

Wonford Methodist Church

Contact Newsletter

August 2020

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Special Edition



Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)



Wonford is a
Fairtrade church

The **Methodist Church** 

www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk



@WonfordMethodistChurch



A Message From The Minister

Dear Friends,

Revelation 3. 14-22

Don't some people just make you sick?! Well, we talk like that sometimes. It's still a shock though, to read of Jesus, who incarnates our God of love, to say, of the Christians of Laodicea, that they make Him want to vomit! We're not used to thinking about Jesus like that, to say the least. Yet, in Revelation 3. 16, He says quite clearly that their lukewarm attitude makes Him want to 'spew them out of his mouth'. Charming! We've noted before that Jesus addresses these churches in phrases and imagery which reflected their local situation, and this is no exception. Laodicea was a prosperous place. Local farmers specialised in a breed of black sheep which produced very fine wool and this had helped to bring wealth to the town. It was also a banking centre, and noted for its medical school. Well might the Laodiceans be a little smug. They were lacking in one respect however: they did not have a good supply of clean water. The main water supply, the river Lycus was not strong at the point at which it passed Laodicea and sometimes, in summer, dried up completely. There was an alternative source of water in the nearby city of Hierapolis, where you could find (indeed, they are still there) hot springs, gurgling out of the ground and eventually tumbling over a cliff opposite Laodicea. By that time, the water was lukewarm and no longer drinkable. In fact, it would taste foul and probably make you vomit. You would spew it out of your mouth, as Jesus feels like doing to the Laodicean Christians. A shocking and unpleasant image, you'll agree, but one prompted by love, not contempt.

The love Jesus has for the Laodiceans, and for all His people, ourselves included is such that He will never cease to desire, passionately and urgently, our flourishing and our growth into Christ-likeness. That's more important than anything. For the same reason, He will set His face like flint against anything which holds us back and prevents us becoming all that we are capable of becoming. In the Laodicean Church, such an obstacle to spiritual growth is the poison of complacency, engendered by prosperity.

Complacency is a dangerous state to fall into, as it stems from a sense of self-sufficiency. A Christian is not self-sufficient, as they rely for their salvation, for their new life, and for their growth in joy and holiness on Christ and what He has done for us. In Laodicea, fatally, the smug and self-satisfied atmosphere of the town had seeped into the church too. It can be all too easy to assume that material comfort are the result of divine blessing and conversely, if life gets bumpy, God is somehow cross with us. Both are

simplistic assumptions. A quiet, peaceable and comfortable life may be a good thing, but it in no way makes those who enjoy such a life 'better' than those who have had a more challenging time of it. In fact, those whose way has not been smooth often realise their need of grace far better than others – witness much of Jesus' teaching. However, neither hardship nor prosperity in themselves tell us anything about God's love for us. In spite of the strong rebuke delivered to them, there is hope for the Laodiceans. They are not told to move to another town, renounce their possessions, or adopt an attitude of false humility. They are told to fully open themselves to Christ (I stand at the door and knock..), abandon their self-centredness and self-sufficiency and look towards their only solid and lasting hope: that those who conquer will one day sit beside Christ as He is enthroned in glory. Let He who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

With every blessing
Ben Haslam

Wonford Methodist Church Open for Prayer

Wonford church leaders have decided that, following the recent government announcement, we will be opening the church for **PERSONAL PRAYER** on the following days of the week:

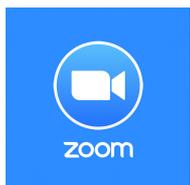
Tuesday **10am to 12 noon**
Friday **6.30pm to 8.00pm**



Personal silent prayer only and strict social distancing will apply

Wonford Zoom Service

This will take place on Sunday 9th August at 10am. The speaker will be Rev Ben Haslam, though others will be involved with readings and prayers.



Login details for this are below but will be emailed to everyone closer to the service.

