



Methodist Church

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Volume 1, Issue 1

Prayer and Praise

sharing our joys, concerns, laughter and encouragement with each other!

The Church Scattered Abroad - From Rev. Naomi

THEME: Sight and Insight
Psalm 22 and John 9: 1-41

Introduction

Hello everyone, I hope you are keeping well and staying positive during these stormy times. I wonder whether the early Church felt the way we are feeling now when we are not able to gather for worship and communion.

Acts 8:1 says, '***On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria***'. Where they were scattered, they were able to witness about the goodness of God. Like them, we find ourselves scattered but thank God we have ways we can connect.

Auntie Corona is bringing out the best and the worst in people. We hear where communities, Churches and agents are offering help to their neighbours and those people who are feeling isolated at this time. Help with groceries, picking prescriptions up, or just to ring and check on them. This is the kindness our humanity. Yet, we hear about people taking food that has been donated to the poor, the case in Tesco supermarket and also in Knottingley where the food bank was broken into and stuff taken. This is humanity too.



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NATIONAL CALL TO PRAYER - SEE BACK PAGE

Put a candle in your window this Sunday.



Bible Verses

Psalm 23: 1 - 4

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

Photo from Deb - Harlow Carr Gardens, Harrogate

Prayer Request

We pray for Mary as
she aims to keep well
prior to her cataract
operation next
Wednesday, 25th
March.

Psalm 23

Whether you are listening to or reading this message, I would like to encourage you that God is in our midst even in these times of fear and confusion. I am going to reflect a bit on Psalms 23 and John 9:1-41. These are long readings and I would encourage you to read them yourself and let the word of God minister to you.

If we were gathered, we would sing, 'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like, I was lost but now I am found, blind but now I see'.

The Psalmist say, 'Even though I walk in the shadow of the valley of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and staff, they comfort me'. There is no other time in most of our living memory when many people have known this feeling, walking through the shadow of death. We are hearing the news about people dying all over. The fact is we don't know what awaits us as the days go by. But we are reminded of who is walking with us, His presence is with us and he will continue to comfort and lead us and therefore we should not fear.'

John 9: 1-41

The long story in John's Gospel talks about a man born blind who received healing from Jesus. Here, Jesus gives sight to a man born blind, who comes to 'see' him for who he truly is. But Jesus' critics refuse to see as the man sees, and their attitudes reveal a more sinister kind of blindness. So this story caused quite a stir in the village, some people even didn't believe he was the same man but he had to convince them that he was. This man used to sit at the Temple Gate to beg. Because of his disability, he was excluded from temple worship. He was not important and although he was there, people really didn't 'see' him. But as Jesus and his followers walked to the Temple, they saw him'. Jesus sees even those whom we don't see. He sees their needs and hears their cries and he responds to them as He responded to this man by healing him. He includes in his fellowship even those we tend to exclude.

The healing of this man was not instantaneous, he was told to go and wash – this sounds familiar? Every day, we are reminded, wash your hands properly. I wonder why this is news, we should be washing our hands all the time anyway. I wonder what could have happened if the man didn't go and wash his eyes. I wonder what would happen if we don't wash our hands to keep away auntie Coro? This man had to exercise his faith by going to wash as he was instructed for his healing to be complete. Like him, we have to play our part to stay safe during this menace.

Jesus used a mixture of saliva and mud (Yuk?). May be the mud and spit recall the creation story of Genesis 2, and the washing is a type of baptism. Both narratives of new life provided by God. In contrast to the Pharisees, who resist signs of God's presence, the man readily embraces his healing as a gift from God, and the healer as God's agent.

After the encounter of his healing, the man faces trial. The religious leaders are not happy, his parents didn't stand with him because of fear. But at the end of the story, he told them, "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!" Haha, you don't have to convince people of your faith and the hope you hold even at these times. If you have had an encounter with Jesus? Stick with it.

Amazing Grace

<https://youtu.be/21G3JMYwAiA>

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years.
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise.
Than when we first begun.

Whatever Age.....

Home is the place to be.



Recycling Centres

Nigel is delighted that these are opening as normal. He is using his 'extra' time to do some tidying.

No doubt that will include some lawn mowing too.

No prizes but.....

Guess which three members of our fellowship have exactly the same lawnmower - all purchased without any prior knowledge of the others.

