



# CROSSGATES METHODIST CHURCH

## May Newsletter 2020

MINISTER: Rev Helen White

### May

Whilst I was out making the most of my daily walk this afternoon (who thought we'd be talking about being outside like that?) my mind was wandering, as it does. I was thinking about May. It can be a lovely month – flowers and sunshine hopefully, though April has been good on that front. I was also thinking about that word – may. At the moment it seems to be tied up with 'not' rather too much. You may not get closer than 2m to another person. You may not gather with other people. You may not go out of your house except for exercise, essential shopping, medical needs or to work (if your work cannot be done from home). I'm sure most of us never imagined that the month of May would see us tied up with nots. May is usually a positive month – 2 bank holidays, warmer weather, summer well on its way. How can we keep the positive side of May?

We may go out for exercise – I'm seeing people out walking who wouldn't normally take daily exercise. We may keep in touch with other people in physically distant ways – how many people have you had contact with that you wouldn't normally? I've learnt the names of some of my neighbours, and discovered what some of them do for work. Perhaps then I should add, you may be nosy... You may learn new things – who knew zoom was anything more than a lens on a camera to let you get up close without getting close.

My challenge to you – how can you take the nots away from May?

May you find blessings amidst the limitations that is part of now.

**Helen**

## **Service Options**

For those with no internet access, volunteers continue to deliver worship materials to those who have requested it.

I am emailing the same material to those with an email address along with details of local worship alternatives. These include:

- a weekly a short act of worship on East Leeds FM 94.6 or <https://www.chapelfm.co.uk/elfm-player/>
- 10.30am Worship over Zoom (people can dial in via phone and hear, and be heard, as an alternative to computer or tablet. If you choose to do this, please check what your phone provider will charge for a 45 minute call, especially if you are using a mobile.)

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**

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## **Funding our Church**

Many thanks to all those people who are continuing to contribute towards the running costs of our Church. Our costs remain the same despite the interruption of services. 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. For safety reasons please do not send cash.

If you would like to discuss other ways your regular contribution can be made then please contact Amanda Brow or Alison Lambert. Their contact details are available from Helen.

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## **Church Flowers**

Many thanks to those people who donated money for church flowers in April and beyond. Once Church services start again Barbara will be in touch with everyone to let them know which week they have sponsored.

### **Leeds City Council & COVID - 19**

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Leeds City Council have launched a helpline. Anyone in need can call:

**0113 378 1877**

And they will be matched with a local volunteer who can help.

If you would like to volunteer please call:

**0113 297 7920**

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## **Foodbank Update**

John Best delivered 2 crates of food to the South and East Leeds Food Bank centre at Hunslet and also sent a cheque for £100 in lieu of food. This was the remaining money that people had given towards our monthly donation.

### **The following message was received back:**

Thank you for your kind donation of £100 and continued support during these trying times, your donation will help us purchase much needed food to keep helping those in need more now than ever.

April 2020 EMERGENCY APPEAL WE are running desperately short of all food and toiletry items. Can you help? We need all the FOOD donations we can get. Our food is going to desperate clients faster than we can collect it in. Please help! Thank you. A massive thank you goes to all our contributors who have continued to donate food and funds to our foodbank in these difficult times A giant thank you also to all our wonderful volunteers who have gone above and beyond throughout this crisis, to keep some centres open. Best wishes to all our volunteers who have been unable to carry on due to medical and government advice at this time. To everyone, stay safe and well PLEASE HELP with our crowdfunding appeal Due to the current situation with Corona virus, donations of food have dropped. Churches are closed and we are all

asked to socially isolate and only go out for essential journeys. If you can please now donate much needed funds online here <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/help-raise-funds-to-keep-this-charity-going>

**Dear Friends in Christ,**

Last week I received on behalf of the circuit, a card from the President and Vice-President of Conference (Barbara and Clive) offering their thanks and prayers for the colleagues and congregations of the Circuit in these challenging times. So I pass this message on to you, and ask that you might share this with your congregation.

Usually, it is very easy to go through the special services and events of Holy Week and Easter Sunday when we remember the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, and then quickly get back to our “normal” routines again, a few days after Easter Sunday, almost forgetting the significance of what we have remembered and celebrated.

One of the strange “silver linings” of this pandemic is that this year, we are not going back to “normal” for quite some time. Indeed, we have the opportunity to change our “normal” as we hold on to some (but not all) of the different ways that we have been living at this time, when eventually we come out of lock-down. I sometimes wonder how different our church thinking and living would be if instead of holding Lent Groups as we often do in the season of Lent, we held Easter Groups over the 50 days of the season of Easter that leads up to Pentecost.

The focus would then be on exploring what does New Life in Christ actually mean for us? How are we to live differently from many of our neighbours in a way that clearly demonstrates our commitment to the healing, reconciliation, forgiveness and New Life that Resurrection Faith brings? What are the new values and priorities that have come to the surface for ourselves in living through this pandemic? How are we to recognise and reward the work and jobs in our society that we often take for granted but in a pandemic we suddenly realise how vital and important they are for our well being.

As we are forced to live at a restrained and slower pace of life, this has a beneficial effect on our environment, as for these pandemic weeks we walk far more “lightly on the earth”. We may be exercising more, having

time to stop and enjoy the natural world , as well as having more time and opportunity to pray, read and reflect on our own calling of being “in Christ”. How many times have we said in the past, “if only I had some more time.....if only I wasn’t so busy.....”

