

MOBBERLEY AND SNELSON METHODIST CHURCHES.



**MAY
DEVOTIONAL
2021**

What does life look like after Covid?

At the Synod this month, we were asked the question “What does life look like after Covid?” However, the truth is that Covid is here to stay, there is no “after Covid” as Covid is now a new reality that we have to factor into our lives. Hopefully, we will get Covid under control soon and we will be able to emerge from our world of masks and social distancing to a much happier place.

So the big question is really “How do we adjust our life so that we can live with this new reality?” And the big question for us as a church is “What will church look like for the rest of the year?” Well, that really depends on you. Each person will respond to the new reality in their own way.

Over the last few weeks we have managed to open our churches and what a joy it is to see people and to worship the Lord together, even as we recognise not everyone is ready to come back. We have also started live-streaming our Mobberley service and, although there have been some hiccups, it has really helped us to all be a part of the same service.

I am continuing with the monthly devotional, although I need to apologise for it being a bit late this month as I have had some personal health problems to deal with. So, as I said, the way forward depends on you and we will continue to offer as many resources as we can and hope you will engage in them. We hope to see you back in the building when you are ready because we value you and have missed each other. And if you are not ready for this, then we hope to see you online as we continue as a leadership team to strive to ensure that the churches remain strong and aligned with the Spirit of the Lord.

The most important thing for us to remember is that God is still God and He holds us in His hands wherever we are. We are His church, wherever we are if we remain faithful, and if we worship Him with our lives, we will receive His full blessing.

God bless.

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May Services

This month sees two wonderful events to celebrate: Ascension Day and Pentecost. As Christians, these are days that should cause us to stop and reflect. At this time we do not have a special Ascension Day service planned but Mobberley church will be open for private prayer from 9am - 3pm so please pop in. It also falls into Christian Aid week and there are more details available on this at the end of the devotional. Pentecost is a Sunday and so there will be services held across the Circuit.

Church services

Mobberley live-stream from church @ 9:30 am each Sunday.

This gives you the opportunity of either attending in person or on our regular zoom service at 9:30am or picking it up from the Mobberley Methodist Facebook page or YouTube account.

Mobberley and Snelson Zoom Sunday service - Sundays @ 9:30 am

Meeting id: 882 532 783

Password: 047 757

Snelson in church service - every Sunday at 11am

Regular Zoom get-togethers.

Monday night youth and young adult Bible Study

Monday @ 6:30pm.

Meeting id: 845 745 494

Password: 017307

Daily catch-up and prayer

Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 12 noon.

Meeting id: 252 002 017

Password: 047827



Discipleship group

Wednesdays @ 10:30am.

Meeting id: 846 381 8786

Password: ChurchWow



Please feel free to join any of these sessions as you are able and to suggest any other ways I can assist you during this time. Sadly, not all of our members are able to access these online resources and so I encourage you to take some time on these special occasions to call each other and encourage and pray together.

May Devotional

Sunday 2nd May - A private conversation with the Lord

Opening prayer

"Oh Lord, to be in Your presence is such a wonderful gift. We know that You will never leave us nor forsake us but we confess that often we get busy or distracted and don't have real quality time with You. Please forgive us and we thank You that we can always stop, wherever we are, and enter into Your presence. Amen."

Worship

Worship is not always communal and sometimes it is just an opportunity for you and the Lord to spend time together. When last did you have real alone time with the Lord? When I do, a song that really helps me move into a place of worship is "Be Still" by David J Evans:

*"Be still,
for the presence of the Lord,
the holy One, is here;
come bow before him now
with reverence and fear."*

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What songs remind you of the presence of the Lord that you sing aloud or in your head when you are seeking Him?

Scripture: Matthew 6:6

"But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Mat 6:6

Message

In the ministry there are many times when I feel overwhelmed. It is actually quite a stressful career and, if I have learned one thing, it is that when I am feeling overwhelmed it is a sure sign that I need to go into my room, close the door, get on my knees and spend alone time with Jesus. Every time I do this, I begin feeling overwhelmed, confused, exhausted and even hurt or angry, but when I leave, I leave as if I have literally been filled with the presence of the Lord.

Covid has given us so much alone time and this has been difficult for us all, but actually it can also be a true gift as it can be time to develop a habit of really creating space to have a private time of worship every single day.

I encourage you to develop a habit of private worship to complement your community worship and to draw your strength from the Lord.



Vision25 Prayer Focus for the Coming Week

Our architect is currently busy preparing for the pre-planning permission. Pray for his application to be accepted by the town council and to meet all their standards.

Sunday 9th May - Waiting on the Lord

Opening prayer

"Oh Lord, it must have been such a difficult time for the disciples after Your death as they waited for Your resurrection and for the church to be born. Today, we are also waiting for the church to restart and we look forward to a church that is stronger and more focused on Your Holy Spirit. Help us to sustain our own spiritual health through this time, so that we in turn can strengthen those around us. Amen."

