

Yn Agglish Haasilagh ayns Mannin

The Methodist Church
in the Isle of Man



Twinned with the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone

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To the Methodist People of the Isle of Man.

Dear friends,

Along with this letter you will have received, the Manx Methodists at Service Together (MMAST) sheet for the 7th and 14th of March. This sheet has a dual purpose. If you are connecting with the recorded services on our YouTube channel at www.methodist.org.im they will help you to follow the service. If you are not able to do this they act as a stand-alone resource to assist you in your devotions. New versions of MMAST are added each Sunday and can be accessed at any time. I am grateful to all those who are doing the work necessary to make this possible.

As of one minute after midnight tonight, we are back in lockdown. There will be no services in our chapels but all the online provision for worship will be available as before.

We are now firmly in the season of Lent and if, as predicted, this circuit breaker lockdown lasts for 21 days we will emerge from it into Holy Week. It feels as though we have been here before. Last year we managed two Sundays in Lent before the lockdown came leaving our Lent Crosses lacking the remainder of their symbols until well into June. This year, if all goes according to plan, we should at least be able to celebrate Easter Day together in church on the right day.

For Jesus, his forty days in the wilderness was about preparation for ministry. In the temptations we see Jesus choosing to reject earthly power and influence and go the way of God. These times of enforced solitude can be difficult and, in some ways, destructive but they can also be opportunities to learn new things and reflect on what is really important.

Traditionally Lent is a time for abstinence but it is rarely about abstaining from interaction with other people. We are social creatures who need the company of others and that's what makes these periods of lockdown so difficult, especially for those who live alone. There is, however, light at the end of the tunnel.

**As the Methodist Church in the Isle of Man
we are called to love and serve in response to God's love in Jesus and help others
to enter into a relationship with him.**

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The vaccination programme is gaining pace and, as the weather improves and the days lengthen, we can dare to believe that there will be an end to this difficult time.

Last year many of us celebrated Easter Day on a Sunday in June when our church doors re-opened. The truth is that we can and should celebrate resurrection every day because that is God's gift to us through Jesus. Each day is a gift from God to be offered back to him in praise and thanksgiving.

This Lent, perhaps the greatest thank offering you can give is to think of someone who could do with a chat during this time of isolation and pick up the phone. We need each other. That's the way God made us. In this third lockdown keep the conversation going until we can meet together again. In this way we bless each other.

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you ;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road ;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear ;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping ;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you ;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you ;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.

Richard A. M. Gillard (b. 1953)

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God Bless.



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