

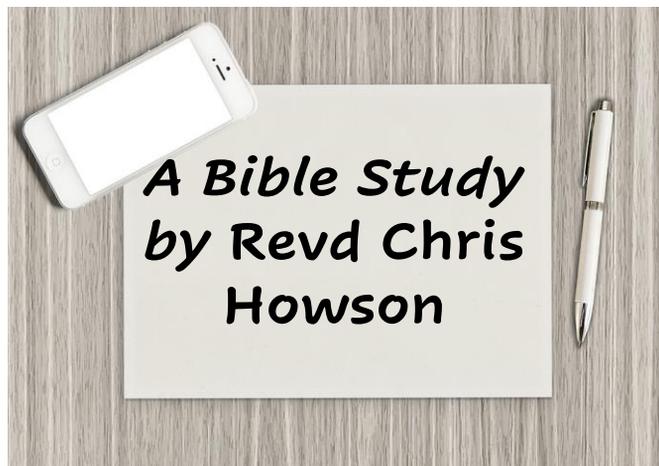


**Kempston East
Methodist
Church
e-Newsletter
Issue 71
July 25th
2021**

Minister: Rev Michael Giles
Michaelgiles2017@gmail.com
01234 930882



Bread and Fish



The Parable of the Talents

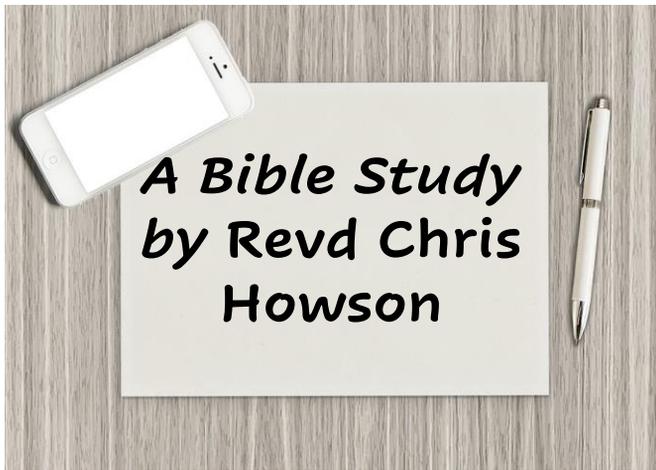
Read: Matthew 25:14-30

An Unheard Voice:

I loved to listen to him tell stories. When I look back on those years that's what I remember; he would be sat on the ground, in a boat, on a rock. A group around him, hanging on his next word. I liked to watch the faces in the crowd react. The stories would become familiar to me, they were familiar to us all, that's how we came to tell them to the learned men who would later write them down. But the crowd's reactions, I never got bored of watching him entertain and provoke them, making people think. He'd throw down a story alongside a situation and delight in not explaining it. He loved to hear us try to work it for ourselves – all those years he was teaching us to think.

We sat up on the Mount of Olives getting some air, the city spread beneath us. Tensions were high in the city and I was already worried that this would be what got him killed. His storytelling, his revolutionary teaching. There were soldiers on every street corner and the city teemed with pilgrims. Pilate had entered by the West Gate with all the strength of mighty Rome, as we entered in the East to the shouts and praise of children. The city was ripe for riot. But just for that moment I was content to listen. His northern accent reminding me of the hills around Galilee, the water, the peace of it all that I missed.

The story was about a man who went away, leaving his slaves with what was years' worth of money for common people. People were listening. This happened – moral upstanding members of society would go off to nicer places, less dusty places, less politically fraught places, and not to be seen grasping for money and profit, would leave it in the hands of those who have no choice but to obey them. Have no choice but to take the tools of oppression and use them to oppress others, to take more than their fair share of wealth, but for someone else. Two people multiplied the master's wealth and having proved themselves, made slaves to more money. Listen to the stories of Jesus: if two people take an action, the third is nearly always the hero of the tale, the one you want to be. Although Jesus wasn't above playing with your expectations, I wish you'd seen the faces of the first folks to hear about the Samaritan Hero. The third buries his money, more effort than taking it to a banker, but keeps it from thieves. In the end, the slave-owner comes back and our hero is thrown out for



daring to speak the truth, for returning to an earthly power only that which was theirs and no more.

