

Dear friends, members and partners of the Mission Church,

Welcome to our summer prayer / newsletter 2020. The aim of our newsletters is twofold; firstly to provide information about the Mission and secondly to stimulate prayer for all that happens in and around the Mission. I write this letter having just completed our tenth and final 'clap for carers' which seems to me to be a very significant moment in the coronavirus Pandemic. The global pain, loss, grief, fear and misery caused cannot be calculated and has led many to ask 'where is God in all this'? I find comfort in the answer that The Lord gives to Job, who experienced profound suffering in his life. 'Can you pull in a leviathan (sea monster) with a fishhook?' Job 41 v 1. Some things are beyond our comprehension but nevertheless, there is a consistent and clear theme in scripture that God is a God of comfort who can and does provide care and assurance in the most difficult of times. Paul writes 'Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God' 2 Corinthians 1 v 3 + 4. I pray that we would all emerge from this painful season as, comforted comforters.

One of the advantages of Lockdown is the time and space available to read and reread books. In the approach to the 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative, I have dipped into a couple of favourites about prayer which I commend to you. They are The Lord's Prayer by Thomas Watson, who is my favourite Puritan writer, and also The Lord's Prayer, by my friend RT Kendall. One of the challenges RT offers us is "what would Jesus' prayer list look like"? He answers in three petitions; Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done. How wonderful it would be if we all had these three requests at the top of our prayer lists.

I hope that you enjoyed participating in 'Thy Kingdom Come' and found it to be meaningful and relevant. In order to consolidate our requests we will meet for 'Immersing the Mission in prayer' at 7pm on Wednesday 03 June via Zoom, and again on Wednesday 08 July. During these meetings we will be praying for our Missions of the month, which are for June, Dochas Education Trust (DET) and for July, Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). The Mission has personal contact with both Missions we are persuaded that they are very worthy of our prayers and support.

Missiology is an interesting field which covers the concept, history, science, methods and practice of Mission. One of my recent reflections has been about whether our Mission is a mission-shaped church or a church-shaped Mission? Modern definitions of Mission usually take their guidance from the findings of The Lambeth Conference in 1988 when the Five Marks of Global Mission were agreed. They are as follows;

- *To proclaim the good news of The Kingdom,*
- *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers,*
- *To respond to human need by loving service,*
- *To seek to transform unjust structures in society*
- *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.*

These are all valid and commendable missional objectives and if this is all that we do we would certainly be considered as a mission-shaped congregation. However, I'm thankful that at the centre of our activities is the expression of worship which honours the Lord and unite us as his body. This includes the preaching of God's Word and the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. These colour our lives and experience very richly. Accordingly, having these at the heart of our Mission make us a church-shaped Mission which I believe is much more in keeping with New Testament teaching about Church and Mission. In this connection I'm very thankful to all those who have planned and participated in our online services to ensure that the core practices of the congregation continue so well, despite Lockdown.

As well as being challenged about the essence of our Mission I have also been reflecting upon our Vision. Do we have a Mission Church vision and if we do, what is it? Also, is it appropriate for a post-modern, post-Christian social context? I like the quote that says 'great vision always precedes great achievement'. I recently came across four principles of Vision, which I believe are worth praying about;

1. Vision is birthed by God,
2. Vision usually flows from our history,
3. Kingdom vision is usually about meeting the needs of others.
4. Vision somehow, attracts resources.

Whatever our individual or collective Vision is, or may aspire to become, let us pray for God's vision to be revealed to us. With God's vision The Mission can become more effective, articulate beautifully with the Lord's will and purpose for us, and achieve much more than we ever visualised.

As we look ahead, we desire to make our teaching much more accessible to our new online audience. We have decided to suspend our present rota and shelve Psalm 119. We will operate with a skeleton rota for as long as we worship online. We will end our series 'Voices from The Psalms' on Sunday 12 July, and we will introduce a new series on Sunday 19 July which may be called 'Mark's Messiah'. The idea is simply to lift up Jesus from Marks gospel and pray that many will be drawn to him.

Matters for prayer carried over from May 2020;

We give thanks for the interest shown and the unity shared during our AGM on Thursday 21 May. Please pray for our new Deacons who were appointed during the AGM; Johnson and Bethany. We continue to pray for the powerful work of Suresh and IVM in India during a very difficult time for that nation. We continue to pray for much fruit from the 'Thy Kingdom Come' project. We give thanks for the day of Pentecost and pray for an outpouring, refreshing and reviving presence of the Holy Spirit amongst us.

Dates for your diaries and prayerful interest;

Tue 02 June 9 15am Local pastors and church leaders prayer time via ZOOM
7 00pm Meeting of Elders and Deacons via ZOOM
Wed 03 June 7 00pm Immerse the Mission in prayer for the month of June.
Sun 07 June 11 00am Family service with communion via Facebook Live, Phil Laver
Fri 19 June 7 30pm City-wide prayer gathering hosted by The City of God church via ZOOM
Sun 05 July 11 00am Family service with communion via Facebook Live
Tue 07 July 9 15am Local pastors and church leaders prayer time via ZOOM
Wed 08 July 7 00pm Immerse the Mission in prayer for the month of July
Fri 17 July 7 30pm City-wide prayer gathering hosted by Torry St. Fittick's Church by ZOOM
Sun 19 July 11 00am Family service - New series from Marks gospel via Facebook Live

Steven recently attended the European Leadership Forum whose aim is to unite, equip and resource evangelical leaders to enable them to renew the church and encourage the evangelising of Europe. We pray for this forum and for its aims and look forward to the ways in which Steven's connection to the group will trickle down into the Mission so that we also participate in the forums aims.

The apostle Paul writes 'We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that may have great endurance and patience and joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light'. Colossians 1 v 9 to 11. I pray this for us all!

With warmest blessings and best wishes

Hector, on behalf of the Elders.

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

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