



Harlington *February* Methodist **2023** Monthly

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Dear friends,

For our newsletter, I would like to share this meditation with you. I hope it will reach your heart.

I will look at a sentence of the Bible that is in the letter of Philippians and I will mention Nathaniel as well as a very interesting character in the Bible

The first verse that grabbed my attention comes from Philippians and says: "Rejoice in the Lord always"!

A verse that stood up among many others...

"Rejoice in the Lord always"!

I find this one of the hardest Bible passages of the Bible, the hardest to apply in our life as believers... the hardest to talk about as well.

I then started to ask the Lord to enlighten my mind and soul in order to be able to find a clear explanation of this word. I wondered: What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord always? How is it possible and in which way?

The first thoughts went straight to my personal life:-

in the last two weeks one of my best friends has just found out to have cancer with metastases, this week my young cousin, is in hospital maybe in her last stage of life with anorexia....and finally Carlo another cousin of mine died last week with pancreas cancer.... I found this bible verse... exaggerated...not applicable to our life...even disturbing...how can we rejoice in the Lord always???

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I wondered how can we recognise ourselves in such a statement while we go through illness death and any dreadful situation.

I believe many of us went or are going through hardship for different personal reasons...like...some have lost their life partner during the lockdown and I know our Circuit as well has not had an easy time for different causes.

It has been hard for people to close their church.

In prayer I continued to meditate, I cannot hide, with a feeling of anger... thinking to drop this verse and look for something else. I think every preacher happens to encounter bible passages difficult to digest....

But I stubbornly decided I needed to find an answer in the Bible...

So looking and looking, the first answer comes from Paul himself, the apostle Paul is in fact the author of the bible verse in question...

...he, the apostle Paul wrote: rejoice in the Lord always.

Paul had a life interwoven of suffering, fights and fatigue and despite it, he wrote this verse:

- rejoice in the Lord always.

And while Paul was writing this word, he was a prisoner. This has been the first answer I found in my hands!

This means, dear all, that not only the Christianity is the most powerful creator of joy that exists, but that it transfigures human sufferings with its splendour and changes it even in delight. What a joyful believer was Paul...

Suddenly another character from the Bible, comes to mind.... Nathanael. Can you remember him?

Nathanael lived in a time when the country was trampled and torn apart by colonialism, exploited and harassed by a growing enormity of taxes and duties, his country was persecuted and mocked by a complex police system and suffered from diseases and social plagues....

Often, there was a latent scepticism as it happens to us, today...that made people say: *Lord I believe but come to rescue my poor faith.*

Nathanael also was sceptical even if he was a sincere believer.

And yet Jesus says to him:" under the fig tree I saw you, this is why I know you".

Over there, I saw you, over there, I met you, in the open countryside.

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We do not know clearly why Nathaniel was under the fig tree...

because he felt the need to meditate on the words of the disciples who said: "we found the Messiah", maybe he was in doubt, maybe he was there under the fig because he was tired and looking for rest, maybe he needed to pray, maybe he had some personal problems to face, maybe he was



worried for the situation of his country during the hard Roman domination or maybe he was there, to reason with himself, aware to be at God presence that is always the only and true witness of our doubts and fatigue to live.

I am carrying a too heavy load and I am tired, this is what happened to Paul as well, who so many times addressed himself to God while he was suffering, while he was in prison, but this is also what happens to us...

We say:

I would like to vanish or stop for a while to catch my breath, perhaps to catch hope because everything is so dark, tough, bitter And I lack strength and ... we say...

I hope God, sees all this

....as it happened to Nathaniel...

We say:

O God, I come to you with so many worries, don't hide your face from me. You gave me life, don't let me overwhelm myself, don't let me lose my humanity.

May the bitterness and pain not take away the only thing I have left: my faith in you.'

Perhaps under that fig, Nathanael felt tired as after a long panting run and after that outburst...

... maybe he sobbed, but after his prayer, after having met Jesus and heard that he had observed him while he was under the fig, he had a sudden serenity, a sense of peace and Nathanael bursts out in a beautiful

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confession of faith, that comes out from his heart without thinking and meditating...

He spontaneously said those beautiful words we know:

“you are the son of God, the Messiah of Israel”.

Both Nathanael and Paul felt the Lord so close in the most difficult times and most disheartening.

