

Petersfield and Liss URC

'In Touch'



The First Sunday of Advent

HOPE

Sunday 29th November
2020



Hello and Welcome

Will I let God change me?

'So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5 v 16-17

And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

The beggar could have refused to be healed. He could have refused to stretch out his arms to Peter's outstretched arms, But he responded to Peter's offer and was healed instantly, Not surprisingly, the locals were amazed. After all, the lame man had been a daily fixture at the gate of the temple. He was part of the scenery.

How willing am I to let God change me? I may pray about my bad habits, sins and weaknesses, but do I really want to say goodbye to them? Part of being healed is being willing to let go of the old familiar patterns and responses. It means that we have to discover new ways of being and relating, and that is scary.

If I let go of my lack of confidence, what will my friends make of the newly confident me? If I let God take away my deep hurt and anger, how will I know how to react to things? Part of God's plan is to make us whole so that we begin to bear remarkable likeness to Jesus Christ. For some of us the process will be painful and frightening. For others it will seem more like a natural progress. Some of us will be tempted to cop out. But God will never stop offering us wholeness.

Prayer: Merciful Lord, help us to entrust ourselves to You, so that you can heal us and make us whole. Help us to let go. Amen

If you are in need of any assistance during this time, we are more than happy to help out, whether you need some items of shopping or just a chat, please do call one of us on the numbers listed below.

Josh – 01730 263433, Carol – 01730 893489, Jo – 01730 301377, Esmé – 01730 266636

Romans 15 v 13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Christmas means not just hope for the world, despite all its unending problems, but hope for you and me, despite all our unending failings.

Timothy Keller

For the Son of God to empty Himself and become poor meant love to the uttermost for unlovely men, who 'through His poverty might become rich.' This Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity - hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory - because at the Father's will Jesus became poor and was born in a stable so that thirty years later He might hang on a cross. It is the most wonderful message that the world has ever heard, or will hear.

J.I. Packer

Where is God in the Coronavirus?

Below is an extract from the book, 'Where is God in the Coronavirus?' by Professor John C Lennox, which appeared in the Summer 2020 edition of the Plain Truth Magazine. This article can be read online by the following link <https://plain-truth.org.uk/where-is-god-in-a-coronavirus-world>

Since all over the world churches are being closed in order to limit the spread of the virus, many are asking where God is – that is, if he is there at all. Is he in inaccessible self-quarantine? Where or from whom can we get real solace or hope?

Coronavirus confronts us all with the problem of pain and suffering. This, for most of us, is one of life's hardest problems. We each need to make sense of coronavirus in three different ways: intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. All are important – and together they present a formidable challenge to anyone. I have a worldview. I am a Christian, and I shall therefore try to make clear why I think that Christianity has something to say about the issue of natural disasters like coronavirus – something that is not to be found elsewhere. Your worldview will make a difference to how you react to disasters like the coronavirus pandemic, and to earthquakes or tsunamis. According to the Bible, it is not true that if someone suffers some severe illness or accident, we should conclude that he or she has secretly been guilty of serious sins. Popular thought has often imagined that this must be the Bible's standpoint. But the whole book of Job in the Old Testament is a protest against that idea. God is not taken aback by the coronavirus; he can work for good even in the evil of it, and his plans will not be thwarted by it, although in situations like the present crisis it can be very hard for us to take this on board. At the same time, we are responsible for our own responses to the crisis and to each other – for he has given us that freedom. We live in a world where things go wrong, and where humans are able to choose to do wrong (or right). A Christian, then, is not a person who has solved the problem of suffering but one who has come to love and trust the God who has suffered for them. We would be wise to take heed of the best medical advice of the day. Interestingly, in ancient biblical times, the Israelites were also instructed about the need for quarantine to prevent the spread of infectious illnesses. The Old Testament book of Leviticus even prescribed seven days' isolation for some diseases, and an indefinite period for others.

The coronavirus and all the plagues that have ravaged the world will be no more: the crown of righteousness that will be given to those who love the Lord Jesus will never perish or fade. Peace in a pandemic? Only Jesus can give that. The issue for all of us is this: will we trust him to do so? Do I think I have answered all the questions that this crisis has raised? No, I don't. Far from it. I am personally left with many ragged edges and issues on which I would like to have more clarity. In the meantime, I shall follow the advice of the great nineteenth-century preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon: **'God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.'**

Isaiah 41 v 13

**For I am the Lord your God
who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you, Do not fear;
I will help you.**

Christmas Card

I am again planning to produce a church Christmas card where everyone has the opportunity to send a Christmas greeting to everyone at Petersfield and Liss URC. If you would like to include a greeting for this year's card, please send it to me by Sunday 6 December. All the messages will then be collated into a card that will be distributed to everyone from 13 December onwards.

Mary Evans

AGE Concern Petersfield & District

PACT Petersfield & District

Church of England

Christmas Meal Invitation

We invite you to enjoy a free traditional Christmas lunch during Christmas week which will be delivered to you. This has been made possible due to the fantastic generosity of the town.

Please choose ONE of the following dates:

☐ Monday 21st December (delivery between 12-1pm)

☐ Christmas Day 25th December

Name:

Address:

Tel No:

Email:

☐ Vegetarian option available - please tick

If you have any other dietary requirements please indicate here

Please return by Friday 3rd December to Winton House, 18 High Str or email to info@ageconcernpetersfield.org.uk

Data Protection: Your personal information is held by Age Concern Petersfield and PACT, is strictly confidential, stored securely, and not passed onto any outside organisations and/or individuals without your express consent.

Registered charity 1178837



A man placed some flowers on the grave of his dearly departed mother and started back toward his car when his attention was diverted to another man kneeling at a grave. The man seemed to be praying with profound intensity and kept repeating, "Why did you have to die? Why did you have to die? The first man approached him and said, "Sir, I don't wish to interfere with your private grief, but this demonstration of pain is more than I've ever seen before. For whom do you mourn so deeply? A child? A parent?" The mourner took a moment to collect himself, then replied, "My wife's first husband."