

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19

Issue 14

June 21st 2020

From the minister...

This week will be the final week of our study on the Old Testament book of Ruth, and with this week's newsletter you will find the final set of study notes. I hope you have been enjoying this study as much as I have, and hopefully it has led you deeper into God's Word. The book of Ruth is much more than a simple standalone story set in isolation – it dovetails into so many other parts of scripture, that both come before it in Genesis, and also later as we discover (spoiler alert!) that Ruth is actually the great-grandmother of none other than the great King David. King David is himself an ancestor of Jesus, of course.

The book of Ruth, when you consider it as a whole, is an account of a desperate and apparently hopeless situation being transformed by God's sovereign power and purpose into a sequence of events which He has pre-ordained for the future salvation of the whole world. He brings order out of chaos, hope out of disaster, strength out of weakness.

This speaks directly into our current lockdown situation. Whatever the challenge of these times in which we are living, we know from studying Ruth that the Lord keeps his promises and is faithful. If we remain faithful to the Lord throughout this period of uncertainty, as Ruth did, then He will give us the same blessing and peace as He gave to her (and to Naomi). Come to the Lord for your protection: as it says in Proverbs 18:10:

"The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

Please note everyone that I will be on leave for the next two weeks, so please don't try to contact me by phone or email. The other ministers in the circuit are available should you need them. I will still be doing the usual live-streamed service each Sunday morning throughout this period, but not the weekday broadcasts.

A prayer...

Lord, give us confidence and strength to keep trusting in You

When times are uncertain may we call out to you for help

May we hide ourselves under the shadow of Your wings

May You console us with love

May You give us the assurance of Your faithfulness

We pray for our churches, our families and our friends

Bring Your protection to them also

Though we may be empty, we thank you that you fill and refresh us

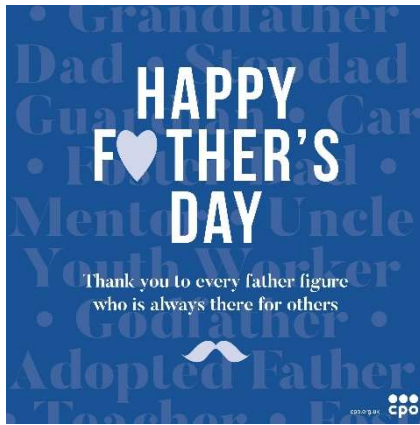
By Your Holy Spirit

Enable us to seek this Spirit and to resist the power of the Evil One.

In Jesus name we pray

Amen

What's On This Week



Sunday 21st June

10am *Taketime Live* join in a meditation in real time, or later by pasting <https://mixlr.com/taketime/> into your Web browser

10:45am live worship with Rev Ralph

Ruth in June 4 - Loving Beyond Imagination

Note – no weekday offerings from Ralph this week as he is on leave.

Prayers at 6 & 8

Now that shops are re-opening please pray for all shop-workers whether on the check-outs, shelf-stackers, cleaners or security staff. Ask God to comfort and strengthen them if they are anxious. Pray that shoppers obey the safety guidance and treat staff respectfully.

World Refugee Week 15-21 June

The plight of refugees throughout the world has been made worse during the Covid-19 pandemic. In your prayers please remember all who are fleeing from wars, poverty and oppression and pray for workers in all the organisations trying to alleviate the situation.

Please pray for

Geoff who is in Crawley Hospital and for Jean, still unable to visit him.

Continue praying for Faye, Maria, Emma, Linda, and others with needs known to ourselves.

Send your prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list.

Does Messy Church have a future?

We are evaluating whether Messy Church is the most effective way to share in the mission to take the Gospel out to the community around Crawley. Please pray for opportunities to share in this Mission, whether it be through Messy Church or takes another form and that we may be guided by God to the right decision.

Jill and Carol

Methodist Conference Goes Virtual

This year's Methodist Conference will be held from 25th June to 2nd July. With Covid-19 restrictions still being in place it will be a virtual meeting opening with the induction of the new President and Vice-President. The agenda will cover essential business with some being deferred until the 2021 Conference.

Ordinations will also be deferred to a later date.

The Methodist Church has expressed concern for ordinands and people expecting to be appointed to certain offices for whom this would have been a significant Conference. We are all asked to pray for them and all representatives to this unprecedented Conference.

Barry's Isolation Diary week 11 – bits and pieces

So, shops are open and queueing is back as a national pastime or has it ever gone away? Have you been? Will you go? Suddenly life is changing rapidly as we take the tentative steps back to some form of normality. As I said last week I still await information about those of us who are shielding, although Wednesday's paper suggested that we might be allowed to join the rest of you at the end of July, always of course if "the science" says its safe.

I guess many of you have been part of the seven plus million who have watched the programmes on the Salisbury poisonings in 2018. I doubt when they made it they thought how relevant it would be to the time when it was shown. But it just goes to show how difficult the extent and timing of critical decisions can be and the pressures on those having to make them. Spare a thought for the pressures that must have been felt and are still being felt by all leaders of the nations around the world now and in the last few months.

This week for me has been much like many others. I have completed two more jigsaws, making thirteen in total since March, the latest being a non-fully interlocking circular puzzle with some very unconventionally shaped pieces and there were the usual Whatsapp coffee morning with friends and afternoon tea and cakes with the girls plus a couple of Zoom meetings.

If you can remember that far back, the first Sunday with no Church was Mothering Sunday so I suppose it's only fair that Church should still be closed for Father's Day this Sunday despite the fact that I still regard it as a recent American import, Fathers not really being celebrated when I was young.

Today, Thursday, I decided it was time to have a second go at cutting my hair. On the advice of Terry Webb, I decided to do it before showering and getting dressed. That way, he advised, I wouldn't spend all day itching from hairs in my clothes. It went slightly easier this time and if you were disappointed that there were no photos last time you will be able to see the results if you watch this Sunday's service, but I shan't be doing a twirl to show the back!

Keep safe and God Bless, *Barry*

Walking around Crawley



During lockdown, we have rediscovered the delights of the Crawley Greenway, a circular route around the outskirts of Crawley. It's accessible from every neighbourhood, so only a short car drive. You can walk a few yards, or miles. We have walked about 4-5 miles every Saturday morning, making each walk into a circular route. Seeing it in the springtime, with all the flowers and blossom, has reminded us just how pretty Crawley is.

Sandra and Terry

If you have favourite walks in or near Crawley to recommend, please send them to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

A poem for the time

Kitty O'Meara, a retired chaplain and teacher who lives in Wisconsin, suffered months of severe anxiety and feelings of helplessness watching the Covid-19 pandemic grow around the world. Then, as she started to see some blessings emerging from the situation, she found the inspiration for this poem which resonated with many people's own experience and quickly went viral on social media. Thanks to Stephanie B. for sending it in.

And the people stayed home

And the people stayed home.

*And read books and listened, and rested and exercised,
and made art and played games,
and learned new ways of being and were still.*

And listened more deeply.

Some meditated, some prayed, some danced.

Some met their shadows.

And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed.

*And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous,
mindless and heartless ways the earth began to heal.*

*And when the danger passed, and the people joined together
again,*

they grieved their losses, and made new choices,

and dreamed new images,

and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully,

as they had been healed.

Kitty O'Meara 2020

★**HAPPY**★
BIRTHDAY!

**to Richard Gorringe who celebrates
his birthday on Saturday 27th June**

Contacts

Rev Ralph is currently on leave

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Prayer requests & newsletter items ask.stpauls@gmail.com

St Paul's website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

Extraordinary Times is published weekly 'for the duration'

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