We can say: Both of them had the experience to rejoice in the Lord, always.

We also have felt heartbreak and sadness in our personal life for different reasons...

We also have been crossing a time of disappointment looking at the situation of our churches as a Circuit, seeing especially elderly people in most of our congregations, the lack of collaboration, and churches closing...but I do know now, instead of feeling so overwhelmed that we forget about God's power we must remember who God is in our life, we must let the scripture shake us again and turn to God entrusting our life to him first.

May each of us as Paul and Nathaniel, discover that especially in adversity, sorrow and distress. In Jesus of Nazareth, God is with us, ready to give us the faith we need to face any situation, and the strength to stand up again and hope to escape from any kind of discouragement with the certitude not to be alone.

And to summarise our message today

I read a verse from John chapter 1:16

The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Let us pray

Blessed are you our Lord, now and always.

We will tell of your mercy because our lives are opened in your hands because our lives are entrusted to you.

Give us the grace to meet you in faith, so in the evening and in the morning in the middle of the day, we can feel you are with us. Amen

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

We held the second “Come and See” in the hall, and on that occasion the technology for playing videos went wrong. I won’t use that again! Our Covenant Service was led by the District Chair on the 15th. We hosted the United Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This was a well attended service led by the Life Church with Robert Johns from St. Mary’s preaching. The service was based on material provided by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and included two videos, one of which was of Inderjit Bhogal, former President of Conference.

Talking of technology, it would appear that Zoom through Windows 11 doesn’t like music, although it works correctly with Windows 10. I have even got an individual user who can’t hear the music when listening on a Windows 11 machine, although generally this isn’t an issue. So far the advice from Zoom has been “uninstall and reinstall”!

626 Club has met regularly. We were able to take 5 new 6 year olds (all of whom became 6 between half term and new year) at the start of the January session. This is good because, although some have older brothers or sisters at club, they all have children of their own age. It can be daunting being the only 6 year old.

TFT are on their way to the England final of the BB Masterteam competition, a BB knowledge contest.

Ladies Bright Hour have been meeting regularly.



Messy Church met. We had 5 children and two adults plus the team. We were looking at St. Paul’s travels.

There is not a lot of craft work around this time, because we did more cooking, which we then ate! The cheese pull-aparts, reflecting Paul’s teaching on sharing food, tasted really good. We did also make a big basket for Paul to be lowered down the wall in.



Open the Book continues in both Harlington and Sundon Lower Schools.

February Diary

- 1st 1545 *Outside Booking—Emily Hancock—Child Singing*
- 2nd 1445 Ladies Bright Hour
- 3rd 1830 626 Club
2015 TFT
- 4th 1600 TFT SLEEPOVER
- 5th** 1000 Come and See led by Rev Claudia Lupi
1800 Evening Service led by Rev Claudia Lupi inc Communion
- 6th 2000 *Outside Booking—Scott Hemsley*
- 7th 1600 *Outside Booking—Kristy Dance*
- 8th 1545 *Outside Booking—Emily Hancock—Child Singing*
2000 CHURCH COUNCIL
- 9th 1430 Thurs Fellowship Group—Concluding thoughts about forgiveness
1445 Ladies Bright Hour
- 10th 1830 626 Club
2015 TFT
- 11th
- 12th** 1000 Morning Service, led by Richard Armiger
- 13th 1400 Crafternoon Tea
- 14th 1600 *Outside Booking—Kristy Dance*
2000 *Outside Booking PBGS*
- 15th 1545 *Outside Booking—Emily Hancock—Child Singing*
- 16th 1445 Ladies Bright Hour
- 17th 1830 626 Club
2015 TFT
- 18th 1600 Messy Church
- 19th** 1000 Morning Service, with Rev Claudia Lupi inc Communion
- 20th 2000 *Outside Booking—Scott Hemsley*
- 21st 1530 PANCAKE PARLOUR
1600 *Outside Booking—Kristy Dance*
- 22nd 1545 *Outside Booking—Emily Hancock—Child Singing*
1945 Circuit Ash Wednesday Service at Trinity Methodist Church
- 23rd 1430 Thurs Fellowship Group— to be decided
1445 Ladies Bright Hour
- 24th 1830 626 Club
2015 TFT
- 25th 1000 Coffee Drop-In
- 26th** 1000 Morning Service, with Christina Salmon
- 27th 1400 Crafternoon Tea
- 28th 1600 *Outside Booking—Kristy Dance*

