

# Parkwood Methodist Church



## The Herald

### February 2021

**St. Mark's Parish Centre  
53 Thornhill Road  
Longwood HD3 4UL**

Dear friends,

Over the past week I have found myself dreaming about going to the seaside. It was one of my favourite places to go on a day out when I was a child. Spending time making sandcastles, little beach gardens and trying to find flat stones to skim on the surface of the sea and looking at how the quartz sparkled in the sunlight. Walking along the seafront and finding somewhere to eat ice cream in the rain are cherished memories.

I have to say, the excitement of going on a trip to the coast is still with me today, it has never left. I think that the beach is far more present in my dreams at the moment because of lockdown. I also suspect that I am not alone in having dreams of being out and about, especially while we are staying home to keep each other safe. As we try to hold on to hope when we read in the news stories of tragedy and sadness, and attempting to grasp the terrible fact that we have reached the point of over 100,000 deaths in the United Kingdom since this pandemic began.

This afternoon I went for a walk. It was very misty and murky, though the rain had finally stopped. As I walked I felt that I was on my own, passing houses without any lights on and empty cars, with only the sound of my own footsteps and breathing to keep me company. As I walked, I noticed a figure appear at the end of the road and I wondered who it was and why they were standing in one place. Then as I got closer I saw another person, a woman in a pink coat, and I realised that they were talking to each other from a safe distance. It made me feel warm, that I

wasn't out here on my own, but that there was life, there were other people around. On the way back home the houses were beginning to light up as people turned on lights in living rooms and bedrooms, lighting up the misty afternoon and my path home.

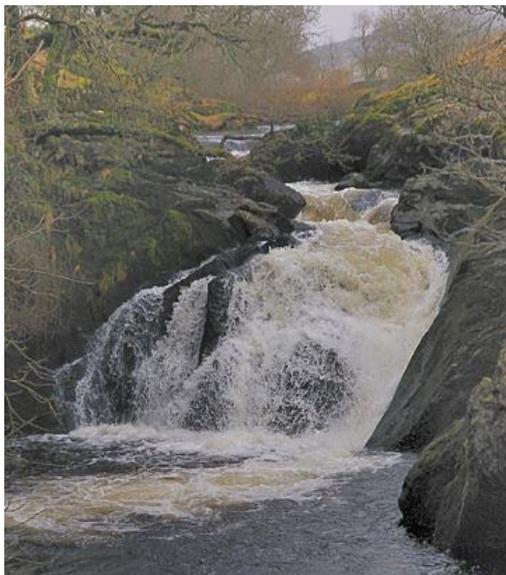
We are living in confusing, often heart-breaking times where we might feel that we are walking on our own, trying to understand, trying to stay safe. In John's gospel one of the major themes is light, starting from the beginning in a reading that we often use around Christmas time, of 'the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.' Then we can read of Jesus as the one who comes to us, teaching his followers to have love and compassion for each other. Reminding us that even when all seems lost, Jesus breaks through the darkest night and brings us hope, light and life.

Part of our faith is to share love with others, and one of ways we can do this is to be in solidarity, to be alongside people, and to offer hope as well. One of my favourite hymns is 'Brother, sister, let me serve you', by Richard Gillard- 'I will weep when you are weeping,/when you laugh, I'll laugh with you./ I will share your joy and sorrow,/till we've seen this journey though. As we continue to mourn with those who have lost loved ones, jobs, opportunities, their health, we remember how valuable and precious they are, and all life is, to God, and to us all.

**Rev Ros**

## **The Tricks Covid has played with our Faith**

I was quite shocked when a friend, who is an inspirational Local Preacher from another circuit, shared their experiences of the tricks that Covid has played with their faith.



When the Second Lockdown was announced, to be frank, he was pretty fed up with himself, like so many others.

So he decided to have a walk at the side of a river and there was white foam bubbling from the river from a waterfall.

He said that for a 'Mini-moment' he stepped out of himself from being fed up, and simply enjoyed the sight of the dancing foam of the river.

For that 'Mini-moment' he found some peace, because he experienced God, once again, as a presence – something he confessed Covid had played tricks with his faith and he seemed to have lost in these bizarre times through which we are living.

As I reflected on his story afterwards I started to understand how much Covid has been playing tricks with our faith and has put us into a position of vulnerability. There was something in his story that resonated so much with my own experience of Covid.

For our experience of God, in the anxiety of lockdown, may be a presence that comes and goes, unbidden and momentarily visits us like a whispery presence, and then departs.

There's a psalmist who had their own Covid lockdown, as it were, when it started to play tricks with their faith - its' Psalm 42.

