



Welcome to the 'virtual' Stoneleigh Methodist Church

Sunday 21st June 2020

10:30am: Morning Worship with Richard Graham

Prayers

Please pray for Emma, Richard and our Stewards; for others within the Church and beyond, and 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.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Ephesians 4:2

Notices

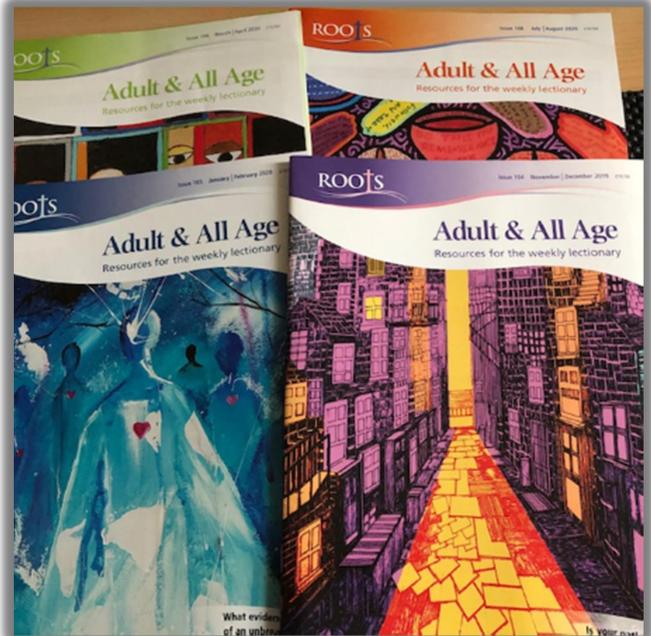
Weekly News/Service sheet. *During the present restrictions we cannot meet or worship at Church, but we will continue to produce a weekly News/Service sheet each Sunday which will be emailed or delivered to every member. Thanks to all those who make this possible.*

Helen is on the move! I am finally moving into my new address near to Ruxley Church next Wednesday. Email and phone number are unchanged; post will be forward by the Royal Mail for the time being. I am keeping a weather eye on the weather! Helen

'Roots' Magazine. Hi everyone. We as a church subscribe to this magazine which gives resources for the weekly lectionary. It can be used by anyone leading worship or wanting to lead a house group, or for personal reading. It has such a variety of prayers and hymn suggestions, plus great background information on the bible readings. 'Roots' inspires worship and learning for the whole Church - on Sundays and throughout the week.

It is well laid out, easy to read, and I am sure you would enjoy reading through the articles and reflections etc. I have a folder with many of them and would be happy to deliver them to anyone who is interested. If you would like any more information please give me a call. This month's theme is: Matthew's message of hope; *Reflections and activities for no ordinary summer!*

So, please have one, and maybe it will inspire you send in a report; not from the pews, but from your own sofa! *Jeananne – 07729 028850*



Around the Trolley

A section of the NewsSheet for less formal news and information exchanges - all contributions gratefully received – it's your NewsSheet after all! Robin

Jim's Travels (Part 2) Still continuing my 'every other day' walks - the weather has been very kind to me. Just one hiccup - one day I decided to walk to Headley and back, but underestimated the mileage and how long it would take. It took me 3¾ hours and I covered just over 11 miles. I needed a good rest that afternoon! *Jim*



Congratulations and best wishes to Gopal and Geetha on their significant wedding anniversary next week. *Vivienne*

Parking Restrictions – sorry, I should have put this in the last NewsSheet, but ran out of space. The Council have reinstated most charges and on-street parking restrictions from 15th June; NHS concessions continue however. *Robin*

On Jo's travels – the people you meet in the Park – out for walk with Jasmine who is now one year old!

Congregation in Waiting In case you thought no-one comes to Church any more, these friendly faces have popped up in the courtyard. Looks like they just can't wait for Services to restart either.



Contact Details

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

Contact: Jeananne (07729 028850) - contact@stoneleighmethodist.church

Minister: 020 8393 2322, 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 friends at Ruxley and Tuesday Fellowship. The combined sheet is circulated 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 Services etc through the Internet are:

The Ruxley/Stoneleigh Thursday Morning prayer by Zoom and it's open to all. Email to publicity@ruxley-church.org.uk by Tuesday for details and a copy of the liturgy too.

Christ Church with St Philip in Worcester Park. Paul and Steph alternate Sunday mornings live at 10:00am on Facebook at facebook.com/christchurchsaintphilip

All Souls in Langham Place who are producing very polished mid-week and Sunday Services at 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 – to news@stoneleighmethodist.church or phone 020 8393 2155.

Sunday, 21st June 2020 – with Richard Graham

You can view this Service on YouTube at https://youtu.be/M_-55vVepw8

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.

