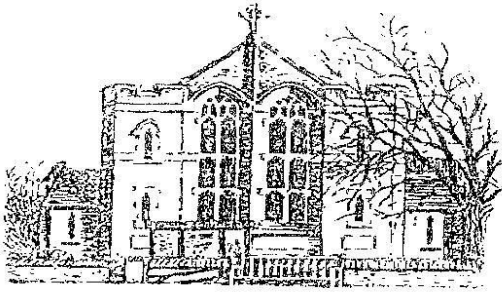


UPMINSTER METHODIST CHURCH



Church Notices
28th June 2020
www.upminstermethodistchurch.org

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS THE SUNDAY SERVICE SHEET AND THE WEEKLY NOTICES

Please note: the links for the services can be found on the email for:

- Revd. Joseph Riberio's 11.00am zoom service
- Revd. Jason Vinyard 7.00pm zoom service

(if you wish to dial into Revd. Jason Vinyard's service using your telephone, please use one of the numbers below and then you will be asked to enter the meeting ID number, including hash tag)

Dial by your location

0203 051 2874 United Kingdom

0203 481 5237 United Kingdom

0203 481 5240 United Kingdom

0131 460 1196 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 816 4329 4747#

Also you can find the link for the Rainham Foodbank which includes a monetary donation section.

Revd. Jason requested that the following report precedes his Sunday Service:

Hi everyone, as the Government updates its advice on public spaces and social distancing we thought it would be useful to update you all on how the Church at Upminster has been managing the running of the Church during the past few months, some of the decisions we have made and how we intend to move forward.

It seems quite some time ago now since we were all able to be together, which has proved both challenging and, in some ways, strangely connected also, with weekly on-line meetings, Wednesday prayer meetings, contemplative services, notices and quizzes and distant friends talking more than ever before. However, that lack of physical interaction we as humans are hard wired to seek out has a strong pull on our souls.

Managing social distancing was always going to be a challenge, but it was something we as a responsible community had to embrace and endure. The Church Council at Upminster obviously had a large role to play in making some key decisions over this period, but the challenge was how do we meet effectively as a governing body in these times of social distancing? The options were really limited to on-line conference calls (some of us were even brave enough to use video!).

However, managing a large number of people in a meeting is always a challenge and even more so on a virtual call. Church Council held a couple of conference meetings in late March to discuss Upminster's initial responses to the unfolding pandemic, but it soon became clear that there were too many voices on the call to manage this challenge effectively.

Therefore, in late March the Church Council agreed to the setting up of a smaller sub-set of Church Council to deal exclusively with decision making for COVID-19 matters. We called this group the "UMC Covid-19 Management Committee". The remit of this committee was restricted to the navigation and management of COVID-19 related decisions. Any other decisions concerning the Church, such as wider building work, would be referred back to the wider Church Council as normal.

This COVID-19 committee started having weekly meetings over Microsoft Teams in late March, just as the Government were mandating that the country goes into lockdown. In some ways this made our initial decisions a little easier to make, but still hard to accept.

We had no choice but to cancel all services and activities in the building. This of course left us with some challenges for both the Church family in general, but also for those individuals who had come to rely on members of UMC for support, comfort, and company.

Whilst on-line “Zoom” meetings were becoming popular and very useful for many people, we were acutely aware that not all members would be comfortable with technology and would require a different approach. However, one of the ongoing strengths of Upminster Methodist Church is the pastoral network that has been nurtured over many years and provided a solid platform to build upon.

Thankfully, we have some great people who built on this pastoral foundation and very quickly identified those members who might be considered vulnerable and put in place a group of volunteers who would essentially form a network of telephone support and where possible practical help. This group (and you all know who you are – “thank you”) provided, and continue to provide, essential links with these members and the feedback has been very positive and gratefully received.

Of course, like many other institutions and businesses the lock down was going to affect some practical aspects of running the Church. We had to make the decision to postpone the AGM to July at the very earliest (more to come on that later). With the closure of the building we would also see our rental income fall to zero, and collection contributions would also fall.

Lockdown would end up costing the Church several thousand pounds each month. We therefore had to examine expenditure and where possible make some cuts and savings. At the time, in early April, we did not know how long this situation would last but we did expect it to be many months. In the first few weeks of lockdown and into the first half of April the COVID-19 management committee decided to cancel the following contracts to reduce costs:

- Cancelled the internet contract
- Cancelled the cleaning contract
- Turned off all non-essential services (boilers for example)
- Changed utility tariffs to reduce standing orders

However, we made a conscious decision in the first week of April that we would honour our commitment to make the Circuit Giving and Sharing contribution for the end of May, especially to protect the Presbyters' stipends. But at the same time, we also had an obligation to forewarn the Circuit Treasurer that we could not at this stage guarantee the full contribution in August. No decision has yet been made on this. The Church Treasurer continues to keep a close eye on finances.