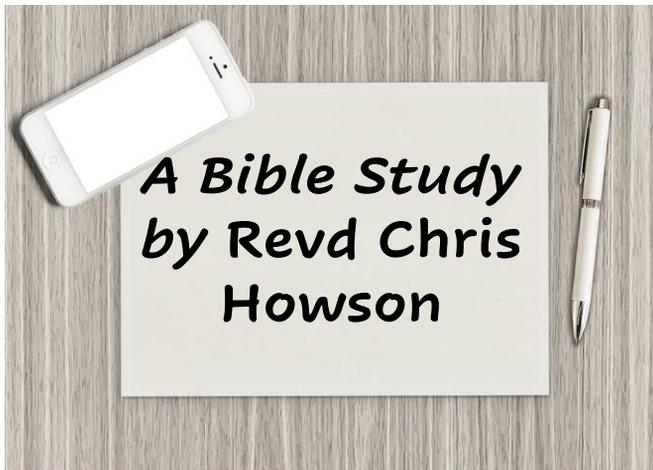
I fear this story will be one of the misunderstood ones. That we won't get the time to tease out its meaning with him. It is clear the slaveowner is not God, who would never recommend the loaning of money for interest as forbidden in the Torah. The slaveowner stands for the powers of this world somehow. I was tired, it is hard to sleep at Passover, so many people. As I dozed he spoke of the kingdom, of those who serve others serving him, that to give to those who thirst, to clothe the naked, is what it is to love him. I found myself thinking about choice. About the hero of the tale, only a slave who should have no choice but to serve his master, but who somehow made a choice. Was Jesus trying to tell us: no matter the systems we think we can't escape, the systems that enslave us all, we have always got a choice? Jesus was the free-est person I ever knew, and when we thought him defeated, thrown out and killed by the systems of this world, in the end he was gloriously free.

Reflect:

- How have you been encouraged to understand this passage before? How did the version you were encouraged to use shape how you saw the nature of God?
- If you were the third slave, would you have been prepared to speak out to the rich landlord?
- Have you ever had to speak out against powerful people before? How did that feel?
- Have you ever been punished for speaking out?

Think:

This is possibly one of the most misunderstood stories in the Gospels, and leads to a lot of confusion as to the nature of God, sometimes mistaken for the absentee landlord in the story. In school assemblies and during sermons, preachers often explain the term 'Talents' (a unit of money) as actual talents or gifts, with the implication that they are given by God, and your discipleship journey is to make the most of them. The 'bad' person is the one who has buried or squandered their 'gift'. Some readings see the story as an endorsement of capitalism. Margaret Thatcher used the parable as a justification that God loves the money-makers, and will reward entrepreneurialism.



These misguided interpretations ignore vital elements in the story that would have been more evident to Jesus' audience in a pre-capitalist, Roman-occupied agrarian society.

The story begins with a member of the wealthy elite leaving his property, or, in the Lukan version, heading off in an attempt to gain more power by being made king. For the sake of clarity, we will perhaps give this character a name, let's say, 'The Boss'. Absentee landlordism was a regular experience for people in Palestine at the time, and they would have been used to the expectation that the indentured servants/slaves would be held accountable for the land and money upon their master's return.

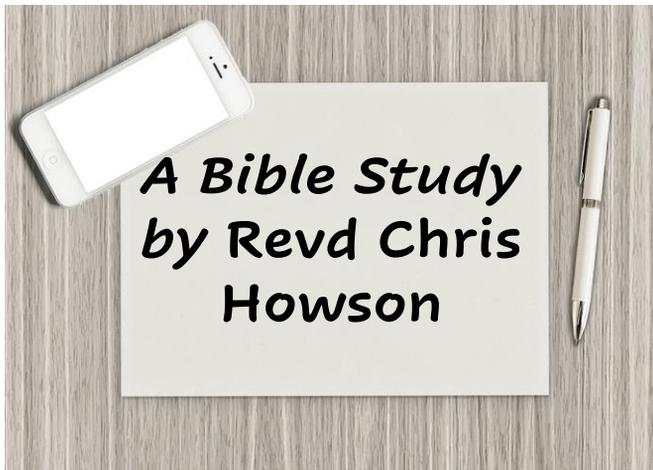
Matthew's version shows how the indentured servant/slave with the most power is quickly able to make money with the money he has, five talents making five talents more. The second slave also gains more money for his initial two-talent investment. With a capitalist worldview, this seems like the right thing to do.

The Boss has given money to those he trusted to make him more money, and they have done so. They are faithful minions who know where the power and wealth lie.