A Prayer of Approach

(500)

Lord, we live in a world of change.
Every day is filled with uncertainty.
We are surrounded by the twists and turns of life
and we often feel we have little or no control
over things that happen to us.

Lord, we come to stand in your eternal presence.
We come to you to find ourselves,
to find our way,
to find hope.

We come to you because in Christ
you first came to us.

Amen.

A Prayer of Confession

(500)

Lord, when we stand in your presence,
all our pride and self-sufficiency,
our self-interest and our self-satisfaction
are exposed as the self-delusions they are.

Lord, when you come to us,
our superstitions, our lies, our half-truths and our self-deceit
crumble like dust before you.

The selfish way we make use of each other,
the way we look down in contempt on other people,
our vanity and our self-righteousness
are shown up in all their poverty and emptiness.

We think about those times in the past week where we have fallen short of God's glory – for those times we were silent when we should have spoken out for Him, for those times where our actions and deeds fell short of His glory and His plan, and those times we have not been good stewards of His creation in all its forms.

Father, we seek your forgiveness
and resist your life-renewing Spirit no longer.
Lift us up and enable us to celebrate your love
made known to us in the risen Christ.

Loving God, Father of all, **Have mercy on us.**

(MWB)

Jesus Christ, Son of God, **Have mercy on us.**

Holy Spirit, Lord of Life, **Have mercy on us.**

**We confess to God and to each other
that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed;
may God have mercy on us.**

**May God grant us pardon,
forgiveness of all our sins,
time to amend our lives,
and the grace and comfort of His Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Joel 2: 12-16

(NIV)

'Even now,' declares the Lord,
'return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.'

Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing –
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.
Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.

Hymn: Singing the Faith 64

<https://youtu.be/3F1ADeQcIU>

Praise is rising, eyes are turning to You;
we turn to You.
Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for You;
we long for You.

*'Cause when we see You
we find strength to face the day.
In Your presence
all our fears are washed away,
washed away.*

*Hosanna, hosanna,
you are the God who saves us;
worthy of all our praises.
Hosanna, hosanna,
come have your way among us;
we welcome you here Lord Jesus.*

Hear the sound of hearts returning to you;
we turn to you.
In your kingdom broken lives are made new;
you make all things new.

'Cause when we see You . . .

Hosanna, hosanna . . .

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna.

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A Prayer of Praise and Adoration

(500)

Father, we praise you that whoever we are
and wherever we go you are there.
We have discovered that there is simply nowhere we can go
where you will not be present.

We cannot hide,
we cannot run,
we cannot even be there before you!
You are always ahead of us, preparing the way.
You are there waiting with arms of love and mercy
to hold us and to welcome us;
to heal us and to hold us.

Lord, you are ever near, ever approachable.
In the midst of our anxiety and fear
you are always understanding,
coming into our turmoil,
our doubts,
our weakness and despair,
and you come with peace.

You stand guard over our hearts and minds
so that we dare to speak your name and serve your kingdom.

Great and wonderful God,
always loving,
we praise and honour you.
Your majesty is beyond our reach,
your fatherly love, so gentle and accepting, is always near.
We praise you for your love and truth
made known in the word of the prophets,
in your Word made flesh in Jesus;
in his dying and his rising.
We praise you here and will praise you everywhere.
We praise you now and will praise you for ever.

Amen.

A reflection for Father's Day

Today is Father's day, and, for reasons that some of you may know, this was once a difficult day for me. The reason is because I don't have a father. I've never met him, nor has he met me, and the 'Father' section on my birth certificate has lines through the relevant box. But, of course, the twist that you've been expecting is that I *do* have a father – my heavenly Father. I expect that most people watching and reading this today will have their own experiences of being a child with a father, and there will be those who have the experience of being a father to a child.

But, for those here today who are like me, without a person they can call 'Dad', or with negative memories and experiences of your earthly fathers, we remember that God is there. It's mentioned a lot in the Bible - how God is our father. Just one instance is when we pray the Lord's Prayer. Jesus didn't say "Pray 'My Father'" but "Pray '*Our* Father'". And in Psalm 2 verse 7 we're reminded that God has said: "You are my child, today I have adopted you." We're adopted into God's family, completely refreshed, forgiven, and God treats us like a father treats a son.

He loves us, he disciplines us, he takes pride in the good things that we do, and I reckon that when we do bad things, he is ashamed, just like a father would be. But when we do bad things, he will grant our forgiveness when we ask for it. We no doubt know Jesus' parable of the prodigal son. The dad in that story basically says 'I don't care what you did son, you're still my son, and I still love you. I forgive you.' And that's what our Heavenly Father says to us.

A Prayer for Father's Day

(Sanc)

Father God thank you for your perfect fathering –
we praise you because we are fearfully and wonderfully made;
shepherded and nurtured; disciplined and challenged
so we can flourish in your purpose and plan for us
and bear our Father's image more fully still.

