



**TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
WOKING
Weekly Newsletter
Sunday 20 September 2020**

Message from Rev Sam Funnell

Dear Friends,
I have one of those 'daily reflections' calendars in my kitchen – you know the ones that are spiral bound at the top and you flip over to find a new message for every day of the year?

Well, the little message the other day struck me, it was this:

'Teach me the art of creating islands of stillness, in which I can absorb the beauty of everyday things: clouds, trees, a snatch of music...'
(written by Marion Stroud in 'The Gift of Friends' as part of her 'Gift of' series)

We all need a few more 'islands of stillness' don't we – spaces in our busyness, times to just stop and wonder (or just do nothing and let our minds go into 'free-flow') and gaps enough in our activities to notice the things around us in our 'everyday'.

Our world is full of so much beauty, so much variety, so much which speaks to us of God as our bountiful, joyful Creator and when we rush on into and through each day, without so much as a single pause or a moment's quiet reflection, we miss it all. We need time to really 'stand and stare' as William H Davies says in his poem called 'Leisure' or to 'consider the lilies' as Jesus himself said as recorded in Luke 12:27 – and this is not wasted time but worshipful, wonder-full time, well-spent with God.

I know it isn't easy and I have some days when I don't make space to 'stand and stare' and then, not only am I bound to be missing something rather lovely or meaningful which would be God's gift to me in that moment but I know that I am

also less effective in all the multitude of things I'm trying to cram into that day. When I create sufficient space and enough 'islands of stillness', the periods of my activity are enabled, and I can actually achieve more and do so with better outcomes. (I actually stopped trying to put some new chairs together to step aside and write this little note – I hope that this means both endeavours are more therefore assisted and produce something more creative and useful at the end of the day!)

Give yourself some space, a little island of stillness – every now and again. See it as God's gift to you and a way of helping you in all the other tasks of the day – it's worth a try and there's an awful lot of beauty out there to absorb, even in our 'everyday'!
Have a blessed week!

Sam

Message from the Leadership Team

Last week I was reading and half watching a medical TV programme at the same time when I saw on the TV screen the words 'JESUS ONLY.' This made me sit up and look but what it said was 'RESUS ONLY'. That made more sense! It did make me wonder though whether Jesus would go somewhere that was only for him and no one else was allowed in. I don't think so, but what if it were his personal consulting room and we could go in and meet him taking all our cares and worries with us, no appointments necessary and no queues.

Over the last few weeks, I have needed to talk to Jesus, to spend time with him. Like most other people during lock down my life has not been straightforward with all sorts of worries and problems to solve. So, what a comfort to know that I have access to Jesus 24/7.

We are all invited to talk with Jesus and our heavenly Father in prayer using our own simple, spontaneous words, any time we wish. We shouldn't be afraid to do so, it's his love so freely given for us that invites us to go to him with all our cares and worries.

*"What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry everything to*

God in prayer".
Jean Normington

A Word in Season 26: "How Much More"

It is fascinating how unconnected things suddenly come together. I have mentioned here before how many times over the past 70 odd years I find God has been working incognito. The latest example began a few weeks ago when House Group started with a session discussing our favourite Bible texts. As you would expect there was a wide selection but many of us chose the same texts. Towards the end of the discussion I suddenly realised that over my years as a local preacher I had preached on all of those texts in some way. I light heartedly shared that thought and John asked me if I had preached on a text from every book of the Bible. I replied possibly not one or two of the minor prophets but definitely not Leviticus. How God must have been smiling because two weeks ago it was confirmed that I would be preaching at West Horsley last Sunday. As part of my preparation I discovered the Gospel reading started with Peter's question to Jesus,

"How often should I forgive? As many as Seven times"? (*Matthew 18:21 RSVA*)

The notes in my study bible referred the number seven to the 'Jubilee Year', and the jubilee year on to Leviticus. I knew that the 'Jubilee' was significant to the African/American slaves in the Southern States of America and the Caribbean, as it occurs often in the Spirituals they sang around the hearth at the end of the day, but that was about all, I needed to find out more. Consequently, I read Leviticus 25:8-55 and found it complicated.

