

South Wigston Methodist Church

The Oracle



Easter Sunday
12th April 2020

Cover photo: Easter cross at South Wigston Methodist Church 1996 – watercolour by Helen Butler. See also the back page.

Our Mission Statement

The people of South Wigston Methodist Church are called to live the good news of God's love through open hearts, open minds and open doors.

We strive to be a place where understandings of Jesus Christ can flourish.

We're called to be good neighbours to people in need, to challenge injustice, and to meet regularly for prayers, singing and learning.

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One of the ways in which we seek to put this mission statement into practice is to ensure that our church is a safe place for all who use it by following the safeguarding policies and practices of the Methodist Church. Our church's safeguarding policy is on the noticeboard in the lounge. The Safeguarding contact is Helen 07500 180517.

**South Wigston Methodist Church**  
Blaby Road, South Wigston LE18 4PB  
[www.swmchurch.org.uk](http://www.swmchurch.org.uk)

**Minister:** Rev. Fran Rhys 0116 257 1069

**Senior Steward:** Mary B. 0116 281 2625

Leicester Trinity Circuit, Charity registration number 1129943

**Editor:** Mary B. contact: [pmmmbry@gmail.com](mailto:pmmmbry@gmail.com) 07891 917768  
Contributions always welcome; deadline 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**You can see *The Oracle* in colour on our website.**

## **Our church is closed for the foreseeable future**

**The Methodist Church issued the following statement on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March:**

*It is with sadness that we recommend that worship services in Methodist Churches are suspended for the time being in line with Government guidance.*

A letter from the Circuit and District goes on to recommend that other activities are also suspended. (See page 8)

**In line with this guidance all church activities, including Sunday worship, are cancelled.**

This very sad news for all of us, especially our older members or those who live on their own and look forward to meeting during Sunday worship, Saturday coffee, etc.

All the outside groups which use our premises are closed, including the Busy Bugs preschool.

The church website [swmchurch.org.uk](http://swmchurch.org.uk) is being updated on a regular basis.

The front page contains links to other forms of worship  
Sunday stuff from Bishop Street Methodist Church – online  
worship material

<https://bishopstreetmethodistchurchsundaystuff.wordpress.com/>

Worship at home sheets from the Methodist Church  
<https://tinyurl.com/wblr5wu>

**Hope13:15** is an encouraging short video with other materials to download, built round the three actions: pray, prepare & proclaim. The video is introduced by Trevor Mildred's daughter-in-law Rachel. <https://hope1513.com/>

**The BBC** will have a service on the radio on Sunday mornings: 8.00 Radio Leicester (104.9 FM) and the same service at 8.10 on Radio 4 (92-95 FM)

**It will be an unusual Easter this year with no church services.** I shall really miss seeing the bare tree come alive with the beautiful Spring flowers. I shall also miss the United Churches Act of Witness by the Tesco Store.

We usually hand out Hot Cross buns wrapped in a serviette with an Easter message to passers-by.

We also use Easter serviettes at the lunch at our church.

I can't give you a serviette, but I can give you the Easter message

### **Why a cross on a Hot Cross bun?**

When Jesus Christ was put to death on the cross, the bun's cross reminds us of what he did for all humankind – even you.



### **Just a story or the most significant event in history?**

There is more to a Hot Cross bun than you realise and there is more to Jesus Christ than you think.

A Blessed Easter to everyone

*Brenda*

## *Church family*

*We wish a Happy Birthday to everyone who celebrates in April*

6<sup>th</sup> Vanessa

7<sup>th</sup> Sylvia

8<sup>th</sup> Rachel

9<sup>th</sup> Nicholas

15<sup>th</sup> Diane

26<sup>th</sup> Helen R.

If you would like your birthday or anniversary to be included in the *Oracle* please let Mary know – we enjoy sharing our special days.

*Congratulations* to Ben and Hayley on the birth of their daughter on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March. Ivy Michelle is a first grandchild for Donna and Andy Jobling, and a niece for Rebecca.



**The Flower rota** has been discontinued for the moment.

We are grateful that we have two arrangements of silk flowers arranged and donated by June Young.