Father God thank you for your perfect example –
we praise you because you show all fathers how to love;
to shepherd and nurture; discipline and challenge
so their sons and daughters can flourish in this world as you have planned,
and carry your presence to all they meet.

Father God, bless all fathers today –
with wisdom, with patience, with courage –
and above all, with love for their children.

Father God, bless all children today –
with openness to correction, with eagerness to learn –
and above all with love for their fathers.

Father God bless all who are fatherless today –
surround them with godly men to teach, affirm and guide –
and above all to love with the love of a father – in your strength.

You are the loving Father,
and we pray this in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

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: Songs of Fellowship 950

<https://youtu.be/6nkAeDpmgEQ>

O Father of the fatherless,
in whom all families are blessed,
I love the way You father me.
You gave me life, forgave the past,
now in Your arms I'm safe at last,
I love the way You father me.

*Father me, forever You'll father me,
and in Your embrace I'll be forever secure.
I love the way You father me.
I love the way You father me.*

When bruised and broken I draw near
You hold me close and dry my tears,
I love the way You father me.
At last my fearful heart is still,
surrendered to Your perfect will,
I love the way You father me.

*Father me, forever You'll father me,
and in Your embrace I'll be forever secure.
I love the way You father me.
I love the way You father me.*

If in my foolishness I stray,
returning empty and ashamed,
I love the way You father me.
Exchanging for my wretchedness
Your radiant robes of righteousness,
I love the way You father me.
Father me . . .

And when I look into Your eyes
from deep within my spirit cries,
I love the way You father me.
Before such love I stand amazed
And ever will through endless days,
I love the way You father me.
Father me . . .

Graham Kendrick
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Readings:

1 Samuel 24:1-7

(NIV)

After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, 'David is in the Desert of En Gedi.' So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

He came to the sheepfolds along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. The men said to David, 'This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, "I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish."' Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

Afterwards, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.' With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

Luke 14: 7-14

(NIV)

When Jesus noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, "Give this person your seat." Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, "Friend, move up to a better place." Then you will be honoured in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

Reflection

At this point in David's story, he has been put in charge of the Israelite army after defeating Goliath. His popularity has made King Saul envious, and so in fear has turned against David and plots to kill him. David is now hiding in a cave, staying away from the man who wants to kill him... who then happens to come into the very same cave to tend to a call of nature. David has a choice to make here. Does he take his opportunity to kill Saul? God had told David that his enemy would be given into his hands for him to do as he chooses... and David chose not to do anything except to cut off a corner of Saul's robe, which he then – in the verses following our reading – returns to Saul with an explanation of why he did not kill Saul, and an apology for cutting the robe; the act of cutting somebody's clothes was considered an act of humiliation, and could indeed lead to war.

The point I want to draw from this today isn't that David chose not to kill Saul – there is plenty we could take from that – but instead that Saul did not notice that the man he wanted to kill was in such close proximity to him. David could easily have killed Saul, and it wouldn't have been the first time that the Bible documented somebody being killed on the toilet (take a look at Judges chapter 3).

This leads us onto our Gospel passage for today.

It might seem a bit of an odd passage to choose at the moment, and it's mostly the second half that I want to look at – talking about inviting guests to a meal. But we should be a church – and not just our own local church – that is looking forward, and although we don't know when restrictions may end, or even how they will, we should be looking at how we engage with our communities when normality returns.

In this passage, we see Jesus telling us to humble ourselves. Don't put ourselves in a place of honour, but instead to put ourselves with the lowest and least. Jesus came from the ultimate place of honour, seated at the right hand of the Father, yet humbled himself as he came to earth as a man, not going into the highest echelons of the community, but to the people a King would never have been seen with: the sick and ritually unclean, the outcasts, the sinners, those who were excluded from society. In Luke 5:31, when questioned about it, Jesus responds, "It is not the healthy that require a doctor, but those who are ill."

He tell us that these are the people who we should invite to the banquet, and not because they will invite us back in return, but because they can't invite us back in return. And in the same way, we are invited to God's banquet – not because we can do anything, but because we can't do anything worthy in return for the great gifts he has given us.

This is where the link between our two readings today come in. David was so close to Saul in that cave that he was able to cut off part of his clothing without being noticed. Who is so close to us yet we don't notice them? In many ways, this time of lockdown and isolation has perhaps strengthened our church communities in ways which wouldn't have been thought of a year or even six months ago. House groups and prayer groups are meeting virtually, and people who are having to isolate themselves are being looked out for by other members of the church, checking that they're doing okay and making sure they have the essentials.

But also in many ways, our churches are the 'healthy' people who don't need the doctors. What about the ones who are, as Jesus puts it, the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind? Those are the ones we should notice; those are the ones we should be inviting to our table.