Whilst the premises may be temporarily closed, Church Council still have a duty of care as Trustees to ensure the fabric of the building remains in good working order. Therefore, regular checks were arranged to make sure that all was well, no leaks or damage materialized and also make it known the premises are maintained.

The committee obviously also needed to make sure that enough information was being communicated via a number of channels to as many people as possible. This included ensuring the website and Facebook pages were updated with news and information about online services and other useful information. The notices mailing list was updated to ensure we captured as wide an audience as possible for the weekly notices and news. (Thank you for this work).

By the end of April, we had settled into a new kind of "normal" routine, with regular updates to members and the wider Church family, those more vulnerable members being given extra support, regular on-line services, and costs had been controlled as much as possible. We still did not relish the situation, but we had at least established some direction and control. For the previous six weeks the COVID-19 Management Committee has been meeting at least once a week to establish these changes, and we now felt confident enough to reduce those meetings to once every other week.

With the new "norm" in place, the committee very quickly turned its attention to forward planning and concentrate on possible scenarios that could allow the opening of the Church and resumption of some services. This has been the main task for this committee through May and June, with a lot of hard work to

establish safe working practices. This has been and continues to be a difficult task to get right and is fraught with risk at every turn. The opening of the building is also intrinsically linked to the fabric of the building, the layout of the floor space and the type of furniture used.

A small group from the committee have worked extremely hard, utilizing their knowledge and expertise of risk management to produce a full report on the space, the risks, the challenges, and possible actions to mitigate the risks. Again, these people know who they are, so thank you for this work. What this report highlights are the monumental efforts required just to open the Church doors.

At every turn we would need to put in place strict controls, risk assessments for insurance, extensive cleaning practices, stop the use of traditional tools such as hymn books, severely limit congregation numbers, consider innovative ways to broadcast services, introduce one way systems to control the flow of people...the list goes on and on.

I say this because it is important that we are transparent with you about the scale of challenges we face when trying to open, which we all desperately want. But we are not prepared to put you at risk unnecessarily and without proper controls which we are confident will work.

The committee also discussed the theological and spiritual aspects of this challenge, and the need to understand and respond to God's plan. Whilst there are obvious and very real challenges, we also need to ensure we still fulfil our spiritual goal of providing a welcoming and warm place of worship, together. This is something the committee has been very mindful of throughout this crisis.

In order to even consider opening the Church there are a number of key decisions that need input and guidance from Church Council as they fall slightly outside the remit of the COVID-19 Management Committee.

We need to consider what physical changes need to take place, what building work will take precedence, how best to distribute finances to this end. These and other questions are now going to be put to the Church Council on the 30th June before we can move forward.

We also need to receive some guidance from this year's Methodist conference taking place over the next week or so and cannot make firm plans to open until that process has completed.

We know that people are keen to return to Church, and when the Government is saying that places of worship can open from the 4th July, you would be forgiven for questioning why we are not yet planning to open at the earliest convenience.

While we are keen to open, we await UK Government to publish Churches Guidance in safe opening practice. Connexion will then need time to work within these guidelines and with each District. This will be circulated through to each Circuit and then each Local Church Council – as Managing Trustees. This process will take time.

The guidance will inform Church Council on key decisions which would aid the safe re-opening of the premises.

And let us also not forget that we are connected with the wider Methodist Church through Connexion and will act as one body. Each church building will have its own unique challenges, but our strength will come through that Connexional band of support.

Many thanks
UMC COVID-19 Management Committee

REVD. JASON'S SUNDAY SERVICE

This week, I've included one image for contemplation and prayer.
Take time to gaze at the image.

What do you see?

What places, real or imaginary, does the painting remind you of?

How do you relate to this painting?

What feelings does this evoke?



Eularia Clarke (1914-1970) Oil on canvas laid down on board 62 x 62 1963 *used with permission.* www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection

Luke 8: 22–25

Eularia Clarke shows Jesus leaning forward, calming the storm. The boat is in extreme danger of being swamped, with several people already swept overboard and near to death. The crew have had the presence of mind to reef the sail when the storm arose. The blue, black and white pillow (looking more like a travelling rug) on which, according to Mark's Gospel, Jesus was sleeping, is portrayed in the stern of the vessel. The artist said: 'I keep praying, "This is meant to be your Son, don't let him look like just any ordinary human." I wouldn't be dragged all that way to Mass by a man who just lived and taught a long time ago.'