However, in Jesus' time, capital is extremely limited. To gain more, i.e. an 'extra piece of the pie', would mean that someone else had their piece of the pie taken away from them. This was seen as a bad thing.

The servant then who morally refuses to take part in this exploitative exchange, but prudently buries the money, would have been seen as the hero of this story. His deed is more obviously heroic when the slave stands up to the wealthy absentee landowner: "Boss, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed." The slave bravely points out the exploitation on the elite land-owner, and whilst being frightened of the repercussions, is prepared to 'stick it to the man'.

The Boss then lays into him, demonising him with some devastating words said in the heat of the moment. Opponents of the wealthy are 'lazy' and 'wicked'. "You should have at least put the money in the bank and I would have at least gained interest," says the rich land-owner. This would have been a clear sign to the listeners that Jesus did not intend



The Boss to be mistaken for God, as interest (usury) was highly sinful to the Jewish community.

The Boss then displays that he is in fact a cruel tyrant who will bully and destroy his opponents. He does what those with power always have done: he takes everything from the poor and gives it to the already wealthy, declaring the doctrine of the greedy elites: "For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."

From a peasant perspective, the hero in this scenario is not The Boss, but the one who refuses to take a part in the system, speaks truth to power, even if it means that the powerful elite may destroy him. What is most important is speaking out and exposing the truth, whatever the cost. Even if it means ending up on the cross.

Listen:

Universal Credit has had a devastating impact on many communities, with already impoverished people being driven even deeper into debt. Even the little amount that people have had has been taken away from them for periods, and this has forced them into the hands of loan sharks, who charge extortionate amounts of interest on their loans. When people on benefits complain about the injustice of the system, they are often labelled as scroungers, lazy and wicked. If our churches are to be 'good news to the poor', we must take action to expose and prevent suffering due to government policy or unscrupulous private sector practices.

Pray:

Lord, help me to speak out. When I see injustice, when I see suffering, when I see cruelty. Help me not to turn away and walk on the other side. Help me face my fears of feeling inadequate or unable to say or do anything.

Lord, for the sake of your people, help me to speak out.

Worship at Kempston East after 19 July 2021

Since 19 July – or Freedom Day if you're that way inclined – the government has removed all the restrictions that previously constrained our Sunday worship as well as baptisms, weddings and funerals. We will all have our own views about how long this state of affairs is likely to hold for (- those nightclubbers

amongst you will need to be able to prove you've had two vaccination doses come late September), but when you next arrive at Kempston East for a Service you will notice some differences. (I'm talking really about Sunday 1 August: today's Service is being held outdoors, of course.)



The government's guidance for the use of Church buildings says:

- There are no longer limits on the number of people you can meet ... so no restrictions on group sizes for attending communal worship.
- Legal requirements for social distancing no longer apply and you do not need to stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with.
- There are no legal restrictions on the number of people that can attend a place of worship, including at significant life events.
- Face coverings are no longer required by law in any setting.
- COVID-secure rules, including table service requirements and restrictions on singing and dancing, will no longer apply.
- There are no longer limits on the number of people who can sing indoors or outdoors. This includes indoor congregational and communal singing.

In interpreting what that means for us, Stewards have recognised that many people returning – or carrying on coming – to Church will be wary of the risks they run in a post-compulsory face covering, post-social distancing world. For some, their 'clinically vulnerable' status makes these worries particularly real. This isn't to do with Church being an inherently riskier environment, but just reflects the fact that world around us has

changed. So Stewards' approach is to encourage us all to continue to be kind: making hand-sanitiser available to anyone who wants to use it; supporting those who want to continue to wear face-coverings; encouraging us all to check whether it's OK with our 'pew neighbour' to sit next to them; continuing to take care with Communion arrangements; and, as we restart serving refreshments after the Service

on 1 August, still being careful with our arrangements.



Worship at Kempston East after 19 July 2021

So at Kempston East you will see that all the chairs will be available for use: none are roped off. But if you're going to sit close to someone, just check with them first that it's OK to do so. We'll still be keeping a record of who comes to Church too ... and destroying it after three weeks. The Methodist Church recommends this approach in case of an outbreak in the church community. We would want to be able to inform our neighbours to proceed with caution if someone they had come into contact with had tested positive. But we will never ask anyone to prove they have been vaccinated before allowing them into the church.

