



CROSSGATES METHODIST CHURCH July 2020 Newsletter

MINISTER: Rev Helen White

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We've been look at the book of Ruth through June, and I've been struck by how well it has related to what's currently going on in our world. It has something to say to us about welcoming the stranger and including people, regardless of where they come from - in the midst of all the images of Black Lives Matter protests. It also tells of two people having to adjust to changing situations and make the best they can of it. With 21st century eyes we might question some of their decisions - like sending Ruth to lie down with Boaz in the middle of the night. But they did what they thought needed to be done, and found ways of living in changing circumstances. And what's true of Ruth, is true of many parts of the Bible. The people of God have often had to find ways of living in changed circumstances, or to use a current phrase - discover their new normal. They didn't always find it easy - sometimes getting angry with God. Think of the Israelites in the wilderness complaining that they would be better off in Egypt as slaves. But eventually, each time, whether during the Exodus, moving into the Promised Land, in Exile, or coming back again they discovered how to live in their changed circumstances and realised God was with them in it - even when they were complaining.

That set me off wondering how we are dealing with our new normal, our gradually changing normal. Are we finding God in it, even if it's just for someone to complain to sometimes? We've hopefully found God in new ways through worshipping at home, apart yet together, whether using the worship at home sheets, joining in on Zoom, or listening to radio or TV services. How will we deal with the next stages? There will be more adjusting to do. Church will not be what we knew before lockdown. Just as the people of Israel had to find new ways of worshipping when they were in Exile, then adjust to something different again back in the Promised Land, so we are on a similar journey - adapting to worshipping

at home, then to something that will be different again when we go back into our buildings. We will be telling you more about what that might look like over the coming weeks, but we will not be going back in before September. Before then the church council will have to meet to look at the risk assessment and agree that we are ready to take this step. The delay will enable us to do things well, minimising risk, and hopefully enabling everyone to be safe to come if they want to. Some of our number are still shielding so we wait with them.

Please pray for those of us with the responsibility to enable everything to happen safely and well. Be patient with one another, for we will each experienced lockdown in different ways, and will be ready to take new steps at different times. Above all, look for where God is, walking with us, in all that we are experiencing.

Blessings

Helen

Service Options

If there are any people or situations you would like included in the prayers on Zoom worship, please let me know by Saturday morning, (having got permission from the individual to be named in our prayers).

Please do contact me if you would like to receive details of worship via email or would like to have printed worship sheets delivered.

Blessings, **Helen**

A Prayer

God of all grace, we rejoice that your love is for all, unlimited and free.

May we, your children, have the same generous love for the world that you show us in Christ. For in Christ, we are all seen and known fully, redeemed and restored, and we need never be ashamed of failure.

May we, in responding to all you offer us in Christ, learn to view others and see your world only through the lens of your love, which holds us, heals us and restores us to fullness of life. Amen.

Helen Cameron, Northampton District Chair

An Update on Opening our Church

We have all heard now that churches can open soon but unfortunately it's not as simple as opening the doors and welcoming everyone back. There are a lot of changes we have to make in order to make it as safe as possible to return. Cedric and I have completed an initial risk assessment and there are numerous things we have to put in place.

Many of us will be nervous about starting to mix with larger numbers of people, Please be assured that we are going to do as much as is possible to make our building and mixing with people as safe as possible. However if you are not happy about returning immediately we open we fully understand and the support for you will continue as it has done throughout lockdown.

As things stand now with the guidelines from the government and the M.C. the following are some of the things that will change.

Initially, because of our large numbers of vulnerable people at Cross Gates we will continue with the 2 metre distancing recommendation. We have worked out how this will work. A Steward will show you to your seat (possibly a different seat each time!) We will have a one way in and out system in place.

You will be asked to bring hand gel, a face covering, a bottle of water if you will need one. No Junior church initially, we will welcome children but they must sit with the adult who brought them, no after church coffee, no chatting in church, no hugging or kissing, we will not sing hymns, or use hymn books or Bibles. Toilets will be a 'one in one out' system with a queue (distanced) in the corridor.

