

Dear Friends,

Our first notice sheet of the new church year is produced within a national context of much uncertainty and change. This week the government announced tighter measures on 'social gatherings' meaning that no more than six people can meet together, indoors or outdoors, from Monday (14th). Whilst there are some exemptions such as schools and places of work, we are still awaiting clear guidance from government and the Methodist Church as to where places of worship fit.

The stewards will be meeting virtually with myself this week. Our discussions will include making a decision on whether or not to send out the second questionnaire about worship, which was intended to be a follow up to the one sent out in July, and was planned to be shared next weekend. We will also begin to discuss whether we can offer the church for small groups, of up to six, to meet for friendship, or bible study, or prayer. We will do our best keep you updated of the outcomes of our discussion.

#### Pastoral Care and Holy Communion

I am thankful for the mutual pastoral care and support that has been shown throughout the 'Corona crisis' so far and encourage us not to relax but to resolve again to continue to exercise love and care for one another as best we can.

If you would like a 'home visit' or to share in home Holy Communion then please get in touch as I believe I can now offer these within the set guidelines, but please only do so if you are happy with the associated risk of having me as a visitor in your home.

#### Worship

Our system of online worship will continue. If you currently receive a paper copy of the service but would like to be able to watch/listen to the recorded service then there are three options available:

A DVD copy can be sent to you each week - contact me to arrange this.

Services can be pre-loaded onto a laptop and delivered to your door with detailed instructions on how to watch it in this.

#### Prayer

Throughout September the church will be open every Thursday morning, 10 - 12, for anyone who wishes to use the space for prayer; this will be reviewed at the end of the month.

I will no longer be producing a list of things to pray for in the weekly notices but I want to encourage each of us to take responsibility for our own prayer life and to set aside time each day, even 5 minutes, to intentionally spend time seeking, talking and listening with God. I pledge to spend the first part of each day in prayer - for the church, our community, the world, but most of all for God's direction and blessing.

Finally, I ask that you please pray for me, and for all in leadership roles within our church and beyond, during these challenging times. We will do our best to keep you informed as things progress. If you want to talk about any aspect of the current situation, church, or the way forward then please do get in touch - I'd love to hear from you.

Stay safe, and may God bless us all.

**Rev Jona Sewell**