



Dore Methodist Church

Weekly Update

16th April 2021.



Message from Gail.



Finding God in the ordinary...

“Sit down and have a cup of tea” – a classic British response to a crisis. John Steinbeck, when he was a war correspondent, recorded the story of five commandos who undertook a perilous mission which began and ended with a cup of tea (John Steinbeck, 'The Lady Packs' in *Once There Was a*

War, Heinemann, 1959). Is it just the comforting warmth of the tea that helps, or is it something about the need to 'sit down' and to wait while the drink is prepared?

Perhaps the ordinariness of the task in the midst of extraordinary happenings is settling. It provide the right circumstances for the mind to open? Is this why Jesus at the end of a day's walk with his companions on the Emmaus road took the time to eat with his friends. (Luke 24:13-35)

Sometimes God reveals himself in the ordinary moments of life, like when we sit down for a cup of tea. Other times we need to seek God ourselves in the ordinary everyday occasions of our lives.

When we start to notice the small blessings in life I believe we start to see hand of God in all things and find ourselves, unexpectedly, standing on Holy ground.

*Through Christ, our Lord and Master, We've a portion of heaven's ground,
Where we sense that deep Holiness, In touch and sight and sound.
Do our hearts not burn within, As He teaches us His way?
Are we not in awe of His majesty, As we see His hand each day?
In our Heavenly Father's presence, A deep peace is found,
As we realise, we are standing. On Holy Ground!*

(Author unknown)

Gail.

Pause for thought and prayer.

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. Psalm 24: 4-5



In last week's pause for thought, I called us to a period of prayer, and set out a number of suggestions to help us listen for the discerning voice of God. Listening, forces us to learn patience. God answers some prayers in a moment, but others he asks us to wait for a clear answer. So in this time of waiting, I invite you to continue to pray through these suggestions and questions: As we listen to God, let us carry on listening to our friends, family, colleagues, and our community. Listen to how people are feeling, what they fear, what they hope for, what brings them joy, what takes their mood down. Chat with your neighbour. What is the mood on your street? Reflect on what is being said or not said. Hold those you talk to in prayer. Do any passages of scripture, songs, or hymns seem relevant? Note down anything that feels important. Are there any patterns. How does what you have heard make you feel? Please share with Gail or any of the leadership team what you are hearing, so that together, we can see the bigger picture

We pray together: Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way, sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided: Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today. Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us - self on the cross and Christ upon the throne, past put behind us, for the future take us: Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone. (*Timothy Dudley-Smith StF 470*)

Worship on Sunday 18th April.

We will meet on "Zoom" for worship at 11-00 a.m. this Sunday, 18th April. Access details are:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81171737202?pwd=REZOT3E5aUVqYkdKc1NvZ201ZzFWdz09>

Meeting ID: 811 7173 7202. Passcode: 117214. Phone number: 0203 481 5240
For those unable to join our "Vine at Home" service follows.

Mapping the Way forward.

Members of the Church Leadership Team have been contacting everyone regarding our future planning. There is a Team meeting next Wednesday (21st April) when we will be considering the outcomes from these conversations. If you have not been contacted or you have had any further ideas, please phone the Baileys (details below) so your comments can be included during our discussion on Wednesday.

**WEEKLY UPDATE – Please send contributions to the Baileys by Tuesday evening.
(Tel 2351085 or email john.bailey23a@btinternet.com)**

The Vine at Home - 18th April 2021 – Third Sunday of Easter

Call to worship

Easter God, we come again to gather in your presence:

To worship, to give thanks for the miracle of resurrection, happening all around us today Amen.¹

Hymn: 351 STF – In Christ alone

1 In Christ alone my hope is found,
he is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

3 There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am his and he is mine --
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

2 In Christ alone! -- who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied
for every sin on him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 351.
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Opening Prayers

Risen Saviour, Jesus our Lord,

We love you and we are so grateful that you love us so much that you were prepared to give up everything and live on earth, showing us how to live, and then to die, all so that we might know what it means to become children of God.

Pour your Holy Spirit into our lives that we may grow more like you.

For your life which informs our living, for your compassion which changes our hearts, for your clear speaking which contradicts our vague generalities, for your disturbing presence, your innocent suffering, your fearless dying and then rising to life breathing forgiveness, we praise and worship you.

As we worship, help us to know your presence with us, open our minds and hearts we pray.

Generous God, whose love is free to all,

We often struggle to be the people that you want us to be, loving one another as brothers and sisters in your world-wide family.

Shape our lives into an expression of faith.

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

Protect us from cultural forces which try to conform us to an image other than yours. Show us the harm we do when we water down the good news of your love, when we become a mirror reflecting the world's brokenness and hate, rather than a window through which your wholeness and love can shine.

Lord, we fail you in so many ways, we are so sorry...*[Pause]*.

