



# Welcome to the 'virtual' Stoneleigh Methodist Church

## Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### 10:30am: Morning Worship – with Richard Graham

## Prayers

**Please pray** for Emma and Richard, and for others within the Church and beyond; for the continued health of our key workers and all of the National Health Service on whom we depend so much now, and at all times.

Please pray also for those of our Church family who are unwell or finding their mobility limited, and consider whether they might welcome a call from friends. And pray for the family and friends of Corrinne Payne who died recently.

*“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3:18*

## Notices

**Weekly News/Service sheet.** *During the present restrictions we cannot meet or worship at Church, but we will continue to produce a weekly News/Service sheet each Sunday which will be emailed or delivered to every member. Thanks to all those who make this possible.*

**Corrinne Payne's** committal service is on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May, 3:00pm at North East Surrey Crematorium. Please remember Debra, her sister Claire and brother Martin with their families in prayer, especially during the time of the funeral. *Emma*

**On-line meetings.** The weekly Thursday Morning prayer happens via Zoom and it's open to all. Please send an email to [publicity@ruxley-church.org.uk](mailto:publicity@ruxley-church.org.uk) by Tuesday for an ID and password to join in, and a copy of the liturgy too. *Emma*

If you know of any other online meetings that would be relevant to SMC members and are available to them, please let me know in time to mention them in our NewsSheet notices (so by 6:00pm Fridays) together with details. Thanks. *Robin*

**Can you help Richard?** “As part of my Local Preacher training, I have been asked to find out about people's consideration of being part of the Methodist Church. I would appreciate it if you could complete the survey at [forms.gle/qzMS5UfF3buVXp6Q6](https://forms.gle/qzMS5UfF3buVXp6Q6) to help with this. The survey will close at midnight at the end of Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> May. All responses will be anonymous, and kept as such - I may use quotes from answers in this and other work towards my LP training but only in those. If you are interested in the final piece this forms, please let me know and I'll try to remember to send it to you once it's done! Many thanks,” *Richard*

**The London District** are planning a radio series for Premier Radio later in the year and as part of the 'Woven' project which will feature powerful Christian stories. If anyone wants to take part in this storytelling of salvation, healing, moments of epiphany or how their Christian faith has informed

their life choices, including friendships, career, calling or how their faith has helped them cope with the struggles of the current crises, please contact me to point you to the direction of the person in charge at the district office. *Emma*

## Around the Trolley

*A section of the NewsSheet for less formal news and information exchanges. All contributions gratefully received – it's your NewsSheet! Robin*

**Ruby Smith** passed away on 29<sup>th</sup> April aged 91. Some members may remember Ruby, either as Borough Councillor and honorary Alderman, or as a staunch supporter of local Girl Guides. No further details available at present. *Robin*

**VE Day.** Stoneleigh Crescent was a joy to behold last weekend, with many residents setting up for tea on their drives. I was especially impressed with the balloons at number 16 – really made me jump when one burst whilst I was discussing (with Andy across the road) the bomb that fell during the war! Sorry, but the only picture I've got is of our own porch – *Robin*



**Celebrating V E Day 2020 in Amberley Gardens.** It all started with a 'WhatsApp' group being started to try to include everyone in the road to get behind the idea of having individual garden parties and for us all to decorate our house in red, white and blue! In the end I had to switch WhatsApp off as it was 'pinging' non-stop, such was the enthusiasm.



It took me awhile to get over the shock of having to produce decorations etc in this lock down situation, as I had nothing to hand. However, after a few cups of coffee throughout the day, Dulcie Batten came into my mind. Ages ago she gave me masses of red, white and blue wool which I used to knit into scarves for Whitechapel, and I still had some in a box. I duly got it out and made some 'drapes' to hang on our Yew Tree and our Hibiscus bush, plus some flags from Amazon and, in the end, I had covered all the boxes asked of me. I made lots of scones to have Strawberry Cream Teas with everyone, and my neighbours, Bob and Jill, provided champagne!

