

WITHINGTON METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Issue 13 | Date: July 19, 2020

Reflection from Krystyna

'For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.'
Isaiah 55,10

Dear Friends,

A group of frogs were traveling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the pit with all their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died.

The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time!



Words have the power to lift people up and to tear them down. Words can celebrate the wonders of life, comfort the grieving, inspire with hope and make someone's day. And words can do tremendous damage. God spoke our world into existence, He took what was nothing and spoke life into it and from those powerful words brought forth light out of the darkness. Of all the different ways God could have created the heavens and the earth, He chose to do so with words. God's Word is living, active and never returns void. According to Isaiah 55,10-12, it's like the rain and snow that cause the seeds to germinate and spring forth into their destiny. Whenever God speaks, the seeds in the earth spring to life. When God's Word comes to us, His truth waters our hearts and causes the seeds of greatness placed in our souls to come to life. Part of the reason that many of us don't realise that we carry seeds of greatness is because over the years so many hurtful, negative things have been said to us. As a result, God's plans and purposes for our lives have become buried and are dormant, waiting for the right Words of Life to germinate them into action.

Will we allow Him to break up the hardness of our hearts and ignore what the world shouts at us so that those seeds can bring forth new things? The world is in desperate need of all the good fruit our lives were designed to produce.

Wishing you every blessing,

Krystyna

Reflection from Caroline Wickens

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
²You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
³You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
⁵You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

These are the opening verses of Psalm 139. It's a phenomenal evocation of God, profoundly aware of every part of our life. This is the God who notices every hair that falls from our head (Matthew 10:30), who is attentive to our every breath and hears our every word.

But doesn't God get bored? I don't find great excitement or profound meaning in every part of my life – why is God so interested in it?

I guess the answer is that God is fascinated by life itself. God called life into being, created it from the tiniest atom to the widest galaxy. God created us, breathing life into us. And each of our lives is different, the fine grain of our being uniquely shaped through interaction with all that happens to us. God's passion is to know us, unique manifestations of the life that is the amazing gift to us.

The psalm goes on to explore this further, in beautiful poetic images.

Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
⁹If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
¹¹If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night',
¹²even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

Wherever life takes us, God is there before us. The sapphire of heaven, the depth of the grave, the gold of the sun pursuing its course, rising with the wings of the morning – the psalmist evokes all these and reminds us that God is there, creator, sustainer. Even in the darkness of grief or depression, God is there, making the darkness as light. God's fascination with us is not just a professional interest in how life will behave in this specific instance. It is a longing for our wellbeing, a desire to protect, support and uphold. Even before we were born, God knew us and cared about us. God cares about us all the more, now we are able to return that interest in us. For if God is fascinated by us, if God is passionate about us, then we should respond by living lives of fascination, passion, for God. The Psalmist ends this section:

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

We can never discover the whole of God's purposes for us; but a life spent trying to count the thoughts of God is a life well-lived.

Lectionary Reading

Romans 8:12-25

¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Present Suffering and Future Glory

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.



Zoom Worship and Social

As usual, the site will open at 6pm. and worship will start at 6.30. Rev. Krystyna Kwarciak will be leading worship this time. Here are the details-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84344057526?pwd=Z3d0ZW90TUlnZhdhTktjZmtjZ3grUT09>

Meeting ID: 843 4405 7526

Password: 1901

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

+442039017895,

84344057526 #, 0#, 1901#



Family News

We would like to send a huge congratulations to Urima Noel who has received a first class degree from University and will be continuing with studies for an MSc in Psychology in the Autumn. Well done Urima!!!

We would also like to wish a Happy Birthday to David Phoenixstone who has a big birthday this Sunday (out of politeness I won't disclose which one!) Happy Birthday from us all!



Prayer Concerns

This week we remember in our prayers- Those who wrestle with mental health issues, that God will grant them support, care, understanding and love.

Refugees and asylum seekers affected by the pandemic.

Medical workers in Greater Manchester and around the world.

Those suffering financial hardships.

Those who face an uncertain future.

Those who are overwhelmed by anxiety and stress.

