

Together as One

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

Verses for the week

Lord, ...I've poured out my life before you, and you've always been there for me. So now I ask: teach me more of your holy decrees. Open up my understanding to the ways of your wisdom and I will meditate deeply on your splendour and your wonders.

Psalm 119: 25-27 (Passion Translation)

Psalms for life

The increased use of online meeting software will be one of the legacies of this pandemic. This has many pluses - in bringing isolated family and friends together and enabling work and schooling from home. Of course, just as it has enabled connection and inclusion it has simultaneously excluded those who are unable to access the Internet for whatever reason. We are going to need to find ways to make this technology more widely available when we can help people in their own homes again. One great bonus I have found is occasionally to be able to attend events online that I would never have been able to get to in person because of the time and travel involved. This week, for just an hour, I had the delight of attending the launch of a book written during lockdown by one of my favourite contemporary Christian poets, Malcolm Guite (it rhymes with light). I had already pre-ordered the book and had begun to explore it. It contains 150 short 15 line poems reflecting on and responding to every one of the psalms in the light of Christ. The book is entitled David's Crown because David is traditionally the writer of most of the psalms. In Malcolm's book each poem is linked to the next through its last line being repeated as the starting line of the next poem. I would have thought this strictly disciplined approach would have made the writing more difficult but the author said at least it meant he already had the first line of the next poem to start from – he said it became quite addictive! The crown or corona is completed by the last line of the last poem being the first line of the first one. This echoes the repeated rhythm of reading or chanting the cycle of psalms in the monastic tradition. This symmetry adds to the beauty of these simple yet profound poems.

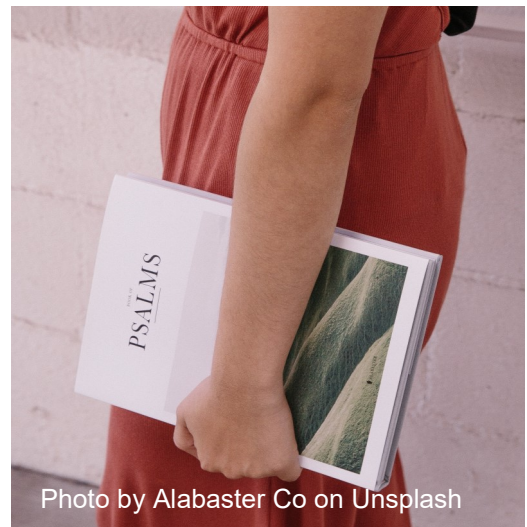


Photo by Alabaster Co on Unsplash

Like the notorious claim of the News of the World (remember that) all human life is there in the psalms. Whatever emotion you are feeling you can be pretty confident one of the psalms will express that same emotion, from the ecstasy of exuberant praise to the deepest depths of abandonment, from joyful faith to quaking fear and from calm, confident peace to vengeful, destructive anger. Above all these emotions are expressed to God and God's response is sought. This tells us much about God and about prayer and worship too. **[See Over]**

There is certainly no need to, and frankly no point in, (see Psalm 139) hiding our true feelings from God. He can take it and he can help. The Book of Psalms and gifted poets can aid that search for truthful engagement and help. Now may be just the moment when you need to explore the psalms again. With love and prayers, Peter.



Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight begins tomorrow. However, you are doing your shopping these days please don't forget those who are producing the food and clothing we need. Remember Fairtrade is not only about bananas, tea and coffee. Over 6,000 products are available and fairtrade works with more than 1.7M farmers and workers in fairtrade certified produced organisations. Fairly traded goods are not only good for the producer and their communities they are better for the planet too. For

more details of where to obtain fairtrade goods [Click Here](#) and for more information about fairtrade and events this fortnight [Click Here](#)

Lockdown 3

If you are feeling that third time round is tough, you are probably not the only one. However, we need to remember that the restrictions are keeping us safe at home rather than stuck at home. And one third of people with Covid don't have symptoms so we all need to act as if we have it. It is a case of keeping on – keeping on. If you have found helpful ways to adapt to the restrictions why not help someone else by sharing them. Here are a few ideas.

- **Be Kind to Yourself**

We are coping with unprecedented circumstances so don't expect too much of yourself. Avoid things, news and people that bring you down. Create a new routine for lockdown that works for you.

- **Ask for help**

Don't struggle on your own, pick up the phone or Email someone.

- **Exercise & Physical Health**

It is important to keep as active as possible, for your physical and mental health. Getting up and moving about is really important. Daily exercise from home is a great way to explore your neighbourhood. It is surprising what you see on foot and what you notice as the seasons change. Why not turn it into a prayer walk by praying about what you see and for the people, homes and businesses that you pass by speaking God's blessing.

- **Keep Busy** Here are some ideas:

Knitting, jigsaw puzzles, other puzzles, drawing or writing a diary.

Catch up with your reading or start reading for pleasure.

Start a new hobby. Make something with your hands.

Experiment with a different recipe or meal plan.

Listen to more of your kind of music - worship songs can be very uplifting.

Older People's Activity Bags

It is not too late to donate towards the cost of these bags which have been so appreciated by older members of the churches. The best way to donate is via the Good Exchange [Click Here](#) but you can also pay by cheque payable to Thatcham Methodist Church sent to the treasurer at 20 Exmoor Road, Thatcham, RG19 3UY clearly indicating what it is for.

And finally

I'd like to imagine the person who invented the umbrella was going to call it the 'brella' but then they hesitated.