**Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches** 

**Newsletter No 35 22 November 2020**

Dear friends,

During the first lockdown earlier this year, for the first time I watched a series of “The Great British Sewing Bee”. As someone whose skills with needle and thread begin and end with putting a button on a shirt, I was amazed at the creative and inventive designs which the contestants could come up with.

Last Sunday, the Gospel reading was about the Parable of the Talents, and whilst Jesus was talking about a talent as a very large sum of money, which the first hearers of the parable would have well understood, in my zoom service in Audlem, I did refer to talents such as sewing, cooking or music to name but three.

That got me thinking – what gifts and skills do we have? What are our talents? Far too many times in church life when I have asked that question, I get the response “Well, I can’t do anything”. I do not believe that to be true for a moment. We all have our strengths and skills in one area or another, and it is something we can all celebrate without becoming boastful about it.

During lockdown, we have seen neighbourliness clearer than we have for far too many years, and that has been an inspiration – people using their driving skills to collect shopping / prescriptions for those who need to self-isolate, people doing a bit of extra baking to take a few scones or some other little treats to an elderly neighbour and see if they are managing ok, and there are many more examples.

To those who can drive or bake, these examples might not seem much. But that’s exactly the point. It is simply people doing what they can to make life a bit better for others. Whilst there’s nothing exclusively Christian in that, loving God and loving your neighbour is at the heart of the Christian tradition. St Paul reminds us “Whatever you do, do it to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). May we use our gifts and skills, whatever they may be, to serve God and build up His church.

With love in Jesus*, In case any friends at Nantwich or Broad Lane missed it before, Robin’s phone number is 01270 812820.*

***Robin***

***Broomhall and Sound Chapel***

Sun 22 Nov.

10.30 am led by Rev Malcolm Lorimer

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82976672769?pwd=aG9pSjMvR3dzaDJaZlFkcnduSmFTZz09>
Meeting ID: 829 7667 2769
Passcode: 366121

Doors Open 10.15am

***Lightwood Green Chapel***

Sun 22 Nov. 6.30pm

Conference call act of worship

To join simply call

0330 336 0036

Local rate charges then enter pin 571297

“Be still. When words just won’t come, Lord, listen to our silence. When the sadness in our hearts feels deeper than the sea, let the tide of your love wash over us. When grief overwhelms us in the maelstrom of life and death, breathe your calming peace into us. Amen.” *(Rosalind Parker)*

Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches 

**Sunday 22 November 2020**

This short act of worship has been prepared for us to use as we are not able to gather for worship. We can remain connected in fellowship by following this simple act of worship around the time you would normally be gathered for worship in your chapel/church.

**Opening Prayer**

Loving God, we come before you today to worship you. Wherever we may be may we know your presence with us. Amen.

**Hymn: StF 264 Make way****, make way**

Make way, make way, for Christ the King

 in splendour arrives;

fling wide the gates and welcome him

 into your lives.

 *Make way (make way), make way (make way),*

 *for the King of kings (for the King of kings);*

 *make way (make way), make way (make way),*

 *and let his Kingdom in.*

He comes the broken hearts to heal,

 the prisoners to free;

 the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,

 the blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,

 who weep and sigh,

with laughter, joy and royal crown

 he'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him

 as Lord of all,

to have no gods before him,

 their thrones must fall!

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

**Let us pray together**

 Loving God, we come before you in adoration and praise for all that you have done for us. At this difficult time it can sometimes feel that we are alone and that you are not with us. But you have promised you will always be there and will never abandon us and for that we praise you.

 We are truly sorry for the times that we have let you down. When we have failed to help those we ought to help, when we have passed by on the other side instead of helping people who need our help. Forgive us, Lord, and help us to share your love with others.

 We give you thanks for all your gifts to us. Help us to share them with others that they too may come to know you more and more, that they will learn who you are and the impact that you can have on their lives.

 We ask these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**A Psalm of thanksgiving: Psalm 100**

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

   come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

   It is he that made us, and we are his;

   we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,

   and his courts with praise.

   Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good;

   his steadfast love endures for ever,

   and his faithfulness to all generations.

