

'Seeking to be the People of Christ at the Heart of the Community'.



Parkwood Methodist Church

News Flash Herald



St. Mark's Parish Centre
53 Thornhill Road
Longwood HD3 4UL

August 2020

Dear friends,

The Leadership Team are in the early stages of looking into the best way forward for Parkwood Methodists to be able to worship together safely.

This is not easy, as the first priority is always safety, especially in mind that many of us are 70 or older and with health conditions. We are carefully studying material from the Methodist Church and the government. The Methodist Connexion has provided churches with resources to both explore opening and help us to navigate through the way ahead Meeting for worship and sharing together is one of the many parts of what makes us who we are. We have all experienced the changes that have taken place over these past months. The need to protect each other, in many different ways, has rightly become a focus for the changes that we have seen in supermarkets, shops and businesses. The Church needs to play our part in making sure that, when we do worship together in a building, that it is as safely as possible. This is why we need to make sure that we have followed guidance from the Methodist Connexion, the government, and have thought about our options. It also needs good communication and cooperation with our partners in the Circuit, Connexion and our friends at St. Mark's and Longwood Day Care. In the meantime, the Methodist Connexion has provided churches with resources to both explore opening and help us to navigate through the way ahead. I am aware that there are people longing to come and worship together and happy to start straight away, people that are waiting to see what happens around us, people that are anxious about social contact, people that cannot come to worship because it is still

too much of a risk to their health. This is one of the important reasons why it is important to us to be able to let you know where we are up to in our exploration.

Over the course of this time we will be asking some good questions, and some hard questions, all designed to help us to be able to worship safely together in due course. As we work through all this, we welcome your thoughts. When we come to a stage of opening for worship, this will be different for a while to what we are used to. No singing, no refreshments, no social gathering before or after the service. The service will be limited to about 30 to 45 minutes. There is but one reason for all this - to keep all of us safe. That is the loving thing to do.

Many of the questions we have relate directly to our shared mission and ministry, and are there to support us in this changing time. Parkwood Methodists, I know, have experienced a lot of changes over these past few years. From a move from our old building to our home in Longwood, through changes in worship and ministers. There has been a lot of changes in Parkwood, and while there are more to come, once again God is with us through these changes, calling to us to accompany each other and our local community through these strange days. We are not alone, God is with us in love, reminding us of the importance of this as another way in which Parkwood can work out what it means to love our neighbour. Even if it looks like a good, thought out risk assessment! With love to you all, and keep safe,
Reverend Roz Page

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Over the last few months a number of conversations have been taking place and a number of documents have been written, all seeking to think through how we might respond to the issues currently facing the church, society and the world. The Huddersfield Circuit staff and stewards have agreed that it might be helpful to organise an open meeting for anybody across the circuit who would be interested in tackling the significant questions that lie before us in how we, as the Methodist Church in Huddersfield, might make a meaningful and creative response in contributing to the challenges facing our society and our world.

If you are interested in being part of such a meeting (by Zoom), could you please let me know by 20th July. We will then take it from there. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to send me an email or give me a ring. You may be interested in the following paper:

<https://www.commongoodfoundation.org.uk/our-work/the-plague-and-the-parish>

Best wishes

David Bidnell

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I wonder if like me and Phil you have missed meeting together face to face as a church family for praise and worship. It's been good to have online and TV resources and we are grateful for them, but for us they seem to have something missing. It's hard to put a finger on what it is. So when the government news came that we could open churches again it felt wonderful. At last we could go back to services as they were before lockdown. But when I read the pages and pages of Government and Methodist guidelines to help keep people safe and save lives I realised that services could not be the same as they were before.

A very brief description of the new type of service is that they will be short (30-45 minutes) and because there is no preaching plan they will all be 'own arrangement'. There will be no singing (for me this is the hardest change) and of course we will need to observe 2m distancing and rigorous infection control cleaning. Also there will be no coffee and chat.

But once I got my head round all this I realised that keeping people safe is going to be the most

important part of everything in life for quite some time and will become the normal thing. Because I have found that the bible teaches the importance of God's people meeting together, I feel God wants us to do all we can to make it possible. It will mean getting to grips with the safety precautions and accepting that things will be different. However we can lean on God's promise to always be with us and help us. As he was with us through the changes of moving our worship venue, he will also be with us through this new challenge.

Blessings to all Sandra

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The Long & Winding Road

When we decided to break our bonds with our old Parkwood Church Building, but keep our church community together, we largely had to work things out for ourselves, with the support of our minister, because it was something no other church had done before in living memory in our area.

We eventually choose our new place of worship at St Marks Community centre and made it up as we went along. We forgot to bring things down from the old building and didn't know what we could store at St Marks in a shared cupboard you couldn't swing a cat in. We laughed (and cried) at our mistakes, but we pulled together – week by week, month by month and we started to make it work. So, maybe we've had a dummy run, in a sense, to face this Corona pandemic. We've already have had to face difficulties and overcome hurdles to make things work in a new way for us.

We believe we've proved we can have some hope, because we are still here as a church community, as we start to face the long and winding road to a 'new normality' in our church life.

We don't know when we can meet again, and Rev Roz is supporting our leadership team as we start to think about what the future shape of worship can be for us.

Not being able to sing hymns and keep our social distance are just a couple of things we're going to get use to when we first meet again.

Yet, we hold onto our hope that got us through our move from our old church building, for us to have the faith to find a way through these new challenges.

Above all, we have to keep us all safe.

Elaine & John.

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