



6th December 2020

The **Methodist Church**

South Warwickshire Circuit

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

This second Sunday of Advent, we think about the prophets, declaring the word of the Lord, calling on people to prepare the way for the one who is to come. In the build up to Christmas, in a world in which the popular celebration is more and more about presents, food and fun, and less and less about celebrating the birth of Christ, it is common for preachers to attempt to refocus people's attention away from the practical preparation, towards a spiritual preparation.

This year is different from any Advent any of us have ever known. Up and down the country, people are considering whether they will take advantage of the Christmas bubble concept, allowing three households to meet. For some, three households is nowhere near enough – it means choosing which of the separated grandparents get to see the baby for their first Christmas, which of the adult children can visit, which of the siblings will be left out in the cold. For others, it is all too soon – the virus is still out there and is not going to become less infectious just because we want to get together.

In these dark days of Covid winter, how much we need the prophet's voice, assuring us that God is near! We can still use this time for preparation. As we come into the awesome, cleansing presence of God, we are encouraged to examine ourselves, and our motives. Why is it that we want to meet – or to stay away? Perhaps the big Christmas dinner and the multitude of people have become a chore rather than a joy, and we are secretly relieved not to have to do it. Perhaps we welcome the big gathering because being in our own company, or that of our household (as the Covid regulations put it) for so much of the time has become hard to bear.

We human beings are fickle: "their constancy is like the flower of the field." (Isaiah 40:6). God, however, is eternal, reliable and changeless. I often advise people at this time of year to take time out from the busy-ness, if only for a few moments, to recall and reflect on their identity in God. It is this, rather than the magnificence of your Christmas dinner, which determines your worth. It will probably be less busy this year – but it is still worth taking that time to be still. Prepare the way for the Lord by offering your heart to him. You will be rewarded with an abundance of love.

Rev Barbara Greenwood

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 1st and 3rd Sunday mornings at: <https://www.facebook.com/Birminghammethodistdistrict/live>

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)

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

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.

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

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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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