



Weekly Bulletin Sunday 10th January 2021

New Year Hope?

1 Peter 1:3-6 (abridged) says this: *'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade...In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.'*

I wonder what hope you have for this year?

Here we are, now in lockdown again. Just when we were all getting excited about a vaccine roll-out, we are thrown into a new variant of Covid-19 with devastating repercussions.

So, does the thought of the year ahead fill you with dread, I wonder, or hope? Are you excited and optimistic about the future – or just wanting to crawl back into bed for another year!

I don't know what time of the year Peter wrote the words of 1 Peter, but he certainly sounded pretty hopeful, didn't he?

'Praise God', he says, 'for he has given us a new birth and a living hope'. 'In this hope we rejoice', he goes on, 'and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy'.

Peter's hope is found in the God he loves. And I believe that, like Peter, we too can find hope for this year in God too – despite what we see around us, and here's why:

First, we can look at the past. We've just celebrated Christmas when God came to us as Jesus. And we believe that somehow, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we have each been brought into a new life of relationship with God.



And we can look back at our own lives too. We can see how God has been faithful, and has always been with us. Even though life hasn't always been easy – and often painful and sad, God has always journeyed with us.

Yes, the past gives us hope. But we can also look to the future.

You see, what God has done in the past is headed somewhere! God is taking us all on a journey that isn't finished yet! *'I know who holds the future, and he'll guide me with his hand'*, we used to sing in that old Chorus. And Paul says, in Romans 8: *'Creation waits in eager expectation for liberation from its bondage to decay'*.

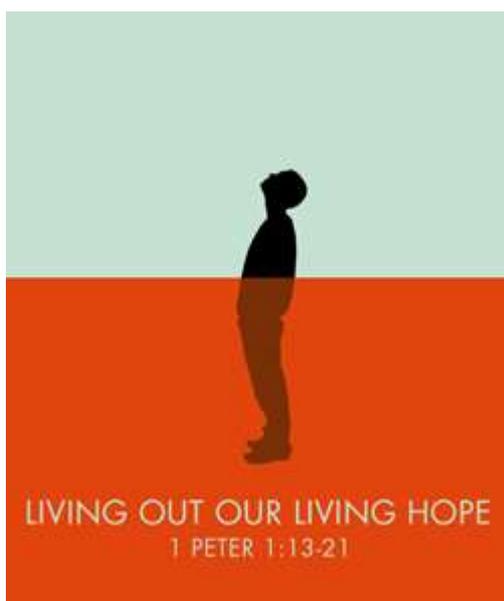
God is bringing us to his future! And that future is something that brings hope.

And finally, we can also look at the present. You see, our hope in God is also about a current reality. It is something we can experience right now!

Jesus said in John 10 that he had come that we might know life in all its fullness – right now! He said *'I am with you always'*.

The hope we have for 2021 is that God has come in the past, and that God's kingdom is heading to its glorious conclusion - but it is also the hope that we can experience God in our lives right now!

We can know God's presence with us – God abiding with us. We don't just have hope in what has already happened, or what will happen one day – but what God is doing in us right now.



Peter calls our hope a living hope. It's a hope for today!

Our hope, then, is not just that one day things will be better, and that there will be an end to this pandemic, and life can go back to what it was before. No, our hope is that today, whatever happens, God is with us, and will be in us, and that God is for us!

So, may you remember all that God has done for you in the past; may you trust in your future held in God's hand; and may you know more of God's presence in your life today and every day.

That old chorus went on: *'So as I face tomorrow, with its problems large and small, I'll trust the God of miracles, Give to Him my all'*.

May that be something you really can hope in!

Rev. Tim

Prayer

God, I confess it's so easy to lose hope.

I look around us at the world about me and I often despair.

It seems I go one step forward and then two steps back!

