

Dear friends and partners of The Mission Church,

Welcome to our May 2020 Prayer / Newsletter. May is always an invigorating month and I trust this newsletter will inspire you to pray and to enjoy the month despite the restrictions that we currently all face.

'Prayer in a genuine act of love for God' so said, Anselm, a former Archbishop of Canterbury. We have signed up as a congregation for a May prayer initiative promoted by Justin Welby who is the present Archbishop of Canterbury. I hope this initiative will be a fruitful and genuine expression of love for God. The concept is global and entitled 'Thy Kingdom Come'. The idea is that we begin to pray on Thursday 21 May, which is Ascension Day (incidentally the day of our AGM), until Sunday 31 May which is Pentecost Sunday. These ten days mirror the ten days during which 'the disciples along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers all joined together constantly in prayer' (Acts 1 v 14). It's a simple yet profound fact that Acts 2 follows Acts 1. The essence of Thy Kingdom Come is for us to pray that the non-believing members of our families, amongst our friends and neighbours may change and discover the wonder, beauty and truth of Jesus so that we might begin to mirror something of Acts 2 as well as Acts 1. Please join us in prayer for this.

To prepare for this more concentrated period of prayer, our own, Immerse the Mission Church for the month of May in prayer and intercession will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 06 May by ZOOM. Please contact Steven if you wish further ZOOM information. During the meeting we will also pray for our Mission for the Month of May which is IVM. Suresh is doing a wonderful humanitarian aid ministry during what seems to be chaos and desperate need in India due to the Coronavirus.

From time to time my own prayer life becomes a bit lost, random and insecure. When this happens I always return to my favourite book about prayer; It's called The Prayer Principle - getting through to God. The author is Michael Baughen who succeeded John Stott as the Rector of All Souls Church, Langham Place, in London. He moved from there to become the Bishop of Chester. It's a super book about prayer which I commend to you. The repeated message is that when we pray we should start with God, not who or what we are or need. However, it's one thing to say 'start with God' but what does that mean in practice? It's about having faith in God as God! Paul discovered this and wrote to Timothy in this way, 'I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed (trusted) and I am sure that he is able to guard until the that Day what has been entrusted to me' (2 Timothy 1 v 12). If we begin our prayer lives there, then we will discern answers that will be refreshing and unexpected.

It's a matter for real thankfulness that life within the Mission congregation continues despite lockdown via Facebook Live at 11am on Sunday mornings and ZOOM for our Prayer and Catch-up meetings at 7pm on Wednesdays. I'm becoming increasingly aware that a fair percentage of the congregation have little or no access to ICT. Thankfully we are still able to keep in touch with them via letter, phone call or texting. One thing we are talking about at the moment is transferring our Facebook Live services to our Website which should increase the amount of people able to share in the services. Let me pay tribute to both Bill and Malachi who have been a tremendous help to me ensuring that the Mission family both present and past have some kind of positive contact with us.

One of the odder things I have been invited to do recently was to lead a thirty-minute prayer meeting about the Coronavirus crises for a radio audience in both the UK and Nigeria. Despite the early morning start I felt honoured to do so. To try to make sense of the current situation I was greatly helped by the prophecy of Habakkuk. Not too much is known about this character although I like the legend about him that says he went to the Den of Lions to give support and some food to Daniel. Habakkuk lived in threatening and frightening times, so he prayed and discovered that things were going to get worse before they got better; nevertheless, he remained resolute in prayer. 'I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts, I will look to see what he will say to me and what answer he will give to this' (Habakkuk 2 v 1). During the broadcast I was encouraging people to remain resolute in prayer when the indicators are not promising and the temptation to despair is real. One friend created some hope, which we all need, by putting it this way; 'Isolation can lead to Incubation'. For example, in the case of Elizabeth who was isolated for five months due to her unusual pregnancy, what she 'incubated' during that time, was to become John the Baptist. I wonder what we are incubating in our isolation. This is something that all believers and churches can pray about in their own situations.

The important work of Christian Solidarity Worldwide continues. I have been able to post CSW "Faith in extraordinary times" interviews on the church FB page. These are well worth watching. Please continue to pray for CSW.

Our teaching series Voices in the Psalms continues. When the elders choose a theme for teaching, we do so for three reasons;

- We feel led to do so by the Holy Spirit,
- We wish to feed, encourage and build up God's people and
- We desire to proclaim God's word as truth.

We have attempted to do this with book five of the Psalms and trust that our objectives are being realised. Can I remind you however, that the 'teaching' is only the sowing of seed. In order for the word to have fruit in our lives we need to accept it, let it dwell in our hearts and water it in prayer in order that we become mature and more Jesus-like in our characters, attitudes and choices. Even if the process takes a few weeks pondering a few words of a Psalm to let it change us. Maybe there will be lots of testimonies about how the Voices from the Psalms have changed us when we meet again? I know many were touched by the challenge of Psalm 139 and may wish to 'dwell' there for a period and 'let it sink in'.

Dates for your diary and prayer during May;

Fri	30 April	12 30 pm	City pastors prayer time by ZOOM
Sun	03 May	11 00 am	Family service with communion via Facebook Live
Tues	05 May	9 15 am	Local pastors and church leaders prayer time by ZOOM
Wed	06 May	7 00 pm	Immerse the mission church in prayer for the month of May
Thurs	21 May		Thy Kingdom Come!
		7 00 pm	The Mission Church AGM by ZOOM
Fri	22 May	7 30 pm	City-wide prayer gathering, hosted by Newhills Parish Church, probably by ZOOM
Sun	31 May	11 00 am	Pentecost Sunday! Family service Final day of Thy Kingdom Come!

A couple of people have asked me about giving to the Mission during these days of lockdown. There are a couple of ways; you can either write a cheque in favour of The Mission and post it FAO Mr William Michie, c/o The Mission or pay directly into The Mission's bank account - SC 80 05 17 A/C 00112568. Many thanks for your generosity.

Please remember to keep filling in your weekly hexagons with a verse, prayer and/or picture. In conclusion let me share an encouraging prayer from the scriptures; 'And this - writes Paul from the isolation of prison - is my prayer; that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God' (Philippians 1 v 9 to 11).

With warmest blessings on behalf of the Mission Church elders.

Hector

*You're invited!*  
Join us every  
Sunday at 11am on 

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