

Wolds and Trent Methodist Circuit

The Link



Keeping Connected



May 2020

Pastoral Letter

Dear All,

We speak of unprecedented times in an almost casual way these days. This morning I walked round the supermarket, 2 metres from everyone. There are still shortages on the shelves. By Wednesday my service is prepared and Thursday is sending day. No doubt your weeks also have a different pattern and rhythm these days, some of which will be positive and others a real loss. As things move back towards a different normal, we will need to think about what changes we will want to keep.

We are Methodist people, we are seeking to stay connected, hence an early Link. The churches, however much we may cherish them, it is not the building - it is each of us. The body of Christ in our homes, actions & living. Our worship sustains & inspires us to do this, we can worship wherever we are, individually, in groups on Zoom or WhatsApp, using the same prayers. I've already been asked if we'll keep a monthly Zoom service. I saw a circuit saying we will plan someone to write home worship sheets as we've realised it includes those housebound in a way we had not considered before.

What are you learning? Where is your spiritual nourishment coming from? What will you hold onto from this time?

My prayers are with you around the circuit & I know that God sustains us and in love will guide us forward into a hopeful future.

Rev. Louise



The Plan.

As you will have realised, the plan is all but redundant at the moment. We do not know when we will be able to use the buildings for worship but we are continuing to stay linked together with Sunday home worship sheets and worship on Zoom at 4pm on a Sunday. There is a plan for these Sundays:

May 3rd Rev Sarah Parkin.

June 7th Mr Richard Alderson

May 10th Mr Tim Smith.

June 14th Rev Sarah Parkin

May 17th Mr Ian Hardcastle,
Mrs Jane Lloyd & Mrs Karen Elvidge

June 21st Rev Louise Carr

May 24th Rev Liz Childs.

June 28th Rev Heather Wilson

May 31st All staff Pentecost

We have a plan or 3 about reopening but, until we have clear government advice, nothing to share, but we assure you we have ideas & will be in touch as soon as we can put something different in place.

Editor's Letter

I expect like many of us, you are keeping in contact with family and friends over the airwaves – our IT skills undoubtedly making a giant leap forward through WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom and the like. Well now your Church Family is connecting with you through a virtual Link this month. In its abbreviated form, we hope you will feel less isolated and know that we are all praying for the World: our NHS, Emergency Services and you.

I had a very frustrating week last week - I am sure you will all have felt like that in recent times, especially. I began the week with high hopes of churning out scrubs for the NHS. However, this has not happened largely due to not having been able to contact a coordinator for this area. I have come to terms with this and have decided I will not be thwarted and will make up some scrubs anyway! I am sure, eventually, I will be able to connect with the outside world. I live in HOPE.

I ran out of reading material, so on a quest to raid the Chapel Book Swap Box on my daily walk round the village, I got into conversation with a neighbour – at a safe distance of course – and she provided me with a supply of books! Things are looking up!

Like many of us, I am missing my grandchildren so, using an idea from a dear friend, I have written them a letter which will HOPEFULLY brighten their day as writing it brightened mine. I look forward with HOPE that they will be able to visit soon, go for walks, ride bikes, dig for worms, collect snails and sing songs with us.....and have appreciated special time but will treasure it so much



lots of hugs! We always spent with our family in the past more when restrictions are lifted.

I look forward with Hope that, in a future with limited restrictions, a new normality will see a more considerate world for us all to enjoy.

Julie

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles.” Isaiah 40: 31

FAITH AND HOPE

“Faith goes up the stairs that love has built and looks out the windows which hope has opened.” Charles Spurgeon

When I was about 8 years old more than anything else, I wanted a dolls pram. My parents were short of money and had to count every penny. It was a time after the “second world war” when only limited supplies of basic necessities were available and children’s toys were “wants” not needs. But I had faith, and hope in abundance, that God would provide.

Every evening I sat on the window seat looking out for my father coming home from work. My mother would gently tell me that he would not be bringing the longed -for dolls pram. And then one evening, after months of watching and waiting, I saw my father walking up our drive pushing the most beautiful pram I had ever seen. As he was walking home someone had asked him if he thought his little girl would like a dolls pram.

I don’t seem to have as much Faith or Hope as I had as a child but in these unusual times, I realise I need to get to understand and live the verse below from Hebrews.

“Now faith is the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

Jenny Rudd

Caistor

A Time For Hope.

Many of us are feeling the strain now of isolation, I am a person of high risk so that I know the consequences of not obeying the rules are dire in the extreme. Fortunately I have good friends; from my chapel who have run me errands and kept in contact, from my veterans family who I class as brothers and sisters, my own family who all live on the south coast, with frequent video calls, I worry constantly about them, all the female members are nurses working on the front line.

I want to quote a verse from Corinthians 1 chapter 16 verse 13

“Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love”.

Keep alert, watch out for other people who may be in need. Stand firm in your faith, you may come through this unscathed, or not. Be courageous, face up to the enemy (Covid). The last sentence, well, you know that is how we should live our lives at all times.

