

THE MESSENGER

The magazine of Petts Wood Methodist Church



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The Church in Queensway

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THE MESSENGER

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Quote

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12

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OUR MINISTER'S LETTER:

by Revd. Terry Wright



Dear Friends,

In the Cornish village I grew up in, the Methodist Church was central to our rural life. The Chapel was physically in the centre of the village. It was the largest building (you couldn't miss it) and it was central to celebrating the seasons and festivals of the year. Even for the majority of folks who didn't attend worship on a weekly basis the high days and holidays saw the pews filled! I especially loved Harvest with our little Chapel decorated and more importantly, for endlessly hungry little boy, the chapel tea that followed with scones and an abundance of clotted cream!

Having celebrated Pentecost we now enter what is oddly called 'Ordinary time' and yet we are living in very un-ordinary times. We feel robbed of our ordinary; be that seeing family, loved ones and friends, shopping without question or meeting for a cuppa at Church. I think it's safe to say many of us can't wait for ordinary to return!

My mind is taken up with what we might do to place our churches, across the circuit, at the very centre of our communities in ways that perhaps we haven't tried before. Just like the early church that emerged from Pentecost our mission is to make ordinary time special God time that we then celebrate with great joy at Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost where, hopefully, we see new faces and pews (chairs) filled!

Well, the great news is that in each one of our churches we have made considerable progress towards this goal. I made a list of just how blessed we are:

We have now:

1. Church buildings that serve a visual reminder of God with us that is passed by hundreds (if not thousands) each day.
2. Well-kept and maintained facilities to host what we do and community groups.
3. A good number of volunteers giving so much thus enabling us to function
4. Incredible generous support of individuals in resources of talents, financial generosity and prayer.
5. A long track record of community engagement.

My life was shaped by that little Methodist Chapel in rural Cornwall. The love of ordinary women and men, who just tried to reflect Christ each day, made a difference to me and many others! Sadly, that little chapel closed in 2000 BUT its legacy lives on.

So Friends, when these strange and challenging times have passed we will return with vigour to make ordinary time Gods time a special time and a pouring of Gods Spirit that can't be missed in the streets around our churches.

Keep safe and be stay blessed, Terry

WE GATHER TO OFFER WORSHIP TO THE GLORY & PRAISE OF GOD

In accordance with the Government's measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, church services have been suspended until further notice.

Video links (via Vimeo) for Sunday services and printable order of services are available on the PWMC website. Please see links below

