

Dear Friends,

Here is the weekly message to you all. As ever you can keep in touch through the church websites

- www.hayesmethodistchurch.co.uk
- www.hemc.org.uk
- www.northillingdonmethodistchurch.org

and Facebook:

- facebook.com/hayesmethodistchurch
- facebook.com/hayesendmethodistchurch
- facebook.com/northillingdonmethodistchurch

And don't forget that each church also has a WhatsApp group. Let me know if you want more details. But you are always able to contact me directly - my phone number and email address are below.

Take care, stay safe
and God bless

Rev Ken

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Making relations, not conducting transactions

A reflection and a prayer inspired by Matthew 10:24-39

You can find it as a YouTube video at <https://youtu.be/KX5W5QOwtV4> or you can read it below.

(You can find a version of the Bible passage as told by Methodist minister Phil Summers at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8Oxj0pI1Dc>)

It's taken 100 days but Premiership football returned on this week, though in a very different form. Games are played behind closed doors with a different atmosphere, although clubs have played cheering over the PA system or even put cardboard cut-outs of fans in the stands. One of the most well-known football clichés is the phrase – "It's a game of two halves". And you can use that to describe the passage from Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus is talking to his disciples who he is just about to send out. He has been giving them instructions and advice and now he is warning them about the difficulties that they will face. Jesus doesn't mince his words – you'll be criticised and rejected he says – it will be tough! Things will get worse before they get better.

And then in the middle of it all, Jesus starts talking about sparrows. Sparrows! These birds were one of the cheapest things to buy. They were literally two-a-penny. And they were used by the poorest people as food (although I can't imagine you'd get much meat from a sparrow). All this points to the fact that they weren't valued. But here's the point – Jesus says God knows when a

common-or-garden sparrow falls from the sky. So how much more does God value each one of us.

I've spent the last week or so thinking about why shops have opened but church buildings remain closed. Then I heard the two words 'transactional' and 'relational'. And it all started to make sense. When we go shopping, we give the shop the money and they give us the thing we want to buy. It's a transaction. But when we go into church, we meet with others to worship together and meet with God. This is about relationships with one another and God – it's not a transaction. And we wait until the time the church building can reopen and we can safely be with one another.

Being relational - that, I think, is the whole point that Jesus is making. God cares for us, God cares for me and God cares for you. Each one of us is valued and precious beyond all measure to God.

Jesus has told the disciples that their mission wouldn't be easy, but not to be afraid. He now warns them that the invitation to put God first can create conflict and division. I wonder if that is because of the way we view it. It's less of a case of follow Jesus and leave your family behind, which sounds a bit like a transaction to me. It's more of a case of inviting people into God's inclusive family about building relations. And I believe in that way we are doing the will of God, and fulfilling the mission of Jesus.

So how are you doing that? What opportunities do you have to build relationships with others in the name of the kingdom? We have a chance to stand (or kneel) to say that 'Black Lives Matter'. We might have more time to talk and listen to those around us as life may not be as hectic as it was before everything started locking down. Or in our busy-ness we may be supporting and caring for others – loving one another as God loves us. What are you doing? And what can you do?

But in and through all these things, know that God loves you more than every sparrow in the world, more than anything you can think or imagine.

Prayer for the week

May God who cherishes every sparrow,
who goes in search of every lost lamb,
who embraces every lonely child,
who dries every tear, and holds every hand,
may God guide you, sustain you
and enrich your life;
and may knowing that you are valued
be your joyful song today and always.

(adapted from Roots)

Sunday on the BBC

(Every Sunday BBC Radio London (94.9FM) has an act of worship between 8.00am and 9.00am.)

8.10am **Sunday Service** Radio 4 (93.5FM)

The biblical language of God as Father can be difficult for some, but the idea of a God with an unconditional love for all his children is a powerful one. Ben Lindsay, Guvna B and Lord Hastings explore what it means to be a 'father' and share their experience of fatherhood.

11:45am **Sunday Worship** BBC1

A service for Father's Day from Holy Trinity Platt Church, Manchester.

1.15pm **Songs of Praise** BBC1

Stories of inspirational dads and father figures putting their Christian love into action.

Methodist Sunday Services on the Web

- Contemporary worship from Swan Bank Methodist Church: [youtube.com/user/SwanBank](https://www.youtube.com/user/SwanBank)
 - Worship from Westminster Central Hall, London: [youtube.com/user/MCHWevents/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/MCHWevents/videos)
 - Worship from Wesley's Chapel, London (also has daily prayer at 10.00am and 12.45pm): www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA
 - *Sthie [at home]*— from the Isle of Man, a different style of worship taking place at home: [youtube.com/andyfishburne](https://www.youtube.com/andyfishburne)
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The Methodist Conference

The Methodist Conference meets every year to share in worship, fellowship and discussion with members of the Church across Britain. It is a time of conferring, and of listening to God and to one another. Due to COVID-19, this year the Conference is meeting virtually on Zoom. But you can follow lots of it on a live stream at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/conference-2020/conference-live-stream/>. You can find details of the programme at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/conference-2020/conference-programme/>.

Compass Hymns

Enid (from Hayes End) shares her Compass Hymn: Graham Kendrick's "All I once held dear".

*All I once held dear, built my life upon,
all this world reveres, and wars to own,
all I once thought gain I have counted loss
spent and worthless now, compared to this.*

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you,
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness
and I love you, Lord.*

As inspiration, Kendrick uses Philippians 3:7-12 where Paul writes that he regards everything as loss because of the all-encompassing value of knowing Christ. This in term links back to Jesus' parables where a man sells all he has to buy a field in which there is hidden buried treasure (Matthew 13:45-46).

In Enid's typical way, she says, "The older I've become the more I've learned that material possessions are of little worth – we don't need a pair of shoes to match every outfit when thousands have no shoes ... The most important is our faith." She adds, "I'm not sure when it will be, but that hymn is in my funeral service!"

Readings for Sunday 28 June:

Matthew 10:40-42; Romans 6:12-23