



Salford Methodist Circuit



Circuit Magazine

Edition 4 - September 2020

Waiting

*The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?*

Wait for the Lord;

be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalms 27: 1; 14

“Waiting is the most intense and poignant of all human experiences.” *W.H. Vanstone*

When the call came, back in March, to close churches, it wasn't a surprise, and it wasn't at all difficult. We just did it, and wondered how long it might last. We looked for ways of doing things, and keeping in touch with one another. And we began a waiting game. This waiting game goes on still. And the way ahead is not really all that clear. The virus is still there. It is still taking lives in this country, though not in the numbers we heard about in previous months. But, we're told, it could have a major resurgence as we move towards the winter. Meanwhile, our churches are at very different stages in the process of reopening. Some have begun work on risk assessments to allow some form of worship to happen. Others have recognised that there is no appetite of attempting to resume worship under the present restrictions. Some have remained open or reopened in part for a community activity to happen. It's important that we respect one another in the places where we are. While we are one circuit, each church council is responsible for decisions concerning their own building. It's a little bit like feeling your way around an unfamiliar space in the dark. We all have to do it in our own way and in our own time.

The reality is that anything we can resume at present is a far cry from what we're all used to. A minister from elsewhere in the country posted on Facebook last night that he had taken his first service since March and it was "one of the most disturbing experiences of my ministry." His reason for this statement was that what he was able to do lacked that sense of community and togetherness that is so much a part of what we know as church - the singing together, the sharing of refreshments, the sharing of conversation were all missing, and everyone was hidden behind their mask.



**Rev Clare had got a little too used to
watching online worship at home...**

But what does waiting mean in the present circumstances? Is this just some kind of limbo time? Are we waiting for the go-ahead to resume where we left off in mid March? Are we waiting until it's safe to pick up the reins of our various activities and to carry on as if nothing has happened? Are we waiting for a green light? Perhaps we are being naïve - actually something HAS happened! The entire world has been changed by this time. And the church will be changed. In fact, perhaps it's more important to acknowledge that we are being changed by our recent experiences, and therefore that the church must be changed, because we are the Church! Church isn't a building or set of buildings. Church isn't the things we do routinely, like worship for an hour a week. Church isn't the money or the committees or the coffee mornings. Church is much bigger than that. Church is people responding to the living God in the midst of their lives. Church is acknowledging our God, and offering ourselves. Church is who we are every day of the week, every hour of the day. Church is who we are in the light of our recognition that God is there in all times and in all places and in all circumstances. And Church is what we do in response to that recognition. That response might be our praise and gratitude as well as our requests presented to the living God. That response might mean offering care to one another. It might mean sharing what we have discovered of God, in order to encourage one another. It might mean making a practical response to the needs of our local community, or the needs of our world. It might mean seeking ways of encouraging others to find what we have found in God. Church is people who know that they exist in the constant unfailing love of God, and their response to that knowledge.

God hasn't left, just because we have abandoned our buildings and our familiar rituals and rhythms. God has never left us for one moment. Yes, we are waiting, but what are we waiting for? We haven't stopped being church, because we can't meet together. We've tried to encourage that recognition of God with us through our online services, and the things we have written and shared. But perhaps we need to put our energy now into asking questions about what can we continue to do in response to God? What new things should we be trying to do as we begin to work with God to be a new church for a new time?

What are we waiting for? I guess at different points in recent months I've been waiting for someone to tell me what to do. But experience has now shown me that while the government may well tell us what to do, their instructions often seem to lead to more confusion, and can be followed by complete u-turns. I'm not saying that in criticism - I wouldn't have their task for any money! But I've learned not to rely on or react quickly to their instructions. Similarly the Methodist Church has issued guidelines, but they change so frequently, and have so many anomalies that nothing is simple. Are we waiting for the virus to disappear in a similar way to which it appeared? That could happen of course, but no one can say when. Or a vaccine could render it harmless? But that's no certainty either. Are we waiting for God to issue some decree that tells us who to be and how to be in this time of pandemic? Are we waiting for a flash of inspiration or some kind of supernatural revelation? Or has God been whispering in a still small voice into each of our hearts right through this time?

