



Welcome to the 'virtual' Stoneleigh Methodist Church

Sunday 27 September 2020

10:30am: Morning Worship
6:30pm: Evening Worship

Prayers

Please pray for Emma, our Stewards and Jeananne; for others within the Church and beyond, and for the continued health of our key workers and all 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.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

Notices

Evening Service The next evening service via Zoom will be this Sunday 27th September at 6:30pm. To join the Meeting from your laptop or mobile go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5582729094> and use Meeting ID: 558 272 9094.

On your home phone, dial 0203 481 5240, listen to the announcement and enter the meeting ID, 5582729094 then # (hash); then, after the next announcement, # again. And that's it, you should be connected and just need to listen. Hang up when the service finishes, or when you want to leave. *Robin*

Church Centre reopening. We've reached agreement with the 3rd Stoneleigh Scout Group for them to restart their Tuesday meetings with effect from 29th September. They've have had to be creative in order to get all the young people back; both reducing times and, in one case, splitting to meet alternate weeks. We are happy to say that their Risk Assessment is in accord with our own, so we wish them all the best. Denise has written to all our regular users to offer them a restart and we await their responses. Meanwhile their original 'slots' are being protected. *Robin*

Epsom Mental Health & Well-Being Festival – Seeds of Hope in Uncertain Times. This annual event by Love my Mind is online this year, but also with 'Festival at Home Packs' for those without access to the Internet. These packs can be requested directly from the website epsommentalhealthweek.org.uk, or by phone 01372 721518. The Festival runs from Saturday 3rd October until the following Saturday, with the usual extensive range of various informative and entertaining sessions.

NHS Test & Trace. You have possibly heard of the smartphone app released last Thursday. Alongside this is a QR code for premises. Although not mandatory for Churches, displaying such a code is strongly encouraged by the Government, by NHS Test and Trace, and by the Methodist Church. The Government website states that places of worship 'should' create and display an NHS QR Code, and NHS Test and Trace states that places of worship are expected to display an NHS QR Code, so we have! Feel free to use it if you have the app – it could save a life! *Robin*

Around the Trolley

Whitechapel - don't forget, we're still happy to accept donations of clothing etc – just drop them off in our porch and I'll get them into the trailer after a day or so. *Robin*

It is good to hear that **Jeff Goodchild** has had a successful cataract operation and is progressing well. We meet and discuss news while putting our bins out or taking them in. *Catherine*

Brenda and Ken Marshall had their Golden Wedding Anniversary last Thursday, September 24th. Congratulations from everyone at SMC and Tuesday Fellowship.

Competition time! You'll remember this picture I published a couple of weeks ago – well, I've had a couple of comments which I'll share with you.

Firstly, I think the whole picture was a little too compressed for some to spot who was in the kayak – so I've enlarged that bit to help you (I hope). Secondly, someone suggested that the whole picture was a good subject for a 'Caption' competition, so I have reprinted that to stimulate your imaginations. Pat says she's never been the subject of a competition before, so let's have your ideas for the bottom picture (anonymous or otherwise), phone or email, as you wish, and I'll print a selection next week. *Robin*



Contact Details

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

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

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

Donations of clothing etc for Whitechapel – please leave in porch of 198 Stoneleigh Park Road

Online Services etc

Christ Church with St Philip, 10:00am - [facebook.com/christchurchsaintphilip](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchsaintphilip).

Surbiton Hill Methodist Church, 10:30am Sunday at [shmc.online.church](https://www.shmc.online.church).

The Ruxley/Stoneleigh Thursday Morning prayer by Zoom and it is open to all. Email to publicity@ruxley-church.org.uk by Tuesday for details and a copy of the liturgy too.

The Methodist Church is offering 'Dial-a Prayer' free of charge, updated every Thursday afternoon, on 0808 281 2514. There's also weekly news, again free, on 0808 281 2478.

Methodist Church Year of Prayer on Tuesdays at 12:45pm – a 15 minute Service on Zoom and Facebook Live – full details on <https://www.methodist.org.uk/yearofprayer/>



This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough, why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

As we still ourselves we recognise that wherever we are, we are in God's presence and the God we know in Jesus waits patiently for us.

Lord our God, help us to know your ways and teach us your paths.
Lead us in your truth for you are the God of our salvation.

Hymn: StF3 Eternal God

Sing/read/pray/proclaim the words, and methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/hymns/eternal-god-your-loves-tremendous-glory-stf-3/ for the tune.

Eternal God, your love's tremendous glory
cascades through life in overflowing grace,
to tell creation's meaning in the story
of love evolving love from time and space.

Eternal Son of God, uniquely precious,
in you, deserted, scorned and crucified,
God's love has fathomed sin and death's deep darkness,
and flawed humanity is glorified.