'I am making all things new', says the Lord. This is Christ's gracious word: 'Your sins are forgiven'.
Amen. Thanks be to God²

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Acts 3:1-19 Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. **3** When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. **4** Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." **5** And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. **6** But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,^[a] stand up and walk." **7** And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. **8** Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. **9** All the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's Portico, utterly astonished. **12** When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, "You Israelites,^[b] why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? **13** The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant^[c] Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. **14** But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, **15** and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. **16** And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus^[d] has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

17 "And now, friends,^[e] I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. **18** In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah^[f] would suffer. **19** Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.³

1 John 3:1-7

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear

² Opening prayers written by Diane Robinson

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friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.⁴

Luke 24:36b – 48 - Jesus Appears to His Disciples

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”^[a] **37** They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. **38** He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? **39** Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” **40** And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.^[b] **41** While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he took it and ate in their presence.

44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, **46** and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah^[c] is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, **47** and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses^[d] of these things.⁵

Reflections on the readings

For our reflection, Bishop Tom Wright unpacks a little bit more about what these stories of Jesus after the resurrection might mean for us:

The ancient world knew all about ghosts, visions, apparitions, and spooks. Ancient literature has plenty of people being found alive after being supposed dead, plenty of spirits of the dead returning to haunt, spy on, or chat with the living. Jesus’ disciples could easily have used such categories to explain their extraordinary experiences of the presence of the risen Jesus.

That they did not is powerful testimony to what actually happened. The real explanation is stranger, and is backed up by evidence of various kinds. The disciples were confronted with a new form of reality, for which they were unprepared, but for which the language of resurrection (not of ghosts, or of mere resuscitations) was available. Jesus, they believed, had gone through death and out the other side into a new mode of life. This was, naturally enough, difficult to describe, but it seems to have involved his physical body being transformed so that it was now inhabiting both our space and God’s space.

And this is what life might be like for us, too. There aren't words to describe what we shall be, says John, but when Jesus is revealed we shall be like him. We shall see him as he is; and we shall be changed into his likeness, into the Easter mode of being. That's mind-boggling, of course, but that's the point. Good theology requires good imagination!

Easter humanity, in fact, is genuine humanity, as opposed to humanity distorted and defaced by sin, decay and death. Resurrection power comes to us, as it were, from our future, so that we can anticipate the truly human life in the here and now.

The power that healed the physical cripple, glorifying the God of Israel in the process, is available to heal moral cripples (like you and I) as well.⁶

[Pause].

What about you? Do you need to be healed of something?

Do you need to let go of something to which you hold on too tightly?

Do you need to be transformed by that 'resurrection power' that comes to us from these Jesus stories?

[Pause to reflect].

As you are loved by an amazing, life-giving God who accepts each one of us just as we are, so too, may you find ways to demonstrate that love to others.

'Love one another, even as I have loved you.'

Amen.

What are you being called to?

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28: 19-20

[Pause]

What does it mean for you "to go and make disciples?"

What sort of leaders do you think the church needs?

Do you have these gifts?

Let us pray.

Jesus, when you command us to 'go' and share your Good News with the world, we have a range of thoughts and feelings; sometimes we are afraid, sometimes we think you don't mean for us to do anything, sometimes we are excited. Jesus, help us to pay attention to the thoughts and feelings that hold us back so that we can bring those to you in prayer.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

As we pray for the world, our nation and our local community we remember the words found in today's Psalm: "Give me relief from my distress".

⁶ Taken from Twelve Months of Sundays Year B by NT Wright

Living God, as we pray for the world that you created, we remember those effected by war.

We pray, grant them relief from their distress.

For those who are living with the effects of climate change. Whether the effects are reduced crops, increased risk of flooding or simply an adverse effect on their living.

We pray, grant them relief from their distress.

For the Christians who profess their faith in Christ but have to remain silent due to their geographical location. We pray that you might embolden them and encourage them.

We pray, grant them relief from their distress.

We pray for those who have been impacted in an adverse way due to Brexit. For small and large business, for the livelihoods impacted.

We pray, grant them relief from their distress.

As we journey as a resurrection community, we lift our nation in prayer. We particularly pray for our health care system and all who serve within it. May they receive comfort and support from near and a far.

We pray, grant them relief from their distress.

We remember those who are left without a home and face an uncertain tomorrow.

We pray, grant them relief from their distress.

For those today who face their own mental health struggles. We ask that support might be readily available and they know of your loving presence.

We pray, grant them relief from their distress.

We lift all those in our nation and around the world who are victims of racism. We pray for a levelling of systems and a breakdown of racial discrimination. We ask that Lord you might be with all those affected and grant them relief from their distress.

In our local community, we remember the work of the church. We remember the lives it impacts and all those associated with it. We pray that you will grant them relief from their distress.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.⁷

Hymn: 239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I

1 Sent by the Lord am I;
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.
Sent by the Lord am I;
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.

⁷ Prayers of intercession written by Matthew Forsyth

2 The angels cannot change
a world of hurt and pain
into a world of love,
of justice and of peace.
The task is mine to do,
to set it really free.
Oh, help me to obey;
help me to do your will.

Jose Aguiar

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Blessing

As we rise from this place, we rise as witnesses to your love, O God.

As we go from this moment of worship, we go as vessels for your Spirit.

May your love flow through us, and out into the world.

Go in peace, and love one another.

Amen.⁸

⁸ Additional prayers by Tim Baker