

**St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley**  
*Extraordinary Times*  
*a magazine to help us through COVID-19*  
**Issue 49** **March 7th 2021**

From the minister...

At the moment the whole nation is very much playing a waiting game, as we move step by step through the significant dates on the Government's "Road Map". (though arguably it's more of a "Timetable")

When you are waiting for something to happen, the closer you get to the moment when it finally arrives, the more frustrated and impatient you feel yourself becoming. I remember when I was in the Merchant Navy, homeward bound from some long voyage to South America. As we crossed the Atlantic the sense of anticipation would start to grow, and the excitement would really start when we made our first UK landfall (which was usually a sight of the lighthouse on Lizard Point in Cornwall). Grown men would grow as giddy as schoolboys at the prospect of soon being able to go home on leave; and we even had a name for this sense of euphoria – "the Channels" (because we had entered the English Channel).

It feels a bit like that now. The Spring is returning, the vaccination programme is continuing apace, and we can see an end to this terrible business. But the sense of "nearly being there" is so frustrating: we feel like giving up on waiting, we just want it now. And this is a temptation we have to resist; more than ever right now we need the spiritual fruit of Patience, for the sake of ourselves and others.

It's easy when you're on a ship going up the English Channel – your only option is to remain on board and wait for it to reach the docks. Giving up on lockdown now is as foolhardy as jumping over the side and trying to swim for it, believing you'll somehow get home quicker. Chances are you'll drown instead. Let's follow Paul's advice to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:5:

*"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship..."*

And from Philippians 3:14:

*"I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus."*

If you've been joining me on Facebook for my weekly chapter-by-chapter Bible Study sessions on the Gospel of Mark, you will have noticed that in this week's session (chapter 9) Jesus reaches the point in his ministry where he stops touring the Northern area of the country around the Sea of Galilee, and deliberately turns south to face his destiny, the cross. Luke puts it best by saying "he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51, NRSV).

Jesus knew what awaited him in the capital – it would bring freedom for all of humanity, but pain and suffering for him. If our Lord can take such a journey, so can we: but ours is a journey out of pain and suffering, and into freedom. Let us undertake it with all the patience and acceptance that Jesus shows us by his own example.

My dad, himself an engineer in the Merchant Navy, used to have a saying which he quoted from when the order came down to the engine room to put the engines "full ahead". Everyone knew that this meant they were going "deep sea" – homeward bound. He used to say "Every turn of the screw brings you nearer to home".

Or in our case I guess you could say, "Every job in the arm brings us nearer to freedom". Either way, however slow, we are getting there.

God bless, *Ralph*

### **What's On**

**Sundays 10:45am** online worship with Rev Ralph Ward

**Wednesdays 2pm** Rev Ralph's Bible study

**Find these live** on [Trinity's Facebook page](#) and [St Paul's Facebook page](#) with videos available afterwards

### **Zoom for Kids**

**Sundays 12noon and Fridays 6pm**

If you haven't joined in yet, email [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com) for an invitation

### **In your prayers**

**As schools fully restart** pray for all pupils and students, teachers and classroom assistants, administrators, maintenance and cleaning staff. Pray for parents and carers who may be anxious and ask God to be with everyone as they readjust.

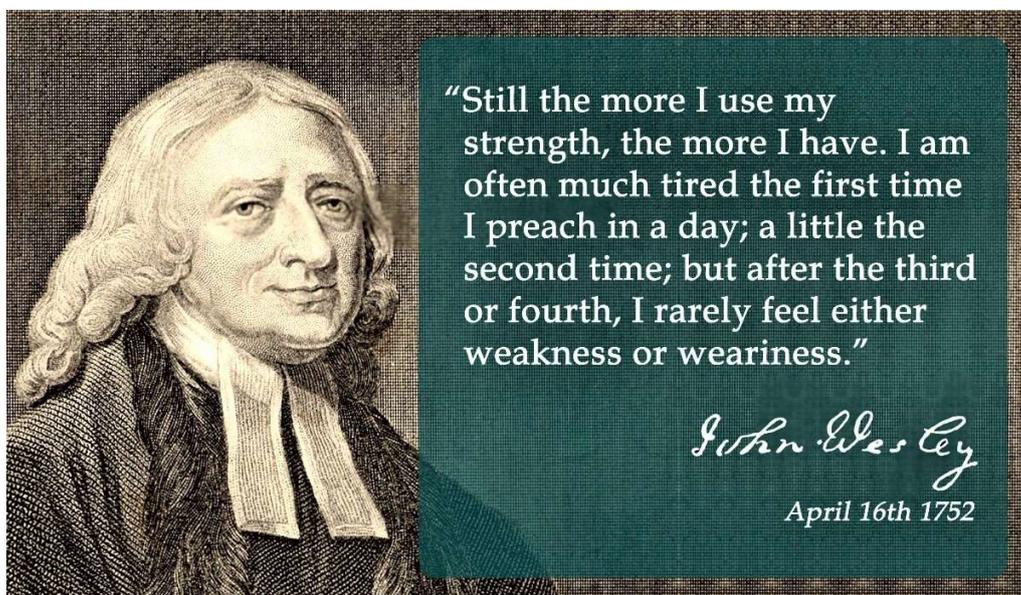
**Continue in prayer** for Lyn's sister, still recovering from Covid-19, and her mother ill with an infection as well as members of our church community and others you know who need our prayers at this time.

