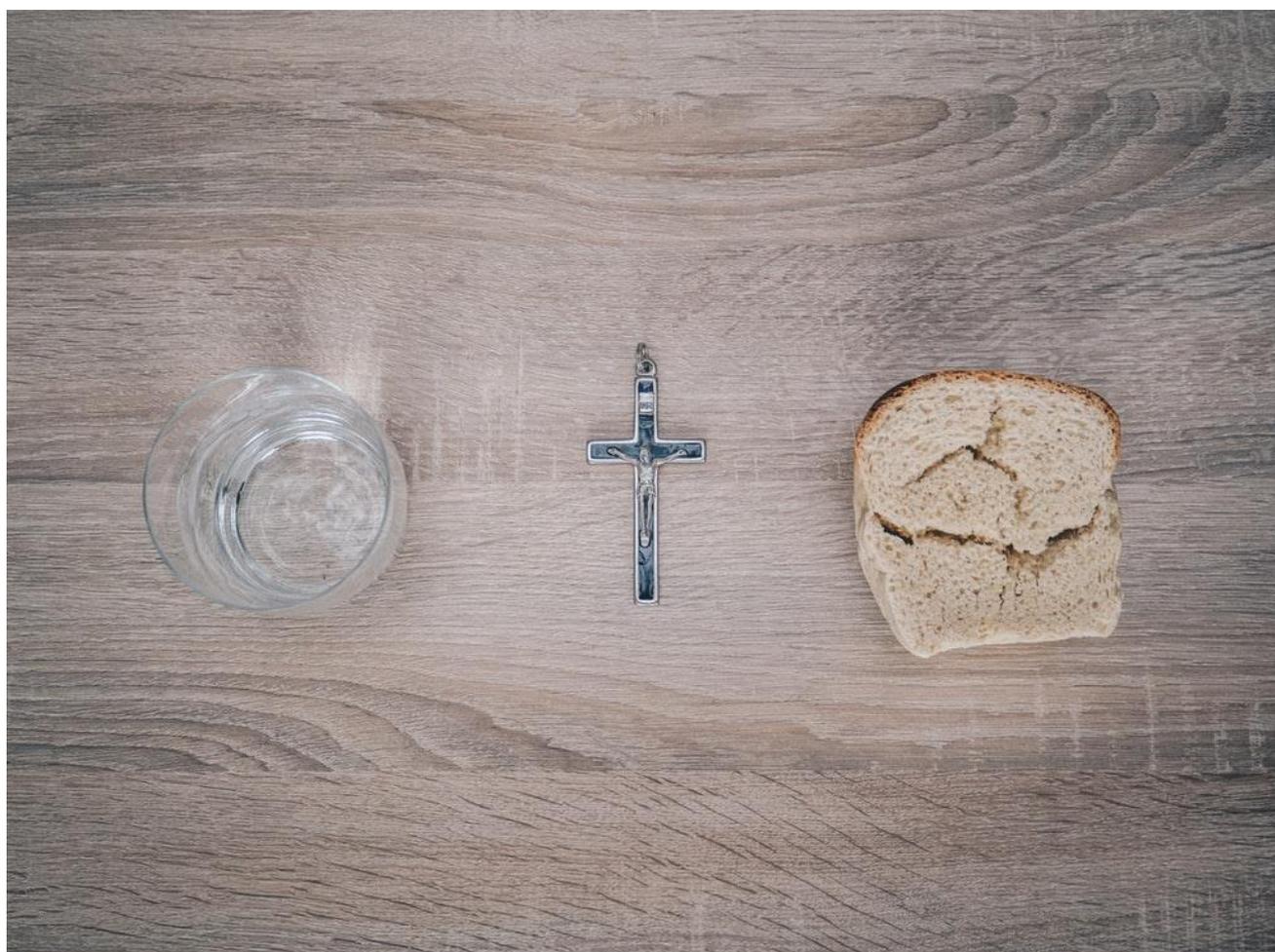


Withington Methodist News

February 2021



SUNDAY WORSHIP

Unfortunately due to the new lockdown rules to be implemented in January, we will be suspending 'in person' worship at Withington until further notice. However, as per the guidelines, we will still be broadcasting a live service on YouTube at the usual time of 10:45. The link and further information can be found below.

