

A message from Corinne

Recently I have been reflecting on The Message's interpretation of John 1: 14 which says 'The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood', and in particular what that means for us when we are unable to inhabit our neighbourhood as usual. 'As I write the government is beginning to ease its Coronavirus lockdown measures: 'the shops are reopening, and we are now allowed to socialise in the open air (at a safe distance of course). However, at the beginning of lockdown there were few people out and about in Bristol – the neighbourhood was deserted! For those experiencing homelessness this was a real challenge, because shelters and day centres like ours closed overnight, and little food was available.

The work of the Methodist Centre might be described as a particularly incarnational ministry: we seek to embody God's love and care practically – through the meals, laundry, shower and computer facilities we offer. It has been challenging to reinvent the way we offer such care safely over the last 3 months. We have worked closely with other charities in the city to consider how best to support those on the streets and, as a result, have provided a door service two days a week, offering a hot takeaway meal. The Circuit has also joined other Bristol charities to serve hot meals each evening from Champion Square to those not placed in emergency accommodation.

However, part of the role of the Bristol Methodist Centre (and another way in which we seek to make God's love tangible) is also to create community. Whilst we have been able to meet some practical needs during the pandemic, it has been far harder to continue to build relationships with our guests, and to 'walk with them' as they face hardship. As such, snatched conversations at the door have become very precious. There have been moments of real joy when we have finally caught up with someone we have not seen during the pandemic, and found they are doing well. It has been humbling to hear, time and time again, 'thank you for just being here.'

I have been reminded how easy it is to focus on meeting practical needs, and to forget we serve a God who seeks a relationship with us, delights when we 'show up' and never leaves us on our own! As we continue to work out how best to serve those experiencing homelessness in these changing times, please pray we might be able to reveal God's love and care for all we encounter.



Become a BMC regular donor

Over the last 5 years we have seen the number of those who access the Centre increase. We regularly feed 100 guests a day, with more passing through the building for support, access to showers and to collect their post. As a result our costs have risen significantly. In particular we have had to increase staffing to ensure the safety and well being of all. (For those who supported us during the move from Midland Road, Old Market this may well come as a surprise as, at that time, need for the service was anticipated to decrease. If only that were the case!)

Generous gifts from donors and the churches that support us comprise approximately one quarter of all our income. The balance in part comes from our charity shop *Street Folk*, and grant funding. However, grant applications can rarely be used to cover our major cost, which is staffing. We need to continue to raise an additional **£65,000** a year to offer that which our guests consider an essential service. Regular giving can help us plan throughout the year, and for the future.

Please would you consider becoming a regular donor? A relatively small monthly donation can make a big difference:

- £5** – could provide lunch for 20 guests;
- £10** – essential telephone services for a month;
- £15** – enable the Centre to be cleaned for a week;
- £25** – could provide lunch for a day.

If you are a UK taxpayer, using Gift Aid can also make your donation go further (for every pound you give, we receive an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue).

Details of how to give can be found on our website:

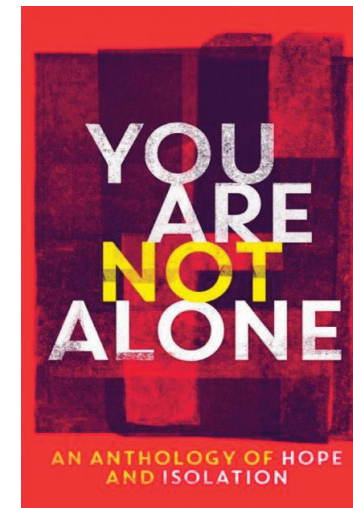
<http://www.methodist-centre.org.uk/support-us>

You Are Not Alone

London and Bristol based STORGY Books have just released an anthology where 25% of their book sales will be going towards the work of the Bristol Methodist Centre. There are three other charities involved in this initiative too, including The Big Issue Foundation, Centrepont and Shelter – so if you can support this project by buying a copy that would be amazing, you don't even have to leave your house to support (social distancing purchasing available!), or if you know of anyone that loves a good book, please do recommend this charity anthology to them, where all four charities will benefit financially during these difficult times. More details below.

PRESS RELEASE

YOU ARE NOT ALONE



HELPING PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HOMELESSNESS

STORGY BOOKS is collaborating with UK based charities The Big Issue Foundation (registered charity number 1049077), Centrepont (292411), Shelter (263710), and The Bristol Methodist Centre (1150295) to publish an exclusive collection of short stories; *YOU ARE NOT ALONE: An Anthology of Hope and Isolation*. All proceeds from this publication will provide ongoing support for people experiencing homelessness during – and after – the Covid-19 crisis.

You Are Not Alone features forty-four short stories by a carefully curated cast of international award-winning and emerging authors, including Susmita Bhattacharya, Astra Bloom, Kathy Fish, Tim Lebbon, Toby Litt, Adam Lock, Carmen Marcus, Benjamin Myers, Rahul Raina, Adrian J Walker, and many many more.

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With great thanks to contributing authors, artists, and designers, STORGY Books is proud to present *You Are Not Alone: An Anthology of Hope and Isolation*. Working in close partnership with UK charities The Big Issue Foundation (registered charity number 1049077), Centrepont (292411), Shelter (263710), and The Bristol Methodist Centre (1150295), STORGY Books is publishing an exclusive anthology to help raise funds and provide continued support for people affected by homelessness following the devastating outbreak of Coronavirus. For far too long the most vulnerable within our communities have suffered in isolation, abandoned and ignored, voiceless. But we hear our hurting kin; and this is our reply.

All proceeds will be donated to charity. STORGY Books will not profit from this publication.



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