



## The Methodist Church

**Bishopston, Easter Compton, Horfield, Shirehampton Methodist Churches and St Peter' Pilning.**

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We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit ([www.bsgc.org.uk](http://www.bsgc.org.uk)),

a family of over forty churches serving communities across the local area.

These notices are also posted on <http://www.horfieldmethodist.org.uk>

**“This too will pass” (Anon).**

**“All will be well, and all manner of things will be well” (Julian of Norwich).**

### Sunday, 12<sup>h</sup> July, 2020.

Whilst our church leadership teams continue to consider about the safe and timely moments to re-open our church buildings, I hope that you are continuing to find ways to pray, ponder and worship, in your home. As you do so, I wonder if you have a sacred space there. Perhaps you have one already, but if not, why not think about somewhere to place your Bible, prayer or hymn book alongside other reminders of God. For many this will be a cross, but pictures, candles, flowers and other earthly objects speak to us of The One beyond us and beside us. By my computer there are a small wooden cross and a prayer card, propped up amongst a few pieces of rock which remind me about my relationship with our eternal God through the message of the cross, grounded in a life of prayer.

There is a tradition in Eastern Europe of creating such sacred spaces, 'poustinias,' which are prayer cabins, often in woods. The literal translation of 'poustinia' is desert or wilderness, a place to retreat and pray, where in the current time we might reflect upon the world, the continuing impacts of the pandemic and our own place within it. It does not need to be anything grand, just a place set aside to be sacred for us. It is interesting to know that many Orthodox Christians keep a part of their home as a worshipping space, with icons, a cross and candles usually on the wall in a corner. However you do this, or whether you take a walk to somewhere special, there is always a poustinia right in the places we live, where we can always pray and find God.

Praying for God's continued blessing for you

*Rev Patrick*

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### SERVICES, DEVOTIONS, ETC.

**Sunday Morning Live.** BBC1 at 10.45am. Sean Fletcher and Sally Phillips take a look at the ethical and religious issues of the day.

**Songs of Praise.** BBC1 at 1.15pm. Aled Jones counts down to the UK's favourite hymn. (R).

#### **BSGC Corona Virus Worship resources.**

Worship resources and other resources for reflection are available on the Circuit website. There is also a daily prayer, based around the Methodist Prayer Handbook, for people to use at 12.00noon.

**Dial-a-Prayer.** A FREE phone service to hear prayers and news from the Methodist Church has been launched, updated each Thursday evening. Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514 Listen to news: 0808 281 2478.

**New Room – Friday Reflection.** See website.

**Bible Study.** A new Bible Study series will begin shortly, probably looking at the book of Esther. Details to follow.

**Video reflections.** A video reflection for this weekend is available on church websites.

**Afterzoom tea.** Sundays at 3.30pm to share news informally and see friends. Please join online via **zoom.us Meeting ID: 962 4920 4497 Password: 004692.**

If you would like to join either the Bible Study or Afterzoom Tea, but do not have internet access, you can use your phone: please dial **0330 088 5830** then enter the Meeting number followed by the Password for the particular event. We look forward to hearing you join in.

**All Age devotions.** Alongside our own devotions included in this news sheet, there are free

materials for younger members of our congregations accessible via [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) (and other material for the young at heart too).

**Big Church Sing.** There is a new link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjETodcfHY>

## CHURCH NOTICES.

### All churches.

**'Thank you'** to those across all our churches who have been keeping in touch with our young people over the past few months. To give you an idea of some of the things which have been continuing in different forms: material for Messy Church 'at home' has been produced routinely, shared with those who would normally meet at Horfield and Pilning, but also online via the Circuit website to extend its reach; members of KiGLe have been sharing in the WhatsApp group for the whole church at Shirehampton; and we have recently started online sessions for young people at Horfield. The church membership lists across our five churches total about 200, but we have routine contact with over 300 people in various ways, with a quarter under the age of 18. Those connected with Horfield will be receiving a book or similar during the coming week, a way of marking their contribution to the church's life, but also to encourage their journey with Jesus. Please offer prayers of thanks and encouragement for them all.



**The New Room.** It is good to announce that the New Room is now open again for private prayer between 11.00am and 3.00pm. The cafe is take-away only. Entrance and exit are via the Horsefair gateway only. The museum and library remain closed for the time being.

Please do take time to watch and listen to the opening addresses from the new President of the Methodist Conference (Rev Richard Teal) and

Vice-President (Carolyn Lawrence) which are available online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/MethodistChurchinGB/videos> and offer prayers for them both: "Faithful God, who sings unexpected songs and brings new things to birth, we are thankful for your gift of creativity. I pray for all who receive the prayers and songs throughout this year and beyond, lift our hearts to praise you and raise our lives to live for you. We pray for Richard and Carolyn in their roles of President and Vice-President. Bless them with wisdom and courage to inspire and encourage the church. And in all things, gracious God give us the resolve to live the life you have given us and wherever we are and whatever befalls embed us in your story of grace now and always. Amen." Other things being equal, we look forward to their visit to the District early in 2021.

Local parks are currently a lifeline for many people, and the Bristol Future Parks Project and Bristol Natural History Consortium are leading a survey to gather views about use of these vital community spaces. Can I encourage you to spend about 10 minutes completing a survey: [bnhc.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/bristol-and-bath-parks-survey20](http://bnhc.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/bristol-and-bath-parks-survey20) Views of children and young people are particularly encouraged, so if you have children or young people please ask/support them to complete a survey as well. Please offer prayerful thanks for the work of SixtyOne which supports those in prison in our local area, and for those in prison, both staff and inmates. Most prisoners are currently still locked up for around 23 hours a day. During the lockdown the prisoners would bang on the bars on their windows at 8pm on Thursday night to thank key workers - including prison staff. Please pray for the MentorMe team as we look to employ a new member of staff to enable us to support more mentees. Interviews will be held in July. Please pray as we explore ways of engaging with more people from the BAME community (mentees and mentors), for whom it is hoped to launch a new project in 2021.