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8163657178?
pwd=UUFxRytYWmRubVd0ZFhzQWVJK3dkUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8163657178?pwd=UUFxRytYWmRubVd0ZFhzQWVJK3dkUT09)

Meeting ID: 816 365 7178

Passcode: SXgy1v

You can dial into the by telephoning 0203 481 5240

Church Services from September

The Church Council are meeting on the 11th August to discuss opening the Church for services from the start of September 2020. The result of this meeting will be distributed to members and friends. If approved the first service will be on the 6th September at 10am. It will be an 'All Age' worship service led by Dr Jon Curtis.

Church Offerings (*repeated from last month*)

The last occasion when we had a church service was the 15th March and if we do not resume worship until the first Sunday in September 24 weeks will have passed without there being any weekly offering. Our solar cells have been doing a good job recently and have not been affected by the lockdown and the Circuit has waived one of our quarterly assessments, so our outgoings are less.

The Methodist financial year ends on 31st August 2020 and I will have to prepare the church accounts by then. Several people have asked me what to do about their weekly collection.

We receive most of our income from our offerings so a drop in offerings makes a big difference to our financial situation. So far our offerings are over £1,100 lower than last year due to there being no services (up to the end of May 2020).

Several of our members contribute their offering by standing order, bank transfer or use internet banking and their income has continued which is wonderful. Some have joined this way of giving during lockdown – thank you very much to all of you.

If you can, please could you consider continuing to make your offering to the work of our church until we meet once more.

Here are some ideas for ways to contribute:

- You can credit the church bank account directly. Please contact me and I will give you the details
- You can send me a cheque (payable to Wonford Methodist Church). Please include a note with your name or your envelope number if you are a member of the envelope scheme.
- You can even put cash in an envelope and post it through my door.
- Alternatively, put money aside each week and put it in the offering when you are next in church.

Please contact me if you need further help.

I have arranged to count the money in mid July and mid August and will then bank the money I have received.

David Westcott - Church Treasurer

Changes for the Environment in Lockdown and Beyond.

We have noticed that God's creation, our earth, did start to heal during lockdown.

You have probably seen photos of how the earth's environment appears to have benefitted in so many ways from the lack of human interference.

Our air quality has seen a marked decline in nitrous oxide emissions from road vehicles, trains, boats and planes which has led to a significant drop in air pollution – cleaner air for us all. This was especially amazing for people living in northern India as they have been able to see the Himalayan mountain range more than 100 miles away, visible after 30 years due to the cleaner air as a result of lockdown.

The water quality across the world has also improved. Places like Venice, notorious for its dirty waterways, saw the water become so clean that the fish could be seen clearly and there was better water flow. Less human footfall helped the oceans start to recover and marine life began to thrive; fish biomass increased after over fishing almost depleted it. Many people have spotted animals moving about freely where once they would not dare to go. Even sea turtles returned to areas they had once avoided to lay their eggs, due to lack of human interference. Here in Exeter I have certainly been able to hear many more beautiful birdsongs during my morning walks and the butterflies abound in the Ludwell Valley Park's planted meadow fields. Plants are growing better due to cleaner air and water, and again because of less human interference. This means they produce more coverage and oxygen, which of course is good for us all. It is very clear that a lighter human footprint has benefitted the environment but as the human race falls back in its old ways, the small benefits will have only been temporary.

I know many of us feel that we want to reduce our waste and recycle more, source more sustainable travel, reduce our energy & water consumption and enhance biodiversity.

So, I was wondering whether at Wonford Methodist we'd consider getting involved in 'Climate Sunday'. This has been launched to provide a focus for churches across Britain and Ireland committed to action on climate change

and has been organised by the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, supported by charities including CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund, A Rocha UK, and Operation Noah.

Local churches are encouraged to hold a Climate Sunday any time during a one-year period from 6 September 2020 - the first Sunday in the annual Season of Creation.

