**Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches**

**Newsletter No 20 9 August 2020**

Sunday’s lectionary reading is one of my favourite passages in the gospel: Matt 14: 22-33, it teaches me so much. It happens at the end of the day after Jesus has fed 5000 people (men actually, they didn’t count the women and children who were bound to be there!) Well, that certainly wouldn’t happen at the moment during this pandemic. I know so many of you have missed being able to celebrate significant events with family and friends. We think particularly of those who re-arranged their weddings recently to just having 30 people, to then be told even that is not possible at present.

Feeding 5000 people is a major event that takes a lot of planning in this day and age. Harping back to Hull yet again, I was involved in an event to feed 5000 people when Hull became City of Culture in 2016. We wanted to tell part of God’s story but had to be sensitive to a multi- and no-faith society, so came up with the idea of retelling the story of the feeding of the 5000, having a huge BBQ to feed 5000 people. Our original plan was to have 100 BBQ’s in the park each feeding 50 people, but the logistics and risk assessment required by the City Council nearly broke us. After much prayer and discussion, we finally came up with an event right in the city centre, bringing in a number of professional fish and chip vans to cook us 5000 portions of fish that were given out freely to the crowds who gathered to listen to the story and take part in the activities. On a beautiful, sunny Saturday afternoon, 5000 people were fed delicious freshly cooked fish, but also given spiritual food in goody bags with a free Bible from the Gideons, Christian literature, and a knitted fish (100 of which my mum had done, and every one was different). People experienced a taste of God’s abundant love for them.

Like many of you I’m “a feeder”. I love offering hospitality, but it often means I’m working through the night to get all the prep done so on the day it “appears” relaxed and organised! It’s great having people around but then when it’s all over and the tidying up is done, it’s good that everyone has gone and you can just crash and relax. Well the feeding of the 5000 was no different. Jesus had crowds following him all day, he was teaching and healing, giving so much of himself to others, then dealing with their basic needs of them all being hungry. You all know the story. After the picnic the disciples gather up all the rubbish (12 baskets). It’s a shame people locally aren’t doing that after they are gathering on Brookfields and round the lake: there is so much rubbish being left after their social gatherings!

After all the tidying up and the crowds dispersed, Jesus sent the disciples away. They were by the lake, we’re told Jesus “compelled” them to get on a boat and go on ahead, returning home on the other side. Jesus needed time to be alone, he goes up the mountain to pray. So many of us think we can keep giving out without carving time to be alone and pray. Something I am guilty of, and need to remind myself of daily. If Jesus needed time alone to pray, how much more do I need it!

Lake Galilee was notorious for sudden storms brewing up. Some of the disciples were professional fishermen; up until meeting Jesus probably just a few months before, they would have spent every day, in all weathers, on the lake to provide for their families. We’re told in the middle of the night the disciples are battling a storm and are afraid. Not many of us may have battled a physical storm in the middle of the night, but many of us have had mental and spiritual storms in the night, when our minds are turning so many things over - doubts, fears ……… Many children and some adults have “night terrors” when they are too afraid to sleep for fear of what will come into their mind.

Shortly before dawn, around 3 am, as Jesus is walking around the lake he sees their concern and walks out on the lake to them. The disciples see him, they are afraid and think it’s a ghost, but Peter looks harder and longer and recognises it’s Jesus and calls out “*Lord if it’s really you let me come to you walking on water”.*

I love Peter, he gives me hope and belief that God can actually use me, with all my faults, failings and doubts. Peter was a hardworking, uneducated, fisherman. Presumably a family man (we know he had a mother-in-law who Jesus healed, so not difficult to presume he had a wife and children) which would mean he had to juggle providing for his family and spending time with Jesus. He regularly opened his mouth without engaging his brain. He spent so much time getting to know Jesus, listening to his teaching, preaching and prayers, but despite all that when challenged if he was a follower of Jesus, denied knowing him, not once but 3 times. Yet despite all that, Peter became the Rock on which the Christian church was built.

Jesus told Peter to take courage, and have faith. How many of us are prepared to take a step of faith like Peter did? Stepping out of the boat, the boat he knew so well, it was his livelihood, his shelter, the environment he had known for most of his life, and step out into the water. Some of us need all the answers before we are prepared to make a decision about something, but we can’t always have them, sometimes we have to take that step and trust.