Image Copyright © Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes. The Methodist Church Registered Charity no. 1132208

Responding to the questions may be engrossing, thoughtful, or perhaps painful, but can become a means of praying for oneself or for another in need of God's leading, assurance, and healing touch. See where your observation, contemplation and meditation take you ... into praise, confession, thanksgiving, intercession?

My thoughts, Love and Prayers are with you all.
You are a 'Sacred Dwelling-place' – and will always remain.
Revd J C Vinyard 28th June 2020

FREE phone lines for prayers and news
from the Methodist Church
Listen to a **prayer**: 0808 281 2514
Listen to **news**: 0808 281 2478
Content is updated weekly on Thursday
afternoon

FAMILY NEWS

The following will be celebrating their Birthdays:

2nd July - Sue Hobbs

5th July - Jill Avis

8th July - Bob Avis



As usual we will be singing a 'virtual' Happy Birthday to them all!!



WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY - 10am on Wednesdays

We have established a weekly gathering for a bible study with morning prayer, finding support both from learning and praying together and having contact with each other. Please join us either on Zoom or through your landline on Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m.

If you are interested in this, email ricky.bull@fmail.co.uk and he will put you on the circulation list, sending reminders on Tuesday afternoon, with all the login details, and also the study passage. Currently we are looking through some of

the key verses in Paul's letter to the Romans, enjoying looking at the hidden metaphors in the letter.

Thanks.... Ricky, 07736 184234

OFFERTORY

It is with much regret that we have had to temporarily suspend all meetings on our premises which most unfortunately includes Sunday worship.

A number of you already give your offertory via standing order and at this time I would ask those of you who don't to consider pursuing this option should you wish to continue your regular giving, please contact Peter Hobbs for further details or set it up yourself from your bank as a monthly standing order quoting your envelope number as the payer reference.

The bank account details are; sort code 20-72-89 account number 73858618 in the name of Upminster Methodist Church Council.

SHOUT

Shout, the group for young people of secondary school age, is having virtual meetings during the crisis. If you would like details please contact Gordon on gordonmreed@gmail.com

PRAYERS, HYMNS AND SERVICES

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Church of England have set up a freephone telephone number called 'Daily Hope'.

When you ring the number they have a very good easy press button system for the caller to listen to hymns, prayers, services etc. Some of the items are updated daily and people can call the line at any time of the day, how often they want, completely free. It is very easy to use for anyone who may not have any technology devices or are fearful of technology.

The number is: 0800 804 8044.

ONLINE QUIZ

Just a reminder that you are invited to take part in the next quiz via Zoom on [Saturday 27th June](#) starting at 3pm.

It is free to take part, but I would appreciate donations being made to the Whitechapel Mission. You can donate by either crediting sort code 110411 account 10646962 or by sending it to me (any cheques payable to me please).

If you are interested in taking part please email me at familyhobbs4@btopenworld.com and I will send you the link to join later this week.

I hope you can take part.

Peter



Smiling Is Infectious
by Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!

In today's environment this is just what we need.....Enjoy

FOOD BANK DONATIONS - UPDATE FROM JOANNA MARIE SKILLETT

Hi everyone!

I hope you're all keeping well in this heat!

I visited the foodbank today and they were so grateful we are still delivering to them through this hot weather.

This week, we took **47.32kg** down to the FoodBank, totalling **746.75kg**



~ and providing our Ark with a giraffe!

How wonderful!

This week, the FoodBank would be so grateful for:

- * Small bags of Sugar (the smallest in the store)
- * Cordial
- * Antibacterial Soap
- * Kitchen Towel & Toilet Roll
- * Tinned Goods

Thank you for all your donations. The FoodBank are so grateful for anything you could spare and continuously tell me how UMC is incredible every week
Thank you everyone,

Keep safe!



Dear Church Council

The masked men have returned, this time armed with pots of a strange smelling green liquid which they spread over doors. We hid. The masked army may think they have seen us off but ants are resilient. These men, who we now believe may be familiar to you, have however caused us to retreat to our secret nest. We only venture out to greet The Sluggard.