'He himself will rescue you from the bird trap, from the destructive plague [...] no harm will come to you; no plague will come near your tent.' Psalm 91

DEAR FRIENDS,

I would like to encourage you to open your Bibles and read Psalm 91, the so-called 'psalm of protection' or 'psalm of confidence'. It's a wonderful Scripture that has been a comfort and source of faith to many, a psalm that believers have turned to for thousands of years whenever there is danger.

Let me point out two verses that might make it sink deeper. The first one is verse 4:

"He will cover you with feathers, you will take refuge under his wings."
That sounds like a bird, doesn't it? The psalmist may be comparing God's care to that of a mother hen who keeps her chicks under her wings until the danger has passed. Or, Hebrew scholars think he may be referring to the wings of the Seraphim resting on the Mercy Seat. (You can google a picture of it, it looks amazing!) The Mercy Seat was the centrepiece of the Temple's Holy of Holies and God sat on the seat, surrounded by His angels. We can all enter that place because of the access granted us by Jesus. Thanks to Him, God's mercy and His angels are always available to us, always within a hand's reach.

The second verse is number 13: "You will tread on the lion and the cobra..." Hebrew literature uses these two animals as symbols of the powers of evil, in which case, we're reading about an even greater God. A God who can rescue us not only from earthly physical dangers, but the personal dangers

of our own brokenness and the spiritual dangers we face in challenging times like these, whenever we feel lonely, discouraged and depressed.

Psalm 91 may be the most important passage of the Bible for the days ahead. It's brimming with declarations and promises of God's protection. The God of Psalm 91 is far more powerful than the unseen microbes, days of isolation and economic uncertainty. He reminds us that we live, breathe, move and have our rest in Him. He assures us of His protection, comfort and care. He encourages us not to dwell on the news, not to dwell in anxiety or worry, as He is our only dwelling place, our only refuge.

Wishing you a peaceful and blessed February,
Rev. Krystyna

A REFLECTION FROM CAROLINE WICKENS

There are many things in this life which are scary. Students are anxious about tests and exams. Adults worry about paying the mortgage or the rent. Many folk wait fearfully for the outcome of hospital tests. And the present times have brought worry and stress to nearly everyone.

But should we be afraid of God? This week's psalm is 111 and it ends with these words:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practise it have a good understanding.

Certainly God is powerful. We understand God as a mighty Creator, able to call light and life into being simply by speaking. And power can be frightening – how many of us have approached someone in authority in fear and trembling?

But for me, the central aspect of fear is unpredictability. When we don't know what is coming next, we struggle to know how to respond. If we knew what to do, we could get on and prepare, even if that meant preparing ourselves for the worst. It is the uncertainty of what's coming that enables our fear to build and build until it threatens to get the better of us.

The words of the psalm point us away from the random chaos of unpredictable power towards a God who is reliable and consistent. God is known for righteousness, grace and mercy. God is faithful and just, trustworthy and upright. Above all, God is a God of covenant:

5 He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

God is in a covenant relationship with us. This takes us back to Moses on Mount Sinai, receiving the Ten Commandments as the bedrock of God's covenant relationship with the people, summed up in God's promise:

I will take you as my people, and I will be your God (Exodus 6:7).

God made that promise to the people thousands of years ago, but it still holds good today. God is awe-inspiring, breath-taking, amazing, stunning, and all those qualities may inspire wonder and perhaps even terror at the greatness of the one who is revealed to us. But God is the same yesterday, today and for ever, and so we do not need to be afraid of any abuse of power that is unpredictable or inconsistent.

So why does the psalm encourage us towards the fear of the Lord? If this 'fear' is the beginning of wisdom, then it must involve learning to recognise the ways in which the Lord has made the world and shaped it for our good, for that is what the Bible means by 'wisdom'. To fear the Lord is not to be terrified of an unpredictable tyrant but to learn to respect the ways of a consistent, compassionate God who is, always has been, and always will be in covenant relationship with us. And in the present times of chaos and confusion, that is a powerful vision to depend on – so that when the Bible says to us, 'Do not be afraid', we know the reason why: we can put our trust in God.