Worship

So often in Scripture we see followers of the Lord having to trust God in a time of crisis and, if we look carefully, we will see that they used to sing to keep themselves focused and strong. What songs give you strength? One song that I always find give me strength is the song by Daniel Brink Towner called "Trust and Obey":

*"When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way
While we do His good will
He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey"*

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Scripture: Isaiah 20: 28 - 31

Key verse: "but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:31

Message

As I write this message, I am eagerly awaiting the finale of the TV series "Line of Duty". I am a part of numerous conversations discussing the likely outcomes and I have really enjoyed every minute of this excellent series, but the waiting is almost too much to bear!

So today's theme is "Waiting". If we are honest, we spend so much time in our lives waiting: waiting for a return to normal, waiting for Covid to be a thing of the past, waiting for the next opportunity, waiting for prayers to be answered. Have you ever thought that sometimes the best things are worth waiting for? If you go to a restaurant and it takes time to prepare your meal, it means it is hopefully being freshly prepared and should taste better than fast foods. In the same way, we are waiting because God is working on a better plan and even when it seems like things are not going to plan, we can take comfort from Romans 8:28: *"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."*

Even now as we are waiting to fully resume worship, it is a difficult time because we don't know what church will look like. Will everyone come back? How will our churches have changed over this last 18 months? So while we are waiting on the Lord, let us trust Him who is trustworthy and let us give thanks and praise because He will give us a bright future.



Vision25 Prayer Focus for the Coming Week

Our feasibility grant application has been received and we will know in a few weeks' time if we were successful. We pray for it to be successful and give thanks for those who have worked so hard on it.

Thursday 13th May - Ascension Day: An Open Door

Opening Prayer

"Lord Jesus, today let us place ourselves with Your disciples in Bethany when You blessed them and then went up to heaven. Let us hear again the words of the angels who said told them not to stand looking at the sky as Christ would return the same way that He left. Let us read the Scriptures and let us, like them, worship You with all our heart, mind and strength. Amen."

Worship

I find it difficult finding songs about Ascension Day. Imagine you are the worship leader and need to plan a service for Ascension Day, which songs would you choose?

Scripture: Luke 24: 50 – 53 and Acts 1: 6 – 11

Key verse "They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Acts 1:11

Message

As you might have realized by now, I am often in a rush and a number of years ago, I was rushing inside while we had guests coming over and someone had closed the glass door! Bang! I got quite a fright because in my mind that door was still open.

So what has this memory got to do with Ascension Day? Well, one of the great messages that comes out of our Scripture is that because of Jesus, the door to heaven is open and by inviting Jesus to be our Lord and Saviour, we can enter through that door to life.

So for the disciples looking up, they got a glimpse of heaven as Jesus went home. And as we engage in this story, it reminds us of the reality that this is not our home but that heaven is and that the door is wide open. Those loved ones who have gone before us are safe and one day either Jesus will come back or He will gently take our hand and guide us through that door. That's a wonderful idea to reflect on this Ascension Day.



Vision25 Prayer Focus for the Coming Week

Fundraising. This week our prayer is for our next fundraising activity and also for open doors into our community so that people will be drawn to these events and engage with our vision. Pray for the fundraising team, for ideas and resources and energy to put their ideas into action. We give thanks for the work they are doing.

Sunday 16th May - Where is your Upper Room?

Opening prayer

"O Lord, we want to thank You today for our Christian friends, some of whom we have not seen in person for some time. Just thinking about them reminds us of how good it is to be part of the family of God. We also want to thank You for the various spiritual homes or churches that we have belonged to over the years. Amen."

Worship

Today the theme is gathering together as a church and one song that comes to my mind is this one by Robert Lowry:

*"Yes we'll gather at the river
The beautiful the beautiful river
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God"*

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It has such themes of unity and blessing from the Lord, What songs remind you of gathering in the Lord's name and in His presence?

Scripture: Acts 2: 1 and Matthew 18: 20

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place." Act 2:1

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Mat 18:20

Message

Sometimes there is so much depth in a simple passage of Scripture. Today we recognise that for the disciples, the next step after the ascension was to gather in one place. They gathered because they found comfort in being together, they gathered to wait on the Lord and they gathered expecting God to do something wonderful. As it turns out, just in gathering the church was born and the world has been so blessed because of that one moment.

As Christians, we know the value of gathering and Covid has taught us that we can actually even gather online and this has given so many people such strength. Now I have to confess that there are times when I am zoomed out, tired of being on screen and reluctant to go to another Christian gathering. However I go, and each and every time I am blessed. Let us make it a habit of meeting as often as we can, for fellowship, friendship and worship, but let us also gather expecting God to show up and help us not to miss this because we were distracted. I pray that as a church we develop a longing to gather and a longing to experience the risen Lord.



Vision25 Prayer Focus for the Coming Week

The garden of remembrance. This week we pray for the team working on the garden as they finalise their planning and look at the scope of the work to be done. We pray too that this garden may be a place where people can experience the presence and peace of the Lord as they remember loved ones.