If you get fed up sometimes, like me, have a go at reading it.

It's not an easy read, but just see if it can mean anything to you.

Here is the psalmist struggling, because their Covid Lockdown, as it were, is playing tricks with their faith.

Yet, in the midst of the Psalmist's own lockdown we find one of the most beautiful images in our bible:

'As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God'.

It's in such a bitter/ sweet outburst of anguish that the Psalmist feels abandoned yet thirsts to find their God again

And this is a spoiler - sorry! As the Psalmist's story unfolds, it's in the act of remembering that the Psalmist starts to come to terms with themselves.

That's just one way of coping with the tricks that Covid is playing with our faith, it may not be for everyone, but it's worth a try.

We know that Covid has inflicted immense mental as well as physical tragedy. It has also played nasty tricks with our faith.

It's not for everyone to be able to share their faith in the way my friend did. Maybe if we can start to share some of the horrible tricks that Covid is playing with our faith, then we are sharing once again in the life of our Christian Community.

John

### **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

1<sup>st</sup> Barbara Rushforth.

10<sup>th</sup> Wendy Cowgill

11<sup>th</sup> Pat Gill

15<sup>th</sup> Graham Ivey

**Planning a Golcar Lily Day for May 8<sup>th</sup> 2021. It will be a 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of VE Day. Best wishes Sue Starr**

### The Lord's Prayer in my lifetime - 3

Like you, at the moment, I have lots of time to think and often reflect on what has happened in my lifetime. My love of music, encouraged by musical parents, was always centred on the music of the church. As a child, I recall singing in the Sunday School under the direction of the Sunday School Superintendents, Dorothy Green and her brother, John Brearley (who was also the choir master). As many of you will recall, my mother, Kathleen, was the organist and my father, Stephen, was in the choir. So, when my voice changed from boy soprano to baritone I quite naturally progressed into the choir. When John Brearley died suddenly, his duties were taken over by Ken Rothery. With a musical heritage of this quality it is little wonder that music has been at the centre of my life.

The church choir was often challenged by John and Ken to sing exciting music and the singing of anthems and musical arrangements of the Lord's Prayer always lifted our spirits and made worship more rewarding. Ken in particular introduced the choir to several different tunes (some of them music written for the singing of chants in the hymn book, which also lent themselves to the singing of the Lord's Prayer). The arrangement most often used (and, to me, the most musically satisfying) was written by Joseph Lees.

Details about Joseph are difficult to find and this is probably the only music he is still remembered for. I'm sure many of the older members of our fellowship will remember it being sung during worship in days gone by. The music is easy to find now as it has been printed in the hymn book Mission Praise and is now also in Singing the Faith.

To access from the 'Net' type –

YouTube, Quartz sings: Our Father: Joseph Lees

This is performed by a German Quartet – Vocaal Kwartet (in English)

**Gareth**



**by Kathleen Partridge**

#### **I BELIEVE**

**Who can view the night and day  
The sunset and the dawn  
And yet deny Thy hand, Thy work  
Or treat one leaf with scorn.  
Though men have many talents  
For inventions here below  
Can man design one blade of grass  
And make that blade to grow?  
A spider's web, so frail a thing  
Yet in the morning dew  
Can shine forth like a diadem  
And bear the weight of dew.  
Who can trap a snowflake  
Or grow a flower from seed  
And doubt the Lord will not be near  
To help us in our need?**

**Here's a Before and After photo set  
Pre 1964**



**Post 1964**

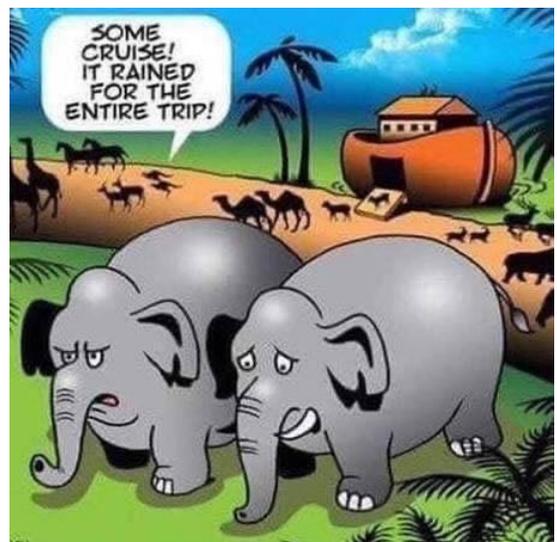


**Pre 2020**

**Post 2020**



**Before  
After**



**Stay Safe Folks.**