



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

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Newsletter

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Thought for the Fortnight

*'The Church of Christ in every age
Beset by change but Spirit led,
Must claim and test its heritage
And keep on rising from the dead.'*

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000) Singing the Faith 415

At time of writing (Tuesday 23 June) we are waiting for the next government briefing at which the Prime Minister is expected to make changes to the current guidance regarding Covid-19.

Change is not an easy thing. Many of us (including myself) enjoy routine, appreciate 'knowing what's what' and find it difficult when the goalposts move. There is no point in denying that the changes that have taken place in our lives since Lockdown was announced have presented challenges to us as individuals and as a church.

Singing and studying hymns is a massive part of Methodist tradition, and our hymnbook contains a wealth of theological writing on how the church has coped with change since its beginnings. In these strange days, this particular hymn has often come into my mind and I find myself humming it occasionally. I have to say I'm not keen on the idea that we are 'beset

by change'. After all, not all the change we see in the world, or in the church, is for the worse. Maybe the Spirit is at the forefront of those who cry out for any equal sharing of all the world's resources and is calling to the church to join in.

Yet, despite that, this hymn is a poignant reminder that part of being called as God's people is to allow ourselves, our traditions and practices to be moulded by the Holy Spirit according to need. A glance at the history of the Methodist Church is enough to show that change is a key part of our heritage. The church has had to adapt to circumstances in order to remain able to express the love of God to the people.

These days we're expressing our faith through audio-services, phone calls, newsletters, social media, knitting, caring for those in need... the list could go on, and you can probably add your own. Who knows what next week, never mind next year, will bring?! The question isn't whether change will happen – that's pretty much inevitable – but whether we will pause to allow ourselves to follow the example of our forebears and be guided by the Spirit into whatever the future holds?

After all, to use the final verse of this hymn:

*'We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
To care for all without reserve,
And spread his liberating Word.'*

Every blessing,

Laura

94 Walks for 94 Years

You may recollect reading some weeks ago about Revd John Harwood, aged 94, planning to walk from his home in central Emsworth to St James' Church and back 94 times in aid of the Church Mission Society. He has now made the walk 74 times and aims to finish his 94th journey on Friday 3 July. So far his sponsorship has exceeded £10,000 plus Gift Aid and the sum is still growing. If you would like to support John and contribute to this worthy cause, please search "just giving, john harwood". This will take you to his page where you can read about the Church Mission Society and also make a donation, which will be most gratefully received and put to very good use.

Sue D

Home Worship for Sunday 5 July

led by Bill

Prayer

There is none like you, Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.
All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
For you are great and do wonderful things;
you alone are God.
Teach us your way, Lord,
that we may walk in your truth;
give us an undivided heart to revere your name.
We give thanks to you, Lord our God, with our whole heart,
and we will glorify your name forever.
In the name of Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

When evil darkens our world, give us light. When despair numbs our souls, give us hope. When we stumble and fall, lift us up. When doubts assail us, give us faith. When nothing seems sure, give us trust. When ideals fade, give us vision. When we lose our way, be our guide! That we may find serenity in Your presence, and purpose in doing Your will. Forgive us and free us from all that is past and grant your Holy Spirit to equip us for all that is yet to be. Thanks be to you, our Lord and our God. **Amen**

Our Lord's Prayer

Reading: Matthew 11:16–19 & 25–30

Reflection

To my mind, the English language has got really sloppy. To all the news reporters every posh building has become '*an icon*'. Then again, the word 'multiple' seems to have replaced expressions such as 'many', 'lots', 'quite a few', 'loads', 'several' and 'more than once'. All the colour seems to be seeping out of our language.

Yes, I know. I'm being petty and old-fashioned. Mind you, I'm by no means alone. Small molehills can so easily become mountains in our minds. As Jesus points out, that can happen in our life of faith the same as anywhere else. We can get so fixed on rules, regulations and customs that we can be tempted to believe that it's vital to our souls whether we genuflect, stand or sit to sing hymns, or keep every Standing Order in our rule book to the absolute letter. Members of any organised church of any

denomination are at the risk of ending up like children shouting to each other: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' Across the centuries, and across every faith organisation today, there's always been the temptation to be so bound up with 'being Church' that we lose sight of being Christ's followers.

