



# 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**

**12<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

## Thought for the Fortnight from David Muskett

### Community?

We all like to feel part of a community. Probably the deepest longing of the human heart is to have significant relationships in which to feel safe and secure, trusted and accountable, honest and open and above all in which to love and be loved.

This is partly why lockdown was so hard for some people. They were cut off from many of their relationships and communities. Many were unable to go out at all and most were unable to meet people beyond their immediate household for weeks or months.

The flip side was that some relationships received more attention than usual. With the use of technology some families were seeing more of one another in weekly video calls than they would have done in 'normal' times.

Whichever way it has affected you those significant relationships that are safe and secure, trusted and accountable, honest and open in which you can love and be loved will have been more difficult to maintain. Either because of isolation or because it is harder over the internet than it is in

person. A 'virtual hug' is not quite the same as a physical one; a 'distant hug' is not the same as one with contact.

These significant relationships are ones in which no one is superior or arrogant but in which each party has a humble attitude of service to the others. This enables all members to derive life-giving freedom from and give life-giving freedom to each other. In true community each person can use their gifts and talents to the full – they can be fully human. It is the kind of unity to which the Church aspires, and not surprisingly, because it is the kind of unity we find in God as Trinity in unity.

It is natural for human beings to yearn for community because we were created in the image of God who is himself community. That is one of the reasons we have been so pleased to be able to return to church buildings. It is not that we need to be there to worship and pray, but that we long to be able to do it together, meet one another and relate to one another. The problem is that human selfishness and pride cause the breakdown of relationships both with God and one another.

The solution to the problem is Jesus' cross – the ideal symbol for the healing of relationships both vertically with God and horizontally with one another.

Humanly speaking there are two things to do:

1. accept that Jesus' death and resurrection have made the healing of relationships possible;
2. lose no opportunity for the building of relationships in community both physically and virtually

David Muskett

Superintendent Minister, East Solent and Downs Methodist Circuit



# Home Worship for Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020

*led by Bill*

## **PRAYER**

**Lord our God**, we know that we are your children, and in this certainty we come before you in prayer. Grant us your Spirit, the Spirit who works in us and frees us from the many evils that still torment us. Be with us and let the power of your great grace and mercy be in our hearts so that we may gain the victory and lead joyful lives on earth in spite of our many shortcomings, blunders, and sins. For your grace is great, much greater than all our failings. You are our God and Father, and we stand in awe of your love and forgiveness declared to us through Jesus Christ your Son, Our Lord. Amen.

## **READING: Matthew 18:21-35**

## **REFLECTION**

It isn't easy, is it, this forgiving business? At least, it isn't easy for most of us, but there are just some special people who show immense dignity in the face of tragedy and manage to forgive the seemingly unforgivable.

Do you remember Gordon Wilson? On Remembrance Sunday 1987 he and his daughter were buried under rubble when an IRA bomb exploded near the Enniskillen war memorial just before the remembrance service started. As they lay beneath the rubble he held her hand and they talked together as she lay dying. Later he gave an interview in which he said: "I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge" Even if he had never achieved anything else in his lifetime, he achieved an immense amount in those few words.

The mother of someone killed in the attacks on the New Zealand Mosques gave her own testimony at the trial of the man who carried out the attacks. All the other bereaved relatives treated the accused with disdain and hatred. Her words? She looked at him and said quietly, 'I forgive you.' She was a Moslem, but she did a Christ-like thing.

Peter asks Jesus: 'Should I forgive seven times?' Seven was considered to be a perfect number, so he's effectively asking Jesus: 'Should I try to forgive perfectly?' Jesus says, 'No, forgive other people seventy times seven.' That's to say, Jesus asks us to forgive other people to the uttermost, to infinity. You might say that Gordon Wilson and the lady at the trial did just that.

Forgiveness means freedom. Suppose someone hurts you deeply. It's not surprising if you feel angry and want to get your own back. The problem is that the anger and hurt that you hold on to can itself trap *you*. It can

debilitate you and restrict you and depress your spirit. If you can manage to forgive the person who's hurt you you're setting two people free: that person is freed from the debt they owe you and you are freed from your hurt and anger.

How you reach that point can be a tough journey, but Jesus points out where it needs to start. It's where the unforgiving servant needed to start: by facing up honestly to the debt he owed and realising that he needed forgiveness too. The king forgives him a huge amount – probably about £10,500,000,000 in today's money. He's done nothing to earn that forgiveness; his Master simply gives it out of compassion.