Everything I write at present seems to form into questions. I think that is the way it is meant to be. This time is not about waiting for the government or the Methodist Church, or even our local church leaders to issue a decree, and then all getting on with whatever

it is. It's not even about waiting for God to move us into a different place, from which we can find the way forwards. It's about the questions that form in our minds, and about our working our way through them to find answers. It's about the small ideas we may have that seem insignificant, but may help to move the church forwards. It's about accepting that we are changed, and that the new thing which will emerge will be different from the old model of church. It's about recognising that while we can't go back to things just the way they were, that the future holds all kinds of possibilities. It's about finding those possibilities through searching our own hearts and listening for a whisper of the Spirit. And then having the courage to act to make things happen.

Whilst the future is far less clear than any of us have ever known, let's not wait for a time when we can roll back onto the path from which we were diverted in March. Let's ask the questions, what can I and what can we do now, that is Church? How can I connect with the living God who is never more than breath away. And how can we find ways of being the living Church now? Your small, insignificant ideas, put with everyone else's small insignificant ideas may be exactly the way forward that we seek! Why not share them. But one thing is really important. If you have an idea, by all means test it out as a possibility with your friends, or your church leaders. But don't assume that your idea might be something for someone else to get on with. Perhaps it was given to you for you to initiate!

Singing The Faith 497

*God in my living, there in my breathing, God in my waking, God in my sleeping,
God in my resting, there in my working, God in my thinking, God in my speaking.
Be my everything, be my everything, be my everything, be my everything.*

*God in my hoping, there in my dreaming, God in my watching, God in my waiting,
God in my laughing, there in my weeping, God in my hurting, God in my healing.
Be my everything, be my everything, be my everything, be my everything.*

*Christ in me, Christ in me, Christ in me, the hope of glory, You are everything,
Christ in me, Christ in me, Christ in me, the hope of glory, be my everything.
Be my everything, be my everything, be my everything, be my everything.*

©Tim Hughes

Singing The Faith 89

*Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.
Our God, You reign forever our hope, our Strong Deliverer,
You are the everlasting God, the everlasting God,
You do not faint, You won't grow weary,
You're the defender of the weak, You comfort those in need,
You lift us up on wings like eagles.*

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Rev Clare Stainsby

Separation

Aleck and I took many years to come to a decision that would change our lives. It meant that we took on a huge responsibility, we had to get to know how to deal with going back to getting up in the middle of the night bleary eyed and then get up a few hours later for the rest of the day. We had to be ultra-organised to ensure this decision we made would be manageable since all four of us work full time. We, with the help of Vee, George's girlfriend, came to know that we needed to keep a diary of events so that we would be able to decipher what was the best plan of action. Millie, our miniature labradoodle was born on the 31st of December 2018 and was welcomed into our family home on the 23rd of February 2019. We have always owned cats. From being a toddler, I have had a cat the first one being Aka until Holly our 2-year-old cat sadly went missing in May this year. Millie from day one became the centre of attention with not only the adults of our family but the children too.



She has black curly hair and big brown eyes. It took a few weeks for us to get used to her routine but because we were keeping a diary, we soon saw a pattern develop and that made life so much easier. The first couple of weeks were difficult as we decided that she would sleep downstairs and we heard her cry when we all went to bed; we were all so tempted to go downstairs to pick her up but resisted it, but it was hard. She soon got used to our routine as well as us getting used to her routine. As a puppy she would nip us when we played with her but we soon learned to have one of her rope toys to hand so that as soon as she went to nip us, we

put the toy in her mouth. Even today the first thing she does when she comes to welcome us home is go and find a toy to have in her mouth and with her tail wagging ten to the dozen, we make a big fuss of her and she of us. She has made a lot of friends at Victoria Park, they play together and, in many ways, it has helped Aleck, George, Vee and I get to know a lot of people before and during the pandemic we are going through. Having a dog is such a responsibility in many ways. Before we can plan anything for the day, we need to take into consideration Millie's needs. She is ok to be left on her own for 4/5 hours but if we know we are going to be out any longer than that we need to ensure that we have someone to look after her. She became a part of our family from the moment we met her. We love being with her and in some ways miss her when she's away for a day out with family members but we always look forward to seeing her wagging tail as soon as she returns home. We pray that we will be blessed to have Millie for many years to come.

