

Weekly Bulletin - Sunday 30th August

Using the Rubble!



Whilst out walking in lockdown, Tracey and I noticed that a large section of the wall separating the golf course from Green Lane had collapsed. It was great, because we could sneak into the Golf Course and walk along the fairways. But then some skilled stonemasons came and rebuilt the wall, using the same stone that had collapsed. It was amazing to watch them, and to see the transformation!

It took them a few weeks, but in the end, the wall looked as good as new.

I have recently been reading the account in Nehemiah of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Although most of the Jews had long returned from captivity, the City walls remained in tatters – completely demolished still.

Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem and surveyed the state of the walls:

‘After dark I went out through the Valley Gate, past the Jackal’s Well, and over to the Dung Gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates. Then I went to the Fountain Gate and to the King’s Pool, but my donkey couldn’t get through the rubble’. (Nehemiah 2:13-14)

They were in a right old state! So, Nehemiah then sets about getting the people to rebuild the walls. They will do it by using the rubble left from the old walls. There was much opposition and scorn from surrounding tribes:

‘What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they’re doing? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?’ (Nehemiah 4:2)

And the people too, soon got tired trying to rebuild.

Then the people of Judah began to complain, “The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves.” (Nehemiah 4:10)

But rebuild they did, and in time, the new walls were finished!

There are two things I want to reflect on in this story. First, I wonder if you feel our churches are currently a bit like those walls when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem? After the lockdown and enforced absence, you could be forgiven for thinking that everything seems in ruins. Everything is mere rubble! So many of the things we had in place have now gone into disrepair. What we had has fallen down.

But God can and will rebuild God's church! And God invites us to get stuck in with the task of rebuilding his Kingdom.

It might seem to us that the task is too great. Like the Jews, we may think the attempt futile. We will get tired and fed up. Often, there will be a lot of debris in the way.

But just as Nehemiah was anointed by God to complete his task, so are we! This is God's work. *'I will build my church'* God says to Peter in Matthew 16, *'and the gates of Hades will not overcome it'*.

It was from the rubble that remained, that the walls were built. And what God is doing in our church, he will build from what we have lying in front of us, right now!

But then I also want to apply these same thoughts to our own lives. Because we often feel burnt out, and tarnished, and just a pile of rubble too. Sometimes we feel like things are collapsing and lie in ruins.

But the story of Nehemiah gives us hope! God wants to work in your life and mine to make something beautiful out of the mess that is already there.



What looks to you like rubble, God can make into something great! I love Colossians 1:18-20 in the Message version. It says this: ***'From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone.... Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross'***.

So, may you look at the rubble you see in the church or in your own life, and trust God to rebuild it into something amazing!

Amen.



Prayer

God, we confess that so often we look at things around us – even our churches – and sometimes our own lives, and we feel things lie in ruins.

So often, we don't know where to begin, and despair at the state things have slipped into.

But God, we believe you are a God of redemption and reclamation and renovation. You are a God who is able to build out of nothing!

Even Your own son's body, the temple where You lived, You rebuilt in 3 days, after it was destroyed.

And what You did in Jesus, You want to do in each of us.

So, help us to trust You, and be prepared to join in with Your amazing work of making all things new!

Amen.



We are delighted to have re-commenced physical worship together at PMC!

Do join us at 10:30 this Sunday, 30th August

for a short service of praise and reflection.

- We have completed a full risk-assessment, and everything possible will be done to ensure your safety and protection – including provision of hand gel, and socially-distanced seating.
- Please wear a face-covering, and bring a pen to sign in.

- In order to speed up the sign-in process and help people get into Church quicker, a list with the names of all those who have attended since 9th August will be available at the end of the sign-in table. Anyone who has previously attended will be able to put a tick against their name on that list after sanitizing their hands. Everyone else will be required to sign in on the other register. Please remember to bring a pen!
- In other to maximise the available seating, it would be helpful if people could please fill the seats from the centre of the row first rather than sit at the end.
- The disabled access door will be open for priority access for anyone who has difficulty standing in the queue.
- Although things will be different, we seek to provide a sacred space where we can come together to meet with God and each other!



The service will also be live-streamed on YouTube for anyone wanting to follow from home, or to catch up later, on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDg84uVexUYw-rnhoF1b2Bw/videos>

You should be able to access this from around 10.20am, but keep refreshing the page periodically if it isn't there when you log on.

PMC continues to provide a **weekly podcast** which is available to download from our website: www.penrithmethodist.co.uk or by dialling 01768 800793



Remember you can join in worship in any of the following ways -



- **On TV at 1.15pm, this Sunday - BBC1: Songs of Praise:**
 - **on national radio at 8.10am - Radio 4**
 - **on local radio.** 8 am (until 8.30 am) on **BBC Radio Cumbria** and 10 am (until 10.30am) on **Eden FM**
 - Worship from **Methodist Central Hall** every Sunday at 11am on You Tube, and also available any time after on **mchw.live**

The Methodist Hymn Book

As we seek to discern the new thing that God is doing in our midst, I want to recall the new thing God did within the Methodist Church in 1933 - the publication of the Methodist Hymn Book!

