

The 'Alternative' Smithy Bridge Methodist Newsletter - 5th April 2020

Welcome to the second edition of the ASBM Newsletter, still reasonably priced at £0. Where faith meets irreverence and we all remain friends – take care and may your God be with you. Ed



The doors may be closed, but
THE CHURCH IS OPEN! KEEP ALL
COMMUNICATION CHANNELS OPEN AND
WITH FAITH, WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS

<https://youtu.be/9Db2tDel5GU>

Ken's Komments

Taking orders!

No, not from HM Government. From you. Steph has been busy in her new greenhouse propagating veggie plants for when we all want to grow our own this year.

We have available: Peppers (salad and chilli), tomatoes, cucumbers, peas, courgettes, mange tout, French beans and purple sprouting broccoli.

PLUS lots of Strawberry plants!



If you would like to order now Steph will ensure there are enough plants for everyone; we will then arrange delivery (yes officer, of course it's an essential journey!) The plants will be available around mid-May.

Steph is not charging for the plants, but in the absence of Plant Sale this year, would you consider making a small donation (or even a large one) to the wonderful Springhill Hospice?



Easyfundraising – a silver lining to the clouds

So we're all staying in, social distancing, perhaps even self-isolating. If in these times you may need a bit of retail therapy and are ordering online, please consider clicking on the easyfundraising icon (you have installed this on laptops, tablets, phones, etc, haven't you!)

At no cost to you or the church, and alongside something you were doing anyway, this raises money for the Bridge Centre. Visit easyfundraising.com to find out more and sign up.

Sadly at the moment the big supermarkets aren't doing donations on grocery shopping, though this might change. There are plenty of other retailers who are still involved and could do with the business!

So if you are shopping online, please get them donating to the Bridge Centre.

**GOD
LOVES
YOU**

Rev Helen's message



A Prayer of Approach

Lord

We join you on a journey
Where you rode on a donkey
Echoes from another day before you were
born
Another journey to another place.
The donkey an animal with no status or
respect
Often abused and mistreated
A symbol for us of your humility.
We come in simple trust
We follow your footsteps to the cross.



This cross reminds us of Your sacrifice and
the price You paid.
Help us to understand how much it cost
Here we are to worship

Link to Light of the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoxopsRSfdU>



Reading Luke 19 v 28 -40

The entry to Jerusalem

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

After he had said this, he went on ahead,
going up to Jerusalem.

When he had come near Bethphage and
Bethany, at the place called the Mount of
Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying,
"Go into the village ahead of you, and as
you enter it you will find tied there a colt
that has never been ridden. Untie it and
bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are
you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord
needs it.'" So those who were sent
departed and found it as he had told
them.

As they were untying the colt, its owners
asked them, "Why are you untying the
colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then
they brought it to Jesus; and after
throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set
Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept
spreading their cloaks on the road. As he
was now approaching the path down from
the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude
of the disciples began to praise God
joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds
of power that they had seen, saying,
"Blessed is the king who comes in the
name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest
heaven!"

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Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."



Hymn Link to The Servant King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrQiLEO4D5s>

Message from Rev Helen

Following on from my message last week where I referred to the stones that become stepping stones I want to point out the reference again to the end of the reading

"I tell you if these (the disciples) were silent, the stones would cry out."

In our reading the Pharisees asked Jesus to tell the disciples, followers and believers to stop praising... and those words were his reply.

This is a timely reminder that throughout even the hardest times we must not stop praising.



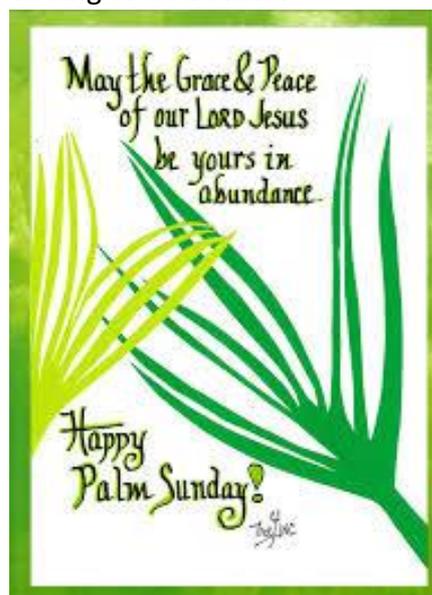
Personally it has been a hard week. Our son has been really ill with the virus and when someone so close is suffering and there is nothing you can do as mum or Minister then it is tough.

There are times when we feel like singing
There are times when we don't
There are times when we don't know what to sing.

I don't know how many of you are in any of these places, but I know that some of you are in that place where it is hard to sing God's song.

For so many reasons I guess we are not in our familiar places where we worship with familiar faces and artefacts around us, or any of the elements of our worship styles and we are having to make sense of worshipping right where we are. Locked down worship because we are still being called to worship

To sing of God's love.



