

BISHOP STREET METHODIST CHURCH

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

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Dear Friends,

“Thy Kingdom Come” is an initiative of mainline churches in this country to dedicate 11 days to prayer, between Ascension Day (21 May) and Pentecost (31 May). Our prayer life can always do with a boost – this is an opportunity for that. Prayer is a central part of how we maintain our relationship with God and how we remain responsive to God’s will for us.^[1] This period of prayer is to focus especially on a few people in our lives whom we’d love to see develop a faith in God; in Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Apart from my spouse, Diane, my closest friends and family members are not self-professed Christians. They are highly committed and caring people, often interacting with people for whom life is very difficult. Although it sounds a cliché, I believe they would find a more profound peace in their lives if they embraced Christian faith. (I wonder what they would say about me !?) In any case, these may not be the people whom God is placing on my heart and mind to pray for during the period of “Thy Kingdom Come”. I am asking God, waiting for discernment, as to whom God wants me to pray for regularly during this time.

According to a poll conducted by Tearfund, since the lockdown to combat the coronavirus started, a quarter (24%) of UK adults say they have watched or listened to a religious service (on the radio, live on TV, on demand or streamed online). One in twenty UK adults (5%) who say they have watched or listened to a religious service since lockdown have never gone to church.^[2] The extreme circumstances of the lockdown and the closer encounter with fear, suffering and bereavement seem to be nudging many people towards the resource of Christian faith.

It is mistaken to think in terms of prayer for other people being “a means of persuading God to act in the world”.^[3] Rather, we “pray for others because this is part of the Christian way of living and loving”, for “one of the most demonstrable results of genuine faith is that our world of love will be widened.”^[4] To be honest, prayer feels like one of those mysteries that we won’t know the answer to in this life, but I do know that when my prayer life becomes less active (ironically sometimes when I’m on holiday), then I feel like something is missing. I do feel the lack of a profound peace. None other than the outgoing Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, describes his experience of “Thy Kingdom Come” last year. You can see it on the TKC website. He says with honesty, “I was most astounded when two [of the five prayed for] came to Christ. And they wrote to me to tell me, but I hadn’t told them that I was praying for them.”^[5] Why not give it a go as well? Rev’d Fran

^[1] J. Neville Ward, *The Use of Praying*, Epworth 1979 (11th impression), p.84

[2] Nationwide poll of 2,101 UK adults by Savanta ComRes¹ for Christian relief & development agency Tearfund. https://www.tearfund.org/en/media/press_releases/many_brits_look_to_faith_during_lockdown/ 3.5.2020

[3] J. Neville Ward, *The Use of Praying*, Epworth 1979 (11th impression), p.84

[4] Ibid, p.92 and p.95

[5] The Connexion *Letting Go* Methodist Church House, London, Spring 2020 (Issue 18), p.25

Bishop Street Diary Dates

Sunday 31st May Pentecost Circuit Morning Service on Zoom (Details to follow)

Saturday 13th June 10am – 12 noon Church Vision Morning. This will take place as planned, probably on Zoom. Watch this space

Worship Possibilities

Here are a few possibilities of worship resources for this coming Sunday.

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

This site provides material from preachers at Bishop Street Methodist Church who share their reflections and prayers. The service for 17th May is provided by Miriam Stevenson and Christian Aid. Parts of the service are also available at the end of these notices.

The Family Friendly Churches Trust

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

<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, and links to other live-streamed services.

Wesley's Chapel London will live-stream from the chapel on Sundays at 11am

www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA

BBC1 10.45am 6th Sunday of Easter service led by Rev'd Sarah Rowland Jones from St David's Cathedral

BBC1 11.15am Rev'd Kate Bottley hears inspiring stories of people trying to unite the people round them

BBC1 1.15pm Songs of Praise

BBC Radio 4 Sunday 8.10am (92.70 FM).

Radio Leicester worship at 8am (104.9 FM).

An act of Spiritual Communion. If you are missing being able to take part in a

service of Holy Communion, this short act of worship encourages us to seek Christ's presence in other ways and to pray that God's purposes may be fulfilled in us, even though we cannot at this time gather at the Lord's Table. See <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/seasons-and-themes/worship-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Giving

Thank you to so many of you! Giving for April is almost at the same level as if the church had been open, which is tremendously positive news. Please keep going in the same way. All 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'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 08-92-99 and account number 65242955. Give your name as a reference. Thank you very much.

Christian Aid Donations <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give-money/make-donation>

If you can't get to a funeral – a worship sheet has been prepared by the Methodist Church for your use at home, at the time of the funeral, or as close as possible in time to it. Click on this link and scroll down:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/seasons-and-themes/worship-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Methodist Homes (MHA) Requests

Sign our petition: help us call for the correct and necessary PPE within the care sector

<https://www.mha.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-coronavirus/>

MHA is also appealing to local schools, businesses and factories to donate aprons, masks, goggles and other protective equipment to help manage the increased demand caused by the coronavirus, and a backlog of government supplies. Aigburth and Foxton Grange are MHA homes in Leicester where these supplies can be donated.

MHA is looking for volunteers to support residents with phone-calls and preparation of worship materials among other tasks.

Make a prayer space at home. Here are some ideas

<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home>

Facebook Group Bishop Street Community needs your likes and your comments. Inspiring daily posts to keep you and others encouraged during this

difficult time.

Praying for Leicestershire Online (Organised through Trinity Life Church, with support from the Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow) Sunday 24th May
7pm Youtube channel -

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChYTbDeBQ_TriMLgvr9Ym4A