



## The Methodist Church

**Bishopston, Easter Compton, Horfield, Shirehampton Methodist Churches and St Peter' Pilning.**

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We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit ([www.bsgc.org.uk](http://www.bsgc.org.uk)),  
a family of over forty churches serving communities across the local area.

These notices are also posted on <http://www.horfieldmethodist.org.uk>

**“Think and be thankful.” (Anon).**

**“The best of all – God is with us.” (John Wesley).**

### Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.

God, I never realized that historic events are not really one thing. Instead they are the combination of humanity's foibles boiling over into historicity. I did not even know historicity was a real word until today. And what will bubble up next? Australian fires, hurricanes, Derechos, Post Offices. Lord I am only human, how can I process all this? Or maybe I cannot. Did racism cause the Black Lives Matter marches and sometime riots? What ingredients meshed exactly right to finally give people the exact things they needed to get out and protest: racism, yes, but also poverty and pandemics, boredom and bereavement, time and trouble. These sorts of things come from the perfect balance, so that the risk you are taking is the best risk possible.

God, I have been thinking a lot about risk. Of Hagar the enslaved who risked raising her son in the desert, about Joseph the imprisoned who risked interpreting dreams of his cellmates, of Rahab of Canaan who defied expectations to help Joshua. What is the perfect risk for us as Christians right now? As we look at this particularly moment in history, how do we decided how to risk, and who to risk, and why? And how do we risk for ourselves and our community, and yet still practice grace towards all the rest of humanity - who are having to make the same decisions in different circumstances. Truly we are all weathering the same storm: but in different boats, with different tools and different gifts.

Really God, is now the time to discern gifts? I mean, really and truly God, I want you to know that now is a truly risky time to discern our gifts.

Remind us, it is worth the time.

Black Lives Matter.

Remind us, We are worth the time.

Safety first.

Remind us, You are worth the time.

God of the poor, the sick and the marginal.

And teach us how to risk in this historic moment, in the best, kindest most gracious way we can.

I pray this with all those who are risking right now. Help me stand with them I pray.

Amen.

*Used with permission of Pastor Katy Stenta)*

Rev Patrick.

#### **SERVICES, DEVOTIONS, ETC.**

**Bishopston.** Next service (to be confirmed)  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September (Revd Peter Mortlock),  
then 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**Easter Compton.** Next service to be confirmed

**Horfield.** This Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September (John Hopper).

Harvest Festival. Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> September. Revd Patrick Stonehewer will lead worship via video recording. We request that gifts of money only be brought to church, to be donated to the

Methodist Centre. Please send your gifts of provisions direct to the Food Bank in your area or alternatively contribute via a collection point at your local Supermarket.

**St. Peters, Pilning.** Next service, Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> September (Revd David Willis). Then, hopefully, full time in October.

**Shirehampton.** This Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September (Revd Patrick Stonehewer). This will include a carefully prepared Communion designed to ensure safe handling of the elements. The preacher for the following Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> September, is still to be confirmed.

In case you are worried, worship is specifically excluded by the Government from the definition of social gathering, but the rule of six would mean that if a group attended, they could not number more than 6 and would have to keep to themselves and not mix with anyone else. Unlikely to be a problem for us. Nevertheless, we are managing worship time by limiting arrival to 10.50am and avoiding social gathering after worship but departing home straightaway.

**Sunday Morning Live.** BBC1 at 10.00am. Sean Fletcher Bell and Sally Phillips take a look at the ethical and religious issues of the day.

**Songs of Praise.** BBC1 at 1.15pm. Revd Kate Botley marks Harvest at Saddleworth, on the Yorkshire-Lancashire border.

#### **BSGC Corona Virus Worship resources.**

Worship resources and other resources for reflection are available on the Circuit website. There is also a daily prayer, based around the Methodist Prayer Handbook, for people to use at 12.00noon.

**Our online worship videos** will continue for the time-being. Please do continue to watch these and pray for those who lead and work in all these faith-based organisations.

**Dial-a-Prayer.** A FREE phone service to hear prayers and news from the Methodist Church has been launched, updated each Thursday evening. Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514 and Listen to news: 0808 281 2478.

**Bible Study.** Please note that the next online Bible Study will be on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September and is on Lamentations. Zoom Meeting details:- Meeting ID: 824 4060 4625 Passcode: 202692.

