Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area **Methodist** Churches

**Sunday 26 April 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**

As you come to worship you might like to picture a road that you know really well. Is it straight or twisted? Is it smooth or uneven? Is it busy or quiet? Who else uses it? Who have you walked the road with? Hold the picture in your mind while you pray.

As I come before you today God, I bring you my road recognising others are bringing theirs too. For some the road to worship today will have been difficult while for others it has been smooth. For some there will have been twists and turns, for others it may have felt straight and plodding. Some will have walked alone and others with companions. Thank you that you walk each road with us, uniting us as a community of faith wherever we are to the glory of your name. Amen.

**Hymn: Christ is alive! (StF 297)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words

**Christ is alive! Let Christians sing**

**The cross stands empty to the sky.**

**Let streets and homes with praises ring;**

**Love, drowned in death, shall never die**

**Christ is alive! No longer bound**

**to distant years in Palestine,**

**but saving, healing, here and now,**

**and touching every place and time.**

**In every insult, rift and war,**

**where colour, scorn or wealth divide,**

**Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,**

**and lives, where even hope has died.**

**Women and men, in age and youth,**

**can feel the Spirit, hear the call,**

**and find the way, the life, the truth,**

**revealed in Jesus, freed for all.**

**Christ is alive, and comes to bring**

**good news to this and every age,**

**till earth and sky and ocean ring**

**with joy, with justice, love, and praise.**

*Brian Wren (b. 1936)*

**Prayer**

Loving God, for the times I have seen you journeying with me, I am thankful.

Gracious God, for the times I have seen others journeying with you, I am humbled.

Holy God, for the times I have not recognised your journeying with me, I am sorry.

Forgiving God, thank you for the assurance that you will continue to journey with me.

Living God, in my journey this week help me to see glimpses of your good news so that my heart burns within me. Amen.

**Today’s Gospel Reading:** Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ He asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**Time to Reflect**

Two friends are walking down a road together in a place of deep despair and sadness. They can barely get their heads around what has happened because they ‘had hoped’ for something so different. A stranger begins to walk alongside them and, to their complete amazement, the events that have so rocked their world seem to have passed him by. How can he not have heard what has been going on? Where has he been? It seems impossible that anyone could be walking that road and not know what they have been through.

We too are living through troubling times at the moment and may feel as if we hoped for something so different. I wonder if there are times you have walked the road of despair over the last weeks. I definitely think that if any of us crossed paths with someone who seemed to know nothing of our journey, we’d have a few questions too!

Yet in that place of despair, even when they do not know it, Christ journeys with the disciples. More than that, he opens up the scripture in a way that clearly energises and invigorates them despite their hurt and pain. Then, in that simple, every day act of breaking bread, they see anew the presence of Christ among them.

I wonder if, as we have travelled our current road individually and together, you too have been surprised by Christ? Have you experienced any bread-breaking moments of recognizing the presence of Jesus? What scriptures or prayers or hymns have you found particularly speaking to your heart?

I invite you to reflect on this for a moment. Many of us have found ways to continue to be church without our familiar patterns of meeting and worshipping. Christ has been present in acts of hospitality and prayer, in phone calls and stillness and my heart has burned within me even as I have felt despair.

**Take a time to sit quietly** and ask Christ to be present for you in new ways this week.

As you prepare to pray, read/sing/reflect on the

words of **StF 66 This, this is the God we adore**

**‘This, this is the God we adore,
our faithful unchangeable friend,
whose love is as great as his power,
and neither knows measure nor end.’**

**‘Tis Jesus the first and the last, Whose Spirit shall guide me safe home; we’ll praise him for all that is past, and trust him for all that’s to come.**

 Joseph Hart, Singing the faith 66

Faithful God, you are present in all aspects of life even when people don’t see it. We call on you today to send your Spirit to bring comfort and peace to all who find their path ahead difficult.

We pray for your church and all those seeking ways to be church in these times.

May they recognize your living presence.

We pray for the world and all those seeking to offer leadership in the midst of uncertainty.

May they recognize your living presence.

We pray for all those who suffer at this time in body, mind or spirit.

May they recognize your living presence.

We pray for all who are bereaved, whether through the loss of loved ones or the loss of human contact.

May they recognize your living presence.

Merciful God, accept these our prayers today in and through the name of the living Christ.

May we too recognize your living presence in the week ahead and trust in you for all that is to come.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father ……

**A prayer of blessing – adapted from a traditional Celtic Prayer**

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
The sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the presence of Christ
Wherever you are on the road.

Original Materials by Rev’d Lorna Valentine, North Bedfordshire Circuit

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**Connecting across our mission areas**

As we continue in lock down we continue to look for effective ways to stay in touch. After a reasonably successful trial last week I invite you to join us either by phone or on line for a short time of fellowship - sharing news and praying together.

