



THE PEAK METHODIST CIRCUIT 25/13
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Coronavirus – Notification regarding Public Worship and Other Activities

Dear friends

At our Circuit meeting last Wednesday I announced that as things stood, the decision as to whether or not worship and other activities should continue in local churches should be taken by the local church Stewards / Leadership Team.

You will all be aware that there have been some significant developments since then, and the advice of Government and health professionals is as far as possible to avoid any non-essential social contact.

I am aware that a number of churches in the circuit have already taken the decision to cancel services and / or other activities, and that has been a very difficult decision.

It is with a heavy heart that the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) at our meeting last night have decided that as a Circuit we should follow the advice of the Government, health professionals and the Methodist Church, and cancel all public gatherings in our churches – including worship and other activities. Because we have a duty of care to all who use our premises, this includes all user groups. Any groups which have paid rental up front should be reimbursed by the local church for sessions which we have cancelled.

At 3pm on Tuesday 17th March the Methodist Church updated its guidance, which includes the following paragraph:

‘Suspending services means that we advise that baptisms will not take place in public worship and if you have a wedding planned in a Methodist Church you should speak to your minister. While funerals may still take place, we would advise that the number of people attending is limited as per the Government’s advice.’

The full update can be found on the Methodist Church website (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>)

We are very conscious that social interaction for many people is extremely important, and after many years of worshipping and meeting with others on a weekly basis, to suddenly have that taken away for a number of weeks is not insignificant.

Therefore we are working hard to maintain ongoing interaction, provide alternative worship opportunities and resources, as well as providing ongoing pastoral care.

Details of the above will be provided in the next couple of days, and we encourage you to make these available to your congregation.

I'm sure you will also appreciate the implications of not meeting from a financial point of view, and because services have been put on hold, there will obviously be no weekly offerings. At the same time, there are ongoing costs which still need to be met – including assessments, maintenance, utilities etc, and therefore it is really important that all who are able to should continue giving as you normally would as far as possible. We would suggest practical arrangements for that should be agreed at each church.

Please don't hesitate to contact any of the Circuit Stewards or Ministers with concerns or queries, and please be assured of our ongoing prayers during this difficult time.

With best wishes

ADRIAN C PERRY

(on behalf of the CLT)