



Tacket Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AU

COMMENT  
JUNE 2020

## THE MINISTER WRITES ...



### *A Necessary Transformation*

Dear All,

As we noted last month, it is good for us to think often and deeply about transformation. This is because transformation is central to any understanding of our Christian faith. In my May letter, we reflected on this present time of unusual and unexpected transformation for us and our world and we took a hopeful look to the future where perhaps, among other things, normal and even mundane aspects of life, which we used to take for granted, might become immensely

precious to us.

This month, I'd like us to focus on one particularly important aspect of transformation. Let's think about Jesus and his inaugural message as recorded by Mark, the first Gospel written: *"The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news"* (Mark 1:14-15).

Many contemporary scholars agree that this is Mark's advance summary of what his 'good news' story of Jesus is all about. Here, *'the Kingdom of God'* is all about the transformation of life here on earth. As we see in Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and, on the next day, Jesus' provocative act of overturning the tables in the temple in Jerusalem, (two actions that were pivotal in the eyes of the authorities), 'Jesus was proclaiming a kingdom, a way of life on earth, that challenged and countered their kingdom of exploitation and violence' (Marcus Borg). His challenging of those in authority because of the way they ruled the world, led to his death on a cross. Jesus lived and died loving others and working for a transformed world in a social, political and religious sense. He was passionate about a new way, God's way of living and loving and this just, loving and transformational way was emphatically rejected at the cross. He was passionate about the transformation of this world.

Whilst we long for our world to come through this difficult time, whilst we understandably long for a 'little bit of normal' to be restored into our own lives, we do *not* long for the world to 'return to normal.' Sonya Renee Taylor, an author, poet and social justice activist offers us these profound and prophetic words:

*"We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature."*

Inspired by Jesus' passion for a transformed world, let us be a prophetic people as we actively seek to live and work and pray for the much needed transformation of our world – social and economic justice, equality, peace and a nurtured creation.

Grace and peace,  
Neil



## **A Prayer by The Revd Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference**

*Loving God,*

*If we are ill, strengthen us.*

*If we are tired, fortify our spirits.*

*If we are anxious, help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.*

*Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders.*

*Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves.*

*Fix our eyes on your story and our hearts on your grace.*

*Help us always to hold fast to the good.*

*See the good in others,*

*And remember there is just one world, one hope,*

*One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.*

*In Jesus we make our prayer,*

*The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,*

*In whom we trust these days and all days,*

*Amen.*

## **THANK YOU**

The last couple of months have been unlike any we have experienced before. On behalf of those who have had to isolate, this is to thank Neil Coulson, Rob King and the Deacons for the very helpful arrangements which they made for our care and support. The lovely Junior Church children sent us nice cards which we enjoyed and there have been many telephone calls. Thank you sincerely.

We all look forward to being together again eventually but in the meantime, we give thanks that we belong to such a warm and supportive fellowship.

## **8<sup>TH</sup> IPSWICH GUIDES**

Lock Down gave Guiding a challenge - how to keep in contact with the guides and provide a programme for them. Our guides have had meetings on Friday evenings via Zoom and so have been able to keep in touch. The company should have been in camp from 23<sup>rd</sup> May for a week's activities but instead, they enjoyed a virtual camp on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May, which culminated with a camp fire. At present their trip to Switzerland at the end of July is still on and we wish them well.

## **LEPROSY MISSION 2.6 CHALLENGE UPDATE**

I am extremely pleased to let you know that **£888** was raised for The Leprosy Mission as a result of the 2.6 challenge! The gift aid will be added on top of that, making the total going into the thousands. I am so grateful to all those who have very kindly and generously supported me. **THANK YOU!**

*Netty*



## **CHRISTIAN AID**

We have reached the end of Christian Aid Week and the end of the on-line auction. It was a very busy final week. A huge thank you to everyone who embraced the auction so enthusiastically and generously - the successful bids have totalled just over £1,150. If your bid was successful you should have been contacted by the donor. If you have not heard and were expecting to - I have not heard of any hiccups, but that does not mean there aren't any - please get in touch. Since last weekend, cakes, plants and other goodies have been making their way around the town. Others have trips out and other treats to look forward to later in the year. Several people have said how good it has been getting in touch with each other again, albeit at a safe distance.

*Anne*

## **THANK YOU - CHRISTIAN AID ONLINE AUCTION**

On behalf of us all, I would like to say a huge THANK YOU to Anne for organising the Auction which she managed entirely on her own; in the last week bids were coming in thick and fast and she did a marvellous job in allocating lots to the highest bidders. I'm sure we are all thrilled with the result which of course couldn't have been achieved without everyone's generosity.

