



St Peter's Church Woodmansterne

www.saintpeterschurch.org.uk

**Mothering Sunday
22nd March 2020**

Dear St Peter's Church family

First things first. On behalf of my family, I wish to say a big THANK YOU for the welcome we have continually received since our arrival. Nothing beats a warm welcome! I look forward to getting to know you all as we settle down and share our lives in Woodmansterne. So, thank you once again. In this my first pastoral letter, penned in our unprecedented times, I recall a story.

Exodus (chapter 17) describes Moses and the Israelites being faced by the hostile army of Amalek. Moses, having recently witnessed the Red Sea part at the raising of his wooden staff (chapter 14) and water come out of a rock at Horeb (chapter 17) when struck with the same staff, he confidently asks his assistant in training, Joshua, to confront this aggressive enemy while he (Moses) does his thing with the staff. Moses had just discovered what a God-powered staff could accomplish. With this staff of God in his hands, no opposition was insurmountable. The story goes that whenever Moses held up the staff in his hand, Israel prevailed and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. So, when Moses' hands grew weary, his aides Aaron and Hur made him sit on a stone and propped his hands, one on either side. *'And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people...'* (Ex 17.13)

In his book 'Prayer', Richard Foster remarks that in the military annals, Joshua as the commander in the thick of the conflict was the man who won the battle that day, but we know what made that victory possible: the backstage battle of intercession featuring Moses, his aides, a stone and some piece of wood.

This story inspires my faith in prayer. Prayer is the staff that God has given us for today. Whenever I raise it up, I know that something in the spiritual realm moves and I become more aligned with the purposes and the will of God. Knowing that we are in God's perfect will is the right place to be whether the

answer to our prayer is a straight 'yes', a disappointing 'no' or a frustratingly long 'wait'. How amazing that followers of Jesus Christ can tap into God's power through prayer – our staff! As we grapple with the meaning and implication of 'social distancing' and 'self- isolation' due to COVID-19, may this present great opportunity for us to rediscover and unleash the potent arsenal called prayer. We will pray that the fearful and restless find the peace of God that passes all understanding (Philippians 4.7).

As a priesthood of believers, it is both a precious privilege and a sacred obligation to approach 'our Father who art in heaven' with confidence as we intercede for others and ourselves. But take heart because in this endeavour, we are not alone since the Holy Spirit and Christ Jesus both are working full time to intercede for us. (Rom 8:27,34). We will not grow tired because our hands will be continually propped. Prayer changes things!

Rev John Itumu

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### **This Week's Service**

Welcome to our first virtual/at home service. This will be developing over the weeks ahead. We start as we usually do with notices!

### **Call to prayer from our archbishops**

To join them from today, for 7 days, in praying the Lord's Prayer every time we wash our hands. It takes more than the recommended 20 seconds. Pray throughout the day for healing for those who are sick with COVID-19.

To observe Mothering Sunday, light a candle at 7pm and put it in your window, then ring someone who is isolated and vulnerable.

### **Open church**

The church will be open daily from 9am to 4pm for your quiet reflection and personal prayer. On Sundays, please join us in prayer from your homes at 10.30am when the church bell rings.

### **Staying in touch**

There won't be Spotlight magazine for a while. While we work on an alternative, we will provide (by email/posting) a combined newsletter and service sheet on a weekly basis to those we have permission to contact. Extra copies will be available in church.

Dear friends in Christ, we have come before God, our Father, as his loving and trusting children, to praise him, to thank him and to pray for ourselves and others.

### **We say sorry to God**

First let us confess our sins to him, in the sure knowledge that Christ died for us to bring us forgiveness.

Our selfishness betrays you,  
Lord forgive us.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

We fail to do the things that you taught us to do.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

We do the things that you taught us not to do.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart and not loved others as ourselves.

**Response: Lord have mercy.**

### **Declaration of forgiveness**

The Lord Almighty grants forgiveness and remission for all your sins through the saving work of Jesus Christ, our Lord, for all those who truly turn away from their sins and towards him. **Amen.**

### **The Collect – the special prayer for today**

God of compassion, Whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal ; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### **Bible Reading: Exodus 2:1-10**

*(either read below or watch)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vf-4x4iefQE>

<sup>1</sup>Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, <sup>2</sup> and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. <sup>3</sup> But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. <sup>4</sup> His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

<sup>5</sup> Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river-bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. <sup>6</sup> She opened it

and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. 'This is one of the Hebrew babies,' she said.

<sup>7</sup> Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?'

<sup>8</sup> 'Yes, go,' she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. <sup>9</sup> Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.' So the woman took the baby and nursed him. <sup>10</sup> When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, 'I drew him out of the water.'

### **Reflection**

Moses family came from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe. But in this case that made no difference, they were all treated the same – all Israelite baby boys were treated the same. The Pharaoh was scared there were too many Israelites. So he wanted to get rid of the baby boys which included Moses.

Moses mother wasn't going to let that happen and did everything she could to protect her son. This began by hiding him, which was pretty risky. If he had been found the family would have been in a lot of trouble. When that was no longer possible she took an even greater risk to protect her baby by putting him in a homemade dingy and hiding him in amongst the reeds on the river Nile. This is when we hear that the whole family is

protecting baby Moses, not just his mother. It is Moses' older sister Miriam who watches over him and makes sure he is kept safe. When Pharaoh's daughter finds Moses, it is Miriam who takes the initiative to suggest Moses' mother looks after him.

Moses' family took massive risks to look after Moses and at the time they probably thought they would never see him again. But the love they showed him paid off and not only was Moses kept safe they also were able to bring him up and have him back in their family. Today is Mothering Sunday, a day where we stop and say an extra special thank you to or think about our Mum or someone who has been like a Mum to us.

As well as thinking and thanking our Mums and immediate family. We also think of our church family today, even though we can't be all together today, we are still a family who care, love and support each other. How we keep in touch and support each other might look a bit different over the coming weeks as we face our own difficult situation.

However we are still a family and we are still all God's children. God is still in control and with us, just as he was with Moses' family. Let's pray.

## **We talk to God**

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are with us each and every day whatever happens. We thank you for all the good things you give us. *Please take a moment to thank God for the things he has given to you.*

We are in a very unusual situations which will bring up all sorts of feelings for each of us. We pray that you will be with us in all the ups and downs of the coming days and weeks. We thank you that you are our God, that you love us and are with us. Please help us to remember this.

We thank you for our emergency services who are working extra hard for us at the moment. We pray that you keep them safe and give them the energy and strength to keep going.

We think of those who are particularly vulnerable at this time. We think of those who are ill and older in our communities. *Please take a moment to remember those know to you.*

We pray that you keep the most vulnerable safe and help us to know how best to help them.

Merciful Father:

**Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

You may also like to try this interactive prayer activity. If you haven't got a pompom and a cupcake case I'm sure you can improvise!:

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2018/03/moses-in-bulrushes-prayers-for-safety.html>

## **We say the Lord's Prayer together wherever we are**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

If you would like to pray the Lord's Prayer with actions please see:

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resources/lords-prayer-actions>

## **The Blessing**

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life and so doing help others to walk with him too; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord: In the name of Christ. **Amen**

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