PRAYER LIST

We remember in our prayers:

Those who have lost a family member to COVID-19

Those feeling anxious about the future during this lockdown

Those struggling to balance work and childcare

NHS and key workers dealing with fatigue and stress

Promilla, Noel, Urima, Aima, Hannan,

Anne,

Stella,

Thandi and Peter,

Cliff,

Cliff's Mum and Dad,

The family of Phil,

Simon,

Ruth,

Sarah and Daniel,

Barbara,

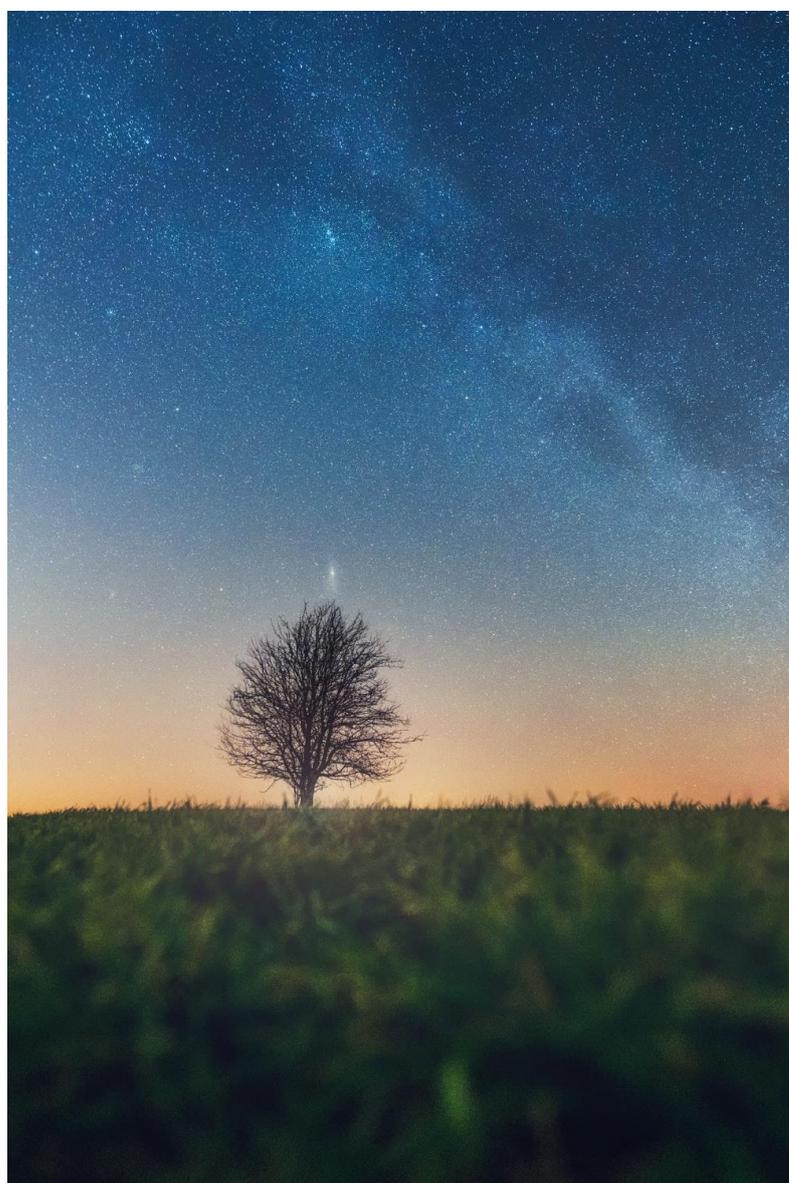
Lizzie and family,

Sylvain and family,

Georgine,

Ingenesia,

Trevor



WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday Morning In Person Worship

As you will know, we are now in full lockdown again. Under the current guidance churches are permitted to continue to meet for communal worship if they wish to do so however, the circuit staff have agreed that in the Manchester circuit we will not continue with face-to-face worship.

Ultimately the safety of our congregation, stewards and preachers is of the upmost priority and we don't feel it would be responsible to put anyone at risk considering the current climate.

We appreciate that this is going to be unwelcome news to a lot of our church family and the Manchester Methodist Circuit Team will continue to review the situation but we don't expect to change this decision while we remain in lockdown.

In the meantime the Sunday morning worship will continue online, streamed on YouTube. We will keep you updated with other remote use resources.

