

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,

Probably like many of us mainly safely protected at home, I have felt anxious in these coronavirus days for the safety of the many righteously angry people gathering in the anti-racism demonstrations in our cities recently. I understand that many people have felt they have no option but to participate, to highlight how, despite many changes for the better, we still live in a racist society (and a racist Church). As the Methodist professor, Anthony Reddie put it^[1]: the fact that we have to say 'black lives matter' demonstrates that the starting point is not the same for black and white people, because we don't need to say 'white lives matter'. Having said that, the reason that Bishop Street Church Council has encouraged church members to read the six short books produced by Inclusive Church^[2] is because it recognises how interlinked are areas of discrimination. Inclusive Church especially recognises how fundamental are the effects of poverty and inequality in people's lives, on top of disadvantage affected by race, age, ability, gender, and sexuality.

I have always felt that Germany has engaged in a lot more honest soul-searching about the horrific history of the Holocaust than our own country has engaged in soul-searching about the horrific effects of colonialism and the slave-trade. Unless we engage in this examining of our attitudes of 'unconscious bias' towards people who think and look differently to me, we will remain stuck in our own biases and gaps in our knowledge. We need to focus on racism as it demonstrates itself today, such as recognising the dangers for black male teenagers or young men simply walking the streets, which many of us take for granted as a safe activity. Or there is the Independent Review which has highlighted the unjust deportations after decades of residency and work of people from the Caribbean who came in the 1950's and 60's to help with the post-war reconstruction effort in this country.

One recurring example of 'micro-aggression' that I come across quite often from my ministry in the connexion is a complaint about the different accents of preachers, especially those of black or Asian descent. We need to acknowledge that preacher's efforts and skill in preaching in what may not be their first language, and we have to make efforts to listen and concentrate more carefully. One to one, we can ask questions respectfully such as, 'can you repeat that please?' or, if our hearing ability isn't as good as it was: 'can you speak more slowly, please?' If we still can't understand each other, there is always the healing safety net of shared laughter.

The Bishop Street Church Council approved a text for a standing banner that says: "As Methodists we believe that God in Jesus cares for all people, so there should be no distinctions based on age, disability, gender, race, sexuality or wealth." Let us continue to seek to dwell in the ways of Christ, name racism when we hear of it or

experience it, and as our Arts Enabler and Administrator, Leonie DuBarry-Gurr, recently put it: 'hang on to the love'.

[1] Greenbelt discussion 18 June 2020 https://www.greenbelt.org.uk/black-lives-matter-is-the-church-complicit-a-transatlantic-conversation/?mc_cid=7f474d9951&mc_eid=ce54decccc

[2] Tony Moore is acting as librarian / distributor for these books. Be in touch with him if you'd like to read one, and please return books to him at 46 Holmfield Road LE2 1SA, or drop them through the church letter box.

God bless you, Rev'd Fran

Bishop Street and Circuit Diary Dates

Open Forward Planning Meeting, Thursday 9 July 7.30 - 9pm (on Zoom) - **Taking forward 13 June Vision Morning ideas, and considering Church reopening possibilities.**

Rev'd Daniel Yovan's Testimony Service, Sunday 5 July, 11am (on Zoom)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84442921897?pwd=SG1oNFd4RVZHRnFnYlJJEZWZpMUtKUT09>

Meeting ID: 844 4292 1897

Password: 659596

Rev'd Edson Dube's Farewell Service, Sunday 26 July, 6pm (on Zoom)

Giving

Thank you to so many of you! Your generous giving to the church has reached 95% of the level anticipated, should services have been held in church. 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 08-92-99 and account number 65242955. Give your name as a reference. To God be the glory, great things God has done!

Other News

The Methodist Conference begins this weekend and there's a great array of Fringe Events that you will be able to access. The East Central Learning Network will be

highlighting a handful over the coming days but because there are so many, it wants to flag up where you can find them all <https://lght.ly/k181bie>

Conference live-streaming can be accessed here from Saturday afternoon, 27 June <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/conference-2020/conference-live-stream/>

Take a look at these 30 visions for a post-Covid Leicester. Which do you especially like the look of, and why? Send an email to be included in the next notices... <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/30-ideas-better-leicester-de-4190039>

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