Our future is however looking brighter. We have water. After the thunderstorm this week (the Lightning Conductor was very excited) The Sluggard paid us an extra visit and emptied the bucket beneath the hole in your roof. Very kindly, he did not arrive until it the bucket had overflowed, so now we can drink from a small lake on the floor of your store cupboard.

And soon we will have food. When we found wise words in your largest book we did as it suggested - Proverbs 6:6-8 *“Go to the ant, O Sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.” It is good to plan ahead so that our lives are in order and maintain balance. Your needs will be met when you plan ahead.*

We planned ahead. Unbeknown to you, while your church garden has been abandoned we have planted crops – tomatoes and runner beans. When these bear fruit (and vegetable) we will be in a land of plenty. As your largest book suggests, we will gladly provide a tenth of our crop as a gift to The One you Call Jason. We trust that he enjoys tomatoes. He may wish to share some with his hedgehog friends. We assume that the Church Council also follows these wise words and plans ahead, although we have not seen evidence of you sowing crops as an offering to The One You Call Jason.



You may recall mention of Albert Ant (you may call him Albert), who is our expert in property matters. Albert has been considering various dilemmas which our research has shown you face as a Church Council and is pleased to provide advice and practical assistance from the perspective of a wise ant.

Your God has written of our great wisdom. Surveying your property confirms to us that the wisdom of ants exceeds that of humans. Let us explain.

Have you ever studied the design of ant hills? Even a cursory glance will tell you that they are pointy - that they don't have flat roofs. Wise ants know that water runs off a pointy roof but gathers and tries to find a way through a flat one. Humans however built some of your church halls and corridors with flat roofs. Now they leak. If only your plans had been shown to ants.

We have given a great deal of thought to the matter of your leaky roof and using our wisdom and ingenuity have devised a cunning plan. You will be aware that

our colony has links with assemblies of many other species. Amongst our associates is a friendly flock of seagulls. We don't generally get on well with smaller birds who tend to be insectivorous in their nature but the seagulls are our friends. They have agreed that in return for the provision of a constant supply of chips (plus a piece of battered fish on Fridays), the flock will fly in formation above your roof, intercepting any rainfall before it reaches the hole. Furthermore, with appropriate use of seagull wing dexterity, the birds will divert the flow of rainwater onto our tomatoes and beans. A cunning plan indeed.

Have you ever considered the location of ant hills? Should you take the time to do so you will notice that they are generally constructed on a flat base. Where levels vary within the home we build slopes, not steps that any less mobile ants would find difficult to negotiate. Knowing that Methodists are caring and welcoming people we can only assume that when your halls were built everyone in Upminster had excellent mobility.

At the rear of your church we have noticed two chairs with wheels attached. Research tells us that these are sometimes used to assist less mobile members of your community should they wish to visit the bathroom. We are unsure as to why they may wish to attend this room as the bath tubs are clearly far too small for humans – yet excessive in volume for ants. They may however be ideal for an aardvark which causes some concern to us. Study of your premises has shown that there is no indoor route from your church to the bathroom that does not require negotiation of steps, something that is clearly an obstacle for this wheeled transport, or for those unsteady on their legs. It must be such a disadvantage to you only having two legs. Have you considered growing more? Our wisdom however suggests that a solution could be found by the construction of a new bathroom (with appropriately sized bath) on the same level as your church.

We understand that you wish to undertake repairs to the leaky roof and removal of a wall from your Parlour in order to facilitate access but that your plans have hit obstacles. We have found in your biggest book some words which may be helpful to you - Luke 14 vs 28 *'Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?'* and some more words (Proverbs ch 15 vs 22) – *'Plans fail for lack of counsel but with many advisors they may succeed.'*

Could this be an indication that you are in need of advice from wise ants? So wise that we can see an easy solution that your committees may have missed. Simply remove the Parlour wall and place it upon the roof above the leak, killing

two birds with one stone – preferably those scary insectivorous birds and certainly not our friends the seagulls.

Finally there is the matter of the church pews, a dilemma which has faced you for many years: tradition and aesthetics, versus flexibility and modernity. Albert considers that this issue goes beyond the mere pros and cons of where you place your bottoms but is a fine illustration of a common trait of Methodism which we have noticed from careful study of your documents – a difficulty in making decisions – and hence that the status quo often prevails. Whilst such inertia may often be for the good, Albert would like to propose a means by which your discussion may be focussed – a deadline of 28 days after which we will summon our friends the termites to devour the pews.

We trust that these suggestions will be of use to you. Meanwhile we will continue to attend your premises provided we can remain hidden from the large-booted masked intruders.

With best regards

The Ants