



Welcome to the 'virtual' Stoneleigh Methodist Church

Sunday 25 October 2020

10:30am: Morning Worship
6:30pm: Ruxley Church Evening Worship by Zoom

Prayers

Please pray for Emma and our Stewards; for others within the Church and beyond (especially Jeananne for her tireless delivery of this NewsSheet each week), 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.

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had," Romans 15:5

Notices

Planned Services for November. Our first Service in Church was planned for the 1st November, Communion, at 10:30am with Emma. However, latest advice from the London District and Paul is that we should not re-open at this time, and Emma's advice is that our Church Council Members will have to have a discussion about it to make the decision about re-opening again, and when. So, for now, no 'face to face' worship in Church I'm afraid. *Robin*

Last week I gave a short summary of the changes you'd see when you came back to Church (in due course) – a '*Brief Guide for Worshippers*'.

This week I've included some detail of the 'jobs' that we will need to cover on a Sunday to allow re-opening. Please read through and let us know which tasks you would like to do, and which Sundays in November/December you **cannot** be at Church. From this we can plan some sort of rota.

On the first Sunday back in Church (thinking positively!) we expect to be able to run through individual duties before the actual service, learning as we go! If you have any questions before then we'd love to hear from you – it'll quite likely be something we've not even thought of, so don't hold back. *Denise & Robin*

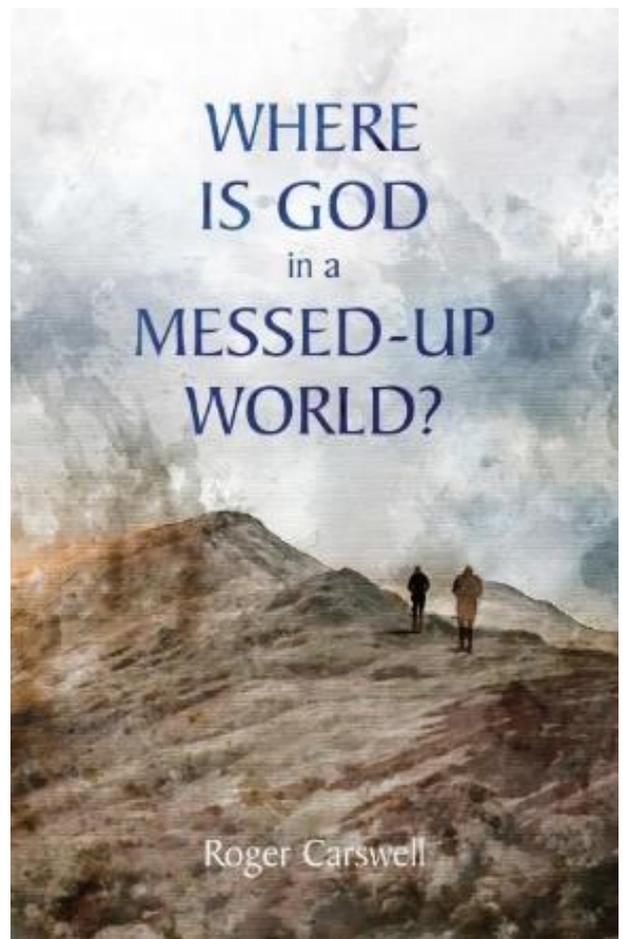
Around the Trolley

Dog Walking – a local disabled lady is looking for someone to walk her faithful companion 'around the block' in all weathers. If you would like to offer to help, give me a ring and I'll put you in touch so you can discuss the possibilities. *Robin*

Monday Group. In our Monday evening Bible study sessions, we've recently been looking at the book of Ephesians through a series of sermons from Gateway Church Leeds. In the first session of these, the book *Where is God in a messed-up world?* by Roger Carswell was recommended. We have been reading this book individually (at our own pace!) for the past couple of weeks and have found it simple to read but going into a lot of depth using various case studies and his own experience.

I have a number of copies of this book available if you would like a copy – just drop me an email with your address (richie.g@googlemail.com) and I can deliver. *Richard*

PS If you are without email you can phone me on 020 8393 2155 and I will pass the message on. Robin



Contact Details

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.

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/>

STONELEIGH METHODIST CHURCH – Service Duties

What follows is a brief outline of the duties expected of those rota'd for a Sunday Service. The roles rota'd are not necessarily those of people holding named positions within the Church, but will match the names on the rota. Thus Steward 1 is a notional role, but not necessarily occupied by an official Church Steward for that Sunday.

