

Issue 6

26th April 2020

Together as One

Newsletter of the Methodist Churches in Hungerford, Lambourn,
Newbury and Thatcham during Coronavirus Pandemic

Verse for the week

'We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses,' Hebs 4: 15

'Where is God in all this?'

How has this week been for you? It has included schools still closed; lockdown extended, no one able to tell us when and how this will end and the rising death toll, every person a loved and valued individual known to God. It may all seem more starkly real. Certainly I have been speaking to several people touched by loss with funerals to arrange, and the pains have been evident. Yet I trust there have been things to be thankful for, light and joy too.

In our isolation, multiplied if we are living alone, and with the sorrows and anxieties of global pandemic becoming ever clearer, you may well be asking, 'where is God?' If you are, then you are not alone. The Bible is full of the agonised cries of his servants who, weighed down by grief and fear, feel God's absence, individually and collectively. 'Will you abandon us for ever?' 'Where are you Lord?' 'Why have you forsaken me?' These heartfelt pleas echo across the years. So, if you share those questions, don't suppress them, cry out with the writers of the psalms in prayer to God. It is OK. God is big enough to cope with all our emotions.

It is in Jesus, the high priest of whom the writer to the Hebrews speaks, that God's response comes. He is the one who is a man of sorrows and familiar with grief, who weeps with and for the pain of the world and at death, desolation and destruction. The resurrection, which we continue to celebrate and which transforms everything, is God's eternal rebuttal. After showing himself to many of his followers Jesus said to them, 'surely I am with you always to the very end of the age'. You can be certain the great I am will never leave or forsake you because not even death, the final enemy, can separate us from him. Resurrection shows us that. So as the book of Hebrews goes on to say, 'So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will find grace to help us when we need it most'. With love and prayers. Peter



Creativity

We have heard that a number of you have continued or resumed painting, embroidery or other craftwork during self-isolation. Why not send us a photograph and we will host a virtual exhibition. Perhaps we can share experiences and ideas to encourage one another too.

Having trouble with the technology? Feeling a bit technophobic?

A new video guide has been created to help people just like you to make the most out of technology while in self-isolation. The video provides advice on texting, video messaging, accessing online information, downloading apps and online shopping. It features celebrities like Claire Balding, Maureen Lipman and Tony Adams. For details [Click Here](#)

New Prayer App - Lectio 365

This is a wonderful new devotional resource, designed to help us engage with Scripture to inspire prayer and shape our lives. It is written by Pete Greig and others from the 24-7 Prayer Movement, and produced in partnership with CWR. This past week the focus has been on 2 Chronicles 7: 13-14.

You may be finding prayer difficult at the moment, particularly if you're unable to pray with others. Why not download the App and give it a try? Chris. For details [Click Here](#)

Beatitudes for a global pandemic

Blessed are those who stay indoors for they protect others.

Blessed are the unemployed and the self-employed, for their need of God is great.

Blessed are the corner shopkeepers, for they are the purveyors of scarce things.

Blessed are the delivery drivers and the postal workers, for they are the bringers of essentials.

Blessed are the hospital workers; the ambulance crews, the doctors, the nurses, the care assistants, and the cleaners, for they stand between us and the grave, and the Kingdom of Heaven is surely theirs.

Blessed are the checkout workers, for they have patience and fortitude in the face of overwork and frustration.

Blessed are the refuse collectors, for they will see God despite the mountains of waste.

Blessed are the teachers, for they remain steadfast and constant in disturbing times.

Blessed are the church workers; the ministers, priests and bishops, for they are a comforting presence in a hurting world as they continue to signpost towards God.

Blessed are the single parents, for they are coping alone and there is no respite.

Blessed are those who are alone, for they are children of God - with Him they will never be lonely.

Blessed are the bereaved, for whom the worst has already happened. They shall be comforted.

Blessed are all during this time who have pure hearts; all who still hunger and thirst for justice; all who work for peace and who model mercy. May you know comfort. May you know calm. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen. By Jayne Manfredi @TheWomanfredi

Spring Harvest at Home

Here is a brief summary of the highlights of experiencing Spring Harvest at home this year. The theme was "Unleashing the Holy Spirit" just as the early church did. It is so appropriate for now and when this pandemic at least slows down. It was excellent, meaningful for children, young people and like me those who have never grown up!

The Children and Youth event "The Big Bang" was exceptionally good. The theme song was about glowing with the Holy Spirit. We were encouraged to have torches, glow sticks or glowing headdresses. Each morning there was a "Holy Spirit" Histories concentrating on the daily passage from Acts. This was dramatically presented. Alongside this we heard from a Christian today and how they had been filled with the Holy Spirit. They had glow prayers and fun but meaningful worship songs. Doris, Newbury.

And finally

"Doctor, I can't stop singing The Green, Green Grass Of Home." He said: "That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome." "Is it common?", I asked. "It's not unusual," he replied.