



April 2021

Minister: Rev. Joe Adams

Tel: 07985 417000.

Genesis 12:1, 4 NKJ *Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

Can you even imagine! Can you grasp how much faith hope and trust in the power of God Abram, later to be called Abraham, needed to do that!

He had to believe in what he could not see and trust and walk patiently waiting for the promise of God to come. He didn't even know what his destination would be or look like. His journey led him to leave behind everything, even in old age, but God's promise drove him on in faith.

God is calling us in a similar way to walk away from our past and trust that the future will be in God; and just like Abram and all other saints we don't know what the future we are called to journey to looks like either, other than it won't look like our past.

We are always called to be a people on the move, a people full of love and hope. Journey and movement are absolutely integral to the Christian life; we cannot stand still as individuals or as Church.

Love and hope always call us to more than we are right now. I have heard people say the opposite of love is not hate but apathy and indifference, and I have a lot of time for that. I read this week though something that is equally true, that the opposite of love is fear.

That rings true, fear really is the opposite of love and hope and we have seen that so clearly in this pandemic year; fear has gripped us and after so long in the wilderness we risk being paralysed by it. So scared we are terrified to take even one step out and on.

For too long the only story in town has been fear and the despair of Covid19 - we need a new more hopeful promising narrative to unite around and look towards.

We need the message of Easter, the Cross and the empty Tomb; we need Jesus calling us to follow Him, drawing us on and out, away from the wilderness and fear of this year. We need Abram and Sarai challenging us to dare to step out again and move on.

There is much we can do I'm sure in small ways to bring joy and hope back to our Church and community; we could for example have outdoor garden get togethers to renew friendships and enjoy fellowship again. We could do so much and have to do so much this summer - we need it don't we? Will you? Would you contact me or one of the stewards and see where you can fit into such a thing, attending or hosting?

Will you be brave enough to hear this call to pray for the Spirit of God to lift your eyes away from your fear and to the Cross we lift up high? Our community and Church need us to do that as life begins to unfold and people move out of their homes again. After so very long in the wilderness, so very long, with closed buildings and an absence of direct fellowship, with fear and sorrow this last long year our community need us to be once more a people full of faith hope love and courage out where our communities are. Offering a physical presence a renewed call to be where the people are.

They don't need any more fear and worry, we have heard and seen enough voices of doom, we have had a stomach full; the community and our Church need us to be ready to be present, reaching out and living the love and the power of Christ, being a positive witness of hope.

Yes the future is uncertain. Yes there are immediate problems and fears that we have not known since the Spanish flu killed so many around 1920; we have lived through such a destructive and awful time and still are living with the shadow of Covid hanging over us all, but as Christians, as disciples of the living Lord Jesus we are called to see a bigger picture too. We are called to live in the power of the Cross and the hope of the empty tomb.

I am certain that we have to stop living defined only by the fear of Covid and start stepping into the future as chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a people belonging to God.

We are in Jesus much more than what we currently see, aren't we? We are called to embrace the Easter hope of resurrection and life.

Not living carelessly or recklessly. Not being Covid deniers, this is clearly ridiculous. I have conducted Covid funerals and ministered in our community to people grieving and scarred by Covid, I have had family members struggle with Covid; I know the pain and loss, the misery, and would never underestimate it.

Yet as our world begins to unfold we have to be present and we have to dream and be ready to journey with the Holy Spirit into our new future. Our future will definitely not be the same as our past. Now it is time we allow God to shape us to be ready to be lights and beacons of hope in the community not trapped only in our homes. That is definitely not to underestimate what this year has taught us.

It has literally been hell for so many and all of us have been affected by Covid and the lockdown. Yet with God nothing is wasted and this last year has not been wasted time. Our fellowships have been sustained and in some ways here at Wimpole Road we have grown through this year.

Perhaps the greatest thing God has given us though has been a window into how it feels to be isolated and alone, unwell and fearful.

- I pray we will be better, kinder, and more eager to listen to other options and opinions without fear stopping us listening.
- I pray we will be more respectful of people who disagree with us.
- I pray too we will be more aware of the pain of loneliness some of our people have lived with for generations because we did 9 months of self isolation.
- I pray we are more sympathetic and understanding about mental health because we have struggled this year or know someone who has.

- I pray too we will never under value those who care for us in GP surgeries and hospitals, in midwifery units and care homes, driving delivery vans or serving in supermarkets, working in prisons or social care; this year has taught us that those we should respect most and revere for their hard work and skill are not the big earners but those often on minimum wage who have held our society together this year.

I do hope our society become fairer and more just because of this year, that we are changed by the pandemic to be more Christ like.

But we have to do more as a Church. We have to plan now so that when the day arrives when people are meeting in person in our communities and let's pray that really is the end of June this summer – and that we are ready and able and prepared to be present and to be alive.

We have to plan to not return to Public worship if we are unsure if it is safe for us, but by committing to not be the same as we were before the Pandemic - doing that would be like Abram settling for staying where he was and not journeying with God away from Harlan.

