

# GLAZEBURY METHODIST CHURCH

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**Bible readings for Sunday, 5 July – Genesis 24: 34-38, 42-49, 58-67, Psalm 45: 10-17, Romans 7:15-25a and Matthew 11: 16-19 and 25-30.**

## **REV ANDREW'S MESSAGE –**

### **'Terror all around!'**

"For I hear the whispering of many - terror all around!" (Psalm 31:13). In times of crisis we often find it easier to identify with the psalmist. We, too, keep hearing of the "terror all around," Covid-19, the millions of viruses scattered by coughs and sneezes are enemies "who pursue us," stealing into our homes and lungs and making those they infect "objects of dread" to our closest friends: "Those who see us on the street flee from us." But the psalmist would have us move past terror to say, "I trust in you, Lord ... My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies." "Be strong and let your heart take courage."

Similarly, "Fear Not" and "afraid" are words much used in Scripture.

Whether it's Adam in the Garden – "I was afraid", or Isaiah "do not fear, for I am with you", Or Moses to Joshua – "Do not fear or be dismayed." The Psalmist – "With the Lord on my side I do not fear." The Angel – "Do not be afraid," Jesus – "Do not be afraid, little flock," St Paul – "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear."

We are often afraid of the unknown; and it is easy to associate that fear with or of others, with our surroundings, with what we read and hear, whilst often not looking close enough at the facts, relying on spurious misinformation or social media which is often both fake and misleading. *"Sadly I think all too few people have the faintest idea of the actual risks of their being hospitalised let alone dying from the coronavirus – NHS England reported that 95% of those who have died in hospitals had a pre-existing health condition, meaning that for almost the entire working population it was not a serious threat"* (Luke Johnson writing in the Sunday Times.)

So, we become fearful, what is it today what was it yesterday, what might it be tomorrow that causes you to be fearful, anxious, worried?

I was speaking to someone just the other day, and the conversation went along these lines -  
I have really bad anxiety today.  
Oh, I'm sorry, what's causing it?

I don't know it's just anxiety, I'm frightened of going out.  
What is it that makes you frightened of going out?

I don't know, it's anxiety, it doesn't need a reason!

That struck at my heart – "it's anxiety, it doesn't need a reason!"

The buffering on all sides without reason undermining our faith, our courage, our self-esteem our very life - does that echo with you, with your experience?

Then today I want to remind you of the steadfastness of your God!

For our faith, our hope is in the God, who has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So, we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

Easy for me to say, I guess maybe so, my experience is not your experience, but my God is the same as your God. It's not my experience you need to concern yourself with, it's yours and your response and relationship to God. Your response to the fake news and the need to arm yourself with the facts – that's not so say that it will be easy or that life and this virus will not find you wanting but rather the certainty that through it all God stands with you and in the immortal poem, carries you when you need to be carried.

Our attitude toward COVID-19 should be marked by the Christian virtue of measured concern, measured, not panicking but heeding Jesus' encouraging warning, "Do not be anxious about your life ... Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul"; and concern, recognising the evil for what it is and not comforting ourselves with falsehoods.

Then I want to turn my attention to the future. The daily readings this week have been of Jesus healing ministry. The leper, the Centurion's servant, the Demonics at Gadarenes, the paralytic, Peter's mother in law and many others at his house.

Several years later when Peter was preaching to the household of Cornelius, he said that Jesus went about doing good and healing... The ultimate purpose of Jesus' incarnation of course was to give His life as a ransom for many, but his three years of public ministry were characterised by doing good and healing people.

I'm sure that part of the reason that Jesus performed miracles of healing was as proof that he had authority, a reference to his divine Sonship. There was another motive, however, he was moved by compassion for those in need. Matthew records that as he went throughout the cities and villages, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Much like today!)

Looking at us today, the followers of Jesus, what might be Peter's perception, are we sold out for the gospel? A challenging question, do we really get what Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection had achieved for us?

Well in terms of loving our neighbour we're doing well, we may not be healing the sick or casting out many demons, but there has been an amazing response to this pandemic as churches have reached out, as you have reached out to the community, with endless telephone calls, provision of food and other practical responses, and my hope and prayer is that everyone who had received something from us will know the reason why.

They will know it's because of God, and the command of Jesus to love.

I hope that the perception of Glazebury Methodist out in the community has been changed, that they have seen what amazing people you are and the amazing love there is within the church for our community and for our neighbours. And I'm hoping that people's perception will have been changed outside, so that we can start inviting people inside. I hope and pray that you are excited with a desire to invite people to come with you to learn more of what it means to belong to the church of Christ today.

Why not grasp an opportunity, why not plan to run an Alpha or similar course, online if you must, as you continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ? The Christ who heals the sick, drives out the demons, and calls us not to be anxious but to trust all things to God's unfailing love and concern.