They will be placed in the porch and, hopefully provide some cheer to those who pass by.

We are continuing to add items, week by week, to the Lent cross in the front window.



## Letter from our minister

When you receive this issue of 'The Oracle', thanks to its editor, Mary Bryceland, and to those who have delivered it, we'll be about two-thirds of the way through Lent. Being two-thirds of the way through something is one of the hardest times...will we ever get through to Easter and resurrection, we ask ourselves? It's likely, moreover, that Easter will not be celebrated in the usual ways this year, unless the government and the Methodist Church decide a reprieve from social distancing and self-isolation is safe to take. All feels very uncertain and unfamiliar as well as scary for many.

We remember, however, that Lent is marked in commemoration of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup> Jesus isolated himself for a long time, as a way of preparing himself for the demands that his life would present him. I've come across an article by a Dominican religious sister who describes how she's practised 'social distancing' for 29 years!<sup>2</sup> Admittedly, she and her religious community live on 8 acres of land, but they only ever leave their community for doctors' appointments or to shop for unusual items. Her advice is three-fold:

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<sup>1</sup> The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 4, verses 1-11

<sup>2</sup> Sister Mary Catharine Perry, Dominican nun in Summit, New Jersey, USA.

1. Have a structure, including times of prayer. Don't stay in your pyjamas all day – unless you're having your weekly day off.

2. Intentionally love others (which is the second greatest commandment, according to Jesus.)<sup>3</sup> Don't get too busy to be interrupted. Make that phone-call to an older neighbour. Donate an item to the Food Banks which, with the households that use them, are short of food.

3. Reflect 'how is it with your soul'?<sup>4</sup> and relax! Play some board games or knit. I remember during my theological training coming across a quote of St Benedict which went: 'Go back to your cell – it will teach you everything you need to know.'<sup>5</sup> So back I went to my campus flat to continue working on my next essay, glad to have the excuse to go to a midday chapel service (something we're denied at the moment, or rather that we have to find other ways to carry out.)

Meanwhile, all round us, signs of Spring are appearing. Resurrection is there all around us, if we seek the eyes of God to help us see it. Pope Francis has written: 'when we hug again... when the coffees will return to the bar...swims at the sea, sunsets...laughter...we think about when it will be all a memory but normalcy will seem an unexpected and beautiful gift. We will love everything that has so far seemed futile to us. Every second will be precious.'<sup>6</sup> (We can insert some of our favourite things which seem a long way from us at present.) Perhaps this time will help teach us how not to take 'simple' gifts for granted.

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<sup>3</sup> Gospel of Matthew, chapter 22, verse 39

<sup>4</sup> John Wesley's guidance for lay class leaders to ask their weekly groups.

<sup>5</sup> The Rule of St Benedict

<sup>6</sup> #papafrancesco #restateacasa #pope #popefrancis

I leave you with a prayer shared by the current President and Vice-President of the Methodist Church in Britain:

God of the present moment,  
God who in Jesus stills the storm  
and soothes the frantic heart;  
bring hope and courage to all  
who wait or work in uncertainty.  
Bring hope that you will make them the equal  
of whatever lies ahead.  
Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,  
for your will is health and wholeness;  
you are God, and we need you.<sup>7</sup>

Take heart – resurrection happens.  
Rev'd Fran

**This is an edited version of a letter which was sent to church stewards & pastoral visitors by Fran on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March.**

To keep you informed, I am passing on this rather dramatic news from the Methodist Church. There may be little option for the Methodist Church to do other than this. But keep reading to the end... alternatives and means for spiritual and social support still exist.

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<sup>7</sup> Prayer for People Critically Ill or Facing Great Uncertainty -Adapted from New Zealand Prayer Book, p. 765,



## **Coronavirus guidance from the Methodist Church** update 17<sup>th</sup> March

It is with sadness that we recommend that worship services in Methodist Churches are suspended for the time being in line with Government guidance. We would encourage people who lead services to think about how worship might be offered in different ways, including online and using worship at home sheets.

