

Notices for Sunday 21st June 2020
Ponteland Methodist Church
Minister – Rev Jona Sewell (Tel. 822057)
LET THE LOVE OF JESUS BE KNOWN

12th in Ordinary Time // Living Water

MESSAGE FROM JONA

Two of the set readings for today are Psalm 86 and Luke 22: 39-46. I encourage you to stop and read them now.

I recently read of someone who said that they were grateful for the ‘gift of desperation’ because it was what made him reach out for help.

This echoes the Psalms, where there is nothing the Psalmist won’t bring to God – fear, panic, anger, despair, jealousy, injustices, pain. From the lowest depths, the Psalmist cries out to God – for what else are the depths for, but to give us the ‘gift of desperation’ which makes us reach out to God?

Jesus too gives us this example with his heart-wrenching prayer in Gethsemane. Jesus brings it all – the pain, the anguish, the loneliness – to God, just as it is.

However, this time is for us, the examples of the Psalmist and of Jesus, encourage us to bring it all to God – just as we are. If there is fear, panic and anguish, bring it to God, let it push you to reach out to God and to good people for help.

If there is desperation, loneliness, despair, let those be the things that have us pouring our hearts out to God, reaching out to the One who is our Creator, Sustainer, Upholder.

If there is joy, gratitude, praise – bring that too! The Psalmist brings it all, Jesus brings it all – so can we – confident, without fear, knowing we are beloved.

Things to consider:

- 1) When are you likely to pray the most?
- 2) Do you find it hard to bring difficult emotions to God? How might today’s bible passages inspire you?
- 3) Consider writing your own Psalm to God – sharing how you are – the wonderful things, the joys, the difficulties and the struggles.

Prayers

A reminder of the invitation to join me in daily prayer at 1:30pm, or whenever works for you. This week we pray:

Continual Prayers for:

An outpouring of God’s Spirit on the Church, our communities and wider.

Those suffering with Covid-19 and their families and friends

The NHS staff and all who are responding.

Those struggling with loneliness.

Our own church community that we may show Christ in our response to those around us and each other.

Weekly Prayers for:

Our friends in other churches in Ponteland.

Our friends from other churches in the circuit.

Your own journey with God.

One person who God lays on your heart.

Courage to listen to the Spirit, respond and act.

Please don't allow this list to be prescriptive, pray as the Spirit leads.

I've been really challenged and encouraged by this short prayer which I pray daily and share with you with encouragement to make your own:

To You, O Lord, I surrender my life.

I pray to be Your servant.

I pray to be aligned with Your will.

I pray to fulfil divine potential for your glory.

Amen.

THANK YOU I would like to say a huge thank you to anyone who donated to my birthday fundraiser. Overall, I raised **£135** for the Mental Health Foundation. *Laura.*

OUR STREET CAN INITIATIVE

There continues to be a great need for food and other items for those people who are vulnerable due to Covid 19. Throughout Northumberland the Community Response teams are getting referrals of those affected. This initiative called "**Our Street Can**" has now sent over **14,000 items** to people in need. Thanks to everyone who has contributed. If you would like to help by giving any of the following items, you may well discover there is a collector on your street. If you have access to the internet, you can check this website www.ponteland.co/our-street-can where you will be able to check to see if there is a donation point nearby? If not, you can either give them to me or I will collect them.

This is what they need:-

FOOD DONATIONS - Non perishable and wrapped unused food

CLEANING PRODUCTS AND NAPPIES

TOILETRY DONATIONS

Unused items including Shower Gel, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Hair brushes, Deodorant, Sanitary Towels, Body Lotion, Shampoo.

Please contact me, **Rosemary Gray** tel. 822493 or email rosemary.gray19@gmail.com

For further information about the initiative, you can also contact **Ela Akay**, email address:- ela.akay@doctors.org.uk

FROM THE DISTRICT NOTICEBOARD

1 - THREE CHANGES CAUSED BY THIS PANDEMIC

We all deal with change differently. How do you handle it? How is your small group responding to change?

I think there are three changes which have been created particularly by the current pandemic:

One: Growing evidence of increased spiritual openness. Many of us have been praying from Colossians chapter 4 for an 'open door for the gospel', and maybe we are seeing that door open through this current situation.

Two: Christians are more connected to their communities - through WhatsApp groups, through the NHS support, through volunteering - than perhaps any time in recent history.

Three: Outreach has shifted from centralised to personalised. If through this time we are creating more connections with people, we need to help them through a pathway, a journey to faith. Historically that pathway has included inviting people to guest services and centralised events that happen in our church buildings. This sadly is not possible at his time so we need to encourage people to think of new pathways, personal pathways.

So we see that these three changes give us both opportunity and challenge. We need to keep encouraging and empowering our church members through our small groups, and using available resources, to maximise the opportunities created by the first two changes above, and respond to the challenge created by the third.

2 - PATHWAYS TO FAITH - webinar, Saturday 18th July, 10am till 12 noon

To help churches and small groups at this time, Cell UK has launched a new webinar called 'Pathways to Faith' which we ran for the first time last Saturday. It was very successful and people enjoyed it, one participant said:

“It was just what I needed. So helpful and down to earth with lots to think about”

So we will repeat this webinar on 18th July, looking at some of the pathways to faith, and practical strategies of engagement:

What are the stages that need to be in place

How to strengthen personal interactions with those around us

Sharing the message in language that connects in our current situation

How resources such as Alpha online might help us

What kind of small groups would people from an unchurched background find relatively easy to join

Just e-mail us on office@celluk.org.uk and we'll send you the Zoom link.

LECTIONARY

Genesis 21 : 8-21, Psalm 86 : 1-10, 16-17, Romans 6 : 1b-11, Matthew 10 : 24-39.

The following questions are from today's Lectionary using the NIV version:-

- 1) What was the name of Abraham and Sarah's child?
- 2) What are/are not sold for one penny?

You will find the answers on the back page.

PRAVERS

In love, O Lord, all your works have begun; by love you sustain them and in your love our life is everlasting. So let the beginning and ending of all our loving be to see you O God, for ever and ever. *Amen*

God of grace and love, the future seems uncertain and dangerous, so we become distrustful and obdurate. We are willing to believe only those who agree with us, and are fearful of difference. We become angry and defensive, hurting others before they can hurt us, regardless of the consequences. In responding to the gospel of your love for us in Christ, help us to remember that, although you were announced by angels, you came to us vulnerable as a new-born child. May all that we offer in your name be filled with compassion and kindness. *Amen*

You alone, O God, are infinite in love. You alone can speak to our condition. You alone can search the mind and purify the heart. You alone can flow over our darkness with the ocean of eternal light. *Amen*

God, your love – gentle, immense, unconditional – arcs a rainbow of grace to shelter us all and creates a space of belonging and healing.

Your love – grounded in reality, accustomed to suffering – welcomes the excluded, tends hidden bruises, binds wounds and remakes lives and community.

God, may the astonishing truth of your love, your wide span of hope, dawn afresh in our hearts and turn us inside out as we act on your call to share your compassion.

Renew our faith and courage that we may live as people transformed by the gospel and inspired by the limitless horizons of your Spirit. *Amen*

Please send your notices to Geoff Lisle by next Friday, 1pm.

Either by phone:- 01661 822532, by post:- 42, Ridgely Drive. NE20 9BL

or by E-mail :- Geoffandangela@btinternet.com

Bible Quiz Answers:- 1) Isaac (Genesis 21:8) 2) two sparrows (Matthew 10:29)