

Withington Methodist News

August 2021



SUNDAY WORSHIP

We are pleased to say we have re-opened our doors for Sunday morning worship. We will be maintaining the same protocols of social distancing and face coverings as when we previously opened.

Please feel free to join us in person or stick with the online evening circuit worship- whatever you feel more comfortable with.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Walking on the beach is one of my favourite summer activities. I like to look at the bright bits of light glancing off the surface of the water. Every time I see one, the same thought occurs to me: Even on a cloudy day, it doesn't take much to reflect the sun.

It's the same with God's light in our lives. I'm just one little swell on a great wide ocean, but that's enough of a surface to dazzle someone with the sun's reflection for a split second.

God has made each of us to be one of an overwhelming 7 billion people in this world right now. That seems quite small, but He has also made us to reflect Himself, to burn with the bright white light of the sun. And we never know who will be touched by us just allowing our life to be a reflection.

We are all incredibly blessed to be out of lockdown and have a community of Christians around us with people who reflect God's light and love daily. It's a beautiful thing to watch. Sometimes, it's done in a look or a shared meal. Sometimes, it's someone just sitting with another person whilst they open up about a heartache. Sometimes, it's surrounding someone in prayer, lifting them up, or coming together to meet a financial need. It's easy to pass by these moments, but instead, I choose to look into them and be struck with wonder just like I am when my eye catches the sunburst of light reflecting off the sea.

On warm, sunny days it's good to be reminded that our job is not to be a

light in a dark world, but to simply reflect God's light onto those around us. This is what we have all been created to do. To live in community with others, allowing God to shine through our lives, and remember that this is not always demonstrated in big, dramatic actions but more than likely expressed by just being there for those around us.

Wishing you every blessing,

Rev. Krystyna

FYI - Krystyna will be on annual leave August 6-August 20.

PRAYER LIST

We remember in our prayers:

Kathleen,
Stasi,
Henry,
Zathilda,
Thandi,
Elaine,
Allan and Betty,
Promilla,
the Lowe family,
Georgine,
Krysten



WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday Morning In Person Worship

We are happy to have our doors fully open again at Withington. The booking system is no longer in place, everyone is welcome to come whenever works for them.

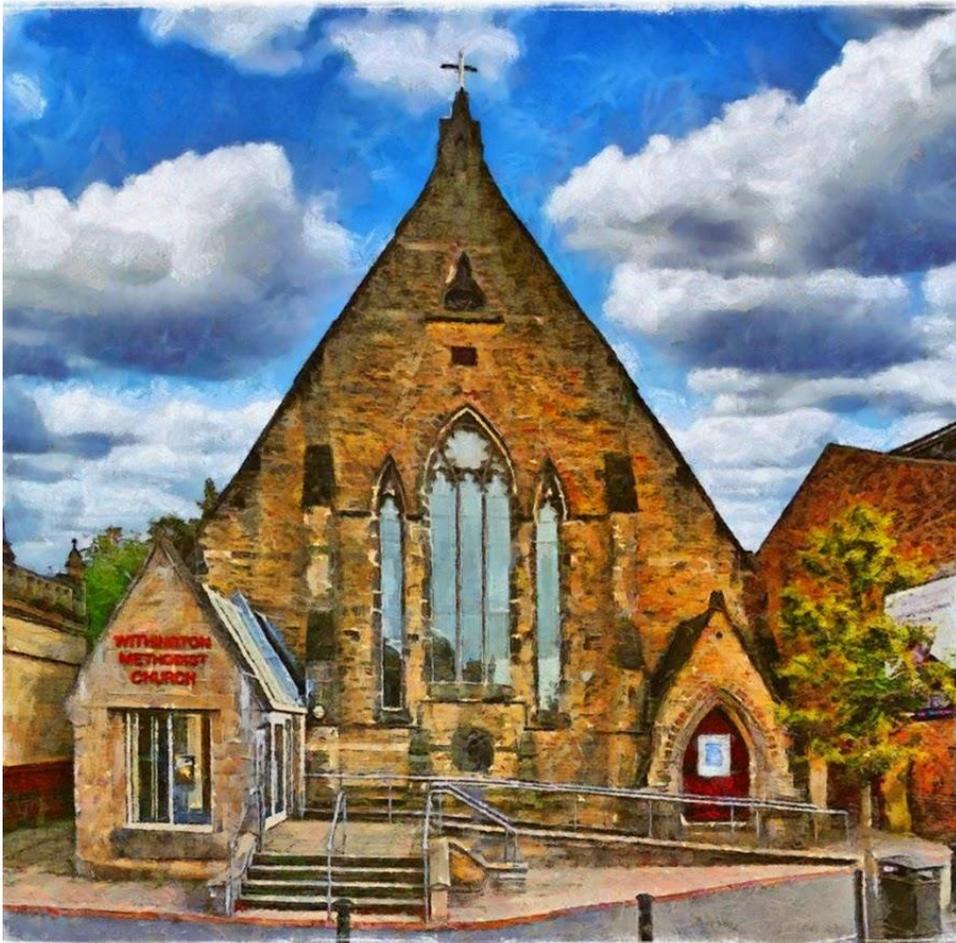
The current Covid-19 safety measures in place at WMC are as follows:

We will continue to wear masks during worship and social distancing will be maintained at 1 m+.

We are allowed to sing quietly with our masks on.

Socialising after the service is permitted, but without refreshments.

Communion will be celebrated in one kind (bread) and for safety reasons wafers will be used.



Reflections and written worship resources:

If you are not on email and would like to receive a printed copy of our mid-week, end-of-week reflections or written worship resources for Sunday, please contact Krystyna on 0161 612 2668.

Virtual Coffee Morning and Bible Study

We have a virtual coffee morning every Saturday from 11:00 am and a fortnightly Bible Study every other Wednesday (6th and 20th January) from 10:30 am which you can also join by phone.

In order to join using a traditional or mobile phone:

Please dial 0131 460 11 96

You will be asked for the meeting ID: 841 4119 8605

Press the hash key on your phone. #

Wait a few seconds and press the hash key again. #

Manchester Circuit Sunday Evening Service

A warm welcome as ever to our worship tomorrow evening.

The Zoom platform will be open from 6pm for those who wish to catch up with others from their church, and as usual worship will begin at 6:30.

The joining details follow-

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99984161376?pwd=bVlvMEJTMctSM2dOc2JxRWcvVVdxdz09>

Meeting ID: 999 8416 1376

Passcode: 1901

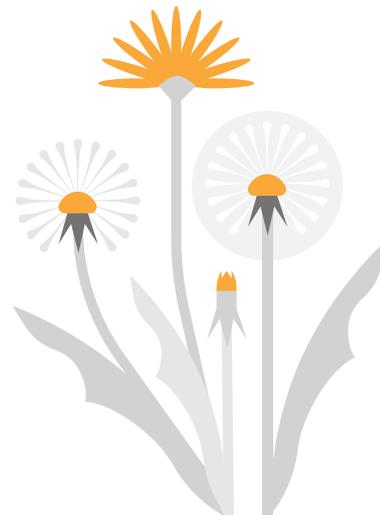
One tap mobile +16699006833, 99984161376 #, 1901#

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING (AGM) REPORT

Despite the continuing Covid-19 restrictions, we managed to hold the Annual Church Meeting (AGM) after morning worship on 27th June. 17 people were present and apologies received from ten others.

John Shuttleworth reported for the Church Stewards on what has been a difficult time during the coronavirus crisis. Our building was closed in March 2020 and worship services suspended altogether for some time. Sunday morning worship was resumed in September in the Ground Floor Hall, with social-distancing and mask-wearing but without hymn-singing. Services were live-streamed on YouTube for many months and are still available there. Thanks were expressed to the three active stewards (John, Helen and Heather) and the four regular preachers (Krystyna, Caroline, Nick and Al) for maintaining Sunday worship through the crisis and the restrictions.