Usually at this point of year volunteers from the Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter Project would gather for a feedback and celebration event. This won't be possible at a physical location so please take a look at the impact report. There is also a presentation which I will share during AfterZoom tea over the next couple of weeks. The report shows how the project brought God's blessing on guests, volunteers and churches. The central project team are currently in conversations with Housing Justice and the other Bristol shelters about how the shelter might work this coming winter, taking

Public Health advice for dormitory style shelters. The way forward is uncertain, but there is a commitment to supporting the homeless next winter even if that means a different approach is needed to keep everyone safe.  
[drive.google.com/file/d/1bhY3BA7zDf53tVU8c0pOZedwTocvv005/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bhY3BA7zDf53tVU8c0pOZedwTocvv005/view)

All are welcome to hear an update from three charities that support and help vulnerable woman in Bristol: One25, Beloved, and Spring of Hope. After the update, there is time for prayer for the women. This is usually held in person in churches across Bristol, and should have been coming to Horfield on this occasion. This will be online on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> July at 7.00pm. If you would like to attend, please email [steve.baker@inhope.uk](mailto:steve.baker@inhope.uk) or contact Rev Patrick

**Junior Church.** We are running online Junior Church sessions every Sunday on-line at 10:30am. For details of these sessions please email the Junior Church Leaders ([Helen-treasurer@horfieldmethodist.org.uk](mailto:Helen-treasurer@horfieldmethodist.org.uk)).

An important part of our discipleship is to pray for our community and each other. This week you are asked to pray for the following people and their families:- Nancy Murombadzi, our musicians, Carol Nelso, and Linnette Nelson.

### WEEKLY NOTICES, ETC.

Please submit all items to John Hopper by each Tuesday ([p.hopper1@btinternet.com](mailto:p.hopper1@btinternet.com) or 0117 951 4529). To be added to, or deleted from, the electronic circulation, please email John Hopper.

### Horfield.

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#### This week's Lectionary readings are:

Genesis 25, 19 - 34; Psalm 119, 105 - 112; Romans 8, 1 - 11 and Matthew 13, 1 -9 & 18 - 23.

#### Reflection - Sower and Seed by Stephen Holliday.



The Sower, by Sir William Hamo Thornycroft. Kew Gardens, London.

One of the few benefits of lockdown is that I have found more time for my garden. In fact, it has never looked better! I have even tried growing some plants from seed. What is interesting is that some seeds (about half) germinated and produced a decent plant, quite a few made an attempt but did not really get going and some seeds stayed in the soil and never bothered to grow at all. My experience reflects what Jesus was talking about in his parable of the sower, where his seed had mixed results too.

Unusually, Jesus also offers a clear explanation of this parable, so we cannot fail to get the point he is making. The seed is the Word of God and we are the soil. The question for all of us to consider is how we respond to God's Word, in other words: what sort of soil are we? In this brief reflection I just want to think about the good soil because that, I guess, is what most of us would like to think we are, or at least would like to be. That does not mean, of course, we should not be honest and consider whether we might be described as shallow soil or rocky ground but I'll leave that for your personal reflection!

Firstly, it is worth remembering that there is nowhere that weeds like more than good soil. Gardeners amongst you will know very well that weeds can appear out of nowhere and if you neglect to remove them,

then they soon take over. In the parable, the weeds represent *'the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth'* (verse 22). On our Christian journey, temptations to do, say or think wrong things – weeds – come to all of us, sometimes out of nowhere. Similarly worries, doubts, and distractions that take our focus away from God – more weeds – easily invade our lives. The danger for all of us is when we let these temptations and distractions grow and take root. Recognizing them is not always easy, and getting rid of persistent weeds can be hard work, sometimes seemingly impossible, but we must be on our guard to ensure that our good soil remains as good as it can possibly be. I find comfort in the other reading for today, *Romans 7 (15-25)*, where Paul writes how he struggles to do the right thing and yet admits he still finds himself falling short. It is an agonizing, very human confession of the struggles of Christian discipleship and a passage which reminds us that we will all struggle at times to live as God would want us to live but, despite our failings, He still loves us and the Holy Spirit will give us strength to persevere.

The key thing, though, is that Paul really works at overcoming his difficulties, and that is my second point about good soil. Good soil does not remain good forever. It needs work. That work is not just about keeping the weeds down, it is also about water, fertilizer, light – everything needed to feed the plants and keep them flourishing. That spiritual nourishment, the strength to persevere, comes through the Holy Spirit and our relationship with the living Lord Jesus. He promises to be the bread of life for each of us and to offer living water so that we will not be spiritually hungry or thirsty again. For us to remain good soil we need to remember our need for spiritual refreshment.

Remaining close to Jesus through prayer and Bible study helps us to produce a good crop. My final point is two questions for all of us to consider: what sort of crop do we produce and are we producing enough? The answers are, of course, different for each of us. We all have a ministry, things we can do to share God's love with others. For some, it is a ministry of prayer, praying for friends, family and the world; for others it is a more practical, offering love and service to those in need. Lockdown has offered many new opportunities to share God's love and to reflect about how we live out our faith. Whatever our calling, this parable challenges all of us to think again about whether we are, or remain, good soil and about the fruits of our Christian service.