Eternal Spirit, with us like a mother,
embracing us in love serene and pure:
you nurture strength to follow Christ our brother,
as full-grown children, confident and sure.

Love's trinity, self-perfect, self-sustaining;
love which commands, enables and obeys:
you give yourself, in boundless joy, creating
one vast increasing harmony of praise.

We ask you now, complete your image in us;
this love of yours, our source and guide and goal.
May love in us, seek love and serve love's purpose,
till we ascend with Christ and find love whole.

Alan Gaunt (b. 1935)

Let us pray together

Loving God, all worship and adoration belongs to you for you alone are Lord, you alone are the mighty God, Creator of all that is good.

And yet you are closer than our very breath.

You are closer than my breath and I thank you Lord that you are always with me,
whether I know it or not,

whether I recognise it or not,

whether I delight in it or not.

You are always there to comfort and to challenge

Thank you for your saving presence.

Amen

You might like to bring to mind the things you are sorry for this week, confident in God's loving mercy and forgiveness.

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Exodus 17: 1-7

Water from the Rock

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?"

But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Today's Gospel Reading: Matthew 21: 23–32

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”

Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn't you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.”

Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

“‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

“Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

“Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Time to Reflect

‘Is the Lord among us or not?’ This is the question behind both the Old Testament and the first part of the New Testament readings.

Is the Lord among us when we are thirsty in the Wilderness and have no water?

Is the Lord among us in the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth?

No doubt in the last months the question ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’ has been asked as we contend with the global pandemic with all its implications not least the different ways of worship.

“Is the Lord among us or not?”

The answer of faith is yes. We have God's promise resounding down the generations in the words “I will be with you” and “I am with you”

Is the Lord among us when we are thirsty in the Wilderness and have no water?

Yes, the Lord provides water from the rock.

Is the Lord among us in the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth?

Yes, the Lord is the source and strength of all they do.

God's presence does not depend upon us and how we feel. God's presence is a gift to us, born out of love for us. God's presence is promised in fire and flood (Isaiah 43:2) because we are precious in God's eyes and loved.

And ours is the call to respond as God asks us, as the father asked the sons, to work in the vineyard. That is our situation. Whether we have been aware of that challenge for many years or have newly come to faith we are called to tell of the saving love of God in word and deed.

Take a time to sit quietly and to reflect on the times you have felt distant from God and the times you have known God's presence.

Take time to pause and be present to God

A time of prayer

Lord we have set aside this time to pray, yet as people and situations pop into our minds today and in the week to come help us to take time to hold them in your love and to pray for them.

Now Lord I use this time to bring my concerns to you. I ask for your Holy Spirit to be in me to guide my thoughts that I may pray in accordance with your will and for your glory.

I pray for those who have suffered this week...

I pray for those who have rejoiced this week...

I pray for those I have seen this week...

I pray for those I have longed to see this week.

I pray for myself.

Lord with me here, take these prayers in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Hymn: StF 530 To be in your presence

youtube.com/watch?v=typ7cueKdT4 or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

To be in your presence,
to sit at your feet,
where your love surrounds me,
and makes me complete:

*This is my desire, O Lord,
this is my desire.*

*This is my desire, O Lord,
this is my desire.*

To rest in your presence,
not rushing away,
to cherish each moment --
here I would stay.

Noel Richards (b. 1955)

A blessing for you

May you know the Lord with you each day of your life, may you answer the call to listen and the challenge to follow.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be with you as you go. **Amen**

*Original Materials by Rev'd Anne Smith
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Evening Service by Zoom
September 27th 2020 at 6.30pm
led by Paulette Withycombe

OPENING RESPONSES

The light and peace of Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

The day is almost over, and the evening has come;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,
so may your Spirit come down upon us
to set us free to sing your praise for ever and ever.
Amen.

SONG

AS WE ARE GATHERED Jesus is here;
One with each other, Jesus is here.
Joined by the Spirit, washed in the blood,
Part of the body, the church of God.
As we are gathered Jesus is here,
One with each other, Jesus is here.

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THANKSGIVING - THE BLESSINGS OF AUTUMN

Creator God, we praise you for bright crisp
mornings,
for leaves crackling underfoot
and wisps of cloud in a pale sky.
Creator God, WE PRAISE YOU.

We praise you for the night-time rain,
for the wind buffeting the city
and streetlamps reflected in wet pavements.
Creator God, WE PRAISE YOU.

We praise you for the season's labours,
for the smell of new-turned earth
and smoking bonfires.
Creator God, WE PRAISE YOU.

We praise you for the season's gifts,
for fruitfulness beyond measure
and time to reflect and remember.
Creator God, WE PRAISE YOU.

Cally Booker

CONFESSION THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
(Galatians 5)

Creator God
we recognise
that we are not as fruitful as we could be.
Forgive us when we fail
to tend the fruit of the Spirit
and water them with prayer.
Lord, FORGIVE US.