**Garden Communion - A message from Rev Andrew – The Leadership Team will discuss this at tonight's (Friday's) virtual meeting.**

I am awaiting delivery of some individual communion wine and wafer sets (due early next week,) and before I move, I would like to arrange some garden communion where possible.

Keeping safe social distance, I'm thinking that we could meet in private gardens with up to 6 people - may be more if we're really careful about distance and keeping safe. If we all could gather the same day and time, then I could move from one garden to the other in the village.

If there were a number of members who would be prepared to offer their garden as hosts then we could see how it might work.

Those who are especially vulnerable or are shielding, and if they have a garden, then they could host and remain in the home while others sit in the garden. Alternatively we could arrange to meet together in one or two gardens one day after the shielding is lifted at the end of the month.

The communion comes in a sealed container with wine and wafer, I would propose that they are positioned on a table in view of everyone and that we follow a short service from a service sheet which is laminated and can be cleaned between use. The elements remain sealed and the words of institution would be said as normal, I would break one other wafer as the symbolic breaking.

With gloved hands I would then distribute the communion and each person would remove the wrapper and consume the elements.'

More information next week, as to where and when.

Rev Andrew.



### **EMAIL NEWS SHEET**

We have set up a 'Google Groups' for the circulation of the weekly news sheet. We will have sent it to you via Google and would ask you to check your spam and junk email and find it there.

From thereon it will only come via Google so keep an eye on your junk mail just in case.

If you have received this in the post, and would like to receive it via email then please let me know. Thanks Christine.

### **SHARING SUNDAY WORSHIP**

We are sharing our Sunday Service over the telephone. Most weeks we have over 180 callers from across the Leigh & Hindley and Liverpool North Circuits.

If you would like to listen in, at 10.30am on Sunday:

Dial **020 3478 5289** on your telephone,

When it asks for the access code, enter **145 404 825#**.

(this number will be the same each week)

When it asks for your ID, press **#**

FOR THOSE THAT LISTEN TO THE SUNDAY SERVICE AND EVEN TO THE PODCASTS. IF YOU HAVE NOT GOT A SINGING THE FAITH HYMN BOOK AT HOME - SO THAT YOU CAN SING ALONG - PLEASE LET ME KNOW AND I WILL ARRANGE FOR YOU TO RECEIVE ONE - Christine Taylor Mobile: 07801 252625 or email - [christine.arran4872@aol.com](mailto:christine.arran4872@aol.com)

### **PODCASTS**

Regular podcasts from Rev Viv can be found on: <https://soundcloud.com/user-476066366> . I send these out daily to those who receive notice sheets by email each week. If you know of anyone who would like to receive them please let me have their email address and I will include them in the distribution. Christine Taylor

**FEELING THE EFFECTS OF 'LOCKDOWN'?** If you are on your own, or not, and are feeling the effects of the 'lockdown' then phone your Pastoral Visitor for a chat.

IF YOU ARE not a member of church and need to talk please ring Rev Andrew Bradley or Delia Caswell on the phone numbers at the top of the first page of this news sheet.

### **First Loved**

**Reading:** God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.... We love because he first loved us. [1 John: 4-9-10 and 19].

**Reflection:** It is so powerful to think that even when we didn't know or care about God, God loved us. God doesn't love us because we do things wrong. The revolution of God's love for us is that it can't be earned. God just loves us. It is a pure gift.

Just as God loved us before we knew it, so God works for all whether they know it or not. God is working in everyone's life. Some people see it, some people don't. God's love acts for all - but what God wants more than anything is for us to recognise it and welcome it. The calling of Christians is to be those who point out how God is already at work in their lives; it is a calling to be channels, not creators of God's love.

**Prayer:** Loving God, thank you that before we loved you, you loved us first. We recognise your love for us today and choose to love you too. Thank you for my friends. Please open my friends eyes to your love and your action for them.

**Action:** It is easy to take people for granted. Are there ways today that you can demonstrate to those you are praying for how grateful you are for them being in your life?

**The above is from Jesus loves all (A Prayer Journal) [www.thykingdomcome.global](http://www.thykingdomcome.global).**

### **Our allotment needs attention!**

If anyone, who is able to go out, is feeling a bit at a loss of what to do!!! Why don't you think of giving the church allotment (opposite Bents) a little attention? All help would be appreciated. Thank you to Aaron and Alan for their on-going caring of the allotment. If you are interested please contact Alan Crozier on his email address - [alancpds@hotmail.com](mailto:alancpds@hotmail.com). Or ring me (Christine Taylor) on my mobile below.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING TO THE NEWS SHEET PLEASE CONTACT ME ON EMAIL BY WEDNESDAY OF EACH WEEK: [christine.arran4872@aol.com](mailto:christine.arran4872@aol.com) or phone me on Mobile: 07801252625.