During this incredibly difficult time when people might want to spend time in prayer in their Methodist Church, local trustees should consider whether it is possible to open up their churches to enable people to come and pray or sit quietly, perhaps offering prayer stations as a point of reflection with precautions around physical distancing.

Suspending services means that we advise that baptisms will not take place in public worship and if you have a wedding planned in a Methodist Church you should speak to your minister. While funerals may still take place, we would advise that the number of people attending is limited as per the Government's advice.

In terms of Church business, we recommend that all meetings including church councils and circuit meetings should be cancelled. Districts chairs will be in touch about Synods. The next meeting of the Methodist Council has been suspended and we will advise

on how essential business will be carried out. We will be issuing further advice on this.

**Other community events** like lunch clubs, after school clubs, playgroups and fellowship groups should be suspended.

**Pastoral visits:** in these extraordinary times, pastoral support is incredibly important and it's likely it may increase but we would advise that you contact people by phone in the first instance to check they are still happy for you to go in person. If you're visiting a care home or hospital take your guidance from them. You should also be mindful of updated safeguarding guidance which you can find here <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>

**And from the Chair of District,** Rev'd Helen Cameron this morning (17 March):

"Clearly, the present Government's advice means cancelling "unnecessary" social gatherings which includes, of course, coffee mornings, fellowship groups, community groups etc.

Each minister should seek to remain in contact every week with each pastoral visitor and each pastoral visitor each week with each member/friend on their list. That way we ensure every single member and friend of the

District is contacted at least once each week."

Helen has recommended we look at Psalm 91, which I find mainly comforting.

God is with us through thick and thin.

Fran

## **Kitchen Proposals**

The Kitchen Group met on 12<sup>th</sup> March. We looked again at the various possibilities identified for the two kitchens at South Wigston Methodist Church and we noted people's comments on these possibilities. We decided a good compromise from both a financial and mission point of view would be to refurbish the existing coffee bar (which has remained the same for 50 years, serving thousands of hot and cold drinks, cakes, and biscuits). We recommend also installing a domestic electric cooker and hood into the back kitchen, and redecorating that kitchen as well. This would enable Girls Brigade to learn more cooking skills and would enable Busy Bugs Pre-School to cook more as well. It would provide cooking facilities for children's parties, and they would be permitted to use facilities in the coffee bar too. The refurbished coffee bar would include two ovens (as a tower) and a separate electric hob. We anticipate these plans would cost in the region of £10,000, and that this amount could be taken out of church reserve funds. (This decision was reached before the church was closed!)

The plan for the refurbished coffee bar will, eventually, be posted on a notice-board in the lounge.

The hope is that these plans can be considered at the 17 May General Church Meeting, but it may be necessary to create a different method of decision-making if that meeting is postponed. Please watch this space. Thank you.

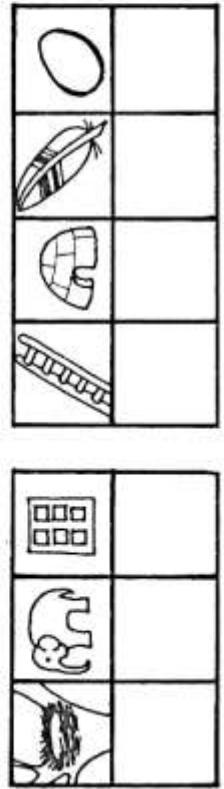
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Very EARLY on SUNDAY morning the WOMEN went to the TOMB. They FOUND the huge STONE had been ROLLED AWAY. An ANGEL told them that JESUS was no longer DEAD. He was ALIVE!



So we give each other as a sign of



**HAPPY  
EASTER**



## **The Rev. Francis Kilvert celebrates Easter Day, 17 April 1870**

The happiest, brightest. most beautiful Easter I have ever spent. I woke early and looked out. As I had hoped the day was cloudless, a glorious morning. My first thought was “Christ is Risen”. It is not well to lie in bed on Easter morning, indeed it is thought very unlucky. I got up between five and six and was out soon after six. There was a heavy white dew with a touch of hoar frost on the meadows, and as I leaned over the wicket gate by the mill pond, to see if there were any primroses in the banks but not liking to venture into the dripping grass, suddenly I heard the cuckoo for the first time this year. It is very well to hear the cuckoo for the first time on Easter Sunday morning. I loitered up the lane gathering primroses.