The afternoon was amazing, the street looked wonderful and everyone ate their picnics and mingled - safely! I had previously walked around the local streets and I felt we were the best in show, but I expect to be challenged on that, so get out your

photos and send them in to Robin. *Jeananne PS – thanks to Dulcie for saving the day.*

**Denise** has been knitting mask links (together with other members of Stoneleigh WI) for Epsom Hospital – these join the elastic ear loops of face masks together behind the wearer’s head, taking the strain off the ears which, understandably, can be quite annoying on a long shift. She’s now making more for Great Ormonde Street Hospital in London. Have you been doing anything you’d like to mention ‘around the trolley’ to members (no photo necessary). *Robin*



**A couple of pictures from Lesley** to cheer us up



Firstly, ‘Proud Parents’ at Bourne Hall

and ‘Surprise Visitors’ in the garden



**Jo** sent this after making a surprise visit to Helen, which she was very happy to receive.



**Church Flowers.** You might remember this arrangement on the communion steps from early March. Although the foliage has dried up, it still looks good from the floor, a testament to the skill of our ‘flower people’. Well done Val!

**Offertories** – thanks to those who have passed on their Offertory money in the past few weeks – very much appreciated. If you’re not sure how to contribute, but would like to, just give me a ring (020 8393 2155) and I’m sure we can sort something out. *Denise*

**Cheques** – keeping the Church’s accounts up to date is important at any time, but even more so just now. It seems that a number of cheques issued by SMC have yet to be cashed; if you think you might have one tucked away, please bank it as soon as possible to help us balance the accounts. *Thanks*

# From Churches Together in Ewell

## PRAYER OF ST BRENDAN

*Help me to journey beyond the familiar  
and into the unknown.*

*Give me the faith to leave old ways  
and break fresh ground with You.*

*Christ of the mysteries, I trust You  
to be stronger than each storm within me.*

*I will trust in the darkness and know  
that my times, even now, are in Your hand.*

*Tune my spirit to the music of heaven,  
and somehow, make my obedience count for You.*

*This beautiful prayer is attributed to St. Brendan the Navigator (484-577 A.D.),  
also known as St. Brendan the Voyager, an ancient Irish monk,  
abbot, sailor, ship-builder, and explorer.*

## Contact Details

**Postal Address:** 1 Stoneleigh Crescent, Stoneleigh, Epsom KT19 0RT

**Contact:** Jeananne (07729 028850) - [contact@stoneleighmethodist.church](mailto:contact@stoneleighmethodist.church)

**Minister:** 020 8393 2322, [emmacusack121019@yahoo.com](mailto:emmacusack121019@yahoo.com), or Skype is available by arrangement. The Minister's Rest Day is Friday.

**News/Service sheet.** During this time of forced 'social distancing', we at SMC are focussed on maintaining weekly contact with every one of our membership, plus others who may be interested, such as specific friends at Ruxley and Tuesday Fellowship. The combined sheet is circulated to all members, either by email, or through your letter box if we possibly can; it will also be posted onto the Church website in the normal way. If you'd like to be added to our email circulation list, or know someone who might appreciate this, just let me know. Jeananne and I are doing our very best to ensure all members are kept 'in the loop' – Robin

*Other Churches offer Services etc through the Internet such as:*

- **Christ Church with St Philip** in Worcester Park. Paul and Steph alternate Sunday mornings at 10:00am on Facebook at [facebook.com/christchurchsaintphilip](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchsaintphilip)
- **All Souls in Langham Place** who are producing very polished mid-week and Sunday Services at [allsouls.org](http://allsouls.org) – these are complete with music, singing and subtitles.
- **The Methodist Church** is offering 'Dial-a Prayer' free of charge, updated every Thursday afternoon, on 0808 281 2514. There's also weekly news, again free, on 0808 281 2478.

**All items for future NewsSheets** –please email to [news@stoneleighmethodist.church](mailto:news@stoneleighmethodist.church) or phone 020 8393 2155.

Loving Father, we still our souls now to remember that You are here with us, You are here in us, You are here for us. Lord Jesus, we worship You. Holy Spirit, we welcome You.

## Psalm 66: 8-20

(NIV)

### How Awesome Are Your Deeds

*To the choirmaster. A Song. A Psalm.*

Praise our God, all peoples,  
let the sound of his praise be heard;  
he has preserved our lives  
and kept our feet from slipping.  
For you, God, tested us;  
you refined us like silver.  
You brought us into prison  
and laid burdens on our backs.  
You let people ride over our heads;  
we went through fire and water,  
but you brought us to a place of abundance.

I will come to your temple with burnt offerings  
and fulfil my vows to you –  
vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke  
when I was in trouble.