During the pandemic our church family have had to be separated from each other, I can't tell you how painful that has been for me as a minister. There have been days when I have so wanted to go into each of the churches even if it meant to simply sit alone. I have had to go in on very few occasions and I have imagined everyone being there. From coming up the path to be welcomed at the door by our door stewards and possibly another member of the church family. Walking along corridors and into foyers where the hymn books and bibles are and people gathering together greeting one another maybe not having seen each other for a whole week. In some churches there is a real buzz and in others there is a quietness and people simply settling themselves

down, making themselves comfortable. Some people saying a short prayer as they enter into what has become their/our routine. At some churches as I prepare myself to lead worship, I am joined at the front with various people maybe needing a bit of information or to have a short conversation with me. We are family and every family have some form of routine whether it is a strict routine or a more casual routine. It takes time to get into a routine and it takes time and patience to change a routine when it needs to be changed for whatever reason. When we are able to return to worship, we will need time to get used to the physical changes that have had to be made to areas of our buildings. We will need to have time to get used to these changes and other changes to the routines that we have been used to. Yes, it will feel different and as I said it is going to take us time. Some people take longer than others, to be able to settle into the new routine. We will get there. We need to remember that even a pandemic can't separate us from being a church family and certainly nothing can ever separate us from the love of God. I look forward to the time when I can be with you again, I may not be wagging my tail like Millie would but I will be very happy to see you. Until we meet again, I will continue to pray for you.

Amen.

Rev Kim Ratcliffe

Worship & Prayer in the Salford Circuit

While our buildings remain closed and restrictions apply, we are still active in our worship of God.

Every Sunday we post an **act of worship** on our YouTube channel. You can watch along when it goes 'live' at 10am, and the videos remain up after, so you can catch up at any time. A full transcript of the service is also available from our website.

To find the details of the Sunday Worship, visit www.salfordcircuit.org.uk/worship

We are now able to offer the weekly **service video on DVD** for those unable to access it online. If you would like one, please contact Matt Collins with your address.

We also have a weekly **Prayer meeting** on Zoom every Tuesday at 7pm. Details of how to join are emailed out each week, sign up for our Circuit emails at www.salfordcircuit.org.uk/mailing-signup.

If you don't have access to Zoom, you can call into the Prayer meeting from any landline or mobile phone. For the details of how to do this, contact Matt Collins or Rev Clare Stainsby.

The Methodist Church in Britain also offers a free 'Dial-a-Prayer' service, allowing you to hear a recorded prayer by calling **0808 281 2514**.

Digital Buddies:

Free one-to-one support for those dealing with loneliness, or needing support with how to use your phone, computer or tablet

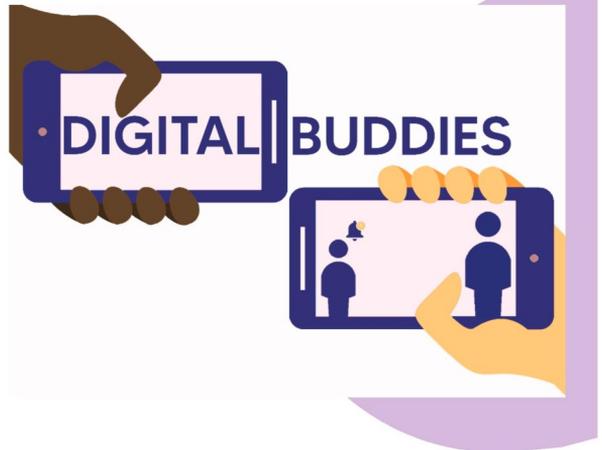
Digital Buddies is for:

- Anyone who is struggling to use their phone, tablet or computer to communicate well.
- Or anyone who is feeling isolated and could do with someone to talk to.

Digital Buddies is great for teaching people who feel isolated how to connect with friends, family or community groups online. Our volunteers can introduce their buddies to platforms they can use to keep connected to their networks.

Digital Buddies links trained volunteers with anybody who needs help with their digital devices, or simply needs someone to chat to during this period of isolation and beyond.

Volunteers will chat to, or coach their buddies on how to use their devices over the phone.



How do I access this support or refer somebody?

