

Good-News Desk!

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Church



Minister:
Rev. Vida Foday

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ONLINE



Easter 2020

GND WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE DURING PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

An old pastor visiting a country jail came upon a despondent young man, 'leave me alone, pastor. I'm not good,' the young man moaned. 'Everything I have touched has been bruised. I have influenced others to turn to a life of crime. I have deeply wounded the only ones who care for me – my mother, my wife, and our young daughter. There is no hope for me'.

The old man was silent for a moment before he spoke. 'The hurt that you have inflicted on others may never be healed. What you have done is most serious. What you need now is to find a new compass, and a new way to walk'. He paused before he continued. 'We must begin by teaching you some new stories'.

'Stories!' the man thundered. 'I speak to you out of despair and you talk to me of idle tales? I live without hope and you speak to me of happy endings? If my life is to be spent behind bars, I may need new facts, but certainly do not need fiction'.

When the outburst had subsided, the pastor placed a caring hand on the young man's arm. 'Humour an old man. Listen to one tale'.

Once a very bad man died and was sent before the judgment throne. Before him stood Abraham, David, Peter and Luke. A chilly silence hung heavy in the room as an unseen voice began to read the details of the man's life. There was nothing good that was recorded. When the voice concluded, Abraham spoke: 'Men like you cannot enter the heavenly kingdom. You must leave.' 'Father Abraham', the man cried, 'I do not defend myself, I have no choice but to ask for mercy. Certainly you understand. Though you lied to save your own life, saying your wife was your sister, by the grace and mercy of God you became a blessing to nations'.

David interrupted, 'Abraham has spoken correctly. You have committed evil and serious crimes. You do not belong in the kingdom of light'. The man faced the great king and cried, 'Son of Jesse, it is true. I am a wicked man. Yet I dare ask you for forgiveness. You slept with Uriah's wife and later, to cover your sin, arranged his death. I ask only for forgiveness as you have known it'.

Peter was next to speak. 'Unlike David, you have shown no love to God. By your acid tongue and your vile temper you have wounded the Son of God'. 'I should be silent, the man muttered. 'The only way I have used the blessed name of Jesus is in anger. Still, Simon Peter, son of John, I plead for grace. Though you walked by the side of Jesus and listened to words from his own lips, you slept when he needed you in the garden, and you denied him three times in his night of greatest need'. Then Luke the evangelist spoke, 'you must leave. You have not been found worthy of the kingdom of God'.

The man's head bowed sadly for a moment before a spark lit in his face. 'My life has been recorded correctly', the man began slowly. 'I am guilty as charged. Yet I know there is a place for me in this blessed kingdom. Abraham, David and Peter will plead my cause because they know of the weakness of man and the mercy of God. You – Luke, blessed physician, will open the gates for me because you have written of God's great love for the likes of me. Don't you recognise me? I am the lost sheep that the Good Shepherd carried home. I am your younger prodigal brother'. And the gates opened and Luke embraced the sinner.

'You see', the old pastor concluded, 'I want you to learn stories, not as an exercise in fiction, but in order to walk in mercy'. (*A story on forgiveness by William Bausch*)

When we harbour bitterness, it causes us to keep striking out at others and in the process, robs us of the joy of living and being loved. What a loss! We're then tied to the past through the umbilical cord of unforgiveness, but when we forgive, we cut that cord. When we refuse to forgive, then we remain tied to a memory that can hurt us for the rest of our lives. That's how issues pass on from generation to generation, therefore let's forgive each other as forgiveness is healing.

As we move forward through the weeks of Lent to those important days on our Christian Calendar, let us keep our eyes focused on the Cross and the good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. Easter is a day of joy and victory! It is the resurrection that gives meaning to the cross.

Jesus gave his life for the world on the Cross and conquered death; and through that our sins have been forgiven. The risen Lord has broken every chain of sin, so let us accept God's forgiveness and lay claim to His love. LOVE has won the victory over sin and death! Let us therefore celebrate our risen Lord who gives us HOPE!

*Now He bids us tell abroad
How the lost may be restored
How the penitent forgiven
How we too may enter heaven
Alleluia!*

M. Weiss (c. 1480-1534) H&P 192 v 5

I wish you all a Happy Easter!

With love and every blessing

Vida

This tribute was not received in time for the celebration of Peter's life on 1st March

Tribute to Peter Howarth from Alison Tuddenham

Peter is someone who has inspired me and encouraged me in faith.