**Today’s Gospel Reading: Matthew 25: 31-46**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

Then the righteous will answer him,“Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”

Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

**Time to Reflect**

Next week Advent begins. It's only 5 weeks till Christmas. The time when we celebrate the coming of that tiny baby into the world, the coming of Jesus, the King of Kings. During this time of Advent let us reflect on who Jesus is for us. We call him King but he certainly wasn’t the king that the Jewish people at the time were expecting him to be. He is our King. He is the Light of the World and we are called to share with others who he is, the Light of the World and the King of Kings.

Our reading talks about helping those in need. By helping those in need we are sharing the love and good news of Jesus with other people. By doing this we are enabling others to come to know him for themselves. In the midst of the pandemic it can be difficult to know how we can help others at the moment. Verse 40 of our reading says this “And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Perhaps at the moment we can help others by donating food, or clothes, or just simply phoning someone up for a chat. All these ways of helping others enable us to do what he asked us to do and to share the love and good news of Jesus which is needed more than ever at the moment.

There are people out there on our streets who have missed out on the opportunity of finding the King of Kings, of finding out for themselves what the real meaning of Christmas is. To them Christmas is just another holiday. They have never known what it is all about, they have never known the difference that this tiny baby will have on their lives if they only take the opportunity to look for him. We know the difference that he has made and it’s up to us to give people that opportunity to find him for themselves. Let us take the opportunity to share with others who this King of Kings is and what difference he can make in their lives.

**Take a time to sit quietly**

**A time of prayer**

 Loving God, we come before you now to pray for our world. The world which you created, in which there is so much trouble. Help us to mend your broken world that all may live in peace. We pray for world leaders as they seek to do the best they possibly can in leading us through the pandemic. Give them guidance and wisdom in all their decision-making as they seek to bring the virus under control.

 We pray for the church across the world as it seeks to serve and to share the good news amidst the pandemic. Give strength and peace to our church leaders as they seek to guide us throughout this difficult time. May they find rest and renewal in you when they need it. We pray for our own churches and for the day in which we can all safely meet together for worship once more.

 We pray for all those who are in need of our prayers at this time, those in hospital and those who care for them, those struggling with mental health problems, those who feel alone with no one to whom they can turn. We pray for those on the frontline who are working to overcome the virus. May they know your peace, strength and love. We bring before you our concerns for people we know who are in need of our prayers at this time.

 We commend to you those who have died, knowing that you welcome them home with open arms. We place them into your care knowing that we will be reunited with them one day. Comfort those who mourn their loss and may they know your presence with them at this difficult time.

 We pray for ourselves. You alone know what we need right now. Give us what we need to face the days ahead as we continue to wrestle with this pandemic which affects us all in some way or another. We ask these and all our prayers in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Hymn: StF 693 Beauty for Brokenness**

Beauty for brokenness,

hope for despair,

Lord, in your suffering world

this is our prayer.

Bread for the children,

justice, joy, peace,

sunrise to sunset,

your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,

cures for their ills,

work for all people,

trade for their skills;

land for the dispossessed,

rights for the weak,

voices to plead the cause

of those who can't speak.

 *God of the poor,*

 *friend of the weak,*

 *give us compassion we pray:*

 *melt our cold hearts,*

 *let tears fall like rain;*

 *come, change our love*

 *from a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars,

havens from fear,

cities for sanctuary,

freedoms to share.

Peace to the killing-fields,

scorched earth to green,

Christ for the bitterness,

his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,

oceans and streams

plundered and poisoned --

our future, our dreams.

Lord, end our madness,

carelessness, greed;

make us content with

the things that we need.

*God of the poor …*

Lighten our darkness,

breathe on this flame

until your justice burns

brightly again;

until the nations

learn of your ways,

seek your salvation

and bring you their praise.

*God of the poor …*

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

**A prayer of blessing**

Lord,

As Christmas draws nearer may we share your love with others. Help us to show them who you are that they may discover you for themselves. Amen.

*Original Materials by Rebekah Fairhurst,*

 *Bolton Methodist Mission*

All Hymns reproduced under CCLi 155789.