<http://www.pwmc.org.uk/home-service-videos/>

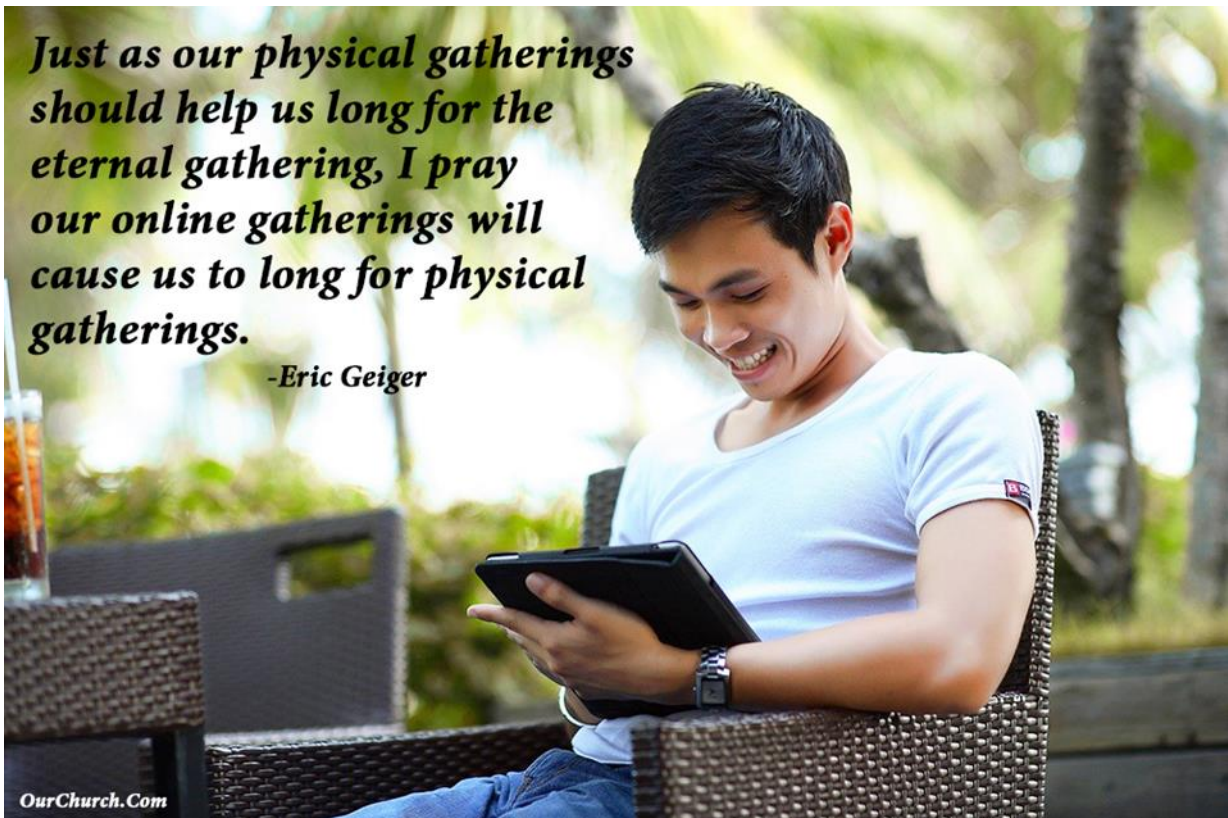
<http://www.pwmc.org.uk/the-messenger/>

Alternatively, please email Joanne Cummins (Circuit Administrator) on the email below with a request to be included in the email list for the weekly video links and printable order of services.

Email: orpingtonchislehurst@gmail.com

***Just as our physical gatherings
should help us long for the
eternal gathering, I pray
our online gatherings will
cause us to long for physical
gatherings.***

-Eric Geiger



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FAMILY NEWS:

- **Congratulations to Clare and Derek Lockwood**

Derek and Clare's celebrated their 30th (Pearl) wedding anniversary on 2nd June. They married at our Church and Revd. Sheila Purdy officiated on a bit of a windy but lovely day.

Congratulations to Clare and Derek and pray for God's continued blessings.

- **Congratulations to Dilsa and John Doddrell**

Congratulations to Dilsa and John who celebrated their 30th (Pearl) wedding anniversary on the 20th May 2020. They were married on 20th May 1990 at Hinde Street Methodist Church in London W1. The service was conducted by the Rev Dr (now Lord) Leslie Griffiths.

May the good Lord continue to bless you both and fill your lives with more love, compassion, good health and happiness.



Dilsa and John on their wedding day

- **Congratulations to Elizabeth and David Gloin**

Elizabeth and David Gloin celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on 25th July 2020. They were married by the Revd. David W Smith at Herne Hill Methodist Church now part of Herne Hill United (URC/Methodist Church). It looks as though the celebrated will be locked down!!

Happy Golden wedding anniversary!!!

Congratulations on reaching this monumental milestone. We pray for many more years of joy, peace, good health and happiness.



- **Condolences to Deacon Maureen Spinks**

Condolences to Deacon Maureen Spinks and family on the passing away of her husband Ian.

The funeral took place at the Falconwood Crematorium on Thursday 28th May.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Spinks family during this difficult time

- **Greetings from Pamela Thompson**

To my Friends at Petts Wood Methodist Church, I have been thinking of you all and hope that you and your families are all safe and well.

I also hope that we can resume your visits to me at Foxbridge House in the near future once the current restrictions are lifted.

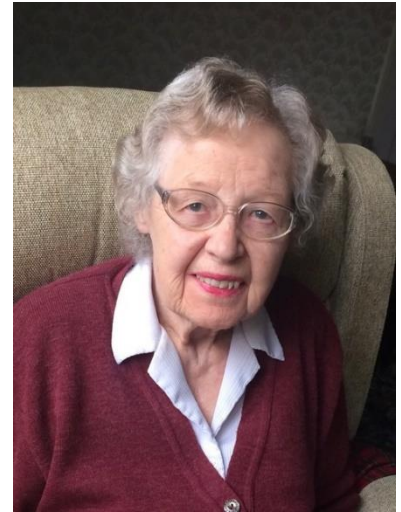
With Love,
Pamela Thompson

Margaret Joyce Tompkins

(9th April 1936 – 20th February 2020)

Margaret Joyce Tompkins was born in Ipswich, Suffolk in April 1936, the younger daughter of Rev. Owen and Hannah Roebuck who were married in Yorkshire in 1930. Margaret's elder sister Sylvia was born in 1932.

