

Ministers:

<http://centralhall.info/>

Rev Stephen Willey  
Deacon Sheila Dawson

Easter 2022

Dear Members of Central Hall Church Family,

This letter comes with our best wishes for a happy Easter! Easter Day, when the sadness of Holy Week ends with a dramatic and unexpected new beginning for the disciples, including the women, who were there when Jesus died on the cross. Suddenly, Jesus is with them again offering comfort and hope to those who thought he was laid in a tomb.

For us, Easter can also be a time of comfort, hope and new beginnings. When we look forward to our future as a church, it is in many ways quite different to the pre-pandemic church. Before the pandemic, we wouldn't consider offering a Bible Study or Morning Prayers on Zoom and our attendance at church on a Sunday didn't include people receiving the livestreamed service!

However, the news is not just good news: just as in the days of Jesus, the world is not perfect! Though Jesus was risen, he rose at a time when Jerusalem was under Roman occupation. Similarly, today, war continues in Ukraine and other countries, and we are still recovering from the pandemic. In the church we hold together the joy of God's ultimate victory and also the sorrow that it seems to take so long for the world to change for the better.

Nevertheless, as a church, we have come through the crisis of the past two years and we do have good news – not least that, by the time you read this, I expect that we will have made three new members on Easter Day! In other worship, during the next few weeks, we will have a baptism service for the babies of two families, on 1<sup>st</sup> May, which will involve our “house orchestra” (or part of it) conducted by our Artist in Residence, Seb. Then, on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 2pm, we are hosting a Pet Service for the city. This was requested by the Lord Mayor, and all are welcome to come to an event which may present some unusual challenges!

In May also we have a couple of significant church meetings: a meeting of members of the Church Council and then, the **Annual Church Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May**. The Annual meeting will be electing Stewards and Church Council members and receiving reports from the different parts of our church, which will be in the next edition of the Connection magazine.

At both these church meetings there will be a report on our property project, which you can now see draft plans for in the foyer. Please give feedback using the forms available and let us know what you think. The property project concerns the future of our building, and will have an impact on our church and our future. We continue to ask questions like, “What sort of church do we want to be?” and “What is achievable in our situation? Whatever is achievable, it will involve all our church members and congregation, with the guidance of God, so please continue to pray for

our church and its future – and don't be afraid to talk or ask others in the church family about the possibilities and the challenges!

A question we continue to ask ourselves about is how we can sustain our presence in the city centre? There is no doubt that people value having us here and it seems that some people are more aware of what happens at Central Hall as a result of the City of Culture work we have done. In a recent Methodist City Centre network meeting the role of City Centre churches was discussed. In many ways we are different from churches which are placed within a local community because we have a role for the whole city. Whilst we have to recognise that we will not be able to do all the activities which may happen in a local community with local organisations, we do offer people who come to our church a broader perspective on the life of the city of Coventry and a wider understanding of some of the issues faced, not just the community where we live, but throughout the whole of the city.

The City of Culture legacy work, is being taken forward by Ade, and involves the artists who have been in residence with us. I would encourage you to come to our final two significant City of Culture events as the year comes to an end. Also, you might be interested in the other events at Central Hall noted below:

- **The final Artists in Residence event**, on **May 2<sup>nd</sup>**, starts at 12.00 noon, and will have music and entertainment as well as some reflections on the year in the main hall at 2pm.
- On the **12<sup>th</sup> May** Emilie, our poet in residence, has put together a **Cabaret** which was originally going to take place around Christmas time.
- **Spires Concert** on **23<sup>rd</sup> April**
- **Coventry Open** – includes a family fun day on **7<sup>th</sup> May**
- **Queen's Jubilee event** on **4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June**

A last bit of significant news: Sheila is going away on Sabbatical for three months from May 6<sup>th</sup>. We will miss her presence in the café area and the wisdom and support she offers to so many who come our building to seek a kind response. We will miss her prayerfulness and her generosity. Sheila, we hope you have a wonderful and invigorating time away, and we look forward to hearing about the things you have learned and the experiences you have had.

Please get in touch if you would like any further information about anything in this letter.

One last thing to note, please remember, as always, if you feel isolated or you'd like one of us to get in touch, you can contact our pastoral secretary, Doreen; our senior steward, Elaine; Deacon Sheila, or Rev Stephen.

With love and prayers,

*Stephen*

*Sheila*