

Warwick Methodist Church
Keeping in Contact During Covid-19
Number 33 – 22nd September 2020

Dear Friends,

I start this week with the sad news of the death of Bill Davidson this morning. Bill and Kath have been members of Northgate since moving to Warwick five years ago and involved in many aspects of our life together. They moved here to be near their daughters, Lynne and Jacqueline, who have been tremendously supportive throughout Bill's recent illness, and now have their son Robert nearby as well. I'm sure you will continue to support the family through your prayers. Funeral arrangements will be notified in due course, but owing to the ongoing situation, will be held at the crematorium, with limited numbers.

As far as we can tell, the recent tightening of restrictions does not have any direct impact on the activities we are currently planning to hold in our premises. Some individuals who were considering attending one of our forthcoming services or times of prayer, may now want to reconsider, reasoning that if things are getting worse, it would be better not to gather. I want to emphasise that no-one should feel pressured to attend events at which they feel uncomfortable, so if you are at all concerned, it is better to stay at home. At the same time, there is something special about gathering to pray and talk in person rather than via Zoom or over the phone.

I want to reassure you that, among the various places you might visit, the church is probably one of the safest. We have undertaken a very rigorous risk assessment, are following the Covid-Secure guidelines to the letter, and the church is a large airy space, which helps to dilute the virus should anyone attend who is infectious. In addition, the number of people in our area with Covid is very low – although it rose by 25% last week compared to the previous week, what that actually means is 25 people in the whole of Warwick District (which includes Leamington and Kenilworth) tested positive for Covid, as against 20 the previous week. The chances of contracting Covid if you attend a church service and comply with all you are asked to do, is vanishingly small.

If you do come – for our Harvest service on 4th October, or for one of the Prayer and Reflection sessions, there are things you can bring, and things you can take away. Your gifts for the foodbank are invited (they are particularly keen to have tins of rice pudding and small chocolate bars), which can be left in the collecting box at church, or if you prefer in the box at local supermarkets. You can take away with you a copy of this years' Prayer Handbook, which is entitled The Earth is the Lord's, and contains ideas and resources to help you to pray. They are on the table just as you leave the church having followed the prayer stations around, together with a selection of other literature for you to peruse and take if you wish.

Prayer comes in many shapes and forms. You can pray out loud, in your head, or without words. You can prayer alone, with others, or physically alone but in the awareness that others are praying at the same time. You can speak, sing, think, paint, draw, write, look, or simply be. Prayer can be asking God for something, or offering a person or situation to God so that he may do with them whatever is best, or it can be simply being still in the awareness that God is.

People sometimes talk of having had a spiritual experience – what a wonderful thing it is when that happens. Perhaps, though, rather than thinking of ourselves as human beings having a spiritual experience, we could notice that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. In our essence, our very soul, we are made of the same stuff as our creator. Now that is a metaphor, because our creator, by definition, is not made of anything. How difficult it is to put into words the idea that we are connected to God, and therefore to one another, while also recognising our separate existence. It takes a wiser person than me to express that.

Words will never be adequate – God is the loving essence of all that is. Perhaps, as an experiment, you could take that idea into your daily life for a little while? As often as remember, let your eyes fall wherever they are, and remind yourself that that object, the sky, that person, is part of God's creation – as are you. God made them, and loves them. God made you and loves you. In that recognition, we may notice we have a little more love for the people and things around us.

One final thought for this week – Margaret Moorse has decided the time has come for her to worship closer to home, and is therefore in the process of handing over the various responsibilities she has fulfilled at Northgate. Among these is being the link person for Action for Children. This is not an onerous task – collecting in the boxes once a year, and reminding people about the special collection we normally take at Christmas time. If you feel this is something you might be able to take on, please speak to Margaret for more information. And meanwhile – if you still have your box at home, you are invited to bring it to church in the forthcoming weeks when it is open for prayer or services. If you are not going out, please get in touch and we will arrange to collect it from you.

Whether you are going out, staying in, or unsure which to do for the best (Hokey Cokey, anyone?), may you know God's richest blessings.

Keep safe; keep caring; keep praying.

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