



Welcome to the 'virtual' Stoneleigh Methodist Church

Sunday 3rd May 2020

10:30am: Morning Worship with Mrs Judy Quaife

Prayers

Please pray for Emma and Judy, and for others within the Church and beyond; for the continued health of our key workers, and all of the National Health Service on whom we depend so much now, and at all times.

Please pray also for those of our Church family who are unwell or finding their mobility limited, and consider whether they might welcome a call from friends. And pray for the family and friends of Corrinne Payne who died recently.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Notices

Weekly News/Service sheet. During the present restrictions we cannot meet or worship at Church, but we will continue to produce a weekly News/Service sheet each Sunday which will be emailed or delivered to every member. Thanks to all those who make this possible.

The Link will be compiled during May, so if you've an entry you'd like included, the deadline for submissions is next Sunday, 10th May. Email to link@stoneleighmethodist.church or send direct to Helen or Vivienne.

From the Minister

Dear friends, I trust the Lord that you are all keeping well and finding things to do to occupy you. "Be brave. Be strong. Don't give up. Expect GOD to get here soon." (Psalm 31:24 The Message Bible).

As we remain in lockdown with the uncertainty of when we might start normal church life, worshipping and in fellowship with one another, we continue to do the best we can and a massive thanks to volunteers ensuring that we receive the weekly newsletter and service sheets.

With regards to update on my sabbatical leave and in consultation with the Circuit, it is certain that the London District chairs of the Methodist Church are happy with the postponement of my sabbatical leave to early next year. The District Chair has asked me to resend an updated version of the sabbatical application and am pleased to hear also from Age Concern that they are OK for me to go along with my original plan to volunteer when the new date has been approved.

Sadly, the trip to Oberammergau in July has been postponed to 2022; however, the good news is that there is a trip to the Holy Land early next year, which falls within the new proposed date, and I believe it's a blessing to have that in place of Oberammergau.

It would have been our Annual Church Meeting today but unfortunately we can't have it. However, I hope that as soon as the lockdown is lifted, we will be able to have the ACM and our suggestions during the open church review conversation on 23rd February - looking to the future - will very much be in the heart of the ACM. I have allocated the following Sundays on a draft preaching plan for the ACM, and would like you to make a note of them as well - 7th June, 5th July and 9th August. I hope and pray things will get better before the end of the Church year which is 31st August.

I invite you to ponder prayerfully on the words of the hymn written by John L. Bell (b.1949) and Graham Maule (b.1958) bearing in mind the current situations in our world:

"Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets, curing those who suffer, touching those he greets. Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too: let my care be active, healing, just like you."

May the peace of the Lord be always with you, *Emma*

Around the Trolley

A new section of the NewsSheet for less formal news and information exchanges. All contributions gratefully received – it's your NewsSheet! Robin

Rainbows – after 5 weeks of isolation Denise suddenly said "why don't we put the wooden Rainbow that we use at our weekly Rainbow meetings at Church, in our window at home?" Well, of course I didn't know the answer, so on my latest inspection visit I was tasked with bringing it home, and here it is. Not quite created by children, but there is a link! *Robin*



Jim's travels – "Prior to lock-down, each week I played squash and badminton, and walked with a small group of friends. Fortunately, in recent times, I have been able to continue walking (solo), normally starting at 8:15am and being out just under 3 hours, covering between 7 & 11 miles. I've walked in Nonsuch Park, round Epsom Racecourse, to Walton on the Hill, Ashted, Cheam and around Epsom & Ewell. Weather great and most enjoyable." *Jim (I'm exhausted just reading this! Robin)*



Pat & Colin – "we have been trying to go for a walk every day, and every day we see something new in God's wonderful world surrounding us by the river. And the fruit and veggies are growing well. We wonder what other people have been doing during lockdown - jigsaws, craft work, knitting, decorating, pressure washing patios and driveways? We are currently redecorating our hall, stairs and landing (shopped for prior to lockdown or ordered on click and collect), which is also keeping us fit. We would love to hear what you have all been up to.