This week some of us will be meeting to discuss and decide whether it is safe and the right time to enter our buildings. That is almost the reverse of what Peter did. We crave to return to the security and familiarity of what we know instead of staying out in unfamiliar, uncomfortable waters, when returning could be more dangerous than staying at sea.

Peter got out of the boat and focused his eyes on Jesus and began to walk towards Jesus on the water. But as soon as he felt the wind rise, he took his eyes of Jesus and began to sink. I hear so often that people lose their faith, or their faith is challenged when a storm comes upon them. The storm could be a serious illness, the loss of a loved one, family breakdown or unemployment. We ask why God allows someone to die or get sick, or why this has happened to me? Being a Christian isn’t a ticket to an easy, pain-free, good life, but a promise that we do not go through the storms alone. Peter lost sight and doubted, but Jesus was there reaching out to him as he is for us still today.

So I pray you will all have courage to step out of the boat when you are called to do so, and through all the storms of life, when you are feeling battered and tossed about, you will be able to keep your eyes on Jesus so you are not overwhelmed.

With love and prayers, Deacon Jill x

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**Re-opening of NMC premises**.

Nantwich Church Council met during the week and after prayerful consideration have agreed to work towards opening for worship from Sunday Oct 4th. Current legislation requires a maximum of 30 people, with face masks, socially distanced and with no singing or refreshments.  This may change if Government legislation changes.   A mid-week service (a repeat of Sunday) will be offered to enable all who wish to attend to have safe access.    We will need people to book into a service so we do not exceed limits.

Once services have recommenced they will be live streamed so people can access them remotely.

The Mission Area newsletter will continue for the foreseeable future.

We hope to offer Bible study, prayer meeting and coffee morning by zoom  in the near future.

If you do not have the technology or knowledge how to use the devices you have, please let us know and we'll try and help.

We are grateful for the property team who will progress the risk assessment to ensure we meet the required precautions.

Please pray for wisdom and guidance in all these matters.

***Broomhall & Sound Chapel***

 ***“Zoom Service” every Sunday in August 10.30 am***

 ***( opens 10.15am)***

***Everyone welcome***

***Join Zoom Meeting***[*https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84907348014?pwd=RlJEL3lmWFJNbW8zQW1MZnpITnJYUT09*](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84907348014?pwd=RlJEL3lmWFJNbW8zQW1MZnpITnJYUT09)

***Meeting ID: 849 0734 8014
Password: 074905***

***Thank you to everyone who makes this possible, especially Charles who “hosts”.***

**Methodist Prayer Handbook 2020-2021**

**“The Earth is the Lord’s”**

If anyone else wishes me to get them a copy, please let me know *this week*. The cost is £4.50, with a slight reduction if sufficient are ordered. Individual copies after that will not be eligible for the discount and will incur postage. Pat (627170)

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**U.C.B. Bible Notes** “Word for Today” for August to October are now available, free of charge. If you would like one, please let me know and I will arrange delivery. Pat (627170)

Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area **Methodist** Churches

**Sunday 9 August 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**

I come this day to worship You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Open my heart to receive Your love, my soul to receive Your Spirit, and my mind to know to Your truth. For Your glory. Amen.

**Hymn: StF 51 Great is thy faithfulness**

 Sing/ Read /pray

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,

there is no shadow of turning with thee;

thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;

as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:

 *Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!*

 *Morning by morning new mercies I see;*

 *All I have needed thy hand hath provided.*

 *Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,

sun, moon and stars in their courses above,

join with all nature in manifold witness

to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,

thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;

strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,

blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

*Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)*

**Let us pray together**

God of grace, I praise You. I praise You for who You are: creator, faithful, rescuer, and holy. I praise You that even though I cannot be with others to worship You, I can feel that You are here in my heart.

I praise You for all the blessings You have given me. For family, for friends, for a relationship with You. Help me not to take You for granted.

God of grace, as I worship You this morning, help me to be transformed by Your love, and in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Today’s Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:22-33**

**Jesus Walks on the Water**

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there

alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God”.

**Time to Reflect**

 I am sure we can all relate to Peter. Throughout the gospels we get a picture of someone who does not always think before he speaks: if we take Peter’s confession in Matthew 16:13-20 and think – did he rush his confession of faith or not? Only a few verses later Jesus rebukes him.

