



Romford Methodist Circuit

First Monday Pastoral letter

by the Revd David Jebb, Superintendent Minister

1st FEBRUARY 2021



Dear Friends,

I wonder how the latest lockdown makes you feel? I know that some feel afraid, whilst for others frustration, anger, or even despair are the overwhelming emotions.

My First Monday Pastoral letter this time has two purposes: first, to remind you that, however you are feeling today, you are not alone; I think all of us are finding this lockdown more difficult than previous ones. Also, there are members of the church family (and the local community) keen to come alongside you and to support you in whatever way is right for you. You may wish to offer support: from chatting regularly on the phone, to ordering someone's regular shop online, there are many ways in which to reach out and share one another's burdens, which will be so important in these grey February days. The pastoral assistants will continue their vital role, as will a some of our church groups. If you ever need or want to offer support, please be in touch with any of the Presbyters and lay workers /Pastoral leaders who are available.

The second purpose of this letter is to let you know that my support is with you as your church has taken the decision that, with immediate effect, the church building needs to be closed to the congregation and members of the public. Rapidly rising rates of illness in the local area, apparently due to the greater transmissibility of the new coronavirus variant, is the main reason we all have taken this step. We want to keep you and all of us as safe as we can, whilst still providing spiritual nourishment and support. To this end, services will continue to be available (a mixture of live stream and recordings) each week on Sundays, and on the website for viewing whenever suits you. Prayer groups and study groups are meeting on other days. Pastoral support

will also continue online or by phone or via email. If you would like to be put in touch with a church group, please contact your pastoral leaders / visitors, church stewards, ministers via telephone or email. We will try our best to listen to you and help you as much as we can.

The most important thing is that people take the current rules very, very seriously. We shouldn't do anything outside them, and in fact, even within them we should be doing our level best to minimise unnecessary contacts, this will help relieve the pressures in the next few weeks.

As you will know, the Government currently allows worship with a congregation physically present in the church building. Whilst this is still permissible, it is increasingly becoming inadvisable. Around 90 per cent of our churches in the Connexion are not now having worship with a congregation physically present and many have moved back online for the next coming weeks / months.

I would now strongly encourage the churches / groups not to have physically present worship in the next few weeks. The risks are now too great, even with all of the precautions that we have so painstakingly put in place.

Meantime, I am expecting the church councils sometime in the future to look to re-open the church building for congregational worship as soon as it is safe to do so according to our risk-assessments and guided by both government and Methodist Church / TMCP guidelines.

Good news is vaccinations against Covid 19 are out and a group of people have been invited to receive the vaccinations already which is a great news. Despite the advent of vaccines, this time of pandemic will be with us for some time

to come. Even with the gloom, anxiety, and frustration of living through these days, I am optimistic that we can set ourselves a new road, with better priorities for our Circuit, Churches and our Nation and our World. I believe that much good can be achieved and we must remain adamant in our prayer, as we ask: “Stay with us, Lord, on our Journey”.

In and through all of this I know that our ministry will continue to bring hope to many. We are hoping to offer series of Lent Study online based on the book called ‘Reflections on the water’ (*see the picture of the cover on the front of my letter*) by Revd Dr Barbara Glasson who is the one of the former Presidents of the British Methodist Conference. In her reflections for Lent, Barbara offers us through forty days of focusing on the theme of water: its power, potential, terror, and gentleness, providing a deep well of daily prayer and meditation. That should inspire us as we continue to care for the vulnerable, isolated, and bereaved, and as we pray for all whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by this dreadful pandemic.

Ash Wednesday, Lent Study and Holy Week details are below of this letter for you. Please do save the dates in your diary. **To ensure security, particularly with Zoom services, where you would like to join a service, please contact either the minister or the church which promotes the service, and they will provide you will the Zoom links.**

In addition, we have weekly Prayer time together on Saturday morning and following a theme to pray together and also created a WhatsApp prayer warriors group to pray at any time of the day, to keep our eyes upon our wonderful heavenly Father and to give us a sense of praying together every day.

With my best wishes for all that lies ahead in this New month (February) and my thanks for all that is being achieved through your goodness and generosity.

I remain grateful for all that you do, and this comes more than anything with my continued prayers.