**Video reflections.** A video reflection for this weekend is available on church websites.

**Afterzoom tea.** Sundays at 3.30pm to share news informally and see friends. Please join online via [zoom.us](https://zoom.us) Meeting ID: 962 4920 4497 Password: 004692.

If you would like to join either the Bible Study or Afterzoom Tea, but do not have internet access, you can use your phone: please dial **0330 088 5830** then enter the Meeting number followed by the Password for the particular event. We look forward to hearing you join in.

**All Age devotions.** Alongside our own devotions included in this news sheet, there are free materials for younger members of our congregations accessible via [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) (and other material for the young at heart too).

## **CHURCH NOTICES.**

### **All churches.**

It goes without saying that 2020 has been a strange year for us all, but amongst the challenges, it is those who are homeless and vulnerable who have suffered the most. We may have all been in the same Covid-19 storm, but we have not all had the same boat in which to stay afloat. The future looks incredibly unclear for those who are homeless or vulnerable, with uncertainty over how long accommodation will be provided for those who sleep rough, questions about what happens if night-shelters are not allowed to open, and the unknown impact of the end of the government's furlough scheme or the ending of the ban on evictions.

By joining in with Sleep Out 2020 you can make a real difference in ensuring that those without a home can have a warm meal, access to shelter and support in navigating their next steps. This year's sleep out will be a virtual event, a huge community of supporters taking part at home and sleeping somewhere unusual. It will start at 10.00pm on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> October and finish by 7.00am on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> October (World Homelessness Day).

Those who are hardy can sleep outside, in their garden, or if social distancing regulations allow, in an outdoor space at church\*. But those who are unable to sleep outside are invited to find somewhere unusual to sleep inside - in the bath, under the table or in the cupboard under the stairs! We will be hosting an inHope Sleep Out 2020 Facebook Group, bringing participants together virtually on the night to share their experiences, photos, and messages of support. As such it would be amazing if every church in Bristol was represented, making the Sleep Out a truly united response to homelessness in Bristol. To sign up to Sleep Out 2020 (Home Edition), participants just need to register at [www.inhope.uk/sleepout2020](http://www.inhope.uk/sleepout2020). A participation pack will then be sent out, including details of how to set up fundraising pages, sponsorship forms, ideas for fundraising and tips for surviving the night.

The recent Circuit Service for Education Sunday is available to watch on the Circuit Youtube channel

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCjPdHk7wmFsEelpy2hRf6nw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjPdHk7wmFsEelpy2hRf6nw) and includes a number of contributions, including a sermon from Barbara Easton, Head of Methodist Schools and Vice President Designate of the Methodist Conference.

Opportunity with accommodation for charity volunteer. ALFA CC (Abundant Life for All Christian Community, [www.alfacc.org.uk](http://www.alfacc.org.uk), Facebook ALFA CC) is a small Christian charity supporting adults with learning difficulties, based in Shirehampton. They currently have space in their house for a volunteer who is interested in working with such adults – rent is negotiable, depending on specific arrangements. Activities at the house include woodwork training, gardening training, hospitality, respite care and use of the quiet garden for prayer and reflection as well as administration of the charity. Help with any of these and/or development of other activities would be greatly appreciated. An enhanced DBS check would be required. Please contact Chris and Lyn Morton on [info@alfacc.org.uk](mailto:info@alfacc.org.uk) to discuss.

Be part of an umbrella of prayer for our City. Christians across Bristol are joining with many cities and nations around the world this week (18<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> September). Visit [www.10days.net](http://www.10days.net) for more details as we seek to draw near to God, and to walk in greater oneness with Him and with one another to be a blessing in this great city in which we live and

serve God.

Please join a weekly prayer meeting for the Methodist Church, 12.45pm to 1.00pm each Tuesday. Go to [www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/year-of-prayer/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/year-of-prayer/) for details and to register for the online link.

### **Shirehampton.**

In your prayers, please continue to remember all those who are unable to get out and join us, including Pearl, Sylvia, Joan, Michelle and Neil, Irene, Veronique and Caitlin, Gill and David, Robin, Bridget, Linda, Sheila, Ess and Jean; together with those who have health problems, including Jonathan, Rachel, and Christine (Ken Luxon's mother). If you can, please set time aside on Sunday morning between 10.00am and 12.00noon to share some time prayerfully with everyone. Please keep us informed of any pastoral concerns.

