

Weekly Bulletin - Sunday 6th September



Kitchen Scene with Christ in the House of Martha and Mary

Joachim Beuckelaer (c.1533–1574)

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

The title of this painting suggests that it is about Jesus' visit to the home of Mary and Martha described in Luke 10:38–42. However, at first, I did wonder if this was just an excuse for the artist to show off his skills as a painter of the still-life, with fruit and veg and dead animals. It seems as if the painter has said to himself, "I'm going to paint a kitchen scene with baskets of vegetables and bowls of fruit. But, I know I ought to make it religious, so I'll just pop Jesus in at the back and give it a Bible title. It's bound to sell then..." After a while, though, I realised that the painting is a lot more subversive than that, and not just a thinly disguised excuse for a still-life.

In the mid 1560's the Netherlands was ruled by Catholic Spain, but Protestants began to revolt, and riots took place in which Catholic churches were destroyed. Theologically, in which direction did salvation lie? Was salvation by Faith Alone (Sola Fide), calling us to a life of contemplation, developing a deep and loving relationship

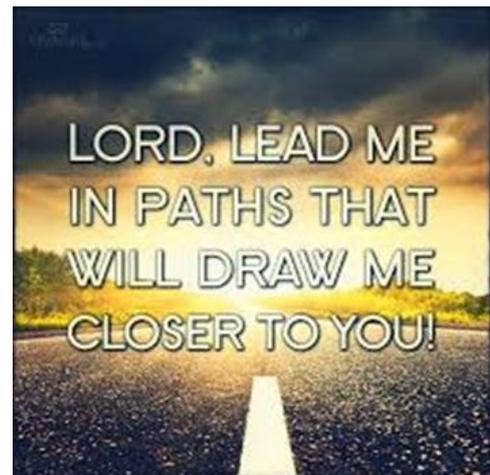
at the feet of Jesus, knowing that we are saved not by anything we do or by how hard we work, but only by trusting in Him? Or, are we called to a life in action and work, toiling faithfully and being active to bring about a kingdom of justice and peace, followed by a “Well done, good and faithful servant” at the end of it all? Is my salvation to be through Faith or Works? Contemplation or Action?

In this painting the “work” is definitely front and centre with the physical and material aspects of life highlighted or showcased in the foreground. Jesus (and Mary presumably) are relegated and isolated in an ivory tower somewhere in the background. Can you see them at the back there in the far distance?

To put the debate in a slightly different way, are the world, the flesh and the bodily appetites things to be welcomed as part of God’s good creation and to take pleasure and delight in? Or, puritanically, are they evils – distractions from the purely Spiritual and therefore to be shunned and avoided? Self-denial or delight in God’s world?

One writer, rather floridly, says: “... the image moves beyond a simple illustration of the Gospel story to become a philosophical exegesis of visible reality. Invested with moral and symbolic content, each object reminds us of our carnal nature and warns us against the dangers of voluptuousness.”

In other words, I think, **the painter is warning us that the world is a very big and tempting place, but don’t let that distract you from being close to Jesus.** Yes, the shopping still needs to be done at the market, but where will the focus of your life be? Is Jesus simply relegated into the background somewhere off in the distance, or is he front and centre instead? Which do we make our priority in life?



The painting also asks questions about the role of women in society and in today’s church. Are they to stay in the kitchen, chained to the oven or sink? Are they of less value and worth than the men? Here, the men sit philosophising by the hearth, while the women sweep and mop the floor, and get the shopping in. In the story of Jesus’ visit to the home of Mary and Martha, Jesus elevates the role of women. They, too, can debate and learn. Mary has her place outside of the kitchen, sitting at Jesus feet to learn from the Master.

So, is this all just a thinly disguised excuse to paint a still-life of fruit and joints of meat? Or are there deeper questions to answer here?

Prayer Pointers



Schools and colleges have returned this week, and next Sunday is “Education Sunday”. Please continue to hold all those who are involved in education in your prayers...