Giselle presented a written report on our finances. She highlighted the fact that our total funds are now less than the value of our building and that our reserves have been reduced to a very low level. Expenditure has been higher than our income in each of the last four years. In the light of this parlous financial position, our 'assessment' to the Manchester Circuit has also been reduced, which will affect the ministerial staffing of the Circuit in future.



Thanks were expressed to Giselle as she stands down as Church Treasurer, and to Papa Andoh-Kweku who has volunteered to take over. Giselle and Richard will continue to assist in managing our financial affairs.

Don reported on two issues that had arisen during construction of the new block of flats on the old bank car park next door. Surveyors and solicitors have been engaged to resolve issues relating to the party wall between the two properties and the loss of our rights to light. The old bank building is to be converted into a bar and restaurant.

Nine representatives to the Church Council were re-elected and six Church Stewards were re-appointed. Other office-holders were confirmed in post. Nick Palfreyman volunteered to join the Pastoral Committee, which still needs a new secretary.



The AGM was immediately followed by a meeting of the Church Council. The Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2020 was approved (and submitted to the Charity Commission by 30th June as required). It was agreed to pay in full the circuit assessment of £20,000 for 2020/21 and £35,000 for 2021/22. The appointment of Papa Andoh-Kweku as Church Treasurer was confirmed by the Church Council.

The away-day for church leaders to consider the future of Withington Methodist Church and the way forward was postponed from 17th July (and will now be held instead on Saturday 30th October). The next Church Council meeting will be on 27th September.

Church Council approval was sought and granted in the meeting for us to release our 'rights to light and air' in return for compensation from the new owners of the adjacent property through a Right to Light Agreement.

Elaine Champion and Jackie Kirkby have stepped down as leaders of Tuesday Tots. Thanks were expressed to both of them for more than 40 years of service to the children of the church and local community.

NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

1 JULY 2021

3Generate report to Conference

In her report to the Methodist Conference, Youth President Phoebe Parkin detailed the impact of the pandemic on young lives and spoke of how young people should be not just heard in their churches, but listened to.

The report highlights how the Methodist Church has responded to the pandemic, working alongside the young people to provide a range of worship opportunities and resources.

3Generate, the annual Children and Youth Assembly of the Methodist Church took a different form and became 3Generate365, a year-round process of engagement with children and young people in their local setting to enable them to listen to God, discern what God is saying, deepen their faith and be confident in being evangelists sharing their faith with others.

3Generate365 creates continuous dialogue and action between children and young people and the Church in a local, circuit, district and connexional context. The theme for the year, “Tune In”, focused on children and young people tuning in to God. Nineteen District Ambassadors across seventeen districts have helped the team achieve the aims of 3Generate365 and helped children and young people explore their response to the pandemic and lockdown.

As part of 3Generate365, Fridays@5:17 were launched. Inspired by 1 Thessalonians 5:17, which reads “never stop praying”, this is a time for children and young people across the Connexion to stop, pray and listen to God. The 3Generate app has been relaunched and has been downloaded more than 500 times.

During the last year the Youth President and Youth Reps have adapted their work to be done online visiting over 50 youth groups, across 20 districts, chatting and sharing ideas.

In her speech to Conference Phoebe reaffirmed that young people are not the Church of the future, they are Church now, saying, “This isn’t about the

Conference listening to a report each year and voting through some resolutions. Whilst this is a really important part of the Methodist Church's engagement with children and young people, we need local churches, circuits and districts to be in conversation with children and young people all year round.

“We need every church member within every context to work with and alongside children and young people to enable and equip them to be agents of change as God calls them to be. This is about all of us, all members of the Body of Christ, working, praying and being in fellowship together.”

The Conference voted to lament the stresses and traumas experienced by young people during the pandemic and directs ministers with pastoral oversight to review how pastoral care might be more intentionally and actively offered to children and young people.

I JULY 2021

Justice, Dignity and Solidarity

The Methodist Conference has voted to adopt a far-reaching Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, underpinned by Methodist theology, which will see “a profound change in the culture, practices and attitudes of the Methodist Church”. As it is rolled out, the strategy will support Methodists with issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, with the aim of becoming a Church in which God's unconditional love is expressed in word and actions and where all people are able to play their part.