To make it manageable I’m suggesting the following times and groups for this week. (But feel free to ring / log on at any of the times below:

 **Conference Call Prayer Time.**

 **Nantwich Thursday 10.00am**.

 **Broomhall & Sound Friday 10.00am**

 **Broad Lane Sunday 2.00pm**

 **Aston Sunday 5.00pm**

**Lightwood Green Sunday 6.30pm**

**Baddiley & Ravensmoor Sunday 7.15pm**

**C**all **03303360036.** You will be asked for a guest pin **544188** then your name. If it works you will then hear everyone else on the call to share your news and prayer together.

Online meeting details:

**https://meeting.powwownow.co.uk/login/guest/544188**

***“I was waiting to answer … but my people never prayed***”, (Isaiah 65.)

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**Poem submitted by Geoff Mace:**

**Smile for You**

 Smiling is infectious, you catch it like the flu, When someone smiled at me today I started smiling too. I passed around the corner and someone saw me grin. When he smiled, I realised I’d passed it on to him. I thought about that smile, and realised its worth. A single smile, just like mine, could travel round the earth. So if you feel a smile begin, don’t leave it undetected. Let’s start an epidemic quick and get the world infected!

**A ROMAN CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEST. KIDS WERE ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE BIBLE WERE WRITTEN BY CHILDREN. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN RE-TOUCHED OR CORRECTED. INCORRECT SPELLING HAS BEEN LEFT IN.** (Submitted by Geoff Mace)

1. IN THE FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLE, GUINESSIS, GOD GOT TIRED OF CREATING THE WORLD SO HE TOOK THE SABBATH OFF.

2. ADAM AND EVE WERE CREATED FROM AN APPLE TREE. NOAH'S WIFE WAS JOAN OF ARK. NOAH BUILT AND ARK AND THE ANIMALS CAME ON IN PEARS.

3. LOTS WIFE WAS A PILLAR OF SALT DURING THE DAY, BUT A BALL OF FIRE DURING THE NIGHT.

4. THE JEWS WERE A PROUD PEOPLE AND THROUGHOUT HISTORY THEY HAD TROUBLE WITH UNSYMPATHETIC GENITALS.

5. SAMPSON WAS A STRONGMAN WHO LET HIM SELF BE LED ASTRAY BY A JEZEBEL LIKE DELILAH.

6. SAMSON SLAYED THE PHILISTINES WITH THE AXE OF THE APOSTLES.

7. MOSES LED THE JEWS TO THE RED SEA WHERE THEY MADE UNLEAVENED BREAD WHICH IS BREAD WITHOUT ANY INGREDIENTS .

8, THE EGYPTIANS WERE ALL DROWNED IN THE DESSERT. AFTER WARDS, MOSES WENT UP TO MOUNT CYANIDE TO GET THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

9. THE FIRST COMMANDMENTS WAS WHEN EVE TOLD ADAM TO EAT THE APPLE.

10. THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT IS THOU SHALT NOT ADMIT ADULTERY.

11. MOSES DIED BEFORE HE EVER REACHED CANADA .. THEN JOSHUA LED THE HEBREWS IN THE BATTLE OF GERITOL ..
12. THE GREATEST MIRICLE IN THE BIBLE IS WHEN JOSHUA TOLD HIS SON TO STAND STILL AND HE OBEYED HIM.

13. DAVID WAS A HEBREW KING WHO WAS SKILLED AT PLAYING THE LIAR. HE FOUGHT THE FINKELSTEINS, A RACE OF PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN BIBLICAL TIMES.

14. SOLOMON, ONE OF DAVIDS SONS, HAD 300 WIVES AND 700 PORCUPINES.

15. WHEN MARY HEARD SHE WAS THE MOTHER OF JESUS, SHE SANG THE MAGNA CARTA.

16. WHEN THE THREE WISE GUYS FROM THE EAST SIDE ARRIVED THEY FOUND JESUS IN THE MANAGER.

17. JESUS WAS BORN BECAUSE MARY HAD AN IMMACULATE CONTRAPTION.

18. ST. JOHN THE BLACKSMITH DUMPED WATER ON HIS HEAD.

19. JESUS ENUNCIATED THE GOLDEN RULE, WHICH SAYS TO DO UNTO OTHERS BE FORE THEY DO ONE TO YOU. HE ALSO EXPLAINED A MAN DOTH NOT LIVE BY SWEAT ALONE..

20. IT WAS A MIRICLE WHEN JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND MANAGED TO GET THE TOMBSTONE OFF THE ENTRANCE.