He hasn't learnt his lesson, though. He hasn't looked at himself honestly in the mirror. Instead, he takes vengeance against someone who owes him less than £30. We're told that, as a result, the king put the unjust servant in prison but, really, he carries the blame for putting *himself* in prison. He wouldn't free his colleague, so he couldn't find freedom for himself.

Jesus calls us to reflect on ourselves; to see how huge a gift God in Christ gives us by forgiving the failures and faults from way back that still darken our memories. Then, when we know ourselves to be forgiven and freed through Christ, we may learn to forgive ourselves and we can set others free too. And all because of God's infinite, undeserved, gift of love in Christ on the cross.

## **PRAYER**

Lord God, Father of all, we pray for –

Those who bring devastation to the lives of others, that they may come to see the debt they owe.

The people who harbour hurt and anger which keep their hearts and spirits in chains.

The innocent who are persecuted and damaged because of their ethnicity or culture or creed, that you will free their spirits.

Those who seek freedom for others tormented in mind and spirit by their sense of guilt and shame, that they may know you make them free indeed.

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you for releasing us from the bonds we use to bind ourselves and others. Thanks be to you, our Lord and our God.

Amen

## **BLESSING**

May the peace of Christ go with you, wherever he may send you. May he send you home rejoicing once more into your doors. Amen

## Memories of Janet

As you all know, Janet Landymore died in early August. The following is a compilation of memories from many of her friends in the church. A big thank you to those who have contributed.

The two words that stand out are **LOYALTY** and **COMMITMENT**. Janet lived at the far end of Hayling Island so it was quite a journey for her every time she came over to church, which was often a number of times each week because of the various activities in which she was involved over the years.

Janet always displayed a real gentleness and kindness, always thinking of others, quietly supporting and encouraging them, especially those less fortunate than herself. She was always ready to help if friends became unwell or unhappy. She was always very friendly and made a point of speaking to people, in her own gentle way.

**Singing** was so important to her throughout her life. Her voice was as sweet as her nature, lovely for solos. She was a member of the United Choir from soon after it started back in the late 1970s. Sitting next to Janet in practices and services has been a real pleasure and joy, and a lot of fun. She rarely missed a practice or service. I first met Janet in 1990 when I joined Hayling Island Operatic Society, when she was in charge of the Wardrobe, making a lot of the costumes herself, with her amazing dressmaking skills. She sang with this society for over 22 years.

The **Thursday Market**, raising funds for Missions, was also another big commitment for her, which she carried out regularly over very many years, doing valiant work on the bric-a-brac stall. We worked together every Thursday throughout the opening hours of the Pastoral Centre. She was totally reliable and a pleasure to work with.

Janet was also a key member of a little group of church friends who regularly went out together for **Sunday lunch** after morning services. We would have intense discussions on all sorts of subjects, depending on current affairs and events, and what had been on the TV and radio. I will always treasure the many happy memories and laughter, and thank our Lord that Janet shared her friendship and love with us every Sunday.

She was a very creative lady, but always very modest about her many gifts and achievements, whether that was flower arranging, which she did for the church for very many years, or sewing and knitting for various good causes. She was a great help to Laura with a craft activity group that ran in the Pastoral Centre for a while, encouraging others in their

endeavours. She would always respond to a need, for example, staying behind after Sunday evening services to help set out the church for the

Pastoral Centre the next day. She was also a very loyal and long-standing member of one of our Ploughmans Teams.

Janet's gentle nature, humility and generosity of spirit towards others has been inspirational and will be greatly missed. And so we give thanks to God for her life, and for all she has meant to so many of us. We will all miss her.

The service to celebrate her life took place in church on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August. This was a lovely occasion and a real tribute to Janet. It was good to see so many of her family there, and to hear from her son, Ian, of her commitment to the family and how she was such a gentle anchor for them all, and always there for them.



### **The Pastoral Centre**

The Pastoral Centre opened its doors again on Wednesday September 2<sup>nd</sup> for 2 hours in the morning, and again the following day. Reports suggest that the opening days went well. There were several visitors, including 'old friends', and all were delighted to return and see each other again.

Plans are to continue to open on Wednesday and Thursday mornings between 10-12 noon. Do pop in and say hello, and perhaps buy a drink – we need your support, and your prayers.

## From Rev'd Stephen Wright, our new minister

Hello everyone. It is a real joy to be part of your church family and to work with Laura and others as part of the leadership team here. I will also admit that Emsworth has long been a favourite destination for waterside walks, so it is wonderful to think I shall be visiting even more often from now on!!!