I will sacrifice fat animals to you  
and an offering of rams;  
I will offer bulls and goats. *Selah*

Come and hear, all you who fear God;  
let me tell you what he has done for me.  
I cried out to him with my mouth;  
his praise was on my tongue.  
If I had cherished sin in my heart,  
the Lord would not have listened;  
but God has surely listened  
and has heard my prayer.

Praise be to God,  
who has not rejected my prayer  
or withheld his love from me!

## A Prayer of Approach

(500)

Lord, we do not come to worship you  
because we must,  
but because we long to.

We do not come because we are worthy,  
but to give you glory.

We do not come for our own benefit,  
or to receive a blessing,  
but because you are worthy  
of all our thanks and praise.

Amen.

## Hymn: Singing the Faith 82

<https://youtu.be/uKGf06YM7rQ>

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works Thy hand has made.  
I see the stars; I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee:  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

When through the woods  
and forest glades I wander  
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

And when I think that God, His Son not  
sparing,  
sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in  
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin:

When Christ shall come  
with shout of acclamation  
and take me home - what joy shall fill my  
heart;  
then shall I bow in humble adoration,  
and there proclaim:  
my God, how great Thou art!

## A Prayer of Confession

(500)

Lord, wherever we go and whatever we do,  
our trust in you is tested.

We confess that there are times  
when the cost of the challenge of living by faith  
is a price that is too much to bear.

So often, when our faith in Christ is questioned or challenged,  
we feel inadequate to respond.

We do not feel wise enough to find the right words.  
We feel that our commitment to Christ is unworthy of him  
and that our knowledge of him and his teaching lets him down.

Forgive us our failure to stand by your truth  
and to demonstrate your love in our lives.  
Forgive us and enable us so to speak and so to act  
that our lives may honour Christ as Lord.

Amen.

## Hymn: Singing the Faith 338

<https://youtu.be/61CJdXmxxLU>

There is a Redeemer,  
Jesus, God's own Son,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
Holy One.

*Thank you, O my Father,  
for giving us your Son,  
and leaving your Spirit  
'til the work on earth is done.*

Jesus my Redeemer,  
name above all names,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
O for sinners slain.

When I stand in glory  
I will see his face,  
and there I'll serve my King for ever  
in that holy place.

Melody Green, Keith Green (1953 – 1982)  
© 1982 Birdwing Music, administered by Song Solutions Daybreak  
Reproduced under CCLI Licence Number 19650

## Readings:

### 1 Peter 3: 13-22

(NIV)

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. 'Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.' But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits – to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

## Acts 17: 22-34

(NIV)

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: 'People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.

'So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship – and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

'The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring."

'Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone – an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.'

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, 'We want to hear you again on this subject.' At that, Paul left the Council. Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

### Reflection

Our readings today come from two very different people instrumental in the early Church. First from Peter's first letter, and then a story following Paul; it's said that Peter was the Apostle to the Jews, while Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Peter tells us that we should not be afraid of what people might say when they find out that we are Christians. Our reading from Acts is often used as an example, a template, to how we might go about doing this – and also an example of what we might expect when we do.

In this moment in Acts, we see Paul, likely on his own, in the city of Athens. Wandering around, he is interested, yet appalled, by the number of idols he sees around the city. Verse 21 tells us that the people of Athens spent their time listening to and discussing the latest ideas. They invited Paul in, not necessarily because they thought what he was saying was *good*, but because it was *new*.

Paul uses what he sees – the altar to the unknown god – as his starting point to his witness: "This god you do not know – this is the God I now proclaim to you." From here he goes on to pass on the gospel of Christ crucified and resurrected. He didn't shout at them for having all the idols that they had, even though they greatly distressed him. Instead, he used the existence of those idols as his starting point, even using quotes from the pagan Greek writers that his audience would have been familiar with – first a hymn to Zeus by Epimenides of Crete, and then from the poet Aratus.

This is where I think we can use this example from Paul as our kind of template. He works from where the people in Athens were, their 'unknown god', their own scriptures of a sort, to tell them about Christ resurrected. There were three types of people who responded that day, and similarly three types of people we might encounter when we speak out our faith. Some people laughed at Paul. Some people wanted to know more. And some people said 'yes' to what Paul was saying.

When we are asked about our faith in Christ, what is it that we say?

We meet people where they are. Right now, with the continued effect of the Coronavirus in whatever form that might be for, we find ourselves in a nation of scared and frightened people: some of the virus itself, others of the financial effects of the virus, still others about the mental wellbeing of themselves and those close to them. But there *is* hope – in Christ.