### **WEEKLY NOTICES, ETC.**

Please continue to submit all items to John Hopper by each Tuesday (0117 951 4529 or [p.hopper1@btinternet.com](mailto:p.hopper1@btinternet.com)). To be added to, or deleted from, the electronic circulation, please email John Hopper.

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### **This week's lectionary readings are:**

Exodus 16: 2 -15; Psalm 105: 1 – 6 & 37 - 45; Philipians 1: 21 - 30; and Matthew 20: 1-16.

### **Reflection by Dilwyn Edwards.**

In our Gospel reading for this week Jesus tells the story of the workers in the vineyard. The previous chapter ended with the words "But many at the front will find themselves at the back, and the back ones at the front." This story ends with the same point: "those at the back will be at the front, and the front ones at the back." New Testament scholar Tom Wright in 'Matthew for Everyone' introduces this story by telling of how as a boy, he watched a large party of hunters on horseback chasing a fox over open country with the local gentry in front riding in red uniform and on splendid horses: "Down the hillside they came and in the front were the leaders, in red hunting uniform, on splendid horses. Behind them were other fine riders on good-quality horses, wearing brown and black hunting clothes. Behind them again, less orderly, on various types and sizes of horse, and without any real uniform came a raggle-taggle group of riders, enjoying themselves, but not such a fine sight. But when the fox they were all pursuing hid in a thicket, and doubled back, the whole company of riders had to turn round and go back the way they'd come. Leading the way, this time, were the raggle-taggle group of riders on whichever old horses they had managed to find. In the middle were the riders in brown and black. And right at the back, having got to the bottom of the long hill only to find they must turn round and go back, were the red-coated brigade, embarrassed at bringing up the rear, something they weren't used to doing either in hunting or in society."

Those at the back, said Jesus, will find themselves at the front, and those at the front will find themselves at the back. There will be astonishment, embarrassment, delight and dismay. God is going to stand everything on its head. This time, the nobodies are in the lead, and the great and good are in the rear. This parable in which those who had only worked for one hour received the same pay as those who had worked all day is not of course easily applied to modern day industry or economics, though it does point us in the direction of concern for those in need. It is about God's kingdom here and hereafter and it challenges us about what we think matters. It also tells us not to think that we are special just because we have been in the church a long time! Above all it affirms that God's grace is not the sort of thing you can bargain with or try to store up. It is not the sort of thing that one person can have a lot of and someone else only a little. God does not make contracts with us, as if we could bargain or negotiate for a better deal. He makes covenants, in which he promises us everything and asks of us everything in return.

Alison Adams is a Self Supporting Minister (SSM) in the Church of England. At present she is Canon Pastor and Sub Dean at Leicester Cathedral. She says that she is often asked why she does a full-time job for nothing. Implicit in the question, as in our Gospel, is the assumption that things must be valued in money. This assumption permeates all layers of society: peoples' importance is measured by their job, and the importance of the job is expected to be reflected in the wages. But, as we all know, what some people – whom we cannot do without – take home in wages in no way reflects their value to us. Commenting on this passage Jane Williams (at one time lecturer in Theology at Trinity College, Bristol) says "If God can bear to filter justice through the lens of mercy, who are we to forget how much we have been forgiven, and demand harsh justice for others?" Judith Dimond in 'Gazing on the Gospels' asks us to consider the landowner's question which is also God's question: "Are you envious because I am generous?"

A similar point is made in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Our story is one of grace and a hymn suggested for this Sunday is John Newton's 'Amazing Grace'. It is timely to reflect that Newton, an Anglican clergyman, was a former slave trade ship master. It took him some time, but eventually he renounced the slave trade saying that: "It will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me, that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders." His graphic pamphlet 'Thoughts Upon the Slave Trade' helped William Wilberforce in his campaign to abolish slavery.

*"Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And he will lead me home."*

A prayer by Judith Dimond.

*"Gracious God, help me accept  
I will not always be rewarded  
For hard work or loving action.  
It is not for me to demand from you  
Or desire to do better than my neighbour.  
I long for the time when we stand before you in the Kingdom  
And all join hands in a circle of love.  
Amen."*