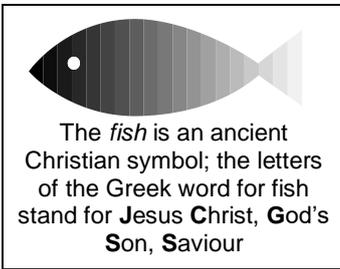




The Methodist Church

Falmouth & Gwennap Circuit (12/3)



Tel 01326 378616
E-mail robert.bowen@methodist.org.uk

Superintendent Minister's Address:- 69 Cunningham Park
Mabe Burnthouse
PENRYN
TR10 9HB

Members & Friends
Falmouth & Gwennap Circuit

April 28th 2020

Dear Friends,

Re: Pastoral Letter

Greetings and love to you! May God bless you in these strange days.

New normal is a phrase we've been hearing recently, so how are you getting used to your *new normal*?

This reminds me of another phrase, used in relation to moving from here to West Africa: *culture shock*! Moving from freedom to move about (go out for coffee, a walk on the beach, all as we please) to only going out for daily exercise, shopping & medical appointments, can lead to a sense of *culture shock*. Before going to Sierra Leone as a Mission Partner, *culture shock* was something we were made aware of.

Culture shock follows a pattern, something like this:-

There is stage one. You move to a new culture (eg from the UK to Africa), and to begin with all the new experiences (eg the heat... glad I don't have to worry about a coat!), new ways of living, etc, are a novelty, very interesting, and you feel on a "high."

Then there's stage two. A few weeks in, you begin to feel a bit fed up, even depressed. The novelty is gone, home feels a long way away, and the new way of life has lost its attraction (the heat... so draining).

Finally, stage three. Time moves on, maybe two or three months in, your feelings begin to return to normal; no longer fed up, coming out of any depression, and just accepting the new way of doing things. Life is moving to a *new normal* and we just get on with it, without a further thought. (The heat... that's how it is, I just keep mopping my brow without thinking).

We are all experiencing a *culture shock* right now, having moved from freedom of movement to being home bound (stage one). The early weeks were a novelty, we were even excited about it, but now, 4 weeks in, we are fed up, maybe even feeling depressed (stage two). As time goes on we will gradually come out of this, moving to the *new normal*, (stage three) where we just get on with it: this is life as it is.

I realise in our *new normal* we have given up a lot; we no longer see our family, or each other, face to face & rely on the phone/internet. Even so, if we feel we're in the depths of stage two, stage three is coming!!

I'm encouraged by these words from Isaiah. He's bringing God's word to those in exile; they've had to get used to a *new normal* over many years; the LORD speaks words of encouragement, that speak to us too:-

But now, this is what the LORD says – he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel:

¹Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. Isaiah 43: 1–3

May God bless you,

Robbie

Rev Robert (Robbie) Bowen Superintendent Minister

Some Additional Points:-

Rev Steven Wild, our Chair of District sends his greetings. He writes to you:-

This is a time when the faith which we believe, hear preached and sing about comes to the fore. In Mark's Gospel, Chapter 9 we see Jesus with Peter, James and John returning from the Mount of Transfiguration and entering a situation of total chaos. A man had brought his son, who had all kinds of problems, to be healed by Jesus. But as Jesus was on the Mount his disciples tried to help and they made a mess of everything - matters got worse.

In the tension of that situation Jesus says to the boy's Father 'Everything is possible for one who has faith.' Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do have faith; help me where my faith falls short!" (Mark Chapter 9 verses 23 and 24 NEB)

We are called to have faith in this crisis. You may feel that you haven't enough faith, but like the man in the story, ask for help where your faith falls short.

I know that the Methodist community will stand firm here in Cornwall. The Lord will help us.

In these anxious times the words of Jesus need to sink into our lives. Jesus puts our worry into perspective. He has promised that He will be with us always and that fact sustains us.

Being In Touch

We have a weekly email, called ***Holy Calm in a Crisis***. Please let Robbie/your minister/Chris Trewern know if you have an email address and would like to receive this.

For those not online we intend to send out a postal mailing, like this one, once a month.

We also have:-

- The *Falmouth and Gwennap Methodist Circuit* Facebook page, on which short acts of worship (Worship at Home) vital, encouraging, and entertaining information will be posted. Search on Facebook for *Falmouth and Gwennap Methodist Circuit*.
- Links to worship & further information will be available on our Circuit website www.fandgmc.org.uk

Money

Our finances are going to receive a hit during this crisis! We realise that your finances may receive a hit too, so we are prayerfully asking you to consider setting aside each week what would otherwise be your normal weekly offering to your local church.

(You may have already received a letter from your local church, if so follow it and ignore provisions below).

If you normally give using cash, could I ask that you consider setting this amount aside weekly. Please make a record each week of your contribution. This need only be a list on a piece of paper with date & amount. This will help us in any claim to the *Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme* for donations of £30 or less.

If you are able, could I ask that you consider setting up a weekly or monthly Standing Order to your local church; you can do this through Online Banking, or Telephone Banking, which can be set up though the phone number on the back of your Debit Card. You would need to know the bank account details of your local church. For bank account details, please contact your Minister/Pastor or your Church Treasurer.

Thank-you so much for prayerfully considering this and your generosity.

We are encouraged to remember Food Banks at this time; please consider how you can help here.

Contact Details

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|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Rev Robbie Bowen | 01326 378616 | robert.bowen@methodist.org.uk |) <i>Please feel</i> |
| • Rev Liz Harris | 01209 820077 | elizabeth.harris@methodist.org.uk |) <i>free to</i> |
| • Deacon Jane Mills | 01326 211361 | itsjanemills@gmail.com |) <i>phone for</i> |
| • Rev Andrew Mumford | 07557 569520 | andrew.mumford@methodist.org.uk |) <i>a chat at</i> |
| • Pastor Jenny Lockwood | 01209 213657 | jenny.lockwood@btinternet.com |) <i>any time.</i> |
| • Chris Trewern (Admin) | 01872 863140 | office@fandgmc.org.uk | |

May God Bless, a **big Thank-You!**