

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley

Extraordinary Times

a magazine to help us through COVID-19

Issue 60

May 23rd & 30th 2021

Climate justice: end of the world or harvest for all?

In the in this series of articles, the Revd Simon Topping, a presbyter working in the Gloucestershire Circuit, argues that the way we see the relationship between earth and heaven guides our understanding of climate justice.

If the Bible tells us the world is going to be destroyed, why bother trying to save the planet? In fact, by trying to protect creation from destruction are we hindering God's salvation plan? This understanding of God's intentions for the physical world certainly doesn't encourage a desire to engage in the struggle for climate justice – quite the opposite! And there are biblical texts which help to sustain this perspective: "the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and the destruction of the godless" (2 Peter 3:7b), or: "the earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word." (Isaiah 24:3).

But there are other biblical texts which point to a renewal and restoration of creation, rather than its destruction: "...he has made known to us the mystery of his will... to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10), or "creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:21).

So, as we read the Bible, how do we decide whether God intends to destroy the world or renew the world? I think our decision needs to be guided by what we learn about God's intentions and purposes for creation elsewhere in the Bible. And elsewhere we learn that God sees all that God has created as "good" (Genesis ch.1), that God loves the world, the "cosmos" (John 3:16), that God's glory and greatness is revealed in the natural world (Psalm 104), that creation can teach us about dependence on and trust in God (Mat 6:25-33) and that, through Christ, "God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Col 1:20). Is this a world, a creation, that God plans to destroy or renew?

It is also important to remember Jesus' petition within the Lord's Prayer that "your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven". Perhaps it is helpful to understand the relationship between earth and heaven more in spatial rather than temporal terms. So, rather than seeing heaven as the place which follows on after earth has ceased to exist, we see earth and heaven as two co-existing realities which God brings together into one reconciled whole through the saving work of Christ. As Charles Wesley writes: "anticipate your heaven below, and own that love is heaven."

NB this issue of Extraordinary Times is for 2 weeks. Next one 6th June.

What's On

Sunday 23rd 9:30am in the church spoken service with Lorraine Valler

10:30am online worship with Lorraine Valler

Sunday 30th 9:30am in the church Holy Communion with Rev Clive McKie

10:30am online worship with Rev Clive McKie

Sunday 6th 9:30am in the church spoken service with Jill Brooks

10:30am online worship with Jill Brooks

Sunday 13th 9:30am in the church spoken service with Rob Burridge

10:30am online worship with Rob Burridge

Find all online services on [St Paul's Facebook page](#) and [website home page](#)

For Kids and young people

Fridays 6-7pm Kids and Young People back to church

Fridays 7pm Young Peoples' Singing Group

In your prayers

Please pray for the new Friday evening teaching and socialising sessions for our children and young people. Pray for the children as they get used to coming back to the church and meeting each other again and pray for their leaders and helpers.

Pray for the ongoing Covid situation. Pray for countries where the virus is still at very high levels and for all who are suffering. Pray for our own country where there is some increase in Covid cases due to new variants. Pray for the health and well-being of all people.

Continue to pray for Neil Roberts, for Jim Tomsett, for Lyn and Richard and others you know who need prayers at this time.

Send your prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

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



Congratulations to Jackie and Martin Bower who celebrate their Diamond Anniversary on June 3rd

Christian Aid Week 2021

Our total now stands at £515 (£617 including Gift Aid). The e-Envelope is still open so, if you'd like to donate, please click the link below. Thank you. *Ruth Lewis*

<https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/stpaulschurchcrawley>

Taketime for the Circuit – Taketime for All



Taketime for All is the new name for *Circuit Taketime*.

It's still on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 7.30pm for 15 minutes followed by a further 15 minutes in which to share experiences for those who wish to stay.

People are very welcome to drop in and try it. The next

Taketime for All is Wednesday, 3rd June at 7:30. If you

would like to join us, please e-mail patoakley@sky.com and she will send you the Zoom details.

Jerusalem is on fire, tears fall like rain

Following a joint statement with Methodist partners for peace in Jerusalem (see ET for 16th May), here is an account of life in the region from our local mission partner.

My name is Angleena and I'm a Mission Partner with the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem. I have travelled around the Holy land over the last three years being a part of the chaos and beauty. Now I watch as Jerusalem, Gaza and the land around is on fire and tears fall like rain. The fire has been fuelled by injustice, human rights denied, occupation, oppression, a broken divided society, failed politics and failed leadership. All who live in this land are affected in some way.