Sunday Morning Live Stream

Please join us in Sunday morning worship, in video format on YouTube-

<https://youtu.be/-5rA2CxOrAl>



Virtual Coffee Morning and Bible Study

We have a virtual coffee morning every Saturday from 11:00 am and a fortnightly Bible Study every other Wednesday (6th and 20th January) from 10:30 am which you can also join by phone.

In order to join using a traditional or mobile phone:

Please dial 0131 460 11 96

You will be asked for the meeting ID: 841 4119 8605

Press the hash key on your phone. #

Wait a few seconds and press the hash key again. #

Manchester Circuit Sunday Evening Service

A warm welcome as ever to our worship tomorrow evening.

The Zoom platform will be open from 6pm for those who wish to catch up with others from their church, and as usual worship will begin at 6:30.

The joining details follow-

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84344057526?pwd=Z3d0ZW90TUlnZHdITktrZmtjZ3grUT09>

Meeting ID: 843 4405 7526

Passcode: 1901

One tap mobile +442039017895, 84344057526#

Daily prayer

If you would like to receive a daily prayer via text message, please sign up by texting Krystyna on 0777 6121 679. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Weekly conference call service

Every Sunday from 2:00 pm until 2:30 pm, feel free to join us from 1:50 pm for a quick catch-up chat before worship where you can also share your prayer concerns. The service includes: a reflection/call to worship, prayers, Bible readings, a short sermon and a hymn.

All you need to join is a traditional or mobile phone.

Calls are charged at local rate and are included in network bundle deals.

THE JOINING DETAILS ARE THE SAME EVERY WEEK:

To join the service please dial: 0333 0164 757

Give the room number: 79317515 #

Give the PIN: 8347 #

After giving the room and PIN number don't forget to press the hash key on your phone.

Reflections and written worship resources:

If you are not on email and would like to receive a printed copy of our mid-week, end-of-week reflections or written worship resources for Sunday, please contact Krystyna on 0161 612 2668.

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY

14th February

Background to Racial Justice Sunday

The Methodist Church has celebrated Racial Justice Sunday (RJS) since 1989, on the second Sunday in September. Since September 1995 RJS has become an ecumenical event celebrated in Britain and Ireland. RJS moved to the second Sunday in February, with effect from 2017. This Sunday is an opportunity for all Christians to join together in:

- Reflecting on the importance of racial justice
- Thanksgiving for human diversity
- Prayer for an end to misunderstanding, racism and injustice
- Action that truly makes a difference
- Fundraising for national and local racial justice initiatives

Why Celebrate Racial Justice Sunday?

We believe that the universe was created by a loving God who chose to become a human being in Jesus Christ, who has redeemed the world and sent the Holy Spirit to enable us to love one another with God's love. All human beings are equally children of God and loved by God. Since none is outside the love of God, none should be outside our love either.

We believe that the diversity of the human race was no mistake on God's part. God deliberately created variety within the human family and wants us to take as much delight in that variety as God does.

But racism persists in Britain and Ireland. At its most obvious and brutal, it takes the form of physical attacks, which sometimes end in murder. But it takes many other forms as well, like discrimination within the police force, popular prejudice against Travellers or people seeking asylum, or reluctance to accept people of a different ethnic or cultural group as neighbours. Even within churches, people can face discrimination and unkindness because they are different from the majority in a particular community.

As long as this continues, we believe that it is important to make time to give thanks for our diversity and to pray for God's help in overcoming our

prejudices and the injustices that reflect and reinforce them.

'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.' - Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN, 1948

LIVING LENT

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) invite you to become part of a community who will respond to the call to climate action by making significant personal commitments to changing our lifestyles for the climate.



Living Lent is about recognising that changing our climate is not just an activity, but a lifestyle. The Living Lent community will share in this together, encouraging and challenging one another as we journey through Lent.

As members of the Living Lent community, we will each make a commitment to changing our lifestyle for the climate during Lent-

You are invited to choose something that will stretch you.

What do you rely on most? What would be something that would change your daily habits?

To support you in your commitment, you can find reflections on our blog, to help you explore the connection between faith and climate action.