In Luke chapter 7, Jesus tells the story of a man who cancels the debts of two men who owe him money; one man owes much, the other just a small amount. Jesus wants to know which man will be the most grateful and show him the most love from then on. The answer of course is the man who was forgiven the larger sum.

When I think of Peter I am reminded of this story! It seems to me that Peter understand just how very much he was loved and forgiven by God and this knowledge filled him with a great sense of joy.

He was an adventurer; journeying through life and faith with Jesus at his side. Always searching for a new revelation of God and a deeper encounter with Christ. Sharing his experience with others as he went; the epic tales of 'Big Ted' an attempt to explain and share what he trusted to be true of his saviour.

In recent years Peter and I had been communicating sporadically by email. There was the general sharing of news, but beyond that there was always the opportunity to share something we had read from the bible that excited us; the deeper understanding of a passage or of God's character. Peter never stopped loving God or tired of following him, even when his health and mind began to deteriorate.

Last Summer Peter wrote these words to me, 'I do not, of course mind death - in fact it is now something to be looked forward to with joy in Christ!' When I heard that Peter had passed away my first thought was that now he would meet his beloved saviour face to face. I'm convinced that he is joyfully worshipping God at this very moment, full of wonder, gratitude, peace and love.

Not everyone is online

If you are reading this and have a printer

If you are able and safe to take daily exercise

Why not print a copy of GND and pop it through the letterbox of someone from our church community who is unable to view online.

Marlow Methodist Church online

Nigel Sweet, our Senior Circuit Steward reminds us that Marlow MC is streaming their Sunday Service from the new TV studio at Marlow Methodist Church. Streaming starts at 10.30am. To be church at home go to the MMC website at - www.marlowmethodistchurch.org.uk - to find a link to the livestream or to their Facebook page where there is a Facebook video of the service afterwards.

We are all invited to take an active part in worship both by sending prayer requests to - prayers@marlowmethodistchurch.org.uk or by posting a selfie or short video of you at home being part of the service on the Facebook page. Our Superintendent Minister Nick Thompson will be introducing the service and will have a short message for all of us in the Circuit.

This is an exciting new venture please pray for all those involved in setting it up. Nick and the team are looking at this and other ways to bring worship and news to the whole circuit. A lot has been achieved in the last few days, please bear with us while we work on longer solutions. Please look out for more news coming from the Circuit.

At least four of us from TGMC enjoyed last Sunday's service. The sermon reminded us that 'church' is not a building. The church is the people.

Thought for Easter

**Our Lord has written the promise of the Resurrection,
not in books alone but in every leaf in springtime.**

Martin Luther

Are you missing Church?

We all are, but we can still stay in touch by phone, by email and social media, video calls and join with Marlow Methodist Church in worship each Sunday at 10.30am.

One message from all denominations is that worship involves the whole of life. Worship is for life, not just for Sundays. These words are from the worship leader and song writer Matt Redman:

*“Worship is all-consuming because God is all-deserving.
So we live our lives eager to breathe every breath,
Think every thought,
And do every deed for the glory of God”*

One part of worship I am missing at the moment are the prayers for the church community. May I suggest that we use the phone or emails to share prayer needs, but only for our members or regular attenders. Include others only with their consent as to do otherwise would be a breach of the GDPR (Data Protection law)



And finally...

It was Palm Sunday, but five-year-old Jamie stayed at home with mum because of a bad cold. When his father and sisters returned, they were carrying several palm fronds. His sister explained: “People held them over Jesus’ head as He walked by.

“That’s not fair!” Jamie protested. “The one Sunday I don’t go, and He shows up!”

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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Worship Leaders: Geraldine Nelson and Chris Oxby

Senior Church Steward: Peter Stevens*— 📞 815256

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Pastoral/First Steps: Rosemary Newman— 📞 461492 and Christine Stevens - 📞 815256

Property : Peter Stevens— 📞 815256

Property matters: For the moment speak to Peter or Geraldine

Online Good-News Desk

Items for the next Good-News Desk should reach
Peter Stevens by 19th April by email to
psredkite@googlemail.com or 📞 815256

**Note: Some items in Good-News Desk are included by subscription to
Parish Pump—the resource site for Church Newsletters.**

CORONAVIRUS – A PRAYER

Loving God

We for those pray for those who are suffering because of the coronavirus, may they know your healing power.

When we are afraid for ourselves and for our loved ones, give us your strength and courage.

When we feel alone and isolated, reassure us with a sense of your presence.

Give wisdom to those in authority and may our community work together for the good of all.

We give thanks for those who care for others and ask them to bless them in all they do.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, healer and physician.

Amen