

21st November 2021


The **Methodist Church**

South Warwickshire Circuit

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

Dear Friends,

Greetings. As I read through the readings selected for this morning one verse stood out for me as very appropriate for where I will be this morning (21st November). In RSV Mark 1: 39 reads: *“He [Jesus] went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues”*. Throughout His ministry it seems Jesus went to the synagogue where ever he was on the sabbath and joined the congregation and often was asked to preach. Worship in Methodist chapels today still has a lot in common with Synagogue worship. Each service included singing of hymns (The Psalms plus more recently composed worship songs) prayers, the reading of scripture (the passage suggested for the day plus preacher’s choice) and a sermon. The biggest difference from Methodism today was that the preacher sat down to preach rather than stand as we do and that women and men were separated.

That said, there is archaeological evidence that Capernaum was an exception to the rule in that women were allowed to worship alongside men. It also seems likely that round the Roman empire Jews had synagogues many of which allowed ‘God Fearing Gentiles’ to join the congregation. There was a big difference in the feel and practice of worship between what went on in Jerusalem where the Temple and its emphasis on the purity of the faith with worship centred around the altar and sacrifice and the towns, villages and cities where synagogues were more informal. The comparison for us today would be contrasting ‘high church’ cathedral worship with free church chapels including Methodists. Clearly Jesus respected both and didn’t judge them rather he did, and we should, respect different ways of worshipping the same God.

Whether in the temple or synagogue, cathedral or chapel, gathering for communal worship was and is important. As a circuit we are doing our best to provide worship for those unable or as yet unsure whether to return to their local church. But whatever we do it cannot be as satisfactory as gathering with others for worship. Which brings me back to where I will be on Sunday 21st. Fenny Compton Methodists Church. It will be their last act of public worship before closure. As minister charged with their pastoral care I supported their decision to ‘cease to meet’ but with a heavy heart. During my life as a Christian I have been in and led worship in many churches and chapels in this country, Africa, and the Bible lands. I quickly feel at home wherever Christians gather but that doesn’t not mean that I don’t feel their pain and share their grief. I have my own memories of worship in Fenny Compton from when I was their minister in the 90’s. Each Sunday a mixture of life long members and new comers were in chapel singing old hymns and new songs and caring for each other..

Since those days some folks have joined the congregation while others have moved on – two responding to a call to ordained ministry- some have died and slowly the congregation has dwindled to the point where it’s no longer viable. Its not just Fenny Compton, many villages are losing organisations and institutions as society changes. Please pray for this final service and for the faithful few who are letting go of a place that has meant so much to them and so many people through the generations. Pray for all churches struggling to offer a place and warm welcome for those who want to gather for worship near to where they live in buildings full of memories.

Rev Richard Wilde

Reminder: Dial – a – Prayer, Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to news:

0808 281 2478

Circuit Resource Centre, Wellesbourne Methodist Church, Bridge Street, Wellesbourne, CV35 9LR

www.methodist-swc.org.uk

m:07578 640013

e: swc.katetennyson@gmail.com

Sunday Worship and Daily Prayers

There are plenty of opportunities to join in worship if you have the internet, eg Methodist Central Hall (London) streams worship each Sunday at 11:00 am (<https://mchw.live/>)

Circuit Service

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

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

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

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

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.

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 zoom meetings are now protected by password – please contact Michael Sharman (see below) for the password. 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 <i>(Day off – Friday)</i>	07368 875790	iain.ballard@methodist.org.uk
Rev Sally Jones <i>(Day off – Monday; Study day – Friday)</i>	01926 740846	sally.jones@methodist.org.uk
Rev. Jeongsook Kim <i>(Day off – Tuesday)</i>	01926 426084	revjeongsook@gmail.com
Rev. Audrey Simpson <i>(Day off – Friday)</i>	<i>Rev Audrey is on Sabbatical</i>	
Rev. Jemima Strain <i>(Part-time)</i>	07969 345389	jemima.strain@methodist.org.uk
Rev. Richard Wilde <i>(Part-time)</i>	07971 218356	revrichardwilde@gmail.com ,
Chris Flood <i>(Part-time)</i>	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