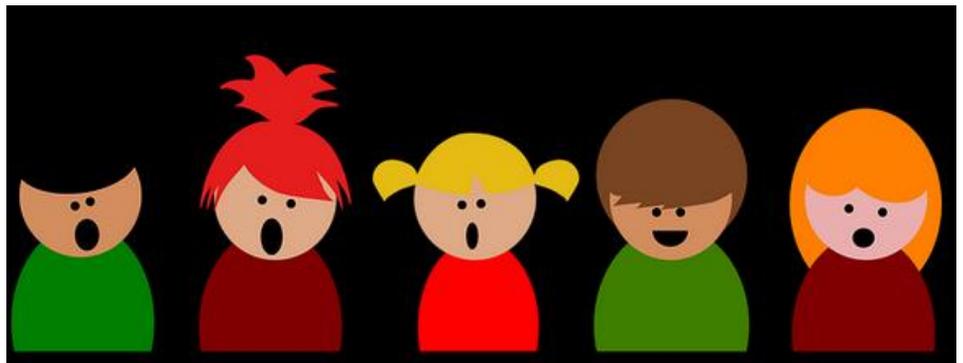


There will still be hand sanitiser and face coverings available at the door if you want to use them ... and no-one will mind or criticise you for doing so.

It's very warm as I'm writing this ... so you'll no doubt be pleased to know that we'll carry on with increased ventilation in the Church. And we will continue too to collect offerings at the back of the Church rather than collecting them during the Service. (Thank you, by the way, to all those who have moved to paying by cheque or via online banking. This is one of those Covid

innovations that we definitely want people to continue with ... and want others, who can, to adopt.)

We will all be singing!
And those who need them will be able to use the hymnbooks again, although we ask that you sanitise your hands before and after doing so.



Services have been intentionally shorter since we returned to Worship (- although some Preachers have more to say to us than others!) and we'll still aim wrap things up within the hour ... though this is harder for us to control.

We will continue to use the biodegradable, disposable glasses and the wafers for Holy Communion, but will return to people coming to the rail to receive it. We'll make sure we have special arrangements for those who want to maintain social distancing to receive the elements in their seats. Those distributing the elements will wear face coverings.

Worship at Kempston East after 19 July 2021

Despite the changes introduced by the government last Monday, there are still a great many people testing positive for Covid daily. Even though we will still have posters up asking people with symptoms

not to attend, some might ... and some people who are asymptomatic may also come to Church. Either way, there's a continuing transmission risk. Making hand sanitiser available, encouraging and supporting those who want to continue to wear face coverings, and encouraging people to allow others to maintain social distance will all help, but we think we can all go further by considering other ways we can greet each other besides handshaking and hugging and we'll be considering other ways to share 'the Peace'.



Welcome to
KEMPSTON EAST METHODIST CHURCH
It's good to have you with us

The virus remains prevalent locally.

If you are showing Covid symptoms or have been advised to self-isolate, please do not come in.

Be COVID-19 Alert!

Although you'll be able to move freely around the premises, we would still ask that you use the Creche toilet on Sunday mornings ...and we'll be scaling back the detailed cleaning arrangements that have been in place so that Kempston East had the 'COVID-secure' status that allowed the various groups that use our premises to resume meeting some weeks ago.

More generally, we'll be reflecting on the positive changes that have been made during the pandemic (e.g. live-streaming services) and look to improve on these as a means of giving people within and outside the church continued access to worship, teaching and support. We'll want to discuss this at the General Church Meeting. So two clear messages: welcome back to a Sunday morning Service that will feel much more normal; but continue to care for those around you.

Richard and the Stewards

Welcome to
KEMPSTON EAST METHODIST CHURCH
It's good to have you with us

 You don't need to wear a face covering ... but please respect and accept the wishes of those who do still want to wear one.

Social distancing rules no longer apply ... but please check with your 'pew neighbour' before sitting 'up close and personal!' 

 Feel free to use the hand sanitiser if you want to do so. We particularly ask you to sanitise before and after using the hymn books.

Greet each other! But think carefully before hugging and shaking hands. 

Be COVID-19 Alert!

Exploring, Discipleship and Students of Faith

Dear Church family,

It is important the Church creates opportunities to explore and learn about our faith and how it relates to life. I have led these courses in previous churches and they have proved to be very helpful in encouraging growth both for individuals and church communities. The courses have different emphases and can be run on weekly, twice monthly or monthly basis. It would be my intention to start the course from the earliest October/ November 2021 onwards on a regular basis. Please can you tick: 1) which ones you are interested in. 2) What order should we run these courses over the next few years.

