

THE LINK

The Magazine of Portsmouth Methodist Church

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Week 17 – July 12th 2020

Text – Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. – Romans 8:1

Information

We continue to work on church reopening, through the delegated committee of the Church Council. Trinity plans to be open next Sunday July 19th. There are a few more checks to be done so please phone Shirley Haynes after Thursday 16th on 07802528627 for confirmation, all welcome from the other centres. Opening of those will follow in due course.

John is on leave from June 29th to July 13th. If you have any urgent need of ministerial support please contact Deacon Laura Evans on Email: laurajevans@me.com or Tel: 01243 376786

A reminder of times when centres are now open for private prayer: Copnor – Wednesday 10.30-11.30, Trinity – Tuesday 12.00-1.00, Thursday 10.00-11.00 and Saturday 2.00-3.00.

Apologies that there is no new dial-up service or video reflection this week.

Call to Worship

Rejoice! There is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

Hymn: STF 685 In Christ there is no east or west

Let us pray together

When the seeds of new life are sown, let us
praise the Lord.

When crops ripen in the field, let us exalt our maker.

When the wind blows, or the snow falls, let us draw close to God.

Lord, for all your gifts in creation, for the gift of each other and the
gift of the Church we offer our thanks.

Most of all for the gift of Jesus who went about among us as
teacher and friend, who lived, died, and rose again we offer our
deepest gratitude and amazement. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us take a time of quiet to bring to mind the ways in which we
feel we have let God or ourselves down during the last week...

Lord, when we are slow to listen, forgive us.

Lord, when we are hasty in our actions, forgive us.

Lord, for the things we have done, that we should not have done,
forgive us.

Lord, for the things we have not done, that we should have done,
forgive us.

Rejoice, for in Christ we know our sins are forgiven. In Jesus'
name. Amen.

Today's Readings: Romans 8.1-11, Matthew 13.1-9 & 18-23

Time to Reflect

Over the last few months we have begun to look at the world in a
new way. Certainties are no longer as certain as they once were.

This time last year no one imagined being in lockdown, although the possibility of a serious virus pandemic was not unimagined. When I read the parable afresh the first thing I noticed was that for his own safety, and perhaps in order to be better seen, Jesus gets into a boat and puts some distance between himself and the crowd. The Bible does not tell us if it was more than 2 metres! Jesus sits down to teach indicating his authority to teach. Jesus takes practical steps to be heard and communicates in ways the crowd were used to and addressed them in ways they would understand. The image of a sower was common in first century Palestine.

And when the seed is scattered not all of it bears fruit, some falls on the path or on stony ground. Some is in shallow earth and fails to mature. Amid much bearing of fruit there is also the failure of hearing and not understanding. Jesus recognized that even with the best news in the world there would still be setbacks.

The disciples have the parable explained to them. They have the benefit of the expertise of Jesus who told this parable and was by definition best placed to explain its meaning.

As we move forward together and plan the activities of our local churches in a world that has been changed we should be encouraged by this parable.

Encouraged to work in ways that we discern are appropriate in our current situation. Perhaps an extra line on the plan for the Circuit's online worship and resources for those not online and unable to attend a building.

Encouraged to keep trying even if the seed we cast does not always bear fruit straight away or in ways we may expect.

Encouraged to gather as much wisdom as we can from others and glad to listen to those who are called to teach and explain,

even when this might move us out of our comfort zones and takes us in unexpected ways. Amen.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Let us pray for our world; for the worldwide effort to create a vaccine for Covid-19. For all the peoples of the world and for cooperation as we continue to live with this virus.

As we pray for our world we pray especially for those in government and industry whose decisions effect the lives of so many. And we pray for wisdom for those in power.

We pray for our own land. For the NHS and for all those involved in social care and all keyworkers, giving thanks for the work they do for us. We pray for local communities as we continue to move towards what has been called the new normal.

We pray for the whole Church throughout the world, especially churches in countries with unsympathetic regimes. We pray for the Methodist Church, both at the local level and also the Connexional Team.

We take a time of quiet to remember those who have died, especially those who have been important to us on our own journeys of life and faith. We make all our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

A hymn/song/poem known to you.

Dear Lord.

When times are hard, walk beside us.

When we are unsure of which way to turn, dwell within us.

When we need to listen to others, encourage us.

When our lives and work bear fruit, rejoice with us.

So may the blessing of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all today and forever more. Amen.