***Broomhall and Sound Chapel***

**Bedtime story on Zoom**

Pre-school and Primary age

23rd November 7pm till 7.30ish

Come in your Pyjamas and bring a mug of hot chocolate, and join us for

A story from the Bible or a story with a moral

Prayer and reflection time

Short talk from Granddad the puppet

Good Night and God Bless

For more information or the Zoom link

please contact

Kathryn-davies@hotmail.co.uk

***Broomhall and Sound Chapel***

**Lego Church on Zoom**

Primary aged children

27th November 4pm till 5 ish



Songs, Bible story in Lego, Lego building

challenge, Prayers

Have your Lego box ready and let your

imagination go wild.

For more information or the zoom link please contact Kathryn-davies@hotmail.co.uk

**Crewe Salvation Army**

It will be helpful to receive monetary donations (***not*** toys or gifts) by the end of November, please. To pay yours directly into the bank, you need:-

Bank: Reliance Bank

Sort Code: 60-01-73

Account No.: 00178123

Account Name: SATCO General Income

Payment Ref.: CR01/11000/GP1-TS

*This reference is important as it allocates your gift to the Crewe Salvation Army Christmas Appeal.*

They are most grateful for all the donations and help received in previous years.

**Nantwich Food Bank**:

Please remember the “Drop-Off & Go” collection at Brine Leas School, in conjunction with Nantwich Food Festival, on Saturday Nov. 28th 11am-1pm.

Strict Covid rules will be in force.

Suggested items are:-

\* Tinned gammon, salmon, rice pudding, fruit,

 custard, sponge pudding;

\* coffee; long-life fruit juice;

\* mince pies (sell-by date after Dec. 25th),

\* Christmas cake, Christmas pudding; fancy

 biscuits, cheesy snack tub;

\* tubes of sweets, small box of chocolates,

 chocolate coins;

\* gift for child aged 1-4, 4-8, 8-12 or teenager,

 gift set of toiletries;

\* Crackers (to pull);

\* Washing powder, washing-up liquid.

Please **no** dairy, meat or fish, fruit or vegetables, items requiring refrigeration, half-used/open packets, anything past its best before/use by date, anything alcoholic, bleach.

**PRAYER**

Please continue to pray for everyone you know, or know of, who is ill, recovering from illness or surgery, bereaved, awaiting the passing of a loved one, or for any reason anxious or sad. May we do our best to comfort them, but especially may they know the presence, strength and peace of God.

Pray for the members or staff and volunteers of the Salvation Army and Foodbank, who are working especially hard at present to deliver essentials and seasonal treats to very many struggling local families. Pray also that those who receive the gifts may sense the love of God poured out on them through his servants, and his presence among them.

The media and whichever charities you support raise our awareness of many parts of the world where God’s people suffer the devastation of natural phenomena, human atrocities, and a lack of justice, compassion and sharing. Let us not only pray but *do* what we can to challenge all selfish and evil behaviour, and *give* what we can to alleviate the consequences.

**Methodist Publishing** invites prayers for inclusion in the Methodist Prayer Handbook 2021/2022, on the theme “A place for all”. Full guidelines can be found at

[www.methodist.org.uk/prayerhandbook](http://www.methodist.org.uk/prayerhandbook)

The Methodist Prayer Handbook often illustrates that prayers written centuries ago are still appropriate to pray today. For example**:**

“*Let us repose, Good Shepherd, in your presence; walk in your path, enjoy your safety, rejoice in your banquet, receive your anointing, drink from your cup and dwell in your house, now and for ever. Amen.*” *[Jerome, c.345-c.419]*

“We bring to you, O Lord, our poverty of soul to be transformed by your beauty; the waywardness of our passion to be tamed by your love; the stubbornness of our will to be conformed to your commandments, and our coldness of heart to be enkindled by your grace. Amen.”

*[Catherine of Genoa, 1447-1510]*

“*Let your word be in our mouth, O Lord, your truth in our heart and your will in our mind. Let us think only of what is good and discern your presence in all that we do. Let us at all times be alive to the promptings of your Holy Spirit; through Christ our Lord. Amen*.” *[Jakob Bohme, 1575-1624]*

Then, written in and for our times: …

“In the darkness of the night, may we catch a glimpse of the distant light.

In the cacophony and clamour of life, may we hear the whisper of God’s voice.