Here is hoping and praying we will all meet up again when this is all over.

Bob Cook

Lea

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HOPE and faith go hand in hand when we look to OUR GOD. It is so difficult to see at this time, but He is in control and we will look back in the future and see His hand working in this situation.

Jean and Brian

Nettleton

Upton thoughts

As I sit here thinking what to write in these difficult and scary times, I am very grateful for the people around me and the place where I live. In the run up to Easter, Stuart Barrow put up a notice board on the gate at the side of Upton Chapel. I thought it would be nice to post messages to the village as we couldn't hold services in the building. I did a display for Palm Sunday and put out Palm Crosses and spare copies of the Link for people to take if they wished. For Easter Sunday some of us put a display of flowers, greenery and celebration posters for people to enjoy. It has caused a bit of interest to people walking by. Last week we had to take the board down as the Chapel has been redecorated outside. Our decorator lives locally and was happy to be painting the Chapel while keeping away from everyone. We now need to get the board back up so that we can keep in touch with the locals safely.

It is very easy to get sad and worried, especially as we watch the news and see all the tragic things that are happening, BUT a phone call to my 96 year old Auntie Hilda always cheers me up. She is a great ambassador for making the most of the time you have. She has been making face masks for family members working in public places and her most recent project has been sewing bags for medical staff's scrubs. I have to say she is my hero of the moment. My Dad, her brother, would be so proud. Captain Tom is another "global hero". I think we have all enjoyed watching him. I write this as he celebrates his 100th birthday.

I would also like to mention my family and daughter in law's family who



are keeping us "fed and watered"!! Also to family living away that keep in touch all the time. I hope all the people reading this are being looked after too. We need to carry on as we are and safe in the knowledge that God is with us. We will come out the other side and hopefully be better citizens because of it.

Thank you to our ministers who are providing fellowship and worship on "Zoom"!! and on paper copies. Let us keep praying for all our workers who are looking after us. Keep safe and may God bless you all!

Jenny and Patrick xxx

The Holy Promise of Hope

Oswald Chambers calls Hope, 'a Holy Promise.' Chambers heads up his chapters this way,

**IN DOUBT: HOPE IN GOD,
IN DESPAIR: HOPE IN THE SPIRIT,
IN DISASTER: HOPE IN JESUS.**

In each section of Chambers' book, there are questions to ponder.

Here are some questions we might consider when thinking about the *Holy Promise of Hope*.

Do we lose hope when darkness closes in? Do we use darkness as an opportunity to rest and trust? In what ways do we limit God by thinking of certain people or situations as hopeless? Do we lose hope because we've not seen God work in us as He has worked in others? In what circumstances has our hope been shaken?

Is it because we were trusting in our own convictions rather than in Christ?

Psychologists list some of the benefits of hope as, boosting immune systems, improving general health, reducing stress and anxiety, helping to support mental strength, and broadening and building up thought processes. The Bible is a book filled with hope.

Two verses that immediately come to mind when I think about **hope** and both are found in the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you **hope** and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).*

*Those who **hope** in the Lord
will renew their strength.*

*They will soar on wings like eagles
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31).*

In today's environment, it is more important than ever to put our hope in the Lord. Are you able to hope in God even in your doubtful moments? Are you willing to hope in the Spirit even in your despair? Then when disaster strikes, as it has now, are you still able to hope in Jesus?

I am convinced there is still hope beyond the Corona Virus! I think you believe this too.

I will close with these hopeful words found in Romans 15:13,

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

Submitted by Rev Heather Wilson

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Glenthams

At the start of the so-called “lockdown” and the cancellation of all church services, I thought I would have to be content with any that the television could provide. Not so, Jenny rang and asked if I would like to be part of a virtual service to be held on Sunday mornings at 9.30am.

I didn’t need asking twice and have been, at first, one of eight and now one of 38. Not all are Methodists as some of our friends from other denominations have also joined us.

It’s comforting to know that we are all reading, praying and singing together even if we are apart.

Many thanks to everyone who ensures each week that we all have what is necessary to take part. I hope and pray we will be able to continue these services until we can meet again in person.

Until then, take care, keep faith, keep your hopes up and keep safe.

Irene



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Thoughts on Covid-19

What strange times we are living in, separated from our friends and family. I never thought that I would utter these words; but thank goodness for the modern social media apps which keep us in touch with each other. However, not everyone has the internet and although the old-fashioned telephone is a great alternative way to chat to people, you cannot see anyone's facial expressions. This is one of the reasons why I have been delivering worship materials by hand, whilst observing social distancing, I have at least been able to see the members of our church face to face. It enables me to check they are all okay and not in need of anything and I can pass on messages and items from one to another, and we all feel connected again for a brief period. It is difficult for many knowing that this situation is going to continue for some time for all those who are shielding.