Stewards' Duties

Normally there are two Stewards 'on duty' at every service, No's 1 and 2, whose specific responsibilities are set out below. This information relates to our 'normal' services – others, especially involving large congregations, may require additional 'staff', but the two Stewards retain ultimate responsibility. Essentially No 1 looks after the building and the preacher, No 2 looks after the functions & facilities, although mutual flexibility is expected here. Both will be masked unless speaking from the front.

Stewards' Duties at Regular Services

In the event of a preacher not arriving, it is the responsibility of the Stewards to ensure that some form of service takes place. Good practice is to create a service in advance to be available for such an event.

The responsibilities of the No 1 Steward are:

- To arrive first at least 30 minutes before the start of the Service, enter masked through the Link Room doors. Clean hands with the gel provided, open both doors into the Church from the back corridor, turn the cross light and candle on, check that all is well and then open the front doors, leaving the screen doors open.
- Offer a prayer with the preacher just before the service and advise of any notices/issues.
- Be the lead Reader, together with the preacher, to reduce use of lectern.
- Ensure that the premises are secure and Covid contact points wiped when everyone has left, leaving the Church Centre last through the Link Room door, checking that it is secure; OR check the Link Room door is secure and then leave through one of the Fire Exits.

The responsibilities of the No 2 Steward are:

- Check that heating is working, blinds and lights appropriately set.
- Ensure that there is fresh water in the carafe for the preacher.
- Check that the Door Stewards are on duty, and someone is at the sound desk.
- After the Service extinguish the candle, turn off the cross light and tip the collection from the bowls into a cloth bag. Add the marked attendance list and any forms from visitors, tighten the toggle and put the bag into the small safe in the vestry.

Additional duties at Communion Services

- Only Communion wafers will be used, to be blessed by the preacher at the Communion rail and then distributed by the Stewards (using gloves and masks and moving through the empty row/space in front of the congregants, delivering a wafer into their open hands. Nothing is said at this stage. The Preacher then continues the Service. Before the service discuss with the minister what assistance is wanted.

Door Stewards

The current situation means an extended role for Door Stewards, who are now not only responsible for welcoming worshippers, but must also inform and reassure those who have not been recently to understand the new 'rules'. Task allocations are not prescriptive; Door Stewards may well develop a better 'workflow' from experience!

Door Steward 1 (gloved and masked)

- Open side door from porch as usual and keep open whilst people arrive, and greet them
- Ask if they feel well (no signs of Covid)
- Remind about social distancing, sanitizing hands and wearing mask

Door Steward 2 (gloved and masked)

- Check Church Members off attendance sheet
- If new people, ask them to complete Test & Trace form, or scan QR code – add to sheet
- Hand over single NewsSheet – perhaps explain that all words are on sheet, thus no bibles/hymn books needed.
- Open door into Church and pass worshippers onto to Steward 3 in Church

Door Steward 3 (masked)

- Explain seating restrictions and take person to end of pew of their preference (any route)

As the Service starts Door Stewards may find it preferable to sit towards the rear of the Church (perhaps on the 'reserved' chairs in the Children's corner) to provide assistance to any latecomers, and to reassure them that being 'late' is acceptable. At the end open both sets of double doors fully.

Sound Engineer

- Use wipes on transmitter and mic clip before placing on the pulpit rail, and check that the preacher is familiar with its placement and operation. Ensure it is switched on (button on top to give green light) after it has been clipped on (the sound engineer will ensure nothing will be heard in Church until the service starts, but needs to be able to check that the microphone is transmitting to the sound desk beforehand.)

Other Specialists

- As rota'd, Hymnal operator, Projectionist, etc. Agree socially distanced locations with sound engineer.

Preacher

The preacher plays a key part in confirming the various messages to the congregation – distancing, no singing, procedures during Communion, advising to leave social distances as marked etc. It is also particularly important that the preacher provides full details of the proposed Service in good time (mid-day Wednesday is a good deadline to work to) so that the Worship Co-ordinator can contact specialists to prepare whatever resources the preacher requires. For a time, we will still be distributing paper copies of the Service to some members, so will need to complete this preparatory work by Friday evening until 'normality' returns.

At the end of the Service all worshippers will leave directly through the open screen doors, thus the preacher may stand near the collection plates (masked) to bid farewell.

Sunday 25th October 2020 – Morning Worship



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

Call to worship

Wherever we worship, whether alone or with others; whether in chapel, at home or elsewhere; whether we are full of joy or overwhelmed by fear and despair; we are thankful that we worship together as a community of Christ. Amen.

