

Together as One

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

Verses for the week

Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.

..... according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good. Psalm 25: 6-7

Remembering



Chris Sansbury on Unsplash

This is the season of remembering, including All Saints Day, Bonfire Night and Remembrance Sunday. This year public remembering and church services have been curtailed or unable to take place so we have been asked to remember at home. The focus has therefore shifted to the private and personal. To see the Queen wearing a black face covering at a very private ceremony beside the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was deeply moving and powerfully symbolic of life today. Your memories may well be

heightened or piqued at this time of year and by the extraordinary circumstances of living with coronavirus and its consequences. My personal remembering coincides with the anniversary of my mother's death 36 years ago. The same day is the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Coventry during which the old cathedral was destroyed. Coventry was the city in which both my mother and I grew up. You will have your own personal recollections for memory works by the triggering of those chains of association and interconnection.

By the same process I have also been thinking about the meaning and importance of remembering in the Bible. It is a word frequently used to describe God's action on behalf of those in need of his help. Describing God's remembering is not to imply He forgets and something causes him to call to mind the individual or group as we in our frail and faltering memory do. Rather it describes the moment when He determines the time is right to act. For example, God remembers Noah in the Ark, Sarah and Abraham in their childlessness and his people suffering in Egyptian slavery. God's remembering is often associated with His covenant promises. So, prayerful prophets and psalmists have appealed to God to remember, as in the 'verses for the week' above. Now is a really good time to pray the same prayer. We need God to remember mercy, to remember us locked inside with the waters rising around us and the rain pouring down like Noah and his family, to remember our lost hopes and disappointments, and to remember the oppression of the harsh labour of life in a pandemic. We need to ask Him to bring us hope, comfort, patience and endurance and to reassure us we are not forgotten, not abandoned, and not destroyed. In the defining act of Christian worship, broken bread and wine outpoured, we remember Jesus Christ, His suffering, solidarity and sacrifice and we remember too His victory, resurrection and glory. In our obedience to His command to 'do this in remembrance of me' we remember we are ultimately secure. With love and prayers, Peter.

International Day of Prayer for the persecuted Church

Today is set aside to remember in prayer Christian brothers and sisters who live life in lockdown because of fear and persecution. Some are imprisoned for their faith and many more discriminated against and marginalised because they declare their faith in Jesus.

For details [Click Here](#)

Here we go again!

That may be what you felt on hearing the announcement of increased restrictions to control coronavirus infections. This time things are different; more people are able to work, schools are open and more essential businesses. We also have learned a lot about how to treat the illness. Nevertheless life will be difficult for many and 'How long, O Lord!' may be our cry and our prayer. This insightful article caused me to think [Click Here](#)

Advent Worship series

This Advent, in preparation for Christmas, we will be following a series of preaching and worship prepared by Sara and Sam Hargreaves through Engage Worship entitled 'Worship in the Waiting'. This will be over 5 weeks so begins on the week before Advent i.e. Sunday 22nd November. It follows the familiar Advent readings with an introductory week. I would encourage you to prepare by reading those sections of the Bible again. The outline of the series is as follows.

Introductory Week - Waiting for a King (Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14, Matthew 25: 31-46 and Colossians 1:11-20)

Advent 1 - Holy suspense (Luke 21: 25-26 and Romans 13: 11-14)

Advent 2 - Active patience (Malachi 3: 1-4 and 2 Peter 3: 8-15)

Advent 3 - Hope-filled expectation (Isaiah 35: 1-10, Matthew 11: 2-11 and James 5: 7-10)

Advent 4 - Awe-struck anticipation (Isaiah 7: 10-16, Luke 1: 26-38, 46-55 and Matt 1: 18-25)



There is also a book of personal devotions to go with the series which can be purchased as a hard copy or downloaded as a PDF if you would find that helpful. For details [Click Here](#)

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

You probably heard the recent announcement of the death of the former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks. With his death we have lost a brilliant communicator, deep thinker and persuasive advocate for faith in the public sphere. His final book, published in March, and entitled 'Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times' continued his lifelong exploration and advocacy for public morality. Here is a relevant quotation from the book, 'The coronavirus is going to test our capacity to work for the benefit of others,... Selfishness is not going to protect us. When we behave towards others with care and concern, sensitivity and tact, honesty and integrity, generosity and grace, forbearance and forgiveness, we start to become a different person. And such is the nature of reciprocity – itself one of the deeply engraved instincts that is the basis of morality – that we begin to change the way others relate to us; not always, to be sure, but often.'

And finally

I'm good friends with 25 letters of the alphabet ... I don't know why.