The other image Jesus gives us is of carrying a yoke and a burden. The yoke that the organised religion of his day had made for people to wear was ill-fitting and uncomfortable. The burden of rules and regulations that they were told they must haul along was unbearably heavy. We need to remember that Jesus is speaking as a trained builder-carpenter and as a Rabbi when he says, 'my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

That's to say, Jesus doesn't say that there *is* no burden or responsibility. He says that the responsibilities he gives us are *easy* and *light*. He still holds to the Law of God the Father. In Matthew chapter 5 verse 17 he's quoted as saying, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil.' The difference is that he calls us to follow the laws of God, not because they're written in a rule book and taught by our leaders, but because we're inspired to follow his leading by our relationship with our God in Christ.

He came to fulfil the Law, but he still said it was good to heal people or to pick wheat to eat on the Sabbath, whatever the Pharisees said about it being sinful and against the law. Jesus wasn't moved by the letter of the Law: he was driven by the Spirit of God and his relationship with his Father.

In our present situation perhaps everyone – maybe unconsciously – is reviewing and reconsidering what's truly important in our lives and in our faith. Perhaps our Lord is using this time to challenge each of us with the question: 'Do I get upset with my brothers and sisters when I pipe for them and they will not dance? Or do I help them feel the easiness of Christ's yoke and the lightness of his burden?'

Prayers for others

God our strong deliverer: when those you call to be your hands of healing power feel overwhelmed by the numbers of the suffering, uphold them in their fatigue and banish their despair. Let them see with your eyes, so they may know all their patients as precious. Give comfort, and renew their energy and compassion, for the sake of Jesus in whom is our life and our hope. **Amen.**

We bring to the Lord our hopes and cares, saying, God of Wonder, Hear our prayers.

For God's people throughout the world, that we might do our part to give glory to God and to bring peace to the earth.

We pause to offer our own prayers.

God of Wonder,

All Hear our prayers.

For all who are in darkness, and for all those in any need or trouble, that the light of Christ may fill their hearts with hope.

We pause to offer our own prayers.

God of Wonder,

All Hear our prayers.

For the sick and the dying and those who care for them, that God will bless them this night with the gift of peace.

We pause to offer our own prayers.

God of Wonder,

All Hear our prayers.

For those who are becoming aware of the miraculous joy and peace that God has placed within them, and within every human being, that the awareness of this gift might be strengthened and confirmed.

We pause to offer our own prayers.

God of Wonder,

All Hear our prayers.

Confident in your love, we place our needs before you, our risen Lord, who turns despair into hope, tears into laughter and death into new life. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the grace of God uphold us,
the peace of God surround us,
the love of God flow from us
and the strength of God protect
and bring us safely through this day.

Amen

Doing What we Can to Help the NHS

As you know, a small group of people in the church, plus a few others, have been making mask extenders for staff at Queen Alexandra Hospital. These have been distributed by Revd John Mills, our Methodist Chaplain there, and we understand they have been very much appreciated. Over the last two months we have contributed over 1,000 mask extenders but have now turned our attention to washbags for patients. A very big **THANK YOU** to those of you who have been involved in this.

Dot

Home Worship for Sunday 12 July

led by Laura

Opening Prayer (Psalm 100)

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,

and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

Reading: Luke 5: 1–11

Reflection: From Peter's perspective

I can't explain what goes through your mind in a moment like that. I knew him, you see. Jesus, the carpenter's son. We'd grown up in the same part of the world. I think he may even have helped to build the boat that was my livelihood. I say 'was' because one thing's for sure – life is never going to be the same again.

It all started when the crowds came. Hundreds of people, and there was no place where he could stand on the banks of the lake and be seen by everyone. We hadn't so much as seen a fish all night long, and were sitting on the beach cleaning our nets, feeling pretty dejected and miserable, if you want the truth. We've all got families to feed and no fish means no money. Normally, if someone got into one of my boats and asked me to take them out on the lake I would have laughed at them. But there was something in his eyes – I don't know – something that made me trust him.

I couldn't tell you what he said to those crowds, but I remember it struck me as odd that an ordinary man could have such knowledge of the world. Such knowledge of God. I'd always been a bit... distant... so far as God was concerned. The idea of an all-powerful entity who went about making life difficult for people because of something their parents or grandparents had done didn't exactly fill me with enthusiasm and or a desire to learn more. But Jesus talked about God as if he knew Him, and knew Him as a friend and Father instead of an oppressor.

