



Message from Rev Sam Funnell

Sam has asked that in lieu of a message from her this week, I share with you Rev Dave Faulkner's pastoral letter to the Circuit, sent in anticipation of Rev Keith Beckingham's return from his sabbatical.

Dear Friends,

Some of you have heard me recount how my late father was an amateur astronomer. He belonged to the British Astronomical Association, and I initially learned the letters of the Greek alphabet (handy later for studying the New Testament) as a child from a BAA journal.

He also once took me to a Saturday morning meeting at their Piccadilly headquarters where a learned lecturer spoke way above my head. However, the person sitting at a table checking in the attendees when we arrived was none other than someone with whom I share a birthday, namely Patrick Moore. After the meeting, I think more people queued up to ask Patrick Moore questions than the guest speaker. What was so striking about Moore was the way he treated the children's questions with equal seriousness to those of the adults.

This love of astronomy meant that together we watched hour after hour of TV coverage of the Apollo space missions, with Patrick Moore (again) and the wonderful James Burke.

One thing I vividly remember from those Apollo missions was when the capsule was about to enter the Earth's atmosphere on return. All communication would be lost for a time, and the heat bearing down on the tiny capsule was fearsome. Re-entry was dangerous.

And so 're-entry' is my theme for this letter. It's the last of the guest circuit pastoral letters before Keith returns from his sabbatical and I hand the Superintendency back to him. Some of the Methodist literature about ministers' sabbatical talks about the danger of re-entry, and how it must be managed well.

Why is re-entry dangerous? Because congregations and church members will be so glad to see the returning minister that they splurge one thing after another onto them all at once, putting on such pressure and expectation that the benefits of the sabbatical can be lost overnight.

I therefore want to use this final letter to appeal to the whole circuit: please be gentle, kind and patient with Keith and Hilary as they re-enter our atmosphere. You do not have to tell them everything at once. You do not have to load expectations on them immediately. Maybe let them make the first move in asking for information and updates.

I say this with real feeling. I have had three Sabbaticals in my ministry. In each one, I have encountered issues that have damaged re-entry, ranging from a Circuit Treasurer who mismanaged funds to people causing trouble over health issues that had arisen during my three months away.

Keith and Hilary need to be refreshed and recharged for their own sakes as well as ours. Let's all play our part to ensure they have a safe re-entry and a gentle splashdown.

Finally, let me say it has been a privilege to act as your Superintendent for these last three and a half months. Before he left, I heard Keith say that he wanted you to accord me the same respect as you would any full time Superintendent. Well, that was certainly my experience. Thank you.

And it has been good to oversee the circuit alongside my ministerial colleagues, stipendiary, non-stipendiary, and supernumerary, along with our excellent team of circuit stewards led so ably by Linda Weedon, and our amazing circuit administrator, Sue Howson.

Give the way I started this letter, I'll close with some verses from the Psalms.
It won't be difficult for you to guess why my father loved these words:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?
(Psalm 8:3-4)

Grace and peace in Christ,
Dave Faulkner

Rev David Faulkner (Acting Superintendent)



Creative Commons: "Space-planets-stars-colliding-4k-space-wallpaper" by johnvoo_photographer

Message from the Leadership Team

What is risk? How do you define it? When does it become acceptable? These are questions we have all been asking increasingly over the last year or so. Whilst the first 2 are relatively simple to gain a consensus on, the last takes on a more personal emphasis. It is easy to assess risk for yourself, but when your actions (or inactions) affect the risks of others, it becomes very different. Even your mood at the time can change how you think.

Boris is only interested in his own personal risk. As long as he gets what he wants, does what he wants, when he wants, he couldn't give a flying fig about anyone else. Is that being selfish or just plain practical given you can't control what you can't control? Sometimes I wish he'd reflect a little more on his actions (or inactions).

But the ultimate risk-taker is God. He sent His only Son to become human and ultimately die on the cross for our sins so that we might live again. It is incomparable to the risks that we might be facing this week / month / year. I'm not so sure I could take such a huge risk but it does put into perspective for me that without risk very little is achieved. The Foundry project is a good example of this.

As for Boris (who is my RSPCA-named cat by the way) he'll never change so I shall just accept him for who he is. Maybe he can teach me better to know when to be risky and when not to be.

David Emmerson

A Word in Season 65 – 'Disappointment'

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him'. (Lamentations 3:22-24 NRSVA)

Like several million others Dan and I watched the Euros Final on Sunday evening. Sadly the result was a disappointment – the huge effort by the England team against Italy didn't bring the result we all wanted. Yet again the 'Penalty Shoot Out' was our downfall. But we cannot fault all the hard work put in by the team and manager. I was disappointed, but I was also immensely proud of how the team had behaved and the honest effort they had put in throughout the tournament. They all gave everything they had. As each player took their penalty they endeavoured to do their best and the goalkeeper did his part too. In the end it wasn't quite enough to win, but for the first time England had reached the final of the European Football Championship and lost by the one goal. As the commentators said, this team has the youth and now the experience to go one better in the World Cup in just over a year. Thank you for your efforts lads and C'mon England for the future.