We need like Abram to be prepared to step away from where we are and get ready to emerge from our enforced exile. Like those first disciples to let go of the old dreams so that new life can be born in us.

We have spent so long looking in; we need to look out again. To the Cross lifted high over our faith and the world; to the empty tomb proclaiming that even death is defeated by the power of God's love.

May resurrection light shine upon you, bringing joy and hope flooding in you and through us all, now and forever.

God bless you *Rev. Joe*

LENT THOUGHT and PRAYER

by Christine Duthie

A Lent Reflection – "The girl in the courtyard" Mark 14 v 66

I was that girl in the courtyard.

I work at the high priest's house. I wait at the table or help in the kitchen.

It was my turn to do an early shift today so I was here very early this morning. Before daybreak and normally there is no one about at this time.

But when I arrived there were people everywhere.

I asked what was happening and was told that Jesus had been arrested and was being questioned.

I went into the courtyard to fetch a broom. There was a fire there and several people were warming themselves. I noticed one man. He was a big strong looking fellow.

Dressed a bit untidily and when he spoke his accent was not from around here.

I went over to him and said, "*Aren't you one of Jesus' companions?*"

I was sure I had seen him before but he denied this, in fact he became really agitated and started shouting and swearing and as dawn broke and I heard the cock crow. I've never seen a man break down in such a way.

And now we hear that Jesus has been sentenced to death, and the man I spoke to earlier was one of his followers.

I wish now I hadn't singled him out. I can see now that he was afraid and feared for his life as well.

I don't understand what this is all about.

Some are saying Jesus is God's son and if that is so then all we can do is pray. Pray and ask God to forgive us.

Dear Heavenly Father

As the risen Lord Jesus met with Mary in the garden and with the disciples in the upper room we pray that the message of Easter may come and touch our hearts and give us peace. Amen

THOUGHTS ON NEW WORDS

by Christine Duthie

During the pandemic we have come to know some new words which have become quite common to use, words like lockdown, bubbles, furlough and shielding.

But as a result of this other words have come forward, old words which sometimes perhaps are not used enough and these words have come to the forefront, words such as kindness, caring, helpful etc.

Many people have been moved to help their neighbour during this time through food parcels, shopping and telephone calls.

We pray that as life has changed during this time that people everywhere will continue to love and help their neighbour as best they can.

Jesus said "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself.*"

WE ARE HELPING PEOPLE TO 'GET DIGITAL'!

On behalf of Wimpole Road and St. Stephen's in support of the work undertaken by the Digital Access Support Team (DAST), the team who join us at WR for the IT Hub as part of our Wednesday Coffee Morning, I am pleased to report that we have secured a grant of almost £5,000 to enable the provision IT devices for a huge number of people in need of these across the borough.

The initial part of the plan was to deliver laptops and other devices to families who hadn't got online access to enable their children to continue learning online during lockdown, with this further rolled out to others in need of this support. In some situations devices are loaned and in others they are donated.

To date over 60 devices have been allocated, with a further 20 ready for distribution over the next week or so. Another 95 are on order and will arrive in batches of 20 over the coming weeks.

Rachaelle and her team at Colchester Borough Council are doing wonderful work in terms on managing this project and the devices and working with the beneficiaries and agencies locally. They are currently working with and distribution through the likes of Mind, Refuge Action, DNA Networks, Colchester 360 and many others. This has the potential to make a real difference to so many people, to help them to stay connected and support their overall wellbeing.

If you or somebody you know might benefit some form of online access, but can't at present for whatever reason, please speak to me and I can put you in touch with Rachaelle and her team. They can also provide a range of IT training if needed.

Andrew Topple

A WORD ON OUR CHURCH FINANCES

To ensure that Wimpole Road is here to serve this neighbourhood after the Pandemic we have still had to keep paying our bills. This has meant that during this last year we have had to call upon our reserves, and get £25,000.00 down from Manchester to cover this. Our very grateful thanks to those who have continued their regular giving by Standing Order or who have forwarded their accumulated collection to our treasurer.

If you have carefully set aside your weekly collection but still have this at home why not contact Edward on 01206 845659 or email e.pentney@btopenworld.com and arrange for this money to be paid to the Church.

From a Gift Aid point of view it would help us if payment could be made before 5th April next and then we can claim back tax for this current year.

If you haven't signed up for Gift Aid then one of the following alternatives may apply to you.

Please consider if you could sign up. You qualify if you pay tax and this may be by deduction from a pension. If in doubt please contact our Gift Aid Secretary Martin on (01206) 322578 or email him at mandp1967@btinternet.com when you can speak in confidence.

If you definitely don't pay tax then Martin can still claim on the total amount of cash paid to the Church during the year. There is however a potential problem in that if an individual gift is more than £30 then this must be disregarded – if someone gives £5 a week and saves up 10 envelopes and puts £50 in an envelope then this doesn't count.

