



# Emsworth Methodist Church & Pastoral Centre



a serving and worshipping Christian church in the heart of Emsworth,  
working closely with other churches and with the local community

**Deacon Laura Evans**

tel: 01243 376786

e-mail: [minister@emsworthmethodistchurch.org](mailto:minister@emsworthmethodistchurch.org)

**Revd Bill Stillwell**

tel: 023 9248 0150

Church Office tel: 01243 373773

email: [office@emsworthmethodistchurch.org](mailto:office@emsworthmethodistchurch.org)

website: [www.emsworthmethodistchurch.org](http://www.emsworthmethodistchurch.org)

Registered Charity No 1127747

**Newsletter**

**20<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

## Thought for the Fortnight

When I look at the sky, which you have made,  
at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places—  
what are human beings, that you think of them;  
mere mortals, that you care for them?  
Yet you made them inferior only to yourself;  
you crowned them with glory and honour.  
You appointed them rulers over everything you made;  
you placed them over all creation:  
sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too;  
the birds and the fish  
and the creatures in the seas.

Psalm 8: 3-8 (The Good News Bible)

Surely I can't be the only one who's been glued to 'Springwatch' over the past couple of weeks?! Most years I tune in to some of the programmes but this year I seem to be becoming quite heavily invested in how many chaffinches manage to fledge, the fate of the blue tits, and how many jackdaws will hatch. This love of birds isn't new - way back in the mists of time I was a junior member of the RSPB.

The little knowledge I ever had has long since disappeared, however the fascination was re-kindled a number of years ago when I visited the Rutland Osprey Project. There I had the privilege of watching through binoculars as one of these fabulous birds returned to her British nest after a flight of thousands of miles to await her mate and bring forth the next generation. \*



According to this version of the Bible, the Psalmist writes that God has made us 'rulers' over creation. It's a strange choice of words and, throughout most of human history, has been interpreted as meaning that we can do anything we like because the natural world is there to be used and to serve us.

In recent decades we've begun to see the dangers of this sort of thinking. It is impossible to have any sort of power without a measure of responsibility. If God has given us this responsibility it is not enough to say 'It's ours to do with as we see fit' without considering the implications of our actions and behaviours for the whole earth, not just now but in the future.

One effect of lockdown has been to draw more fully to our attention the impact the current lifestyle of many throughout the world has been having on this planet of which God has given us charge. Lockdown has resulted in cleaner air, less water pollution, less noise pollution to name but a few changes. Perhaps there are lessons to be learned here as we step out again. After all, how can I watch an episode of Springwatch, or go for a walk to hear the birds in Hollybank Woods, and not pause for a moment to recall the God-given responsibility to protect all creation?

And let's not forget – we only have this planet on loan from God.

Every blessing,

**Laura**

\*There's a camera set up on that very nest, and at time of writing four chicks are almost the size of their parents. If you're at all interested in birds, and have the technology to do so, I recommend having a look. <https://www.lrwt.org.uk/wildlife/rutland-ospreys>



## **Spotlight on... Vivienne**

### **What job did you do?**

I worked for the Post Office, including for Bletchley Park during the war.

### **What are your hobbies?**

I enjoyed cycling.

### **Tell us one surprising thing about you.**

I can read Morse code.

### **What is your favourite food?**

Banana.

### **How would you spend an unexpected £1000?**

Make gifts to charity and relatives.

### **What is your favourite verse in the bible?**

The 23rd Psalm.

### **Please tell us a bit about your family.**

I grew up in a family of five children, all girls, as youngest.

### **What is your favourite TV programme?**

The Repair Shop.

### **What makes you turn off the TV?**

Loud arguments.

### **What is your favourite holiday destination?**

We liked Southern Spain.

### **Who do you most admire?**

The Queen.

### **What concerns you about the future?**

Loss of independence.

### **What one item would you rescue from your home?**

Stair lift.

### **What are your favourite books?**

Series like *Swallows and Amazons*.

### **What is the best advice you've been given?**

Keep cheerful.

### **What makes you nervous?**

Thunder.

## **What is the best thing about attending this church?**

The feeling of being part of the church family.

## **What is your favourite hymn?**

Now thank we all our God.

**Vivienne would like to thank everyone for the birthday wishes sent on her recent 97<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

## **A Bit of Light Reading ... to (hopefully) make you smile, from Dot.**

I guess many of you, like me, will have 'stuff' stored away that really needs sorting. Well, with some time on my hands, I have made a start. I have pulled out some boxes of old paperwork and memorabilia that have been collected over many years, including the inevitable old family photographs with no names on the back. It has been an interesting, enlightening, amusing and at times, emotional, experience. I would like to share with you a few of the more amusing things I have found.

Firstly, a very well-worn little notebook with an inscription inside the front cover: 'RECIPE BOOK Joan Still 1930'. This was Philip's mother, aged 17, before she was married. She has written out recipes for Jams and Preserves, Puddings Cakes and Pastry, Meat Dishes. Then at the end of the book there are Health Hints: How to Keep Fit in Winter... 'Vit D keeps teeth from decaying' ... 'Don't eat between meals.'