Some of you will feel perhaps, that you know me quite well, as I have led evening services at Emsworth since the 1990s - which seems a very long time ago now. But it seemed a good idea to say a few words about myself in this first piece for the newsletter.

I was born in John Wesley's own county of Lincolnshire, though in the south (Boston) not the north. The area is known for its agriculture and is very, very flat. I sometimes say, to tease, that I played football for Holland in my youth (I did), but only because the area of Lincolnshire that I come from is known by that name!

I became a Christian in my teens and quickly wanted to share my faith with others. Although even then, the thought of being a Methodist minister was not something I was particularly drawn to. But eventually, through a time at Cliff College and then a period of lay work at Plymouth Central Hall, I came to realise that it was what God wanted me to be. All this was a very long time ago!!!! I have been a Methodist minister for 36 years, which hardly seems possible. My first appointment was just outside the



potteries (Stoke-on-Trent), but then we moved south and there we have stayed ever since. I say 'we' because by the time I left Theological College

I was married to Helen. We had 2 children, Greg (who was born in Torquay) and Michael (who was born in St Mary's, Fratton). I suppose part of the reason we gravitated south and remained here was because Helen came from Cornwall and wanted to be as close as possible to her family.

But sadly, the other reason was because she passed away in 2004 and the boys needed stability. As you can imagine, it was a very difficult time. I look back and wonder how I managed to continue ministry, look after 2 young chaps, as well as continue with academic studies (which as I have got older have become more and more important to me). The answer is largely down to the help that God gives through a supportive church and friends. Which includes the Methodist Church's willingness to keep me local.

Since the 1990s I have been responsible (sometimes for only short periods as cover) for 11 of our 23 Circuit churches!!! In recent years I have even returned to a couple of churches (Hart Plain and Horndean) where I'd served previously, in the 90s. I'm sure this is quite unique!!!

In 2020 my boys are now young men, both still living at home, although Greg is only doing so because of the pandemic. He normally works at the head-office of Santander in Milton Keynes, while Michael helps to manage Puregym at Waterlooville and plays football for Petersfield Town. And now there are 4 of us once again. In 2018, I married Louise who is wonderful in every way; she will usually accompany me when I lead worship. We look forward to meeting you, getting to know you and working with you.

**Stephen**

## Home Worship for Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020

As you all know, during the past couple of weeks there have been some ministerial changes and Laura has been poorly. Because of these rather complicated circumstances we don't have an audio service and transcript for 20<sup>th</sup> September at this time.

However, we hope that a service will be available, and if so we'll send it out to you - separately from the newsletter - in the usual ways: via email, the EMC website or by post.

I'd like to recommend the Circuit Digital Services to you – I very much enjoyed the first one last Sunday, led by David Muskett. It was a video presentation, including hymns and songs with the words on screen, and it was good to sing along! Laura has been instrumental in planning and putting together these services, and I believe Alan's playing features on some of them. They will be available on YouTube – search for East Solent and Downs Methodist Circuit or follow this link:

<https://www.esanddcircuit.org.uk>

*Diana*

### **Returning to Worship in Church**

We are very much hoping to be able to open our church for Morning Worship again later this month, possibly on Sunday September 20<sup>th</sup>, subject to Church Council approval.

The Church Leadership Team and Church Council will be meeting during the coming week/s to discuss our way forward. All our planning will be geared to ensure that worship is as safe as possible. We'll keep you informed.





## Prayer Prompts

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

Lord Jesus,

I give you my hands to do your work, my feet to walk your way.

I give you my eyes to see as you do, my tongue to speak your words.

I give you my mind that you may think in me, my spirit that you may pray in me.

Above all, I give you my heart that you may love in me your Father.

Lord Jesus, I give you my whole self, that you may grow in me, so that it is you who live and work in me, loving others through me.

***Grail Prayer (Altered)***

**Remembering our church community**, let us pray for each other: those feeling depressed because life is so different; those missing loved ones; others with ill health or facing surgery.

**Remember the world in which we live:** rulers and those with power, that kindness, justice and mercy will be the mark of their governance; people, especially children, who know only the life of a refugee, living in poverty and hunger; the task of ridding our planet of plastic, that we may take our part and treat the Earth as God's, given for the blessing of all.

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)

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 16<sup>th</sup> September**

Good news is especially welcome!