

WITHINGTON METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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Reflection from Krystyna

'But God is my helper Psalm 54, 4

Dear Friends,

Have you ever looked up the phrase “but God” in the Bible? You will find it in a lot of interesting situations where God intervened.

Take the story of Noah, for example. I wonder if he started to lose hope as he and his family were stuck in the ark with all those animals after the Flood. Genesis 8, 1 tells us: “But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede”.

Then we have the story of Joseph. His brothers sold him into slavery and thought he was dead. Yet God preserved him. He elevated Joseph to a position of great power in which he was in charge of the food supply.

When a famine struck, his brothers appeared before him one day, asking for food. Joseph said to them, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people” (Genesis 50,20).

The nation of Israel faced the Red Sea, an insurmountable obstacle, with the Egyptian army pursuing them. But God intervened and what looked like a hopeless situation became a time of glorious deliverance.

The Bible tells us, “But the people of Israel had walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, as the water stood up like a wall on both sides”

The lives of Noah, Joseph, and biblical Israelites remind us that “with God all things are possible”.

Maybe, like them, you are in a place where the only way out is God. You can be sure of this: God is bigger than your problem. And God will always have the last word.

Wishing you every blessing,

Krystyna



Lectionary Reading

Philippians 4:1-9

Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity

4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

²I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Final Exhortations

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Reflection from Caroline Wickens

The Bible tells us of two key moments when God's people turned away from their God. First, Adam and Eve ate the apple in the garden of Eden. Then, when God had led the people out of Egypt into the desert, drying up the Red Sea for them to cross over, they collaborated to make the golden calf, and worshipped it, while their leader Moses was away from them on Mount Sinai, receiving the Ten Commandments.

It is this second moment of sin that is remembered in today's psalm:

- ¹⁹ They made a calf at Horeb
and worshipped a cast image.
²⁰ They exchanged the glory of God
for the image of an ox that eats grass.
²¹ They forgot God, their Saviour,
who had done great things in Egypt,
²² wondrous works in the land of Ham,
and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.

These verses of Psalm 106 express the horror of what the Israelites did. How could they possibly turn away from the living God and worship something which they had made themselves? Did they not see the contrast between this piece of metal, a poor imitation of an animal, and the God of earth and heaven? The psalmist wants us to realise that this is a moment of madness which makes no sense at all.

Yet we know that sometimes people, or whole groups of people, or whole nations can fall under the spell of folly. Next Sunday, 18 October, is Anti-Slavery Sunday, and we are asked to remember the horrors of the slave trade and to recognise the existence of modern slavery. It is horrifying to think that there are people in this city who are trafficked and enslaved, but perhaps even more appalling to recall the trans-Atlantic slave trade – and yet the wealth of nations was built on this abhorrent business. Why did people fail to see the inhumanity, the shocking abuse, involved in slavery?

But there were people who did stand up and shout about the evils of this trade, two hundred years ago. There were former slaves in this country, such as Olaudah Equiano, who spoke and wrote about his experiences. There were many slaves in the colonies who risked their lives in rebellion, undermining the power of the slaveowners. There were people in public life who were committed to ending the slave trade, Wilberforce the best-known among them.

The psalm sets Moses in the same position, a courageous voice opposing wrong and making it possible to rebuild a relationship with God.

- ²³ Therefore he said he would destroy them—
had not Moses, his chosen one,
stood in the breach before him,
to turn away his wrath from destroying them.

Moses stands for all those men, women and children of great courage who are prepared to speak out against wrong, and call people back to right ways of living. There are still people like this today - who can you think of who 'stands in the breach' as Moses did, calling us back from madness to choices that make sense for the wellbeing of people and planet? God gives us the resources, the people, to find our way back from the brink of disaster to renewed wonder at that steadfast love.

It is the gift of restored relationship that enables this psalm to begin and end with praise:

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever.

So too we can praise God, who sends prophets, people who call us back from our foolishness and sin, even when things have gone horribly, unimaginably wrong – because God's steadfast love for us endures for ever.

Zoom Worship

Caroline Wickens would like to invite you to the weekly Sunday evening worship on Zoom. Deacon Pru Cahill is going to lead our worship around the theme of Prisons Week-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84344057526?pwd=Z3d0ZW90TUlnZkdHdktrZmtjZ3grUT09>

Meeting ID: 843 4405 7526

Password: 1901

Or dial in on your mobile with the following number and codes-

+442039017895,

84344057526 #, 0#, 1901#

Phone Worship

Our conference call services are held on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 until 2:30 pm, but feel free to join us from 1:45 pm for an informal chat before worship where you can also share your prayer concerns. Each service includes: prayers, Bible readings, a short sermon and 1 hymn.