Margaret's parents have family roots in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. Her father was a Methodist minister and Naval Chaplain and the family tended to move around frequently. As a result, Margaret attended seven schools before she had turned 18.



During the 2nd World War the family lived in Portsmouth and went to the Isle of Wight on holidays with family friends.

In 1946, the family moved to Malta where Margaret's father was stationed. They lived there for two years, and Margaret's younger brother John was born while the family lived in Floriana.

After Malta the family returned to the British Isles, lived first in Bromley, and later moved to Farnborough village.

Among Margaret's interests in school were music, drama, swimming and hockey. She started learning to play the piano and violin – but was advised quickly to switch to the viola.

She took part in drama productions in Bromley Girls Grammar School in the 1950's. As a hockey player she took part in a selected team for the Festival of Britain in 1951.

Margaret studied the viola and piano at Trinity College of Music in London and had a fine deep alto singing voice.

After Trinity College, Margaret decided on a teaching career and took a teaching diploma. Her first position was at Mottingham School, later she taught at Charles Darwin School in Biggin Hill and finally at Bromley High Girls Public Day School Trust in Bickley.

Margaret always had very close ties with the Methodist Church, she was involved in the Guides and Youth Clubs in various places, ultimately in Orpington where she met our father Alan Tompkins.

Margaret and Alan Tompkins were married in Bromley in August 1959, and they moved to Petts Wood, Kent. They had two children, Gillian born 1962 and Peter born 1966 and it is here in Petts Wood that our family has its roots along with a very close relationship with the Methodist Church.

There were regular musical events going on in the church involving Margaret with Junior and Adult choirs, family music parties, musical reviews and carol-singing. She became involved in organising music for Christmas and Easter, many of the choral numbers she arranged herself – some of them are her own compositions – and she played the organ in services in the church for decades.

Margaret joined the viola section of the Bromley Symphony Orchestra in the 1960s and performed with the orchestra over a number of years, finally leaving the viola section in the late 1990s.

She enjoyed travelling and summer holidays which were always something for the family to look forward to. We travelled widely throughout the British Isles – usually keeping clear of large cities and going out into the countryside, often not too far away from a good beach.

The family travelled to Malta in 1977 – the first time Margaret had been back there since 1948, and to Norway to celebrate Margaret and Alan's Silver Wedding.

Her elder sister, Sylvia passed away in 1979 following a number of years fighting cancer, her father Owen died in 1981 and her mother, Hannah shortly after in January 1982.

From 1988 Margaret and Alan took their first of many trips to Iceland, to see Peter and the family there and also to tour and explore the country. The whole family was in Iceland for Peter and Hjördís's wedding and for the christenings of Margaret and Alan's grandchildren Gils Peter and Jóel Ben.

Margaret and Alan were very fond of rail travel and often took excursions on Euro-Star to continental Europe – visiting France, Belgium and Italy. They also went further afield and visited Australia, Singapore and the east coast of the USA.

Margaret started have health issues after 2006 and needed major heart surgery later that decade. After that she and Alan travelled less extensively than before – tending to go for short holidays in the British Isles.

Margaret and Alan celebrated their Golden Wedding in 2009 and held a large family party to celebrate Margaret's 80th birthday in April 2016,

Margaret's husband Alan Tompkins sadly passed away in November 2016.

Margaret was by nature an optimist, and had a good long life – she saw and experienced so much. She was a constantly encouraging others and refused to allow set-backs get her down, even until the very end. She died very peacefully in Beckenham on 20th February this year – she is greatly missed by her family and friends, and we are thankful for memories we have of her which we can eternally treasure.

Thank You:

- **Thanks from Edward and Angela**

Edward and I would like to say a big “thank-you” to everyone who has helped us during this Lockdown, especially Karen who has done a lot of shopping for us until we mastered delivery. We hope everyone in our Church family have kept as well as we have and managed to get on top of lots of jobs that for a long time we have been meaning to do!! Hope it won't be too long before we are altogether on a Sunday morning.