To find out more, please visit - <https://livinglent.org/>

NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

07 JANUARY 2020

Methodist Youth President Election Results

Following the election held online in December as part of 3Generate365, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, it has been announced that the next Youth President will be Daud Irfan, aged 21, from Cardiff.

Daud will become the new Youth President for the connexional year 2021/22 at a service to be held this autumn. On receiving the news of his success, Daud commented; “I would like to thank all the children and young people who took part in the voting process. I feel honoured to have been elected. I am humbled that God has blessed me with this responsibility and I am excited to see what the coming year holds.

“The focus of my year will be on God’s Church being a home for all. While, as a nation, we try to overcome the grip of Covid and pray steadfastly for world peace, as a Church we need to stand together in unity not only for our local churches but for our communities as a whole.”

The Methodist Youth President is a salaried position working full-time for one year to serve the children and young people of the Methodist Church in Britain. The role involves meeting and representing the young Methodist people to ensure that their voices are heard and to help them be involved in every aspect of Church life.

The Revd Dr. Stephen Wigley, Chair of the Wales Synod of the Methodist



Church who supported Daud, commented: “I am delighted to hear the news of Daud Irfan’s election. I have known Daud for some 15 years since he and his family arrived in Cardiff. His experience will enable him to enrich and encourage both young Christians and the wider Church in his year as Youth President.”

Daud's father, Revd Irfan John, is a Synod Enabler for culturally diverse congregations with the Wales Synod. Revd Irfan commented: "For myself and Daud's mother, Raheela, it is a huge honour to see Daud elected into the position of Methodist Youth President. It's a fruit of our upbringing as God graced us according to His word. As a minister, I want to encourage Daud to work faithfully in the year ahead and I pray that he will be a blessing for many young people."

The current Methodist Youth President, Phoebe Parkin, commented: "My prayers and congratulations are with Daud on his success. Daud will be taking on this role at an important time when we hope that society and our Church will be leaving Covid behind and looking to renewal and rebuilding. It will be important for children and young people to have their voices heard as part of this."

11 JANUARY 2020

At a time of political transition for the US the Presidency writes to the United Methodist Church

The President and the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference have written a letter of support to the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church assuring them of the prayers of the Methodist people of Great Britain:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Methodist Church in Britain values its concordat relationship with the United Methodist Church and has benefitted greatly and in many ways from our sharing with Methodists in the United States of America. Like many around the world, therefore, we rejoice when you rejoice and weep when you weep.

At this time of political transition in the USA, we wanted to assure you of the prayers of the Methodist people here. We understand (and indeed to some degree experience ourselves) the way in which deeply held convictions can divide people in communities, in families, and in churches, and we understand the frustration that those who would be peacemakers feel when

faced by groups with contradictory and apparently irreconcilable narratives. We pray with you that the call to civility might be heeded; may the Methodist people be emboldened to offer pardon where there is injury, hope where there is despair, and love where there is division.

Yours in Christ,

The Revd Richard Teal President of the Methodist Conference 2020/2021

Mrs Carolyn Lawrence Vice-President of the Methodist Conference 2020/2021

27 JANUARY 2020

Presidency calls for prayers of lament and hope

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 has recorded a prayer following the announcement of 100,000 deaths in the UK due to Covid-19.

Join Richard and Carolyn each Monday on Facebook where they reflect on some issues that we are all feeling at the moment including loss and anxiety.

You can listen to short reflections from the President and Vice-President here:

- [Richard Teal on disappointment and loss](#)
- [Carolyn Lawrence on anxiety](#)

FROM THE METHODIST BLOG

One arm at a time, together, we are offering hope which will change the world.

The Revd. Dr. Joanne Cox-Darling explains how Trinity Methodist Church in Codsall is offering faith, hope and love to its community as part of the national vaccination programme.

I walked into one of our church buildings on Friday afternoon, armed with chocolate brownies. Every room was filled with people. The atmosphere was fizzing – a heady mixture of hope and needles.

Since early December, we have partnered with Seisdon Primary Care Network and the local CCG to provide a Covid-19 vaccine centre for South Staffordshire. When we are up to full capacity, 1000 people will walk through the doors every day.