How many of you have been involved in 'Zoom' virtual meetings and get-togethers with churches, friends and families. As it will be Pat's birthday next week, we will be sharing a meal with all our family by Zoom. A virtual gathering can be great fun and a natter with friends on the phone is also vital - keep in touch with each other somehow. Take care and stay safe." *Colin & Pat*

FAQ (*that's frequently asked questions*) – a quick selection of queries that have been asked in the past few weeks, in case you were thinking the same things!

- Are you still collecting for Whitechapel/Foodbank? *We certainly are – just drop donations off in our porch at 198 Stoneleigh Park Road, and we'll quickly send them on their way appropriately.*
- And is Whitechapel still open for the homeless? *Yes, the Mission is continuing to serve a cooked breakfast to the homeless and hungry every single day. They are seeing many new faces from different parts of London as most other places are now closed. Please will you will hold the staff in your prayers as they are working very hard to meet the needs of their guests. And for the guests themselves, as they cope with the fallout from coronavirus lockdown.*
- Is the Church running out of money? *Not at all – we have good reserves that, even without hire charge income, should last a good few years yet. And with no electricity or gas to pay for, our outgoings are much reduced.*
- Is there still an Offertory? *Certainly. Many people pay by bank standing order and those continue to reach us. If you'd like to make a direct payment at any time, just give Denise a ring on 020 8393 2155 and she'll explain your options.*
- Is anyone looking after the Church Centre? *Yes – as well as being a sensible precaution against damage/leakage, weekly visits by a nominated person (Robin in our case) are required by our Insurers and the Methodist Church. The plants are watered at the same time, litter cleared, letter box emptied etc. to avoid the centre looking 'abandoned' – just 'resting'.*
- Can we do any cleaning/painting whilst the Centre is closed? *Sorry, no – only 'essential' work is allowed by both the Government and the Methodist Church.*

The Methodist Church (and the Government) are constantly updating their advice; these sources are monitored daily and all relevant changes implemented as and when. *Robin*

Updates . . .

Foodbank. “The last six weeks have been a whirlwind for all of us here at Foodbank HQ **We have continued** to provide food to people in crisis including people experiencing issues with their benefits, people on low incomes and families with young children across East Surrey. On top of our usual food provision, we are also now supplying emergency food to people who are struggling financially due to the situation with Covid-19.

We have seen more than a doubling in demand for food; a steep increase as some have lost their income, are awaiting government funds and as some families have not received vouchers from schools for lunches. The rise in the demand for food a few weeks ago meant we lacked the volume of food needed from donations, this was also affected by the short supply of some items available in supermarkets. For the first time in the eight years we have been running, we had to try and organise the bulk buying of food. However in the last few weeks the food donations have been amazing and we now have plenty of food to cover the increase in needs.

We have needed to make changes very quickly in the way our service operated to keep people safe. We have gone from having our foodbank centres in Epsom, Ewell, Tadworth, Banstead and Leatherhead, to now running a delivery only service. For a few weeks we ran a 50/50 service using our van as a base from our centre car parks as clients came to us (thankfully it was dry!) matched with doing some deliveries. Although we introduced

deliveries beforehand to people who are self-isolating, for the last three weeks we have been operating as a fully delivery-only service.

Donations of food continue to be given, and some from supermarkets. The logistics of organising the collection and sorting of higher volumes of food with fewer volunteers is a big challenge. Packing food parcels has been a challenge with social distancing - we have gone from having a team of 6 people in the office and 40 volunteers in the warehouse, to 1 in the office and others working from home, and being only able to have a maximum of 7 in the warehouse. This has meant that unfortunately we have had to turn down offers of help from some because of our lack of space to social distance.

The last six weeks have felt like a whirlwind for us at the Foodbank, staff and volunteers having to make changes quickly, work extra hours and go above and beyond anything expected to meet new needs in our communities. We are so grateful for all of the support we get.

