

**Warwick Methodist Church**  
**Keeping in Contact During Covid-19**  
**Number 40 – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Dear Friends,

Once again, sad news of the death of Ethel Qualtrough on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November at the age of 95. Ethel was a longstanding member of Northgate, who along with Will had offered a warm welcome and friendship to many over the years. She had moved down to a care home in Surrey last year, so that it was easier for her sons John and Tim to visit her, and they were able to be with her at the end. Will is buried in Warwick Cemetery, and John and Tim want to bring Ethel back here to join him. So there will be a funeral service in church, date to be arranged. There may be scope for a few from church to attend, and it will also be possible to watch the service via Zoom. More details when they are available.

And after sadness – joy! Yesterday brought the announcement of interim results from the trial of one of several Covid-19 vaccines, showing that it is safe (no serious adverse events reported) and effective, offering better than 90% protection against catching the virus. As the Prime Minister was keen to remind us, there are more hurdles to be crossed before it can be rolled out to the population. However, it is still unambiguously good news. It proves the thing which some people doubted – that it is possible for us to develop a vaccine which will prevent many people from catching this dreadful disease.

It has been widely publicised that the single biggest factor determining someone's risk of dying from Covid is age. For that reason, alongside staff at care homes and health and social care workers, the vaccination programme is expected to start with the over 80's and then gradually work down the age range. Death is not the only risk with Covid – you may also have heard about "Long Covid", in which people suffer a wide range of debilitating symptoms for many months after initially catching the virus. Of course we do not yet know how long this will last, and it may be that these people will eventually recover fully. Or maybe not – and it appears that there are a similar number of people affected by long Covid as there are who die from it. Here, it is not restricted to older people in the same way – I heard this morning from a former youth and children's worker in my previous circuit, a woman in her early thirties, who is still suffering symptoms after having a mild dose of Covid in March.

So, while the news of a successful vaccine is wonderful, it does not mean we can throw caution to the wind and drop our guard. Covid is still a serious risk, and not only to the elderly. We need to maintain our vigilance with distancing, masks and hygiene, for many

months to come. But there is light at the end of the tunnel – something we have sorely needed.

While there are still restrictions on our movements, and will be for a considerable time, we are nevertheless planning to celebrate Christmas as a Christian community, and to reach out to the wider community in various ways to share the joy of the season. More information about these ideas will be reaching you in the weeks ahead.

For now – we recognise that life is a mixture of joy and sadness. We trust God to carry us through the sadness until we can find the joy.

Keep safe; keep caring; keep praying.  
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