Here are some prayers from the Education Sunday webpages:

God of all, through all time and in all places, in each circumstance and season,
You call us and welcome us with open arms as Your beloved children.
Each one of us is precious to You and called by You.
In this time of great change and uncertainty, You are unchanging and ever faithful.
In this moment, let us feel You speaking to us, leading us, teaching us,
Filling us with Your spirit and strengthening us for the journey ahead.
God did not leave His people alone in the wilderness, He stayed with them and led them on.

We are a learning people in a time of change.

We pray for everyone who’s just starting school or nursery

The God who has called you will lead you on. AMEN

We pray for everyone who’s going back to school or college

The God who has called you will lead you on. AMEN

We pray for all those transitioning to secondary, to college, to uni

The God who has called you will lead you on. AMEN

We pray for teachers, tutors, lecturers and teaching assistants

The God who has called you will lead you on. AMEN

We pray for parents, waiting anxiously at home

The God who has called you will lead you on. AMEN

We pray for admin staff, catering staff, all who keep places of learning running smoothly

The God who has called you will lead you on. AMEN

We pray for all who are adjusting to new circumstances

The God who has called you will lead you on. AMEN

Let us feel you speaking to us, leading us, teaching us,

Filling us with your spirit and strengthening us for the journey ahead.

AMEN

https://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/346862/Home/Resources/Education_Sunday/Education_Sunday_2020/Education_Sunday_2020.aspx



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

Do join us at 10:30 this Sunday, 6th September

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 order 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 Light at the Back of the Cloud

At the back of the cloud there's a splendour in the regions beyond human sight. Though the sky may look stormy, remember that it veils the unchangeable light.

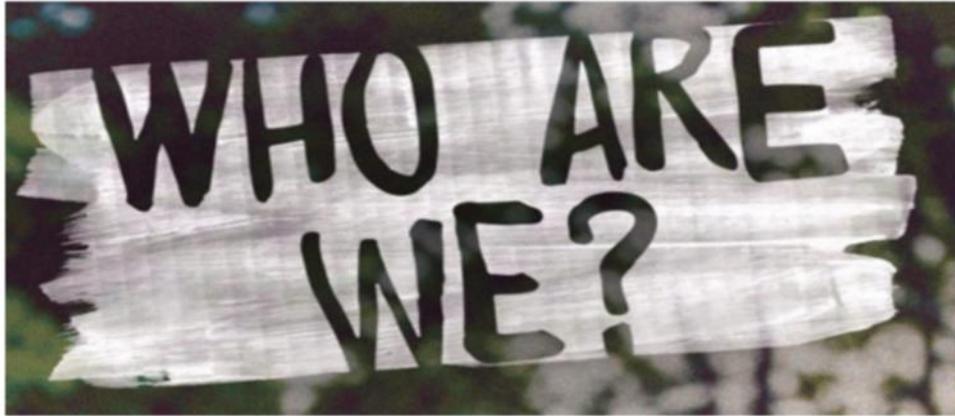
At the back of the cloud there's a lining and it's golden and silver and blue. For the brightness of heaven is shining on the side that is hidden from you.

When adversity comes, never mind it. Face the storm with your shoulders unbowed. And remember that God is behind it in the light at the back of the cloud.



The Methodist Hymn Book – just to clarify that the article in last weeks' bulletin was actually written by Michael Cannon, not Audrey. Sincere apologies for the error.

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



Operation Christmas Child

Leaflets to guide you to pack your own shoebox are in Reception. We won't be able to have our regular communal packing morning this year, but I'll arrange a time for you to drop off items to pack towards the end of October. Remember no sweets or toothpaste now, but hand knitted stuffed toys are allowed as long as the stuffing is new and not rice etc.

We need to raise the transport / distribution costs too - £5 per box. This has come partly from Sunday coffees etc in previous years. If you are able to help, collect your spare change in an envelope between now and the end of October.

Thank you - Judith Joyce.

Contact Details:

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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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Lets stay connected with one another!