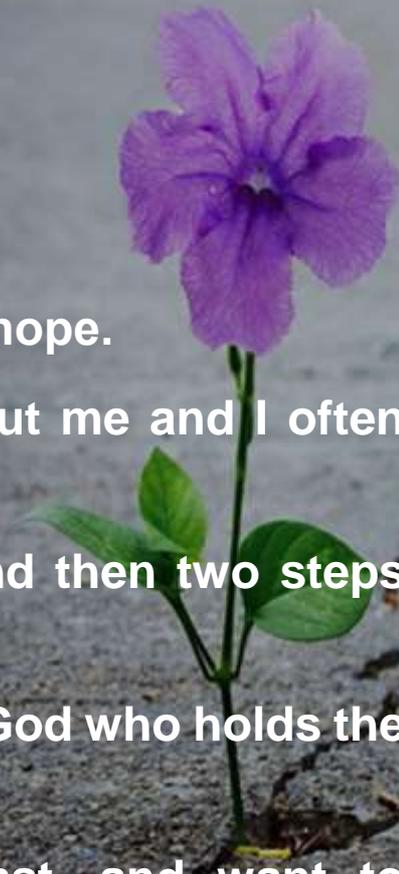
But God, I believe that you are the God who holds the past, the present and the future.

You have blessed me in the past, and want to continue blessing me – now and for ever!

So, help me to put my hope in you.

And God, as I go into this year with all its uncertainty, may I know your presence with me. Help me to trust you completely, and find joy in your communion in every step I take, as we journey together into 2021.

Amen



Update on Rev. David

Although David's infection has now cleared, he is still very tired and low on energy. He continues to convalesce on Doctor's orders and we wait to see what the next step will be mid-month, whether that is further time off or a gradual phased return to work.

Please continue to hold David and Christine in your prayers.



Since we are not meeting for physical worship, we are returning to pre-recorded services being shown on You Tube from this Sunday at 10.30am.

*This week, Revd. Gillian Belford is leading a Healing Service. Please pray for all those who are involved in this service and for those who take this opportunity for prayer. *

A reminder that if anybody needs any help accessing the services whilst on lockdown to please contact the Circuit Office.



The weekly podcast is available to download from our website: www.penrithmethodist.co.uk or by dialling 01768 800793.



Remember you can also join in worship this Sunday in any of the following ways:

- **On TV at 12.25pm - BBC1: Songs of Praise:** Claire McCollum is in Stirling exploring the city's connection to the world-famous King James Bible, and JB Gill meets a Scottish singer who found Jesus while battling addiction.



- **On Radio 4 at 8.10am:** *"If you believe in God...then you should feel a responsibility to care for His Creation"* (the Duke of Edinburgh). This insight led Prince Philip, as International President of the World Wide Fund for Nature, to invite today's service leader Martin Palmer, to help him bring together in Assisi, Italy, the birth place of St Francis, for the first time in 1986, five of the world's major faiths and key environmental organisations to explore how the faiths could become partners with the conservation movements in protecting what Pope Francis calls "our Common Home". Now a member of the Pope's Covid Commission and CEO of FaithInvest, a new organisation that helps faiths invest in a values-based environment, in this morning's service Martin puts the horrifying statistic of the death of 160 species across the last ten years into a spiritual perspective. The programme draws on insights from major world faiths, but is grounded in the Christian hope of renewal and regeneration with readings from Exodus 3, Psalm 148, and Colossians chapter 1.
- **On local radio** – *BBC Radio Cumbria*: 8am – 8.30am; *Eden FM*: 10am – 10.30am
- Worship from **Methodist Central Hall** every Sunday at 11am on You Tube, and also available any time after on **mchw.live**



You are now able to donate directly to PMC, either as a one-off or regular payment, via our website by clicking on the 'Giving' tab at the top of the home page. This facility has been set up through the Charities Aid Foundation and is connected to our bank account with them. A receipt will be emailed to you by CAF for your records.

Each financial gift supports us to fulfil our mission to reach beyond our church and extend love and hope in the life of our wider community. Thank you.





Christmas Charity Donations

We raised a total of £318.40 for our chosen charities over Christmas. The sum will be divided equally between The Nourished Project (Salvation Army), Shelter and Médecins Sans Frontières.

Zoom Coffee and Chat Saturday 16th January at 11am

A chance to catch up with one another since the New Year and the start of lockdown 3!

The Zoom link is the same as previous times but a reminder will be emailed out separately next week.



Congratulations to Mark and Rachael Tate (nee Cottam) on the birth of their daughter, Maggie Iris, on 27th December 2020! Talwyn is now a big brother to the little one who weighed in at 7lb 13oz. All are doing well.

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