Last week our teams have packed over a hundred parcels for various sized families, delivered those food parcels and collected food donations from doorsteps and supermarkets too. We estimate the 100 food parcels we are delivering each week will feed in the region of 300 people. We expect this raised demand to continue and possibly to keep increasing as growing numbers of people are furloughed or lose their jobs.

Sadly, last week we were broken into at our foodbank depot in the very early hours of a morning. This was both sad and frustrating. Fortunately, nothing was taken, there was just some mess made causing some damage needing to be repaired.

Now we have been able to move on we are sharing this, not for sympathy, but to say a massive thank you to *Epsom and Ewell Beat (Surrey Police)* and to *Verisure*, our alarm company, both of whom were exemplary in their response and support following the incident. Thanks again to the many of you that are supporting us at this time."

Contact Details

Postal Address: 1 Stoneleigh Crescent, Stoneleigh, Epsom KT19 0RT

Contact: Jeananne (07729 028850) - contact@stoneleighmethodist.church

Minister: 020 8393 2322, emmacusack121019@yahoo.com, or Skype is available by arrangement. The Minister's Rest Day is Friday.

News/Service sheet. During this time of forced 'social distancing', we at SMC are focussed on maintaining weekly contact with every one of our membership, plus others who may be interested, such as specific friends at Ruxley and Tuesday Fellowship.

The combined sheet is circulated to all members, either by email, or through your letter box if we possibly can; it will also be posted onto the Church website in the normal way. If you'd like to be added to our email circulation list, or know someone who might appreciate this, just let me know. Jeananne and I are doing our very best to ensure all members are kept 'in the loop' – *Robin*

Other Churches offer Services etc through the Internet such as:

- **Christ Church with St Philip** in Worcester Park. Paul and Steph alternate Sunday mornings at 10:00am on Facebook at [facebook.com/christchurchsaintphilip](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchsaintphilip)
- **All Souls in Langham Place** who are producing very polished mid-week and Sunday Services at allsouls.org – these are complete with music, singing and subtitles.

All items for future NewsSheets –please email to news@stoneleighmethodist.church or phone 020 8393 2155.

Sunday, May 3rd 2020 – The Good Shepherd.

Prepared by Mrs Judy Quaife from Ruxley Church

You can follow this Service on-line at <https://youtu.be/Sq9iTso3kGc> if you wish

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;

His faithfulness continues through all generations, Amen.

Song – The King of love my Shepherd is.

Reading – John 10, 1-10 (Good News version)

Talk - A verse to remember

If you would like to join the activity in this talk you will need a copy of the sheep outline, printed or drawn, and a pen or pencil.

In this memory verse Jesus says “I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me” (John 10:14)

So if Jesus is the good shepherd, who then are His sheep?

They are those of us who choose to love Him - you and me.

Jesus says that as the good shepherd He knows His sheep. He knows each one of us and what is going on in our lives. He knows us even better than our parents know us, because He sees our hearts.

He knows us better than anyone else in the world knows us and He loves us. But even more wonderful than being known is that we can know Jesus. He isn't like a celebrity who we will probably never meet and get to know. Jesus says that we can know Him and enjoy a relationship with Him.

Jesus is our good shepherd, and from our memory verse today we have discovered that He knows us. If you have a picture of a sheep you could write your name or draw a picture of yourself in the middle of your sheep.

We have also discovered that in the same way that a shepherd looks after their sheep, so Jesus looks after us. Let's think about four of the ways that Jesus looks after us as a shepherd looks after his sheep. One of the ways that a shepherd looks after his sheep is by:



1) Giving them what they need. Sheep need grass and water. Think about what you and I need.

Water, food, shelter and clothing. Jesus provides everything that we need, doesn't He? Not only does He provide food and water for our physical bodies, but he also gives us love, forgiveness, joy, hope, peace and many other good things that our spirits need. So you could write in the bottom right hand corner of your paper: "He gives me all I need" or draw a picture of something you need that God gives you.

