

Hedon, Preston and Thorngumbald Churches

South Holderness Circuit Country Section information

Hope in the midst of Coronavirus

When we are in the middle of a crisis the hardest thing to do is to step back and see the bigger picture. The fear of a coronavirus catastrophe can cause us instinctively to focus on fear and the immediate dangers ahead. The temptation is to want to bury our head in the sand and wish that we could go into hibernation for nine months and wake up when it's all over. We can gain a sense of perspective and reassurance as we look at the past and the future and this will help us to cope, with hope, in the present.

This pandemic is bringing out the best and the worst in human nature. We see stories of kindness and sacrifice as well as tales of self-centredness and greed. The truth is that in time scientists will find a vaccine for this particular strain of coronavirus, just as it is almost certain that there will be further viruses in the future. But what is the vaccine for our current state of fear?

I believe we are facing the same fear as was felt during the time of the Black Death of 1347, when so many of the European population died. We see our anxiety exacerbated by the constant drip-feeding of bad news and additional measure of self-isolation and social distancing to limit the spread of infection. We are concerned for our loved ones and those most vulnerable in our society. We are also concerned for ourselves and how we'll all cope in the months ahead.

As Christians this pandemic is a severe test of our faith and its relevance in our lives and the lives of those around us. Not being able to meet for worship and mutual support is an added challenge and can add to our isolation.

Plague and disease however are not new to humanity. We can learn from history. When we look at how the Church in the past has dealt with plague – whether in ancient Rome, medieval Europe, 19th century London we see amazing stories of sacrifice and self-giving love, of caring for those who were sick and supporting those in fear.

Hope seems to be sadly missing in the immediacy of our current fear. Real hope has to be more than the wish that this mess will soon be over. Where do we find hope? We find hope in our living saviour Jesus and in the word of God. Let me share with you the Christian hope recorded in Romans 8:

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose. In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death?

No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: 28, 31-35 and 37-39

May the almighty God strengthen us and give us hope as we overcome fear and support those in need.

Steve Barlow

Minster for Hedon Methodist Church

Suspension of Worship

Further to guidance issued by the Methodist Church, all worship is suspended for the time being at all churches. This includes baptisms and special services. Funerals can go ahead but it is advised with only family members in attendance.

Hopefully everyone that is a member of Hedon Methodist Church will have been contacted by their pastoral visitor to explain the situation. You should also have been informed that if you require anything at all, be it shopping, talking to someone or someone to pray either for you then please contact your pastoral visitor in the first instance and your requests can then be dealt with in the appropriate manner. These are difficult times for everyone and the stewards would like to assure you that we are here to assist at any time and help in any way we can. A group of young volunteers, that were part of the Youth Club and then Youth Alpha, are ready and able to do any running and fetching for anyone in need so please don't be stuck. If you need their assistance just contact your pastoral visitor as previously stated and we will ensure the youngsters receive your request. They will also be happy to accommodate requests from people in Preston and Thorngumbald.

Regarding collection monies, naturally we still have expenses to meet even though the church is closed. We are also losing money from hall rentals which help enormously with our running costs. May I ask you to consider, if you are able, putting aside your usual collection monies and bring them along when the church resumes services. Alternatively, if you so wish you could set up either a Direct Debit or Standing Order from your bank to the following Hedon church bank account:

Bank: Lloyds Bank

Sort Code: 77-12-25

Account No. 13221268

We know and understand that this may not be possible for everyone but as the ad goes 'every little helps'.

If you have the facility the Methodist Church are providing on-line worship through their website at www.methodist.org.uk. Alternatively we have attached a service sheet from the website for you to follow. The Methodist Church will provide these each week so if you would like to receive one please let us know and we will ensure one is put through your door.

May I ask you to keep the church family in your prayers at this time along with anyone else you know who is struggling in any way with the affects of the virus, be it physically or economically. Please don't hesitate to contact any of the church family if you have any worries, concerns or would just like someone to speak with.

A prayer by Nick Fawcett:

Lord of all, when life seems dark, help us to put our trust in you. Inspire us with the knowledge that, where all seems hopeless, you are sometimes most powerfully at work – challenging, deepening and strengthening faith, equipping us for new avenues of service and opening the way to a richer experience of your love. In that assurance, lead us forward, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.