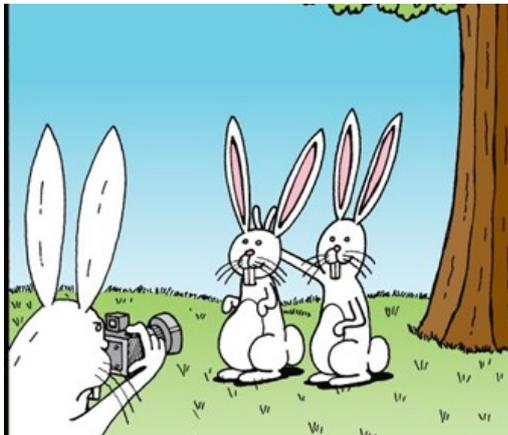


The 'Alternative' Smithy Bridge Methodist Newsletter - 12th April 2020

Welcome to the EASTER SPECIAL 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.
.....



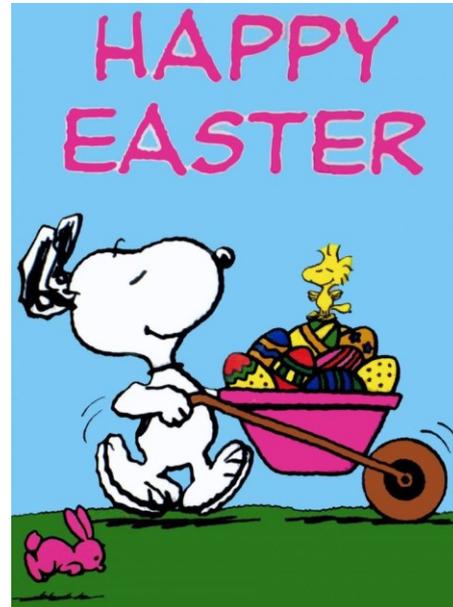
Steph & Ken are still taking orders

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?



Have you noticed...

As us humans withdraw
Due to Covid and more
It is the wildlife that has been reborn?
More birds every day and the squirrels at play
Or the wildebeest roaming your lawn?

Well perhaps not the latter
But that doesn't matter
The point is. There's life all around.
So take heart and take voice
It is always your choice
But engage with all your surrounds.

Sing along with the peace
And just feel the release
Whether warbling with pigeon or dove
Feel life and God's love
As it is sent from above
Even if you honk like a squadron of geese.

**GOD
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Rev Helen's message



Now a YouTube sensation, thanks in no small part to David Parker's fantastic cinematic skills, Helen's Holy Week messages here to re-live if you missed them:

Tuesday -

https://youtu.be/VEMf1_sUF9A

Wednesday –

https://youtu.be/atQ_RwgLZ3s

Thursday –

<https://youtu.be/PTL4jirP6Ok>

Good Friday –

<https://youtu.be/PAeiyDqbHSo>

Saturday –

https://youtu.be/MiKmp_FHsFk

And Easter Sunday - Woohoo!!! –

<https://youtu.be/Vl1XmOzL33U>

Reading Luke 23 v 50-56

Call to worship

It has been a lonely Saturday

Watching

Waiting Wondering

Weeping

So now we come together

We wait behind locked doors

Waiting for the sun to rise

Come Lord Jesus Come

The day dawns

A new day

Alive with promise and hope

All is not lost

Your Resurrection power seeks us out

We know you are not there in the tomb
but alive in the world

Closer to us than we can ever imagine

Let our faces be lit by our glimpses of you

The stone has been rolled away

We rejoice in you our risen Lord.

Reading Luke 24 1-12

Song He is Risen

https://youtu.be/233HptFY_JU



A new day is Dawning - Easter Message

Today is a celebration as we rejoice in the promise of new life and resurrection and with each Easter Sunrise a new day of opportunity and promise.

The women approached the tomb on the first Easter morning expecting to find Jesus but he was not there!

So right from the beginning there is something about finding Jesus not in the places where we would expect him to be and perhaps seeking in order to find him. What then does that empty tomb signify for us today Easter 2020 in the middle of a pandemic.

If the church is the tomb the place where we would expect to find faith and the doors are locked what does all that mean? The doors should be firmly locked its residents no longer there?

Have they risen and gone and where can they be found?

Whether we like it or not a new day has dawned

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New life is springing from the old familiar places - this time not from the church as the centre of worship, but from our homes. Is this not what it was originally like? ...The early church grew in homes with families.

At the time of Jesus's resurrection it seems to me the disciples, believers and supporters were just like us, locked in their homes. In fact, they did not have familiar places such as church buildings or even meeting places unless it was on a hillside.

This is where the story first began behind locked doors.

So my first thought today is
Are we prepared for the God encounters in our homes in the coming days? Maybe you have already had some.. a realisation, a new day dawning on your faith story. Be sure to share them.



In our text for today we have heard again what happened at the tomb.

There are some words that leap off the page for me.



First "and they found the stone rolled away"

I have already reflected on stones, but this time the stone was not getting in the way - the significance being that the stone had already been rolled away and clearly this was not a human feat.