For us as church, the rationale was two-fold. Firstly, we have a longstanding healing ministry. Offering a space for the vaccine, therefore, gives us a chance to share hope, good news, clinical excellence, and support the restoration of society. Secondly, we have invested long and hard in both the refurbishment and relationships necessary to being a venue which is open and accessible for the community. As a church, we have been exploring what it means to live out our calling as a 'space to play, pray and heal.' No-one expected the pandemic to be our Spirit inspired, God-given training ground. Yet this is where we find ourselves – inhabiting a space offering faith, hope, and love, at the coalface of a global pandemic.

Relationships.

For us, relationships are at the heart of our activity as a church for the community. We have engaged in a range of ways and activities to build relationships within the community.

Since the first lockdown, we have sent a fortnightly delivery of chocolate brownies and doughnuts to medical practices (and local school staffrooms). This was intended as a classic piece of missional blessing – offering a gift into the community, without expectation of return.

The return initially came as one medical centre used our premises as a venue for flu clinics throughout the autumn and winter. The clinical staff got to know our building, and got to work out the processes and protocols required to get the maximum number of people through the building in a safe manner.

We have also been able to encourage our church members to get involved with part of our local community – including sitting on GP patient partnership committees, again a relationship which has secured our reputation as a place suitable for a vaccine centre.

In more recent weeks, we have built relationships with the wellbeing officers within the NHS, who have enabled us to be present for people who need a listening ear during their 15 minutes recovery. This has included chatting with carers and family members who are just relieved that there is hope for an end to separation; to providing links to the local foodbank for those who require a referral; to sitting with patients in tears as they describe this visit to a Methodist chapel as the first journey outside of their houses for nine months.

We see part of our job is also to make sure that we don't read that last sentence too quickly.

Reputation.

As people take to social media to comment and complain about queues – and even phone the minister to request that we stop the snow (!) – there is the opportunity for the church building, and our volunteers, to make sure that the experience of patients and clinicians is one of welcome. We have tried hard to think about how to make the experience as safe, and as non-clinical, as possible. We are not, after all, a clinical venue. We are a Church.

With the Covid-19 signs pinned to almost every door and wall, it can be hard not to look like every other community facility. We continue to try and adapt our displays, walls, and even our toilet doors – as other ways to bless our guests whilst they are with us.

Behind the scenes, we are able to listen to staff who are working in the Centre in addition to their normally contracted hours. We are supporting volunteers and patients through offering spiritual care in addition to the

social prescribing on offer from the NHS. Little of this would be possible without our cleaner and caretaking volunteers, who continues to make sure that all of our users are safe and cared for.

Front of house, we have encouraged people to join the volunteer team. Some of the clinical staff are members in the wider circuit. We also try and carefully respond to the comment and criticisms, so that people are best prepared for the best possible experience. Whatever the weather. One favourite anecdote remains the Zoom Sunday worship which was interrupted by the delivery of 10000 syringes!

When many of us are still working out what church looks like when the building is closed – we are having to work our what church looks like when the congregation don't meet, but the building is very much open and perhaps 'on show' more than it has ever been (we also have a nursery on site, which remains open to local preschoolers). This impacts our congregation differently, and occasionally more painfully, than to the wider community.

Restoration.

There is no doubt that with the advent of the regulated vaccines, comes hope that a new normal is within our grasp. Offering the space for a Vaccine Centre enables us as a church building and community of faith, to hold that hope and offer that place for restoration – of society, of creation, as well as for individuals.

We are finally able to use our building for the restoration and healing of the world – and it is not a privilege we hold lightly. This is the calling of the kingdom of God, for which we are happy to get involved with.

The real story-keepers and miracle workers throughout this are the hundreds of medics and volunteers who are at the start of this vaccine marathon. They deserve every chocolate brownie and prayer we are able to offer to them – and that is absolutely our privilege.

One arm at a time, together, we are offering hope which will change the world.

THE LEPROSY MISSION

The Unconditional Appeal

This year's 'Unconditional Appeal' in support of The Leprosy Mission's work in Mozambique is being promoted by Dame Darcey Bussell, the former ballerina and judge on Strictly Come Dancing. A copy of her letter to church groups is shown opposite.

