

PERTH METHODIST CHURCH

MESSAGES AND INFO

FRIDAY 15TH JANUARY

Our usual news-sheet is renamed Messages and Info and we hope it will be one of the ways we can keep in touch with each other during this strange and difficult time.

Please encourage others to read it and please print a copy for anyone you know who is not on email. Please also send in any items such as personal messages or info that you wish to share with members of the congregation.

Nik Wooller's Manse Musings

The Call to Worship for our covenant service, from Jeremiah 31, says this:

“31 The days are surely coming, says the LORD,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

33 But this is the covenant
that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,
says the LORD:

I will put my law within them,
and I will write it on their hearts;
and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

But what does it mean, when God says he will write his law on people's hearts? We're obviously using more metaphorical, symbolic language, for God isn't going to literally carve words on the organ beating away in our chest.

Today we tend to think about the heart as the seat of the emotions, particularly emotions such as compassion and love. The heart symbolises love, particularly romantic love – think of all those Valentine Day cards we'll be sending (or receiving) in a month's time. In contrast with the heart the head is the logical, reasoning part of ourselves. In actual fact science tells us our thoughts and feelings all come from the brain – the heart is just a muscular pump – but this is the language of metaphor, of poetry. So we feel with our heart and think with our head.

Now for the ancient Hebrews, the heart wasn't just associated with emotions, but with the rational, decision-making part of us as well. So, when Jeremiah speaks of God writing his law on our hearts, he doesn't just mean that we will have a warm and fuzzy emotional feeling toward God; he means that the desire to put God's will and purposes into practice will be absolutely engrained in our deepest being.

For some reason I'm reminded of those sticks of rock that my home town of Brighton is famous for. Wherever you break them or bite them, they still say Brighton Rock, for the words go all the way through. God's law will be written on our hearts – the Hebrew word for law is Torah, which also means teaching and instruction. It's actually very close to what Paul meant when he wrote to the Romans: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom 12:2)

These ideas are brought together in the hymn 'O for a heart to praise my God'. It is really a prayer for a heart that is cleansed, changed and renewed. In the last line Charles Wesley asks that God will write a 'new name' on his heart. And what is that word? The word is love. The word that summarises the whole of the law. That's what we need God to inscribe in our innermost beings, so we are people guided, motivated, ruled by love.

Covenant Service this Sunday, 17th January

This Sunday's services, will be on the YouTube channel from 9am Sunday. This Service will be a Covenant service. To access the service or any of the earlier services go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and where it says 'Search' enter:

'Angus, Dundee and Perthshire Methodist Circuit'.

If you know of anyone who doesn't have access to YouTube and would like the service on DVD or a full script, please tell Nick Wooller or Sue Marshall-Jennings smj4409@hotmail.co.uk so it can be posted to them each week.

Action for Children

The donations to AfC from PMC members in the Christmas 'collection' raised £290. Our support of this charity could hardly be more needed than at this difficult time.

Report on Housing and Domestic Abuse

This recently published report was commissioned by the Scottish government and was co-chaired by the Chartered Institute of Housing and Scottish Women's Aid and can be accessed here

<https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Improving-Housing-Outcomes-for-Women-and-Children-Experiencing-Domestic-Abuse-Report.pdf>

Alternatively you could ask me for a pdf of the synopsis of the report. Gerald.

Bible Month The following message about Bible Month has come from Lorraine Darlow (District Learning & Development Officer):

Dear friends,

Happy new year from the Learning Network!

We are excited to bring you news about Bible Month for this year which focuses on the Gospel of Mark. You can order a copy or download the material [here](#) at www.preachweb.org/biblemonth

Have you joined the **Methodist Church Bible Month Page** yet? You can join it here <https://buff.ly/3n169Q6>

This year we are doing Bible Month differently - not just focusing on one event in the year, but offering a variety of different ways of engaging with the Gospel of Mark throughout the year. You can currently join Rev Adrian Roux on a study guide of the Gospel on Thursday evenings, pray Taketime meditations each Friday, join Pioneers sharing stories around a (virtual!) campfire, be in conversation with how children and young people can engage with the Gospel, listen to and join in some academic teaching, recorded conversations on modelling group bible studies and different hermeneutical readings of the key passages. And lots more - all throughout the year! Sign up to the **Methodist Bible Month Page** on Facebook and join in the journey!

One of the resources available is a monthly facilitated Taketime together meditation on the last Friday of the month from Jan-Jun and Sep-Nov, with weekly links to meditations that you can use at home to walk through Mark's gospel. Some of you will be very familiar with Taketime and others may not yet have benefited from what it can offer. Please find an introduction video [here](#) from Rev Clive McKie, which you can download and pass on through your networks or you can copy and paste this link: <https://vimeo.com/499976384/4582ac9961>

More information to follow but do sign up on Facebook if you can

Sundays at 7.00pm. Scottish Church leaders encourage us to keep on lighting a candle in a window and offer a prayer on Sunday evening.

Lord, you search us and you know us
And we bow in your holy presence.
You know us this day in all we face
And you are with us through the hours of the night.
Guard us and keep us till the day is done and the darkness is no more.
Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, you search us and you know us
And we bow in your holy presence.
You have made us in your image
And woven us together in the womb.
Guide us to the place where life is renewed and our shared life restored.
Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, you search us and you know us
And we bow in your holy presence.
You know the challenges of this time
And of all the days that lie before us.
Give hope to all who despair and comfort to those who grieve.
Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, you search us and you know us
And we bow in your holy presence.
You know all who by their work serve the common good
And who by their gifts renew hope in dark times.
Keep safe the most vulnerable and walk with those who are fearful this day.
Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, you search us and you know us
And we bow in your holy presence.
You are the beginning of all things,
And you are the end of all things, in Jesus Christ.
Guard us and keep us till the day is done and the darkness is no more.
Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

This **Messages and Info sheet** is currently being produced by Gerald
please send items for inclusion to him by 12 midday on Thursday each week.

(His details are in the church directory)