

23rd January 2022


The Methodist Church

South Warwickshire Circuit

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

Hello everyone, and warmest New Year Greetings to you all,

This letter comes to you in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Churches Together in Warwick describes this as 'an opportunity for Christians around the world to focus their prayers on the Church as the body of Christ, to celebrate its many diverse yet uniquely important parts, and to pray for closer relationships with each other and a shared vision of God's work that we are called to do'. Globally, nationally, denominationally and within our own local areas and churches, this feels more important than ever. The climate crisis cannot be addressed unless the world works together. The unequal response to the coronavirus pandemic across the globe has highlighted and confirmed the injustice that exists for poorer nations. Our government speaks of a 'levelling up' agenda, at a time when perhaps we feel less of a 'United Kingdom' than ever. So it feels to me that our prayers for unity in all sorts of spheres are needed now more than ever.

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2022 is 'We saw his star in the East...' and recalls the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child in Bethlehem. As the 2022 resource reminds us, the visitors came from afar, traditionally from different areas and backgrounds, but were united by their common purpose in desiring to come close to the Son of God.

So it feels particularly poignant that the text for this year's resource should have been chosen by the churches of the Middle East, where to maintain a hope for unity must be such a struggle, and to be able to pray for unity must be a sign of deep and loving faith. At Queen's, a group of us were due to visit the Holy Land, but this was sadly cancelled due to the pandemic. Just a few weeks after the date of our proposed trip, I read of rockets being launched and retaliatory fire. And in the summer last year, tensions erupted again. Our news is full of stories about the enduring hardships of the Palestinians, and on Thursday it will be Holocaust Memorial Day, where we remember the unimaginable suffering of the Jewish people. What a complex and seemingly insurmountable set of problems this area is faced with. Surely only fervent, diligent, spirit-filled prayer can begin to make a difference for these divided lands. I invite you to add your personal prayers for this region this week.

The Psalm that is set for today, Psalm 19, is one featured in Carla Grosch-Miller's wonderful book, *Psalms Redux*. *Redux* means 'brought back' or 'revived'. She writes that these prayers are not meant to supplant the Psalms, but simply to 'refresh and enrich their vocabulary of prayer and worship'. In her poem based on Psalm 19, she writes:

Keep us from arrogance and vanity.
Root our desire in Your goodness
and Your sweet grace.

Praying into a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, this seems a good place to begin.

I'll sign off with some words from Wesley, which feel particularly relevant to us as a denomination at this time:

Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences.

God bless you. Keep praying, keep smiling, keep testing!

Rev. Sally

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, 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:

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

or if this doesn't work, try the long version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=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. 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, 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