

## SOUTHEND AND LEIGH CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

Registered Charity No: 1134248

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Tuesday 17th March 2020.

### ***1 Peter 5:7 - "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you".***

#### Southend and Leigh Circuit Response to Corona Virus

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It seems we are as a nation heading into unprecedented times. None of us have ever seen anything like this. Over the last weeks we have watched and prayed as nation upon nation has fallen to the virus. With more and more cases being reported and tragically more deaths in the UK we have seen the governments response increase. Yesterday many of us watch our Prime Minister a usually confident man look worried and introduce more restrictions in the battle to stop this virus spread.

Today our President and the Senior Leadership team of our Church joined our Brothers and Sisters in the all the major Churches in Britain to cease Worship Services and all activity in the churches. Kathy as Circuit Meeting secretary and myself had already made the decision to cancel Thursdays Circuit Meeting. Which is a shame for as well as our usual business I had some really exciting news to share about the experience project which we are running at Whittingham Avenue. All business will now be transferred to the June meeting.

So, what next? Like everyone else the Methodist Church is taking one day at a time. There is regular advice and updates daily on the Methodist Church website. **The Churches are to shutdown all church activities until further notice.** All services, groups and gatherings. Some services may have to take place, Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms but numbers will have to be limited and where possible postpone. I'm presently taking advice about the Night Shelter.

I will contact the senior steward of each church and staff members when we can reopen. If you let your premises to outside lets it is their responsibility and insurance whether they stay open but bear in mind the church council members remain the trustees of the building and are liable. You may want to decide if you're willing to take the risk in the present climate or at least check each lettings insurance. All members should decide for themselves what is the best way forward to protect themselves in this present time.

Let's remember first and foremost we are a church. We exist too worship and give thanks to God and secondly to serve one another. While it may be impossible to meet together for a short while we can still worship together. Every week there be a service provided via

either live stream on the Methodist Church Website or a downloadable sheet also on the Website. Some of the bigger church within the country are also live stream Service, i.e HTB, Hillsong, etc.

We should also take care of one another, all churches have directory, lets ring one another up and keep a watchful eye out. Those well enough and not at risk help one another as well. Unfortunately, we have to limit face to face pastoral visits from the minister's but we are all at the end of the telephone.

We do not, at the moment have any reported cases within the membership of the circuit.

On a personal note some of you may know that my wife Natalie had pneumonia at Christmas. Unfortunately, due to a long-standing life condition (intracranial hypertension) she hasn't recovered yet. So, it is with much sadness we as a family have decided to self-isolate. I myself have asthma and we decided that puts us very much at risk. If every situation has a silver lining, then at least you will be able to get me hold of me by telephone or email. Details of which at the top of this letter.

Finally, be assured of our prayers at this difficult time.

A prayer from the Methodist Church:

*God of all hope we call on you today.  
We pray for those who are living in fear:  
Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's reactions to them.  
May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.*

*We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.  
For those people who are worried about attending worship.  
For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other  
For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.  
Grant us your wisdom.*

*Holy God, we remember that you have promised that  
Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.  
Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.*

*Amen*

Yours in Christ.



Rev Pete Moorhouse