

I will say of the LORD
He is my refuge and my fortress:
my God; in him I will trust

Psalm 91:2

1st May '20



Tonbridge Methodist Church Newsletter



Dear Friends,

For this newsletter, I asked you to tell us about your favourite Psalm. But I have a confession! I don't have one favourite, there are too many to choose from!!!!

As a teenager, I think I thought the Psalms were really boring and irrelevant. How wrong I was. I have grown into the Psalms and have found that no matter how I feel, happy-sad, tearful, full of laughter or total despair there is a Psalm which will help me. I took an assembly not long before lockdown and got the kids to talk about their favourite songs. Why do you like them so much? And for some, it was about the music the rhythm the tune making them want to dance or laugh or cry but eventually we began to tease

out that the song lyrics helped us to communicate thoughts and feelings that we just do not have the words for ourselves. I went onto say that there is a book in the Bible that does this too! The Psalms. I am not a poet or a wordsmith. When I do not know what to say, to pray, to praise, to cry out to God in those moments of deep sorrow, the Psalmists have given the words and have helped me maintain and develop my relationship with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. How about you?

In these strangest of times do remember to use the Psalms to help you communicate with God. People often tell me they don't know what to say to God. That's ok - use a Psalm I always say now, because someone has felt those things before us.

With love and continued prayers,

Rev Gill

There are parts of many psalms that I love but the one that is special to me is Psalm 19. The first part stems from my favourite oratorio which in its turn contains one of my favourite pieces 'The Heavens are telling the glory of God'. (The Creation by Haydn). It turns us to seeing God in the glory of his creation. However, the rest of the psalm is great as well because it speaks in a powerful way of everything that comes to us from God in a spiritual way. 'The law of the Lord is perfect; the Lord's instructions are right; His commands shine brightly. And so on - do read it and reflect on its words.

Phil Leese

Psalm 121

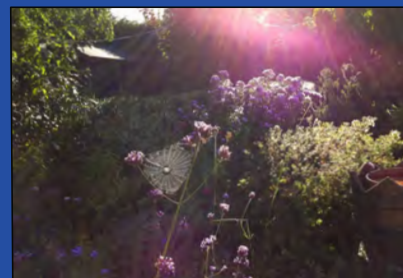
Chosen by Joanne Rowe

I look to the mountains; where will my help come from? My help will come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let you fall; your protector is always awake. The protector of Israel never dozes or sleeps. The Lord will guard you; he is by your side to protect you. The sun will not hurt you during the day, nor the moon during the night. The Lord will protect you from all danger; he will keep you safe. He will protect you as you come and go now and forever.

I feel it is especially appropriate now when our individual and collaborative lives have been turned upside down. It is wonderful to know that no matter what, **"The Lord will keep you from all harm- ...he will watch over you-...both now and forever more"**

Psalm 121 is my favourite, partly because I have been on many walking holidays in hills and mountains over the years and also because of this wonderful evocation of our loving God always and forever watching over us. And at the moment the final verse has particular significance; a friend quotes it to herself every time she leaves and returns to the house!

Margaret Abraham



Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness: come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his: we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise: give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever: his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 100 means a lot to me. It expresses joy and reassurance in the Lord. It also reminds me of John's late father who read it so beautifully at the wedding of our son Stuart to Kate 19 years ago.

Jill Gray

Staying connected during lockdown.

We were very concerned for the welfare and mental health of our service users, many of whom are over 80 and living alone.

We began by Lindsay Kennedy and I making individual phone calls to the most vulnerable, but then discovered a free conference calling system which we are now using.

The group call happens at 11am on whichever day the group normally meets, but they are all able to phone into any other group chat if they want to as the phone number and pin are the same for them all. It's

been an interesting experiment, and after a few hiccups, mainly everyone wanting to speak at the same time, we are now rolling with regular chat calls.

There are one or two members who have very poor hearing and find these calls difficult so they are getting regular calls from one of us. Lindsay and I are also making calls to the newly bereaved clients of Abbey who are living alone in isolation.

The exception to the phone calls has been our evening group which

meets at Trinity in Tunbridge Wells and was set up for younger bereaved people who can't get to our daytime meetings. We did a zoom meeting with them on Tuesday evening which was excellent. We are now going to brave a zoom meeting on May day for the older members who have access to the internet. What could possibly go wrong?

Wish us luck!

Chris Parker

A Contact from the Past

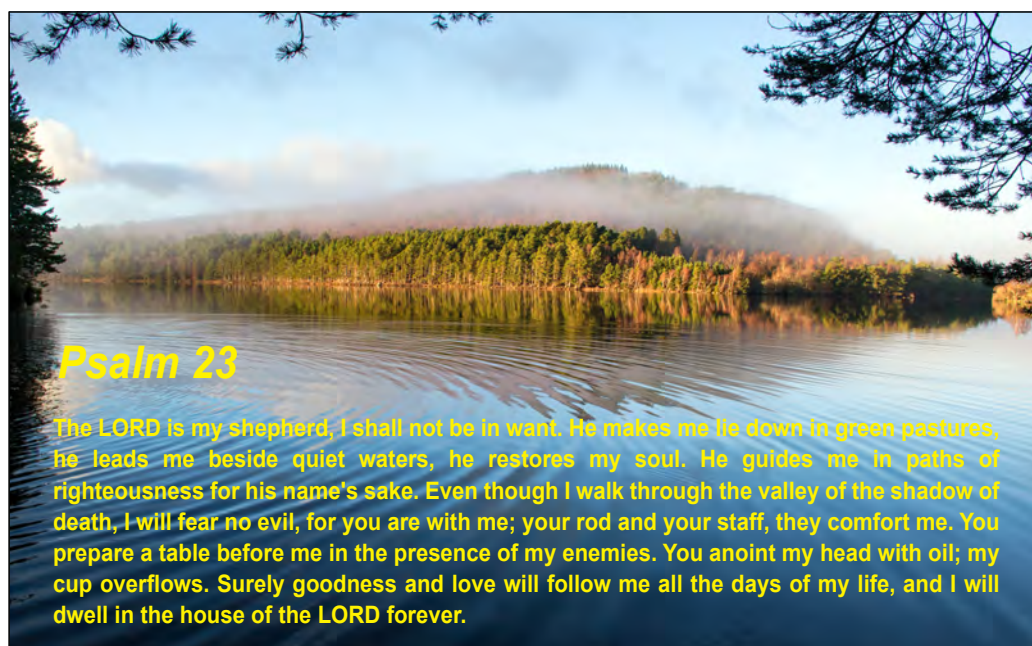
This week Lynne and I received a phone call from Don and Kathy Hodson from Iowa, USA. For those of you with long memories, Don was a Methodist minister in the American church who came to Tonbridge on an exchange in 1987. He and Kathy have visited the UK a few times since, the last in 2016.

