**Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches**

Newsletter no 49 14th March 2021

Dear friends,

Mothering Sunday is a joyous day for many, and a difficult day for many others. It’s also probably one of the most misunderstood dates of the Christian calendar.

Mothering Sunday falls on the 4th Sunday of Lent, and it was a chance to have a short break from the Lenten disciplines. I recognise that what I’m about to say goes back to a former age, but it was when people working in the service industry could return to their homes and their mother church. That is where the name of the Sunday comes from, in itself it’s not so much about being a mother, or even being female, as the role of the mother church.

That said, I am writing this on International Women’s Day, and thinking ahead to Sunday, I am reminded that it is a chance to explore the lives of some of the Biblical heroines of the faith, celebrate the talents of female hymn-writers and composers and so much more.

Mothering Sunday last year was the first Sunday since the Methodist Church recommended that church services be suspended, and in a YouTube reflection which I recorded from behind the closed doors of the Methodist Church in Flint, I said that it was a strange day when the mother church had to protect her children by asking them to stay away and keep their distance. A strange day, yes, and what a strange year it’s been since. Yet even in the strange times she faced, Mother Julian of Norwich had the courage and the faith to say “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well”. That’s not to say that the Christian life offers no problems, but that there is something, or rather Someone greater than the problems we face. Mother Julian knew that full well.

As lockdown continues and we are still unable to meet in person, may we have the faith of Julian, the boldness of Deborah, Miriam and many others and look forward to the day – hopefully not too far away – when we can return to worshipping in the mother church.

With love in Jesus,

***Robin***

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***Broomhall & Sound Chapel***

Sunday 14 March 10.30 am Zoom

Led by Nick Cutts

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82976672769?pwd=aG9pSjMvR3dzaDJaZlFkcnduSmFTZz09>

Meeting ID: 829 7667 2769

Passcode: 366121

***Lightwood Green Chapel***

Sunday 14 March 6.30 pm

Telephone conference service

It’s very easy to join : ring 0330 336 0036

Then enter PIN 571297

***Broomhall & Sound Chapel***

**LENT DISCUSSION GROUP** by Zoom

every Tuesday in Lent 7.30 pm

Based on Andrew Roberts’ book “*Holy Habits”.*

Led by Andrew & Jill Taylor

16 March – Habits: “Making disciples & eating

together”

23 March – Habits: “Gladness, generosity &

worship”

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87967239246?pwd=NXhxOU1GYXZ4VThXRDBhSmJDVzRqZz09

Meeting ID: 879 6723 9246

Passcode: 212993

**Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches**

**Worship Sheet No 49 14 March 2021**

**Opening Prayer**

‘Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His faithful love endures forever. [Psalm 107:1]

Holy God, though we do not worship together in one building we worship together in one spirit and with one heart. Through our worship reveal to us your will we pray. Amen.

**Hymn: StF 88 Praise to the Lord**

1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!

 O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!

 All ye who hear, brothers and sisters, draw near,

 praise him in glad adoration.

2. Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work

 and defend thee;

 surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee:

 ponder anew what the Almighty can do,

 who with his love doth befriend thee.

3. Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,

 fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before thee,

 then to thy need he like a mother doth speed,

 spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.

4. Praise to the Lord, who, when darkness of sin is abounding,

 who, when the godless do triumph, all virtue confounding,

 sheddeth his light, chaseth the horrors of night,

 saints with his mercy surrounding.

5. Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!

 All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!

 Let the amen sound from his people again:

 gladly for aye we adore him.

*Joachim Neander (1650-1680)*

**Let us pray together**:

Holy God, we praise you for the faithfulness of your people down the ages.

We worship and adore you as creator of this wonderful earth, and of us made in your image.

We praise you that you are a Giving God. For our family and friends, God we thank you.

For the signs of Spring all around us, God we

 thank you.

For the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God we thank you.

Forgiving God, we bring you our confessions now.

We are sorry God for the times when we have failed you and ourselves.

(*in a moment of quiet offer your confession to God*)

We know God you are quick to forgive.

As Jesus said to many he met, ‘Your sins are forgiven’, it is on this promise that we too rely.

We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Today’s OT Reading: Numbers 21: 4 - 9**

 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

 The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live

**Today’s Gospel Reading: John 3:14 - 21**

 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

 Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

**Time to Reflect**

I wonder how many times through this pandemic you have been unhappy with things and complained out loud or inwardly to yourself? Perhaps you haven’t agreed with Government decisions, perhaps you have been angry at the people who seemed to mindlessly flout the rules put in place to keep us all safe, perhaps you’ve complained when you were unable to attend church, or if you were, you were unable to sing; there are many reasons of late why we are likely to have moaned. And this is how it was with the Israelites as they travelled slowly towards the promised land. They took their frustration out not only on their leader Moses, but also on God. They had forgotten the miracles God had performed for them, their faith was waning, and they refused to obey God’s law (see Psalm 78).