Sunday 23rd May - Pentecost: The Breath of God

Opening Prayer

"Heavenly Father, we ask You in this moment to breathe on us again. Let Your Spirit descend on Your church as in the days of Pentecost and the time of Christian revival. Anoint each one of us so that we are able to do more for Your Kingdom and live in such a way that the light of Jesus shines powerfully through our lives. Amen."

Worship

Pentecost opens us up to so many wonderful songs about the work of the Holy Spirit. The first one that comes to my mind is the song by Edwin Hatch called "Breathe On Me Breath of God":

*"Breathe on me breath of God
Until my heart is pure
Until with Thee I will one will
To do and to endure"*

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What other songs can you think of that celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit?

Scripture: Romans 15: 13

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Rom 15:13

Message

One of the most perfect meals must be roast beef and yorkshire pudding. (You might have a different opinion on this.) However, this meal on its own still lacks something and there is an almost magical moment when you pour on the gravy. The gravy completes the meal and brings it all together. In the same way, our Christian faith urgently needs the anointing or pouring of the Holy Spirit. This transforms us from good Christians to Christians operating in power and changing our world.

Another metaphor for the Holy Spirit is the "breath of God" which we see referred to often in Scripture, right from the creation of Adam to Ezekiel's dry bones and of course in the coming of the Holy Spirit.

If I had to be honest, I would say I have seen churches that are doing their best and churches that are operating in the Spirit. At the moment, our churches often rely on their own strength and abilities but there is so much more that can be done when we operate in the power of God's Holy Spirit. And the same can be said for Christians. So let me ask you: "Have you truly been baptised by the Holy Spirit?" If not, why not search the scriptures to gain a better understanding and then ask the Lord to breath His breath on you again.



Vision25 Prayer Focus for the Coming Week

The Community Café. This week we pray for the team working on the community café. We pray in particular that they may receive lots of feedback from the community as they continue to plan around the needs of the village and start thinking ahead towards a menu and design ideas.

Sunday 30th May – Re-inventing Church

Opening Prayer

“Lord Jesus, this month we have engaged with a changing world and Lord we thank You for change. In truth, we acknowledge that some of what we were doing was no longer bearing fruit and so we thank You for this opportunity to refocus our churches and our lives. Teach us how to join in with what You are doing through Your Holy Spirit. Help us today to reflect on all that You have done for us and may we give our lives as a holy offering to You. Amen.”

Worship

Before we could all read and write, singing songs had a very important function in the church and that was to teach illiterate people the great truths about God and the practices of Christianity. So today, think of songs about church and what they teach you. In researching this, I found a new song for me that contains a great truth:

*“The Church of Christ in every age
Beset by change but Spirit led
Must claim and test its heritage
And keep on rising from the dead”*

By Fred Pratt Green, © 1971 Stainer & Bell Ltd, CCLI Song # 2564481

Scripture: Acts 2: 41-47

Key verse: "So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added." Act 2:41

Message

In 1995, I starting attending church regularly. I had some previous understanding of the Christian faith but now that I had given my life to Christ, I had to learn what it was to be a part of the church, I also had to unlearn some of my previous understanding of church. So it was a time of discovery for me.

The early church also had to totally re-invent itself to discover what a Christian church would look like. And it has continued this process of reinventing itself many times since through history. This has always been done by reflecting on current practices in light of what has worked in the past and so there is great value in studying the Acts church which was so effective that people joined by their thousands. I encourage you to engage with this topic, and really try and learn from their practices because I would love to see our churches experience revival again.



Vision25 Prayer Focus for the Coming Week

We pray for the group working on our grant applications, for their research and for the application process itself. We pray that we may be able to present our ideas clearly and for groups to see the value we hope to offer to our community through our project.

Financial giving

Once again thank you to those who are giving faithfully, however this still is a very urgent matter for both of our churches. Snelson in particular is very quickly running out of financial resources. Last month there was a £20 increase in giving at Snelson at a time when we are hundreds of pounds short every month.

Please if you can, review your giving to help us come to the point where there are enough financial resources to meet the needs of ministry. If you have any questions or would like to view the financials, please contact me or one of our treasurers.

Our banking details are:

Mobberley Methodist Church

Sort code 60 - 12 - 30

Account number 07044011

If you would like to gift aid, please include your name as a reference.

If you are able to continue giving and prefer not to use the internet, please could you post cheques to:

Mobberley Methodist Church

% Rev Scott Manning

Wesley Cottage

Faulkners Lane

Mobberley

WA16 7AL

Snelson Methodist church

Sort code 01-00-13

Account number 01005979

If you would like to gift aid, please include your name as a reference.

If you are able to continue giving and prefer not to use the internet, please could you post cheques to:

Snelson Methodist church

% Bud Foster (our treasurer) at

2 Oak View,

Knutsford,

WA16 8BE