

BISHOP STREET METHODIST CHURCH

...serving people in Leicester City Centre (Reg. charity 1129068)
through welcome, worship and mission.

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NOTICES FOR SUNDAY 29th MARCH 2020

A message from Rev. Fran Rhys

Dear Members and Adherents of Bishop Street Methodist Church

It thought it would be a good idea to send you a pastoral letter during these strange and worrying times we are living through. I hope you are keeping as well as possible.

To begin with, here are some words from The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, the General Secretary of the Methodist Church: “We are asking people to change their way of ‘going to church’ to help to protect themselves and others. We have put in place measures that will enable Methodists still to be part of the worshipping community, whilst for everyone’s sake staying away from church buildings. There is a range of resources available for people to use at home which we hope will help them to continue their cycle of prayer and worship. The Methodist Church is more than its buildings and if in these unprecedented times we can continue our life as Methodists without using our buildings we will help to reduce the chances of transmission of the virus.”

Here are just a few possibilities of worship resources:

Songs of Praise BBC1, Sunday 1.15pm

Morning Worship (from a variety of churches) BBC Radio 4, Sunday 8.10am (FM 92.70)

The Family Friendly Churches Trust

<https://familyfriendlychurches.org.uk/> will help parents and carers of school-aged children to worship with them.

For those who use the internet, here are just a few of many options:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/seasons-and-themes/worship-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/> Provides Sunday “Worship at Home” sheets

Wesley's Chapel London will live-stream from the chapel (the Minister lives on the premises)

Sunday 11am www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA

Rev'd Jennifer Smith lived in Leicester for a good many years, and I trained alongside her at Queens, Birmingham, and recommend her preaching.

<https://bishopstreetmethodistchurchsundaystuff.wordpress.com/>

This site provides material from preachers at Bishop Street Methodist Church who share their Sunday reflections and prayers and even the odd video.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1540042632786558/> (“Bishop Street Community”)

A new Facebook group administered through Bishop Street Methodist Church.

Our Gospel reading for this Sunday comes from John, chapter 11, verses 1-45. In contrast to Jesus' twelve disciples who are asked to become itinerant and abandon their homes and former livelihoods, the members of this household (Lazarus, Mary and Martha) continue to be disciples from their home. Unless we're a 'key worker' or can work from home, in these strange times, many of us are being called to be a disciple from our homes.

Jesus says that Lazarus' raising from the dead is to bring revelation about God. In the restrictions and difficulties, the suffering and pain of the current partial-lockdown of society, brought about by combatting the Corona virus, revelation is received. We're reminded, abruptly, of the need for more care and thoughtfulness towards each other. Despite some horror stories of alarmed panic-buying, there are many other stories of enhanced neighbourliness. This week nearly half a million people have answered the Government's call to support through the NHS those in vulnerable circumstances with shopping, and phone calls. Methodist theologian, Prof Frances Young writes: “Tragedy, then, is normally viewed in entirely negative terms, but what I want to suggest is that, contrary to expectation, it's through tragedy that we discover what is most deeply life-giving, and that the clue is provided by the cross.”¹

So keep hopeful in these overwhelming times and in it all, may you receive glimpses of divine revelation.

In Christ, Rev'd Fran

¹ F. Young, *Arthur's Call, A Journey of Faith in the face of Severe Learning Disability*, (London: SPCK, 2014), p.98

Giving

Members and adherents are encouraged to put aside their offering for when it is possible to bring it into church again. You could also post a cheque to the Church Office, Bishop Street Methodist Church, Town Hall Square LE1 6AF. Alternatively you could switch your giving to a standing order, because the churches are dependent on this source of giving to continue.

Bishop Street Methodist Church

The Cooperative Bank sort code 08-92-99 and account number 65242955. Give your name as a reference.

Dear Bishop Street Members, here is more detail from the link above for this Sundays worship

Sunday 29th March 2020

[This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use if you are unable to attend church. 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 come to worship you might like to have a time of silence and light a candle.

Then pray: Holy and Loving God I come to worship you, as I do I remember that I am a part of your church in my community and in the world, and I take comfort from the fact that I am not alone.

Come by your Holy Spirit and help me to worship you in spirit and in truth.

Amen

Hymn: StF 370 Breathe on me breath of God

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5keJHZdWYM>

Let us pray together

Holy and Loving God, all life comes from you, and in you all things hold together.

As we remember this, we pause to give you thanks and Praise.

As we remember this, we are reminded that you hold the end from the beginning, and that nothing is too large or too small for you.

As we remember this, remind us that as all things are held, so we are held by you, in love.

Help us in our anxious thoughts.

Help us in our day to day lives.

Help us in this time of deep uncertainty.

We acknowledge that at times we are selfish, at times we do not seek you first.
But we know that you are always faithful, merciful, gracious, and forgiving.

(Silence)

We receive your mercy and forgiveness faithfulness and grace.

In the name of Christ.

Amen

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Today's Gospel Reading:

John 11: 1-45

Time to Reflect

Today's readings are full of hope, reminding us that the resurrection is real, and new life is possible.

Take time to read the gospel passage slowly and prayerfully again.

Is there a word or a passage that stands out to you?

Pause to spend time with that word/ passage.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

If Jesus were stood before you what would you like to ask him?

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Let's pray

Holy and Loving God we pray for your world, for the leaders who are making difficult decisions as every day brings new changes and challenges.

Lord of all, Lord for all

Hear our prayer

We pray for our nation, that decisions might be made with wisdom and care for the benefit of all.

Lord of all, Lord for all

Hear our prayer

We pray for our town/ city/ village. For all who live here that your peace might reign and that your perfect love might settle our fears.

Lord of all, Lord for all

Hear our prayer

We pray for frontline workers, Drs, nurses, carers, shop workers, refuse collectors, postal workers.

Lord of all, Lord for all

Hear our prayer

We pray for our loved ones, those we know who may be ill, those who are struggling, those who are confused and conflicted... (you might like to name names here)

Lord of all, Lord for all

Hear our prayer

And finally we pray for ourselves, you know what is on our hearts and minds, and so we offer that to you (again you might like to name your own prayers and concerns)

Lord of all, Lord for all

Hear our prayer

AMEN

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to: (Oceans by Hillsongs United)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GGFb6LcX3U>

A prayer of blessing

May you know the deep peace of the God who knows and perfectly loves you.

May take the yoke of Jesus upon you, knowing that he bears your load with you.

May you know the indwelling Spirit bringing you wisdom and peace.

Amen

Original Materials by [Rev. Sally Coleman](#)

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

John 11: 1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us

go to him.’ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.’

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, ‘The Teacher is here and is calling for you.’ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’ But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?’

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, ‘Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, ‘Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.’ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’