



# Friday Fellowship News No 8 22 May 2020

## TRANSITION - NEED A HELPING HAND?

PSALM 13 is a great Psalm to read in these days.

It's easy to get locked into the darkness of our own thoughts and feelings. Sometimes it seems there is no way out, that we are trapped and held captive by our circumstances. We have no indication how long David stayed in the darkness, but it didn't last for ever as v3-4 indicate. Slowly his heart began to turn towards God again and once more he finds himself able to pray.

This happens, not because of some supreme effort on his part, but because of an act of grace on God's part. There are times, thankfully quite rare, when we need a *Helping Hand* to come and rescue us, to save us from ourselves and lift us out of the mire. The change in David did not come about because he believed more or trusted more, but because in his helplessness he cried out for help. As the chorus says, "Love lifted me, love lifted me. When no one but Christ could help, love lifted me."

I think today of Peter walking on the water towards Jesus, full of faith and courage - the model disciple. Then he took his eyes off Jesus, looked instead at the wind and the waves, and promptly began to sink. He could not save himself, but only cry out for help, "Lord, save me!" He needed a *Helping Hand*. What happened next? "Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him (Matt 14:31)."

As I shared last week, its all too easy for us to cry out "How long, O Lord?". We wonder how much longer we can live like we are? Perhaps it's like a marathon runner who, halfway through the race 'hits the wall' and feels she or he can't go on. Then, seemingly from nowhere, she/he gets a second wind and finds the stamina to continue to the end.

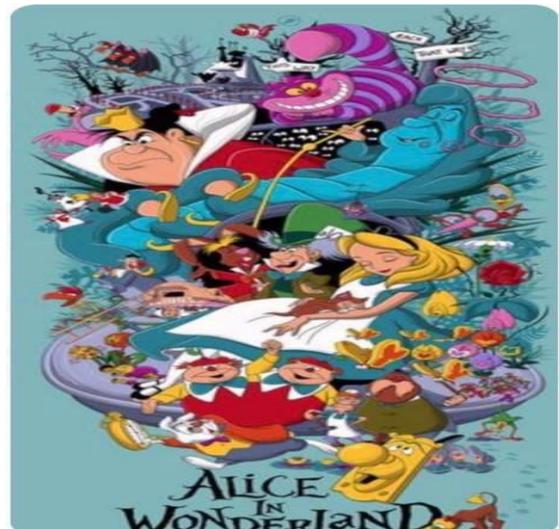
I like to think of it as the *Helping Hand* reaching out and taking hold of me despite my little faith. Grace at work in me, and grace available to each one of us to help us in our time of need.

## STANFORD FESTIVAL - WITH A DIFFERENCE!

SADLY, this year, St Denys cannot organise and host the village two-day festival. However, as a village we can celebrate with a difference.

Karin Williams-Cuss, a member of our Messy Church family, and a parish councillor, has come up with the great idea of a '**Stay at Home Stanford Village Festival**' - The annual village festival with a 'curious' twist!

Karin said: "*The Village Festival has unfortunately had to be cancelled this year due to COVID 19. However, as it has been running for 38 years, we would like villagers to enjoy a 'Stay at Home Individual Celebration' to celebrate the amazing village in which we all live.*"



**Date - Sunday 14th June**

**Location - Your own home**

Theme - 'Alice in Wonderland' with a 'Mad Hatters Afternoon Tea'

Karin adds: "Why not decorate your front window, garden fence, front garden with anything 'Alice in Wonderland' themed. Enjoy a 'Mad Hatters' Afternoon Tea at home, or by adhering to Social Distancing

requirements in a stay at home front garden celebration, with your neighbours a la 75th Anniversary of VE Day.

“It would be truly lovely if as many households as possible could stay at home and join in, so that people can enjoy an individual walk around the village to enjoy the ‘Alice in Wonderland’ themed creations.”

Any queries/ further information required, please contact Janet Warren on 710789 or Karin Williams-Cuss on 718637

• **The 2021 Stanford festival, organised and hosted by St Denys Church will be on 19/20 June.**

## THY KINGDOM COME 2020



DON'T Forget – these next days, across the Globe, Christians will be taking part in the TKC Prayer initiative . See www. <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/> for lots of resources and ideas.

## SUNDAY READINGS & MESSAGE

THE Bible Readings for this Sunday are Acts 1: 6-14 and John 17:1-11. I will post a brief video with some thoughts on the John reading on the St Denys Church Facebook Page, and on our YouTube Channel – search in YouTube for **St Denys Church Stanford**.

## ST DENYS CHRISTIAN BOOK CLUB?

SADLY, only one person registered any interest in a Zoom Book-club, so this will not proceed.

## HELPING THE BEREAVED

COVID-19 Social Distancing has created many challenges to our normal way of life. And we are all grieving the loss of many things we have quite rightly taken for granted. This creates inconveniences, anxieties and tensions for all of us that are, of course, challenging in many ways.

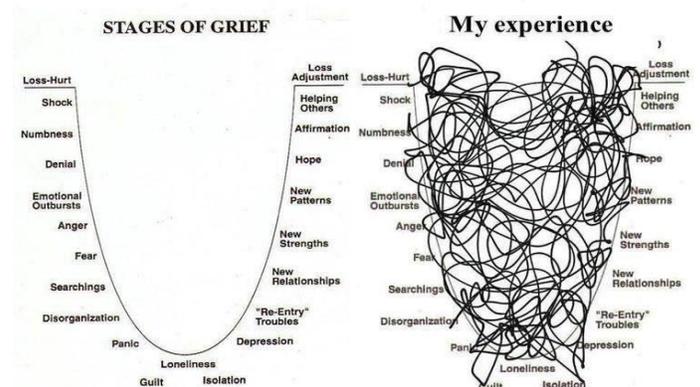
But for those who have already lost, or are facing the imminent loss of a loved one during this period, the impact on their grieving and mourning is compounded. Grief can make you feel isolated in normal circumstances. Social distancing can make this more intense. It is a very sad fact that grieving and mourning in ways that people are accustomed are just not possible at

this time – and for those who have lost loved ones in the village, they feel the grief even more acutely.

Once the funeral is over it is important for the griever to have connections with trusted friends and family in some way. It's so important that they can talk and cry with someone. So, in the absence of a hug or face to face contact, please be proactive and connect with family and friends who are grieving. Whether it be in old ways such as a telephone call, text, a card or newer ways such as Zoom or face time.

It's so important to talk about what has happened and help them to express their feelings - otherwise it may lead to increased feelings of isolation, loneliness and distress. And if you are the griever, even though you may be on your own in self-isolation it is important to connect with others. Perhaps use Zoom/Face time to look at photographs together, talk about the person who has died, talk about your feelings and emotions. Remember the things that made you smile and perhaps plan a future memorial service together.

Forget any talk about a neat, gradual movement through the five stages of grief – it doesn't happen! The diagram below is much more realistic – so don't worry if you grieve differently to others, or you see loved ones grieving in totally different ways to the way you may have in the past.



The best thing we can do for people in grief is to be there for them. If you are apprehensive, then send them a brief letter, card, a text, a brief phone call – just let them know you care and they are not alone.

## VICAR HOLIDAY DAYS

Just a reminder that I am taking a few days off 'holiday' from 22 May (our Wedding Anniversary – 21 Years) to Thursday 28 May inclusive. The Tuesday Zoom Coffee Morning will still go ahead – look out for the email with entry details. Do contact the wardens during this time if needed.

With my love and prayers  
**Revd Paul Eddy, Vicar**  
**T: 01367 710267**  
**E: vicar@stdenys.org**