

Parkwood Methodist Church



The Herald April 2021

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I have always liked this time of year, especially the lengthening daylight hours and the promise of new life fulfilled. When I was at college in the Hope Valley, I would open my window whenever it was warm enough at night. For most of the night you could hear the sound of sheep calling to each other in the valley, but it always came to a peak when lambing season came along. The deeper baas of the adult sheep mixed with the higher pitched baaing of long-legged lambs as they gambolled through the fields. There was something comforting about it- even if everything was up in the air, year after year the sound of the sheep was a constant.

I often wonder about the part of the story we don't hear much about in the Gospels- the in-between times of the crucifixion and the resurrection. The resurrection and the ascension of Jesus. We hear in John's gospel that the disciples had gathered together, with doors locked because they were afraid. Then Jesus came and stood with them saying 'Peace be with you.' Jesus enters into the fear and gloom, meeting them with peace and hope. During that time, did Mary Magdalene's proclamation of the resurrection bring them any sense of hope or comfort? Did they listen to what she had said? There was so much for them that was unknown- what would happen next, how they would come together and what kind of future were they facing?

We have been living through times of great uncertainty. Presently we are moving out of

the stay-at-home order and into the next step towards relaxing Coronavirus restrictions. We are celebrating the second Easter of the pandemic, and we live in the awareness that changes are still to come. Changes that may bring us hope, such as the vaccination programme, and some which may still bring a feeling of anxiety because they still have the feature of being unknown. Perhaps, in the risen Jesus, we can explore these uncertainties together, and share in the comfort of God's constant and steadfast love that is always with us, especially in those unknown, uncomfortable places.

I hope that you all have a Happy Easter! Peace be with you.

Rev Ros Page



News from the Drop By Centre & Trees Estate



Before the Covid lockdown, Parkwood and Primetime were working together with running the 'Parkwood Children's Club' from the Drop By Centre on the Trees Estate. During lockdown Parkwood's work has continued with both taking 'Activity' bags out to the family that attended the Parkwood Children's Club, and Primetime have been delivering youth work around the estate and drop-by-centre on our behalf. We are grateful to Primetime for enabling us to have a continuous presence on the Trees Estate even during lockdown. This is an update that Primetime have sent to us of this work they are doing on our behalf on the Trees Estate: *I just wanted to email a short update on the work that we have been delivering in Golcar.*

We have been attending Golcar, weekly on Thursdays (at the times when the sessions used to run, straight after school), and delivering detached youth work around the estate and drop-by-centre. Throughout this time we have engaged with one of the families who used to attend Parkwood Youth Club and have seen them repeatedly most weeks whilst out, along with meeting new children, young people and families.

We have begun to develop a presence around the estate and this continues to grow week-on-week as the weather continues to improve, and more people are outside.

I appreciate it may still be too early to explore re-opening the Parkwood Youth Club / Drop-by-centre at this time, but it has been amazing to be out on the streets engaging with the local community throughout this time until we are able to deliver face-to-face sessions again.

I hope you, and all the Parkwood team and volunteers are looking after yourselves!

Many Thanks

Rosie Reay Dixon

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The Lord's Prayer and other cultures - 6

In this edition we look at the influence of other cultures on the Lord's Prayer. The full English bible has been translated into 700 different languages (and the New Testament into a further 1500 languages) but the words of the Lord's Prayer still retain the same literal meaning. Different languages reflect the customs and character of the people and this influences the music they create. Afro-Caribbean music contains strong rhythms and repetitive phrases, and this character has been embraced by the wonderful arrangement of the Lord's Prayer that I invite you to listen to this time.

As many of you will know, Charmaine and I have been involved in choral music for over 50 years. We have regularly supported the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen, North Wales. Recognised as one of the premier competitive festivals, it attracts choirs from as far afield as Australia, China, India, Malaysia, USA, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and South Africa.

In 2018 we were privileged to witness a performance by a choir that has regularly earned the title of 'Choir of the World'. The choir comes from Stellenbosch in South Africa. Situated about 50 miles north of Cape Town, it has the oldest University on the African continent. Although the University does not 'major' in the 'arts', through the skill of successive musical trainers, a unique musical excellence in choral singing has developed.