If you have any questions please contact me, blessings Rev Michael Giles

	Description	Interested, tick	course priority 1 to 5
ALPHA	www.alpha.org Exploring Faith, newcomers, existing members 15 sessions, DVD/ USB, On Line Booklets available <u>Session Time</u> ; 90 minutes run on consecutive weeks + weekend <u>Subjects</u> : Is there more to life, Who is Jesus, Why did Jesus die, Why did Jesus die, How can I have faith, Prayer, The Bible, Guidance, Who is Jesus, What does the Holy Spirit do, How can I be filled with the Holy spirit, How can I make the most of the rest of my life, How can I resist evil, Tell others, healing, What about the Church.		
Bible Society: The Big Story	www.biblesociety.org.uk/thebiblecourse For those already have a faith. 8 sessions DVD/ USB/ On line. Booklets available cost £2.50 <u>Session Time</u> : 90 minutes Can be run monthly, weekly or twice a month, Eg Sunday 5pm to 7pm with tea. <u>Subjects</u> : Introducing the Bible, Creation & Creation, Exodus & Promised Land, Judges & Kings, Exile & Prophets, Jesus & the Gospels, Acts & the Church, Revelation & Review		
Christianity Explored	www.ceministries.org Exploring faith but also for existing Christians 7 sessions DVD/ USB/ Booklets available Session Time: 90 Minutes, weekly, twice a month, monthly Subjects: Good News, Identity, Sin, the Cross, Grace, The Cross		
Start Course	www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk Exploring Faith, newcomers, existing members 6 sessions DVD/ USB Booklets available £1.00- £1.50 <u>Session Time</u> : 60 minutes Can be run monthly, weekly or twice a month <u>Subjects</u> : Life, God, Mess, Jesus, Cross, Onwards		
Talking Jesus	www.talkingjesus.org Evangelism equipping course 6 sessions DVD/ USB/ On Line= Booklets available £1.00 <u>Sessions time</u> : 60 minutes, Can be run monthly, weekly or twice a month <u>Subjects</u> : Everyone Talking Jesus, What motivates us, Living distinctively, Our story, God's story, Go on talking Jesus		
Your details optional	Name: _____	Contact Details: _____	

DEADLINE: 29th August 2021

PLEASE RETURN TO Church Steward on a Sunday service or

Rev Michael Giles, 29 Payne Road, Wootton MK43 9JL or email michaelgiles2017@gmail.com



Our Church Family



Please remember in your prayers:

- Les and Rosemary R
- Cilla
- Rosemary H
- Jean B (in hospital after a stroke)
- The family of the late Rev Dalwyn Attwell
- The family of the late Geoff Hutchings

Geoffrey Hutchings

It is with great sadness that we inform you that Geoff Hutchings was found dead at home last Wednesday morning. We hold his daughter Kay as well as his wider family and friends in our prayers. Please pray also for David and Susan Masih, long-term neighbours of Geoff, who were the ones who found him. Geoff is now at peace and reunited with Lena

The funeral of Geoff Hutchings will take place at Kempston East on Wednesday August 11th at 10.30am.

Autumn Study Groups

As you will have seen from last week's newsletter, Rev Michael Giles is planning to run a series of study groups in the autumn. As some of you will perhaps have already been on one or more of these courses, Michael would like to know (a) which of these you would be interested in attending and (b) if you're interested in more than one course, what your order of preference is. To this end, he has produced a form detailing what each course entails with a column to tick if you're interested and a column of order of preference if there is more than one course of interest.

This form was attached to last week's newsletter mailing but to ensure as wide a range of publicity as possible, it's also repeated here on page 9 **and** there are some printed copies at the back of the church at East.

WORSHIP AT EAST

This Sunday, our morning service at 10.30am will be led by Roger Gadsden and the Gadsden Band. Weather permitting, it will be held outside in the church garden. This allows us to, once again, sing with all our heart, soul and voice. In the event of inclement weather, we will meet in the church where, with the easing of restrictions, we will be able to sing again (though perhaps not as lustily as we would outside!)

We will be reverting to the plan outlined under 'Hybrid Services' in the newsletters of two and three weeks ago. In other words, we will not be live-streaming the service on Zoom.