We see too that when the Israelites complained things only got worse. They improved at once, though, when the people recognised that they had sinned against God through their attitude and actions. When the bronze snake was hung on a pole the Israelites didn’t anticipate the fuller meaning that Jesus would bring to this experience.

In the Gospel reading Jesus explains that just as the Israelites of old were healed of the sickness caused by the snake bites by turning their gaze towards the snake on the pole, we today can be healed from the sin that pervades our lives by turning our gaze towards Jesus’ death on the cross. You see it was not the bronze snake that healed the Israelites, it was their renewed belief in God’s healing power, in God’s compassion for them, in God’s love for those created in God’s image and called beloved.

Today, God’s healing power, compassion and love exists for each one of us too; it is there for the taking but like the Israelites we too need to recognise the times we stray away from the path of light that guides us and turn back wholeheartedly towards God. Amen.

**Take some time to sit quietly in reflection.**

**A time of prayer**

Gracious God,

We thank you for the blessings in our lives.

We pray now for those struggling at this time:

We pray for our world in these difficult times,

that your peace will reach across borders and into the lives of all your people.

We pray for our Christian brothers and sisters living in lands where they risk their liberty and lives to follow you, be their courage and strong foundation.

We pray for leaders and others in positions of authority and power, that they will be guided by you.

We pray for your churches who await your direction, may your will be done.

We pray for all people suffering with ill health at this time, for those awaiting treatment or test results, for those recovering from operations or illness, for those suffering with mental health problems, may you heal them.

We pray for all who have suffered the loss of loved ones, may you be their source of strength to face another day.

We pray for ourselves, may we be people of peace and justice, bringing hope to those we interact with.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer, Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father ……

**Hymn: StF 78 Give Thanks**

Give thanks with a grateful heart,

Give thanks to the Holy One,

Give thanks because He's given

Jesus Christ, His Son x 2

And now let the weak say, I am strong,
Let the poor say, I am rich,
Because of what the Lord has done for us x2

Give Thanks

**A prayer of blessing**

God of grace and restoration be the strength in our lives as we go about our days, now and forever more, Amen.

Original Materials by Rev. Zena Smith

Hymns reproduced under CCLi 155789

**Asylum Seekers in Crewe**

*If anyone has a bike in good condition that they no longer need and are willing to donate to one of our asylum seekers, or …*

*If anyone has a tablet or laptop they no longer need and are willing to donate to a local asylum seeker, to enable them to engage in online learning, please contact …*

Deacon Jill Taylor 01270 618872

 *Thank you*

**PRAYER**

 Forgive me for reminding you again, but please make your prayers your own**:** the intercessions in the service above suggest what we might bring to God. National and global needs reach us via the media and whatever charities we support; we all have different acquaintances and information about their needs. It is probably most helpful to linger over each suggested heading and fill in who and what particularly concerns you.

 The Methodist Prayer Handbook (designed for use each day) provides a wealth of information and guidance, and many of our hymns make excellent prayers.

 Don’t just bombard God with requests - remember to thank him for all that is good, and simply ‘be’ with him in silence and stillness.

 May I also remind you that under the GDPR (Data Protection) Act 2018, it is ***illegal*** to divulge or convey any personal information about anyone to a third party without their express permission, whether in writing or conversation. We recognise that this plays havoc with aspects of our pastoral care, but we are required to function within the law. I will always be happy to mention a name and as much information as that person wishes, but cannot include anyone’s circumstances without their agreement.

 Rev. Alan Mumford is making progress but remains in Ward 6 at Leighton Hospital, and Louise in care. Brian and Margaret Tilley (Broad Lane) are also happy to be prayed for. To meet the needs of other friends we must all be sensitive and pray and care as best we can, but not publicly divulge any information they do not authorise.

*Pat*

“Lord our God, we thank you for giving us your love, for letting us draw nearer to what is right and good. May your Spirit penetrate everywhere, overcoming what is false and helping people everywhere to understand the true nature of your justice. Guard us on all our ways. Protect us when our bodies and our lives are worn down by sickness and distress of every kind. Grant us your help according to your truth and righteousness. Amen.”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3: 5,6)

“In your presence is fullness of joy.” (Psalm 16:11)

**Nantwich CAP Job Club**

(Christians Against Poverty) …

… are holding a free online course to help you manage your money better and learn to budget, save and spend well.