The choir's current Musical Director is Andre van der Merwe and it is his arrangement of the Lord's Prayer that I bring to your attention on this occasion. Written in the Swahili language 'Our Father' becomes 'Baba Yetu'. Whereas our reserved European background dictates reflective musical interpretation of the text, here we have an unashamed and spontaneous declaration which is full of enthusiasm and joy!

Needless to say, the choir won the three classes they had entered and this performance of 'their' Lord's Prayer was given a standing ovation by every other competing choir. For Charmaine and I it was a musically uplifting experience we will never forget. We hope you find it uplifting as well.

To access from the 'Net' type – YouTube, Stellenbosch University Choir, Baba Yetu, Llangollen 2018

Gareth

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The Story of Lazarus Luke 11; 1-45

Imagine a situation where all unnecessary travel is banned, because it is seen to be too dangerous.

Imagine a situation where only a few close family members are permitted to attend a funeral.

It's not too hard for us to imagine at the moment, because that is exactly the situation we find ourselves in. We know that unnecessary travel can be dangerous; and we understand (but find it hard), when we are not permitted to attend the funeral of a close friend.

This mirrors the situation that Jesus was in when he heard about the serious illness of his close friend, Lazarus.

Jesus and his disciples were staying near the River Jordan, some days walk from Bethany where Lazarus, and his sisters, Martha and Mary lived. Bethany was about 2 miles from Jerusalem.

When Jesus said to his disciples that they should go to Bethany, to visit their friends at a difficult time, the disciples said, "It's too dangerous. Last time we were there, the Jews tried to stone you." Jesus delayed his journey for a couple of days, because then, as now, unnecessary travel was considered to be dangerous.

Jesus and the disciples did decide to set off to make their way to Bethany two days later. As they approached Bethany, Martha came out to meet him, but it was too late. Lazarus had already died, and had been laid to rest in a tomb 4 days earlier. A grief-stricken Mary joined them, and Jesus saw the grief of the family who had buried Lazarus without their friend, Jesus, being there. Just as today, people are being prepared for burial or

cremation with just family members present; close friends are not there.

Jesus walks to the tomb, which has a stone in front of it, and asks that the stone be removed. "Hold on" says Mary, "he's been dead for four days. It will stink in there!" "Just do it" replied Jesus, and called in a loud voice "Lazarus, come out." Lazarus walked out, still covered with the burial cloths around him.

I have had the privilege occasionally of leading Christian funerals. I remember one family I visited to discuss the funeral arrangements in respect of their mother. They were not, at that time, a church-going family, but their mother had close links with the local church over many years. They wanted a Christian funeral, but as we went through the Order of Service, one of the daughters said, "We don't want any reference to the resurrection!" The concept of resurrection was one they had thought about and struggled with. They would prefer not to have the word used in their mum's funeral service. We had an honest discussion, and with their permission, I did refer to the resurrection in the service, but was very sensitive to their feelings and concerns.

The account of Lazarus being raised from the dead should not be seen in isolation, it is also about the resurrection of Jesus. And the concept of resurrection is important. Jesus used the incident to help the disciples, the family and the mourners see that God is still at work in the world, even at the darkest times- and that new life is always possible! We can let this story show us something of the wider picture of God's presence amongst us. These are worrying and uncertain days, there is suffering and pain- but God is with us! So- hang on!

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Easy question: What have we here?



Spring is Springing

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Whilst some of our circuit churches are having limited opening and meeting, Our Church, Parkwood are waiting in the wings!

A Newsletter will be circulated as soon as decisions have been made: Meanwhile Stay Safe and all should be well.

Remember this pic from a few issues ago!

Names have been supplied

Joyce Gibson (Lawton), Winifred & Jacqueline Ibbeson, Rita Workman (Crossley), Alma Whiteley (Ryan), Marjorie Payne (Norris) Golflinks 1953

Thanks to Adrian & Rita Crossley.

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This is the time of new beginnings. Very apt in the current situation.

This could be the beginning of a whole new world, won't be easy but will be worth it; I'm sure.

Take a tip from nature.



Under the blanket of winter with all looking bleak and forgotten lies nature's wonderful beauty



Have Faith!



HAPPY EASTER

Stay safe, not long before we can all meet up again.