As usual, though, Dom will put a recording of the service on the church website later on Sunday and an audio recording on CD will be available to those who normally receive these.

Forthcoming Services from Kempston East

Sunday Aug 1 st	10.30am	Geoff Talbot
Sunday Aug 8 th	10.30am	Janet Watts
Sunday Aug 15 th	10.30am	Rev Michael Giles (Holy Communion)
Sunday Aug 22 nd	10.30am	Rev Martin Truscott
Sunday Aug 29 th	10.30am	Rev Eric Royden

All these services will be held in the Church following the advice and guidelines given in the Stewards' recommendations (see pages 6-8)

Special Clean

Following the delay caused by the Covid pandemic, the annual special clean of the Kempston East premises took place on Monday and Tuesday this week. The Old School Hall block received most of the attention but all of the halls and adjacent areas were properly cleaned and furniture which had been locked away since March 2020 was returned to its usual place.

On behalf of the Church, I would like to thank those people who helped over the two days - Julie Co, Sarah, Mary, Rosemary R, Ann, Joyce, Peter, Andrew, Keith, Phil, Stuart, Richard and Roger.

All of the Halls are now ready to use for Church activities and by outside organisations. It was hard work but carried out with much fun and banter.

Thank you all very much.

Michael S

WORSHIP AT HOME SUNDAY JULY 25TH 2021



This short act of worship has been prepared for you so you can spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Lord you promised that you are always with us. Wherever we may be and whatever we may be facing as we come to worship you, may we know your presence with us. Draw us closer to you in this time of worship. Amen.

Hymn: The Church of Christ in every age. Singing the Faith 415

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGG9ht_wzK0

The Church of Christ, in every age
beset by change but Spirit-led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

Then let the servant Church arise,
a caring Church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.

For he alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
to care for all, without reserve,
and spread his liberating Word.

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

Let us pray together

Loving God we come to offer you our praise for everything that you have done for us and continue to do for us each day. We praise you that no matter what we face and whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, you are always with us walking beside us even when we don't realise you're there.

We are sorry for those times when we have let you down. We haven't always said¹² or done the right thing. We have sometimes hurt others through our words and actions.

We are sorry for the times when we have put ourselves first instead of helping those who needed our help. Forgive us and help us to be the people you want us to be.

Thank you for always being there for us no matter what we face. Help us to remember that when we find things hard and we struggle to cope with what life throws at us. Help us to share your love with others each and every day.

We ask these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: John 6:1-21

Time to Reflect

Today's Gospel reading from John looks at the story of the feeding of the 5000 and Jesus walking on water. But let's focus on that story of the feeding of the 5000. A familiar story to many of us. But I wonder what it would have been like to have actually been there when it happened? I wonder what the boy who donated his loaves and fishes thought when he realised his meal had fed so many people? We may not know what it was like to be there but what we do know from reading this story is two things. 1) The little things are just as important to God as the big things. 2) We are reminded of God's faithfulness to us.

- 1) The little things are just as important to God as the big things. When that young boy gave Jesus his loaves and fishes he probably wondered what difference they would make. But with just a few loaves of bread and some fish Jesus was able to feed 5000 people. Here we see that God can use the little things, the things that we think can't make a difference in doing his work and spreading the kingdom to do a lot. We may think that the gifts and skills we have are not enough to offer to God's service but actually it doesn't matter how much we can offer God for he can use it all big or small it all contributes to the building of his kingdom and he invites us all to be a part of it.
- 2) We are reminded of God's faithfulness to us. He will never let us down. He will never leave us; he is always there for us even when it feels like he isn't. He walks alongside us each day. The story of the feeding of the 5000 reminds us of the faithfulness of God. It reminds us that God can help us overcome obstacles so that we don't face them alone; we face them with him. We just need to continue putting our trust in him and he will help us get through it. In the times we are living in it can be hard to do that but we just need to keep on going. It can sometimes feel like God has let us down but he hasn't and he never will. He is always with us and always will be.

Let us continue to answer his call and do the work he has called us to do knowing that he is beside us every step of the way.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Lord,

We come to pray for your world. A world of hurt and pain. A world where so many are struggling because of war, disaster or poverty. Sometimes we look at your broken world and wonder what we can do to help mend it. Show us Lord how we can play a part in mending your broken and troubled world.

We pray for the church. As we continue to respond to the pandemic and seek to share the good news we ask for your guidance in the weeks and months ahead. Be with all our church leaders as they seek the way forward that they may know your presence with them. We pray for our own individual churches as we all seek the way forward in sharing your gospel with the world.

