

Minister: Rev Derek McLean

11th January 2021

Dear Friends

I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things To your pleasure and disposal.

These are tough words for tough times. When we've had such a tough year we want comfort more than we want challenge. It is no wonder that many people choose to stay away on Covenant Sunday. Surely this is too much?

... and yet, we were privileged to have Revd Helen Cameron, our Chair of District, lead our service on Sunday. She emphasised that we were right to go ahead and hold the service now. To renew our commitment. This year, more than any, we knew what it meant to be put to suffering and to do things which we wouldn't have chosen to do.

However, this has also been a year in which we have been immensely aware of the way in which small acts of Christ-like service can make a huge difference to those close to us. We have seen lots of examples of selfless sacrifice – often from those who have a different faith from our own, or who have none.

Whatever God call you to do in the service of others, be assured that God equips us and surrounds us with love, even in the darkest times.

God bless you all.

Rev Derek

KnightsBridge Estate Agents School Tablet Fundraiser

KnightsBridge are supported by the Oadby Retailers to provide Tablets so that pupils studying at home can access online learning. Each Tablet costs £50. We have funded one from Zeph's Purse. Thanks to an anonymous donation, the church has been able to donate a further four. These are going to Manor High School where we have strong links with Liam Powell the Head Teacher. If you'd like to help children in Oadby by contributing to this scheme via the church, please let me know. (As I write, £1800 has been raised toward a £5000 target.)

Love in a time of COVID-19 (part three)

My friend, Rev. Leigh Greenwood, is Minister at Stoneygate Baptist Church and a Member of the team at the University Chaplaincy. She agreed that I could share these words of wisdom with you:

Make a to do list With many of us finding our usual routines disrupted, it can help to have a few simple tasks to give some pattern and purpose. It doesn't need to be long or complicated, just enough to help you keep on top of the things that most need doing. And if you start your list with 'make the bed', you can easily start the day with a sense of accomplishment.

Tear up your to do list If it is bringing more pressure and guilt than clarity and structure, rip it up like confetti. We're all under enough stress without creating more, and we don't always need to be productive. Sometimes getting to the end of the day in one piece is enough.

Write a done list Juggling ministry with looking after a six month old and home schooling a four year old means there is plenty to be done around the house but very little goes to plan. I'm not sure where the idea came from, but I have found it helpful to write up what I have managed to do. 'Hung the laundry', 'loaded the dishwasher', 'took the recycling out'...it's harder to feel despondent about what you haven't done when you're looking at a reminder of what you have achieved.

Take each day at a time Some days you'll need a to do list, some days you'll put it through the shredder, some days you'll look for the encouragement of a done list. It's okay not to be consistent. Try to pay attention to what you need each day, whether that's slumming it in your pyjamas until midday or dressing up fancy for a cinema at home evening, having another go at perfecting your sourdough or crying into the last of your Christmas chocolate.

Be real This season is hard in so many ways, and I'm not sure if the fact that we've been here before means we're better prepared this time, or just means we're starting already exhausted. Name how you're feeling, and allow yourself to feel it. Lament is a normal and necessary response to times of grief and hardship, but also remember that joy is sometimes found in unexpected places. Don't feel guilty about either.

Drink a cup of tea And I mean just that. Drink a cup of tea. Nothing else (except maybe eat a biscuit). It's often convenient to grab a mug and sit down at the computer, or slurp mouthfuls between loading plates into the dishwasher, but there's not much pleasure in it. Take time over making your perfect cup, then sit down and simply enjoy it.

Shower with candles A bath may be more conventional, but hear me out on this one. It's a simple way to make an everyday task feel like a treat, and some days we will need those quick fixes.

Keep some Christmas sparkle You may know about the twelve days of Christmas, but you may not know that some traditions mark forty days, so that the Christmas season lasts until Candlemas on 2 February. You don't need to justify keeping some fairy lights up if they lift your mood, but if you do want an excuse then there you have it.