Last Monday was Jerusalem Day, a national holiday when hundreds of Israeli settlers celebrated control over the Holy City in the six-day war in 1967. Saturday, 15th May is Nakba which means 'catastrophe' in Arabic, when Palestinians remember the day in 1948 when they fled or were expelled from their land and homes. For some it's a time to celebrate, for others to weep.

Things started to look up as a war was waged against Covid-19, with Israel's vaccination programme and it seemed a war against sickness, disease and loss of life from a virus was being won, as it became under control. Life started to go back to some form of normality. Then another pandemic raised its ugly head. Jerusalem is on fire, but it's a fire of hatred of division, disunity, injustice, pain, rage and suffering. As things started to become normal the racism, distrust, anger and frustrations returned. Freedom of worship, equality and human dignity is not offered to all, as we have seen during Ramadan. Orthodox Christians are celebrating Easter, but many locals were barred from entering the Old City for the Holy fire ceremony in the Holy Sepulchre. Police barriers forbidding entry to both Muslim and Christians. Jerusalem is on fire, and tears fall like rain.

Jerusalem represents all the people of the land and as we hover on the brink of another war; there are no winners. There is civil unrest, towns are burning and people are being killed, injured, displaced and traumatised. They are tired from constant sirens and bombardments. Jerusalem is on fire and tears fall like rain as Jerusalem wages war against a new pandemic.

Yesterday I attended the installation of Jerusalem's new Archbishop Hosam Naoum at the Anglican Cathedral, which Christians travelled from all over the land to attend. An uplifting, moving service in dark times brought some relief and joy as we celebrated, praising God. He reminded us of the importance of Christian unity, a unity that is needed in the world. Jerusalem is on fire and tears fall like rain. It can happen in any community where there are systems that rob people of dignity, hope and equality. May the church of Christ weep damn it and shine brightly speaking out and against injustice everywhere, praying for solutions for the rage and fires lit, praying for a just peace.

May the rage turn to hope in Jerusalem, in Gaza, in the West Bank, in all the land between the Jordan and the sea we call Holy and may the people find each other. Thank you for your continued lament and prayers for the peace of Jerusalem; may it stop burning and the tears stop so lives can be restored and all can freely enjoy the wildflowers.

Angleena Keizer is a Methodist Mission Partner in Jerusalem.

A broadcast service on anniversary of George Floyd killing

Senior Church leaders from Britain and Ireland will join forces to call for justice at a service marking the first anniversary of the killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2021. Titled *Doing Justice: A Service of Reflection on the Anniversary of the murder of George Floyd*, the service will remember the tragic death of Mr Floyd, as well as challenge churches and communities in Britain and Ireland to stand up for justice, and against racism, ignorance, and hatred.

The service was initiated by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), an ecumenical organisation that encourages Christian unity, and includes churches of all traditions and denominations. One of the organisers, Richard Reddie, Director for Justice and Inclusion at CTBI said: 'Last year, George Floyd's killing and the Black Lives Matters protests that followed, showed that many were saying "enough is enough" when it comes to racism, especially the form experienced by Black people on both sides of the Atlantic. This anniversary is a timely reminder that we need to continue the work started last year, if we are really committed to ending injustice in church and society.'

The service will feature music by the awarding-winning IDMC choir, one of the leading Gospel choirs in Britain as well as poetry, prayers and a symbolic action that sees local schoolchildren laying candles at the foot of a cross to remember all those who have lost their lives to intolerance. This activity will be followed by a minute's silence to remember them, including, of course, George Floyd.

The service will be recorded on 18 May 2021, but broadcast at 7pm on 25 May 2021, via YouTube and other social media platforms. BBC Radio 4 will broadcast the service at 8:10 am on Sunday 30 May for its Sunday Worship programme.

And finally – celebrating hawthorn

*"The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made."*

Oliver Goldsmith

*"Hawthorn, white and odorous with blossom, framing the quiet fields,
and swaying flowers and grasses, and the hum of bees."* F. S Flint

*"And every shepherd tells his tale,
Under the hawthorn in the dale."* John Milton

*"Yet walk with me where hawthorns hide
the wonders of the lane."* Ebenezer Elliott

"In hawthorn-time the heart grows light."
Swinburne

"Ne'er cast a clout 'til May be out" Traditional
proverb, but does it mean the blossom or the month?



Contacts

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St Paul's website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

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