She also clearly liked writing letters to prominent people. Sadly, there are no copies of her originals, but there are some replies. From William Barclay, in response to a letter in which she appears to have challenged his theology in one of his books: 'If you insist on looking at the Bible stories with a Western literalistic mind, you will inevitably misunderstand them.' And from Catherine Cookson: 'I do wish to thank you for your concern regarding my spiritual health...'

One of Philip's aunts wrote a letter to George Cansdale asking for advice about the problems she was having with her pet bush baby, which lived on top of a wall cupboard in the kitchen. His reply: 'I am now convinced that a lot of exercise is necessary for these bush babies because the droppings are always passed while they are moving around and they seem unable to get rid of them otherwise. I am wondering whether yours has got rather sluggish and is therefore a bit bunged up.'

In a school project about the family, Simon my younger son, then aged 5, drew a picture of a lady with a mop of hair, with the words underneath: 'this is my mummy she is tall and thin she does the washing up.'

And a question for you: so who was the real hoarder in our household?

# Home Worship for Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020

*led by Bill*

## PRAYER

God of all time, we praise and adore you for breaking into the darkness of this world with the glorious light of your presence.

A light which made your love for the world visible in the baby born in Bethlehem— Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour.

A light which guided those gift-bearing travellers from afar to find and worship the Christ-child.

A light which leads us to you, now revealed in Jesus Christ.

We pray that you will accept our worship for it arises from hearts and minds in awe over the enormity of your gift to us of pure love.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Lord, when the darkness of our doubts robs us of the light of your promises, when our focus on what we cannot do prevents us from seeing what You can do through us, when our vision becomes clouded with prejudices so that we cannot see that we are being more judgmental than conciliatory, when we say what should not be said and fail to say what needs to be said, when we forget about commitments we have made and leave undone that which we should do, when our faith becomes feeble and our courage fails, when we find it hard to trust and difficult to obey; Lord forgive us. Give us hope by filling us with the assurance of your love now and forever. **Amen.**

**READING: Matthew 10:24-39**

## REFLECTION

In this passage Jesus lays his cards out on the table: life is *not* a bed of roses even, or maybe especially, for those who follow him.

Just being human brings its challenges and trials. I hardly need to remind you of some of the challenges and trials that we're all facing right now. On the other hand, would we have seen and heard of so many loving and heroic acts shown by people to one another in any other circumstances? In that regard I ask myself: if I never had darkness would I recognize the light? If I never had conflict would I recognize peace? If I never knew the cross would there be new life?

Jesus warns us that, as his followers, we may experience yet *more* conflict and darkness than most other people. He says that there are times that we may even have to *choose* to face the difficulties which faith brings. We may have to *choose* whether to face disharmony, even within our own families and friends. We may have to accept insults and hurts from other people. In all these things, he says, don't offer a fight

to protect yourself and don't just ignore it as though it never happened. Instead, if you believe that these things are coming to you because you're serving God's will, of your own free will pick up your cross and walk with it.

Why would we want to do that? I found this following reflection, from an unknown author. I'd like to share it with you, just with one alteration. Where you hear the word 'church' I'd ask you to hear instead the words 'Christ's people on earth'. It goes like this:

'If you cannot *cherish* what it is the Lord is doing in your life, at least do not *waste* what He is doing in your life. Lay down the self-pity, and with all the strength and grace that He allows you, yield to His work. If you cannot make it up within you to yield totally to your Gethsemane (most of us can't) then at least yield up to the light the dark feelings of resentment and bitterness that are trying to hatch inside you. One day you are going to come to the conclusion that serving the Lord is mostly crying ... and suffering ... and agonizing. What can you do in that sad hour? Nothing really, except bend over double and absorb into your being those sufferings, sufferings which really belong to the church. In that hour, bear her sufferings for her. And if you happen to look up, you will see her going on her way, gloriously rejoicing. She will be oblivious to the fact that she is, at that moment, so very glorious because you have suffered.'

To me those are powerful words, but you might still think to yourself, 'Well, I'm still not prepared to put up with challenges and difficulties: I'm just not strong enough'. But Jesus gives us this reassurance: in all these things he is with us. If he knows when a sparrow falls to the ground, he knows only too well when we hit rock bottom. That much is true for our lives in this world, but there's also a promise to us for eternity. After all, Jesus says, when all is said and done, there's an eternal reward which far outweighs our passing pains and sufferings: *...those who lose their life for my sake will find it.*

The Lord gives us all we need in this life to sustain us in his service come what may, confident that we shall find our true eternal life in him.

### **PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**

Jesus, broken on the cross, we bring to you those suffering from broken dreams, broken relationships and broken promises.