You can complete our referral form:

<https://forms.gle/1b2922MwpMRN4ZnZ8>

You can call our digital buddies coordinators:

Katherine: 07931732791 Emily: 07714749562

Or email us:

digitalbuddies@salfordfoundation.org.uk

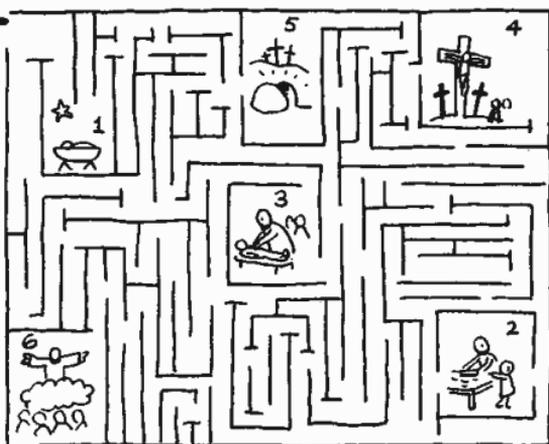
After an initial phone call with one of our coordinators, you will then be linked with a trained volunteer who will provide remote one-to-one support or be available for a friendly chat.

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www.salfordfoundation.org.uk

CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY?

START



END

You must travel right through each event in Jesus' life in the right order!

1. Jesus is born at Bethlehem.
2. Joseph teaches Jesus to work as a carpenter.
3. Jesus heals a little girl.
4. Jesus is crucified.
5. Jesus is alive again.
6. Jesus ascends to heaven.

Kids Bible Wordsearch

Animals in the Bible Puzzle # 1

Fit the words in the list into the diagram below reading forward, backward, up, down, diagonally, always in a straight line.

BEAR
CAMEL
DONKEY
GAZELLE
GOAT
HART
HORSE
IBEX
JACKAL



LEOPARD
LION
MOLE
MOUSE
NIGHTHAWK
OSTRICH
SHEEP
UNICORN
WOLF



JOHN THE BAPTIST

A WORKSHEET SORT OF THING. WRITE OR DRAW IN THE GAPS

BIBLE VERSE
MARK CHAPTER 1
VERSES 1 TO 8

My favourite
clothes



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Marks for
style (out
of 10)

- camel hair jacket
- Leather belt
- sandals
- sandals with socks

WHY DID JOHN
THE BAPTIST
HAVE SUCH AN
ODD TASTE IN
FOOD & CLOTHES?

BAPTISM

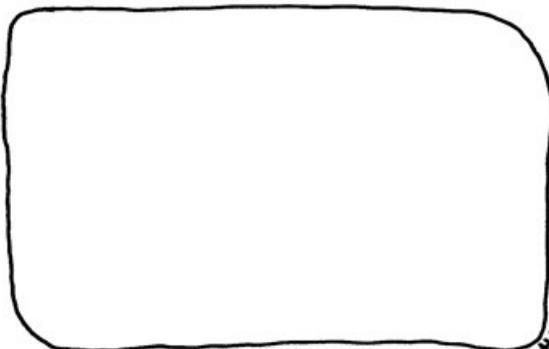
PICTURE OR EXPLANATION

REPENTANCE

(AN EXAMPLE OF)

WHAT
WAS
JOHN'S
MESSAGE?

HOW DO YOU IMAGINE JOHN THE BAPTIST



OR



JOHN THE BAPTIST

TOP 5 FOODS

- 5.
- 4.
- 3.
- 2.
- 1.

Locusts & honey
RECIPES:
Rank from 1 to 4

- Raw locust & honey
- locust & honey sandwich
- Deep fried locust, chips & honey
- locust curry with honey

THINGS TO
TAKE TO THE
DESERT



(NUTSHELL)

.....

.....

THINGS TO PREPARE
FOR:



HAVE
YOU BEEN
BAPTISED
OR CONFIRMED

?

IF NOT WHY NOT
ASK SOMEONE
ABOUT IT.

Methodist Conference Digest

At the end of June and beginning of July, the Methodist Conference met virtually to discuss and vote on a number of important issues for our church. Due to the restrictions of meeting via Zoom, a number of issues have been deferred to the 2021 Conference, including 'God in Love Unites Us'. But below you can see a snapshot of some of the discussions that were had.

Election and Induction of the President and Vice-President

On Saturday 27th June the Revd Richard Teal was elected and inducted as the new President of the Methodist Conference. The President chose the final words of John Wesley as his theme for this year, 'The best of all is, God is with us' and spoke in his address of the orientation of the Church.

The Vice-President, Carolyn Lawrence, was also elected and inducted. Carolyn is part of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women and spoke of her love for the church flawed though it is in her address to the Conference.