There was a very large congregation at morning church, the largest I have seen for some time, attracted by Easter and the splendour of the day, for they have here an immense reverence for Easter Sunday. There were more communicants than usual: 29.

*He talks about people dressing the graves with primroses – some in the shape of a cross. He also mentions the young people having new clothes – It was an old saying that if you don't wear something new on Easter Day, the crows will spoil everything you have on.*

*Francis Kilvert wrote his diary from 1870 to 1879 when he was based in the Welsh borders & later around Chippenham. At the time of this extract he was curate to the vicar of Clyro near Hay on Wye. There is more information at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis\\_Kilvert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Kilvert).*

*My copy is falling apart – it has been well read – so I can't lend it, but it is worth getting hold of a copy if you haven't read it.*

## **To our Church Family**

As you are all aware, the guidance from the central organisation of the Methodist Church is currently that Sunday services for the foreseeable future are to be cancelled because of the Coronavirus pandemic. In order to assist with the matter of personal giving to our own South Wigston Methodist Church, I would like to mention as an option that it is possible to make regular giving of collection monies to the Church by way of Standing Order, even if it is just for this temporary period. The claiming of Gift Aid would still continue as before. In order to give in this way, you would need to provide your Bank with the following details:

Payee: South Wigston Methodist Church.

Sort Code: 08-92-99.

Account Number: 65271298.

Reference: Provide your own Name.

You would then specify the amount and frequency of payments.

If you do on-line banking you can set this up yourself.

Another way of maintaining your regular giving would be send a cheque to me made payable to *South Wigston Methodist Church*.

My address is 48 Granville Road, Wigston LE18 1JP

Forgive me for bringing up the matter of finances at a time of grave concern such as we are all currently experiencing, but please do consider this as a possible option for continuing your giving of collections to the Church on a regular basis. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I do wish you all well.

Trevor Mildred (Church Treasurer).

## Brenda's Quizzes

The present quiz on "FISH" ends on Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>. The next quiz will be ready at the beginning of May. This will be in aid of Age UK Oadby & Wigston, all the answers will contain the word "GOLD." If we are still self-isolating, I will send it out by e-mail, you can pay later.

If you want something to do whilst you are twiddling your thumbs at home, try this quiz. All the answers are places in LEICESTERSHIRE. Answers next month.

|     |                           |     |            |
|-----|---------------------------|-----|------------|
| e g | PEBBLY ENTRANCE           | 10  | STONEYGATE |
| 1   | CHILD'S TOY               | 6   |            |
| 2   | ROMAN PLAYGROUND          | 5 4 |            |
| 3   | STOP MR CHAMBERLAIN       | 6 4 |            |
| 4   | LARGE VALLEY              | 5 4 |            |
| 5   | CHEERFUL WITH DEPOSITS    | 5 4 |            |
| 6   | VETERAN RETAINER          | 3 4 |            |
| 7   | FOR WHAT REASON RELATIVE? | 5   |            |
| 8   | MURDER LETTER             | 5   |            |
| 9   | RIVER BOULDER             | 11  |            |
| 10  | ABIRD AND EXCLAMATION     | 6   |            |
| 11  | CASK VALUE                | 8   |            |
| 12  | GARMENTS                  | 5   |            |
| 13  | FUEL PLACE                | 9   |            |
| 14  | HARASS AN INSECT          | 6   |            |
| 15  | I AM A FAKE               | 7   |            |
| 16  | STOCKINGS                 | 4   |            |
| 17  | FUNNY WEIGHT              | 8   |            |
| 18  | FRESH RECREATION GROUNDS  | 3 5 |            |
| 19  | BASIC CROSSING            | 10  |            |
| 20  | HOMESTEAD                 | 5   |            |



Easter garden, South Wigston Methodist Church, Easter Sunday 2000. Watercolour by Helen Butler