



The Methodist Church

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

Minister: *Revd Patrick Stonehewer* T: 0117 924 8407, E: patrick.stonehewer@methodist.org.uk

We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit (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, 16th August, 2020.

What a story!! - see Genesis 45: 1 – 15. All the elements of a good yarn. A family situation; a father's favourite, the younger son; jealous brothers selling him into slavery. A new life in a strange land where he finds favour with his employer until jealousy intervenes again and he is imprisoned. Eventually he is released when a former inmate remembers him and his skill in interpreting dreams. He finds favour with Pharaoh and rises to a position of power in Egypt.

What more could you want? It certainly has the excitement of the modern Star Wars series, which I have been watching with my grandson this last week! But wait, the story is not complete. What about retribution? Surely Joseph must 'get his own back'?

But Joseph is a changed man, he has realised that God has been with him all along, that his brother's actions were God's plan. So that when his brothers go to Egypt in the time of the famine, Joseph is in a position to help them. He does not want revenge but wants to welcome and forgive them. He wants harmony in the family.

Harmony – this is the word that jumped out at me when I looked at the readings for this week.

“How wonderful it is, how pleasant when brothers live together in harmony!

For harmony is as precious as the fragrant anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head
That ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe.

Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion.
And the Lord has pronounced his blessing, even life for evermore”

Psalm 133

This is the world God wants. When I look out over a wooded area from above (such as the view from Sea Walls across the Gorge to Nightingale Valley), at all the shades of green of the trees, I marvel at the harmony. How difficult for an artist to replicate! Watching the changes in the natural world through walks and seeing God in control (sticky buds – flower candles – conkers) brings hope and assurance.

So at this time of discord and conflict, uncertainty and anxiety, the ups and downs of everyday life let us remember that God is with us. That He is in control, even if it does not seem so. That He will restore harmony in his own good time and we must be ready to do what we can to hasten that day, through prayer, support and encouragement.

God bless you all
Janet Browning

SERVICES, DEVOTIONS, ETC.

Sunday Morning Live. BBC1 at 10.00am. Sean Fletcher Bell and Sally Phillips take a look at the ethical and religious issues of the day.

Songs of Praise. BBC1 at 1.15pm. Clair McCollum explores the history of Christian worship at Trentham Gardens.

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.

Our online worship videos will continue for the time-being, and in August will include contributions from Christian organisations here in Bristol and further afield. Please do continue to watch these and pray for those who lead and work in all these faith-based organisations.

The New Room. The New Room has partially reopened Tuesdays to Saturdays 11.00am - 3.00pm. The Cafe is open for drinks, cakes and light lunches with limited seating/ The Chapel and the courtyard are open for private prayer and reflection, as also is the museum.

The New Room – Friday Reflection. See website.

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.

Bible Study. Bible Study, looking at the book of Esther, will recommence on Wednesday, 19th August at 7.45pm. [Zoom Meeting details:-](#) Meeting ID: 824 4060 4625 Passcode: 202692.

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 (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.

If you are looking for somewhere local to visit for some quiet time in God's presence, then everyone at ALFACC* (Fulligrove House, Woodwell Road BS11 9UG) will be pleased to welcome you to their garden which is available for people to come on their own or with a few friends (appropriately spaced) to sit in peace and think/read/pray etc. They are affiliated to the Quiet Garden Movement <https://quietgarden.org/> and have a few photos and resources in the summer house. It is generally helpful if people contact us in advance (info@alfacc.org.uk or 01179826455 or alfacc.org.uk) as there are days when activities will be happening and the garden will not be quiet. Drop-in sessions will be available on Wednesdays 2.00pm – 4.00pm in August when the weather is dry: tea and cake will be on offer!



Feeding Bristol is fundraising for part of the city-wide Healthy Holidays project, looking to support our most vulnerable children during the summer holidays. Please visit this fundraising link if you feel able to contribute.

Horfield.

Thank You cards. The Fund Raising Group has now produced some Thank You cards. So many people have been helped by others willing to go the extra mile to make life easier for them we are extending our greetings card range to include Thank You cards.

Coffee cup cards are £1 each with a minimum order of 3 cards. There are various options available.

There are three designs:-

- Traditional floral.
- Contemporary floral.
- Spots/stripes.

A choice of drink sachet:-

- Douwe Egberts coffee.
- Lyons decaffeinated coffee.
- Twinings teabag.