Videos and transcripts of their addresses can be found on the Methodist Church in Britain website.

The Conference elected the Revd Sonia Hicks to be President and Mrs Barbara Easton to be Vice-President of the Methodist Conference 2021/2022.

God For All

The Conference voted overwhelmingly to implement a new Church-wide strategy for Evangelism and Growth. 'God for All' commits the Church theologically, culturally, and financially to deepen its mission to be a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, and inclusive Church and is the result of a year-long consultation across the Connexion involving thousands of conversations with leaders, practitioners, and ecumenical partners. In the context of declining membership numbers, God for All prioritises helping new people become disciples of Jesus, starting new churches, and raising up new lay and ordained leaders to join God in engaging diverse rural, urban, estate, and suburban communities across Britain. The strategy also focuses significant energy and resources on developing the role of young evangelists, serving communities experiencing marginalisation, expanding the Church's digital presence, and helping Methodists live out their faith in everyday life.

God for All will launch this September with a focused Year of Prayer that will offer the Church's work to God.

Inclusive Methodist Church

The Conference voted to strengthen and increase the work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) throughout the Connexion, through the development of the Inclusive Methodist Church Strategy. It called on Methodists to engage in their own contexts, to confront and challenge all racism and other forms of unjust discrimination; and directed every Circuit to convene a forum for reflection, conversation and planning to ensure that such actions are carried out in each local context. It also voted to incorporate work already started to ensure people who are intersex or transgender are included in the life of the Church, into the Inclusive Church Strategy.

The Methodist Church's work on EDI can be found here: www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/

3Generate

The Methodist Youth President, Thelma Commey presented the report of 3Generate, the Methodist Church's Children and Youth Assembly to the Conference. The 3Generate manifesto this year focuses on the life of the Church and the Church's position within the world. Among the challenges are to ensure that God is in the Church's conversations and to ensure that the Church is kind, helpful and respectful and working towards being inclusive and welcoming. The manifesto also calls for the Church to be better resourced to support people, particularly the young, who face mental health issues and for more churches to be eco-friendly with the Church challenging those in power on issues of climate change, poverty and peace. In particular, it urged every Church Council to include the 'Eco Church challenge' on its agenda during the next connexional year.

You can see the whole manifesto at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/15984/final-a4.pdf>

Methodist Homes (MHA)

The Methodist Conference received a report from Sam Monaghan, the Chief Executive of MHA. The Conference learned of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on MHA with more than 430 residents from its care-homes, three staff and a number of live-at-home clients having died as a result of the virus. Sam also shared the impact that the pandemic has had emotionally on staff and residents.



Occupancy rates at MHA care-homes have reduced from around 90% pre-Covid-19, to around 77% and could take up to two years to recover. Fundraising opportunities have also been reduced. These factors will see a reduction in income for MHA of an estimated £20million this year and the need for MHA to make £5million of savings. Sam called upon the Methodist Church to support MHA, to pray and to call for testing, Personal Protective Equipment, funding and for those in later life not be marginalised.

God's Holiday

Once upon a time, in the beginning, there was absolutely nothing! Just darkness and water and nothingness! And there was God! And God decided to make the nothingness into somethingness. So he put on his thinking hat and off he went.

First he switched on a light. "That's better. I can see what I'm doing now." He practised switching it on and off for while, because he liked to experiment. Then - by the light of his new light, He looked at all that water and said, " I don't want just water. I want sky and land. I want deserts and snow. I want puddles and islands and lakes and mountains and rivers and beaches." And as he thought them and said them - they appeared. "Wow", said God, "That's just what I wanted!"

Next he decided he wanted some shade. And perhaps some colour. And perhaps some greens to go with his Sunday dinner! So he imagined trees and plants, flowers and vegetables, all different sizes and shapes: huge oak trees, and tiny snow drops; vast banana trees and soft juicy strawberries. "Those look nice", said God. "I'll have those with a bit of cream later!" Then he made fir trees. "Those'll be useful for Christmas". And weeds: "Not sure what I'll do with those, but they might come in handy later on." God was very pleased with himself. He was doing a great job.