On Sunday, the introduction to my Sermon 'How Many Times' was rooted in Leviticus. As far as Peter's use of the word seven is concerned, when considering his question, we must remember that he was a practising Jew and had grown up with the century's old teachings and doctrinal practices found in the *Torah*, (particularly Leviticus). His question is based on the principal of the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-55), put simply,

"In the TORAH, the fiftieth year, (the year after the 49th year – 7 x 7), was named the year of Jubilee, and decreed to be a time when slaves were liberated, debts were cancelled, and land returned to its original owners. Hence the word Jubilee is used of times, seasons, or anniversaries for rejoicing".

(*The Complete Bible Handbook*, John Bowker, Dorling Kindersley, 1998 p516)

This shows the significance of the number 7 and combinations of it. In the time of Jesus, the general recommendation was that you should forgive up to three times. Peter was in fact being more generous than the norm.

Jesus picks up on the context and affirms not 7 or 7x7 or 70 x 7 or 70x70, no, forgiveness should be unlimited!

When we look at the world around us that looks like an impossible position, yet it is what Jesus expects of us and he came to provide the example.

The outrageous parable, (*Matthew 18:23-35, RSVA*), that Jesus tells in answer to Peter's question shows the ironic sense of humour Jesus had, we often forget that our Lord was human with all the attributes of being human. His use of ridiculous numbers shows the depth of God's forgiveness is unlimited. Another, different and relatively modern example can be found in a musical called 'Hosea' which was written by the then Captains in the Salvation Army John Gowans and John Larsson. It contains this song-

If human hearts are often tender, and human minds can pity know, if human love is touched with splendour, and human hands compassion show:

If sometimes we can live for others and sometimes give where gifts are spurned, if sometimes treat our foes as brothers and love where love is not returned:

If we will often share our gladness, if we respond when children cry, if we can feel each other's sadness, each other's tears attempt to dry:

Then how much more shall God our Father in love forgive, in love forgive, then how much more shall God our Father our wants supply, and none deny.

(79 The Salvation Army, Songs of Faith,

HQ for Canada, and Bermuda, 1971)

How much more God forgives despite our human weaknesses, perversities, lack of faith and indifferent love. The familiar and challenging verses of John 3:16-17 shows the depths of God's love for us.

"For God so loved the world, (including you and me), that he gave his only Son, so that everyone, (including you and me), who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him". (RSVA)

It has also been put this way by William Reed Newell,

O the love that drew salvation's plan! O the grace that brought it down to man! O the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me, There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary.
(405 Salvation Army Song Book, 1987)

Tim Hughes reminds us –

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross ... (StF 175)
We will never fully understand the depths of God's love for us, but it will become clearer, more understandable, when we take Jesus's instruction to forgive, and forgive, and forgive.

I believe that forgiving doesn't necessarily mean we accept or agree with what has happened, but that forgiveness is the beginning of reconciliation. As a Teacher you quickly learn when dealing with certain children it is not the child but the behaviour that is unacceptable. It often takes a great deal of patience and Christian love to reach out to those children. There is such a joy, for me when, with God's help, you have managed to bring the child to a meaningful reconciliation. Sometimes it is not possible to achieve that reconciliation, but you have shown that through the love of Jesus you were there to enable some forward steps.

In these times we hear of dreadful events and untold suffering inflicted across God's people. In our everyday lives we hear, 'that is unforgivable', perhaps not for us, but not beyond God's forgiveness. However, we have to try to forgive, as difficult as it is. In the Lord's prayer we pray for God's forgiveness and the Lord's help to forgive others.

I heard of the reality of the bombing of Coventry in 1940 from my Mum who was there driving a Salvation Army Canteen. She could never go back because of the memories she said, when she drove into Coventry it was a city standing but when she drove out it was a city on fire. War is such a huge destroyer that it is difficult to forgive. In spite of their wartime experiences towards the end of the war Mum and Dad befriended a German Prisoner of War who was awaiting the opportunity to return home. They often talked about 'German Peter' with affection and compassion. Mum always said he was just a young man forced by fear for his family to fight. He had a wife and baby and didn't know what he would find when he returned to Germany.

When I visited the newly restored Cathedral as a teenager on a school outing and again recently (in the pre Covid era), I was touched by the simple, yet profound, statement on the plain altar in the ruins of the old building, and the reconciliation reflected in the links with the people of Dresden who were savagely bombed by the Allies in 1944:





'Father Forgive'

As we reflect on forgiveness in our own lives; those who have offended or upset us, we must forgive them. Father forgive our reluctance to forgive others. Our own need to recognise God's forgiveness for ourselves, and to forgive ourselves, which can be so difficult. Through the act of forgiving we come to know that the breadth and depth of God's love, the grace of Jesus, our Saviour and the power of God, the Holy Spirit is with us as we reach out in forgiveness and reconciliation to share that love.