My next first MONDAY PASTORAL LETTER will be out on Monday 1st March 2021.

With prayers

David Jebb

THE DETAILS OF THE LENT & HOLY WEEK SERVICES

ASH WEDNESDAY (ZOOM / FB Live)

17th February at 7:30pm led by Revd A Fummey on Zoom.

LENT STUDY based on 'Reflections on the Water'

- **1st Session** on Thursday 25th February at 7:30 pm and Saturday 27th February at 9:30 am - Karen Bell (ZOOM / FB Live)
- **2nd Session** on Thursday 4th March at 7:30 pm and Saturday 6th March at 9:30 am - Armstrong Fummey (ZOOM / FB Live)
- **3rd Session** on Thursday 11th March at 7:30 pm and Saturday 13th March at 9:30 am – David Jebb (ZOOM/ FB Live)
- **4th Session** on Thursday 18th March at 7:30 pm and Saturday 20th March at 9:30 am – Led by Jason Vinyard (ZOOM/ FB Live)
- **5th Session** on Thursday 25th March at 7:30 pm and Saturday 27th March at 9:30 am – led by Barry Sansom (ZOOM/ FB Live)

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE / MEDITATION / REFLECTION led by David Jebb (ZOOM / FB Live)

Time: Apr 1, 2021 07:30 PM London

GOOD FRIDAY 2ND APRIL AT 11 AM – Good Friday Meditation led by Jason Vinyard (ZOOM / FB Live)

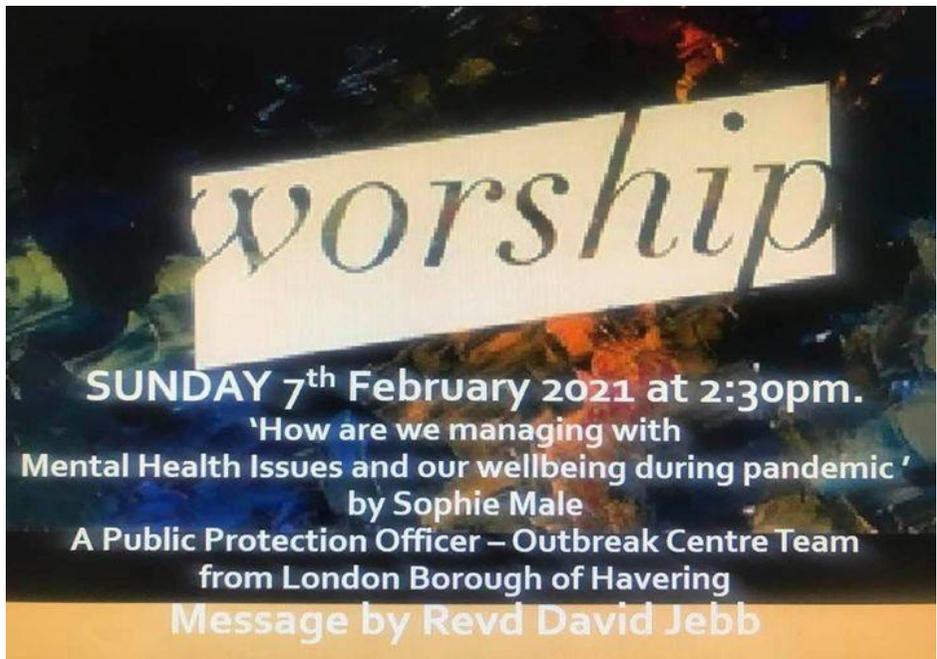
GOOD FRIDAY 2ND APRIL 2021 AT 3PM
MEDITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS (ZOOM / FB Live)

The last Seven Words at the Foot of the Cross reflection led by David Jebb.

FOR EASTER SUNDAY AND OTHER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES. Please do contact either minister or the church steward(s) for the online access details.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

MENTAL HEALTH & WELBEING SUNDAY – 7th February 2021 at 2:30pm with Sophie Male . (ZOOM / FB live)



worship

SUNDAY 7th February 2021 at 2:30pm.

'How are we managing with
Mental Health Issues and our wellbeing during pandemic'
by Sophie Male

A Public Protection Officer – Outbreak Centre Team
from London Borough of Havering

Message by Revd David Jebb