It is our faith which gives us the strength to carry on and the hope that something good may yet come from this dreadful pandemic. I have never known the collective governments of the world put people's health before the economy. In 2008 when we had a financial crisis, saving the banks was all that mattered; now the emphasis is on trying to protect the most vulnerable people. Experts who come on our television screens are daring to speak about a very different future. Let us pray that it is a future which has more respect for humanity and the world God created.

Jo Kershaw

Misterton



GMC's Anon e-Mouse... on relocation

D'you know what!? since they rescued me from my mousehole in GMC, at the start of lockdown, my life has gone mad. They make me work for quite long periods, and I wish they would warm their hands occasionally. Some of the work I've been helping with has been really interesting, so that compensates. A lot of time is **keeping connected** with their family and friends, shame they can't exchange visits for hugs, we all need comforting gestures. My mates send me similar reports. There are many interludes when amusing (sometimes a bit naughty!) films or jokes arrive... often a bit too intellectual for the GMC Onwards-MC.

Sundays ought to be less hectic... Oh YES?!!!!?.. Mind you I'm not too bothered. We usually have a couple of ZOOM visits to Church **keeping connected** with our friends around the circuits. On the very first visit, there was great hilarity... during the hymns, the singing was a great cacophony... Les Dawson style. Experience is a great teacher. I would certainly recommend you to tell your mouse to download the Zoom App and then we can get you access codes to join us for the Wolds and Trent Service, tell all your mates too. By Sunday evening I am drained... **keeping connected** to the source of all power and rested overnight boosts my morale no ends...try it!

Let's **hope** lockdown doesn't go on too long, even though I am quite enjoying myself here. When things are eventually relaxed, you will have lots of different challenges to face, including worship.

I am aware that, along with many ordinary people, Churches and charities are also suffering financially and need as much support as possible. Many international humanitarian groups have had to evacuate their front line staff ... there are less opportunities for introducing Christian **Hope**, practical **Help**, and vital **Healing**. Let's pray that the work that they have already done will be a lasting legacy: that the message of **Hope** will penetrate more souls.

Hopefully there will be more cheesy messages from me in the not too distant future.

Lots of love, hugs and blessings.....

Anon e-Mouse (of GMC)

Showing Kindness

I've been joining in with the Random Acts of Kindness for several years now. There is always a plethora of ideas to show kindness to others and surely this is in keeping with the Saviour's words, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matthew 7:12). Since arriving in September, this has been my experience in Wolds & Trent. Everyone has shown kindness and love toward Hugh and me. During this lockdown, when I feel inadequate in many areas, those of you in the churches to which I have been assigned have been both encouraging and supportive. The little notes, telephone calls, packages of Maltesers, and books popped in my post box are appreciated. You know who you are; I don't need to embarrass you!! I started out wanting to minister to you but you have ministered to me in so many ways. God will bring us through this and our relationship will be strong and steady. I pray for you all daily – yes, that's the truth. I take my directory and start at the top and work down. Then, to make sure I don't miss anyone, I begin at the bottom and work up.

The photograph is what Middle Rasen in particular 'one of the youngsters' did to decorate the church on Easter Sunday!



Rev. Heather



Glentham

If you're anything like me knowing Father God is everywhere, do you wonder where you can find Him?

This poem was prompted by words from St. Paul addressing people in the Aeropogus in Athens.

'God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' Acts 17: 27-28

Where are You?

Dear Lord, is that your voice I hear, in the whistling wind's refrain?

Are you in the gentle tap of rain, upon the windowpane?

Can I find you in the power of crashing surf, on stormy shores?

Or on the highest mountain peak, is it there your love outpours?

Are you in the colours of the evening, when your glory paints the skies?

Amidst the thunder and the lightning do you hear our frightened cries?

Do you live within the purity of sparkling splashing streams?

And speak to me through pictures, in the solitude of dreams.

As I wander forest trails, through trees so straight and tall

Are you there within the silence, or the distant songbird's call?

Then in the depths of winter, 'midst freezing ice and snow

Will I find you 'neath the hedgerow, when plants being to grow?

As spring flowers emerge from lifeless earth, once again I'll know

The wonder of your resurrection, as you bring new life to all

Whose hearts respond in love to your never- ending call!

So, from winter through to autumn, when your bounty fills the land

I'll praise you my LORD and Father, as you lead me by the hand
For throughout this wondrous world, in which I live and breathe,
I'll find my Saviour everywhere, if through faith
I just believe.

Peter R Atkinson (1990)

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God walking with us

We pray for the world and all its people, facing a shared danger,
uncertain how to respond, and needing the promise of hope.

We pray for those with the power and authority to make decisions
that have life and death consequences, that they may display wisdom
and integrity, humanity and humility.

We pray for all who are plunged into darkness and despair, that they
may be touched by the love of friends and strangers.

We pray for all who have built into their daily routine care and
concern for those around them.

These prayers we offer in the name of Him whose death and
resurrection bring a living hope in which we passionately rejoice.

Amen

(Richard Pinder)