So I want you to think: who is God prompting you to notice? In this week and in the coming weeks, think about someone who may be more isolated than usual at this time. The ones who are so close to us, yet we don't see them. Let's be welcoming, even if at the moment we can't invite them in to our buildings, we can still be welcoming to them.

And then, when lockdown is over and we can return to 'the new normal', let's think about how our church communities, whatever church we may be a part of, can seek out those in our communities who do need the doctor.

Hymn:

<https://youtu.be/s27D7M8biuI>

Come all you vagabonds,
come all you 'don't belongs',
winners and losers,
come, people like me.
Come all you travellers
tired from the journey,
come wait a while, stay a while,
welcomed you'll be.

Come all you questioners,
looking for answers
and searching for reasons
and sense in it all;
come all you fallen,
and come all you broken,
find strength for your body
and food for your soul.

*Come to the feast,
there is room at the table.
Come let us meet in this place
with the King of all kindness
who welcomes us in
with the wonder of love
and the power of grace.
the wonder of love
and the power of grace.*

Come those who worry
'bout houses and money,
and all those who don't have
a care in the world;
from every station
and orientation,
the helpless, the hopeless,
the young and the old.
Come to the feast . . .

Come all believers
and dreamers and schemers,
and come all you restless
just searching for home;
movers and shakers
and givers and takers,
the happy, the sad,
the lost and alone.

Come self-sufficient
with wearied ambition,
and come those who feel
at the end of the road.
Fiery debaters
and religion haters,
accusers, abusers,
the hurt and ignored.
Come to the feast . . .

Stuart Townend, Mark Edwards, Phil Baggaley
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Prayers of Intercession & Petition

(500)

Father, we come in Christ
to pray for the church and the world.

We pray for all Christians everywhere,
that they may come to you
in the sure and simple way
that Christ came to his Father's house.
Be there, we pray, for those who seek you
with heart and soul and mind and strength,
and be with those who go in your name
to love their neighbours as themselves.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, make us your witnesses.
So fill our lives with your love and your truth
that others will know
we have been with Christ.
We are so aware that many of those around

us, many of those we meet,
are living small, cramped, empty lives.
They are existing
when you intended them to live;
they are hanging on by the skin of their teeth
when you are offering life in all its fullness.
We pray that what we say and how we say it,
what we do and how we do it,
will enable those who do not know you
and have never loved you
to be caught up
by the wonder of your love for them.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, make us your servants.
So touch our lives by your Holy Spirit
that we may be equipped
to care for the careless,

love the unlovable
and enable the ungrateful to give thanks.
Lord, call us to be your servants
to those whom life treats harshly,
those overwhelmed by grief and loss,
those who are finding life hard to cope with,
those who are crushed or defeated
by the demands
and expectations of others or themselves.
We pray for those
who are poor, hungry, homeless
or lacking the skills necessary
to live in our modern world.
Save us from patronising
others with our words
and fill us with love that is genuine.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, make us your channels
of hope and healing and wholeness
to those who are broken and defeated by life.
We pray for any we know personally to be in
need of God's healing touch.
We think of those who are ill,
those who are lonely or afraid,
those who are dying
and those who watch with them,
those filled with regrets or remorse,
those who do not know which way to turn,

Hymn: Singing the Faith 692

Thy hand, O God, has guided
thy flock, from age to age;
their wondrous tale is written,
full clear, on every page;
thy people owned thy goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both of this bear witness;
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings
to greatest as to least;
they bade men rise, and hasten
to share the great King's feast;
and this was all their teaching,
in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

those for whom the bottom
has dropped out of their lives.
Fill us with your Spirit, we pray,
that the light of your mercy
may reach into the darkest corners of life.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for ourselves.
Keep our eyes fixed on Christ,
the source of all faith, hope and love.
In him, bring our faith to perfection.
By your Holy Spirit, may it come to full bloom.
May we feel your touch
in every part of our lives.
In the quietness,
we open our lives to you and your will.
By your Spirit,
may our lives honour and glorify you
with praise that never ends for all eternity.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We remember those situations that are on our hearts and minds at this time, and bring them to the Lord in a time of silence.

We bring our prayers to God in the name of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

<https://youtu.be/blQk7m7Edzg>

Through many a day of darkness,
through many a scene of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely,
to guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
sin pardoned, man restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

And we, shall we be faithless?
shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
shall we evade the conflict,
and cast away our crown?
Not so: in God's deep counsels
some better thing is stored;
we will maintain, unflinching,
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
nor leave thy work undone;
with thy right hand to help us,
thy victory shall be won;
and then, by all creation,
thy name shall be adored,
and this shall be their anthem:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Words: Edward Hayes Plumptre (1821–1891)
Public Domain

Blessing

(Roots)

May we have discernment to see whom to serve.

May we have wisdom to know how to serve.

May we have strength to serve as a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

(MWB)

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