 And it is the same in this reading. Peter is singled out while the others stay in the boat.

 Jesus says to his disciples ‘Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid’ when he walks on the water to the disciples in the boat. Should this have been enough for Peter as it was for the others? No, Peter being Peter, wants to try and walk on the water.

 Perhaps the message today, for us, is one of trust as we journey as disciples through these difficult times? Jesus says to us, as he said to Peter, “Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid”.

**Take a time to sit quietly**

**Time of prayer**

 Almighty God, I come now to pray for Your world. Your world which is full of brokenness, injustice, and inequality. I bring before You the rulers of the world, local or national, and pray that they will remember that all power comes from You.

 Almighty God, I pray for your church. I pray that during these times we will unite in worship and service. I pray for my local church, and its ministers/pastors, that they will be strengthened by Your Spirit.

 Almighty God, I pray for those known to me and name them before You. And, I pray for myself, that I will be transformed by Your Spirit, and live in the love which You have given me through Jesus.

In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father ……

**Hymn: StF 238 Lead us heavenly Father**

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but Thee;
Yet possessing every blessing
If our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
All our weakness Thou dost know;
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
Lone and dreary, faint and weary,
Through the desert Thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
Love with every passion blending,
Pleasure that can never cloy;
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.

**A prayer of blessing**

As this time of worship ends,

and I enter into the storms of life,

and the uncertainties which may come,

may I take heart that Jesus is present,

and ever live for His holy name.

And may the blessing of God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

be with me, and those whom I cherish in my heart,

now and always.

Amen.

*Original Materials by Matthew Ramsden, Local Preacher from Bolton Methodist Circuit*

*Hymns reproduced under CCLi 155789*

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*“Wherever Jesus may lead us, he goes before us. If we don’t know where we’re going, we know with whom we go.”* (Charles Spurgeon)

***Coffee & Cuddles***

*3pm Thursday 6th August, 20th August*

*Songs, story, craft and prayer*

*Aimed at pre-school children but all are welcome!*

***Lego Church***

*3pm Friday 7th August*

*Songs, story & Lego challenge*

*Aimed at primary school children but all welcome*

***For more information and to receive the links to the above activities please contact*** ***kathryn-davies@hotmail.co.uk***

**J.M.A.**

Victoria needs to close her books by the end of August. Would Nantwich collectors who have been saving up their donations during lockdown please let David know (627170) so they can arrange to fetch them. Thank you.

**Prayer and Church Family News** …

 Our love and very best wishes for the coming years to Valerie Gibson (NMC) who was 80 years young on Thursday.

 Please pray for Rev. Gary Wareham, minister at Market Street Church, as he recovers at home from a heart attack.

 Continue to pray especially for all our folk who still cannot receive visits from family and feel bereft in the latter part of their earthly life.

 Pray for the victims of warfare, discrimination, natural disaster and human error throughout the world. Also for churches and aid agencies who struggle to save lives, repair the damage and rebuild livelihoods. Our media convey some of the atrocities but much goes largely unnoticed.

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**Words of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter:**

*“I have one life and one chance to make it count for something. My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can, with whatever I have, to try to make a difference.”*

(Reminiscent of an exhortation by John Wesley!)

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**:

“*Do your little bit of good where you are: it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”*

**Jesus**:

 *“Go and do the same.”*

**The URC have generously shared this research and advice –**

 **Making Choices About Returning to Activities in Church Buildings.**

As a community of Christian disciples, we are concerned about the safety of all those who contribute to and take part in our shared life. Some are employed or paid stipends as office holders, many are volunteers, more are participants. We are expected to have particular responsibilities towards those we pay, but others may also value guidance about the choices involved in returning to activities in church buildings.

We are familiar with risks that have been around for a while, but COVID-19 is a new risk and we are still learning about who may be affected most. Already we know that certain groups of people are at greater risk than others. The Government has categorised some people into groups:

• the clinically extremely vulnerable. The guidance for people who fall into this group may be different in Wales and Scotland and other jurisdictions, but the serious consequences of catching COVID-19 are the same. We assume they will still be cautious about gathering indoors with people from a number of households.

• the clinically vulnerable, which includes all people over 70 and those with underlying health conditions.