The Easter faith of the first Christian communities took time to formulate itself and develop its enduring characteristics. They weren’t given a textbook to follow with everything worked out, just some letters from prominent leaders to help guide their thinking and ways of behaving. We too need to be on an Easter journey into a changed future.

Peace and Love. Stay Safe

**Robert Creamer**

**Circuit Superintendent, Leeds North and East Methodist Circuit**

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### **Joan Jackson RIP**

We send our condolences to David and Richard, their family and friends on the death of their mother Joan Jackson.

Her funeral will be at 11am on Wednesday 6th May at Pontefract Crematorium. Due to the current lockdown, only 10 close family members are allowed to be present. We will therefore hold a service of celebration when we are able to gather.

In the meantime, there will be people who would otherwise have wanted to be at Joan’s funeral, and the Methodist Church has prepared material, like the Sunday worship at home sheets, for people to use at home, at the same time as the funeral. These are being distributed either by hand or via email. If you have not received a copy but would like to, then please contact Helen or Barbara.

At Joan’s funeral the hymns will be Praise my Soul the King of Heaven, Be Still for the Presence of the Lord, Dear Lord and Father of Mankind.

Sadly, it is likely that all of us at some point will find ourselves unable to attend a funeral we would normally have been at so this material may also be of comfort in the future.

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*Jesus said 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die'.*

## **Thelma Commey's Story**

### **Methodist Youth President 2019/20**

I am a 19 year old Ghanaian woman who has had the privilege of experiencing God's undeniable love. Giving my life to Christ when 11, I found a relationship that would transform me. Growing in faith, day by day, through word and fellowship, I have seen amazing things for me and through me. God has blessed me immensely and I am truly grateful.

I worship in a diverse and vibrant church in Milton Keynes where I have the privilege of serving at Sunday school and with children and young people. I have seen God develop me in that environment and nurture my gifts. I have learnt so much from being around these amazing young people. I truly enjoy being able to be a part of the stories God is writing in their lives.

It is my prayer that as we explore Scripture and reflect on the unconditional love of Jesus you will experience it for yourself.

Jesus loves you.

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### **A Prayer for Times of Isolation taken from the Christian Aid website:**

*God of heaven and earth, in these times of isolation, apart from loved ones, distant from friends, away from neighbours, thank you that there is nothing in all of creation, not even coronavirus, that is able to separate us from your love.*

*And may your love that never fails, continue to be shared through the kindness of strangers, looking out for each other, for neighbours near and far; all recognising our shared vulnerability.*

*Each of us is grateful for every breath and willing everyone to know the gift of a full and healthy life.*

*Keep us all in your care.*

**Amen**

## **Ways to speak with friends and neighbours in the coronavirus crisis**

Be open to sharing honest, deep, vulnerable conversation (online or over the phone only at the moment) with people. Many people are understandably extremely anxious and would welcome a chance to share and confide via phone, email or social media. Sometimes these conversations will lead to wondering about God, faith, and/or suffering and may bring up difficult questions.

If you are talking with someone who is suffering or worried about the coronavirus, take time first of all simply to listen and to be with them in that place.

It's important to avoid giving simplistic answers as to why this is taking place or giving false reassurance that we can somehow avoid all suffering. **Avoid messages** that suggest in any way that taking precautions that help keep people safe is 'letting fear win'. **Avoid messages** that faith in God will protect people from anxiety and pain. **Avoid messages** that suggest in any way that the pain and anxiety someone is experiencing is their fault or the result of someone's sin.

Instead **choose messages** that seek to embody the love and presence of God. **Choose messages** that assure people that we can go through this together in grace and care for each other along the way. **Choose messages** that name that God is with us, especially in times of great fear.

**Offer to pray** for people and ask if they need practical help. If they do need help – such as with shopping or with collecting prescriptions – make sure to follow through even if it's by connecting them with a church group or other group that is able to help out. And continue to pray, since we know that the God of all comfort is for them too. Pray for a 'peace that

transcends understanding'. Pray for a felt sense that suffering will not have the final word and that somehow, finally 'all shall be well'. Pray for a personal experience of God's presence even in the face of great suffering.

***Taken from the Methodist Church Website: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)***

Please email contributions for the Newsletter to Tracy Dick [tracyldick@icloud.com](mailto:tracyldick@icloud.com) **While many services and activities are suspended there is space to include some alternative items so please, do get in touch with any ideas.** Deadlines coming up: 24<sup>th</sup> May, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Just a reminder, that back issues of the church newsletter from 2016 to present date are available for viewing on the LEEDS NORTH EAST WEBSITE at [www.leedsnandemethodist.org.uk](http://www.leedsnandemethodist.org.uk) On the home page click on churches , from the drop down list click on Crossgates to view.

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**Thanks:** John Blyth would like to thank everyone for their kind wishes, help and prayers.

Sandra Bentley says 'thank you for all the prayers, cards and flowers I have received from Church members. It has been a long and difficult road to recovery at times and it has been helped by you all. May God keep you all safe and healthy'.

**News:** In the last newsletter we printed news of the sad death of Jessie Chambers, sent by her daughter Diana. Both Linda Booth and David Leeming remembered the Chambers family well. David remembers Diana looking after his guinea pig when he went on holiday. Sympathy and good wishes have been passed on to Diana by Helen.

**Prayers:** 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.



**Our thoughts and prayers are with all the families and friends who have lost a loved one through the pandemic that is sweeping the world.**

**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*