



The **Methodist** Church

Blackheath and Crystal Palace Circuit

Monthly Newsletter

If you have any items, stories, words of inspiration, etc., that you would like see included please send them to me on office.bcpc@btinternet.com. Linda, Circuit Administrator

Issue 31

May 2020

Superintendent Minister's Letter

The Sound of Silence

Dear Friends,

In this edition of our circuit newsletter, we are encouraging everyone to think positively about the 'lockdown' which all of us are experiencing. We are being told that 'social isolation' and 'social distancing' may become the 'new normal'. In other words, it might be a long time before we begin to return to the same kind of lifestyle we are used to. Whereas many of us are struggling to cope with limited opportunities to travel, to be with friends and family, and struggling also with the financial implications of lockdown, there are some positives that all of us benefiting from as well.

Life in London, even suburban London, is often lived at a rather frenetic pace. We rush from one busy job to another barely giving ourselves time to pause, to think and reflect. We also live in a rather noisy City where we have to travel a long way to find somewhere truly peaceful. Lockdown has changed all of this. We have been forced to clear our diaries, to cancel all our 'important' meetings, and to stay at home for the good of the nation, and as we are being constantly told, the NHS. Suddenly, our busy, noisy City has become empty and quiet. It is possible to hear the sounds of birds singing again and to enjoy, in the words of the Simon and Garfunkle song, 'The sound of silence'!

Silence is not something we Methodists have generally been terribly comfortable with. Our services are full of hearty hymn singing, preaching and praying. If there is ever silence in our worship, we assume something has gone wrong! Yet in the worship of many other churches such as Quakers and Roman Catholic, long periods of silence in which we think and reflect on God's presence are very important. Silence is also a way of paying respect. As I write this article, the nation has just marked a minute's silence as we recall the lives of key workers who have died during the Coronavirus pandemic.

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There are a number of Bible passages that speak about silence. Remember that the writer of Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verse 7 speaks of ‘A time for silence and a time for speech’, emphasising the need for balance in our world. The Psalmist entreats us to ‘Be still and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46 verse 10). All of the Gospels tell us that Jesus often spent time in prayer, for example Mark chapter 1 verse 35, ‘Jesus went to a remote place in prayer’.

If nothing else, perhaps lockdown encourages us to respect and enjoy times spent in silence when we can be aware of our place in God’s world. Silence gives us a chance to listen to the word of God and to declutter our lives from all those other thoughts that distract us from hearing what he is trying to say to us.

May we come to see this lockdown as an opportunity to value the Sound of Silence and so draw closer to our Father in heaven,

Amen.

Richard

On-Line Bible Study: Introduction to James

“But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act— they will be blessed in their doing”.

(James 1.25 NRSV)

Revs. Rohama and Abe will lead a four week ‘Online’ Bible study on the Book of James in May. James is a short, snappy and challenging book, full of wisdom about how best to live as a follower of Jesus. Also, a letter, the book has a lot to say about holiness and justice. For James, holiness without just living is impossible – ‘faith without works is dead’ (James 2.26).

The book of James challenges Jesus’ followers to live out their faith by good deeds and we will do our best to take you through it, following the structure as set out below:

- ❖ 6th - Week 1: Doers of the Word (Rev. Rohama Asif)
- ❖ 13th - Week 2: Faith & Works (Rev. Abe Konadu-Yiadam)
- ❖ 20th - Week 3: Speech & Wisdom (Rev. Abe Konadu-Yiadam)
- ❖ 27th - Week 4: Living for the Word (Rev. Rohama Asif)

We look forward to seeing you ‘Online’. Further details, including the YouTube link, to follow.

Revs. Rohama and Abe

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Musings on Lockdown: by Rev. Paul Hulme

There's no doubt about it, that the situation we are now in is quite unique. We've not been here before. We can't really say, those of us who can remember it, that it's like World War 2. This is a pandemic, and at the moment, and for the foreseeable future, we've yet to find a solution to a disease which is threatening the whole of our planet, not just a few countries here and there falling out with each other.