I was also very proud of Football when both teams made the public statement of 'taking the knee' against racism in sport at the start of the game. But I wasn't just disappointed, but horrified, distressed, and very angry at those, you can't call them 'football fans', who have used social media to show their racism to those three young men who unfortunately missed their penalties. They are three very talented young men who gave their all in the cause of trying to do their best for our country. I have spent

my working life alongside children, young people and colleagues from across the world. We are all children of God. I find the racist attitude of the internet bullies unacceptable. Without all the members of the squad playing an equal part England would not have made the tournament let alone the final.

During the course of our lives we all meet disappointments. As Christians we are not exempt, we too face them. Sometimes we understand them and sometimes we don't – think of Elijah on Mount Horeb: after the wind, fire and earthquake in the sound of sheer silence – God said to him, **“What are you doing here, Elijah?”** He answered, *‘I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away’* (from 1 Kings 19:13-15 NRSVA)

God then goes on to tell Elijah what God has planned for him and reassures him. God does the same for us as the text at the start of this article, from Lamentations, tells. God's faithfulness and love never cease, they come new every morning. Jesus said, **‘Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age’** (Matthew 28:20b NRSVA)

“The Advocate/Helper, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (from John 14:26-27 NRSVA)

Whatever our disappointments and worries maybe we have these promises that God is with us throughout them, we do not need to worry or be afraid – of course there are times when they will cause us to worry and fear but we can turn to Jesus and he will share them with us.

Many hymn writers have written words about the love and faithfulness of God for us. ‘Great is thy Faithfulness’, ‘What a friend we have in Jesus,’ ‘O love that will not let me go’, ‘Faithful One, so unchanging,’ to name but a few. I leave you with one of my favourites

‘Is your heart bound by sorrow? Is your heart weighed down by care? Come to the cross, each burden bearing, all your anxiety leave it there.

There's no other friend so keen to help you; no other friend so quick to hear; no other place to leave your burden; no other one to hear your prayer.

Come, then, at once; delay no longer; heed Christ's entreaty, kind and sweet; you need not fear a disappointment; you shall find peace at the mercy seat.*

All your anxiety, all your care, bring to the mercy seat, leave it there, never a burden you cannot bear, never a friend like Jesus’. (E H Joy, 246 Salvation Army Songbook, reprinted 1987)

(* the mercy seat was the golden lid on the Ark of the Covenant, where blood sacrifices were made as a sin offering for atonement. It can be seen as the place where God's mercy and justice meet.

For many Christians, it is referred to as Jesus, who's blood was shed for our sins: e.g. ‘Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood effective by faith’. (Romans 3:23-25a). It has also been equated with the saying ‘at the foot of the cross’).

I do hope that this England team will come good in the World Cup but I know that, as a Christian - **‘In all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (from Romans 8:37-39 NRSVA)

‘May the God of hope fill us all with all joy and peace as we trust in him, so that we overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit’ (From Romans 15)

Graham

Valerie's Quiz Corner!

Answers from the last quiz:

1. What can be isosceles or scalene? *Triangles*
2. What is the former name of the Russian city St Petersburg? *Leningrad*
3. New York's statue, The Statue of Liberty was a gift from which country? *France*
4. In medicine what is hypertension? *High Blood Pressure*
5. Which Canadian city hosted the Olympic Games in 1976? *Montreal*
6. What was a Sopwith Camel? *An early type of aeroplane*

7. Which composer wrote The Magic Flute in 1791? *Mozart*
8. Which oil can help to relieve toothache? *Cloves*
9. In which European country is Colditz? *Germany*
10. Which historical Chinese rebellion can also be a type of dog? *Boxer*
11. One of the National sports of Scotland. Played by 2 teams of 15 on a field? *Hurling*
12. Which chemical element has the symbol Si? *Silicon*
13. Which is the larger, the African or the Indian elephant? *The African*
14. Which is the largest bone in the human body? *Femur*
15. In which ocean did the Titanic sink? *Atlantic Ocean*

This week's Quiz:

1. Which European country has the largest population?
2. Anfield Stadium is home to which English football club?
3. In which country was the British Writer Rudyard Kipling born?
4. From which nut is marzipan derived?
5. What is the capital of Austria?
6. With what type of reference book is Peter Mark Roget chiefly associated?
7. In the periodic table of elements the Letter "H" represents which chemical element?
8. In which country is the U.K's highest mountain Ben Nevis?
9. What are petit fours?
10. In which year did Elizabeth II officially become queen of the U.K?
11. In which Cathedral is Horacio Nelson buried?
12. Which South American country has borders with 10 other countries?
13. How many months of the year have exactly 31 days?
14. Which resort opened the U.K's first nudist beach in 1979?
15. In the Solar System which is the farthest planet from the sun?

Methodist Church Prayer of the Day, Tuesday 13 July 2021



Methodist Church

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#Prayer of the day:

Help us to find different ways and resources to solve the problems we are causing and give us the strength to make a positive difference to your world.

<http://ow.ly/NKvh50Fu0oK>

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