Edward and Angela Wilks

- **Thanks from Gill and Peter**

We would like to thank everyone for their kind thoughts, prayers, messages and flowers after our mother Margaret passed away in February. We truly felt loved and supported at this sad time.

Gill and Peter Tompkins

Coronavirus' Letter to Humanity

In an ode, "Letter To Humanity", that has been widely circulated on social media, Vivienne R. Reich eloquently scolds humanity for its "non-stop wars, non-stop greed" and for stubbornly refusing to be humble enough to listen to the earth's whispers, speeches and screams. Powerfully capturing the profound dilemma and the existential danger in which humanity is stuck today, Vivienne warns that Coronavirus wants humanity to wake up from its sordid materialism and vile egoism and "to reflect on what is important in life." Failure to seize the chance to reconsider the true meaning of life may have ominously chilling consequences:

"Next time I may come back even stronger"
The earth whispered but you did not hear.
The earth spoke but you did not listen
The earth screamed but you turned her off.
And so, I was born...

I was not born to punish you ...
AND YET, praise be to God,
in all this, 'nature is never spent':
the blossom still sparkles,
the flowers still inspire wonder and the birds still rest and sing in the trees
and build their nests for the next generation!
And, best of all, they do not worry about tomorrow!

I was born to awaken you ...
The earth cried out for help...
Massive flooding. But you didn't listen.
Burning fires. But you didn't listen.
Strong hurricanes. But you didn't listen.
Terrifying Tornadoes. But you didn't listen.
You still don't listen to the earth when,
Ocean animals are dying due to pollutants in the waters.
Glaciers melting at an alarming rate.
Severe drought.

You didn't listen to how much negativity the earth is receiving.
Non-stop wars.
Non-stop greed.
You just kept going on with your life ...
No matter how much hate there was ...
No matter how many killings daily ...
It was more important to get that latest iPhone than worry about what the earth was trying to tell you ...

But now I am here.
And I've made the world stop on its tracks.
I've made YOU finally listen.
I've made YOU take refuge.
I've made YOU stop thinking about materialistic things ...
Now you are like the earth...
You are only worried about YOUR survival.
How does that feel?
I give you fever ... as the fires burn on earth.
I give you respiratory issues ... as pollution fills the earth air.
I give you weakness as the earth weakens every day.
I took away your comforts ...
Your outings.
The things you would use to forget about the planet and its pain.
And I made the world stop...
And now...

China has better air quality ...
Skies are clear blue because factories are not spewing pollution into the earth's air.
The water in Venice is clean and dolphins are being seen.
Because the gondola boats that pollute the water are not being used.
YOU are having to take time to reflect on what is important in your life.

Again, I am not here to punish you ...
I am here to awaken you...
When all this is over and I am gone... Please remember these moments ...
Listen to the earth.
Listen to your soul.
Stop polluting the earth.
Stop fighting among each other.
Stop caring about materialistic things.
And start loving your neighbours.
Start caring about the earth and all its creatures.
Start believing in a Creator.
Because next time I may come back even stronger....

Signed: Coronavirus



Thoughts on Anger

By Harvey Moores

This piece is prompted by David's article on page 21 of the April-June 2020 Messenger.

Like David I wonder about those words ".....the wrath of God was satisfied" in hymn 351 in Singing the Faith. My misgiving concerned not specially the idea of God being angry: I mean it seems difficult not to see an element of divine anger in Jesus' behaviour in that temple precincts incident. Was he really cool as a cucumber the whole time?; and what about the *Dies Irae*, a text in your standard Requiem Mass from the 13th century; and there is a bit in the confession (to be used at sea) from the Book of Common Prayer on page 542 which speaks of our sins, grievously committed, against the Divine Majesty ".....provoking most justly Your wrath and indignation against us". It was rather with the (apparent) connection between the crucifixion and the satisfaction of divine anger.

Maybe the words of the hymn are the lyric writers' expression of the first half of Article 31 of the Articles of Religion (which the monarch at the time declared were the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's word.) starting on page 611 of the Book of Common Prayer - again.

