

BISHOP STREET METHODIST CHURCH

... serving people in Leicester city centre through welcome, worship and mission

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(Reg. charity 1129068)

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Dear Kindred Disciples of Christ,

On July 23rd the Church Council voted in favour of a reopening of the church from 1st September, providing the lockdown is lifted and a risk assessment is approved and implemented. Plans are also being made to enable the Chapel Cafe to reopen from 17th August. Significant cleaning and risk assessments will need to take place for rental groups to resume in a gradual way in the church building from early September.

Some people will decide for health reasons, because of shielding others, or other factors that put them in high risk categories that they will not be able to return to the church building for the time being, and this will include a lot of local preachers and supernumeraries (retired ministers.)

In order to ensure that private prayer or led-worship can take place as safely as possible, what would take place on a Sunday morning in the building will have a very different feel. The following will be some of the features of private prayer / worship (where a preacher or worship leaders are available):

- Shorter services of 30 – 45 minutes (to avoid prolonged contact with a big group)
- Follow a one-way system, as in supermarkets
- Give your name and a phone number on entry to the church for 'track and trace' if needed
- Social distancing of 2 metres between households
- Short conversations held with social distancing in place, or outside in Town Hall Square!
- A well-ventilated space – so you'll need to come in warm clothes if weather is cool
- Use either printed material, a projector, or bring your own bible etc. Since books can be 'quarantined' for 48 hours, it may be possible to use them.
- No singing is allowed, because of the danger of water droplets spreading between people
- Any spoken responses need to be made in a soft voice
- Music can be played and listened to, providing the church has the relevant copyright licences
- Communion is highly regulated but possible if the Church Council decides to hold this service
- Face masks are not required but are recommended as in all public spaces where many people are present

- The Church Council could consider providing a separate time when people who are clinically vulnerable (have health conditions) or fall into other 'at risk' groups, such as BAME, older men, and those pregnant could meet together for private prayer or worship
- Parents need to supervise their children at all times. Use of materials and toys for children need careful separation, cleaning, and quarantining. The current plan is for each family to occupy a table in the cafe area.

This all sounds very restricted and will require a lot of coordination to put into practice, but it would be really good for some people at least to see each other again and together give thanks to God for our gift of life. Remember, God is with us everywhere: 'God said to Noah, "This bow in the clouds is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'" (Genesis 9:17)

Stay hopeful and safe – Rev'd Fran

Giving

Thank you to many of you for what you've been able to give. It's best if you can send in your offering now, so that the church can claim Gift Aid on it, rather than waiting until the church reopens. You could post a cheque to the church's gift aid officer, Tony Moore at 46 Holmfield Road LE2 1SA. Alternatively you could make a BACS transfer to Bishop Street Methodist Church. The Cooperative Bank sort code is 08-92-99 and account number 65242955. Give your name as a reference.

Bishop Street Benevolent Fund

Please can you send a small donation to help replenish this fund for people who are in financial difficulty. An offering is usually taken up at communion services, but that's not possible at present. Please use the BACS details above, but mark it: Benevolence Fund. Thank you.

Circuit Churches

Many of our Circuit churches are in financial trouble. Following a generous donation, the circuit has set up a fund to enable it to offer support to help those churches in their mission. If you want to support this in addition to how you are supporting your local church, please use these details:

The Circuit's bank details are: Leicester Trinity Methodist Circuit (for cheques to be sent to Peter Holdridge, Circuit Steward, 25 Linden Avenue, Countesthorpe, LE8 5PG) Sort Code 08 92 99 The Co-Operative Bank, Account Number 6526 2650

The donor should use their name as the reference if paying by bank transfer. Any donor should be asked if they are able to gift aid and if so, ask Peter Holdridge for a form.

Other News

Margaret Stokes, the wife of former employee at Bishop Street, Tony Stokes, has died. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

New minister for the Circuit

Unexpectedly our circuit was offered the opportunity to look at the profile of an ordained minister who was looking for an appointment for September this year. Following Zoom meetings and a 'visit' the minister was found to be a good match with the needs of the circuit and an invitation was extended to the Rev. Debra Chidakwa-Akue and accepted by her. Debra has now been stationed to the circuit for 5 years from 1 September 2020 and will, for this first year, have responsibility for Nativity and Christchurch and will also cover the sabbaticals of the Rev. Derek McLean and the Rev. Saidu Kanu which are due to be taken this coming year. It is anticipated that she will retain responsibility for Christchurch and Nativity from 2021 but that she will also be given additional responsibilities.

Due to the generosity of the wider Methodist Connexion, we are able to have Debra with us for this first year at no additional cost to the circuit budget and so we rejoice in the provision of more ministry than we were expecting.

Video message of support and unity from 3 MPS for Leicester

Dear Friends,

With the continued lockdown in Leicester, I have come together with my fellow Members of Parliament Jon Ashworth MP (Leicester South) and Liz Kendall MP (Leicester West) to bring a video message of support and unity for all residents across Leicester affected by Coronavirus. You can see the video by [clicking here](#).

We wanted to reach out to you to let you know that we understand how hard this will have affected your place of worship and your congregation. We know how hard all the faith organisations are working to keep offering help to our local communities and for that we thank you.

The video is available with subtitles in a range of languages below for you to share with your congregation in order to spread the message of support, unity and togetherness far and wide.

For English subtitles [click here](#)

For Hindi subtitles [click here](#)

For Punjabi subtitles [click here](#)

For Arabic subtitles [click here](#)

For Urdu subtitles [click here](#)

For Tamil subtitles [click here](#)

For Slovak subtitles [click here](#)

For Polish subtitles [click here](#)

For Bengali subtitles [click here](#)

(If you require any other languages please don't hesitate to get in touch. We are also able to share these messages via what's app if you would like to forward to your groups, simply message 07949 694841 with your preferred language/s)

We believe that together we will get through this.

Wishing you all the best and stay safe

Best wishes,

Claudia Webbe MP

Member of Parliament for Leicester East