The strategy's recommendations include a celebration of the richness of the Church's diversity and opportunities to learn more of God, and to be changed by God through encounter with each other across the Church. Comprehensive training on topics of racism, gender, disability and LGBT+ awareness will be mandatory for anyone in a leadership role. The strategy will also introduce moves to ensure that the leadership of the Church reflects the diversity of its membership. A series of structures, processes and practices will be put in place to ensure that people are treated with justice and dignity and that the discipline of the Methodist Church is upheld in the

face of discrimination; preventing, challenging and redressing all behaviours which are discriminatory or belittling.

The strategy includes mandatory actions for local churches, circuits, districts and the Methodist Council which are all designed to embed a culture of respect for all, as equal partners in the Gospel. The implementation of the strategy will be supported by EDI Officers across every sphere of Church life.

Through this work, Conference aims:

- for the rich diversity of people within the Methodist Church to be recognised as a cause for thanksgiving, celebration and praise;
- to eradicate all discrimination and coercive control within the Methodist Church, and for all people to be treated justly and with dignity across the breadth of the Methodist Church;
- for a profound change in the culture, practices and attitudes of the Methodist Church so that all Methodists are able to be full participants in the Church's life.

Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, commented: "I warmly welcome the Methodist Conference vote to adopt the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity. The Methodist Church has a long history of being an advocate for social justice and challenging injustice.

"As a Church, we have made significant progress across all protected characteristics. However, discrimination on issues of race, sexuality, gender and disability remains a major challenge. The adoption and implementation of this strategy will enable us to become a more fully inclusive Methodist Church and will include organisational, structural and cultural changes required for us to say in truth that all are welcome."

The Revd Sonia Hicks, the new President of the Methodist Conference, commented: "Diversity, in all its forms, is a gift from God and I am pleased that this strategy will help us, as a church, to be more intentional in acknowledging and celebrating that gift."

Bevan Powell, Equalities & Diversity Adviser for the Church, commented: "We call upon every Methodist, in considering this report, to think about themselves, their own prejudices and about how this strategy will change

the exclusion that some people, including people we love as well as people we don't even know, may have experienced in the past.”

1 JULY 2021

Methodist Conference votes on banning of conversion therapy

The Methodist Conference has decided that no conversion therapy can take place in its name and has called on the UK government to ban the practice without delay.

The Conference also moved to support the ‘Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK’ definition of conversion therapy which offers the most significant and widely supported definition, with up to 20 health, counselling and psychotherapy organisations having signed up to it, including the Association of Christian Counsellors.

The text of the agreed reply to the Memorial to the Conference, which was brought by the Birmingham Synod, is as follows:

The Conference agrees:

- (1) to support and adopt the ‘Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK’ definition of conversion therapy as quoted above,
- (2) to call on all Methodists to refuse to offer or participate in offering conversion therapy in any form.
- (3) that no conversion therapy can take place in the name of the Methodist Church.

The Conference directs the Methodist Council to consider, draft and publish a policy on ‘Conversion Therapy’ in light of points (1) to (3) of this response. The Conference calls on the UK Government to ban ‘Conversion Therapy’ without further delay and therefore also directs the Methodist Council to consider further the most appropriate way in which to engage with HM Government on this issue.

Notes for editors:

The Memorandum defines conversion therapy as follows: 'Conversion therapy' is an umbrella term for a therapeutic approach, or any model or individual viewpoint that demonstrates an assumption that any sexual orientation or gender identity is inherently preferable to any other, and which attempts to bring about a change of sexual orientation or gender identity, or seeks to suppress an individual's expression of sexual orientation or gender identity on that basis. It goes on to say the practice of conversion therapy, whether in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity, is unethical and potentially harmful.

01 JULY 2021

New President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference elected for 2022/23



The Methodist Conference has elected the Revd Graham Thompson to serve as President and Anthony Boateng to serve as Vice-President, starting their year of office when the Representative Session of the Methodist Conference opens in Telford in June 2022.

