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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Someone said to me the other day “Your Presidential year has ended in a bit of a whimper”. Well, yes and no. I’ve certainly had to curtail all my future Presidential visits and apologise for doing so.

The situation in which we find ourselves today is completely alien to us and not one of us has experienced anything like this before. Our liberty has been severely restricted, and we are being urged, indeed, ordered, to stay at home with (at the time of writing) no end in sight. It is, to many, a very scary experience, emphasised by the daily increase in fatalities. If we allow ourselves to do so, we can find ourselves gradually sinking into a feeling of depression, anxiety and fear when we consider what might lie ahead for us.

My attention was drawn, only yesterday, to a few verses from Philippians which, although very familiar, struck me with a new relevance for our current situation:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:4-7 NIV)

As I have said before, I’m not usually a fan of “The Message” version of scripture, but I’m finding myself reading it more and more to give a different slant on scripture. This is how the Message translates the above verses:

Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! The Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute! Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what

happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life. (MSG)

Everyone is anxiously awaiting the production of a vaccination for Covid- 19, an antidote that will enable us to begin to get back to normal – whatever that may look like. An antidote for Covid-19 is not yet available, but there is an antidote to depression, anxiety and fear – and we find it in those verses from Philippians quoted above. The antidote to anxiety and fear is prayer and praise!!

One last thought from another well-known verse of scripture. Psalm 23 begins with these words: “The Lord is my shepherd... he **makes** me lie down in green pastures” and maybe this season is God’s way of making us slowdown from the hectic hustle and bustle of our Christian lives and spend some precious, quality time with him – in those green pastures with which he has provided us.

With my best wishes and the assurance of prayer for your safety and wellbeing
Colin

(Rev C Braithwaite: President)

DISCONNECTION DESTROYS US – BUT KING DAVID'S PRESCRIPTION RESTORES US

'Disconnection destroys us,' said the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in an online service, adding, 'It leads to panic buying, to growing fear and to spiritual and emotional as well as physical isolation.'

Isolation is not natural for human beings – we are not designed for it. In times of crisis, such as we are experiencing with Covid-19, our instinct to group together is like a bungee cord and straining against it creates tension in us. Yet here we are, millions of us, isolating ourselves to prevent the spread of the disease even from our families, while at the same time being bombarded with horrifying headlines. So, it's no surprise that many people are feeling anxious, while those already struggling with anxiety and depression are affected even more.

But it doesn't have to be like this. There are things we can do, some seemingly simple, but with known, powerful effects. The clearest and best was written by King David, hundreds of years ago. He knew what it was to experience isolation, betrayal, persecution, attempted murder, and more. He wrote:



Isolation can bring us to breaking point

'When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul, Psalm 94:19.

David remembered all that God had promised, all He had done, and all that He was. Here are some consolations to heal out souls –

- **Remember the good things He has done for us.** The Israelites put stones in the river Jordan as a memorial to the miraculous stopping of the river when they crossed. When we are anxious, we tend to forget the times that God has intervened in our lives. It helps to write them down and give God thanks for each one.
- **Being grateful has a hugely therapeutic effect.** There is so much we can be grateful for – for big and for little things. When we reflect, often the little things had as much impact as the big. Clinical studies have shown the physical as well as emotional effect of being grateful.
- **Encouraging others.** Make telephone calls, send emails, write FB or twitter posts. You can begin by saying, 'I was just remembering when ... (the person said or did something) and how much it meant to me.' You will have your own memories and words. Find the little ways.
- **Accepting help from others.** We can be so used to being independent that we have unwittingly pulled up the drawbridge that lets people in to help. When someone phones to ask if there's anything they can get you from the shops, say 'yes'! Even if it's only a bar of soap. (They might even be able to find toilet rolls!)
- **Learn to spend a little time focusing on the small things.** How the sun's rays through the windows light up the pattern in the carpet, or a picture – or even if

it's only the dust, then the sunshine itself!

- **Find the Scripture verses that are full of God's promises to you.** (Some references are given below.) The Bible tells us that these verses are 'living and active.' Write them out on post-it notes and stick them where you will see them during the day – and stop to read them.
- **Finally – worship music.** Music is known to be good for the brain, and worship music is good for our souls. Welsh pastor Selwyn Hughes, founder of Crusade for World Revival (CWR), believed that that in worship we enter into the presence of the Lord and His unity becomes our unity. He puts our fragmented, world-weary selves back together.

Verses to look up: [Isaiah 41:10](#), [Psalm 46:1](#), [Deuteronomy 31:8](#), [Philippians 4:13](#), [Psalm 139](#), [Psalm 18:29](#), [Psalm 138:8](#), [Isaiah 54:10](#) – there are many more.



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COVENTRY GOD CAKES

Ingredients

375g pack of ready-rolled puff pastry
Scant 50g (2oz) butter
200g (7oz) mixed dried fruit
1 heaped teaspoon mixed spices
25-50g (1-2oz) demerara sugar
White of a small egg and granulated sugar for glaze.
Scant tablespoon brandy or elderflower or blackcurrant cordial.

Directions

1. Preheat oven to Gas 7/220C and lightly grease two baking sheets.
2. Cut pastry into 12 squares.
3. Melt butter, add dried fruit, spices, demerara and liquid and mix well.
4. Divide mixture between pastry squares, moisten edges with cold water and fold to make triangles, pressing edges together.
5. Place on baking sheets and flatten slightly. Make a couple of small slits in top of each to allow steam to escape.
6. Brush with lightly beaten egg white and sprinkle with sugar.
7. Bake for about 10 -15 minutes until golden.
8. Allow to cool on tray for few minutes before transferring to wire rack.