21. THE PEOPLE WHO FOLLOWED THE LORD WERE CALLED THE 12 DECIBELS.

22. THE EPISTELS WERE THE WIVES OF THE A POSTLES.

23. ONE OF THE OPPOSSUMS WAS ST. MATTHEW WHO WAS ALSO A TAXIMAN.

24. ST. PAUL CAVORTED TO CHRISTIANITY, HE PREACHED HOLY ACRIMONY WHICH IS ANOTHER  NAME  FOR  MARRAIGE.

25. CHRISTIANS HAVE ONLY ONE SPOUSE . THIS IS CALLED MONOTONY.

**UCB Word for Today**

 **Bible study Notes**

May/June/July edition are now available and have arrived at church. If you would like a free copy let Deacon Jill know and we’ll get one to you asap.

The General Church Meeting (‘AGM’) for NMC scheduled for June 7th will now be held on June 28th if we are able to meet together again by then.

**Church Family News**

Please remember the families of

 **Les Skitt** & **Sharon Sims King**

whose funerals will take place this week.

Also of **Eileen Bourne**, who died this week.

xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Give thanks that **David Peak** has returned home

from hospital.

The **London Marathon**, due to be run today, has been cancelled. Each year it raises over £60 million for a wide variety of charities. No other fund-raising events will be held in the foreseeable future, charity shops are closed, and people may not congregate to organise or support alternative means of fund-raising. Every charity is severely affected by the national lockdown, while need drastically increases because of reduced income, rising household tensions, children not being fed at school, regular support being withdrawn, etc., etc.

**Railway Children** always have sponsored runners, so it has set up a '26' challenge. It is asking supporters to raise money in any way they can using the figure 26 (the approximate mileage of the Marathon course) as a symbol. **David Maidment** (its founder) has taken up the challenge and from Sunday will walk two miles every day - along the canal towpath or on a treadmill at home - for thirteen days until he reaches 26 miles. He is setting himself a target of seven hours - a fast walk (not running!) - and will feed his time into the Railway Children website every day until the completion. He would appreciate sponsorship, and can be contacted on 01270 627170.

**Action for Children** has launched an Emergency Coronavirus Appeal, to help provide essentials to the most vulnerable families they support across the UK and those potentially affected in the future. The work of **All We Can** (Methodist Relief and Development) and **Methodist Homes for** **the Aged** also need continued support at this difficult time. All need our prayers! Details of all these are on their websites. If you need help to get in touch, Pat Maidment (01270 627170) will try to oblige.

**Food Banks** are also badly affected by increased need and reduced donations. Please put what you can in the containers in the supermarkets, or ask whoever fetches your shopping to include something on your behalf. We are asked to pray for safety and wisdom for the staff, and peace and good sleep for Jane, who bears most of the burden for the Nantwich bank.

Any other charity you usually support, or have often meant to, will be glad of whatever donation you are able to make.

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**Goodbye and Hello!**  Our Circuit Administrator Judith Bell will be moving away to be nearer her family. We thank her for her hard work over the last two years. As from this week she is replaced by Daniel Keen, also a member at Wesley Place and known as a Local Preacher in the circuit. Please pray for them both in their new ventures.

Our **District Chair**, Rev. Helen Kirk, assures us all that, although District Synod and Conference are not able to meet in the usual way, the District Policy Committee and the Methodist Council are exploring ways to meet in an alternative form to ensure that essential business is completed.

The debate and voting on “God in Love Unites us” will be deferred until the 2021 Conference.

Please be aware of the many good news stories that are around. You can share any that might encourage others by emailing to chester.stoke@btconnect.com.

Helen encourages us to continue to stay safe, following government guidelines on hygiene and social distancing; and to remember that we have not ceased to be the Body of Christ, therefore to**:**

Pray regularly, worship, care and be kind, finding creative ways of being Church. Many resources are available on line, not least on our own websites. Perhaps those of us with computer access could help others by locating and printing off suitable material if required.

Remember that we are all beloved children of God. However long this situation lasts, as a nation, as a church and as individuals we shall all be changed. But remember the words of St. Paul: ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? …. I am convinced that …nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ***.” (Full text in Romans 8: 35, 37-39.)

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Do you know about the **24/7 Prayer Movement**? Since it was founded in 1999, more than 10,000 prayer rooms have been established across the world, each praying for the specific concerns of their town or locality. Building on a concern that there is no one place in Nantwich where prayer can be focused, Liz Brazier - an elder at Market Street Church, Nantwich - is trying to set up a virtual system (as we cannot at present physically meet) based on the ideal that every hour of every day *someone* will be praying for Nantwich. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Liz at liz.brazier@marketstreetchurch.co.uk or ask a friend with computer access to make the first contact for you.

***May the Lord bless you and keep you***!