

4th July 2021


The Methodist Church

South Warwickshire Circuit

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

As I write this letter I do so just as the Conference is about to meet and yet you will read it after it has adjourned for another year. There are a number of issues facing the church and this year's Conference will be asked to make decisions about some of these. The most publicized of these is the report, 'God in Love Unites Us', the conference will consider whether or not to allow people in same sex relationships to marry in a Methodist Church. Whilst this obviously raises passionate responses from those who have differing opinions, it is not the only report which will ask us to live together even though we don't agree on something. There are also reports considering whether Holy Communion can be celebrated online, or how we should alter our structures to allow a more streamlined approach to governance and oversight. Including the possibility of increasing the minimum number of Local Members needed to constitute a church with its own Church Council. The Conference will also consider a Statement (higher precedence than a report) which considers what Ministry in the Methodist Church (both Lay and Ordained) should look like for the next decade and beyond. All of this alongside the usual acceptance of the Stations, Budget, and so much more. There is much on which we might agree or disagree.

It has always been the case that we don't agree on everything. Indeed, I would offer that if we did agree on everything our denomination and world would be all the poorer for it. It is in our disagreeing that we find an opportunity to be creative and find new ways of being and working. It is in our diversity that I believe we can glimpse a little more of the mystery and majesty of God. You may have spent the last week blissfully unaware that the Conference was meeting, or you may have been glued to your computer screen watching it, or maybe like me somewhere in between. The Conference isn't the only place where we disagree. There is much in church life, even local church life where we find that we don't always have the same opinion, even as our friends or family. It is in our local churches that we find what it can really mean to be the body of Christ, agreeing on much and also agreeing to disagree. My experience of family has always been that dichotomy and yet that tension is held together not solely by our agreeing but because we are a family. I encourage you to spend some time thinking about those in the church and beyond who are wrestling with hard conversations and difficult decisions. Thanking God for all those who are in positions of responsibility, both in your local church, the denomination and beyond into the universal church and the whole world.

'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...'

John Wesley

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, 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

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

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzyDSCOYMtQvpCroUvxxjE93MqkTWQomY>

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.

District Messages: The Birmingham District puts out a message each week on their YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC65eOm7QtM4Wu1R6jT17frw>

or you can search on YouTube for *Birmingham Methodist District*. We also have it up on our website.

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 (Day off – Friday)	07368 875790	iain.ballard@methodist.org.uk
Rev. Barbara Greenwood (Day off – Friday)	01926 740846	barbara.greenwood@methodist.org.uk ,
Rev. Jeongsook Kim (Day off – Tuesday)	01926 426084	revjeongsook@gmail.com ,
Rev. Audrey Simpson (Day off – Friday)	01789 267971	revaes@gmail.com ,
Rev. Jemima Strain (Part-time)	07969 345389	jemima.strain@methodist.org.uk ,
Rev. Sam McBratney (Part-time)	07706 586860	s.mcbratney@methodist.org.uk ,
Rev. Richard Wilde (Part-time)	07971 218356	revrichardwilde@gmail.com ,
Chris Flood (Part-time)	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

