

Parkwood Methodist Church



The Herald JUNE 2021

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You just Couldn't make it up -

Part 2

We've looked back into our past and seen where we came from, when we started life as 'The Church at Snow Lea'.

So, where does Parkwood go from here as a church?

It's a bit obvious – but we start with our worship as a community together and our pastoral care for each other which is at the heart of anything we do.

We've all craved to be able to worship again and finally we made it a couple of weeks ago, and how strange it was:

Methodists who aren't allowed to sing!

Friends sat six feet away from us!

At least there was one advantage as someone said to me pointedly:

'Only half-hour services so you can't keep drooling on John!'

Yes – 'You just couldn't have made all this up'

Covid has brought home to us more than ever what loneliness and isolation can do to us. And it has also helped us to understand how much worship and pastoral care can help to overcome these scourges of our lives today.

We applaud and say thank you to our ministers and others that have put on Zoom services for us.

I had an interesting Zoom service where a lady knit all the way through it. I don't know if it was a statement about my service but strangely I found it very soothing!

In the midst of tragedy of Covid it's strange that there has been so much to say 'Thank You' for.

It's unfair to mention any names, but keeping in touch with phone calls and having the weekly chat has brought a lifeline to us, and thanks to all those who have made this happen.

The Herald has done an outstanding job in keeping people in touch and helping them through the Pandemic

Despite having to shut our new Parkwood Children's Club at the Drop By centre, thanks to all those who have helped with the Family Activity Bags to remind families that we haven't forgotten them and we care about them.

We also say thanks to our partners 'Primetime' who have come on board with us to continue our community and outreach work on the Trees Estate.

They have braved Covid and the weather to engage with Young People on the streets of the Trees Estate. Maybe it's only a small incident, but one of the Street team told me that they were recognised by a young lad who shouted out: 'You're from the Children's Club'.

There's one word we've constantly heard during this pandemic which is **NORMAL**, or should I say two words – '**NEW NORMAL**'.

It seems to be clear, even now, that our lives are not going to be the same after Covid – and neither is our church life. Not only that. The church is going to have to face up the issues of finance and our legacy of old church buildings which has worsened during the Pandemic.

Just listen to the words of our President of Conference, Rev Loraine Mellor BEFORE the pandemic;

'It's time for churches to consider closing their churches and selling the buildings if the money can be better used for outreach.'

Well, we managed to do the first bit – the second one is not quite as easy for us!

Some more advice that was given to the Church was:

'Close your old church building if it's too much of a burden and continue to meet in a café, a home, a community hall or garden centre.'

It also suggests that:

'Set up an 'Outreach Project' in a different part of the community' ...and this is exactly what we have done at Parkwood with Primetime.

We've already heard that there's going to be a shake up for grants in our church. Whilst there are no promises, the shift will be towards projects such as 'The church on the

Margin' – which is what we have become at Parkwood after our move from our old church building into the Longwood Community Hall and our work with Primetime at the Drop By centre.

Maybe these are some of the signs to show us what the 'New Normal' will be like.

Just before lockdown started last March we started to have a Café style 'Community Service' at Parkwood where we served coffee at the beginning of our service. This gave us a chance to share our experiences of our move to the Community centre and our hopes for the future. Maybe it would be a good idea to re-start these services when Covid regulations finally allow.

Perhaps we can think about bringing life back to our community with 'Messy Church' again

Hopefully we can re-start our breakfasts at the Drop By centre – people have missed them.

Something that our Primetime partner wants to start is a 'Young Person's training scheme'. This is to help to develop Young People's confidence and self-esteem, as well as improve their employment prospects. This is something that is so desperately needed on the 'Trees Estate'. Discussions are in hand with Kirklees to see when we may be able to re-open the Parkwood Children's Club.

One special addition to this club that Primetime are thinking about is giving the children when they leave a session a 'Cook and Eat' bag. This will have ingredients and a recipe card so they can make themselves a meal under supervision at home.

We're looking to see if there are ways we can raise funds for people to help us re-start the Wednesday lunch club at the Drop By Centre or pay for a couple of tables at the Colne Valley Garden Centre.

There's also the chance to maybe deliver 'Cook and Eat' bags to residents of the Trees Estate with help from The Mission. During Covid we've been given a generous grant to be able to develop this outreach from the Drop By centre. This is going to give us a chance to provide what this community have asked for in better opportunities for their children and something to give their Young People a better life.

We've also taken the chance during Covid to set up in our church an Outreach Committee that can liaise with our Church Council and oversee the outreach work on the Trees Estate. We're also setting up a 'Working Group' that can support our Primetime partner in getting these new projects off the ground.

These are just some of the answers Parkwood is trying to give to the questions that are now being asked about what the 'New Normal' will look like. It all seems a far cry from the 'Church at Snow Lea' that set themselves up over 150 years ago in William Shaw's house on Lamb Hall Road.

We've already said that leaving our old church at Parkwood has been like 'Giving ourselves a clean slate'.

Maybe we are starting to see some of the things that we can write onto that blank slate.

Perhaps we've even had a glimpse of what the NEW NORMAL could look like for our church.

Possibly something is starting to be revealed to us through the gift of the Spirit.

Let's just go back to St John's Gospel where Jesus is trying to share something with those very frightened disciples about what his fate was going to be and what their new lives would be like:

'I have yet many things to share with you, but you cannot bear them now'

'You're just not going to believe what's going to happen.'

'You couldn't even make it up.'

John



Post Covid Service



Pre-Covid Service

Hope to see everyone back soon

(Ed!)