

Methodist News



The Pilgrim People of the Moment

The Spirit might be asking us to be brave, to not cling to the old but to be the pilgrim people of the moment.

The Government announced that places of worship may open for private prayer from 13th June. Jude Levermore, Head of Mission for the Methodist Church in Britain, writes of her hopes for how the Church will move forward, by being 'the pilgrim people of the moment'.

When Methodism changed from a connexion of societies to become a denomination or church we began to erect and use separate Methodist buildings which became our churches. Methodism came first, our buildings came second. As we begin to think about 'going back into our buildings', I am hopeful that we will take time to consider what we have learned from being out of them. I am hopeful that we will have solidified our understanding that church is not a building; we teach that to our children, but do we hold that in our hearts? We, the people, are the church, the body of Christ meeting together in community, acting together in mission, longing together for the transformation of our world, responding together to our calling.

I'm praying that as we share a road map for leaving lockdown, with all its needful risk assessments and procedures, we will guard against entering another lockdown, that of being so caught up in our buildings that we miss the opportunities to be a church without them.

Anecdotally, I have seen and heard of such amazing innovation and creativity over these last months, as churches seek to serve their neighbourhoods and be good news and speak good news. All around the connexion new and wonderful things are springing up.

As our managing trustees consider carefully their next steps my hope is that they carve out time not only to navigate a way through the pages of the risk assessment, but to first undertake a spiritual assessment; to what is God calling this church, this chapel? I believe the Spirit might be asking us to be brave, to not cling to the old but to be the pilgrim people of the moment. Let's be a people of vision, let's not long to get back to normal, let's see what God might do if we allow ourselves to be led somewhere new.

Let us be generous and gracious to one another, allow different churches and chapels to make the decisions they need to without pressure to get on with the usual, allowing instead time to consider the Spirit.

I am reminded of Charles Wesley's wonderful Pentecostal hymn: *Jesus, confirm my heart's desire/to work, and speak, and think for thee;/still let me guard the holy fire,/and still stir up the gift in me.* Let us guard the holy fire, and guard our buildings only as a means of that, let us keep walking the way together bearing the burden of grief for all that and those, which and who have been lost, in love for one another and in service to our world.

Revd Dr Helen Hooley

www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/the-methodist-blog/the-spirit-might-be-asking-us-to-be-brave-to-not-cling-to-the-old-but-to-be-the-pilgrim-people-of-the-moment/

Re-Opening

Arrangements for re-opening in line with the latest requirements have been discussed and we have obtained feedback from our attendees as to how they feel about returning to worship with restrictions in place. We are hoping to have re-opened by late August for an abbreviated service and possibly for our House Groups. House Groups are currently holding 'virtual get-togethers' and we are still accessing a variety of local and national Sunday services, details of which are being circulated to our attendees.

It is good to keep in touch as a church and to know that prayers are being said. If you wish for us to pray for someone or a particular situation, please let Ruth (861461) or Barbara (860823) know. We are all eagerly looking forward to meeting together again for worship and fellowship at services and to all the other activities, such as coffee mornings, that have had to be curtailed.