**Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches **

**Newsletter No 18 26 July 2020**

**Through all the changing scenes of life.**

How apt is the first line of this hymn in these present strange and challenging times! Personally and globally change has been at the centre of most people’s lives. Some small changes have had a profound effect on the people who for example used to enjoy the pleasure of meeting friends for a coffee or just a greeting or chatting whilst shopping. No longer able to have a daily routine, some people in the early days felt isolated and confused. We can sometimes underestimate the small things in life which bring joy. Challenges which very soon resulted in phone calls, emails, Zoom calls, cards and letters, enabling people to keep in touch. Clapping together at a distance, to thank key workers, even saw some neighbours getting to know each other. Younger people still able to go out shopping for older people who had to ‘Shield’. An eighty-year-old told me how she used to wonder about all the modern technology and say to her grandchildren it wasn’t for her, but unable to leave the house and so wanting to have contact with her family said she soon learned how to use, in her words: ‘whatever it was they set up for me’, missing the hugs but grateful for what she has been able to have.

The changes in education, healthcare, commerce, religion, leisure, all have presented challenges which have resulted in pain and heartache for many but also positive and life-enhancing responses. It is the responses we make to the changes and the supports we have as we move forward into the next that make the experience either a positive or a negative one. One of our great abilities as human beings it to adapt. The story of God’s people is one in which the golden thread of God’s love is entwined in their hearts. Knowing the presence of God helps us to develop a resilience which enables us to travel from the old to the new.

A source of sadness has been not being able to be physically present with others to worship, the challenge has been to find new ways of being in communion. I would like to thank Jill for inviting me to share with you in this service and for her ministry among us. This service which Jill has produced has been a great example of finding a new way of worshipping together, so too has been the use of Zoom to bring people visually and audibly if not physically together. The challenge to us as Christians is to find the new what next in so far as ways in which we can support one another and share the life-enhancing invitation to a loving relationship with God. What the church will look like may well, and perhaps in some areas should, be different to when we began this year.

In the last twelve months my life has changed in so many, not least because of Covid-19. Retirement from Circuit Ministry and a move of home last July was a significant event, made easier because I was able to stay in Nantwich. I am grateful to The Methodist Church for allowing me to stay in Nantwich. As many of you will know, a Methodist Minister would normally move from their last circuit appointment; I was given permission to stay in the area because my parents had moved to Nantwich and it has also enabled me to continue as Chaplain at Leighton hospital.

Hospital Chaplaincy has been a challenge partly because The Trust has been extremely cautious as to what has been permitted. The diligence of protocols in response to the virus has however been positive in helping to keep staff, patients and visitors safe, but it has meant that some families have been unable to be alongside a loved one in the way they would have chosen, at the time of their loved one’s illness and dying. These measures which were put in place have resulted in sadness, frustration and sometimes anger, but mostly in deep gratitude for the dedicated care and skilled attention of a hard working team.

Funerals have been particularly challenging. The limited number of people able to be at service, family and friends who would normally offer the unspoken support and love by embracing, limited to just being there. Some people not even able to attend a service, and in extreme cases no family or friends even allowed.

Personally I have been blessed in as far as I was able to be alongside both my parents in their dying. I enabled them to have dignified and peaceful deaths and funeral arrangements just as we had planned. I am privileged to have had two loving and supportive parents who taught me so much about laughter, kindness, resilience, dignity, selflessness, commitment and love. They both did their dying as they had lived their lives, with dignity, smiles, courage, and gratitude.

One challenging outcome of Covid-19 that I didn’t see coming has been playing Scrabble with Malcolm. He is very competitive and we have played most afternoons; he is trying to catch up to me – I am well ahead on games won!

I hope that you have known God’s strength and peace during these strange and challenging times and been blessed by others, and that you have also been a source of blessing. As we begin to emerge into the new normal may we all find what is worth living for. Perhaps the biggest challenge for me has been to identify what is good and truly worth holding onto and working to preserve.

Teresa of Avila says:

“*The soul that truly loves God loves all good, protects all good, praises all good, joins itself to good people, helps and defends them, and embraces all the virtues. It loves only what is truly worth loving.”*

Charlotte Lorimer

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**Broomhall & Sound Chapel**

**Are hosting another “Zoom Service” today, July 26th, led by Deacon Jill.**

It’s great to see a number of people from across the mission area joining in.

Why not give it a go? Service will last approx 30 mins **10.30 – 11am.** You can login in from 10.15 and stay on later to chat with people.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84907348014?pwd=RlJEL3lmWFJNbW8zQW1MZnpITnJYUT09>

Meeting ID: 849 0734 8014
Password: 074905

***Thank you to everyone who makes this possible, especially Charles who “hosts”.***

**Lightwood Green Phone Fellowship - 6.30 Sunday Evenings**

You are welcome to dial in and join members of the Mission Area in prayer and fellowship.

Call **0330 336 0036**  and PIN **571297** which should be charged at the same rate as any calls to landlines.

**The Methodist Prayer Handbook**

**“The Earth is the Lord’s” - 2020/2021 : The Year of Prayer.\***

The cost is £4.50 each, but there will be a slight reduction if sufficient are ordered.

If you would like your own copy ordered, please give me your name within the next two weeks.

*Pat Maidment* (01270 627170)

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**\*** Conference has declared 2020/2021 a **Year of Prayer** to support the new Connexional strategy for Evangelism and Growth. We are all invited to pray for the Methodist Church as we deepen our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, inclusive, justice-seeking Church of gospel people.