**Send** your prayer requests to [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com)

*Permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list*

### **Wesley on wellbeing**

On the 2nd March 1791 John Wesley died in London. This quotation from his diaries reveals a man of great energy and vitality who travelled extensively, overcoming early opposition to Methodism, preaching to thousands who flocked to hear him. An early advocate of wellbeing practices, he lived to the age of 87.



## **Methodist Church stands in solidarity with Myanmar**

The Methodist Church in Britain is standing in solidarity with its partners in Myanmar following the coup that occurred in the country at the start of February. Since the coup, there have been violent scenes in the country, with protesters being fired upon and a growing number of deaths.

The Myanmar Council of Churches has called for churches around the world to pray for justice and peace in Myanmar, and requests the release of those detained by the military regime, action on the control of Covid-19 and an end to the use of force and discrimination.

The Revd Conrad Hicks, Director of Global Relationships at the Methodist Church in Britain, commented, "We stand in wholehearted solidarity and prayer with our partner, the Myanmar Council of Churches, and wish to reiterate their call for an end to the violence and discord within the country."

*A prayer in response to the call for support:*

Lord Jesus we stand together with the people of Myanmar at this time of turmoil and unrest.

We hold before you our sisters and brothers in the Methodist Church of Upper Myanmar.

We pray for peace and justice for all citizens and for an end to division and conflict.

We pray for your church in Myanmar and pray for your people as they shine the light of Jesus which the darkness cannot overcome, showing your love and compassion for all people.

In solidarity with our partner, the Myanmar Council of Churches, we renounce the forces of destruction and despair and pray for your peace, hope, joy and unity to prevail. Amen.

(The Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference and Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference)

## **Taketime Together**

On the 7th of every month at 3.00pm we gather together to share a quiet time listening to a story from the Bible and then sharing how that story touches us and how we find it relevant to our lives today.



Why not join us? Our next meeting is this Sunday, 07 March, at 3.00pm via Zoom. If you would like to join us please e-mail [patoakley@sky.com](mailto:patoakley@sky.com) and she will send you the Zoom details. Everyone is welcome.

## **Circuit News**

As we reported in December, after discernment and consultation the Circuit Leadership Team has requested the curtailment of Deacon Irene's appointment. Following a review of the request by a neighbouring District this has been upheld with effect from 01 February. Deacon Irene and her family will continue to live in the manse until the summer but is no longer exercising ministry in the Circuit. Please continue to hold the Circuit and Deacon Irene in your prayers.

# THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

THE VICAR IS ON  
'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY'



PEOPLE SHE HOPES  
ARE LISTENING



THE BISHOP



ALL HER SOCIAL  
MEDIA FOLLOWERS



A TV TALENT SCOUT

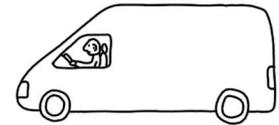


HER MUM

PEOPLE WHO ARE  
ACTUALLY LISTENING



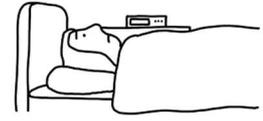
SOMEONE DOING  
THE WASHING UP



A DELIVERY DRIVER



A TENNIS FAN WITH  
TUNING DIFFICULTIES



AN INSOMNIAC USING THE  
RADIO TO GET TO SLEEP

CartoonChurch.com

## And finally – some thoughts about March

"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade."

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 1861

"March brings breezes loud and shrill,  
Stirs the dancing daffodil..."

Sara Coleridge (1802-1852),

"Indoors or out, no one relaxes in March, that month of wind and taxes, the wind will presently disappear, the taxes last us all the year."

Ogden Nash (1902-1971)

"March winds and April showers bring on the May flowers"

Old English proverb

## Contacts

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Prayer requests & newsletter items [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com)

St Paul's website [www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk)

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