A record of everyone attending will be kept for track and trace purposes. Hand sanitizer will be available at each entrance, and sanitising of all hard surfaces will be carried out before and after service. A deep clean of the Church will have taken place prior to opening.

At the present time we propose to commence worship on 1st September but initially this will most likely be a service at Colton one week then a zoom service the next week. Cross Gates the next week followed by another zoom. This may change when Helen decides how to split herself into enough pieces to do all she has to do!

Please don't be concerned you will not know what to do when you first attend a service, plenty of us will be on hand to show you. I will keep you informed of what is happening in July and August and you can ring me anytime if I can be of help.

Please pray for our church, Colton, the Circuit and Christian people everywhere, many of whom are facing far greater difficulties than we are

Barbara Lloyd

Leeds South & East Foodbank

helping local people in crisis

Following our appeal for items of food/toiletries in the June Newsletter, we were able to deliver 4 large full containers to the Leeds South and East Distribution Centre at Hunslet. Many thanks to everyone who contributed.

This warehouse (run by the Trussel Trust) supplies food to the 11 food pick up points in South and East Leeds - Belle Isle, Beeston, Drighlington, Gildersome, Gipton, Harehills, Hunslet, Lincoln Green, Middleton, Rothwell, Seacroft, (while a further centre supplies Leeds North and West.)

The S & E Leeds Foodbank writes "Just want to say a big thank you to everyone who has donated food or funds to us during this Covid-19 crisis, it's hard to keep on asking in this unprecedented time - this really is a marathon not a sprint.

We have many conversations around food poverty and this time made us think about our similarities with food bank users.

Not being able to buy the food we want or to have the choice, or to travel to a local beauty spot to have a nice day out- ours because of lockdown , Foodbank clients often because of lack of funds resulting to having to walk to most places, or facing the dilemma of whether to buy food, pay rent or heating.

Many of us have struggled with this at times but imagine this being your life, THIS IS THE LIFE OF SOMEONE IN POVERTY

We don't think anyone in our Community should have to face going hungry. That's why we provide three days nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to us in crisis. We are part of a national network of foodbanks, supported by the Trussell Trust, working to combat hunger across the UK."

If you are able to contribute food or toiletries, please contact John Best. jvbest39@hotmail.com who will arrange for your gifts to be collected.

FREE phone service to hear prayers and news from the Methodist Church has been launched.

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to news: 0808 281 2478

Content is updated weekly on Thursday evening

Statement on racism from the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference

The brutal killing of George Floyd, who died at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis, has prompted a wave of anger and revulsion around the world. As Christian people, we are appalled that someone could die in such a fashion and appalled also at the continued injustice which many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people experience in many parts of the world, including the United Kingdom, and in many institutions, including, shamefully, the Methodist Church in Britain.

We therefore welcome and endorse the call of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement for radical action in addressing the causes of this injustice. The Methodist Church in Britain believes that racism is a denial of the gospel. However, we have to recognize that we have not eradicated the problem from our Church, despite the excellent work of many over several decades; in the last year we have redoubled our efforts to do so and are actively working on the implementation of our 'Inclusive Methodist Church' strategy which commits to challenging all forms of discrimination and creating a Church where people from every background are welcome and are safe from abuse and discrimination.

Such a Church will celebrate and not be afraid of diversity; it will be disciplined and uncompromising in its refusal to tolerate any form of racism; it will work to encourage the vocation of those from minority groups to serve in positions of senior leadership; and it will be one in which all people can be confident of the welcome that they will receive as they share in worship and ministry with us. We repent of the ways that we have fallen short of that in the past and of our slowness in changing our ways and we continue to look for ways in which we can witness to the all-encompassing love of God and become the transformation that we long to be. 'Only the Spirit's power can fit us for this hour': we pray, 'Come, Holy Spirit, come!'

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that”.

Martin Luther King Jr

The Spirit might be asking us to be brave, to not cling to the old but to be the pilgrim people of the moment

As we consider the opening of Church buildings, Jude Levermore, Head of Mission for the Methodist Church in Britain, writes of her hopes for how the Church will move forward, by being 'the pilgrim people of the moment.'