Don is now retired and by all accounts enjoying the experience. They have fond memories of their time with us and asked to be remembered to all their friends.

Don explained that over the Easter lockdown he had been listening to recordings of services from earlier years, one of which happened to coincide with a visit to them by Lynne and myself. He asked me to read at the service and I was able to wish his congregation a Happy Easter and exchange the Easter greeting "Christ is risen - he is risen indeed" with them. It is a special memory.

It was good to talk with Don and Kathy and to share their greetings with you.

Lynne and Hugh



Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 139 has always been my favourite as the words make me feel so safe and protected in the knowledge that the Lord knows everything about me. It also seems particularly relevant during our current crises.

I was pleased to note from the 29th March newsletter that Psalm 139 brings words of encouragement to Peter Overton also. He mentioned that Hymn 482 (STF) is a paraphrase of this psalm, so I shall be looking out for it especially during future church services.

Barbara Sanders

One of my favourite Psalms.

It is **Psalm 8**, a psalm full of praise, a psalm to lose yourself in, a psalm about all that God has made. It is a psalm that reminds me just how awesome God is and how he thinks amid all this beauty in creation about little old me!!!

In these days when we go for our walk, we are so much more aware of the beauty around us. The skies seem much bluer, the flowers seem brighter the bird song is clearer, louder and more plentiful. If you wander outside at night the sky is beautiful, Venus is shining so brightly and the

stars and galaxies are superb!!

I can also hear this psalm as a song written for children. When our two were young we had an American cassette where a robot called Coby sang the psalms in songs to the children. This psalm I can still hear playing in my mind.

"O Lord, my Lord, how excellent your name is, how excellent your name in all the earth, you took me and you loved me and you've given me a crown and now I'll praise your name eternally"

A good psalm to keep us positive in these days!

Jane Jordan

Sending Birthday Greetings to Pat and Shirley for Friday 1st May, no sweets but lots of love,

Jane and John x

May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

PSALM 20:4

Happy BIRTHDAY



Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

I chose this psalm because it reminded me of a visit to a community climate change project in Kalendo in South West Ethiopia in October 2019. Some of the locals proudly showed us their new church building. Although it was still under construction, they were already using it. Previously they had worshipped under a tree in a field. As you can see from the photos, the church building was very basic. Mud walls with bare wires protruding, low wooden benches on the earthen floor. The only other piece of furniture was a pulpit with the text from Psalm 46:7:

**The Lord Almighty is with us.
The God of Jacob is our fortress.**

One of my enduring memories from Ethiopia is that although the people had very little in the way of material wealth, they did have hope, joy and resilience. This is reflected in Psalm 46 and perhaps there is a message there for us too.

Paul Grime



Peter and I send our good wishes to all our friends. We are enjoying the services on Sunday mornings something that we never imagined we would be doing when we moved here. Thank goodness for a lovely garden, a small one at the back and a larger one at the side.

Best wishes
Margaret and Peter



High Hopes

Dear Supporters of The Tonbridge Children's Workshop / High Hopes

We hope you are all doing well and staying safe and healthy at this time. We are praying for you and your families.

We have been continuing our work from home and have recently created an Easter Exploration video series. These videos are aimed at connecting with all pupils in their homes, especially those from non-Christian families, allowing us to continue to teach them about the work of Jesus from afar. You will be able to see the playlist on our YouTube channel:

We have worked incredibly hard on this project and are very pleased to have received over 14,000 views in the first week. This means we have reached a significantly higher number of people than ever before – it's amazing how God has used this 'unusual situation'. We have continued our planning for the rest of the year, including creating some Bereavement, Wellbeing and Coping in Difficult Situations workshops aimed at all primary age groups. We hope to deliver these as soon as children are back at school to equip them with tools to understand and cope with the difficulties they have faced in this time. Schools, even at this stage, remain open to vulnerable children and key workers children and our videos and contact can be a great resource for the teachers.

We are incredibly grateful for the contributions you have made to our work in the past and we hope that you will be in a position to help us again in the future. We have had a Trustees meeting, via Zoom, at which it was decided that the team will be furloughed for May but we will be back in June! Please continue to keep us and our work in your prayers.

Thank you again for all your support.

**From all The Team here at The Tonbridge
Children's Workshop / High Hopes**

Psalm 100

Chosen by Joanne Rowe

**Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.
Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his
faithfulness continues through all generations.**

I adore the joy and reassurance this Psalm evokes
It's good to know that know matter what- we are loved unconditionally!