A choice of greeting inside:-

- “To thank you for your kindness.
And the care you've shown me too.
I'm sending you this cuppa,
As a thanks from me to you.”
- “Thank you for listening.
Thank you for caring,
Thank you for being you.”

Teapot 'Thinking of You' cards at 4 for £3, are still available to order.

Email orders for coffee cup or teapot cards to: teapot_cards.etc@yahoo.com. This can be done through our facebook page, 'Teapot cards - and more'



Hazel Thorne writes: could I please ask that I am in your thoughts on 24th August when I am having an eye operation. Also because of the situation am required to self-isolate fourteen days before, and fourteen days afterwards.

Worship Consultation. The next meeting will be online on Thursday, 20th August at 7.30pm. [Zoom Meeting details:-](#) Meeting ID: 856 0226 4713, Passcode: 104301.

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).

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:- Scrabble Group, Scouts, Donna Sharpe, and Mark Shipton.

WEEKLY NOTICES, ETC.

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

This week's lectionary readings are:

Genesis 45: 1 - 15; Psalm 133; Romans 11: 1 - 2a and 29 – 32; and Matthew 15: (10 - 20) 21 – 28.

Reflection on the Canaanite Woman by David Bainbridge (Horfield).

The second part of this week's Gospel reading is to say the least challenging. It is the kind of reading we want to pass over because on the surface it clearly conflicts with the image of Jesus that we hold, the champion of the poor, the advocate of the oppressed, the friend of the outsider. Yet here he is in this passage from Matthew's Gospel responding in the most derogatory terms to this Canaanite woman who had come to seek healing for her daughter and telling her that his ministry was only to his own people.

Some commentators say that this encounter was part of Jesus own growth and development, the point where his father challenges him to see the much broader purpose of his mission. But, why such dismissive language? One of the disadvantages we have is not being able to transmit the tone of Jesus voice to the printed page or to know whether he said what he said with a smile on his face, letting her know that he was not being serious. Or was he using it to teach his disciples, starting out by affirming what they and this woman would expect, that a Jewish teacher would be dismissive towards a Gentile and especially a woman, then by giving in to her request demonstrating to them the inclusiveness of the Gospel, that barriers of race and gender have no place in the Kingdom of God?

What is clear is that he did not send this woman away as the disciples requested, but engaged with her and healed her daughter. If we focus too much on trying to take the sting out of this exchange we detract from the faith and perseverance of this Canaanite woman. It is a wonderful example of a mother's love. This Canaanite woman was willing to do whatever it took, even if it meant being rejected and humiliated, to gain healing for her child.

It was this powerful combination of faith and love which takes centre stage. It was a faith that just would not give up. In some respects, you could say that this woman's persistence was not so much down to her faith, but her desperation. But then sometimes does not it amount to the same thing? Faith is not just trusting in God and leaving it all to him. There may be times when that is all we can do, but faith must be active, not passive. It bangs on doors until there is an answer. It drives us to make our voice heard, not just out of concern for ourselves, but also on behalf of those who have no voice.

Martin Luther King once said that we must learn that to expect God to do everything while we do nothing is not faith, but superstition. This woman's sheer persistence resulted in her daughter being healed. It did not matter that as far as the Jews were concerned, she was ritually unclean. (In the first part of today's Gospel reading Jesus pointed out that their traditional understanding of what was clean, which included certain dietary requirements and washing hands before meals, did not make them clean in God's eyes, but what was in their hearts. This Canaanite woman's heart was certainly in the right place). It did not matter that social convention stood in the way of her approaching Jesus. It did not matter that she was stepping over boundaries that were supposed to keep her out. What mattered to her was that her daughter was ill and in this Jewish Rabbi she saw the possibility of healing. Nothing was going to stop her because she was driven by love.

Cardinal Newman once said, "*It is love makes faith, not faith love*". Sometimes we think we have got it all taped, that we know the way God works, but then He springs one of his surprises and reveals himself in unexpected places through unexpected people who may be the very last we would expect to be channels of His activity. So, may we draw inspiration from this Canaanite woman, whatever challenges we face, to persevere in faith and love.

A prayer.

*Lord Jesus,
as the Canaanite woman brought her daughter to you for healing,
overcoming stigma and rejection to do so, confident of your healing in her life,
we bring the needs of others in prayer:
Those who experience constant pain.
Those who daily live with chronic illness or ill-health.
Those who care for and treat people who are ill.
Those in Beirut whose lives have been shattered by the recent devastating explosion.
And for ourselves in our weakness, along with all your children everywhere,
Lord Jesus Christ, bring healing, bring peace. Amen.*