Free resources are being provided to suit every tradition and style of worship. Each church is invited to do one or more of three things:

1. To hold a climate-focused service to explore the theological and scientific basis of creation care and action on climate, to pray, and to commit to action.
2. To make a commitment as a local church community to taking long term action to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Join with other churches and wider society by adding its name to a common call for the UK government to take much bolder action on climate change in advance of COP26 (the United Nations climate talks), and to strengthen its credibility to lead the international community to adopt a step change in action at COP26.

The culmination of the campaign will be a national Climate Sunday event on Sunday 5 September 2021, to share church commitments and pray for bold action and courageous leadership at the COP26 UN climate talks in Glasgow in November 2021.

We need to make changes to protect God's creation, our world, before it is too late.

I am reminded of a quote which I believe is from Mahatma Gandhi 'be the change you wish to see in the world'. At Wonford Methodist Church I am sure we want to see global warming reduced, so should we take action and hold a Climate Sunday here? Please pray for those within CBTI who are organising Climate Sunday and let us know what you think about us doing this.

Sue Keatt - Church Green Team



Prayer Focus for August

Prayer - Our Strongest Weapon - Pray Without Ceasing

As we begin to emerge from lockdown please keep praying as before for the effects of COVID-19. Although places are opening up and we can now get that long awaited haircut it doesn't mean the virus has gone. There are still pockets of it lurking in our midst so please keep praying for those most vulnerable. Pray for those who are searching for a vaccine to protect us. Pray for those who have lost their businesses and jobs. Pray for those who work in food banks and for those who need to rely on them. Thank our Lord for those who give of their time to provide food and other essentials.

In parts of the world there are refugee camps and at this time those forced to live there seem to have been forgotten. They don't have water, soap, hand sanitisers as we do. The virus can totally wipe these poor souls. Pray that the right aid will get to them. Pray for ghettos and shanty towns in parts of the world where social distancing is impossible and again they don't have what they need to keep safe.

Pray for governments all around the world as they make decisions for their Country. Pray for fairness, honesty and, when needed, compassion.

Still keep safe everyone. Pray for our brothers & sisters facing illness at this time & pray for those who are preparing our church building in readiness for us to meet together once more.

God Bless you everyone.

May you all be richly blessed as you pray for all the activities at Wonford, surrounding area & the wider world.

If you have anything that you would like included please let Julie Rothwell know so that it can be included here.

Our Prayer Phone Link

Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Rev Alan Rothwell (01392 926840). Your request will then be passed to members of the Prayer Link who will pray for your need. If the first contact is unavailable, please contact Margretta Bowstead (01392 437329) or Rose Smith (01404 510853)

Various prayers and services from the Methodist Church are available to listen to via free-phone telephone numbers:

To listen to a short prayer – 0808 281 2514

To listen to a selection of Methodist related news stories: 0808 281 2478
(Content for both is updated weekly on a Thursday afternoon)

The Prayer Team

THANK YOU from the Smith Family

Rose and Paul Smith and family would like to thank all of you who sent them cards and flowers, text messages and telephone calls after the death of their son Stephen in May. We appreciate your good wishes and ongoing prayers at this very sad time for us.

Bridge Books Christian Book Shop Open Again

For the time being they are only open Monday to Saturday 9.30-1.30pm, but you can email: sales@bridgebookshop.co.uk, or call 01392 427171 anytime with your orders and they can post or deliver.

Maybe you could consider buying a Gift Card now for yourself or others via our website, which can be used at any later date.

<https://www.bridgebookshop.co.uk>

Luxurious Yet Lukewarm Laodicea



"I know all the things you do, that you are neither **hot** nor **cold**. I wish that you were one or the other!" (3:15 NLT)

The deadline for items for the September 2020 Newsletter will be Sunday 16th August 2020. There is no guarantee of inclusion, but they may be given to:

Andrew Jackson - 19 Hills Orchard, Martock, Somerset. TA12 6DF.
Tel: 01935 826072 or e-mailed to andrew.m.jackson@me.com