All you need is a phone, calls are charged at local rate and are included in network bundle deals.

To join the service please dial:
0333 0164 757

Room number: 79317515 #

PIN: 8347 #

In Person Worship

We've had some lovely feedback about our weekly morning live streams. It's nice to hear that this is another way of making our church family feel closer together even while we're apart.

Our service this week will be lead by Nick Palfreyman and will again be live streamed at 10:45 through the following YouTube link-

<https://youtu.be/mLiWkQTcHKc>

Prayer List

This week we remember in our prayers-

Those suffering financial hardships.

Those who face an uncertain future.

Those who are lonely

Those facing redundancy

Those who have lost a family member to COVID-19

Thandiwe and Peter,

Cliff,

Cliff's parents,

Phil,

Simon,

Stella,

Robbie,

Barbara,

Georgine,

Promilla, Noel, Urima, Aima & Hannan,

Christians in Pakistan,

Pat and Jim

Closer Despite Covid– With Hanna Botchwey

Thank you to Jemalia Hanna Botchwey for sharing her experience at Withington -

Where did you worship when you were growing up?

My mother and father went to the Methodist Church in Ghana and so I attended the Church in Odouker.

How long have you been coming to Withington?

I have been coming to this church for 6/7 years.

How did you discover WMC?

I was going to Whalley Range Methodist and I met Elizabeth Adu. I followed her to Withington.

Why is WMC important to you?

It is important to worship God and have contact with other Christians. They are very welcoming here. It is important not to forget God and be glad what He does for me.

Tell us one of your favourite hymns

I like 'Near my God to be' because God is always with me in good and bad times.

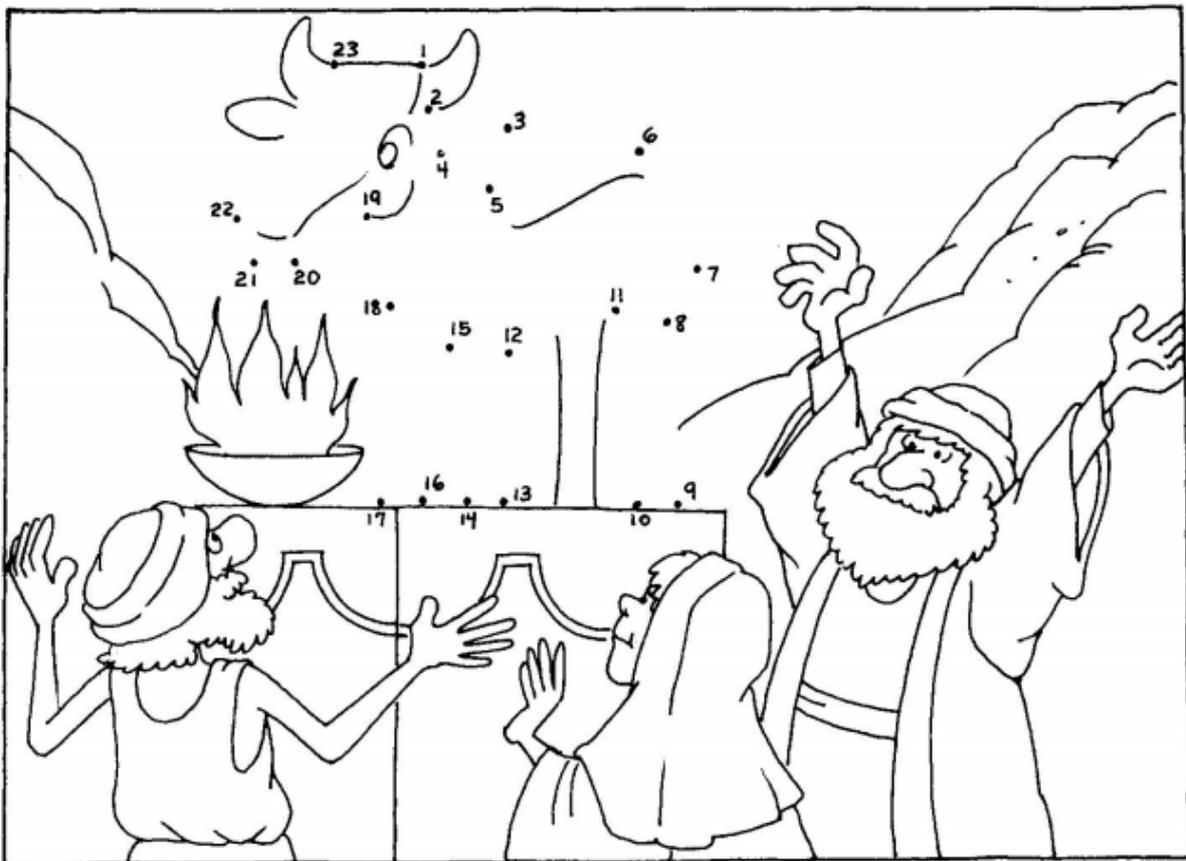
One thing about yourself.....