The whole idea of social isolation is utterly foreign, especially if you're a Methodist. One of the hallmarks of the Methodist Church, though it's not unique to us alone, is Fellowship. How we relate to each other, or how we Connect with each other is part of Methodism's DNA.

Never in our history as Methodists have we faced anything like we are facing just now. The idea that we cannot hold a District Synod at this time of the year, or a Circuit Meeting, when so many important issues are before us; not least the Ordination services of new ministers, which is always a highlight of the Methodist Conference, which is the Parliament of the Church. As is the electing of a new President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference. All this is unfamiliar territory for the Methodist Church nationally. But within the grand scheme of things it's not a major problem we can't handle.

What's niggling away with many of us is the whole uncertainty of everything. How long is the isolation going to last? How long will my job stay open? How am I going to manage financially? And if you're young, what's going to happen as far as exams are concerned? Will I still have a place at university? And if you're old, and one of you or both of you are in a nursing home, what are our life chances likely to be? Or if you are a victim of domestic violence, which a horrifying number are, what's going to happen to me or, even worse, to my

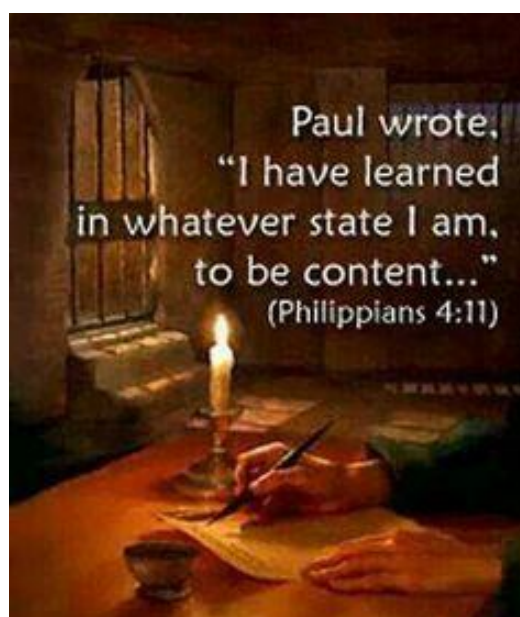
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children? And, if you have caught the virus, and it is under control, when is science going to come up with a remedy, before I die along with thousands of others?

For many of us, I suspect, these ultimate questions may seem academic at the moment. It's all getting a bit tedious this self-isolation stuff, and let's just hope we get out of it soon. But what a self-centred stance that is? And if ever I'm tempted to think that, I'm quickly ashamed of myself! This pandemic is a threat to all of us. Nobody is immune. Thousands of lives had been ended with brutal rapidity. Thousands of hearts have been broken through bereavement. Others, medics, carers, nurses, even if PPE has improved from what it was, are putting their lives on the line every day as they care for the suffering. And all I've got to worry about is that I'm inconvenienced by not being able to go about my life as I'd like!

There are some words of the Apostle Paul that have been ringing in my head for a few days: and Paul knew more of human suffering than most of us are ever likely to. The words are: 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content'. And he wasn't talking about smug self-satisfaction. It was something much more profound than that. And I hope and pray I may discover a little more of it, in these strange and frightening days. To be rooted and grounded in the love of God, from which nothing can ever separate us. By the Grace of God, that's what I want! For now, and for whatever the future may hold.

PAUL HULME.



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The Love Feast Cakes

As we couldn't hold our traditional Easter competition this year, I asked if people would share photos of the cakes they made, from the recipe suggested by Rev Richard Grocott, that were to be shared during the Easter Sunday service. Some people made cakes and did not take photos, others bought theirs, but everyone enjoyed them and the service.