In the anguish and pain of death and disaster, may we feel the breath of hope.

In the convolutions and disagreements that weigh upon us, may the Word of God lighten our load.

In the loneliness and aloneness of a busy world, may we know the presence of our creator God.

For the earth is the Lord’s and so are we.”

*[Elaine Halls, Presbyter, SW Wales Circuit.]*

**\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \***

**We definitely live and learn … or hear better!**

Apparently, the Lord’s Prayer does *not* include:

**\*** “Give us this steak and daily bread”

\* or… “our jelly bread”

**\*** “forgive us our mattresses”

**\*** “Our Father, who art in heaven, howdja know

 my name?”

**\*** Or “Harold be thy name,” when Wilson was

 Prime Minister

**\***  “Lead a snot into temptation”

Nor do Creeds include:

**\*** “Hail Mary, full of grapes”

**\*** “He suffered under a bunch of pirates”

**We have room this week to make up for the times when those of you who look forward to some clever/corny humour have felt deprived.**

**First – Children, heh?**

The R.E. teacher was not thought to have much of

 a sense of humour.

One day, a student remarked:

“I didn’t know they had aeroplanes in Jesus’ day”.

Sir: “What do you mean?”

Student: “Well, why was Pontius a Pilot?”

Sir: “You’ve heard of the Sermon on the Mount? Let me tell you about the Sermon in the Plain.”

An infant teacher asked if any of her class could recite the 23rd Psalm. A 4-year-old girl put up her hand. Not being too sure, the teacher got ready to prompt her. The child announced confidently, “The Lord is my Shepherd and that’s all I want”, then bowed and sat down. Teacher conceded that was perhaps the best interpretation ever!

*A mother was concerned about her daughter* *walking home from school in a storm. Taking the car, she soon spotted the child walking happily, but every time the lightning flashed she stopped and looked up smiling. Asked why, she replied that God kept taking her photo and she wanted to look pretty for him!*

When my daughter said her bedtime prayers, she asked God to bless every family member, every friend, every animal (current and past) and finally, "All the girls." When curiosity got the better of me I asked her, "Why do you always add the part about all girls?" She replied, "Everyone else always finishes their prayers by saying 'All Men.'"

**And now we look at employment**:

A young lad from the East End of London got a job as a boot-black at a smart London hotel. At the same time his out-of-work father found summer employment helping a farmer in Kent to cut the grass in his meadows, thinking to himself, “I had better make hay while the son shines”!

*I can’t believe I got fired from the calendar factory: all I did was take a day off!*

Most people are shocked when they find out how bad I am as an electrician.

*My boss is going to fire the employee with the worst posture. I have a hunch, it might be me.*

My first job was working in an orange juice factory, but I got sacked: I just couldn’t concentrate.

*When my boss asked me who was stupid, me or him, I told him he doesn’t hire stupid people.*

My memory has become so bad it has actually caused me to lose my job: I’m still employed, I just can’t remember where.

*My boss says I have a preoccupation with vengeance. We’ll see about that.*

When a job application asks who is to be notified in case of emergency, I always write, “A very good doctor”.

*I’m great at multi-tasking. I can waste time, be unproductive, and procrastinate all at once.*

I always tell new staff, ‘Don’t think of me as your boss, think of me as a friend who can fire you.’

*If every day is a gift, I’d like a receipt for Monday. I want to exchange it for another Friday.*

A clean desk is a sign of a cluttered desk drawer.

*There is a new trend in our office: everyone is putting names on their food. I saw it today, while I was eating a sandwich named Kevin.*

My annual performance review says I lack “passion and intensity.” I guess management hasn’t seen me alone with a Big Mac.

*I get plenty of exercise – jumping to conclusions, pushing my luck, and dodging deadlines.*

How do construction workers party? They raise the roof.

*Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.*

Feeling stressed out? Make a nice cup of hot tea and then spill it in the lap of whoever’s bugging you.

*I use artificial sweetener at work. I add it to everything I say to my boss.*

The boss frowns on anyone yelling: “Hey Weirdo!” He says too many people look up from their work.

*A hard thing about a business is minding your own..*

I have lots of jokes about people looking for a job, but none of them work.

 *[As always, thanks Geoff Mace for many of these]*