Limit screen time Cutting ourselves off from reality isn't feasible or healthy, but absorbing the entire internet isn't either. Keep informed and keep in touch, but give yourself plenty of breaks. Why don't you start now by finishing this blog and putting your screen down?

Affinity

The deadline for the Feb/March newsletter is Sunday January 17th. Contributions to Heather Corlett, please.

Sharing Your Faith. (Dare we call it Evangelism?)

Rev. Daniel is leading a group looking at the resources from the connexional Evangelism and growth team. 6pm every Wednesday In Feb and March

Church Membership

Are you interested in Church Membership / confirmation / adult baptism? Do you know anybody new to church or just wanting to get more involved? Rev Fran is trying to get together a group. The first session will take place on zoom on Tuesday 26th Jan, 7 – 8.45pm. Other timings to be mutually agreed.

African Palms Ltd

This charity supports educational and healthcare projects in Tanzania. They anticipate a reduced demand for palm crosses this year because of the Coronavirus pandemic and so the villagers have produced a limited number of tote bags for sale. These bags are made from dried branches of the dwarf palm which grow wild and so are not cultivated or chemically treated and therefore has no impact on the environment and is sustainable. The bags are handmade and unique in colour, style and design and the skill involved is quite magnificent. They measure approx. 19"x16"x6" and look very sturdy indeed. They cost £27 including VAT and carriage. More info/ orders please contact Barry Wilford

After 18 makes a positive start to 2021

Alison sends greetings from After 18, and thanks for our continued support

Helping Hands

Helping Hands Community Trust has been obliged to stop its face to face advice and assistance services to those who are facing financial, housing and general welfare problems.

advice and support can still be offered via the phone, our email and via social media. Please encourage anyone you know who might be in distress to phone 0116 278 2001 or email office@helpinghandscentre.co.uk For more info call Lesley Thornton on 271 0865

Accommodation

We've had an enquiry from a Methodist moving from the North-West of England to work in the Leicester hospitals at the beginning of April. He is looking for accommodation on a short-term basis whilst looking for something more permanent.

Morning Worship continues online every week at **10:30am**.

If you speak to anyone who has not been joining us, do please remind them that help is available to get the technology set up, and that it is possible to join from a landline telephone.

17/1 Richard Tinley

14/2 Colin Smith

24/1 Derek McLean

21/2 Neil Richardson

31/1 Derek McLean

28/2 Richard Cawthorn

7/2 Matthew Forsyth (All We Can) AAW

7/3 Derek McLean

Please let me know if you would like to join online, and I can send you a link, and also talk you through setting this up. Email for information: derek.mclean@methodist.org.uk

Don't forget that it is possible to phone in, even if you haven't got a computer.

Sunday Evening Circuit Services

There is a Circuit Service online every Sunday evening at 6pm. The service will last around 40 minutes, and there will be the opportunity after the service to chat to people from around the Circuit. Revd Saidu Kanu will lead the service on the 17th.

Churches Together/Week of Prayer

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity runs from the 18-25 January and will look different this year. There will be a short daily reflection posted as follows: Monday – St Peter's; Tuesday – Baptist's; Wednesday – Catholic; Thursday – URC; Friday – Methodist; Saturday – St Paul's.

There will be a joint service on the Sunday (24th) at 6.30pm in the evening. This replaces our usual Pulpit Swap.

Holocaust Memorial Day

I plan to lead a short online reflection at 2:30pm on Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January). Please join via the Sunday morning zoom link.

Funerals

We hold in prayer the families and friends of those known to us who are preparing funerals at this time. Please pause and hold these people in prayer at the relevant time, but please contact the family if you plan to attend as numbers are strictly limited during Covid.

Prayer

We particularly hold in prayer our friends at Houghton and Glen who have each recently made the difficult decision to remain closed for in-person worship, at least for the next few weeks.

Saturday Prayer continues online each week at 10:15, please contact Barry or Derek for joining instructions.