*I especially remember before you.....*

Jesus, **Have mercy on them.**

Jesus, who lost everything, we bring to you those who have suffered loss of work, mobility and well-being.

*I especially remember before you.....*

Jesus, **Have mercy on them.**

Jesus, defenceless victim, we bring to you those who are victims of violence, abuse and false accusation.

*I especially remember before you.....*

Jesus, **Have mercy on them.**

Jesus, alone and destitute, we bring to you those who are lonely, homeless and hungry.

*I especially remember before you.....*

Jesus, **Have mercy on them.**

Saviour, you died that we may be brought back to you.

Save and raise up those who have none but you to turn to.

*I especially remember before you.....*

Jesus, **Have mercy on them.**

### ***Our Lord's Prayer***

#### **BLESSING**

May the Christ who walks with wounded feet walk with you on the road.

May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out your hands to serve.

May the Christ who loves with wounded heart open your hearts to love.



# Home Worship for Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June

*led by Laura*

## Service for Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June

*(Prior to Lockdown this service was designated as Ladies Group Sunday. The decision has been taken to delay that service until we can celebrate together.)*

### Opening Prayer

Loving God, we gather as a community – though dispersed for a season. May each and every one of us know your presence. May we see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly, day by day. *Amen.*

**Call to Worship:** Psalm 89: 1-4

**Reading:** Matthew: 10: 40-42

### Address

In the light of current circumstances I have to confess that my heart sank a little when I read the lectionary for this Sunday.

According to the gospel of Matthew, Jesus has spent a good chunk of recent days equipping his disciples to be sent out. In Matthew 10: 1-4 he calls them by name. He provides them with clear instructions as to where they should go, how they should behave, and what to do if they do not receive a welcome. In true Jesus fashion he doesn't pretend that it will all be easy. In fact Jesus goes to great lengths to describe just how hard it will be! They won't be popular with everyone. Yet they will carry with them the assurance that they are called, equipped and sent by Jesus.

The problem comes in the shape of one word: welcome. Under 'normal' circumstances this is one of the things Emsworth Methodist Church does well and something we should be proud of. However, at time of writing our building is closed and we cannot even receive guests into our homes. Even those of us able to do so can only meet with a maximum of five other people, outside, at a distance. Under these conditions how can we even begin to speak of 'welcome'?

Perhaps we need to change the language. Rather than speaking of 'welcome' in this context maybe a better word for these times would be 'sharing'. We may not be able to offer a cup of water (or a cup of tea in the Pastoral Centre) but the advent of the telephone and internet, as well as good old fashioned written communication, means we can still offer a shoulder to cry on and a listening ear. Jesus, called, equipped, and sent out his disciples. At the moment being 'sent out' isn't an option for any of



us, but maybe that in itself provides opportunities for developing our own discipleship and sharing what we learn with others. What if God is using this time to equip us to spread the word in different ways? After all, the disciples could not possibly have imagined what the future would hold for them, any more than we can.

### **Prayers (From the Methodist Church website)**

God of all hope we call on you today.

We pray for those who are living in fear:

Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other's reactions to them.

May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.

For those people who are worried about attending worship.

For those needing to make decisions in order to care for others.

For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.

Grant us your wisdom.

Holy God, we remember that you have promised that

Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.

Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.

Amen

How long, Lord, for how long, must we live in exile and watch the sufferings of the poor?

How long must we keep silent when our bones cry out for justice for the vulnerable and weak?

How long must we wait for equality, for privilege to be overthrown for the sake of the common good?

How much longer must good people struggle and the honest be disregarded?

God of truth and justice, call us out, to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly in ways of integrity and peace and may our anger be for righteousness and our actions for the good of all.

Amen

### **Blessing**



## Prayer Prompts

You are invited to use the suggestions listed below in your prayer times.

*May the raindrops fall lightly on your brow  
May the soft winds freshen your spirit  
May the sunshine brighten your heart  
May the burdens of this day rest lightly upon you  
And may God enfold you in the mantle of His Love. Amen.*

### ***Traditional Irish Blessing***

**Let us pray for:** our neighbours and friends, particularly those who live alone: for all who cope with depression from the lockdown circumstances and others who find isolation affecting their mental health.

**Give thanks for:** sunshine, showers, the green of gardens, the wind through the trees; all volunteers making meals, delivering groceries; dedicated carers, especially those who are young family members.

We have a small **Prayer Chain** working within the church. If you, or anyone you know, is in need of prayer please do contact Chris Walters on 01243 379254 or email [c.walters5@homecall.co.uk](mailto:c.walters5@homecall.co.uk)

*Congratulations to John and Vivienne  
who celebrate their  
68<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June.*

Please send contributions for the next fortnightly newsletter to

[notices@emsworthmethodistchurch.org](mailto:notices@emsworthmethodistchurch.org) or  
[newssheet@emsworthmethodistchurch.org](mailto:newssheet@emsworthmethodistchurch.org)

**by Wednesday 24 June**

Good news is especially welcome!