So when the man with all this knowledge suggested that we push our boats out under the midday sun I was surprised and a little

disappointed. I know fishing. It's what I've always done; and my father did it before me, and his father before that. The fish swim down into the cooler water at the bottom of the lake – far from the reach of our nets – at this time of day. Maybe I wanted to prove that, like so many of the religious leaders, Jesus knew so much about God that somewhere along the line he'd forgotten about real life, or maybe I really did want to see what would happen. It doesn't matter. I did what he asked.

Like I said, I've been a fisherman all my working life, but I've never seen so many fish as I saw that day. The nets were full, the boats were full, and in the middle of my boat stood Jesus. And I knew, I just knew, that this was happening because of him. I'd brought him out here to make him look a fool – but it turned out that I was the fool after all. I wasn't worthy to have a man like this in my boat.

I couldn't help it. Right there and then, just as I was – soaking wet and with fish flapping all around me – I threw myself on my knees at his feet. 'Go away from me, Lord! I am a sinful man!' It wasn't that I wanted him to go. I just couldn't bear to have him stay.

But Jesus only smiled. And it was a smile I have never forgotten. 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'From now on you will be catching people.' He reached out his hand to me, and I knew that he was asking me to go with him and share whatever adventures came his way. But he wasn't asking me because he felt sorry for me, or because he thought he ought to. He was asking me because he wanted me, because, for some reason I cannot possibly comprehend, he didn't want to make the journey without me.

So I got up, left everything and followed him.

Prayers: From Singing the Faith: 519

The Lord's Prayer

A time of Reflection

Blessing

'The Lord bless you
and keep you;
The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.'

A Tribute to Dorothy Colverson

Many of you will remember Dorothy who was in Emsworth until she moved to a care home in Essex nearly 10 years ago, to be near her daughter Gillian and family. Dorothy died recently at the great age of 103.

She was born in Eastbourne in 1916. I understand from Gillian that she had a 'tough childhood' but was always very determined to make the best of everything, but she was also a very humble and gentle lady, as many of you will remember. She was a Petty Officer in the Wrens, which brought her to Hampshire, and Emsworth in 1945, just before the end of the war, where she met Ernie, a teacher, her husband to be.

They were married for over 60 years. Dorothy loved children, and ran the Sunday School in the days when there were lots of children around. I am told there was a rota of people to go up to the Sunday School room to play the piano for their singing, which always included 'Hear the Pennies Dropping'.

Dorothy was always very supportive of everything at church. She was a good baker, supplying cakes for sale, especially when we were fundraising for 'Project 80' (our first building project) or for social events. She was also very supportive of our Anglican/Methodist links, especially our United morning services. With Ernie being an Anglican and Dorothy a Methodist, it meant that once a month they were able to worship together which they both valued enormously.

I have a copy of the Order of Service for her Cremation plus a link to the website where you can access a webcast video recording, which should be available to view until mid July. Just let me know if you would like either of these.

Dot



Quiz

A Miscellany of Questions for You

1. Who was the first person in the Bible to get drunk?
2. How many toes does a rhinoceros have on each foot?
3. In which year was the Queen born?
4. Who wrote *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*?
5. What was 'the food of the Gods' in Greek Mythology?
6. What is the capital city of India?
7. In which town was *The Good Life* set?
8. Who wrote *Anne of Green Gables*?
9. Who wrote the music for *West Side Story*?
10. Who invented television?
11. On which island is *Fingal's Cave*?
12. Which Hampshire town is known as 'the home of the British Army'?



Answers

1. Noah
 2. 3
 3. 1926
 4. Victor Hugo
 5. Ambrosia
 6. New Delhi
 7. Surbiton
 8. L. M. Montgomery
 9. Leonard Bernstein
 10. John Logie Baird
 11. Staffa
 12. Aldershot
- with thanks to Dot*



Prayer Prompts

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

*Look graciously upon us, Holy Spirit, and give us for our blessing:
thoughts which pass into prayer,
prayers which pass into love,
and love which passes into life with Christ for ever. Amen*

Let us allow God the Spirit to bring to mind those who need our prayers:
family, friends, neighbours; the communities of Emsworth, Westbourne,
Southbourne;
those whose names we forget but faces we remember.

Pray for:

all troubled with the breakdown of relationships, marriage and family life
during this pandemic;
children, young people as they begin settling back at school or college in
the months ahead;
those who wait for delayed surgery, who cope with pain; all recovering
from surgery.

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

Please send contributions for the next fortnightly newsletter to
notices@emsworthmethodistchurch.org or
newssheet@emsworthmethodistchurch.org

by Wednesday 8 July

Good news is especially welcome!