

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? And what has been done differently? Senior Steward, Mary Gill reflected on these questions for the Circuit, and it is shared with everyone here.

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 Youtube. Members of the congregation have appreciated being able to access services from around the country and beyond. Weekly worship material has been produced by Fran, other ministers, local preachers and worship leaders using a link to <https://bishopstreetmethodistchurchsundaystuff.wordpress.com>. Miriam Stevenson and Fran Rhys have been responsible for compiling the service including links to Youtube hymns and videos. During Holy Week the site received 450 visits. Generally there are about 50-60 visits every week. Members of other churches have expressed thanks for this material which they have also been using. We are beginning to think about how worship can take place in the building again, using the projector screen and music but with no singing or movement within the building.

Last year the vision-planning group recommended strengthening the Church's online presence, which is happening through the Wordpress site listed above. Work on improving the website has continued, thanks to Martin Briers. There is also a new Facebook group: Bishop Street Community which has been set up for regular postings. Leon Dundas has set up a Whatsapp group to maintain contact with the more tech-savvy congregation members. (Contact Leon to join the group).

Pastoral visitors have been keeping in regular contact with their groups. Informal contact by email, phone, text and letter has been maintained between members of the congregation, cell group members and Bible Study group members. A new local and the Connexional Prayer journals were distributed in May 2020. Copies of 'Our Church's Future Story' and 'Inclusive Church' texts are also circulating among members, both generously donated by Clive Marsh. Tony Moore is the librarian for the Inclusive Church books. Therefore prayer and study have been encouraged through more resources.

The church building

Tony Moore has visited the premises and church office twice a week to check the security and resilience of the building and collect post and emails. Thank you Tony! He has had contact with our remaining tenants. They are Zinthiya Trust Community Shop and Advice Centre, and Community Cycles, both of which are regarded as 'essential' services.

Robin Stevenson and Tony Moore have been on a site visit with Carbon Legacy, the company who are to install solar panels. It is hoped these can be installed as soon as final quotes have been obtained for scaffolding and working conditions cleared.

There have been ongoing email exchanges with Zinthiya Trust over the possible reopening of the Chapel Cafe. They are reorganising the furniture and re-training staff in the hope that the cafe will be able to re-open in late August.

Employees

Centre Administrator, Chris Parker and Liaison Worker, James Blackhall were furloughed from March until this 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.

Heritage

This group, headed by Mary Gill and Alison Skinner, has been meeting during lockdown. There are three projects in hand, the costs of which will be covered by the Methodist Heritage grant.

With Siggy Parratt- Halbert, Regional Learning and Development Officer for the Connexional Team based in Sheffield, we are producing a comic-strip/graphic art booklet telling the story of how Methodism came to Leicester resulting in the eventual building of Bishop Street Church. Called 'Have HORSE will travel' it should be ready for sale and distribution in September and promises to make you smile!

Paul Hale, who oversaw the restoration and refurbishment of the organ and organ case has offered to write up the history of the organ. Martin Briers is liaising with him and the Heritage team.

An enquiry has come via rev Jill Marsh from Bevan Powell, the new Connexional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion officer, about the display made about the international links to World Methodism which was put together with congregational members a few years ago. He considers this work which should be replicated elsewhere in the connexion.

Progress through Meetings online

There have been Church Council meetings in June and July, and another is scheduled for 2nd September. A General Church Meeting was held on 3rd May at which Francisca Incoom and Tanvi Pate were approved as stewards. Thanks are also due to Alison Skinner and Miriam Stevenson for all their detailed minutes!

The Finance and Property Committee has been meeting via Zoom every 2 weeks, to discuss financial issues, and to make recommendations for the eventual reopening of the building and bringing Chris Parker and James Blackhall back out of furlough.

A Vision Day, via Zoom, was held on Saturday 13th June facilitated by Rev Jenny Impey. Action points emerged from this meeting which were circulated through the Notices for Sunday 5th July.

A follow-up, open Forward Planning meeting was held on Thursday 9th July to begin to make a response to these. A further Forward Planning meeting is planned for Tuesday 22nd September via Zoom.

I hope this gives an idea of where we are in moving forward and preparing for the changes and challenges to come. We pray for God's guiding Spirit in the days ahead.

Mary Gill, Senior Steward

Giving

Thank you to many of you for what you've been able to give. Offerings are 90% of what they are budgetted 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.

Other News

Please consider signing this petition which is for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak. As two-thirds world countries face the coronavirus challenge and the massive additional costs involved to the economy and to people's lives, please urge the UK Government to drop the debt of the poorest nations.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/debt-jubilee-petition>