

Trinity Church

Sunday 24th May 2020

Dear Friends,

It seems that the conversations are changing rapidly! The advice ten weeks ago seemed to change daily on what was safe, now people motivated by a release of lockdown and getting the economy moving are asking all sorts of things – not always with any proven knowledge behind it – it seems to be more conjecture than fact. And that is part of the problem – this pandemic is still being explored and our understanding of it is at best only partial.

I suppose I am a bit old school – I think peoples' safety should come first.

Then we need to ask the questions of our church – and in the next few weeks we will be sending out some specific questions to hear your opinions.

We still have no idea when all restrictions will be lifted, and looking at other churches, all sorts of social media platforms have been used not just for worship but for coffee mornings and meetings. The Elders began experimenting with a Zoom meeting this week and it was really lovely to see everybody who made the meeting. It would be helpful as we look to the next few months, to have some idea of how many of you would be able and willing to participate in something online?

There will come a time when we can meet in the building, we just do not know when that will be yet, and advice may change quite quickly when it comes. Until then, we have to carry on doing church in a different way – and the hope is that we can all journey in that different way together.

Keep safe, *Richard*

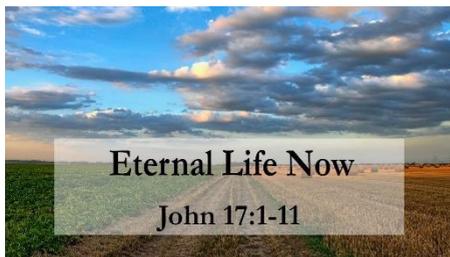
- New video reflections are published on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. You can access all the videos via the circuit website on the reflections page <https://www.staffmoorlandsmethodists.org.uk/video/> or via Trinity's website at <http://trinitychurchleekurc.org.uk/> or by searching Sarah Best Point For Reflection on YouTube.
- Across the Circuit we are being asked to pause at 9.00 pm every day and pray together. It may be helpful to light a candle or use some of the on-line resources (some of which are below with more details on our web site and FACEBOOK page).

TRINITY CONTACTS:

Tel: 015383 398483 (church office) Email: trinitychurchleek@uwclub.net

Website: <http://trinitychurchleekurc.org.uk/>

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/URCMethodist](https://www.facebook.com/URCMethodist)



Lectionary Readings

Sunday 24th May 2020

Acts 1: 6 - 14 Psalm 68: 10, 32 - 35

1 Peter 4: 12 – 14 & 5: 6 – 11

John 17: 1 - 11

A Reflection *based on* 1 Peter 4: 12 – 14 & 5: 6 – 11

We don't like to think of anyone suffering. That is human nature. There is a wonderful psalm written by Janet Morley - Psalm of Grief – where the author describes her experience of watching her friend die a cruel death. She captures that sense of feeling useless, angry and the unfairness of it all. It also shows our need to have someone to blame. I have often heard it said how we would not let an animal suffer in the way we make another human being. However cruel some of these things are, it is still part of a natural process, it is not inflicted by another.

The current situation has caused great concern for the welfare of people. Even when we know our social distancing is to protect ourselves and others, including those in frontline services, for many this has been a great endurance. As well as people's physical health – and it is not just Covid 19 that people are suffering with – it is people's mental wellbeing – we are being asked to live in a way that goes against our natural inclinations, even the most introvert of us enjoy company sometimes. The treatment for some illnesses can often seem worse than the illness itself.

Sometimes our suffering is our own fault – the things we say and the things we do have consequences, and there are times those things we have done come back and bite us. Only we ourselves can change those outcomes.

Then there is the suffering caused by other people. People have the potential of doing great good, but also have the potential of extreme cruelty. I wonder if the problem stems from a lack of understanding or empathy for others. Many nations have added to the suffering of asylum seekers by the way they are treated when they arrive in a new country; when you are always the last picked for a sports team in PE lessons can have an impact; we are more aware of how body image, identity can impact people, especially young people; and so many people are restricted by repressed upbringings which greatly affects their fulfilment and relationships as adults.

In this reading, Peter continues his thoughts on the suffering endured for being a follower of Jesus. Religion has over the centuries been a bone of contention for many, and many unjust wars and insurgencies have been carried out in the name of religions that advocate peace, love and goodwill – treating your neighbour as you would like to be treated. Often the problem has been about power – the religious majority have

often fought to hold on to power and influence which, in reality, are not founding tenets of any faith.