The man's encounter with Jesus happens before he is healed, and the man doesn't see Jesus until later when Jesus returns to seek him out. Yet the process of believing is well under way by that time. God is working in our case even when we don't know it and even when we don't understand it. Just keep on walking the path of faith. Keep on praying and believing that God is working and will come through for us even in this menace that is surrounding us.

Jesus the light of the world. The sight here was more spiritual sight than physical. May God open our eyes to really see.

Oh, the parents didn't talk for him because of fear. What is driving fear at this moment? Fear! Fear had lead people to clear most of the food in supermarkets, fear has lead people to stock toilet papers that can last them for a year--- fear is a spirit and it can kill. Remember, 'For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but one of power, love, and self-discipline. **2Tim 1v7**'

Friends, keep on holding to the faith you have, as Jesus told his disciples, the blindness of this man was not as a result of his sin or his parent's sins, but it became an opportunity for the power of God to be demonstrated. Let's use this time of seclusion for good. Let's pray for one another. We can't meet but we can ring and check on others in our community. Keep the faith, keep occupied, watch the news sparingly, be active and creative and never forget that God loves you with and everlasting love. He really does!

May God be our vision as we journey on for He is travelling with us even in this. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Sprit. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession and Blessing

In these uncertain times, dear Lord, we pray for peace.

We hold before you all those who are putting others before themselves.

We pray for those who are worried about their financial situation, not knowing how they will cope in the coming weeks.

We pray for the people and situations close to our heart.....

We hold before you the governments and leaders of the world, those making difficult decisions,

So, in these uncertain times may we reach out to support each other, our families, our friends, our neighbours.

May we speak using words of comfort and grace.

May we reflect your love for all of creation.

And may we be a reassurance and a blessing to all we speak to this week.

Amen

Sleep Tight

To sleep tight is to sleep well and have a good night's rest. In this context the word 'tight' is generally thought to be about pulling the bedclothes tightly around ourselves. But the first beds to be mass-produced in England were made with straw mattresses held by criss-crossed ropes attached to the bed frames. Sooner or later the ropes would slacken off and the mattress would become uncomfortable. For this reason all beds were sold with an iron tool, similar to a large clothes peg, which was used to wind the ropes tighter whenever they came loose. Therefore, to suggest a person 'sleeps tight' was to remind them to tighten their mattress ropes and have a more comfortable bed to sleep in.

Thanks to Roger for this. We look forward to more of the same.



A primitive wood rope bed key.

Keeping in Touch

We hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter, put together to keep us in touch during these difficult times.

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list please let Paula know.

Please send items for inclusion (points for prayer, funny anecdotes, moments of joy etc.) to Paula too.

paula.ridley@yahoo.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Prayers from The Vine.

Note from the Editor

This style of newsletter is all new - use of a publisher template. I decided to leave the pictures of the computer in. Perhaps many of us feel all jumbled up just like the computer cables.

To hear a recording of Rev. Naomi please visit our facebook page or follow the link below to youtube.

<https://youtu.be/cKizF63i3IM>

**Do you prefer to hear a recording or read in print?
Please let us know.
Thank you.**

What kind of sloth are you?

From Jean W

The Daily bread reading from Friday 20th March looks at the sloth, the world's slowest moving mammal and then reflects on God the ultimate example of going slow - slow to anger.

It made me think of all those today ie Doctors, key workers, the PM and those making decisions etc etc. who won't have a minute to breathe but also of people who are being asked to self isolate who will suddenly find their days very different, lacking direction and going slowly.

Those of us in the "go slow" group need to be creative in how we fill those days for our own mental health and to keep us going for the long haul.

For me I'm going to try and make at least one thing from each of those cheap craft books I'm always buying from the Works. What are others doing?

It would be good to know - please share with us so we can include in Issue 2 of Prayer and Praise.

A NATIONAL CALL TO PRAYER

Re. The Coronavirus Pandemic
On Sunday 22nd March 7pm
Light a Candle of Hope

A National Day of Prayer and Action has been announced by the presidents of Churches Together in England for this Sunday 22nd March. In an excerpt from a joint letter issued today, they wrote:

At a time such as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.



Therefore at 7pm (GMT) this Sunday, light a candle in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

Where ever you are in the world, we invite you to join with us in prayer to see an end to the Coronavirus pandemic.