It was supernatural, unimaginable and virtually impossible - yet it had been rolled away.

The action was not about those who went to the tomb prepared with spices etc; the hard work had been done and the work they thought they were going to have to do was not an option.

Could this be Jesus saying to us ...the door is open now ..I have opened it for you I have broken down the barrier - Opened the doors of opportunities for church for an excitement about things of faith for new life and paths to tread.

Another reminder to us to prepare for the encounters as a new day dawns and when things begin again. Not same old.. same old...



2nd The second phrase that stands out "why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here - he is risen "

What does this say? To me it asks, even commands us to look for signs of life in the new in the things that are springing up This new sense of unity and togetherness as communities

- Rejoicing in the simple things family life
- Respecting others for the things that they are achieving
- Encouragement of those who are often overlooked and forgotten.
- Caring for those in isolation

The power of prayer for those on the front line.

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3RD The third thing Peter the man who Jesus names as the rock of the church ...was the one who stooped and looked in ...saw and then went home amazed. This is a call to all who see themselves as rocks of the church to

- Stoop
- Look carefully
- Notice and see
- And then be amazed ...



Over the next weeks and months having stooped, been laid low, having retreated to our homes and been levelled by our predicaments.

Having looked and examined what we deem to be necessary and reflected deeply on where we are..

Let us get ready to be amazed first by what God has already done
Second by what he can do
And amazed that what we think is impossible is possible tangible and real.

Let's celebrate today the beginning of new life and a new chapter in the history of the people of faith where all are indeed welcome.

Let's make our witnessing be that story of hope and not idle tales as was the impression of some of the twelve disciples until they were also caught up in the wonder.

May our broken lives and the lives of the people around us - for they surely are that story of hope for all to celebrate and participate in.

We have the symbol of the cross to hold before us and lift high.

Alleluia

Jesus is ALIVE.

Hymn - See What a Morning
<https://youtu.be/6xM-fpXayUg>

Prayers of Intercession Jean Spencer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r54sTcBCPkQ#action=share>

The Peace
Jesus said "Peace be with you "
May peace be with all you who have joined this worship
Be reminded that in all things do not give up
When you doubt - be at peace
When strength seems gone - breathe peace
And hold on to the promise that Jesus is with us always.
Go in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen



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Word For Today, not to be confused with similar acronyms. The new Word for Today starting on the 1st May has arrived. These are the printed booklets and as we are unable to meet in church our alternative is to hand deliver them. If you would like a copy please contact Janet or Tracey at the Bridge and they will ensure that a copy will be delivered to you.

If you are online it is possible to receive a new Word for that day EVERY day.

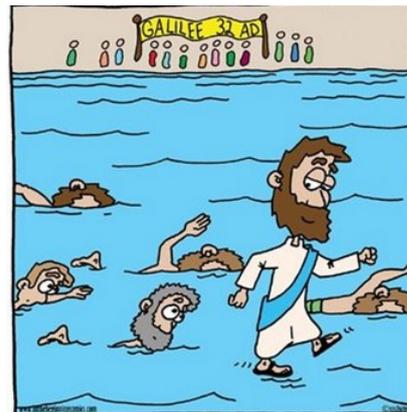
<https://www.ucb.co.uk/myaccount>

(even Nigel managed this, so it IS simple). Or google Word for Today and the UCB site will bring up that particular day's message. On this site as well as the printed message there is also the availability to listen to it being read. It does change every day.

Here is Easter Saturday's:

You will never understand the message of the cross, or receive the benefits of salvation that come from the cross, until you first kneel at the cross and receive Jesus Christ as your personal saviour. The story is told of a great preacher who was touring Italy. A friend told him to go to a certain village and see a painting of the crucifixion of Christ. 'What is it like?' he asked. His friend said, 'Never mind what it is like. I want you to see it. Please promise me you will.' He replied, 'I will.' He went to the village and visited the chapel where the painting was. The old caretaker said, 'You've come to see the painting, haven't you?' He said, 'Why, yes I have.' The caretaker responded, 'Follow me.' The great preacher was not prepared for what he was about to see.

Instead of a beautiful masterpiece, the painting seemed all out of proportion and didn't make sense. 'I don't understand this painting,' he said. The caretaker replied, 'Come closer.' He did. The caretaker said, 'Get lower.' He did. Finally, as he was kneeling at the foot of the cross, he looked up and saw the power and beauty of the painting and was reduced to tears. It's only when you lay aside your pride, your preconceived notions, and your intellectual approach, and humble yourself, that the message of the cross transforms you. 'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God' (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJV).



Consequently, Jesus was banned from further triathlons...

And finally...

Back, despite popular demand, a 'second favourite book ever' volunteered is *A Prayer for Owen Meanie* – And another of our readers has nominated *Lord of the Rings*. A good choice if you have time on your hands and don't have the DVD. It may be significant that the third book in the trilogy is the *Return of the King*... How about *Speak O Lord* as a rousing hymn to start the day off?

Come on Allan - give it laldy!

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