

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 All,

One of the things the Methodist Church is asking circuits and churches to reflect on is:

What has been learned while churches have been closed? What have we missed? What haven't we missed? What has been done differently?

This week our centre administrator [Chris Parker](#) reflects on these questions after 4 months of furlough.

Reflection from Chris Parker the Centre Administrator

Fran suggested I could share my own experience during lockdown and I'm so happy to share my personal experience, how it felt for me.

I feel blessed that our church has been able to keep the role open and whilst in furlough ensure I did not have the burden of lack of finances to pay my bills and live day to day, eat etc. The start of the furlough felt like an extended holiday (yippee) but restricted in terms of ability to interact on a face to face basis. The second month was where I felt a little low and unsure of the future, thankfully I have fantastic support (from Fran, the church, the church teams and my friendship group) I'm self aware thankfully, this allows me to talk, be honest and open on how I feel. The low times also gave me an opportunity to reflect on what my purpose is during my relatively short time on our planet. I have always had a strong desire to help others, be altruistic and non-judgemental (maybe why I am also on the final year to becoming a qualified humanistic therapist, or counsellor).

I do feel when things are tough that it is the time for me to be able to hand over my life and my will, have trust in my beliefs and having faith. Since I followed this path (as oppose to listening to my head all the time) of handing my will and life over, guess what – every aspect of my life has gotten better over the last 4 years.

During any periods where I felt low, depressed and confused, I reached out for help and answers through prayer and received the answers. For me - my message was - carry on as you are. A simple message and I wanted to do more. My children's mother (single mother, working full time) who worked all the way through the lockdown was appreciative of Dad using his free time by seeing my children (15 & 10 both boys) every weekend all weekend, sometimes either side as well. A wonderful experience as I normally see them every other weekend. I felt that our relationships deepened, became stronger, more loving through interacting, sharing and talking. I think lots of camping combined with fishing, pit fires combined with marsh mellows also helped my boys as well.

I also did some volunteer work and a bit of essential delivery work to keep busy as I felt stir crazy sat in my room just going out to shop or exercise. Mental health and caring for it is as important as the physical aspects. I also changed my lifestyle eating habits and have shed 4 stone now since Christmas, another blessing. I joke that it only took 50 years however I feel so much more alive and healthy, next step is to stop smoking but one step at a time.

So in summary, a mix of emotions with positive outcomes, by believing I'm not in charge and handing over my will and life over then I feel that through all the sadness, the despair of the current pandemic that I am blessed. I admittedly was chomping at the bit to return to church as I missed everything about it, the space, the feeling in the church, the people, Fran, the church teams and staff and it feels great to back in a space that feels like home.

Worship, Pastoral Care, Prayer and Learning to 'serve the present age'

There has been a weekly newsletter including a 'mini' sermon from Fran and news from the Circuit and Connexion along with links to our own worship material and other services available on line via You-tube. Weekly worship material has been produced by Fran, other ministers, local preachers and worship leaders using a link to <https://bishopstreetmethodistchurchsundaystuff.wordpress.com>.

I am currently in the process of writing the Risk Assessment to ensure our safety with reference to worship and the building for community use to restart sometime in September. The café successfully reopened this week with people respecting the guidelines. It was lovely to meet the community visiting the church again. The café staff have been so helpful in ensuring we were ready with extra training and signage for the café and church.

The church building

Thank you to Tony and the team for checking on the building during my furlough.

Staff

Our Centre Administrator, Chris Parker (me) and Liaison Worker, James Blackhall were furloughed from March until last week in Chris' case. Government funding has been claimed. It's intended that James will resume work once enough rental groups are meeting again. Our Arts Enabler and Administrator, Leonie Dubarry-Gurr has continued to work one day a week from home, putting together an online art exhibition. This should appear on the web site www.artatthechapel.com very soon.

Giving

Thank you to many of you for what you've been able to give. Offerings are 90% of what they are budgeted to be. 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. 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. Go to the Church's website

www.bishopstreetchurch.org.uk and look for the new 'Donate' button on the Home page, for which, thanks to our treasurer's persistence. You can donate with a debit or credit card.

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.