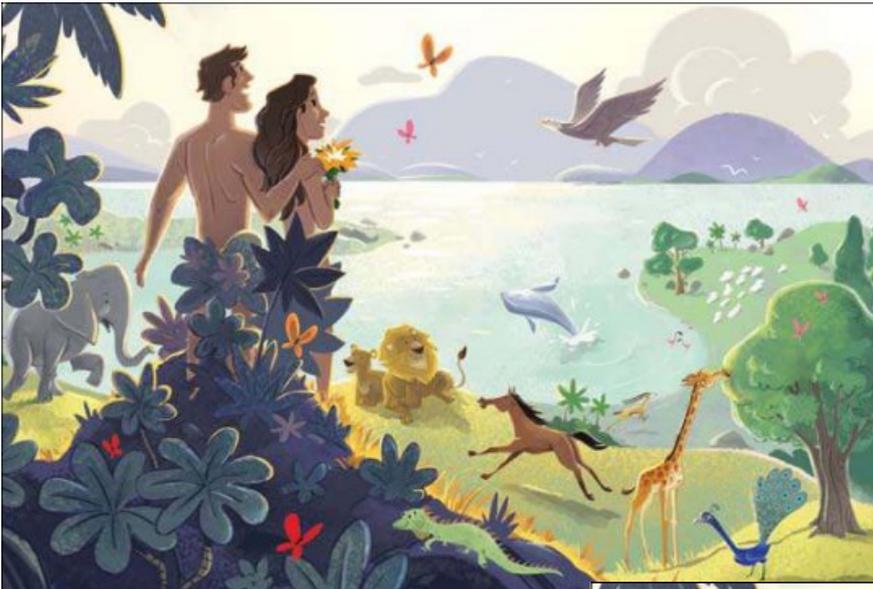
Heather and family.

Those who mourn and those who comfort them

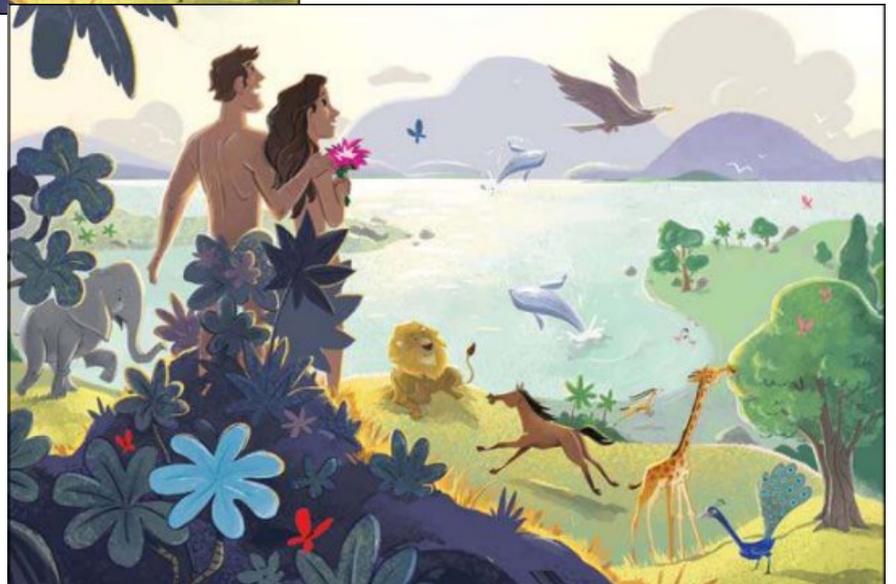
Families that are separated

Those who are lonely

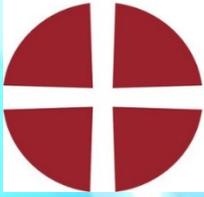
A bit of fun – Adam and Eve spot the difference



Compare the picture on the top with the picture on bottom. Circle the **13** things that are different.



Sorry, no answers this week. If you think you've found all the differences, why not take a picture and post it on the Facebook group?



Manchester Methodists



Seeking, serving, sharing Christ

SUPERHEROES



This Photo by Unknown

**Dates : Monday 3rd Aug to Friday 7th Aug
&
Monday 24th August to Friday 29th August**

10 am to 11am online via Zoom



This Photo by Unknown

**25 places available!
Booking essential by 22/07/2020**

A holiday club with a difference. To serve and protect we will be online via Zoom to all superheroes aged 5 to 10. To apply to be a superhero email clarechildren.family@gmail.com. All are welcome.