



Dear Friends,

As we enter another period of lockdown being introduced by the government this week I write to clarify and confirm what this means for the Church. For the duration of being in lockdown all church buildings will be closed. This includes worship services, meetings in any form, including church council meetings and use by any groups which do not meet the criteria set out within the government guidance on the rules of what is permitted. These can be found on the government website. We are permitted to hold funeral services following current rules on being COVID secure.

Now is a time for the church to be standing alongside our neighbours as the storm of COVID-19 persists. We will close our buildings and press pause on gatherings in accordance with the government rules, but we remain to be the church. This act of closing buildings demonstrates our love of neighbour. I fully appreciate that this further lockdown period will bring rise to a mixture of emotions. Please be assured of my prayers and please do contact someone from the ministry team or your local church if you need to talk. I am confident that the same love and care will be found around the circuit as I have witnessed over these recent months.

There have been many helpful developments within the circuit since March when the nation entered the first period of lockdown. Each week a Worship at Home service is put together in a written and recorded format. The Worship at Home resource can be found via the Circuit's website www.riponlowerdalesmethodist.org.uk and the recorded Worship at Home service can be found on the YouTube channel, search Circuit Worship Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist.

If you have been receiving a printed copy of the Worship at Home service and other materials such as newsletters, these will continue to be distributed. If you would like to be included in the circulation of these printed resources, please contact your local church.

We appreciate the ability to have printed resources and the use of technology. The internet does mean we can make full use of things, such as Zoom gatherings or YouTube. We also appreciate having telephones which is often more readily available to all. The circuit phone prayer and reflection is up-dated each week and there you will find a recorded local voice leading a time of prayer and sharing a reflection. The number to call is 01765 530700. Note all calls are charged at a local rate.

Please be encouraged to do what you can during this time of restrictions through lockdown. By the grace of God, we have many ways and means to worship and share fellowship together even though not gathered in our buildings. May we keep watch and pray for one another, our neighbours and community. May we be found loving God and each other. And may God strengthen and guide us through this storm, now and always.

Grace and peace,

Gareth

4th November 2020.

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