

The Bigger Picture

Doing Church Differently

17th May 2020

Word for the week

Words of wisdom from our Pastor, Mike....

Some months ago, there were various opinions within our church about what our Easter Sunday service should look like. I then woke up one morning around 3.30 am, and as I was praying about this, I felt God say that we should hold a baptismal service. For the only time in 38 years of ministry, I announced this intention before we had any definite candidates.

Lockdown put an end to those plans which made me question the validity of my guidance. However, I don't think I was mistaken. I believe that this was God's Plan A for us. An unlikely candidate was one of several who agreed to be baptised before we went into lockdown.

Recently, this candidate phoned me to say he still wanted to be baptised and my dream is to baptise him shortly after we return to the building even if social distancing rules may mean that I have to sprinkle him rather than fully immerse him.

What is the moral of my story? Simply, that we can't always follow through on God's plan A. Sometimes, we mess it up through our own stupidity, but other times, it is because the circumstances change as a consequence of God's permissive will.

Has lockdown delayed some of your plans? Perhaps, you are frustrated because they seemed to be God-honouring plans. Let's recognise that God is, generally, in less of a hurry than we are, so don't despair, and don't be surprised if those plans do actually fall beautifully into place... eventually!



"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord.

Jeremiah 29:11

CONNECT

Sunday 17th May - Talks on Youtube:-

Mike's sermon - https://youtu.be/V9ZD_fvxVrY

A **short message** based on Mike's talk from this morning - <https://youtu.be/vxtwq0oQrwo>

Thursday 21st May

10.30am - Encounter - this week everyone will have the opportunity to share a Bible verse and say why it's important to them.

Sunday 24th May

10.30am - Worship & Praise - a church gathering on Zoom, including, a short talk by Mike, and songs chosen and led by Linda.

Welcome

Welcome to the 5th
The Bigger Picture.

We hope you continue to
find it an inspiration.

May the Lord bless you
and keep you.

Mike & Sharon

Family Worship

On the MRBC website there are resources for families who want to worship together in a creative way—*church at home*.

This week the worship is based on the time when Jesus calmed the storm.

Do you have Jesus in the boat of your life?

www.mrb-church.org.uk/children-and-families-on-sunday/

*"I have told you all this so that
you may have peace in me."*

(John 16:33)

Prayer Challenge

For those who dare to go deeper with God

Prayer Walking

"And so I walk in the Lord's presence as I live here on earth!"

Psalm 116:9

Prayer walking can mean different things for different people at different times.

It can mean walking in nature, going to the country



and experiencing the awe of God. Many people feel a strong connection with God when immersed in his creation. Walk with God, be open to him speaking, and enjoy the beauty of the world God made for

you. Ask God to heighten your senses—listen to the bird song, bees buzzing round, animals in the fields; watch the clouds move across the sky, the butterflies fluttering by, the plants bending in the breeze; notice the different smells, good and bad, as you walk. Experience God's presence.

If you can't go to nature then let nature come to you - the BBC Blue Planet series allows you to see the wonder and wow of creation without leaving your living room <https://www.bbcearth.com/shows/blue-planet>.

Praying as Jesus Prayed

In this series we look at the prayer Jesus taught his disciples. This week we consider what Jesus meant by.....

**And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

When we pray these words we aren't suggesting God tempts us—he doesn't—we are praying for protection. Protection from the temptation to sin and protection from the devil.

We are asking God to give us the strength to stand up to the things that tempt us to sin. There are a lot of things that tempt us, some of which we don't even realise have led us into sin.

We need to be aware that there is a force acting against God, ready to tempt us away from him, taking our attention and focus off God, and placing distractions in our path.

Or, prayer walking can be walking the streets in your neighbourhood. Ask God to show you what to pray; pray for the people in the houses you walk past, pray for people you see, and pray for businesses you pass. You can do this on your own or, perhaps more effectively, with a prayer partner. You can pray out loud or pray quietly. Pick up clues from what you see, and pray what God puts on your heart.

And, thirdly you can 'walk and talk' - pray as you normally pray but do it as you take your daily exercise, wherever that happens to be, walking round the streets, in your garden, by the River Sowe, simply talk to God as you go - your unseen companion on every journey.

Open Heaven

is an initiative which unites all churches in Coventry with a vision to cover the city in prayer by prayer walking every street during June 20. Each street only needs to be walked once. If you want to be involved please contact Terry by 20th May.

Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,

Look upon us O Lord and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of your brightness.

Fill us with Holy love and open to us the treasures of your wisdom.

All our desires are known to You. Therefore, perfect what you have begun, and what Your Holy Spirit has prompted us to ask for in prayer.

We seek your grace and Your favour Lord.

Please bless us with your Holy Presence, reveal your Glory, then our peace shall be perfected.

Amen

Thanks to Sue for sending in this prayer.

It is important we ask God to protect us daily. To help us recognise the temptations and give us the strength to resist them.

If you are praying, 'lead us not into temptation' then you must make an effort to stay away from what isn't of God—to walk in the light and not stumble along in the darkness.

We can protect ourselves from evil by being aware of it, and by staying close to God through prayer and Bible reading.

The Lord's Prayer by Charlotte Church

<https://youtu.be/HzTHDZh35Vs>

Spend time with God and allow Him to transform you

Prayer & Praise for the Week

Prayer Pointers

This week let us pray for

- Sunday** school staff as they meet to discuss and prepare for the possible return of pupils and children who may feel anxious at the possibility of returning to school.
- Monday** [the Deacons this evening as they meet to discuss the way forward.](#)
- Tuesday** Penny's sister-in-law, Pam, who has discovered a secondary liver tumour and is now not looking at surgery but further chemotherapy. This is very disappointing news but she remains positive and cheerful and we trust that the Lord has a bigger plan yet to be revealed to us.
- Wednesday** [anyone you know who has lost a loved one because of the coronavirus](#)
- Thursday** the government as it monitors the effects of easing lockdown restrictions
- Friday** [anyone who continues is 'shielding' and unable to go out.](#)
- Saturday** all who are worried about their employment and/or business, the safety and wellbeing of all who have recently returned to work and continue to work.

Be Blessed

The Blessing has been reaching and blessing people across the world, many who don't normally attend church.

Coventry churches have come together to record a version of The Blessing to unify and bless the people of the city. If you haven't heard it you can listen to it now—[The Blessing Coventry](#)

You may also be moved by this rendition of [Hosanna](#), sung by Christians from around the world.

Sing Your Praises to the LORD

A week of worship from our worship leader, Helen.

On a walk last weekend I saw a Hawthorn tree in full blossom. I stood there for a few minutes and noticed how the birds were coming and



going from it. The words 'safe haven' came to mind. This tree was their refuge, they were safe from harm. We are safe in the arms of Jesus, let us draw even closer to Him during these times.

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?"*

*The Lord is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?"*

Psalm 27:1

"One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock."

Psalm 27:4-5

Song links for this week:-

(click on the song title for the YouTube link)

[The Lord is my salvation](#)

[My lighthouse](#)

[King of my heart](#)

[Better is one day](#)

[To be in your presence](#)

[Still](#)

[Everlasting arms](#)

[YouTube playlist](#)

[Spotify playlist](#)