Headed "*Of the one oblation of Christ finished upon the cross*" this article says: "*The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual: and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone.*"

Something is being satisfied; satisfaction hints at fulfilment of a desire or a need or maybe even a hunger or the doing of justice or the upholding of honour: something is being redeemed; redemption hints at the settlement of a debt or the recovery of a pawned possession: something or someone is being propitiated; propitiation hints at the appeasing of an offended Entity.....is this where the element of anger comes in?. But is it necessary to suppose that what is being propitiated is anger? But there again, it is said that the sky went dark and the veil was torn apart.....not exactly pacific omens.....

In Edwyn Bevan's "Symbolism and Belief", the chapter called "The Wrath of God", page 182 covers all sorts of ground – retribution, desserts, indignation, repentance, corrective punishment – but nowhere do I find a sentence like ".....it is generally considered by anyone who has thought seriously about the matter that divine anger

may be assumed to represent.....” so I was a bit disappointed. Bevan suggests that to represent God as having eyes, hands, thrones is to use symbols; to represent God as having non-physical attributes like love, wisdom, mercy, justice is much nearer the reality.....and a long way from reality is the attribution to God of anger. To me, then, the possibility of divine anger is hinted at, rarely strongly, mostly less so, but is not entirely absent.

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

Word Search: Noah

All the words listed below are in the puzzle.

After you have found all the words, order the leftover letters in the correct order to form the mystery answer.

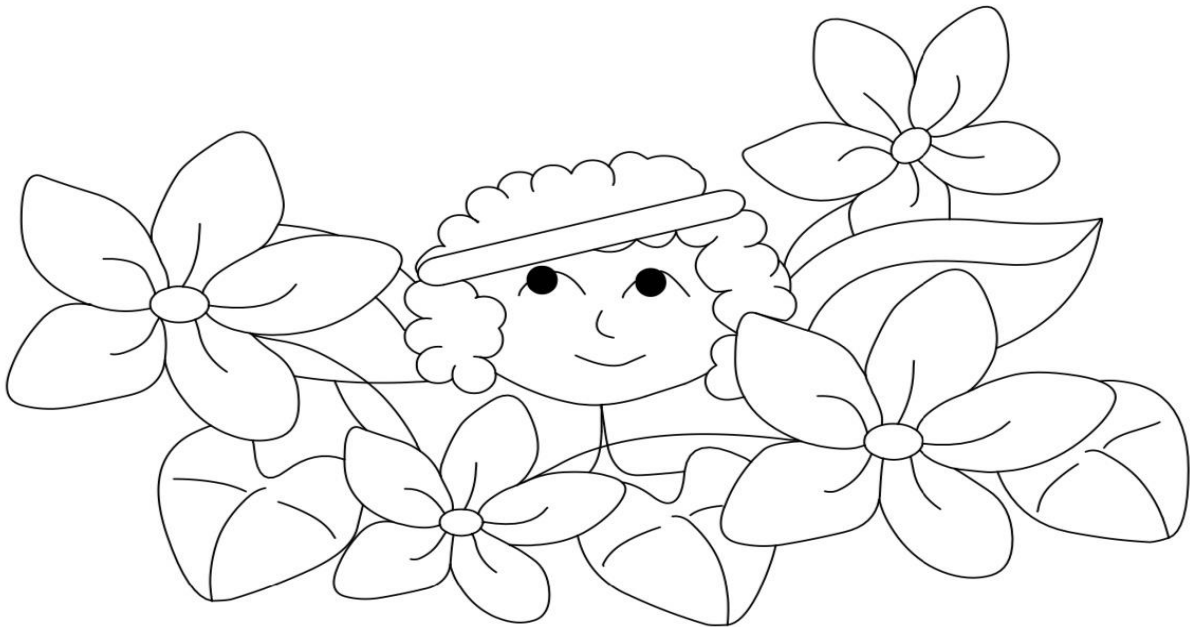
Mystery answer on page 13.

D	G	E	N	E	S	I	S
N	O	D	O	G	W	R	A
W	I	V	E	S	A	R	K
S	I	A	E	Y	T	N	Y
O	H	T	R	A	E	D	T
N	N	G	I	S	R	B	R
S	L	A	M	I	N	A	O
B	O	W	B	O	W	T	F

Words

Animal	Forty	Sign
Ark	Genesis	Sons
Bird	God	Two
Dove	Obeyed	Water
Earth	Rain	Wives

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with
all my heart: and I will glorify your
name for evermore.



