

## **BISHOP STREET METHODIST CHURCH**

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

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Dear Friends,

During the past year, Bishop Street has had a handful of meetings to consider its vision and sustainability into the future. The need for reflecting on these questions has been accelerated by the Corona virus (extended) lockdown. What follows are areas and questions from these past meetings, for further reflection and action. Please do 'come along' to a Zoom 'open forward planning' meeting on Thursday 9 July, 7.30 - 9pm to join the journey. The Zoom meeting details will be sent to you all early on 9 July.

**Reopening the Church** - How has the church and its members responded to the Corona pandemic, and how has the church's mission changed as a result? What have we learned / gained / lost as a result of the lockdown? Who is available to help implement risk assessment procedures? For worship, for the Café, for rental groups, for individuals entering the building? What worship will be possible / desirable after opening? What is a desired date for reopening / recommencing worship?

**Worship** – How can worship better reflect the diversity of the congregation? What worship experiences have people valued during lockdown? What is Bishop Street moving towards or aiming at through its worship? How can Bishop Street's 'core' worship be described on the website / for visitors?

**'Sanctuary' changes** – What further changes to the sanctuary (church) may be helpful? Would it help to remove some more pews to create a more flexible space? (N.B. "30 Ideas for a better Leicester" suggests uses of 'public' spaces - see link below). What redecoration and repair work is urgently needed? Is this the best space to be used for worship?

**Ideas from other city-centre Methodist (and other denomination) churches** – What ideas can be gleaned from other churches in similar situations to BSMC? Which churches do you know which give you ideas?

**What is needed to 'expand and grow the core congregation of Bishop Street'?** (District Review 2018)? What would need to happen for the congregation to grow? What is the role of house or online groups and familiarity with talking about faith? How can we understand more of each other's stories?

**What will the congregation look for in the next minister (from Sept 2021)?** What can members of the congregation offer to the new presbyter? (This feedback needs sharing with the Circuit invitation Committee.)

**Nurturing Leadership** - How can people's skills be fostered? Would a skills audit be helpful? How can 'uncomfortable' voices be heard?

**Communication** - How can communication within the whole congregation and all church user-groups be enhanced? How can the website and other social media be used to full advantage? What's the best use of weekly notices?

**Art at the Chapel** - How can this significant work be taken forward beyond 31 March, 2021?

**Financial Sustainability** - What are some of the ways for BSMC to achieve this into the future? In the application to the Circuit for support, what is the church asking for, and why?

**Prayer** – (Last but not least) Rev'd Jenny Impey says 'it is vital that we commit to pray for a prophetic and pastoral ministry'. How can this aspect be enhanced and implemented?

We're pilgrims together on the journey of faith! Rev'd Fran Rhys

### **Bishop Street and Circuit Diary Dates**

**Rev'd Daniel Yovan's Testimony Service**, Sunday 5 July, 11am (on Zoom)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84442921897?pwd=SG1oNFd4RVZHRnFnYlJEZWZpMUtKUT09>

Meeting ID: 844 4292 1897

Password: 659596

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

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### **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!

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## Other News

Last week if you didn't have time to listen in to the **Methodist Conference** you can catch up now with discussions on everything from disinvesting from fossil fuel companies to whether or not online communion should be taking place. There's also an array of fringe events that you can access here: <https://lght.ly/k181bie>  
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/conference-2020/conference-live-stream/watch-again/>

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. There's a post on 1 July from the Leicester Council of Faiths with a call for unity during this extended lockdown period in our city.

Lizzie Hartley to be **clothed as a Novice of the Community of St Mary the Virgin in Oxford**, late morning of July 30th. Lizzie was the former cleaner at Bishop St. Further details from Fran. Let's remember her in our prayers.

### Update from One Roof Leicester (Mrs Salma Ravat)

At the end of March 2020 we had to close the Night Shelter when Central Government deemed any dormitory style accommodation to be an unsuitable and unsafe environment for rough sleepers. All our guests were placed in temporary accommodation by LCC and we have continued to provide support to these guests.

The information we have been receiving is that night shelters delivered in shared spaces/dormitories are unlikely to be safe to reopen until next year, if at all. At the same time there seems to be a greater inclination to accommodate people into supported housing rather than in night shelters.

We have been reviewing all the guidance we have received and assessing how this impacts the health and safety of our guests, volunteers, staff and other users of the venues we use. After taking all this into consideration we have made the very difficult decision to close the Night Shelter and Winter Night Shelter for the remainder of this year and into the early part of next year. We will however review this decision as we receive more guidance.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues we have also been exploring how to develop and grow ORL to respond to the current and ongoing housing and support needs of people who are homeless or rough sleeping.

ORL currently runs a housing project – ORL Homes, where we provide accommodation and support to 12 individuals. Therefore, it seemed a natural choice to look at expanding this project. We are in the process of purchasing another property, and we have been offered three more properties on long-term leases. Between them we will be able to offer accommodation to 17 more individuals, taking our total capacity to 29. Whilst in our houses we will continue to provide support for

people to rebuild their lives and move-on. As lockdown measures ease we hope that some of you will be able to provide either befriending or practical support to our residents.