

**Warwick Methodist Church**  
**Keeping in Contact During Covid-19**  
**Number 39 – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020**

Dear Friends,

Another month, another set of Covid restrictions. If you have been watching the infection rates and comments from various quarters, then the Government announcement of a new lockdown for England from Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November will not have come as a surprise. And whether you agree with the strategy or not, the Church is bound to comply, which means that our Sunday worship is once again suspended.

The new lockdown is planned to end on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, and while some may be sceptical about that, we are working on the basis that the next service to be held in church will be Holy Communion with Rev Mark Rowland on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December. If that changes, we will let you know. While churches are allowed to remain open for private prayer, the leadership team have discussed this in the light of the fact that the rate of new cases in Warwick District is nearly 10 times what it was in September. We have therefore decided to suspend the Wednesday and Saturday opening for the time being.

We find ourselves back where we were in March.... Except we don't. As the proverb has it, you can never stand in the same river twice – the water (i.e. the external circumstances) is different, and you are not exactly the same moment by moment.

So, what is the same, and what is different? Among the things that are the same:-

- We may not meet together to worship
- We may not leave our homes, except for the permitted reasons of essential shopping, to give or receive care, or for exercise
- We have access to TV, radio, phones and the internet, to help us keep in touch with family and friends, keep up to date with the news and to access entertainment

And what is different?

- Our system for providing worship and pastoral care remotely is in place and running like a well-oiled machine
- Many of us have acquired new skills, such as video calling, recording and editing
- Most of us have adjusted to a weekly food shop and not changed back to a more frequent pattern. Some of us now have groceries delivered
- Local businesses which adapted last time still stand ready to deliver if needed
- There is no shortage of hand gel or face masks

- Last time it was Spring, with the lengthening days and incredibly good weather for the first few weeks of lockdown. Now it is Autumn – evenings drawing in, temperatures dropping, wind rising – not so appealing for standing outside in a queue.

But although there are challenges, there are also resources to enable us to meet them. In a few weeks, we enter the season of Advent, the time which teaches us how to wait and look forward with hope. The dawn will come – although we do not know for sure when. Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Now might be a good time to remind yourself of all the potential sources of light in your life. What do you have to be grateful for, which sustains you and lifts your spirits? Today it is sunny – that always does me good. I have already been out for a blustery walk around the racecourse. I have been in more frequent contact with my Mum lately, as she has welcomed a new puppy into her home – watching him play thanks to modern technology is a source of joy. I have started a new jigsaw!

If you attempt this exercise and find it difficult to list positive things, please do not think there is no hope. Call me – or your pastoral visitor, or a friend. Find someone to talk to. Mental health and resilience are crucial to getting through times like these. There should never be any shame in asking for help, even the strongest of people are finding this a testing time.

It may be that a supportive conversation, with the promise of more, is all you need. It may be that there is something more serious going on, for which medical help is required. In September of last year, I made the decision with my GP to start taking antidepressants, having resisted them in the past. I am profoundly grateful that I did, because they gave me back my self. And now – despite the pressures of the pandemic – I am well enough to have been tapering off them for a couple of months and will soon cease altogether. But they did their job – together with the faith, hope and love which surrounds us all.

As we prepare to close down again, it may feel like darkness is coming. But darkness can be a time of rest and renewal, held safe and warm in the hands of God. May this be your experience in the coming weeks. But if it is not – do not suffer in silence.

Keep safe; keep caring; keep praying.

Barbara

Phone: 01926 740846

Email: [barbara.greenwood@methodist.org.uk](mailto:barbara.greenwood@methodist.org.uk)