

Keeping in touch 1

18th March 2020

As Circuit Superintendent, this is the first "Keeping in touch" letter to let you know what is happening in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic.

This letter is an opportunity for me to share with you updates from the District and Connexion.

Due to the fact that things are changing so rapidly, I would recommend that if you are able to access the internet, that you regularly check the Connexional website, where all updates will be posted, please go to <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>

Information will also be posted as soon as possible after on the Circuit website which you can find at <https://www.wantab.org.uk>

You may have already heard that as of yesterday (Tuesday 17th March) all worship services, business meetings and church activities have been suspended for the time being. This means that until we are advised otherwise, there will be no Sunday services in any of the churches in our Circuit, including ours.

While funerals may still take place, we have been informed that the number of people attending is limited as per the Government's advice.

Please find attached a simple order of service that you may wish to use in your homes this coming Sunday. We will ensure that these are made available for each Sunday over the coming weeks. If you are aware of someone who might appreciate this but has no access to the internet, please would you consider printing a copy off and passing it on to them.

We are also looking into the possibility of posting some videos onto the websites if possible and each week Wesley's Chapel in London will continue to live-stream worship, adapted for no physical congregation.

Service times

Wednesday 12:45

Thursday 12:45

Sunday 9:45 and 11:00.

All these services will be available

at: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA)

More information about all of this can be found at

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

As we think how we can best care for one another and offer on-going pastoral support, we are being recommended to carry out pastoral 'visits' by phone.

During this period, I will make it a priority to ring around and speak to as many people as possible and if pastoral visitors are able to be in regular contact with those on their lists, then hopefully we can try to keep a sense of being isolated to a minimum.

Remember that many people are anxious and a reassuring phone call and an offer to pray might be very much appreciated.

We are also being asked to think proactively about who in the church might need extra help should they decide or be required to self-isolate. Is there the need to create a plan for shopping for more vulnerable members of the community for example?

In connection with this, many communities are organising initiatives to

reach out to and help those who are elderly and vulnerable. Please see what is happening in your local area. If you feel you might be able to either help or as importantly, benefit from these initiatives, do make contact with them.

You may have also heard that starting tomorrow, (Thursday 19th March) in every Sainsbury's Supermarket, the first hour will be set aside for elderly and vulnerable customers.

Please do not forget the needs of the local Foodbanks, who will be under even more pressure than usual during the coming weeks.

The latest Government advice of the coronavirus can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#diagnosis-and-analysis>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>

Lastly, Rev'd Helen Cameron the Chair of our District is in regular contact with all the Superintendent Ministers in our District offering updates and guidance as and when.

She reminds us that; "it is vital that we know and celebrate and share that we are the Church even when we cannot meet and gather as we are used to doing. Our task will continue to be to support the weak and the most vulnerable and find ways to support and encourage one another and to practice still belonging to one another - just expressed differently."

These are difficult and unprecedented days and we seek to live through them with hope, love and faith.

Please take care of yourselves,

With love and God bless

Keith