

**ST JAMES' METHODIST & UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH WOOLTON L25 7RJ**

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*Peter's day off is Friday - messages and emails left on Fridays
will not be received by him until Saturday.*



SUNDAY APRIL 5th 2020

Peter has written a new entry on his Blog, “Jesus, lover of my soul”, and he commends it for your study: it is printed below.

The Collect for the Sixth Sunday in Lent (Second Sunday of the Passion or Palm Sunday)

Eternal God, in your tender love towards the human race you sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take our flesh and to suffer death upon a cross. Grant that we may follow the example of his great humility, and share in the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SAD NEWS

The Rev. David Sharples, who was a minister at Childwall Valley and Court Hey from 1994 to 1998 died on Friday. Please keep his family in your prayers.

We also hear of the death in the USA of the Rev. Geoffrey Wainwright, who was minister at Halewood in the mid-sixties. Geoffrey was an eminent scholar as well as a much-loved pastor to the early tiny church family there.

GOOD NEWS

Congratulations to Arthur Evans, who reaches his 90th birthday on Monday. He joins a very select group among us, and we send our love to him and those around him.

QUIZ NIGHT 21ST MARCH

Please will all those of you who bought a ticket for this event contact Wendy Doig for a refund. She will ensure the money is returned to you.

MONEY

As you are all aware sadly we are not able to meet at our Church premises at present, and maybe for some time yet. Nevertheless we do still need to maintain our premises so that our Ministry, outreach and service to God can continue, although currently in a limited form. There are expenses which will continue during this period such as the utilities, cleaning and insurances. Because we are not meeting we are not able to have our normal weekly offering, and as the Pre-school and other organisations that normally use our buildings are also no longer meeting our rental income from these has also stopped. We realise that many people regularly contribute by direct payments into the Church's bank account, and we hope that you will be able to continue to do this.

We are aware that the current situation is difficult for everyone. However, could we just make a gentle request? If you would normally put your offering on the plate, could we encourage you if at all possible to put the money aside ready for when we are able to return to Church.

Can we thank you all for the gifts of time and money that you give to God through St James'; it is really appreciated, as without everyone's dedication, support and sacrificial giving, none of the good work that St James' does in the name of Christ would be possible.

HELEN MUNROE ASKS

"if my granddad could be added to the prayers. He's currently in Fazakerley hospital with Coronavirus. He's 98 years old and the nurses can't believe his strength, but it's very hard not being able to visit him ourselves."

DEREK LONG ASKS

"Please remember my son and daughter in your prayers, both living in the part of London most affected by the virus: Mike has lost two of his church members this week, and a third is very ill."

Please read the Worship and Service documents on the website and use the opportunity it offers for your private worship.

JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL

**Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last!**

This hymn has been on my mind a lot during the last week. You can find it in most hymn books, including Hymns and Psalms (528), Singing the Faith (355) and Mission Praise (372). It was written in 1740 by Charles Wesley.

The hymn has the lines “**Hide me, O my Saviour, hide, Till the storm of life is past**”. It was the idea of hiding from something that made me think of the hymn at this time. We are expected to hide away in our homes until the threat of Corona virus is past. The hymn is talking about God hiding us away from the storms of life and leading us into a safe harbour.

God as the lover of our souls is a thought found in “The Imitation of Christ” by Thomas a Kempis (1380 – 1471). He wrote that God is “**zealous lover of faithful souls**”. Knowing that God loves us to the core of our being, the person who we really are, is very reassuring. God holds us close to himself when we need him most.

The “nearer” waters suggest troubles that come close to us as individuals; the sea may be calm elsewhere even when my life is in turmoil. At the moment the waters are stormy throughout the world, although the peak of the storm (the virus) comes at different places at different times.

The idea of God hiding us comes from Psalm 17 verse 8 “**Keep me as the apple of your eye, hide me in the shadow of your wings**”. Whatever our situation today, we are under the shadow of God’s loving wings. We can’t all hide away all the time, we have to emerge from time to time to buy food or to care for someone who needs our help. God doesn’t promise we will remain virus free, but whatever happens we remain under the shadow of his wings. We are protected from anything that would harm our souls.

Later verses of the hymn talk about being helpless, ask that God won’t leave us alone and pray “**raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick**”. These are our prayers for ourselves and each other at this time. The prayer of Charles Wesley is that having come safely through the storms of life we will reach the safe haven of heaven. For some of us that will be the outcome of the virus. Hopefully most of us will come safely through the storm of the virus and emerge from our homes to enjoy life in the sunshine again.

The hymn is often sung to the tune “Aberystwyth” by Joseph Parry. Having lived for several years in Aberystwyth I know how stormy that place can be. A few years ago the promenade was devastated by a particularly ferocious storm. However, these storms pass and on a summer’s evening there is nothing quite like walking along the same prom as the sunsets.

We will come through this stormy time and God will lead us to times of joy again.

God Bless

Peter