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Mystery Answer to young at heart word search – Rainbow

COVID-19 Quiz: (Has your brain gone stale in this pandemic?)

1. How many animals of each species did Moses take into the Ark?
2. Some months have 31 days, some have 30. How many have at least 28 days?
3. A man built a rectangular house with each side having a southern aspect. A bear came wandering by. What colour was it?
4. If you were alone on a freezing cold night, and there were an unlit fire, a candle and a lamp, and you only had one match, which would you light first?
5. How many birthdays does an average man or woman have?
6. How much soil (to the nearest cubic millimetre) is there in a hole 2cm x 2cm x 4cm?
7. Is it legal for a man to marry his widow's sister?
8. If you drove a bus leaving Waterloo with 40 passengers, dropped off 7 and picked up 2 at Aldwych, stopped at Holborn and picked up 10, and went to St Paul's, dropped off 12 there and picked up 6, then drove on to arrive at Liverpool Street 5 minutes later, what would the driver's name be?
9. You enter Mary's one-storey home. Her walls, curtains, tables and lampshades are all red. What colour are the stairs?
10. I survive when I'm fed but if you give me a drink I will die. What am I?
11. Connor's father has 3 children. The first was named April and the second was named May. What is the name of the third child?
12. What has keys but will never open a door?

Answers on page 19

Prayer Corner

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Psalm 46:10

Thanksgiving Prayers

Thank God for the Peace you enjoy in your Health, Homes and Families.
(Psalm 4:8)

Thank God for His Peace in our Countries and the World. (Psalm 27:1)

Prayers for Peace in the World

Lord! speak your Words of Peace in our troubled world of COVID-19
(Mark 4:39)

Oh Lord our healer, have mercy on us and heal our WORLD. (Exodus 15:26)

Father, we lay our burdens upon you. Help us oh Lord for we are weary.
(Matthew 11:28-29)

Father, we trust in you only; help us oh God for there is no one that can help us except you. (Jeremiah 17:14)

Lord, let your peace reign in our hearts in Jesus' name. (Colossians 3:15)

May you find peace and healing as you connect with God in Prayer.

AMEN

MISCELLANEOUS:

- **The Methodist Conference will meet virtually this year**

The Conference Business Committee met last week and agreed that the Conference should meet June 25 – July 2 2020 in order to conduct its essential business. The committee recognised that the restrictions that are likely still to be in place at the end of June mean that a virtual meeting is necessary. The committee was encouraged by the experience of the Council when it met virtually at the end of March.

Final details about the timetable are being discussed and there will be further communication with all those attending.

- **Worshipping in community**, contributed by David Gloin

When the State allows Christians and other faiths to worship appropriately in community it may be appropriate to recall the words of the unknown author of the Letter to the Hebrews quoted by Bear Grylls in his Daily Devotional “Soul Fuel”:

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds; not by giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but by encouraging one another...” [10:24-25].

And a couple of thoughts from the Orthodox tradition:

“No one is saved alone. [Those] who are saved are saved in the Church as a member of her and in union with all her other members.”

Ignorance and sin are characteristic of isolated individuals. Only in the unity of the Church do we find these defects overcome. [The human] finds his [or her] true self in the Church alone ... in communion with [her and] his brothers [and sisters and their] Saviour”

[Aleksei Khomiakov and Fr. Alexander Elchaninov quoted at page 107 The Orthodox Way Bp. Kallistos Ware

- **It was Only When...** by Clive Marsh, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

For obvious reasons I have been re-reading the Exodus plague stories recently (Ex 7-13). It has been a very long time since I've read them in one sitting. It is a sobering and challenging exercise, and reading the stories now, when coronavirus rages, sharpens the exercise further. It is also a dangerous thing to do.

Whilst it is true that our Christian sense-making requires us to make connections between what happens to us now, and narratives, texts and traditions from the Jewish and Christian past, sometimes we can make those links too easily and

sloppily. Reading about 'The Ten Plagues' now may imply that the coronavirus is God's doing.

We can, of course, only say that in the sense that everything can be called God's doing. All is 'of God' in so far as God has 'let the world be'. Whilst God remains tangled up with the world in a creative way – as incarnate and as Spirit – it no longer looks as though God fiddles with things in the world in detail. In love, God has even let the world go astray, for that is what love's freedom entails.

