



Newsletter from the Bury St Edmunds Circuit
for Sunday 21st February 2021

Dear Friends,

Wishing you a happy Lent!

That sounds rather incongruous, as Lent is often considered to be a season for self-denial, penitence and reflection, not a 'happy' time. Perhaps this year it seems even more so as we continue in lockdown. Yet Lent can also be a time of refreshment and can be very fulfilling as we stop, conduct a bit of a spiritual 'spring clean' and focus on what is truly important. One of my favourite poems, 'Lent' by Jean M Watt captures something of this:

*Lent is a tree without blossom, without leaf,
Barer than blackthorn in its winter sleep,
All unadorned. Unlike Christmas which decrees
The setting-up, the dressing-up of trees,
Lent is a taking down, a stripping bare,
A starkness after all has been withdrawn
Of surplus and superfluous,
Leaving no hiding-place, only an emptiness
Between black branches, a most precious space
Before the leaf, before the time of flowers;
Lest we should see only the leaf, the flower,
Lest we should miss the stars.*

For Lent, we don't necessarily choose to give something up, but we do try to do things differently. We aim for something for self, which may be a giving up/taking up something, something for God – a Lent reflection book or course, something to deepen spirituality – and something for others, which might be supporting a particular charity or helping out neighbours or taking up the challenge to do an act of kindness each day. In this way we hope to find a glimpse of the stars between the branches of our daily routine.

God bless Debbie, Rita and Ruth

WORSHIP SHEET

We thank Bill Humm for our reflection today.

CIRCUIT SERVICES

ASH WEDNESDAY 7.30pm

We will be holding a circuit service by Zoom for Ash Wednesday – the link is below. I will open up at 7.15pm.

During the service we would normally have an act of Ashing as part of our penitence, however as I will not be able to do that I would ask you to bring a drop of olive oil or similar and we will use that. Also we will be celebrating together in our Love Feast, so please do have food and drink ready for the service.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88588931194?pwd=V3gzZlFWQ3gweW02ZGJtemFrTVp3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 885 8893 1194

Passcode: 087185

MAUNDY THURSDAY 7.30pm

The circuit service of Tenebre will be held by Zoom.

Tenebrae simple means 'darkness', and the service is an adaptation from an early 4th Century act of worship of the same name.

It centres on the gradual extinguishing of the candles which symbolises:

- The darkness of the enmity gathering around our Lord
- The darkness of the spirit which swept over Him
- The desertion of the disciples

The thirteen candles represent Jesus surrounded by the twelve disciples. A candle will be extinguished after each reading; the extinguishing of the main candle is symbolic of His death, who was made light of the world. The re-lighting of this candle points to the renewal of Hope and the emergence of New Life at Easter.

I will send the worship sheet and link out nearer the time.

GOOD FRIDAY 10.30am

This again will be a circuit service, and I will send out details nearer the time.

Sunday Worship A Circuit video recording of the Sunday Worship Sheet can be found at: <http://www.trinitymethodistchurch.org.uk/worshipthisweek.htm>

Zoom Sunday Worship: You are welcome to join Zoom Worship on a Sunday morning with Rev Debbie Borda or Rev Rita Carr. If you would like to join in worship in this way then please contact either of them and they will give you details of how to join a zoom meeting.

Live stream service Ruth Ridge is leading a weekly service on the St John's Facebook page live at 6pm every Thursday. The service lasts about 30 mins and is available to watch live and on the page at any time after it has been broadcast. The service is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsmethodistchurchsudbury> and you do not have to have a Facebook account to access it.

Vaccination Scam

Please be very careful. I have heard that people are being unscrupulous and taking advantage of people who are awaiting the Coronavirus vaccination.

The vaccination is free and you must not give your bank details to anyone in order to have the vaccination even for identification purposes.

Vaccination help across the world

I have received this email from Rev Becca Rogers a minister in Kings Lynn. She has set up a page on JustGiving to help raise funds to enable people in low-income countries access the COVID-19 vaccine. She writes:

You may have heard on the news the other night that, despite much effort on the part of the global vaccine alliance, there is still much unfairness in how the COVID vaccine is being rolled out globally. Only 10% of people in low-income counties are likely to get their vaccine this year. Imagine the situation we are in now, but without the real hope of the vaccine.

I have set up a just-giving page which invites people to donate the cost of their vaccine (around £5-£10 for the 2 doses) This money will go to COVAX so, in essence, each donation will be allowing someone else in the world to have their vaccine too.

Do have a look if you'd like to, share with others who may be interested and donate, if you can.

To read more about it or to give just click on the link below.

[Help raise £2000 to help people in low-income countries access the COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Thought for the Day 11th February 2021 from Rev Val Spencer

On 11th February 1990 Nelson Mandela walked free from prison in South Africa. I remember that joyful day as we watched on TV as he emerged through the prison gates. Much has been said and written about him and like everyone else he was not 100% perfect, but he is a real hero of mine. He was influenced strongly by Methodism and attended Methodist Schools and Colleges.

As early as 1964 he said in the Rivonia Trial, "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and see realised. But, if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Later he was sentenced to life imprisonment, famously for many years on Robben Island where he worked on a degree course from Oxford, had to work breaking rocks, and live in tough conditions.

To see him come out of all that in 1990 with such graciousness, declaring his commitment to peace and reconciliation was inspiring. He went on to be President of S Africa and play a major role internationally. Even when he retired from the Presidency around 80% of South Africans expressed satisfaction with his work. Few politicians can have had a higher popularity rating at the end of their terms.

A commitment to non-violence, a tangible desire to leave the past behind and pursue peace, a generous demeanour and a warm smile were all involved in my own and many others support for Nelson Mandela. After the pandemic we will need to look at lessons learned, but also we will need a determination to rebuild lives and livelihoods devastated by the disease, a generosity of spirit to others locally and globally, a willingness to protect this beautiful planet, a belief in the possibility of a better world, a fairer, kinder world where graciousness and love prevail.

Does that sound fanciful? Or is it a bit like something Jesus came to establish -the kingdom (or reign) of God? Jesus believed in us enough to entrust his work to us. Wow! That means you and I could be key players in making that better world happen. With God's help -we can!

Keep following government advice to stay in to be safe



and open windows to let fresh air in