OUTSIDE BOOKINGS - JANUARY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>GROUP</u>
01 FEB	1545	1800	Emily Hancock—Child Singing
06 FEB	2000	2200	Scott Hemsley—Band
07 FEB	1600	2000	Kristy Burgoine - Dance
08 FEB	1545	1800	Emily Hancock—Child Singing
14 FEB	1600	2000	Kristy Burgoine—Dance
14 FEB	2000	2200	PBGS
15 FEB	1545	1800	Emily Hancock—Child Singing
20 FEB	2000	2200	Scott Hemsley Band
21 FEB	1600	2000	Kristy Burgoine—Dance
22 FEB	1545	1800	Emily Hancock—Child Singing
28 FEB	1600	2000	Kristy Burgoine—Dance

LADIES BRIGHT HOUR—Speakers for February

2 nd	Rev'd Patrick Kandeh tba
9 th	Pam Greener
16 th	Helen James tba
23 rd	Marie Mead

CIRCUIT ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

7.45 pm a Trinity Methodist Church Leighton Buzzard

This Service will be led by Rev. Seung-Wook Jung, Rev. Claudia Lupi, Peter Baker and Catherine Roots.

If anyone would like to go and needs transport, please contact one of the stewards.

PANCAKE PARLOUR

We are holding Pancake Parlour on 21st February (Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Day)

3.30 pm till 6.00 pm

All profits go to our church charity.

If you can help in any way, please let Jo know.

ISSUE #27

Welcome to the twenty-seventh edition of our monthly magazine/notices. Deadline for items for the **MARCH** edition will be **THU 16TH FEB** for things for the diary to Trevor, or general articles and pictures of things being done by our church community to me by Thursday 23rd February 2023.

It is still possible to send late notices. These will normally be tagged on to the end of the circulated weekly service.

ROTAS

DATE	STEWARD	FLOWERS
05 FEB	am Martin pm Jo	
12 FEB	Mary	
19 FEB	Jo	
26 FEB	John	

FLOWER ROTA 2023

There is a new Flower Rota on the Notice Board. I have included special dates but do let me know if they are incorrect. I do hope you will feel you can contribute flowers each Sunday this year, it's a valuable asset to our time of worship. Many thanks in advance!

Jo

STAMPS

Don't forget to save your used Christmas stamps for the Leprosy Mission! There is a box just inside the main door, or pass directly to Dorothy

NB. We have been advised that the Leprosy Mission will no longer be accepting stamps from the end of March 2023. Last date for 'posting' stamps to Dorothy is 12th March 2023 to enable time for sorting and forwarding.

MAKE SURE YOU KEEP YOUR VOTE!

Changes to voting, from the local elections on 4th May, including General Elections in the future.

If you are registered to have postal votes, this does not affect you.

If you like to go to the polling station and vote in person, from this May you will need to take photo ID with you and show it to the people on duty. Even if they know you, you still have to produce the photo ID. Fortunately, the forms of photo ID are not as restrictive as they are for some things. The following forms of photo ID are all valid:

Passport

Photo driving license

A Blue Badge

Older person's bus pass

Disabled person's bus pass

Oyster 60+ card

Freedom Pass

Identity card with the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (PASS card)

You can use an out of date photo ID as long as the photo still looks like you, and the name on the ID is the same name as you are registered to vote in.

If you don't have any of these and you want to continue to vote in person you will need to apply for a free voter ID document, called a Voter Authority Certificate. If you need to get this, the deadline to apply is 5pm on Tuesday 25th April 2023. You need to be registered to vote before you apply, but if you are already registered, this shouldn't be a problem.

If you decide that you will vote by post in the future, you don't have to have photo ID, but the deadline to apply for a postal vote for 4th May is 5pm on 18th April – a week earlier than the deadline for photo ID! You need to be on the electoral register by 11.59pm on 17th April.

If you want more information, please talk to me, Tina Salmon (01525 874481; christinasalmon60@gmail.com).

There is also now information on the Parish Council website

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

The two Thursday Fellowship groups still meet, every other week.

At 10.30 am. Live. Please contact Helen/Jo (872495) for dates and location.