When Methodism changed from a connexion of societies to become a denomination or church we began to erect and use separate Methodist buildings which became our churches. Methodism came first, our buildings came second.

As we begin to think about 'going back into our buildings' I am hopeful that we will take time to consider what we have learned from being out of them. I am hopeful that we will have solidified our understanding that church is not a building- we teach that to our children, but do we hold that in our hearts? We, the people are the church, the body of Christ meeting together in community, acting together in mission, longing together for the transformation of our world, responding together to our calling.

I'm praying that as we share a road map for leaving lockdown, with all its needful risk assessments and procedures, we will guard against entering another lockdown, that of being so caught up in our buildings that we miss the opportunities to be church without them.

Anecdotally I have seen and heard of such amazing innovation and creativity over these last months, as churches seek to serve their neighbourhoods and be good news and speak good news. All around the Connexion new and wonderful things are springing up.

As our managing trustees consider carefully their next steps my hope is that they carve out time not only to navigate a way through the 29 pages of the risk assessment, but to first undertake a spiritual assessment; to what is God calling this church, this chapel? I believe the Spirit might be asking us to be brave, to not cling to the old but to be the pilgrim people of the moment. Let's be a people of vision, let's not long to get back to normal, let's see what God might do if we allow ourselves to be led somewhere new.

Let us be generous and gracious to one another, allow different churches and chapels to make the decisions they need to without pressure to get on with the usual, allowing instead time to consider the Spirit.

I am reminded of Charles Wesley's wonderful Pentecostal hymn:

*Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up the gift in me*

Let us guard the holy fire, and guard our buildings only as a means of that, let us keep walking the way together bearing the burden of grief for all that and those, which and who have been lost, in love for one another and in service to our world.

Wesley's childhood

John and Charles Wesley were born in Epworth, Lincolnshire, into the large family of Samuel and Susanna Wesley (of about nineteen children, three sons and seven daughters survived). Both parents were devout and strongminded people.

Samuel had been raised in a Dissenting academy, but became a high church Anglican and was Rector of the parish at Epworth. He was a man of faith and spoke of 'the inward witness' as 'the strongest proof of Christianity.'

Susanna Wesley, who seems to have had a considerable influence over John, raised and educated her enormous family with great competence and discipline - the children had 6 hours of home schooling a day. She also found time, during one of Samuel's absences, to set up a Sunday afternoon house group in the rectory kitchen, which eventually attracted 200 people.

Samuel had a turbulent relationship with his flock and when in 1709 the rectory was destroyed by fire, some speculated that disgruntled parishioners might have been responsible.

John Wesley, who was six at the time of the fire, was caught in the house but was rescued from an upstairs window. This gave rise to a belief in his family that he had been spared for some special purpose, and later John used to refer to himself as 'a brand plucked from the burning'. This literal event was a powerful image of having been saved 'from the wrath to come'.

Thank you: to all those people who are continuing to contribute towards the running costs of our Church. This is making a real difference to our financial situation. If you would like to send in your collection, cheques can be sent through the post to the Church's address or to Linda Booth, Please include at least one of your offertory envelopes so if you are a 'gift aider' this can continue to be claimed.

Newsletter: Please email contributions for the Newsletter to Tracy Dick tracyldick@icloud.com Deadlines coming up: 20th July, 24th August, 17th September.

Thank you: I'm sure many Church members would like to join me in saying an enormous 'thank you' to Barbara Lloyd for making such beautiful face masks for us to wear when we are able to 'escape' from our homes and go out shopping, on a bus or for that long awaited hair-cut. Thanks again Barbara.

Congratulations and best wishes: to Amy and Emma Tobin who celebrated their 18th birthday on June 7th.

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers:

All those people in our prayer book and those we know who are unwell, in hospital, in Nursing Homes, going for tests at Hospital, recently bereaved and who find this time of year particularly difficult.

CROSS GATES METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group of people who are seeking to celebrate and share God's love for all.

Through Worship, Witness and Service in the Community we aim to follow Christ's example of open arms, hearts, minds and doors

Cross Gates Methodist Church, Austhorpe Road, Cross Gates, Leeds, LS15 8QR