

## Wokingham Methodist Church Pastoral Letter from Revd Catherine Bowstead

Dear Friends,

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

We are living through strange times, but although we may be prevented from meeting together physically, there is plenty that we can do to keep our church community thriving.

As you know, our Sunday worship has been suspended until further notice, our buildings are now closed, and our employees are working from home. If you need to contact Will at the Church Office, e-mail is the best way, but he will be able to access the church answer phone so you can also leave a message there.

But our Church Community is far more than our building so please keep in contact with one another by phone or e-mail. If you have a church directory you can contact whoever you wish. We are going to set up a system of 'phone buddies' to ensure that as far as possible everyone in our church community is contacted by phone at least once each week. If you would like to be a phone buddy contact me and I'll give you some names of people to contact. And please do contact me if you are struggling or if you just want a chat.

To keep our Sunday worship alive, we will be recording a service to put on the church website each Sunday. You can listen to it whenever you like, but I like the idea of us listening together at 10:30am each Sunday. This Sunday our preacher is Mike Bowstead so he and I will be leading our audio service together. You will be able to access this on our Church website. [www.wokinghammethodist.org.uk](http://www.wokinghammethodist.org.uk)  
[Direct link: <https://www.wokinghammethodist.org.uk/index.php/worship/sunday-services> ]

And we will send out an e-mail each week (we'll try to get something by post for those without e-mail) with a pastoral letter from me and any church news. Will is going to co-ordinate this for us, so let him know of any news to share. You might be able to send him quizzes, recipes or other articles to be included.

Try to look after yourselves whilst you are confined to your home. Find time to read the Bible – the Psalms are always a source of inspiration and encouragement. You'll have time to pray too – how about saying the Lord's prayer at 12 noon each day? Why not sing? – even if you are on your own you can sing your favourite hymns or pick one each day from your hymn book. You can have time to read, talk to friends and relatives on the phone. Try to get some exercise each day, even if it's just walking around your home and garden and try to get some fresh air too. If you are feeling anxious about the situation, might I suggest that you limit the amount of time you watch the news and do something else instead.

This time of crisis will pass, and we will get through it. Our God will remain the same and we need to encourage each other to keep our faith and hope in him alive

In Psalm 95 we read:

*Come, let us sing to the Lord, let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before him with thanksgiving, and extol him with music and song  
  
For the Lord is the great God,  
The great king above all gods.  
In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him  
the sea is his, for he made it  
and his hands formed the dry land.  
  
Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker  
For he is our God and we the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.*

This reminds us that God is bigger than this virus which is disrupting our lives. God has been there for eternity and his love will remain for eternity. We are his people and he will continue to love us and care for us, as we love and care for each other.

With every blessing  
Catherine