

Dear friends,

Happy Bank Holiday weekend! We wait to see what sort of weather we will have. Whether it is rain or sunshine, our churches continue to meet for worship on Sunday morning. Alternatively, you can join Ruislip Manor who stream their service (www.youtube.com/channel/UCjLbCitLuwAJL2wYdzK57EQ) and Christ Church as they share their service on Facebook (www.facebook.com/christchurchuxbridge).

A video of the Bible passage, sermon (below) and prayer is also posted on YouTube on Sunday at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP9o1o7wxg_4sroOfwtEgiQ.

9.30am **Worship at North Hillingdon** led by members of the congregation

11.00am **Worship at Hayes End** (with Holy Communion) led by Majek Kuyuro

11.00am **All Age Worship at Hayes** led by the Revd Ken Kingston

Please continue to take care and stay safe.

Rev Ken

(020 8756 0567) (ken.kingston@methodist.org.uk)

Inside out

One of the most embarrassing things I have done (although there's a long list) is spending half the day wearing a jumper inside out. It wasn't until late in the afternoon that someone pointed it out to me. And I just wondered how many people had spotted it and were laughing at my expense. I guess I'll never know!

I can't imagine the scribes and the Pharisees in Mark chapter 7 worrying about this sort of thing. As far as they are concerned they have far more important things on their mind – they're angry that Jesus' disciples are eating food when they haven't washed their hands correctly (according to religious law that is). So the Pharisees and teachers of the law take Jesus to task over the matter.

Jesus, however, is having none of this. He challenges their behaviour, saying you may do the right things on the outside, but you are rotten on the inside. And he quotes the prophet Isaiah (words that no doubt the Pharisees would have been familiar with) telling them that whilst they may honour God with their words, their hearts are far

away from God (Isaiah 29:13). They have placed their own human rituals above God's commandments.

Then to make strike the point home, Jesus draws people around him and tells them, that it is not what is on the outside that makes you unclean, but what comes out of you. So what is on the inside is what is important. To put it another way – "You can't judge a book by its cover!"

This question that this raises in me is "Why is God so interested in the state of our hearts?" And you need to bear in mind that in biblical times, the heart was viewed not just as the centre of our emotions, but the centre of our will, where decisions are made, about the direction of life. The heart is the essence of us – of you and me.

I believe that it is because God is interested and passionately concerned about us, the very us-ness of each of us. God is not so focused on what we do or say (although that has an importance), but on who we are. Because God is concerned about a relationship – a love and a care for us. And

that was why Jesus came for us. If all God was interested in what we do or how we behave, then God would have just provided a set of rules and regulations. And that was the mistake that the Pharisees made – they were so focused on the law, that they overlooked the love of a God who brought them out of slavery in Egypt, a God who led them on a journey to the Promised Land, a God who chose them and never rejected them, a God who returned them from exile in Babylonia. A God who was more concerned for them, than about the right or wrong people were washing their hands. God is more concerned about what is going on inside us (inside our hearts), and then how that is reflected out in that what we do and who we are, in response to God’s love (if our heart is right with God, then we love because God first loved us – 1 John 4:19).

But God doesn’t stop there. Go back to the words of Isaiah that Jesus quotes – about people honouring God with their lips but their hearts being far from God. But if you read further you’ll discover that the very next thing God says is, “I will again do amazing things with these people, shocking and amazing.” So God’s goodness and God’s powerful love can break through the deadening effect of any human ritual. There is nothing that God cannot do for us and with us.

God is with us. But more than that, God is working within us, so that what comes out of us bears witness to the love of God. As Jesus says, it is what is inside us that matters. But then what is inside us needs to be reflected outside us in how we share God’s grace, and love our neighbour.

That’s the best description of inside out that I can possibly imagine. And certainly, never something to be embarrassed by!

Prayer for the Week

Lord, go with us into our everyday lives,
to honour you by our words and actions.
May your love and grace inside us
shine outwards in all we do and say. Amen.

Sundays on the BBC

8.10 am Sunday Worship BBC Radio 4

Homecoming –As people begin to return to rhythms of life they have known previously, such as the breathing space Greenbelt offers, how can we achieve a more balanced world in the future, one of racial and environmental justice – an altogether more hopeful world?

10.15 am Fern Britton meets ... BBC 1

With the Paralympics taking place in Tokyo, Britain's most decorated Paralympian, Tanni Grey-Thompson, looks back on her sporting career, discusses her role in the House of Lords and reflects on how faith has shaped her outlook on life.

1.15 pm Songs of Praise BBC 1

Faith and Fun – Visits Noah’s Ark Farm Zoo in Bristol to hear how the Christian faith of many of its staff impacts their work. And recalls fun moments from the series, including a helter-skelter in a cathedral and a Christian surfing community in Cornwall.

Welcome to the Revd Dong Kwan Kim



Dong is the new minister for Ruislip and Ruislip Manor Methodist churches. He comes from Korea, having taught and studied at Korean Methodist University. Before that, he was a minister in the Islington and Camden and Kingston-upon-Thames circuits.

The circuit formally welcomes Dong at a service on Wednesday 1 September at 7.00 pm at the Lighthouse Centre, HA4 ONL (formerly South Ruislip Methodist Church). Places are limited, so to be part of the welcome you will need to book a place.

You can email admin.hahcircuit@btconnect.com or phone 01895 622758, with your name and church, plus any guests you will be attending with. If you leave a message on the answerphone, don’t forget to leave your phone number too.

Attendance by booking will be on a first-come first-served basis.