Lord, we thank you, in the words of the Psalmist,
"That as far as the east is from the west,
so far you remove our transgressions from us,
for you know how we were made, and remember our humanity".
(Psalm 103:12-14)

O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, this week may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly, day by day.
(from the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester, amended).

Graham.

Lockdown isn't over for everyone: We need Phone Volunteers.

For many of us life is returning to some form of normality. On the whole we have meaningful contact with those who matter to us. Now consider those folk, perhaps older people living alone, for whom there has been only limited change. Their opportunity to meet friends is often based around being together at one of the centres for the Community. The fact these remain closed means that they are still effectively stuck at home, just like under lockdown, and possibly with very limited

human contact.

There are still around 300 elderly or vulnerable people on Woking Borough Council's list who need a call on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis to check they are OK, but primarily for someone to listen, and talk with them.

Woking Phone Friends is being led by Hugh and Dan as part of their work supporting ROC Woking.

We are using a variety of networks to recruit volunteers phone friends, including the church networks, and we would love to recruit volunteers from Trinity. Your phone call could make a big difference to someone's day. Contact Dan or Hugh for more information or have a look at our Facebook page, search for Woking Phone Friends on Facebook.

Thank you, Hugh and Dan.

Bringing Life back into the Building

After such a long period away, it's been a pleasure this week to welcome our first tenants back into the building. It's going to be a slow and steady process over the next few months, to work with the organisations who use our facilities, to get them back in, if it's appropriate, and safe, and for us all to breath life back into Trinity's rooms and halls. As you know, we started off with Covid risk assessments for the Site, and then the Sanctuary, and the Office, and now each of the rooms. We're now getting down to the level of risk assessments per activity.

Tenants will be very limited as to where in where in the building they can go, and the infection control processes between bookings will be time consuming and necessary.

We're doing it all in a controlled way, so unfortunately the building won't be 'open' in the same way it has been for the time being, this means that sadly you won't be able to just pop in. But, we are open and opening, and that is a good thing! Watch this space for more details, and please pray that the reopening goes well.

Dan

Valerie's Quiz Corner

Answers to last week's Quiz:

- Nevada
- Conservative
- Francis
- Whooping Cough

- Weaver
- Bank of England
- Burned at the stake
- John Pershing
- Matthew
- Southward from the US State of Alaska
- John, 1167-1216
- Interaction of 2 complimentary forces in the Universe
- Yokohama
- Young Men's Christian Association
- Terrorist group of the Kikuyu of Kenya

And now for this week...

- Which country produces Jarlsberg cheese?
- Who was the second of Henry VIII's wives?
- In which UK nation was Newsnight presenter Kirsty Wark born, in 1955?
- Backgammon is a board game for how many players?
- Which city recently saw the inauguration of the UK's first 'Dutch style' roundabout which prioritises cyclists?
- What is an antigen?
- Where is Honduras?
- What type of creature is a common nase?
- Of what is St Francis of Assisi the patron saint of?
- Where is the city of Giza?
- What is traditionally mixed into a Christmas pudding to bring good luck?
- What is hurling?
- What is the measurement of a hurricane on the Beaufort wind scale?
- Who painted 'The Shout' in 1893?
- In which decade was BBC2 launched?

Trip to Scarborough

Paul and I had a lovely holiday to Yorkshire last week. (And thanks to Jean for producing the newsletter in my absence). We were based in the tiny village of Hackness, about 7 miles inland from Scarborough. It was a very peaceful place and for a townie such as myself it took a bit of an adjustment to hear nothing but the birds, and to chat to no-one but

the owner of the house, and the sheep in the field next door!

We enjoyed the wide-open beaches at Scarborough and Whitby, and the beauty of the Dalby Forest and the Bridestones on the moor. Fountains Abbey was a highlight for me. The weather was nice on all but one day, and we were able to enjoy a fresco fish and chips on a bench at Robin Hood's Bay.

I hope you enjoy these photos of our trip!
Dan



View from atop one of the Bride stones, Dalby Forest



The beach at Scarborough



Paul and I at Fountains Abbey