Palm Sunday ...just in case you have forgotten which Sunday we are at. It is when we are called to celebrate, to welcome Jesus and wave palm leaves and lay down our cloaks.

So how do we do this from our living rooms?

How do we sing Alleluia?

**GOD
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YOU**



I want to take you back to the beginning of the reading you have heard today. We are told of a simple act by the magic two people...working together untying the colt.

Preparing the ground and the way being obedient to Jesus' call on their time and life.

Obviously bothered they had been asked as Jesus instructed them if anyone asks tell them the Lord needs it!!

So what is it that the Lord needs of us today?

Initially there is the temptation to fall back on what we always do ...but we can't so we groan inwardly..even despair and at best a tad despondent.

Remember though those two disciples did what they had been asked and took the colt to Jesus ... I am not suggesting you steal a donkey, but....!! They then put their cloaks on its back

This is a metaphor for us to take hold of. How can we lay down our cloaks?

Well we probably have not got cloaks in our wardrobes but we have coats ... We wear coats to protect us from the elements if we don't we are a bit exposed to the wind and weather. Our protective shield removed

Could it be that this Palm Sunday we are being called to unveil some of our protective layers?

Some of the things that trouble us hold us back, things we fear things that inhibit and undermine our faith and belief the things that will enable us to continue to sing the Lord's song.

Laying down our cloaks could mean opening ourselves to more of God.. this will surely strengthen us in the days ahead. We will be free to wave the palms and shout Alleluia.



The reading also speaks of a multitude waving and cheering it seems far more than the 12 they were waiting to be released as Jesus rode down the road many waiting to be released waiting to join in.

Do you think... that this whole CV crisis might be a catalyst to growing God's kingdom.. There are so many more worshipping on line than come into our churches on Sunday. This whole procession was outside ..

Jesus's journey was a journey of hope a sign of hope for a people waiting to be released from the rule of the Romans seeking a new king. We know Jesus was not the kind of King they had anticipated hence the donkey and not a war horse. Today on Palm Sunday we are called to join in that triumphal procession once more.

**GOD
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To begin the entrance to relive the events of Holy week to know the purpose of the drama.

We must be the ones who lay down our cloaks so that others may have an opportunity to pick up and touch the cloak that Jesus travelled on and we know the power of that.

So I invite you to pick up a piece of cloth or your coat and lay it down as a symbol of laying your life down and prepare to walk the road to the cross once again.

Link - Jesus Christ I think upon your sacrifice

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tAJxHV_ttl

Prayers - A prayer of confession

Lord we come to you in our weakness and our frailty

We know that we often fail you and that our lives contradict what we should do as Christians.

We are sorry when we walk away and ignore your voice.

Help us to praise you through dark times

Keep us centred on you

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Prayers of Intercession

As you wept over Jerusalem we weep for those suffering from Corona Virus

Lord hear our prayer

As you cried out we cry out

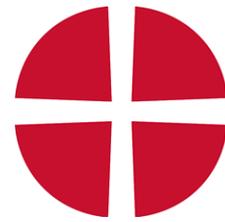
Lord hear our prayer

Keep those who are working to help those who are sick.....

Lord hear our prayer

Give strength to those who are keeping the infrastructure of our society together

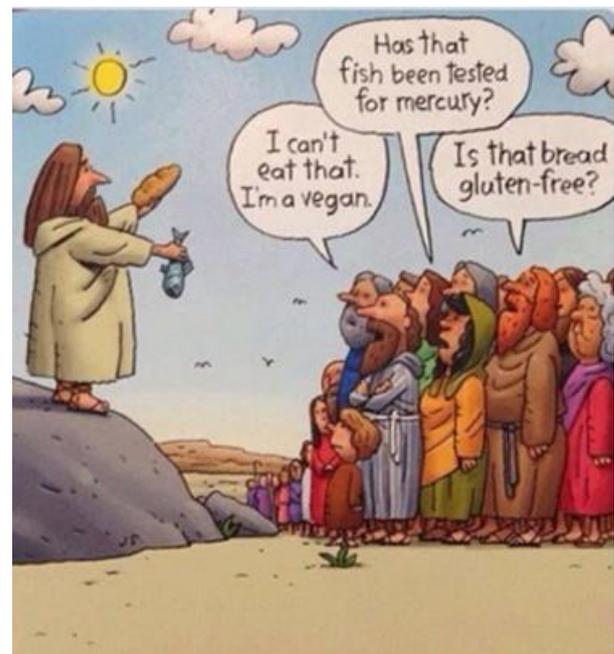
Amen



TOP TIPS

Our lives must be the demonstration of God's love in the present that gives a watching world reason to believe that goodness and love will indeed triumph over evil and hate.

God bless



And finally...

This is an open Newsletter, so would welcome any contributions for articles, letters, comments or inspirational musings. The world is, as Hilda Ogden would always espouse, your lobster. So dig out a string of pearls to add to next week's edition...

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