The results of a recent survey carried out by Tearfund shows that 'some 3 million new people have turned to prayer in the UK since lockdown began' and that the number of people attending a Sunday service has leaped from around 5% of the nation to 24%. The online bookstore Eden has reported a 55% increase in sales of Bibles in April.

We are in that strange time between Easter and Pentecost. Jesus had died and was risen, and had ascended to the Father. Now the disciples were in that upper room together. They knew the hope of Christ resurrected, they had seen him in the flesh, they had heard his voice and his commands to go out and witness to him, and they were now waiting for the promised Holy Spirit.

We are perhaps in that same situation – we are still in a state of lockdown although it is beginning to be eased, wondering what will happen next, scared of what might happen if we go out. But we do have hope – a hope grounded in Christ. We have a fantastic opportunity here that although our church buildings are closed, the church can be more open than ever to those seeking their unknown gods.

As Peter wrote, and quoting from the Message translation: "Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick." (1 Peter 3:14, MSG)

### **Hymn: Singing the Faith 418**

<https://youtu.be/OXlojQCipq4>

We have a gospel to proclaim,  
good news for all throughout the earth;  
the gospel of a Saviour's name:  
we sing His glory, tell His worth.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:  
empty the tomb, for He was free.  
He broke the power of death and hell  
that we might share His victory.

Tell of His birth at Bethlehem —  
not in a royal house or hall,  
but in a stable dark and dim,  
the Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of His reign at God's right hand,  
by all creation glorified.  
He sends His Spirit on His Church  
to live for Him, the Lamb who died.

Tell of His death at Calvary:  
hated by those he came to save,  
in lonely suffering on the cross,  
for all he loved His life he gave.

Now we rejoice to name Him King:  
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.  
This gospel-message we proclaim:  
we sing His glory, tell His worth.

© Edward J Burns  
Reproduced under CCLI Licence Number 19650

### **Prayers of Intercession & Petition**

(from the Methodist Church website)

God, our heavenly Father, make the presence of the Holy Spirit real to us now. We invite the Holy Spirit to guide us as we pray.

*Pause*

We remember before God our local church, both at Ruxley and at Stoneleigh, and across the Circuit, and all its people. We give thanks that our mission continues even though we cannot meet for worship together at present. We pray that the Holy Spirit may direct our work, and strengthen all

of us in the tasks to which we are called. We pray for the wider church, across this area, across this nation, and across the world that by word and action it may proclaim to the world God's love in Jesus Christ.

*Pause*

We remember before God our world and its leaders. We pray for peace, for a just and sustainable use of the world's resources and for greater recognition of our responsibility to care for all creation. We give thanks for those who work to combat disease; for scientists, doctors, nurses and all who care for the sick, the aged and the vulnerable. We ask God to bless and strengthen them.

*Pause*

We remember before God people we know who particularly need our prayers at this time: family members, friends, neighbours, fellow church members, the people we would normally meet regularly but from whom we are currently separated. We think of those who are ill, or anxious, or grieving, and we pray that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit may surround and sustain them.

*Pause*

We ask the Holy Spirit to show us how we can be part of the answer to our prayers. As God blesses us, so may we be a blessing to others in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be Your Name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory are Yours,  
now and forever.

Amen.

### **Hymn: Singing the Faith 345**

*(Songs of Fellowship 2215)*

<https://youtu.be/oc3y07FWEAE>

And can it be that I should gain  
an interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left his Father's throne above —  
so free, so infinite His grace —  
emptied Himself of all but love,  
and bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
for, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray —  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,  
my chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
and clothed in righteousness divine,  
bold I approach the eternal throne,  
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Amazing love! How can it be  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

## **Blessing**

(500)

Have no fear, be in no doubt;  
you are not alone.

Open your eyes to the presence of God,  
open your ears to his word for you  
and know he is guiding your feet.

Receive his peace, know his presence  
and be filled with the Spirit,  
and in all you say and do and are,  
confess that Jesus is Lord.

Amen.

### **Copyright Acknowledgements (where not already indicated above)**

Items marked '500' taken from 500 Prayers for All Occasions, by David Clowes, © 2003, 2009.  
Published by David C Cook. Used with permission.

Scripture quotations labelled NIV taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version, © 1973 1978 1984 2011 Biblica, Inc.  
Used with permission.

Scripture quotations labelled MSG taken from The Message. © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002.  
Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group."