



BARNARD CASTLE AND TEESDALE

METHODIST CIRCUIT

FEBRUARY 2021

WHAT'S ON and NEWS ITEMS

Message from Rev Tim

Dear Friends,

I have been asked to clarify the current status of the two circuits with regard to the closure of our church buildings.

At the present time all of the church buildings across our respective circuits are closed for communal worship even though legally we could open with biosecure protocols in place. Formally speaking this decision is the decision of each set of managing trustees, that is the local church council. However it is important to note that the Circuit Covid Group and by far the majority of Methodist Churches in our District have made the same decision.

These decisions rested on a number of similar concerns not least the increasing severity of transmission of the new variants of the virus, the age of our congregations and especially of our stewards, leaders and preachers responsible for opening and sustaining the practical requirements of worship. Many church congregations also noted that a much large proportions of their communities actually knew someone or some family struggling with the virus in these most recent times. With the new vaccines providing real hope on the horizon the overwhelming feeling was that having waited so long we could and should manage a little further. Throughout the pandemic our very first concern has been to provide a safe environment for our people and where that could not be guaranteed to encourage and support congregations in staying as safe as is possible.

When will this change? Technically speaking this is up to each individual church council. Some have committed to reviewing at the end of January, others such as the Covid Circuit Gp at February half term after the government has made its national recommendations. At least one neighbouring circuit has targeted Palm Sunday as their day for reopening. In truth such review occurs every week as we reflect on the course of the pandemic and review the numbers on our own neck of the woods. In practice I think it is unlikely that any of our churches will open before half term but it is impossible to predict what will happen after this.

Please pray for me as I try to make a plan! Likewise for our preachers and worship leaders as they try to make difficult and inevitably personal decisions about risk and availability. May I encourage all church members and especially preachers, and worship leaders not to feel embarrassed or pressured into attending or taking services if they feel they are not yet ready or able. God can and will find us wherever we are. Keep praying, keep singing (safely of course!) and keep listening for and searching for that love which is new each and every morning.

Take care

Every blessing, Tim

CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT

CORONAVIRUS - A Covid Vision Group has been set up across the two circuits to look at the regulations from government and notes on how to apply these from the Connexion. This has enabled some churches to reopen, even though worship isn't the way we normally do it.

STAINDROP

The worshipping community at Staindrop are not meeting in the church at present, but they are having *Telephone Services* by telephone conferencing. These have proved very popular and will continue until the Coronavirus situation changes. Contact the stewards for details.

Lectionary Readings for February 2021

Date	Sunday	Old Testament	Psalms	New Testament	Gospel
7th February	5th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 40:21-31	147:1-11, 20c	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
14th February	The Sunday before Lent	2 Kings 2:1-12	50:1-6	2 Corinthians 4:3-6	Mark 9:2-9
17th February	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:1-12, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12	51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
21st February	1st Sunday in Lent	Genesis 9:8-17	25:1-10	1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1:9-15
28th February	2nd Sunday in Lent	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	22:23-31	Romans 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38

OUR CALLING

Worship

Learning and Caring

Service

Evangelism



BIBLE STUDY - a look at *St Mark's Gospel* led by Rev Adrian Roux. This is a Zoom meeting on Thursday evenings, and continues through February, but you can join in at any point. Contact Tricia Mitchell of the Learning Network Team at mitchellt@methodist.org.uk for further details.

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN

The 2020 EASTER OFFERING service has been postponed until **2021**. We are working on holding an on-line service in the autumn.

Do not dispose of envelopes and other materials already distributed; these will be used in 2021.

CHANGE HAPPENS, SOMETIMES WITHOUT WARNING

We are publishing this information in good faith, but services and other activities might have their times changed or be cancelled altogether at short notice, often beyond our control. Do not undertake a long journey without checking first.

Ministers' contact numbers:

Rev Tim Boocock - 07926 584858
Rev Graham Cutler - 01833 638272
Rev John Howard - 01833 640823
Rev Alan Coustick - 01833 908604
Rev Richard Hunter - 01833 630315

CIRCUIT OFFICE

The Circuit Office is closed for the time being. Edwin can be contacted by telephone on 07484 398958 or by email at bctmc1317@gmail.com

Praise and Prayer Points

Pray for all those recently bereaved and those who are unwell.

Give thanks for all those who work hard to maintain our buildings, and pray for them.

Pray for the Barnard Castle & Teesdale and Darlington circuit leadership teams as they continue to progress the work of forming a new circuit.

Pray for all those suffering from the effects of the many recent wars, conflicts and man-made and natural disasters around the world and other acts of violence.

Pray for the work of the Food Banks and for those who need them.

Pray for all those involved in the Coronavirus pandemic - those suffering, those working to relieve suffering and to help in other ways, and those whose lives are disrupted by it.

Pray for all those working to maintain safety in our places of worship as the start to reopen.

Pray for our Mission Partners from the UK in various parts of the world during the current crisis, feeling very isolated, but committed to their presence with the people they serve.

Give thanks for all those whose work is helping us keep in touch by Zoom meetings, telephone services and other means of communication, and for those who phone up to make sure we are well.



CIRCUIT WEBSITE www.teesdalemethodists.co.uk

The next issue of What's On/Praise Points will be for March. Please email items to bctmc1317@gmail.com or send to your contact person by 14th February.