## **A CHRISTIAN AID PRAYER IN A TIME OF CORONAVIRUS**

Love never fails

Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope.

Love compels us to fight against coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty.

Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far.

Love compels us to give and act as one.

Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before.

As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family.

So, let us pause and find a moment of peace, as we lift up our hearts together in prayer.



## ECO CHURCH - CREATION CARE - CLIMATE CHANGE AND CORONAVIRUS

As time goes on, a number of parallels and connections are emerging between the world-wide coronavirus crisis and the climate change emergency. In the first place, with increasing globalisation, we cannot fail to be aware of the interconnectedness of all peoples and countries, with a new virus able to spread throughout the globe in a mere few months. Actions taken in one country can affect not just that country but those on the other side of the world, which is true both in the management of the virus and the climate. We are one world and both issues need co-operation at global level.

A sad fact is that the people most at risk from Covid-19, as well as the old, are turning out to be the poor. The same can be said to be true for the effects of climate change, with the poorest countries – who have done the least to cause global warming – suffering the worst from its effects. The inequalities in the world, and even within our own country, are only too obvious.

But could the causes of climate change also have something to do with the outbreak of the coronavirus? Well, it seems there might be a connection. It is becoming apparent that, in all sorts of ways, humankind has been taking too many liberties with the natural world, encroaching too far. We know that habitat loss caused by us is threatening the extinction of many species, but it also seems that, as we disrupt the ecological balance, the possibility of viruses passing from animals to humans increases. Two years ago, scientists predicted a new coronavirus would emerge from bats in Asia, partly because this was the area most affected by deforestation and other environmental pressures. South America, with the alarming destruction of the Amazon rainforest, is considered a similar risk.

There is complex science here and plenty of food for thought. In every way, it seems, it is Christian values which are needed more than ever to tackle these world-wide issues. Prayers for peace and justice have long been part of our thinking and we must continue to work for these at all levels. For co-operation rather than competition between countries, for economic justice and greater equality and for economic growth to be less important than health and well-being for us and our world.

### THURSDAY FORUM

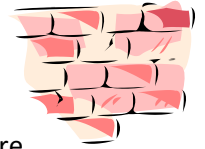


It is impossible to guess when Thursday Forum will be allowed to restart, and even then, how many people will feel comfortable about meeting others, especially as the majority of attenders are elderly, many of them shielding now. So we decided to write a note to all of them whose addresses we had, just keeping in touch, offering a chat, or regular communication, and wishing them well. Nearly 40 letters were written.

Lots of them have replied, obviously pleased to have been thought of, and passing on their appreciation, looking forward to the time when they can meet again. All, so far, have been positive, and have been blessed with helpers to do shopping if necessary, and some have very regular contact with their own local churches.

A further note, (or phone call or email, now that I have these details) will need to go round when we finally get going again.

*Ann Fox, Coordinator*



## OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras

Dear Friends,

As I write, tomorrow is Ascension Day, 40 days from Easter, and still we are in lockdown, but there is hope of gradual release. Good news is that 25% of people say they have watched a streamed service and 44% say that they pray. We should thank the Lord for this. I hope the town centre churches, maybe along with Inspiring Ipswich will, once we are open again be looking how we can bring Christ to the town. We missed the Good Friday witness! The Eastertide Lectionary readings from Acts and John are so uplifting. Doc and I travelled along Paul's route for many miles; he is such an example to us.

Less good are the stories of bereavement. At a streamed Mass just now, I heard of an Ipswich man on a ventilator as his wife is expecting their first child. We all need to be praying for each other. I am blessed to be part of a group that all pray at the same time once each week, and it includes my Ugandan friends! In March, our second bishop of East Anglia, Archbishop Peter Smith died, and just last week was the funeral of Bishop Leo McCartie, ordained in 1949 then auxiliary bishop in Birmingham from 1977 and bishop of Northampton from 1990. I visited him in January and he was still in great form. He was probably the longest serving bishop in England and Wales since the Reformation and there were just 6 at his funeral Mass. On a lighter note, I wonder how long it is since St Pancras feast day was not celebrated with Pancras pie!!

As we approach Pentecost, I recall my childhood in Manchester and the Whit Walks. These huge events with Catholic, Anglican and then nonconformist Sunday Schools marching through the streets on successive Sundays were a great witness and big processions and bands thronged the city centre on Easter Monday and Friday. I remember hearing them as I sat my final exams!! Thinking of this, let us not forget all our young people whose GCSE, A level and University or college grades are being estimated this year and the year 10 and 12 youngsters who have missed valuable lessons. Let us pray for all our students that arrangements to restart formal learning can be made safely.

God bless you all and let's hope we soon meet again!

**Jean**