



Newsletter from The Bury St Edmunds Circuit  
for Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Friends,

Over the last few months and especially the last few days I have heard much about finance and money. The circuit has a budget to prepare; there are companies crying out for money from the government as they are no longer able to trade; the airlines are demanding help now that air corridors are being closed; a friend is looking to start up a shop and working out all the costing and wanted help; and there is the rush by people to get their tax returns in before the deadline. It would seem that there are those with lots of money and those with none and neither is happy. It is no wonder that it says in the Bible “the love of money is the root of all evil”.

However, there is a lot of poverty around and as Christians we cannot turn our backs on it. Concern for the needy represents the fundamental response which is inseparable from the demands of the gospel. We have heard of the plight of children and school meals and of the food banks working at full capacity to help those who are struggling.

I am delighted when people say to me that we are not spending as much as they normally would so they have been able to give more to charity. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has done that or those who have given to the food banks, and if you would like anything passed on to the food banks they do contact me.

You see wealth is not in possession but in enjoyment. And it could be that in these times when we are struggling that we have lost our capacity for enjoyment – but I hope not! I hope you remember that what makes us rich in the sight of God is not what we own, or even what we've done, but what we are.

*God bless  
Debbie, Rita and Ruth*

### Vaccination Scam

Please be very careful. I have heard that people are being unscrupulous and taking advantage of people who are awaiting the Coronavirus vaccination.

**The vaccination is free and you must not give your bank details to anyone in order to have the vaccination even for identification purposes.**

**Sunday Worship** A Circuit video recording of the Sunday Worship Sheet can be found at:

<http://www.trinitymethodistchurch.org.uk/worshipthisweek.htm>

There is also a pre-recorded carol service on this link

**Zoom Sunday Worship:** You are welcome to join Zoom Worship on a Sunday morning with Rev Debbie Borda or Rev Rita Carr. If you would like to join in worship in this way then please contact either of them and they will give you details of how to join a zoom meeting.

**Live stream service** Ruth Ridge is leading a weekly service on the St John's Facebook page live at 6pm every Thursday. The service lasts about 30 mins and is available to watch live and on the page at any time after it has been broadcast. The service is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsmethodistchurchsudbury> and you do not have to have a Facebook account to access it.

Keep following government advice to stay safe.



and open windows to let fresh air in.

## Thought for the day

### A Leisurely Start to the Day!

As you can see, Tigger has no intention of being put off by the fact that today, Monday 18th January, is supposed to be Blue Monday – the lowest time of the year, when the weather is cold, Christmas and New Year celebrations are over and finances are stretched. Tigger is nevertheless still going to enjoy a quiet moment before rising to meet the world!



We often read in the Gospels of Jesus 'rising a great while before day' in order to spend a quiet moment with God before going out to meet the world. In fact Mark's Gospel, which is the gospel set for the lectionary this year, is littered with examples of Jesus going to a solitary place, withdrawing from people, going up a mountainside, leaving the crowd behind and being all alone. It is a salutary experience to read through Mark and highlight all the references to Jesus' times of prayer, both alone and with His disciples. Sometimes His word to the disciples was quite simply 'Watch'. Prayer is not about talking, it is about withdrawing, being quiet and sitting alone with God.

Archbishop Rowan Williams was once asked how he prayed about a difficult problem, and his reply says a lot about the God Whom we approach in prayer. It took him 30 minutes to come into the presence of God, before he even started to bring the needs of the situation before Him. This helps us to realise something of the transcendence of God, even if we cannot understand His 'otherness'. The 17<sup>th</sup> century poet, Henry Vaughan, talks about 'the radiance of divine darkness'. God is mysterious and beyond words, which goes some way to explaining Rowan Williams' answer to the question of how we pray.

However, the wonderful truth is that, although God is 'other', He is also ever-presenting the Holy Spirit, so we are never alone. Enjoying

a quiet moment before rising to meet the world worked for Jesus – He then went out and spent a hectic day teaching and healing. People came to Him from everywhere and He was able to meet their needs. At our low points we, too, can be uplifted by taking a quiet moment to watch and wait with God.

Jenny Benfield

And from Hannah Stammers

The Psalm in the lectionary for tomorrow is the beautiful Psalm 139. The full Psalm is quite lengthy, but here is an excerpt:

*Lord, you have searched me and known me.*

*You know when I sit and when I rise.*

*You perceive my thoughts from afar.*

*Where can I go from your Spirit?*

*And where can I flee from your presence?*

*If I go to the heavens you are there.*

*If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," Even the darkness will not be dark to you.*

*The night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you."*

We are reminded in this Psalm that each one of us is part of God's miracle of creation, as it says later in the Psalm 'fearfully and wonderfully made'. We are reminded that God knows each one of us completely, our successes and our failures, our worries and our joys. Wherever we go and whatever we do – even when we feel that the darkness is engulfing us – God is there beside us and we are never alone. A prayer based on Psalm 139:

Lord, I thank you that I am fearfully and wonderfully made,  
That you know me completely and love me despite that.

I thank you that even when the darkness threatens to overwhelm me,

You are there beside me, a light in the darkness.

In these dark times, I pray that all may see that light. Amen.