Graham Thompson, said:

“I am overwhelmed by the designation and humbled by the belief that Conference has in me. I will do all I can to serve God and the Church as we

discern our path, emerging from the pandemic.”

Graham Thompson serves as Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter District, a role which he assumed following his service as Chair of the East Anglia District. Before offering for Methodist ministry, Graham worked as an accountant. He has served in a variety of Circuits, urban and rural, both as Presbyter and Superintendent as well as serving on variety of Methodist trusts, boards and Connexional committees. He has broad ecumenical experience and is an ecumenical Canon of Exeter Cathedral.

Anthony Boateng is a Local Preacher from the London District, with a passion for social action, politics, church unity, spiritual revival and creative ways of worship. He has been a member of the Conference since 2014. Anthony serves on several committees across the Church including as a convenor of the London District Social Responsibility Commission and member of Church Action for Tax Justice management committee. In his ‘day job’ Anthony is a caseworker for Ingeus - a government Work and Health Programme.

Anthony Boateng said:

“As a young Ghanaian immigrant who has spent all his life in the Methodist Church, it is an honour and privilege to be given this opportunity by my siblings to serve the church at such a challenging time. I am enthusiastic about stepping into this leadership role, and working alongside the whole Church to discern and move towards God's vision for us in the year ahead.”

The role of President of the Methodist Conference is reserved for presbyters and that of Vice-President for lay people or deacons.

13 JULY 2021

Presidency and Youth President condemn racism following Euro 2020 final

The Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, have issued the following statement responding to racist attacks against England team members after the Euro 2020 final:

“The hideous response towards the young black players of the England football team after the penalty shootout at the European cup finals is both abhorrent and deeply upsetting.

“Our theme for this year is God's invitation to all people to take a place at God's table. In her address to the Methodist Conference, Sonia spoke about the experiences of racism that had touched her and her family; Barbara spoke about diversity and inclusion bringing out the very best that people had to offer.

“We pray for the many who experience racism in their everyday lives and that we may all model ourselves on principles of love, compassion and respect for self and our neighbour alike.”

Phoebe Parkin, Youth President, has issued the following statement:

"Sancho, Rashford and Saka represented England so well. The racist abuse directed at them and the toxic nationalism shown by some England supporters burning Italian flags, booing during the national anthem and attacking Italian fans is inexcusable.

"Football isn't the problem. The problem is that we live in a society where sexism, racism, nationalism and violence are enabled, where not enough of us (including myself) actively work to challenge even the lowest levels of sexism, racism and nationalism. Jesus showed us that we should be peacemakers and showed us that we should love others as ourselves, showing the same grace and compassion that God shows to us."



14 JULY 2021

Reaction to Commons' vote on international aid budget reduction

The following statement has been released on behalf of the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the United Reformed Church following the vote in the House of Commons to reduce the UK's foreign aid budget and to impose new financial tests before restoring the legal commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid:

"The decision to renege on the UK's international development commitment is unfair, unwise and immoral.

The UK Aid programme plays a vital role in helping to tackle poverty and support sustainable development in the poorest places in the world. The shrinking economy in 2020 already meant that the international development budget would be reduced, and cutting this further by reducing the target from 0.7% to 0.5% has been devastating for many vital and necessary programmes. Plans to provide people with clean water and sanitation have been put on hold, programmes to support women in family planning have been savaged, and the UK's contribution to combat neglected tropical diseases has been slashed. Under the strict criteria set for a return to the 0.7%, the £4bn cut in annual funding is likely to be perpetuated year on year. This decision will undoubtedly cost many lives.

"Other major economies have shown leadership during the pandemic by increasing their international development programmes. The UK government's cut in international development stands in contrast to its recent announcement of the largest programme of spending on defence since the end of the Cold War. As those called to love our neighbours as ourselves in an interconnected world, we regard yesterday's vote as heartless and self-defeating."

Lynn Green, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain
The Revd Sonia Hicks, President of the Conference of the Methodist Church
Mr Peter Pay and the Revd Clare Downing, Moderators of General Assembly,
United Reformed Church

GIVING TO CHURCH – YOUR OFFERING

If you are unable to come to services on Sunday morning, how do you give your collection money to Church?