Hymn 503 (StF): Love divine

Sing/ read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here youtu.be/sw5ZCZeS32M

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;

let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayers of adoration, thanks and confession

We pray together

Holy God,
creator of all things and source of all holiness,
we praise you for all that you provide for us materially and spiritually;
we give thanks for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, who showed to us that perfect example
of human love;
we praise you for your Holy Spirit, who empowers us to share that love with others.
We give thanks for our local Christian communities and the worldwide church to which we
belong; may we praise you with one voice.
God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
accept our praise and adoration. **Amen.**

We confess our sins to God.

Silence

We confess that we have not loved you with heart, soul and mind. We have failed to love
our neighbours as ourselves. Help us to become the loving people you want us to be. Amen.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is his gracious word:

“Your sins are forgiven.”

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Today’s Reading from the Old Testament Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

Various Laws

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy
because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

“Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

“Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

“Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the Lord.

“Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Today’s Gospel Reading Matthew 22:34-46

The Greatest Commandment

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.”

If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Time to Reflect

The BBC’s Question Time, for me, is compulsive viewing, even though I often find it infuriating when the politicians avoid answering questions by skirting round the issue or answering a question that wasn’t asked. I’m sure I’m not alone in my frustration!

Many questions have been on our minds throughout the Covid-19 crisis. Would fewer lives have been lost if lockdown measures were introduced sooner? Were care homes, including MHA facilities, dealt with properly? Could more lives have been saved if...? All of these are

difficult to answer. One slip of the tongue from a politician could lead to political trouble. No wonder they are reluctant to give a straight answer! In no way do I defend politicians but concede that journalists' questions are often loaded to trip them up. This is nothing new. In the gospel reading, Jesus is asked a loaded question in similarly politically-charged times, not by a journalist but a lawyer.

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Matt. 22:36

This question is dynamite. Jesus is being asked to make a judgement on which of God's commandments, written in the laws of Moses, is greatest. This is like asking a politician which law of the land is the most important. Imagine the field day the tabloid press would have!

I dare say that the lawyer was very pleased with his question, certain he had Jesus trapped. There was no answer he could give that would not land him in deep trouble.

How wrong could he be? Rather than picking out two of the laws, Jesus expertly sums up the whole of God's law: love God and neighbour. This answer silences the lawyer and the pharisees, as there is nothing for them to argue with.

We may argue over points of doctrine and practice within Methodism and across denominations. It would be so much better if our primary motivation was always to simply love God and neighbour. The church and the world would certainly be better places and, as Charles Wesley writes, 'the joy of heaven' would 'to earth come down'.

Forget the difficult questions, focus instead on Christ's simple answer – love! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself. **Amen.**

Take a time to sit quietly

Prayers of intercession

Loving God,
as we mediate on Christ's commandment to love,
we pray for the church throughout the world;
for justice and peace between and within nations;
for political leaders and all in authority;
for the communities in which we live;
for people who suffer in any way;
and for all those on our minds today.

Silence

May the presence of your love be felt in every situation.

We give thanks for those who have died, especially those who have lived in the love of Christ.

May we be united with them in your eternal kingdom. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

Hymn 615 (StF): Let love be real, in giving and receiving.

Listen to it here: youtu.be/SkBAxZw5NxU or read the words

Let love be real, in giving and receiving,
without the need to manage and to own;
a haven free from posing and pretending,
where every weakness may be safely known.
Give me your hand, along the desert pathway,
give me your love wherever we may go.
As God loves us, so let us love each other:
with no demands, just open hands and space to grow.

Let love be real, not grasping or confining,
that strange embrace that holds yet sets us free;
that helps us face the risk of truly living,
and makes us brave to be what we might be.
Give me your strength when all my words are weakness;
give me your love in spite of all you know.
As God loves us, so let us love each other:
with no demands, just open hands and space to grow.

Let love be real, with no manipulation,
no secret wish to harness or control;
let us accept each other's incompleteness,
and share the joy of learning to be whole.
Give me your hope through dreams and disappointments;
give me your trust when all my failings show.
As God loves us, so let us love each other:
with no demands, just open hands and space to grow.

A prayer of blessing

May everything we do be guided by the law of Christ's love; and now may the blessing of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us this day and forevermore. Amen.

Hymns reproduced under CCLi 19650

To join the Evening Service go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6641594384?> and use Meeting ID: 664 159 4384, passcode 123123.

On your home phone, dial 0203 481 5240, listen to the announcement and enter the meeting ID, 664 159 4384 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.

**Ruxley Church Evening Service (6:30pm) via Zoom
25 October 2020**