The coronavirus is not, then, a God-sent plague. It is a consequence of a free world. What, then, is the point of reading the plague stories now? Scripture still throws us vital stuff to wrestle with even when its distance from us in time can shock. We often have to accept that it can't possibly deliver insights straightforwardly to our present concerns. And yet, in wrestling with the texts, using all of the wisdom we can lay our hands on – human and divine, and accepting that's God's Spirit is working with us right now, fascinating things come up.

God doesn't come off too well from the plague stories, let's be honest. 'Why would God do this?' is a simple, honest and sharp question. It is easy to start from the happy ending of the Exodus – this is the liberation of the children of Israel after all – and work back. If freedom came, then it had to be God's doing. But the God who is portrayed here is not altogether pleasant, actively making Pharaoh stubborn (Ex 7.3, 10.20, 11.10, for example).

It is understandable why believers might say God must have behaved this way: God is always in control, so 'it must have been like this'. But what if we are to read this whole text much more as an account of human oppression and the thirst for justice? It matters less that Pharaoh was Egyptian (against whom the God of Israel was hostile). It also matters less how involved God was in the detail of Pharaoh's decision-making than the fact that people were being taken advantage of, and being held captive.

It also matters relatively little exactly what happened and when. Were there ten plagues? Two of the Psalms (78 and 105) refer to seven plagues (a much more biblical number). And what if these plagues were memories of 'natural disasters' anyway, tangled up with the memories of captivity? Those who live in cramped conditions, with little freedom or opportunity to escape when nature takes a nasty twist are always more vulnerable.

How clearly we see this at the moment. These are powerful stories that help us understand how the people of Israel came to be, how they grasped the nature of the One God, and how the drive for liberation in all its forms overcomes whatever obstacles (human or natural) are placed in its way. They are a mix of memory and community-creation. They are also a gift to the whole world.

And for us, now, as contemporary Christians, faced with a frightening global virus? The plague stories provide a clear opportunity for us to look carefully at the understandings of God we carry with us, and why. God – as reality – always eludes us, even as we live, move and have our being within God.

All our attempts to grasp God in words will be inadequate. But we need to keep on trying, otherwise we shall not be able to communicate to others the nature of the divine reality within which we believe the whole creation has its being. Christian understandings of God are of course profoundly shaped by the person and stories of Jesus, whom the early Christians identified (we believe correctly) as the Christ. There is much in the Gospels about which we also have to say: ‘we don’t know precisely what happened’. But the stories of Jesus still work effectively to help us understand God better.

In so many cases in life we find ourselves saying ‘it was only when...’ something happened that certain things became clear to us. I feel sure that this kind of reaction was going on as the Exodus narratives and the Gospels were put together. Though historical, or history-like, texts they are doing much more than narrate historical events.

They are shaping individuals and communities. I wonder whether there may come a time when we say of the coronavirus things like ‘it was only when...’ I could not speak to my neighbours face to face that I realized how important they were; or that I realized my addiction to foreign travel might not be a healthy thing; or that a simple trip to the shops to pick up readily-available food is such a privilege. We may then (rightly) not want to say God caused the coronavirus. But we shall want to draw out some big consequences for what we say about God, humanity and nature as a result.

- Finally...

I’ll tell you a coronavirus joke now, but you’ll have to wait two weeks to see if you got it.

Finland just closed its borders. You know what that means. No one will be crossing the finish line.

What do you tell yourself when you wake up late for work and realise you have a fever? Self, I so late.

Why didn’t the sick guy get the joke? It flu over his head.

So many coronavirus jokes out there, it’s a pandemic!!!

DIARY DATES SELECTION:

August

Thursday 6th

Deadline for contributions for Sep-Nov Messenger

ANSWERS TO COVID QUIZ ON PAGE 15:

1. None, Noah was in the ark
2. All 12 months
3. White, because the house is at the North Pole
4. The match
5. Only one
6. No soil in a hole
7. If he is a widow he is dead
8. Your own name as you are the driver
9. A single-storey home has no stairs
10. Fire
11. Connor. Connor's father is the parent of all three kids. Therefore, Connor is the third child.
12. A piano

TAILPIECE

After every storm the sun will smile; for every problem
there is a solution, and the soul's indefensible duty is
to be of good cheer

William R. Alger, Theologian