Other groups have also been identified as more evidence about the effects of the virus is gathered. We may not know which individuals will catch COVID-19, but *we can use some of the information about the risk of complications to help with the conversations people will have about returning to gatherings*.

At the time of writing it is not clear whether surviving catching the virus gives immunity or for how long such immunity might last.

As well as trying to assess the risks of catching the virus and the appropriate action to take, we recognise that our attitude to risk varies: the risk that one person may be willing to take is too much for another. Living with someone who is at higher risk affects the risks other household members are willing to take. *When we are talking about gathering together, we need to be sensitive to these variations.* When we are coping with new risks we may also be more sensitised to them in comparison to risks that we have coped with for many years. However, government policy is related to the general risk for the population which goes down as the number of the people with the virus goes down, whilst the potential impact of catching the virus for a vulnerable individual remains the same until there are additional treatments and a vaccine.

When the lockdown restrictions were imposed, ministers were designated as key workers because of the fears of COVID-19 resulting in many more funerals. Some churches have also helped with essential food distribution or other essential services and ministers and volunteers have been involved in this work. The URC so far has echoed Government advice that ministers should work from home where possible. As restrictions change, it is time for ministers, volunteers and participants to consider their risks.

*Catching the virus depends on the amount of virus you are exposed to and for how long, and the risk of that happening during any activity depends on the circumstances. Those who are responsible for your church building will have been thinking about reducing these risks* using ‘Emerging into the New Normal’. There is evidence about which groups are at risk of more serious consequences if they do have COVID-19 disease, and you can weigh up these personal risks.

The assessment ‘tool’ overleaf helps you to see how different risk factors may combine to give serious health complications should you catch the COVID-19 virus. It does not include the factors that may make you clinically extremely vulnerable, where you should be following the guidance for those who are ‘shielding’. It includes the factors where there is significant statistical evidence but does not include any rarer conditions which you may have, so *this only offers a starting point*. You may want to discuss the results with your doctor or with those who have expectations about your involvement with church life*. This should be read alongside other government or local advice about staying safe.* We are not claiming medical expertise in sharing this way of scoring your risk, but giving a way to show how serious catching the virus may be for you.

**Circle the score next to each one that applies to you and add up your score.**

A score of under 3 indicates a lower risk, but you should still be following the guidance for staying safe.

A score of 3-5 suggests a greater risk and you should consider ways of reducing your risk by taking additional precautions or avoiding some activities.

A score of 6 or more suggests a high risk and indicates that you should continue to work or participate in church life from your home.

The scoring is based on an article from the British Medical Association website.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Risk Factor |  | Score |
| Age | 50-5960-6970-7980 and over | 1246 |
| Sex at birth | Male | 1 |
| Ethnicity | CaucasianBlack African DescentIndia Asian DescentFilipino DescentOther (including mixed race) | 02111 |
| Diabetes  and Obesity | Type 1 & 2Diabetes Type 1 & 2 with presence of microvascular complications orHbA1c>64mmol/molBody Mass Index greater than or equal to 35kg/m2 Online BMI calculator https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/ | 121 |
| Cardiovascular disease | Angina, previous heart attack, stroke or cardiac interventionHeart failure | 12 |
| Pulmonary (lung)disease | AsthmaNon-asthma chronic pulmonary diseaseEither of the above requiring oral corticosteroids in the last year | 121 |
| Malignantneoplasm (cancer) | Active malignancyMalignancy in remission | 31 |
| Rheumatologicalconditions | Active treated conditions | 2 |
| Immuno-suppressanttherapies | Any indication | 2 |
|  |  Total Score |  |

Risk Stratification tool for Healthcare workers during the CoViD-19 Pandemic; using published data on demographics, co-morbid disease and clinical domain in order to assign biological risk:

David Strain, Janusz Jankowski, Angharad Davies, Peter English, Ellis Friedman, Helena McKeown, Su Sethi, Mala Rao medRxiv 2020.05.05.20091967; doi:https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.05.20091967

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WARNING: a number of people are receiving phone calls purporting to come from the NHS Track and Trace service. They say you might have been near someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, but are not allowed to give any more detail as to who, when or where. After saying you should be tested within 72 hours and asking for your address so they can send you the kit, they request a card number so they can take the £50 fee. **This is a scam: there is no charge for a genuine test.** Please pass this to any elderly or vulnerable people you know, so they do not become victims.