Another way that a shepherd looks after his sheep is by:

2) Guiding them on a safe path so that they don't fall into danger. Like sheep, it is easy for us to wander off and get into all sorts of trouble. Jesus knows the safe path for us to walk through life and He promises to lead us on that path. So would you like to write in the bottom left hand corner of your paper: "He guides me on a safe path" or draw a picture of a path.

Another way that a shepherd looked after his sheep is by:

3) Always being with them. The shepherd often spent all day and all night with his sheep. In Jesus' time, even when the sheep couldn't see the shepherd, he would reassure them that he was with them, by banging his rod against the stones of the sheep fold, so that they wouldn't feel afraid.

Jesus has promised to always be with us. He said: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) We can trust Jesus to keep His promise, even when we can't feel Jesus near us, He is still with us, looking after us. So you could write in the top right hand corner of your paper: "He is always with me" or draw a picture of Jesus.

And finally, one of the biggest ways that a shepherd looks after his sheep is by:

4) Protecting them from harm. In Jesus' time the shepherd would lie in the entrance of an outdoor sheepfold to protect his sheep from wolves and thieves at night-time, and he would use his rod during the day to scare off wild animals. A good shepherd would sometimes be willing to lay down his life for his sheep.

Jesus, our good shepherd was willing to lay down His life for us, so that we can have eternal life. He said: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:28) In this life, we may have to cope with all sorts of troubles, but Jesus has made it possible for us to be kept safe for all eternity. So you could write in the top left hand corner of your paper: "He protects me from harm eternally" or draw a picture of a cross.

We can see that there are four wonderful ways that Jesus, our good shepherd looks after us.

1. He gives us all that we need.
2. He guides us on a safe path.
3. He is always with us and
4. He protects us from harm eternally.

As you look at your sheep, in a moment of quiet, thank Jesus for being your good shepherd.

Song – The Lord’s my Shepherd

There is a second important reading set for today – it tells of Jesus’ disciples living together as His flock and supporting each other.

Second reading - Acts 2:42-end

Collect

Risen Christ, Faithful shepherd of your Father’s sheep:

Teach us to hear your voice And to follow your command,

That all your people may be gathered into one flock, To the glory of God the Father.

Amen

Confession

Sometimes we choose not to listen to Jesus and end up doing and saying things that are wrong. The prophet Isaiah said this: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)

So let’s say sorry to the Lord where we have failed to listen to Him and follow Him.

Lord Jesus, our good shepherd, please forgive us where we have not listened to your voice and have thought, said and done things that have been wrong. Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Please forgive us where we have followed the crowd rather than following you. Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

Please forgive us where we have been stubborn, wanting to go our own way instead of going your way. Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Thank you Jesus that as our good shepherd you laid down your life so that we might be forgiven. We receive your forgiveness today. Bring us back onto your safe path and help us to listen to you and follow you.

Amen.

Intercessions

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. Thank you, Lord that you are our good shepherd. Thank you that you give us everything that we need. Help us to share your good gifts with others, and please provide for those who have little to eat today.

You are the good shepherd.

Help us to listen to and follow you

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Thank you Lord that you guide us each day. Thank you that you never leave our side. Guide the leaders in our country to make wise decisions, and comfort those who are going through difficult times.

You are the good shepherd.

Help us to listen to and follow you

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Thank you Lord that you keep us safe from the evil one. Thank you that you are the One who heals us. Bring healing to those who are unwell today, and help them to know your love.

You are the good shepherd.

Help us to listen to and follow you

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Thank you Lord that you never stop loving us. Thank you that we can look forward to being with you forever. Strengthen your church that we might show your love to those around us, and keep our eyes fixed on you.

You are the good shepherd.

Help us to listen to and follow you Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Christ the good shepherd,
Who laid down his life for the sheep,
Draw you and all who hear this voice,
To be one flock within one fold,
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among
you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Service source material Jane Hulme from All Age Worship Resources.org