At 2.30 pm. On Zoom. Contact Tina (874481) for dates and details for the joining link. If there is any subject you would like to discuss or study, please let Tina know.

SUNDAY SERVICES PROCEDURES

Please stick to the following in church:

1. If you suspect you might have COVID, or anything else infectious, please do not attend, but join us on Zoom or YouTube.
2. Hand sanitiser continues to be available.
3. Over refreshments we can all now sit round one table, although if the weather is good we may also put tables outside.
4. If you feel you need more distance, please feel free to keep apart.
5. If others require more distance, please respect this.
6. Windows can be open for ventilation.

Clive



HARLINGTON MESSY CHURCH

We will be back on 18th February at 4 pm for the next live/Zoom/Streamed Messy Church. If you would like to join us, either as a participant or a helper, please feel free. People may well be needed to help small children. Do remember this is “messy” church and therefore there is usually at least one

messy activity!

As this is the Saturday before the start of Lent, we will be using a Lent theme. Our March Messy Church will have an Easter theme.

Our normal format is to do activities until 4.45 pm, then have a Celebration which includes further activities, usually ones it is easier to do at home. This is streamed and recorded. Then at 5.30 pm we have tea.



CLOTHES

Melody, herself an Iranian refugee, is collecting good, clean clothes for refugees - men, women and children - living in hotels. She is working with Claudia at The Square.

If you have anything suitable, please give it to me

Thank you, Jo

REFLECTION

Joshua Chapter 1, Verses 1 to 2a and 6

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead.... Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them."

It is always hard to take over a job that someone else has been doing, at least it is if they have been doing it well. Moses was a special prophet, unique in that he spoke to God face to face. It wasn't that he was perfect. We know that he wasn't allowed to enter the promised land because of times when he failed to do what God told him. But God spoke to him, and gave him directions and instructions. God gave him the Law, particularly the 10 Commandments. God told him how to make the Tabernacle, and when he came down from the mountain his face shone.

Joshua was one of the two spies (the other was Caleb) who came back from looking at the promised land and said that the Israelites should go in. All the others were too scared. So he was one of the few who survived the forty years in the desert. He was Moses' assistant, and God spoke to him (but not face to face).

But how do you take over? Later we see how God helped him. The Israelites crossed the Jordan in a way that was reminiscent of the crossing of the Red Sea, and that showed that God was with Joshua.

When you take over a job, what do you do? Do you try to keep everything the same? You are not the same as the person who did it previously. You have new skills, and quite possibly lack others. While trying to change everything immediately is generally a bad idea, you have to find your own way to do a job. The fun is that you can bring new ideas and approaches to the task.

In the church, we believe that God calls people to roles. If God calls you, he knows what you are like, what you can do, what you can't do, what you can learn to do. It's not "I can't do this because I can't be ... but I can do this if I can be me.

Prayer

Dear God, call me to new things. Help me to do them in ways that please you. Help me to be me.

Father God, when new people take on old tasks, help me to accept the changes, and recognise that jobs can be done in other ways.

Amen.

NOTICES Details of items for the Notices should be delivered to Trevor Caveney at hmc.bookings@ntlworld.com.

DEADLINE for inclusion in February edition is **THU 16th February**

CHURCH BOOKING DIARY

PLEASE check with Trevor before adding any dates.

Prayer Chain number: Dorothy Preston 874841

Church Website: www.harlingtonmethodist.church

Church YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw

FACEBOOK

Don't forget the church has a Facebook page. You can use this for communicating, and it's very good for showing pictures. If you want to join the group, contact Martin. Remember, the more people who use it and who belong to the group, the more useful it becomes.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE CHURCH FAMILY



Pick up your pen, pencil or keyboard and share with us what you are doing in your life and as part of the Church.

Please feel free to send me items of interest, messages, birthdays, anniversaries or anything else you might wish to share for inclusion in future editions of these E-notices. Keep safe.

Trevor & Mary

CONTACT MAGAZINE

The latest edition is available at <https://harlingtonvillagemagazine.org>

Paper copies will also be available.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

'The calling of Harlington Methodist Church is to respond to and celebrate the Gospel of God's presence. In all of our activities we seek to serve Harlington and the wider world. Most of all we aspire to honour and serve the living God.'