

Warwick Methodist Church
Keeping in Contact During Covid-19
Number 42 – 24th November 2020

Dear Friends,

When I woke up on Monday morning, I thought to myself, “I wonder what this week’s vaccine news will be?” After all, the previous two Mondays had brought trial results from the Pfizer/Biontech and Moderna vaccines respectively, so we were due another Monday morning announcement. I wasn’t being serious – but as it turned out, there was indeed an announcement of positive results for the Oxford/Astra Zeneca vaccine. It is absolutely wonderful news – not that you would have known that from the initial reporting which seemed to focus on it being “only” 70% effective, not mentioning that one of the dosing regimes had produced results, albeit in a small number of participants, which suggested it could be 90% effective.

Glass half full, or glass half empty? Even if the Oxford vaccine were “only” 70% effective, that is an astounding result - better than the flu jab most years, and few of us hesitate about having that. A vaccine does not need to be 100% effective to make a massive difference to the spread of a disease. That’s a lot like human beings – we do not have to be perfect in order to be valuable, precious, or loved.

Life is never perfect and we human beings are most certainly not. It should not surprise us when things go wrong – perhaps the more surprising thing would be if everything always ran smoothly. One prayer of confession includes the line that “we have sinned through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.” My own view is that most people, most of the time, hurt and disappoint others through negligence and weakness rather than through their own deliberate fault. And when we discover wrongdoing, or hurtful behaviour, or carelessness, much depends on the response of the person concerned to our discovery.

Sometimes, they justify or defend their actions. That gives a clear message – they do not think they did anything wrong, they do not believe we have anything to complain about. It is difficult to be reconciled to them in that case. But if, on the other hand, they apologise and tell us they got distracted, or were too busy, or didn’t realise how this would affect us – they demonstrate to us that their actions were not intended to belittle or harm us. They are human, they messed up – and in those circumstances, we generally find it much easier to forgive than we do the person who holds firm. If by contrast the person apologises and we ourselves are unable to let go or move on – what does that say about us?

Perspective makes all the difference. How do you view the current national restrictions due to Covid – a necessary evil, or an ill-thought-out response, made with no regard to the most vulnerable? Or perhaps – a cynical, sinister conspiracy intended to enslave us all. The actions are the same – the motives behind them, open to speculation.

How do you view the impending arrival of a vaccine – a wonderful hope, some way off, but steadily coming into view, or a suspicious, rushed effort, possibly with sinister motives behind it.

Whatever your view on that, it has been announced this week that the lockdown will definitely end after 2nd December. Later this week we will find out which tier our area is in – but whichever one it is, worship will be allowed to resume. We can therefore say with confidence that the Communion service on 6th December will go ahead. If you are not able to attend but would like to share Communion at home, please let Anne Oliver know as soon as possible.

2nd December – the last day of lockdown – is when Ethel Qualtrough's funeral takes place at 11.15am. Regulations permit up to 30 mourners, but the recommendation is that only family and close friends should attend. If you considered Ethel a close friend and would like to be there, please give your name to Julie Barr so that seating can be arranged. If the number of people who want to attend exceeds the permitted number, unfortunately some people will be disappointed. However, it will be possible to watch the service live on Zoom – here is the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83266146944?pwd=emx4aVd3OVMwanI2aFc2dzZJdytkZz09>

Meeting ID: 832 6614 6944

Passcode: 766569

Another call please for Christmas messages to be displayed in the church window. It is so important in this challenging time to let the people of Warwick who walk past our building every day know that there is hope, both in this life and for the next. If you want to send Christmas wishes both to our church family and to the wider community, please send your message to Julie Barr, jd-tgbarr@sky.com, before Thursday.

The waiting goes on.... but there are signs of hope. Hang on to them. Cherish them. Share them.

Keep safe; keep caring; keep praying.
Barbara

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