I went to France to join my husband in 1980. My husband lost his job and moved to the UK where I joined him in 1997. We had 5 children. We left the 4 girls in France because 2 were working and the other 2 were at University. We brought our son to the UK. I enjoy singing, swimming and walking. My husband died 10 years ago.



A bit of fun!- Bugs in the Bible Wordsearch

One of the lectionary readings for this week is Exodus 32:1-14. Complete the dot to dot to remind yourself what this reading is.



Is it time to come back to church?

The team at Withington Methodist Church are currently considering when Sunday morning services will reopen, There will be changes in place to make sure there is as little risk as possible of catching COVID-19. We would like to know what you think about the new safety measures below.

You need to stay at home if you have any of these symptoms:



- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If you have been shielding:



Though the government guidance around shielding has changed, it is still advised that these groups of people stay at home as much as possible.

If you have been shielding, talk to your GP about whether returning to church is the right decision. You can also find more information at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Our promise to you

When we decide to reopen, the following rules will be in place:

Seats will be 2 metres apart

No moving around will happen during the service. This also means no hugs or hand shakes.



Places will be limited

There will be a booking service for everyone to use so we can ensure only a set amount of people attend.

No singing or refreshments

To prevent the spread of infection as much as we possibly can, we have been advised not to have any singing or refreshments during the service.

Although we'd love to be able to catch up, after the service is finished, we will be asking everyone to leave straight away.

Meet us downstairs

Services will be held in the ground floor hall.

Access to the building will be from the back door (through the car park) only, so please walk your way around.

Please wear your mask

It is a legal requirement for you to put on a mask or face covering before you enter church, and keep it on for the duration of your stay. Some people may not need to wear a mask if they have a valid reason – for more information, please visit www.bit.ly/facemaskchurch

You will have to sign in

The church will be running a 'track and trace' system. This means if anyone at a service has COVID-19 up to 48 hours after the service, we will contact everyone else who attended to self-isolate.

We will only keep these details for 21 days.



We will be keeping the space clean

The worship space will be regularly cleaned, and will be well ventilated – this might mean it is colder than usual in the church, so you might want to bring a jacket or jumper.

We will also be asking everyone to use the hand sanitiser provided as they enter.



Toilets will be available

Toilets and hand washing facilities will be available, along with hand sanitiser. Please ask a steward for more information on your arrival.

- Before we reopen, we need to know what you think:
- **With these precautions in place, how happy would you be to return to church?**
 - **What else can we do to make you feel safe?**

Please let us know by calling and leaving a message on 0161 445 0804 or by emailing office@withingtonmethodistchurch.org

What do you think?

How can I book my place for worship?



We will be reopening Withington Methodist Church for Sunday morning worship at the usual time of 10:45am, however due to social distancing measures we will be limiting attendees which means you will have to reserve your place in advance.

How many spaces are there?

There will be a maximum of 15 people each week, with some space for couples and small family groups living in the same household. If the service is fully booked you will be able to book a space for the following week.

How do I book?

To book your spot, either ring the church office on 445 0804 to leave a voicemail or email office@withingtonmethodistchurch.org. Please mention the names of those attending, your contact details and whether you are happy for the church to hold these for 3 weeks for track and trace records. Richard from the office will then return your phone call or email back to confirm your booking.

When should I book?

Booking will close at 4:00pm on Friday for that Sunday or earlier if the seats are all booked up. However in this case you will have the option to book early for the following week.

An important note.

Before booking your place to attend Sunday worship at Withington, please familiarise yourself with the new safety measures outlined in the leaflet above. We do not want to encourage anyone to attend 'in person' worship who doesn't feel completely comfortable doing so. Please rest assured that we will continue to produce alternative worship resources for you to access at home including a live stream of the Sunday morning worship on YouTube.

If you have any further questions or concerns please let Richard know on the phone.