These very rich pastries, dating back to Chaucer's time, are a regional variation on Banbury or Chorley cakes. Traditionally they were given to children by their Godparents at New Year and their triangular shape represents the Trinity.

As I prepared a recent talk on The Road to Emmaus, I was struck anew by how the two travellers didn't even recognise Jesus in His bodily form as He walked beside them. How much more difficult is it for us to realise the presence of His Spirit now He is ascended to be with His Father? Very difficult at times, I'd suggest.

And yet that was the promise Jesus gave to His disciples and to us:

And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
Matthew 28:20 (NIV)

OBITUARIES



Fife Street Church, Nuneaton

On the 5th March 2020 we lost a dear friend and Christian lady. [Bette Munday](#) was born in Fife Street, Nuneaton and has been attending our church from childhood. Following her marriage to Bob she encouraged him to join the church. They were both church members and worked tirelessly for the church. Although Bette didn't attend church for the last few years due to ill health, she maintained contact and upheld us in prayer. We pray that God will comfort her son Chris and the family. Bette was a loving friend to those in need and a listening ear to those with problems, who just wanted to talk. She maintained her faith and set a good example for a caring life to all who met her.

OBITUARIES



Owlerton Church, Sheffield Circuit

It is with sadness we report the passing of [Jean Handley](#) on 3rd February age 86, but rejoice that she is now in the presence of her Saviour whom she loved and faithfully served.

Jean was brought up in a Christian home and came to know the Lord for herself at a young age. It was in 1962 that Jean began her employment for the Wesleyan Reform Union until her retirement in 1992. She worked with three General Secretaries, Rev. A. Halladay, Rev. D. Morris and Rev E. Downing, including also the Y.P.D. Secretaries, the first of whom was David Cartledge who started at headquarters the same day as Jean. Whilst working for the Union many lifelong friendships were formed at conference time in particular.

Jean also served as Circuit Steward for a number of years, since her retirement from WRU and represented the Circuit at Conference.

Jean joined the church at Owlerton in 1987, having formerly attended Philadelphia Church under the ministries of Rev. Jack Barton and Rev. Charles Nicholson. She also taught in the Sunday school.

At Owlerton, Jean was fully involved in all aspects of the life of the Church, especially the work amongst children either in Sunday school or outreach on a needy housing estate. Another area for involvement was the Ladies Meeting. For many years she shared in the leadership of the meeting and was a regular speaker herself.

A great supporter for mission work overseas, Jean kept in regular contact with many missionaries. One missionary, Margaret Payne used to look forward to receiving letters from Jean because they were always handwritten and not sent by email.

For someone who didn't like flying, she made many trips to Bosnia and Croatia visiting and helping relatives who worked over there. In addition, she visited Phil and Diane Benstead in Turkey, including the year after the earthquake in 1999, when she cared for the children enabling Phil and Diane to help with the relief work. She also made a few trips to America visiting friends during the time of Thanksgiving.

Her funeral Service held on 2nd March was conducted by Rev. Charles Nicholson at Owlerton followed by burial conducted by Rev. Tony Hodkinson.

Ebenezer WR Church, Stairfoot Barnsley Circuit

[Philip Nuttall](#) was the ultimate, consummate professional. He was a Qualified Chartered Mining Engineer and worked in the Barnsley area in the late 60's and early 70's.



After the closure of the pits, he worked as a senior local government officer for Sheffield City Council, primarily responsible for sourcing European Funding for regeneration projects in South Yorkshire, travelling to Brussels on many occasions.

He was an accredited local preacher in the WRU for over 50 years. His preaching extended to many parts of the country, when he often travelled hundreds of miles to 'preach the gospel of Jesus Christ'. Invariably he would take some mechanical gadget to entertain and underline his message. Philip had been a member of the WRU General Committee, Chair of Local Preachers' Fellowship, a Trustee of LPMA, former National Advocate and Chair of LWPT and Finance Director of LWP Homes. He worked tirelessly to support churches with property and legal issues, searching for and replacing deeds in order to comply with regulations for the Land Registry and local councils. He was known for his lengthy, complicated, detailed reports often written and sent out by email late at night. Philip was also a life-long member of Gideons and served as branch Secretary in the area where he lived.

Combining his professional and Christian beliefs gave Philip the opportunity to serve the people of Barnsley in a voluntary capacity with especial interest in regeneration projects. He was a Trustee of Access to Sport and Recreation based in Grimethorpe. He was Project Manager for the redevelopment of Monk Bretton Methodist Church and Worsbrough Community Church as a means of outreach for the community and served as Chair of "Mind" in Barnsley, working to improve access for those with mental health issues.

When the Church at Eyam closed where he was Pastor for many years, Philip chose to come to Salem Church in Barnsley, following in the steps of Clifford Race and Reverend Doctor Derrick Morris. He was the Church President and Treasurer of Salem making sure they complied with all regulations relating to the Charity Commission. He was also Salem's representative for the "Churches Together" in Barnsley. In 2011 the Barnsley James Hudson Taylor Group was formed based at Salem and Philip became the Treasurer and Joint Secretary of this Group.

Without Philip, the Salem Trustees and members could never have achieved the satisfactory transfer of Salem to another Christian group that would continue the work started by our predecessors so many years ago. After the transfer of Salem, Philip along with other Salem members joined the fellowship at Ebenezer WR Church, Stairfoot.