Sandy



Chris



Margaret



Jean



Ama



Janet shared her traditional Easter breakfast

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Emergency Covid-19 Appeal

Our absolute priority is the care and protection of our staff and residents and therefore we have needed to spend £200,000 to buy face masks, which is at five times the normal rate. As a charity, this was not an easy decision to make. However, we felt we had little choice given that the Government's PPE supply has been patchy and unreliable to date. We hope this will buy enough time for the Government supply lines to become more reliable as this is otherwise not an affordable or sustainable solution. We would appreciate any charitable support that you're able to offer during this difficult time which will enable us to continue providing the high-quality care and support that we are recognised for, which is safe to both our residents and care teams. Please make a donation today.

You can help us reach many more supporters by sharing our appeal on social media, and with your friends and family.

Sign our PPE petition

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, our committed workforce has been working tirelessly to support the residents we care for. We, and our suppliers, have been working around the clock to source and move personal protective equipment (PPE) to where it is needed, to ensure the safety of our residents and colleagues, but it is proving increasingly difficult to do so. But we shouldn't be in this position and this is why we need your help. We need you to help us put necessary pressure on the Government and our Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, so that we can ensure that our colleagues, and indeed all carers, who have become the second frontline are equipped with all the tools they need to safely do their job. [Sign our petition now and help us call for the correct and necessary PPE within the care sector.](#)

Make a donation to our urgent Covid-19 Appeal

We would appreciate any charitable support that you're able to offer during this difficult time which will enable us to continue providing the high-quality care and support that we are recognised for, which is safe to both our residents and care teams. Please [make a donation today.](#)

<https://fundraising.mha.org.uk/donate-form?id=0db170ff-942f-48cb-b17d-8b30e7ee917e#manage-cookies-popup-accept>

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A Message from Christian Aid:

Christian Aid Week 10th -16th May 2020



Love never fails. Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all. As this virus spreads across the world, love rises up in response. You've already shown incredible kindness to your neighbours. Now is the time to reach out to your neighbours both near and far. Your love protects. From storms, from drought, and now from coronavirus. Your love protects our global neighbours battling the spread of this illness. Your love protects. With soap, clean water and medical supplies. By supporting us this Christian Aid Week, you can reach out and protect more of your neighbours today. [Please donate now and save lives](#)

We made such a difference together last year.

Will you stand with us again?

We fought poverty Together we raised £8m to help poor communities

We stood together Christian Aid Week raised £57k

We'll use your Christian Aid Week donations to help families around the world to overcome poverty and injustice, wherever the need is greatest.

Send an e-Envelope <https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/>

Help us raise vital funds for Christian Aid Week by simply sending your friends and family a personalised message in an e-Envelope. Encourage them to donate and join the fight against poverty and injustice around the world.

Virtual fundraisers

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/christian-aid-week/virtual-fundraisers>

We would love you to join in to show love for our neighbours near and far, as a global family. Host your own virtual event.

Ways to donate

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give-money/make-donation>

There are many ways you can donate to Christian Aid and every penny you give will help end poverty.

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Worship With Us

If you have missed any of the Circuit services on YouTube, details below, or available via the Circuit website

<https://bhcpmethodist.org.uk/>

The readings are taken from the Revised English Bible (REB)

Service for Sunday 3rd May 2020: <https://youtu.be/IwxLVj2Kf7M>

Service for Sunday 26th April 2020: <https://youtu.be/IVaokv76bgo>

Service for Sunday 19th April 2020: <https://youtu.be/QGZalhowe0M>

Service for Easter Day: <https://youtu.be/4i8xFXmSu8M>

[Love feast cake recipe](#)

Good Friday message <https://youtu.be/iEfyJkzkMME>

Maundy Thursday message <https://youtu.be/eIWyNBHtNFI>

Palm Sunday message <https://youtu.be/XYjjXpb3Y-0>

In addition you may wish to view the following

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgY7_PJL9LgBkVGI3o0Jjiw/

which has been prepared by the London District Office
'Keeping the Faith during lockdown'.

Forest Hill Methodist Church service for 3rd May 2020 can be viewed on

<https://youtu.be/UysSwCYcZpA>

Additional worship resources are available from the Methodist Church

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/>

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