We pray for all those who are in need of our prayers at this time thinking of those in hospital, those struggling for lots of different reasons due to the impact of the pandemic on their lives. Be with all those who need our prayers right now Lord and give them the strength and peace that they need.

We place into your hands those who have died knowing that you welcome them home into your waiting arms. Be with all who mourn and may they know your peace, love and strength at this difficult time.

We pray for ourselves. You know the challenges that each of us face. We ask that you will give each one of us what we need to face them. When we struggle remind us of your faithfulness to us. Help us to serve you and build your kingdom. We ask these and all our prayers in Jesus' name Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to Mercies (New Every Morning)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpC-dTewHal>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Loving God help us to share the good news with others that they may come to know your love for them. May we always be reminded of your faithfulness to us. Amen.

Original Materials by Rebekah Fairhurst, Bolton Methodist Circuit

Hymns reproduced under CCLi 1144191 and CCLi 5467

**A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of
Roger Wood**

will be held on Wednesday, 28th July at
11.30am

at Priory Methodist Church, Newnham
Avenue

followed by light refreshments

All are welcome

The service will also be live-streamed on
Zoom (link to this is attached to
Richard's mailing)



**The Christian Aid Fayre that was
postponed because of Covid
restrictions will now be held on
Saturday September 4th.
Please put this in your diary.**



To all Guild members

Following our social afternoon at Priory Country Park last Wednesday, Ann and Michael are inviting all guild members to a further get-together for tea and cakes in their garden on Wednesday 18 August at 2.30 pm.

Weekly COVID-19 Cases in Bedford Borough

Still no good news this week as, along with the rest of the country, new case numbers continue to increase, In the week up to July 18th there were 765 new cases of Covid-19 reported in the Borough, up from 453 in the previous week. This equates to 441.5 new cases per 100,000 population compared with 261.4 new cases per 100,000 population in the previous seven days. Case numbers remain high in all age groups, including some in the 60 to 79 age groups, The 10-39 group was again particularly hard hit. There were, though, only three deaths from Covid-19 in the week to July 9th.

New case numbers reduced in Wootton from 56 last week to 42 this week. There were 36 new cases in Kempston Rural (up from 25 last week), 21 in Kempston Central and East (up from 8), 16 in Kempston West (up from 14), 15 in Kempston North (up from 5) and 14 in Kempston South (up from 6).

Despite the Government ending almost all restrictions, the data both locally and nationally gives some cause for concern. You are all, therefore, encouraged to be sensible in your decisions, wearing masks indoors and still socially distancing if you feel worried.

Newsletters in August

Putting it simply – apart from there being a newsletter next Sunday, August 1st, there won't be any other newsletters produced during August. It has always been our practice to take a break during August (although, because of lockdowns etc, we didn't do this last year). So, as we will have produced 72 issues of these newsletters each week for the past 72 weeks, it's time for a break. And not just for me, but also for Richard who has sent it out week by week and who has, along with a number of other helpers, printed and delivered copies to those who don't have any electronic means of access.

The newsletters will restart on Sunday September 5th. What form they will take is anyone's guess at this stage because much depends on whether, as a result of Covid cases rising as lockdown ends, we find ourselves back in another lockdown again. Ideally, the new newsletter will be a smaller affair. It will still contain all the news and information that you would expect from a church newsletter but, assuming we are still able to meet together in person for worship, it will not contain a 'worship at home' section. This is partly because we hope that everyone will want to feel able to come to church to worship in person and partly because the Methodist Church nationally who have produced this worship outline throughout the pandemic have not given any indication of continuing beyond the end of August. The 'worship at home' outlines for the rest of August will be collated together and sent out as one document with next week's newsletter.

Having given our group of pastoral letter writers a rest over the past few months and, instead, included a series of Bible studies, we will be reverting to having pastoral letters written by our own members. So, please watch out for some emails or phone calls from me or Cilla asking you if you will write one of these letters. You've had a good few months now to think of a subject!

In terms of getting the newsletters to you, we will continue with electronic delivery as, with saving the planet in mind, that cuts down considerably on the amount of paper we use. We will print a limited number of copies that will be available in church and which can be sent with the CDs.

Thank you for all your support and positive comments about the newsletter over this past year and a half. We look forward to bringing you all the church news in September.

Geoff and Cilla