Sometimes people of faith have suffered because of a stand against an injustice or a stance for freedom. Sometimes people of faith have suffered because, according to someone else, we have not believed the right things or in the right way.

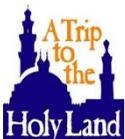
Whenever I look at the life of Jesus, the things he did seems to try to alleviate people's suffering, whether through healing or acceptance – reminding people that they too are children of God, children of Abraham, they belong. There are words attributed to Jesus that warn of sufferings that will come, but I cannot find any reference to Jesus advocating his followers to cause another's suffering.

Therefore we should be careful how we use these passages. Suffering in and of itself does not bring us closer to God, but perhaps Peter is suggesting that our attitude through that suffering can bring us closer to God; perhaps I am suggesting from my understanding of the scriptures and the nature of God that we are not meant to cause suffering to others. That includes how we share this good news, how we serve our communities, how we practice our faith and how we treat other people.

Loving God,

- with so many problems and issues facing our global community, help us grasp our place within that conundrum – are we passively acting in a way that increases the sufferings in our world, or are we actively trying to alleviate it.
- even when the problems seem too great for us, show us how even in small ways we can play our part so that your loving, inclusive, accepting, hopeful kingdom can be experienced by all.
- help us listen to the nudging of your Spirit so that we make a loving response within our daily living.

Amen



Applications are being taken now for the '**Living Christianity in the Holy Land**' visit for 20th January-1st Feb 2021. This visit is organised and led by former Mission Partner Rev. John Howard and Current Mission Partner Deacon Angleena Keizer who together have many years of experience at the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem.

This trip is different from a traditional pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We do visit some of the holy sites, but much of our time is spent meeting Christians from the Holy Land. We include a little time doing voluntary work. The focus is upon the Christian Community of the Holy Land – though in order to understand their situation we will also be meeting Muslims and Jews and listening to them. We will share in the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" events in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Some bursaries are also available. For more information and application forms please go to: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-worldwide/global-relationships/middle-east/partner-organisation/>

Prayer List for Sunday 24th May 2020



Those who need prayer for sickness or other reasons

Angela Bates, Sara Best, Eric Birch, Lynne Dennis, Grace Hambleton, Frances Earl, Heather and Dennis Bates, Josh, Ivan, Lyn Kirkham & family, The Rev Julie Hassall, Jane Fulbrook, Audrey Pointon, Christine Redfearn, Millie and family. We also pray for all those who care for the above.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Renee Bowcock who celebrates her 90th Birthday on Saturday the 23rd May

THANK YOU

Olive and Dennis Johnson would like to thank you for your kind wishes, cards and flowers you sent for their Golden Wedding Anniversary.



A GENTLE REMINDER – SPONSORED WALK 28TH MARCH 2020

Betty Ward would like to ask walkers who have completed their sponsored walk to let her have their sponsorship money by the 1st July.

If you have been unable to make your usual weekly payment perhaps you would like to make a late sponsorship donation. Please contact the church office asap.



The generosity of Trinity folk knows no bounds. So far £1440 has been raised plus some food parcels have been left with Maureen. Please note cheques should be made payable to ASHA North Staffordshire from now on. If you cannot get out Maureen can arrange for collection and forwarding. For anyone who wants to donate by BACS we have just received notification from ASHA that their bank details have changed – please contact the church office for details.

By continuing to donate to Asha, we can show that asylum seekers may be out of sight, but they are not out of mind.

Please continue to support the FOODBANK

The Foodbank is needed more than ever in these difficult times. They are currently in need of Instant Mashed Potato, packets of Instant Custard and 1ltr cartons of Orange Juice.

Donations can be left in some supermarket baskets in Leek or

taken to the Gateway Church, 34 West Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 8AA. They are open 10am to midday on Tuesdays and Fridays. Alternatively, if you would like to make a donation, cheques can be sent to Trinity Church. Please make cheques out to Leek and District Food Bank.



Please note: different email for Circuit Office

CIRCUIT CONTACTS:

CIRCUIT WEBSITE: <https://staffmoorlandsmethodists.org.uk/>

CIRCUIT FACEBOOK: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/staffmoorlandsmethodists/>

CIRCUIT OFFICE: 01538 723666 EMAIL: staffmoorlandscircuit@gmail.com