Therefore if your accumulated amount is more than £30 please include a note 'Please treat this gift as representing separate donations'. If we have the envelope number there is no need to sign or give your name.

Other potential problems can arise where any accumulated monies are paid to the Church either by bank transfer or cheque (i.e. not by cash) by a non-taxpayer as again these cannot be included in any tax repayment claim.

Again, if you usually put whatever amount you choose in the collection in cash and now feel that you could give a lump sum to cover this your gift may be worth more to the Church if we consider the best way to do this.

All a little complicated and if you are not sure or wish to talk over the best way forward please speak with Martin or Edward.

Last year we received almost £4000 in tax recovered. Please help us to get close to that figure this year.

Thank you.

Edward Pentney Church Treasurer

Martin Broom Gift Aid Secretary

HE COULD HAVE WALKED AWAY

by Norma Peckston

He could have walked away,
Turned his back and waved goodbye'.
He could have said, "*Not me*".
He didn't have to die.

How many would have blamed him,
If he'd chosen not to hang around
But fade into the background
And become one of the crowd.

He could have stayed a carpenter,
Which is a useful trade.
Working hard with Joseph,
Always proud of what he made.

Live a quiet life
And watch the world go by.
Instead he chose to spread God's word,
To heal, to teach, to die.

He could have left Jerusalem,
While he was still ahead.
A miracle man, celebrity,
A raiser of the dead.

Instead he let them nail him
To a cross made from a tree.
To suffer pain and torment,
To die for you and me

THE LORD IS RISEN

His love breaks the power of fear,
Just as a candle lit in a dark room
Shines gently, bringing comfort.

The Lord is Risen.
His love breaks the power of death,
Just as the sun rising
Over the horizon at dawn
Spreads colour in the skies,
Bringing day from night.

**Let us share the Easter Acclamation.
Christ is Risen!
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

We have a full week of services and other on line material planned to lead us through Holy Week and prepare for the celebration of Easter. Some of this will be via our Facebook pages and others will be via Zoom.

Full details are set out below and all Zoom meetings / worship can be joined both on line and via the telephone.

Additionally from Palm Sunday to Easter on Facebook we will be sharing regular thoughts, songs, meditation and readings by way of a rolling act of worship during the week.

To join by telephone you can use any of the following number: 0131 460 1196, 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240 or 0203 901 7895 followed by Meeting ID 780 700 295 and Password 011904

- **Palm Sunday 28 March from 11:00 am** join us live on our Facebook pages for worship
- **Monday & Tuesday from 7:30 pm** we will be sharing a short time of meditation and reflection
- **Wednesday at 7:30 pm** you are invited to join us via Zoom for our final Lent Study meeting; the Poet's Gospel.
{There is no need to have attended previous meetings, so please come along if you are available}
- **Maundy Thursday at 7:30 pm** on Zoom we will join together for a time of prayer and reflections
- **Good Friday at 3:00 pm** you are invited to join us for a short service on Zoom
- **Easter Sunday Morning from 11:00 am** we invite you to join us to celebrate Easter with us via Facebook

KEEP UP TO DATE ON OUR WEBSITE:

www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

Margaret and Keith Clubb – their son, *Stephen*, bravely fighting cancer.

Derek Pitcher, whose funeral is on Wednesday 31 March.

Rev. Joe Adams, preachers and Stewards – as the church re-opens from 18 April.

BIRTHDAY THANKS

I would like to thank everyone for their good wishes, cards and gifts for my 90th birthday. *Edith Plane*

Please don't forget, if you have stories or items that you would like to contribute to a future monthly Newsround please contact me by phone, e-mail or post.

Tel: (01206) 869505 or e-mail: alison.ablewhite@btinternet.com



WORKING TOGETHER



PRAYER MEETING Tuesday 10.00 - 10.30 a.m.

Meeting number: 195 594 506 password 011904

Using the Northumbria Community Morning Prayer

BIBLE STUDY Thursday 7.30 - 8.30 p.m.

Meeting number: 780 700 295 password 011904

Join on line via Zoom or

Dial in from your phone on:

0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240 or 0131 460 1196

FACEBOOK LIVE SUNDAY SERVICE

EVERY SUNDAY at 11.00 a.m.

Expertly led by either Rev. Joe Adams; Jonathan Sparkes, Joanne Eckersley or Rev. Lorraine Badger Watts.

SUNDAY SERVICE REPLAY

This is available for anyone unable to access the weekly Live Facebook service via the internet or web-site.

This is hosted via Zoom and allows people to simply dial into the call from their telephones.

We run this at 2.30 p.m. every Sunday afternoon, normally hosted by Debbie.

Dial in details are set out below:

Phone numbers to use to dial in:

0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240 or 0131 460 1196

Meeting ID: 458 171 4255 {Password if needed is 011904}

*{During Lent our weekly Bible study meetings will be suspended
and will re-start after Easter at their normal day and time.*

Weekly Prayer meetings on Tuesday morning at 10:00 will continue as normal.}