I was four years old at the time. MHB and I were together for 50 years! The arrival of 'Hymns and Psalms' in 1983 created a rather uneasy 'ménage à trois'!

During those 50 years hymns were ever before us. Five hymns on Sunday morning, five in the evening service, hymns at evening meetings, hymns in the home, hymns at Rallies and Anniversaries. My tune book went with me on holiday, on National Service, to University. Many of the hymns, hymn numbers (69, 371) and tunes became lodged in the memories of Methodists. Now, in later middle age I find these memories of value in two ways.

First, certain hymns are linked with certain events. So, for instance, the line 'Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way' (MHB 691) takes me back to the war years when, as an evacuee, I was living with a Methodist farming family in a Yorkshire village. The Methodist chapel had not been blacked out. The evening services during winter were held at the farm and took the form of singing hymns chosen by the group. In the dark days of the war one favourite was 'Eternal Father, strong to save' (MHB 917). When the singing was done the group would set out from the warmth and light of the farm kitchen into the pitch darkness of a country blackout. Each person had a tiny flashlight to guide them as they set out on their homeward way.

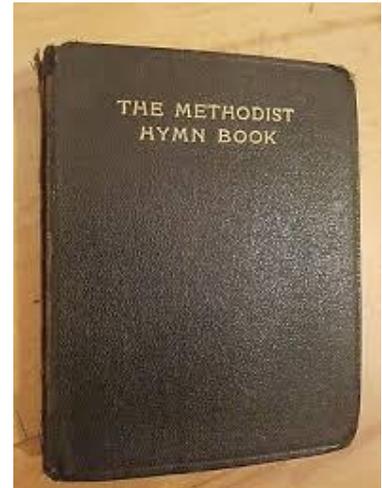
The second way in which these hymns have spiritual value is that they form a treasury of devotion. There are thoughts and prayers for every situation. For example, after 'lights out' at night MHB 689 makes a splendid preparation for sleep:



At even, ere the sun was set, the sick,
O Lord, around Thee lay:
Oh in what divers pains they met!
Oh with what joy they went away!
Once more tis eventide and we,
Oppressed with various ills, draw near.
What if Thy form we cannot see,
We know and feel that Thou art here.

Hallelujah!

Audrey Cannon.



September Sermon Series



Exploring PMC's Core Values



What are these four values that underpin our Church ethos?

What do they really mean?

6 September - Tim - Praise
13 September - Dave - Belong
20 September - Tim - Act
27 September - Dave - Grow



Making Your Giving Go Further

We are enormously grateful to you for choosing to support us at this very difficult time but we know this has been a practical challenge for those who give using weekly envelopes or by cash in the collection plate.

However, under a special Government scheme all cash donations up to £30 are worth an extra 25% to the Church even if you are not able to participate in Gift Aid.

Some people may wish to “catch up” on what they would have given during lockdown and, in these circumstances the **£30 limit does not apply, BUT** if you put these donations in an envelope and **mark it “catch up”** we can make it go further. Thank you.

I am looking to borrow an electric or battery powered sheet metal nibbler/shears. If anyone has one they could lend, could you contact Duncan please on 07432 653939 or duncanrwatson@icloud.com



There will be a Plant Sale on 5th September. Just as in May, it will be between Little Fairfield and Fairfield on Wordsworth Street. No money will be taken but donations can be given to a favourite charity.

Many thanks,
Thelma and Carol (next door!)

Thanks very much to the flower team who, in lieu of being able to send flowers each Tuesday, have been sending over 80 cards out to pastoral contacts as a way of blessing others.



TV Licence Warning

If you are Over 75 and going to have to buy a TV licence for the first time in a while, please be aware that there are some very clever scams operating. A friend of ours who is normally very clued up about these things was caught by a phone call that really seemed to be genuine. He gave a lot of information before his inner alarm bells rang.

The advice is to wait until you receive a letter from the TV licensing authority, which may not arrive until September.

THE CARLISLE REFUGE COLLECTION.



A very **BIG** thank you.

The relatively short notice and Storm Francis did not stop an amazing response of items for the Carlisle Refuge.

Jeannette & Keith

**A reminder that the Circuit Office will be closed on Bank Holiday
Monday, 31st August.**

Contact Details:

Rev. David Milner: 01768 863209 or email: dave@revmilner.plus.com

Rev. Tim Cooke: 01768 890465 or email: tim.cooke@methodist.org

Circuit Office: 01768 862787 or email: admin@penrithmethodist.co.uk

(Open 9am – 1pm, Monday to Friday)

PMC Website: www.penrithmethodist.co.uk

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