

Hope Church Good Friday Service 2020



Sarah Sutton



Covid-19 response

Like all Christians around the world - in the Rhondda we've been trying to work out what 'doing church' while being physically distanced looks like.

We find ourselves in a strange season - with some people busier and more stretched than ever before, some facing extreme anxiety and others facing long days in the house with no work. But what's been encouraging me constantly in this time is that Jesus is above it all (John 3:31). He sees the end from the beginning and He will lead us through.

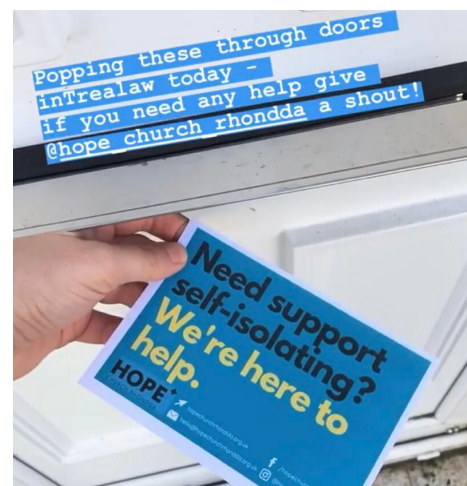
Like you, we've been having fun with 'online 'church' (see screenshots left) and all the joys and struggles it brings.

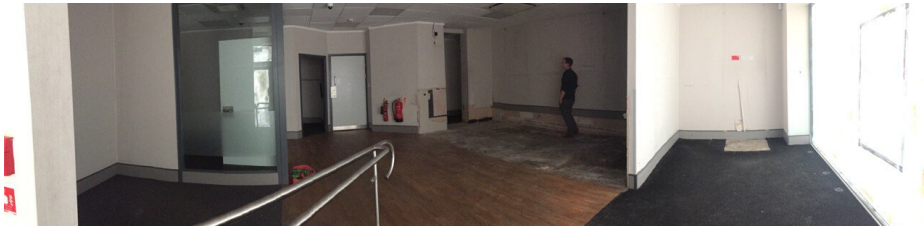
We've been seeking ways to bless the vulnerable in our community and have dropped off 1000s of 'self-isolation help' leaflets - we have had lots of response and have been able to carry out tasks (shopping, prescriptions etc) to help people.

Steadfast in the storm

Pontypridd and parts of the Rhondda were badly affected by flooding earlier in the year: this has meant that 2020 hasn't been the easiest year for our community. But in spite of that we've seen growth in church life. We were still having new people (when meeting on Sundays) walk through the door every week and after a visit to the local school, our youth club gained about 25 new kids, all totally new to church. We're now having fun doing online CLUB content.

The new congregation in Treorchy has seen amazing growth since they started in September 2019- they have about 30 adults and 20 kids connected in with them and they ran a thriving alpha course.





Clwb Coffi update

As some of you will know, John and I have been praying and planning for a while now about a new adventure that God is leading us into. A few years ago Ben (our pastor) shared a prophetic word: that God is interested in the spiritual, social and economic renewal of Tonypanydy and the Church's response to is to create a 'Kingdom Business'. This fanned into flames our desire to open a business - one with a Kingdom significance. Since then we have been making plans to open a coffee shop on the high street. Being voted Wales' worst high street back in 2017 and seeing first hand the demise of our high street pushed us to action. It will be called 'Clwb Coffi' and we want it to serve local people, be a community hub for groups etc, to create mission opportunities for us to spend more time in our town talking to people about Jesus and serve ethically sourced coffee, brunch etc. We want it to reflect God's heart to see the both the spiritual renewal to our town, but also economic. We hope to be able to create jobs for local people and as well as inspire other businesses to start. So - we have the keys to a wonderful building (see above) and there is an amazing story about how that happened and we are so grateful for some financial support from MAG. But obviously, our plans have needed to pause because of Covid19 - we would love your prayers for patience. But - we are SO EXCITED and still full of faith for this adventure, if not a little terrified!



Unexpected joy

A few things we've able to enjoy that wouldn't have been possible had we not faced Covid 19!

- The street bonding opportunities of the Thursday 8pm clap
- Having a go (emphasis here) at learning Welsh: *dw i'n trio dysgu Cymraeg*
- Less rush, more time to spend with God
- Making CLUB kitchen Youtube videos for our youth club

Please pray for

We would really value your prayers for the following

For peace during this time, as we face uncertainty over Clwb Coffi opening date, finances etc we would love more of God's peace.

For opportunity to be creative in sharing the gospel with our neighbours and in responding to doing church differently.

For the vulnerable people in our community & for our Foodbank.

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*The one who
comes from
above is above
all - John 3:31a*

As ever, I am so grateful for your kind and faithful support towards John, myself & Hope Church Rhondda in Tonypanydy. We are so blessed to be partnered with you in the gospel. Thank you so much for the many ways in which you support us. We are praying for you!

The picture left is the cross above Tonypanydy, this was taken on a walk the other day, someone has recently added 'NHS'.