In recent years the Tuesday Morning Coffee Fellowship has collected money for The Leprosy Mission, and this has usually included the proceeds from tea and coffee after a morning service at Withington Church on a day designated as Leprosy Sunday. As we will not be meeting again for some time perhaps this year people may wish to consider donating directly to TLM, either by a cheque made out to The Leprosy Mission and sent to:

The Leprosy Mission
Goldhay Way
Orton Goldhay
Peterborough PE2 5GZ

or on line at:

leprosymission.org.uk/donate

Please note that only donations made between 24th January and 24th April will be doubled under the government's UK Aid Match scheme. Donations outside of these dates will not qualify.



The Leprosy
Mission

THE
UNCONDITIONAL
APPEAL

Dear friend

I'd like to tell you about something that's been in my heart since my family and I visited Mozambique in 2017. During our stay we visited The Leprosy Mission in the town of Pemba and met people affected by leprosy.

We were heartbroken to meet children, some the same age as my daughters, who had developed disabilities because of leprosy. Some had even become blind. Yet it is an entirely curable disease.

Worse still, myths surrounding leprosy saw many rejected by their families and society. The injustice and prejudice surrounding leprosy will stay with me forever.

Yet I'm so happy to say that in Jesus' name there is hope! Every year churches around the country hold a Leprosy Sunday to share His love in action.

I'd like to invite you to join me in 2021 and hold a special Sunday.

Together we can partner with churches and community leaders in Mozambique to rid the country of leprosy forever!

Together we can create communities where those once banished can be welcomed back! Every individual can be at the beating heart of their community; living valued, healthy and prosperous lives. This is entirely possible!

I have a wonderful film to share, taking you deep into Mozambique, where you'll meet Zaina and hear her story.

Will you please join our extraordinary mission?

Thank you so much



P.S. I AM EXCITED TO TELL YOU THAT FROM 24 JANUARY TO 24 APRIL 2021, YOUR DONATIONS WILL BE MATCHED BY THE UK GOVERNMENT. THIS MEANS THAT TWICE AS MANY PEOPLE CAN BE REACHED!

THANK YOU FOR READING!

VACCINATION

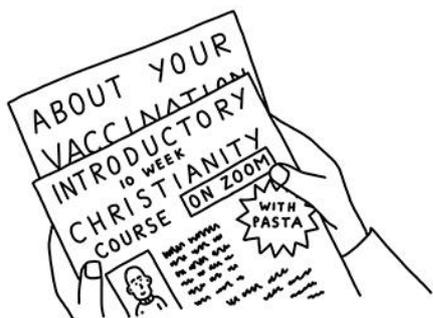
AT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH OR CATHEDRAL



YOU'LL NEED TO WAIT YOUR TURN



KNEELING IS OPTIONAL



PLEASE TAKE THE LITERATURE AND READ IT CAREFULLY



A STEWARD WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY OUT

**The next magazine will be out on the 28th February.
Weekly newsletters will be out every Sunday on the Withington Methodist Church Facebook Group and via email.**

If you have anything you would like to contribute to next month's magazine, or the weekly newsletters please pass it on to Caroline Fielding - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

If you would like to receive a emailed copy of the magazine or newsletter please email - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

Withington Methodist Church

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Minister: Rev Krystyna Kwarciak

Sunday Services

Morning Worship* : 10:45 am
*booking required

Regular Activities

Monday	Monday Monkeys – 10:00am - 11:30am
Tuesday	Tuesday Tots – 10:00am - 12 noon Tuesday morning coffee fellowship see <i>inside cover</i>
Wednesday	Rainbows – 5.30 - 6.30pm Brownies – 6:30 - 8:00pm
Thursday	Needles & Yarns craft group – 2-4pm
Friday	Men's Club – 2:00 - 4:30pm
Saturday	Contact Centre – 2:30 - 4:30pm

About Withington Methodist Church

We are a community of people who meet to worship God every Sunday morning and evening (see inside cover for details). Our services are open to all. At our morning service, we have both a crèche and Junior Church available for children ('All Age Worship' will only have the crèche as older children are welcomed into the main service).

During the week we have various other activities & organisations meeting at our premises. We have two toddler groups a week and are open weekday mornings for anyone to have a coffee and a chat. Our craft group meets on Thursday afternoons for anyone who wants to bring a craft or learn a new one. We have various rooms available for hire for anything from a once off hourly basis to a long term let, please speak to the Church Office for details, or email withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com.