But it was a bit quiet, so he thought very hard and came up with another idea, or rather a million million ideas. In no time he could hear the splashing of fish and dolphins, and crabs and sea horses in the sea. He could hear the roaring of lions, and the mooing of cows on dry land. "I know I need those cows", God commented, "Cos they'll make the cream to go with my strawberries!" And he could hear the tweeting of sparrows, the cackling of crows, the cooing of doves, and the soft rush of wind as the eagle flew by. And when he listened very closely, he could hear the soft stirring of the soil, as an earth-worm passed through, and the gentle humming of a bee enjoying a buttercup. There was another sound too: a constant munch munch munching! "What can that be?" asked God. And then he saw - it was a rabbit chewing his way through that pile of weeds he'd made yesterday. "I knew they'd come in useful", smiled God!

And he looked around at this creation. "By, this is good!" said God. 'Am I glad I started this project!"

"But there's just one more thing I need. I need someone to help me with all of this. Someone who likes creating, like me. Someone who can work alongside me, and make sure every living thing has what it needs; who can even add some things of his own to my world. Someone for me to love. Someone who can love me back. Someone a bit like me." And suddenly there they were: people of every size and shape and colour; laughing and chattering and running about and admiring God's work.

God looked at everything he's made - every single thing in his world And he knew every bit of it was top class work: the best in every way. "I've done a great job, said God, "And I couldn't be happier!"

Then God got out his deck chair, and his sunglasses and a glass of his favourite grape-fruit juice, and a bar of his favourite chocolate, and a good book he'd been saving up. He took off his shoes, and he rolled up his trousers, and he splashed himself all over with sun cream,

And he lay out in his deck chair. "This is alright", said God. "I've been working hard, and now I need a rest and a bit of a break. So I'm going to make one more thing: I'm going to make time for myself, to do exactly what I want to do. And that's absolutely nothing at all."

Take time to rest and be refreshed!

Rev Clare Stainsby

Coronavirus Poem

This is a strange and testing time
Viewing the graph - watching it climb
Keep mentally fit
Never never quit
Though nothing at all seems to rhyme

The empty roads - the empty skies
Our emptiness as a friend dies
The sound of sirens
The sound of silence
It hurts not to say our good-byes

Long days merge into one big blur
The Queen broadcasts to reassure
'We will meet again'
Trace rainbows through rain
Give comfort to the insecure

Avoid the invisible bug
Love your neighbour - fear is a drug
Your phone call will blend
The voice of a friend
With a socially-distanced hug

Protecting the old and the sick
Relying on what makes you tick
Our world is our home
Stop in - when in Rome
If carrots don't work - use the stick

Incessant TV and the press
Increases the fear - adds to stress
But Britain is Great
On Thursdays at eight
Clap our amazing NHS

If anyone still takes the view
That none of this applies to you
Whose eyes can stay dry
While nursing staff die
Wake up! That is what 'Angels' do

Let no-one be guilty of sloth
Obey all the rules - donate - both
When push comes to shove
There's no greater love
They Lived their Hippocratic oath

Happy Birthday Captain Tom Moore
You're our number one garden tour
Never walk alone
Reap what you have sewn
An 'Absolute legend' five-score

So there we are - follow your heart
You knew what to do from the start
Take care at the shops
When the music stops
We're in this together - apart

**Written 25th April 2020 - Edith Jameson
Submitted by John Eaton**

Learning Online

As part of my Local Preacher training I opted to go to Cliff Collage in March of this year, and take part in their Spring School. As you can imagine a small obstacle called COVID19 got in the way, and the Spring School was deferred to Summer School scheduled for August.

August came, and still the restrictions applied. Summer school was also cancelled. However in true Methodist style, solutions were sort. On the 3rd August at 10:00 precisely a sea of 89 faces flashed across my laptop screen, as summer school was converted into nine zoom sessions across four days.

After the initial session, participants were split into four streams depending on where they were up to on the programme. Each stream had 19 participants and 1 facilitator, and yes you can get twenty faces on one screen. The participants in Stream 2 were a motley collection from across the country, mainly ladies, with a smattering of gentlemen.

The sessions were thought provoking, mind stretching and entertaining in equal measure. Our youngest participant was 19 year old Abigail and our oldest was Susan at 78 from the Isle of Wight.

It was amazing to hear people's stories, from all walks of life. Some struggling with mentors, other with tutors, some the only learner in their circuit, others in lay roles. People came with children in the background, with animals wandering in and out of screen, others shot off to answer the door, all there though with the same purpose – to grow in knowledge and strength of God. To find our own paths, and enable others to discover the Word of God in our own communities.