Forgive us when we quench
the warmth of love
that enables such fruit to ripen.
Lord, FORGIVE US.

Forgive us for those times
when fear causes us
to resist your pruning.
Lord, FORGIVE US.

Forgive us when, set in our ways,
we block your growth
in our lives.
Lord, FORGIVE US.

Come fertilise our hearts
and bring to fruit in us
your joy and loving kindness. AMEN

Mary Palmer

SONG

O GOD, YOU SEARCH ME and you know me,
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
When I walk or lie down you are before me:
ever the maker and keeper of my days.

You know my resting and my rising;
you discern my purpose from afar.
And with love everlasting you besiege me:
in every moment of life and death, you are.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,
you have known its meaning through and
through.

GOD OF AUTUMN

God of autumn,
help us to be more like nature,
accepting the changing seasons;
like the changing of the trees:
not a dying as life sometimes feels,
but a stripping bare in preparation for inner
growth,
knowing that to shed the outer layers
will reveal the strength that is hidden
underneath.
God of autumn,
it's so hard to let things go:
the shields,
the camouflage,
the flimsy covers ...
We cannot hide from you;
you are our strength,
you see our inner beauty.
You see beyond the human dressings
and wish to clothe us in your love.
God of autumn,
help us to be more like nature,
accepting the changing seasons
not because they are out of our control,
but because they are in your hands.

Katrina Crosby

You are with me, beyond my understanding:
God of my present, my past and future too.

Although your Spirit is upon me,
still I search for shelter from your light.
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you:
Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me,
gave me life within my mother's womb.
For the wonder of who I am I praise you:
safe in your hands all creation is made new.

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READING

Ephesians 3:7-19

⁷I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

SHORT REFLECTION

RESPONSE: JESUS, YOU ARE THE WAY

Jesus, help us to hear you speaking to us in other people,
even in those people we don't like;
the ones who irritate us, bore us and get on our nerves.
Jesus, YOU ARE THE WAY.

Jesus, help us to laugh at our silly ideas of self-importance.
May we learn to see you, serve you and respect you in all our sisters and brothers,
especially in those who are deemed to be of 'no value' in a fast-moving commercial world,
but who are valued and loved very much by the Father.
Jesus, YOU ARE THE WAY.

Jesus, give us the strength to break through our defences and fears
so that your Spirit freely breathes within us and through us.
Jesus, YOU ARE THE WAY.

Fill us with your Spirit.
Take away our fear,
so that we are not afraid to be vulnerable to people who are hurting through rejection and the isolation of not being listened to, or valued.
Jesus, YOU ARE THE WAY.

And Jesus, when it becomes hard,
let us rest in you and become strong again.
Jesus, YOU ARE THE WAY.

Jesus, vulnerable one, let us pray to become like you.
Help us always to listen to you and hear you.
Jesus, YOU ARE THE WAY.

*June McAllister, Faith and Light Community,
Tuam, County Galway*

CREED

Let us declare our faith in God.

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

PRAYER THROUGH OUR MUTUAL LOVE SOW FREEDOM

God of grace,
you call us to live by grace:
teach us how to do so,
in our personal lives,
in our community,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

God of peace,
you call us to be peacemakers:
teach us how to do so,
in our personal lives,
in our community,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

God of wisdom,
you call us to be wise:
teach us how to be so,
in our personal lives,
in our community living,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

God of gentleness,
you call us to be gentle:
teach us how to be so,
in our personal lives,
in our community living,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

God of creation,
you call us to be creative:
teach us how to be so,
in our personal lives,
in our community living,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

God of generosity,
you call us to be generous:
teach us how to be so,
in our personal lives,
in our community living,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

God of love,
you call us to be loving:
teach us how to be so,
in our personal lives,
in our community living,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

God of passion,
you call us to be passionate for justice:
teach us how to be so,
in our personal lives,
in our community living,
in the wider world.
Through our mutual love SOW FREEDOM

Elizabeth Baxter

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

SONG

O LORD MY GOD! when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe
displayed:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I
wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain
grandeur,

And hear the brook, and feel the gentle
breeze:

And when I think that God His Son not
sparing,
Sent Him to die—I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

When Christ shall come with shout of
acclamation
And take me home—what joy shall fill my
heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou
art!

*SF 425 Stuart K. Hine. © 1953 Stuart K. Hine/
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FINAL PRAYER A PRAYER FOR LATE AUTUMN

Walk with us, God,
through sharp frosty days
and bright crunchy leaves
into winter.

Rest with us
by warm firesides
and tell us stories
into the night.

Take us out at night
and show us the stars
and fill us
with wonder.

Bless us and our families
our friends
and our neighbours
with love and with courage.

And never let us forget
the stranger
who needs to share our wealth,
our shelter
and our hope.

Ruth Burgess

BLESSING

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

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