An increasingly popular and efficient way is to set up a standing order, or repeat payment, from your bank account direct to the Church's account.

Of course, this does not suit everyone, and some people prefer to use cash or cheques --- equally acceptable!

Please contact one of the stewards if you are unable to get to Church, and unsure how to give your offering.

If you wish to remain part of the envelope scheme, there will be some changes this year, so please contact Helen Fielding for details: leave a message on 0161 4912636, or email hfielding23@gmail.com

Most importantly, however you give, if you are a tax payer, PLEASE remember to GIFT AID your giving, meaning we can reclaim the tax, increasing your gift by 25%, at no further cost to yourself!

So here are the details you need:

Account name: Withington Methodist Church

Account no.: 06149480

Sort Code: 01-09-78

Cheques made payable to: Withington Methodist Church.

Gift Aid declaration forms: Giselle Du Toit at: giselle@withingtonmethodistchurch.org or ask one of the stewards.

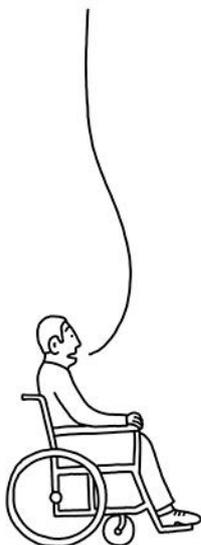
Finally, we know times are hard, but please consider your giving to our Church. As reported at the AGM, our expenditure has been greater than our income for several years, so every penny (or pound!) helps. Many thanks for your generosity.

THANK YOU FOR READING!

THE ENDING OF RESTRICTIONS

WHAT IT MEANS FOR MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

FREEDOM FOR YOU
MEANS ISOLATION
FOR ME. I'LL NO
LONGER FEEL SAFE
GOING OUT NOW
THAT MOST PEOPLE'S
MASKS ARE OFF



I'M TERRIFIED
THAT MY VACCINE
WON'T PROTECT
ME FROM THE
NEW VARIANTS
THAT WILL
NOW DEVELOP



I'VE KEPT MYSELF
HIDDEN AWAY FOR
ALL THIS TIME FOR
THE SAKE OF OLDER
PEOPLE. NOW I'M
BEING ALLOWED TO
BE FREELY INFECTED,
WHEN NO ONE KNOWS
THE LONG-TERM
CONSEQUENCES



WE CAN
SING HYMNS
AGAIN!



The next magazine will be out on the 5th September on the Withington Methodist Church Facebook Group and via email.

If you have anything you would like to contribute to next month's magazine please pass it on to Caroline Fielding - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

If you would like to receive an emailed copy of the magazine please email - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

Withington Methodist Church

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Minister: Rev Krystyna Kwarciak

Sunday Services

Morning Worship* : 10:45 am
*booking required

Regular Activities

Monday	Monday Monkeys – 10:00am - 11:30am
Tuesday	Tuesday Tots – 10:00am - 12 noon Tuesday morning coffee fellowship <i>see inside cover</i>
Wednesday	Rainbows – 5.30 - 6:30pm Brownies – 6:30 - 8:00pm
Thursday	Needles & Yarns craft group – 2-4pm
Friday	Men's Club – 2:00 - 4:30pm
Saturday	Contact Centre – 2:30 - 4:30pm

About Withington Methodist Church

We are a community of people who meet to worship God every Sunday morning and evening (see inside cover for details). Our services are open to all. At our morning service, we have both a crèche and Junior Church available for children ('All Age Worship' will only have the crèche as older children are welcomed into the main service).

During the week we have various other activities & organisations meeting at our premises. We have two toddler groups a week and are open weekday mornings for anyone to have a coffee and a chat. Our craft group meets on Thursday afternoons for anyone who wants to bring a craft or learn a new one. We have various rooms available for hire for anything from a once off hourly basis to a long term let, please speak to the Church Office for details, or email withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com.