Tuesday 16, 23 & 30 March, 10.30-11.30am.

To book call Katrina on 07398434397 or 01270 625268, or email saintmarys.capnantwich@gmail.com

They will also run a Step Towards Employment course for 8 weeks starting Tuesday 13th April.

To book, contacts as above.

**Nantwich Food Festival Volunteers**

are holding a

**Spring ‘Drop Off & Go’ Collection**

to support **Nantwich Food Bank**

**Saturday 27th March, 10am – 1pm**

Brine Leas School, Audlem Road

Needed:

Long-life milk & fruit juice;

tinned meats, fish, vegetables, fruit;

instant coffee,

washing powder, cleaning sprays (no bleach);

shampoo, conditioner, deodorants (men’s and women’s)

Unable to accept:

Dairy; fresh Meat, Fish, Fruit or Vegetables; opened packets of nappies or baby formula.

No clothing.

All items in date, please.

We have police permission.

**This week’s lectionary readings:**

Mon 15th Jeremiah 13: 1-11 Psalm110

Tue 16th Jeremiah 18: 1-6 Psalm 111

Wed 17th Jeremiah 18: 18-20 Psalm 112

Thur 18th Jeremiah 20: 7-13 Psalm 113

Fri 19th Matt 1: 18-25 Psalm 89: 26-36

Sat 20th Jeremiah 26: 1-24 Psalm 114

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“How clearly the sky reveals God’s glory!” (Ps. 19)

“When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places… what are human beings?” (Ps. 8)

“Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion.” (Sir Isaac Newton)

It might not have been wise for the vicar to follow his impassioned sermon on James chapter 3 (The potential evil of the unrestrained tongue) with the song, “I love to tell the story” !!

**Growing old (dis)gracefully!**

Senior Citizen texting codes:

ATD At the door

BFF Best friend fell

BTW Bring the wheelchair

BYOT Bring your own teeth

FWIW Forgot where I was

GHA Got heartburn again

LMDO Laughing my dentures out

OMSG Oh my! Sorry, gas

TTYL Talk to you louder.

*I recall the good old days when ‘snap, crackle and pop’ were a sound made by my breakfast cereal, not my body!*

Is it true that an apple a day keeps the doctor away, or is it one of Granny’s myths?

*When you die people cry and beg for you to come back, but when you do there’s the running and the screaming…*

I finally figured out what I want to be when I get older … younger.

*They say 50 is the new 40. Try saying that to a traffic cop.*

Whoever came up with the word dentures really missed the opportunity to call them ‘substitooths’

**Wellbeing**

If anyone knows how to reverse cheap plastic surgery, I’m all ears.

*What’s the leading cause of dry skin? Towels.*

I used to have a bad drink problem and was told to try the A.A. Now I’m on the right road.

*What if oxygen is poisonous and it just takes 80 years to kill us?*

I ate a stone-baked pizza, but it broke every tooth in my head.

*Conjunctivitis.com – a site for sore eyes.*

**Relationships**

My wife says I make terrible coffee, but I’m sure that’s not grounds for a divorce?

*Whenever my wife uses the phrase ‘I’ve been thinking’, that means I have to either move, build, paint or buy something.*

My missus asked me to put ketchup on the shopping list. Now I can’t read anything!

*My wife says I’m hopeless at fixing electric appliances. Well, she’s in for a shock.*

My wife said she wanted a divorce because of my obsession with my walkie talkie radio. She said, “It’s over.” I said “Over and out!”

*My wife wanted to become a postal worker but I wouldn’t letter.*

I love playing mind games with my wife. I just bought her flowers and I haven’t done anything wrong.

*What did the plumber say when he wanted a divorce?*

 *“It’s over, Flo” (Had she driven him round the bend?)*

Been on a blind date with a girl who mixes concrete for a living. Things were going great until I put my foot in it.

*My girlfriend left me for an electrician, who promised her the earth.*

I joined a pyromaniacs dating site – got a match straight away.

**The Name Game**

Vicar, holding a baby beside the font: “Mr and Mrs Royd, are you *sure* you want to name her Emma?”

And Mr & Mrs Fish: “You’re sure about Courtney?”

*When my wife was giving birth to our daughter the midwide asked, “What about epidural anaesthesia”? I said, “We’ve already picked names, thanks.”*

When I was a kid I was adopted by a man whose nickname was Daz. He’s my non-biological father.

*Lance is a pretty unusual name these days, but back in medieval times people were named Lance a lot.*

I was called ‘pretty’ today! Well, actually, the full statement was ‘You’re pretty annoying’, but I only focus on positive things.