



25th December 2020

The **Methodist Church**

South Warwickshire Circuit

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

When Isaiah writes 700 years before the birth of Christ, he is addressing a people in despair. They are captives to the Babylonians, their leaders have been carried off into captivity and their city ransacked. They are desperate to hear the good news of a future hope. Into this Isaiah speaks of a light shining in the darkness. That light is personified in the birth of a child, a child born to be King. This year has often been one where we have been in the darkness of lockdown, unable to meet friends or family, afraid even to go shopping, to work or even to church. At times it may even have felt as though Church itself had been stopped. Yet in this darkness we have found light, through online and zoom services, letters sent out with the words of the service for those unable to meet online. New ways of being and doing church. In this we have reached out to old friends and started to make new ones as we have been light in the world.

During some of the darkest days of Covid I have found myself searching for good news, light at the end of the tunnel. Googling vaccines and treatments, hoping that the death rates drop or that we find a cure. I wonder if you have done the same. Now that a vaccine has been found and hope given it would be easy for us to return to the old ways as though nothing had happened. Yet not only is this impossible but also for many unwanted. We need to take this opportunity to start again, building a new way of being where we are lights in the darkness of the world. I am sure that many will receive the vaccine and the hope it brings only to return to lives that are empty, devoid of meaning. For many that will be through poverty, or loneliness, the drudgery of life, abuse, fear, anger, illness. Yet we who have also walked in the darkness have seen a great light. That light is made visible to us through the love of God which came in the human flesh of a baby born that first Christmas.

As we approach this Christmas I hope and pray that you are able to find and hold on to that light of hope that isn't in a vaccine or treatment, that won't come with a gift tag and wrapping paper but is the Son of God here amongst us.

Isaiah 9:6-7

*⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;*

*authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named*

*Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.*

*He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

Richest blessings,
Iain

Reminder: Dial – a – Prayer, Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to news:

0808 281 2478

Sunday Worship and Daily Prayers

There are plenty of opportunities to join in worship if you have the internet. We are encouraging everyone to link up

with the live stream worship being offered by the Birmingham District via FaceBook on Sunday mornings, 10:30 am at: <https://www.facebook.com/Birminghammethodistdistrict/live>

Circuit Service

The Circuit continues to provide a pre-recorded service each week, via YouTube, Facebook and our website – see below for details:

Change of YouTube account:

Please note, the Circuit now has its own YouTube account, which means that the URL has changed.

Please access the YouTube video by clicking the following link or typing it into your browser:

[tinyurl.com/SWCplaylist](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzyDSCOYMtQvpCroUvvxjE93MqkTWQomY)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzyDSCOYMtQvpCroUvvxjE93MqkTWQomY>

If you regularly watch the Circuit Service, do consider subscribing to the Channel.

Rev Jemima, Michael Sharman & Graeme Russell have created **Family Worship Time** video which is available from 9:15 am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month through our YouTube Channel – and can be accessed here: [tinyurl.com/SWC-FWT](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzyDSCOYMtQsCToUfQ3sforT5J7geU2-D)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzyDSCOYMtQsCToUfQ3sforT5J7geU2-D>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SW.Methodist/>

Website: www.methodist-swc.org.uk

A full text of this service is available on the website, and is being sent by post to all those people who do not use the Internet so they can join in too. These worship opportunities will be available and sent to you every Sunday. We will be offering worship in a similar way each Sunday as the health crisis continues.

TV & radio opportunities for worship:

Radio 4, Sunday Worship, Sunday 8:10am,

Radio 4 Long Wave, Daily Service, 9.45am Mon-Fri,

Radio 3, Choral Evensong, Sunday 3pm.

BBC 1, Sunday Worship, Sunday 10.45am,

BBC 1, Songs of Praise, Sunday 1:15pm

(The times of the TV services can alter, please check the times)

Daily prayers at 10am are led by members of the circuit via zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/328494818>

All members of the Circuit are invited to join, **you do not need a zoom account to join**. You can also join by **telephone**. Please contact Michael Sharman on 07412 401988 if you'd like help getting in.

Pastoral Support

A reminder that if you are in pastoral need of any kind please contact your own Minister direct by email or phone. We may also be able to arrange practical help with shopping and so on. Our details are below.

If in any doubt, please contact Rev Dr Iain Ballard and he will link you up with help locally to you.

Rev Dr Iain Ballard	07368 875790	iain.ballard@methodist.org.uk
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Chris Flood	07772 292033	chrisflood_erniescheu@hotmail.com ,

Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying. With every blessing to you and yours.

The Ministers and Stewards of the South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit of Churches