We discussed where we find God in our own lives, where we find God in prayer. We talked about God in the world in which we live, and how difficult this can be at times. We related to scripture, to imagery, to music, to the things that lift our spirits to meet with the Holy Spirit.

It was illuminating to meet (although virtually) with others following the same path, and realise that we all follow in different shoes. Some of us are wearing sturdy boots because we expect the way to be rough, others are in flip flops because their expectations of sunshine and joy.

We all gave to each other, possibly in ways we didn't imagine. I was humbled by Susan's tale of setting up Honour Village in Cambodia, which she now raises funds for, from her independent living village. I was equally humbled by Rachel's tales of family work across Altrincham. I was moved by each story, each person's experience of God, of how as a team of people, who have never met in 'real life' we came together and supported each other to discover the way forward for each of us as individuals, as members of our own circuits and as members of the wider Methodist church.

I am grateful for this experience, even though it was not in the beautiful Derbyshire Dales, experiencing the fantastic food I have heard regaled. This was possibly a distinctly unique experience, from God especially just for us. Proving that it doesn't matter what the circumstances are or what obstacles are thrown in our way. God's love is constant, for us to experience, to guide others to and to hold us up when there is nothing else.

Ruth Dawson

Behind The Scenes of Online Worship

Since we went into lockdown, my weeks have taken on a new pattern of working. When we knew that churches were closing, Clare quickly made the decision to do pre-recorded online worship. So now my working week is all shaped around that.

I had some experience of video editing before, but I've learnt a lot new skills and tricks having now created 26 service videos. And it is amazing how much work, and how many hours of various people's time goes into a 40 minute video.

Once the preacher has an idea of what they want to say, the process starts with them sending their song choices to Clare, who then records the music and gets a number of people to record vocals. She then edits these all together (which can take a three hours per song) and sends them to me. In the meantime, the preacher films the sermon, prayers and all the bits to link the service together. When Rach, my wife, lead the service at the end of July, this took her about two hours and generated many outtakes! These videos are then all uploaded to Dropbox, a file transfer service, and make their way to me.

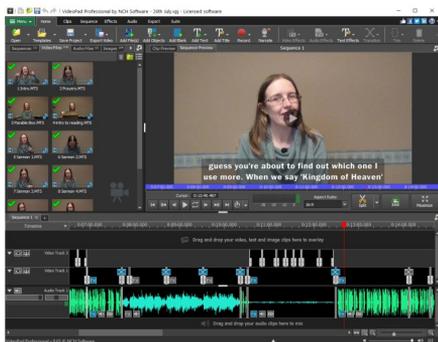
While waiting on the files, I'll put together the titles, song lyrics and text of the readings using Canva, a great graphic design program tailored at people who aren't designers (like me!).

On a Thursday, once the songs, videos and graphics are in one place on my laptop, the editing begins. Getting the clips in the right order, with the graphics coming in at the right time can take another two hours if all goes well. Then it requires another pass to try and get the audio all about the same volume. Once that is done, the video will export (turning all the clips into one single file). This takes about 90 minutes, so I leave my laptop to it and get some lunch and make a start on the weekly mailing.

Once the video is finished, it gets uploaded to YouTube. I make another listen to the whole video to create the subtitles. Usually this is just tweaking the script the preacher has sent to match what they actually said, but this takes about another hour. These subtitles are then loaded into YouTube as well.

By the time the video goes live at 10:02 on a Sunday morning - YouTube insists on playing a two minute countdown, but will only let you schedule a video on the hour! - I have watched it through so many times I can almost mouth along with the preacher.

Each week our worship video gets about 160 views, and I know it is watched much further than Salford, with people around the country and even Down Under regularly turning in.



I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who give so much of their time to help lead in our worship, the preachers, the readers, the singers. We are lucky to have so many talents and skillful people in our Circuit, and I am honoured to be able to play my part in keeping the worship life of our members alive in these most interesting of times. If you would like your talents to be used in some way, let Clare or I know.

Matt Collins



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Page 4 'God in my Living' - Tim Hughes © 2005 Thankyou Music
'Strength will rise' - Brendon Brown and Ken Riley © 2005 Thankyou Music

Page 5 Photo by Matt Collins

Page 9 Worksheet by Dave Walker on CartoonChurch.com

Page 10 Photo © TMCP