



28<sup>th</sup> February 2021

The **Methodist Church**

South Warwickshire Circuit

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

In our gospel reading this week we hear Jesus tell the crowd that if they want to follow him they must take up their crosses. I wonder what that must have felt like. Just how did it make them feel? Here we have a crowd, they have seen Jesus perform miracles, healing the sick and feeding thousands. They have listened as he told them the truth about the Kingdom of God, the last will be first and the first will be last. If like many in the crowd you were amongst the last on the earth, then at least in heaven you will be one of the first, Alleluia! Now you must give up even what you have including your life, take up your cross and follow.

The cross was a powerful symbol to the nations subjugated by the Romans. It showed who had power over life and death, a gruesome death and it wasn't you. It symbolised oppression and injustice, occupation and degradation. Now Jesus the one who has come to save us from all that is asking us to submit to it. How can this be? How can the Saviour ask us to give up everything including our lives and instead face a tortuous death at our occupiers' hands?

Lent is a time to re-evaluate our relationship with God and our journey of faith. It is coming to terms again and again that we control very little and in reality own even less. If we are true disciples of Christ then that discipleship is costly. In the poem, 'When I became a Christian,' Adrian Plass puts it like this...

He said, 'Look, I'm not asking you to spend an hour with me  
A quick salvation sandwich and a cup of sanctity,  
The cost is you, not half of you, but every single bit,...'

Following Christ, taking up our crosses is not easy. It's not meant to be easy. It's meant to be costly, to cost us everything but there is no other way. Salvation is about hearing the Good News that Christ died for us, setting us free from every sin and blight that had stained our souls and responding to Christ's giving his all for us by giving our all for him.

In this Lenten time of reflection and attention to our lives with God may we find the richest of blessings, our crosses.

*Rev Dr Iain Ballard*

#### **Lent Activities:**

There are a number of initiatives which are happening across the Circuit this Lent:

*The Lent Course* (Wednesdays at 7:30 pm on Zoom); *TakeTime Meditations* (Thursdays at 3 pm – recording available on the website and on YouTube); *Stretch and Pray* (Monday – Friday throughout Lent, recordings available on YouTube); 40 acts of wellbeing and kindness.

Check the website for more details [www. https://www.methodist-swc.org.uk/lent-2021.html](https://www.methodist-swc.org.uk/lent-2021.html)

#### **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 the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday mornings 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) or if this doesn't work, try the long version:

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

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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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) again if this doesn't work, try the longer version:

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

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

Website: [www.methodist-swc.org.uk](http://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.**

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**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*