



Sacriston Methodist Church

Newsletter

April 2017

MINISTER'S LETTER – Rev Colin J Jackson

Dear Friends, it is time!

"Time for what?" you might ask me. It is always time for something as Ecclesiastes tells us in chapter 3 v2-11.

That most prolific of all poets, Anonymous, once put it like this:

Take time to LAUGH, it is the music of the soul.

Take time to THINK, it is the source of power.

Take time to PLAY, it is the source of perpetual youth.

Take time to READ, it is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to PRAY, it is the greatest power on earth.

Take time to LOVE and be loved, it is a God-given privilege.

Take time to be FRIENDLY, it is the road to happiness.

Take time to GIVE, it is too short a day to be selfish.

Take time to WORK, it is the price of success.

Take time for GOD, it is the way of life.

This poet tells us to take time for the good things in life, unlike the writer of Ecclesiastes. One of the good things in life is to take time to rest. The creation story reminds us that Sunday is to be a day of rest and most Christians celebrate Sunday in honour of Christ's resurrection. Sunday should be a special day. I always feel sorry for those who have to work on a Sunday because it takes many people away from their families and the opportunity to rest and relax together. Everyone needs one day a week in which we do no work. None. Absolutely none. One day which God gives us to go to church, visit family and friends, have a sleep, go cycling with our family and do whatever it is we need to refresh our minds, our bodies and our spirits.

The writer of Ecclesiastes however reminds us that we do not only experience good things in our lives, there are also times for sorrow, for tearing down and pulling up things,

for mourning, for throwing away things, for hate and war. Life lived in all its many aspects is what God has given us and we must take every situation and deal with it when the time comes.

Over the last year we have shared time in mourning the loss of some of our friends and family. This has given us a time to support each other, to gather around and share time spent in remembering, in consolation and love. This time has meant families and friends have gathered together to reflect on what life is and what life 'in Christ' means. It has been a time to listen to the words of the bible, words that bring comfort and assurance; words that remind us that in Christ there is always life, be it here or beyond death. None of us get any younger, even the children among us, and as we mature we realise that God has plenty of 'time' for us. He is timeless, unhindered by a mortal body, brain or vision. He wants us to spend time with him, in prayer, in reading, in sharing all we have to offer to our brothers and sisters.

Don't think that you have to be working constantly, as on a treadmill that never ends. *"Come away by yourselves,"* said Jesus, *"to a lonely place, and rest awhile."* Good advice. We need time to relax with our families and friends and we need a time to worship God. As Lent turns into Easter may you make time to spend with family, friends and God, loving, serving, healing, giving, resting, so that your time is well spent. Enjoy Easter and enjoy being part of God's family.

Wishing you Easter Blessings!

Your friend and minister,

Colin.

Church Family News

Baptisms

There have been no baptisms in our church recently but we have families booked for baptisms in the near future.

Funerals

There have been several funerals in our church since the last newsletter:

George Arnold Laddie on 1.12.16

Jimmy Gallagher on 16.1.17

Brenda Scaife on 30.1.17

William Richardson on 21.2.17

We hold their friends and families in our prayers. May they know God's love surrounding them.

People who are unwell

Please continue to write names or initials in the prayer book which is on the table in the entrance porch. There is no need to write details of the problem but we would like people to know that they are remembered in prayer.

Regular activities in church

We continue to hold our regular Tuesday coffee mornings – 9.45 – 12 noon. These continue even through school holiday time. You are all very welcome to invite people to come. It would be lovely to have a few more people taking their turn on the rota – it isn't difficult and there would always be someone else to help.

Craft and Chat – Wednesday mornings Craft and Chat is a growing group where people can come to try out new crafts or relax and continue with crafts they already enjoy. It meets only in school term time, from 9.15 until 11.45. It is another opportunity to welcome people from our wider community. Please don't feel you have to be good at something before you can come – you can even just come for a chat and a coffee.

We serve soup lunch, usually on the first Wednesday of the month after Craft and Chat. An exception to this will be the first Wednesday in April when the church will be in use for children from local schools – **the next Soup Lunch will be on Wednesday 3rd May.**

Activities for children and young people

Monday mornings – Toddler Group from 9.15 am

This is a group for parents, carers or child minders with pre-school children. There is a wide range of toys and activities – you are very welcome to call in and have a look for yourselves.

PJs Children's Club is a group for primary school aged children – we meet from 5.45 pm until 7 o'clock, also on Mondays.

We have a young people's group for older junior school and younger secondary school children (no strict age limits) which meets monthly on Sunday evenings at 6.30 pm until 8 o'clock – the next two meetings will be 2nd April and 7th May.

Please note – we aim to be a family-friendly church where babies, children and young people are always welcome. We have toys and activities available for children even at activities and services which are not primarily All Age.

Lent Studies

The Lent Studies are drawing to a close now, but on Wednesday 5th April at 7pm there is the last meeting of the Newton Hall group when the speaker will be Bishop John Pritchard.

On Thursday 6th April there will be the last meeting of the Langley Park Group where Rev. Tony Holden will lead a session from 'The York Course' – in the vestry at Langley Park Methodist Church at 2pm.

These are both ecumenical and all are welcome.

Palm Sunday Songs of Praise

This is arranged by Churches Together for all churches in Kimblesworth, Sacriston and Witton Gilbert. It will be led by Lieutenant Cor van der Woude of the Salvation Army and will take place in **Sacriston Methodist Church on Sunday 9th April at 5.30pm** with refreshments following the service.

Arrangements for Holy Week and Easter

We will again have united services during Holy Week arranged by Churches Together:

Monday 10th April at 7 o'clock in the Salvation Army

Tuesday 11th April at 7 o'clock in St. Bede's Roman Catholic Church

Wednesday 12th April at 7 o'clock in St. Michael's and All Angels' Church, Witton Gilbert.

On Maundy Thursday, there will be no service in our church but we will be welcome in other churches having a service that evening.

On Good Friday we are all invited to the service in the Salvation Army at 10.30am.

Easter Day – Worship on Easter Sunday morning will be at Witton Gilbert Methodist Church at 10.30am when the preacher will be Rev. A. Dawson from Hexham. This will be Witton Gilbert's Chapel Anniversary and we are invited to celebrate with them.

In the evening of Easter day we have an Easter Communion Service in our own church, led by Rev. Colin Jackson at 5.30pm.

Easter Journey

This year we have the privilege, once again, of presenting Easter Journey in our church for children from local primary schools.

This will happen in the afternoons of Tuesday 4th April, Wednesday 5th April and Thursday 6th April, probably

starting at 1 o'clock or just before. Mark McKnight will be leading these sessions but we do need as much help as we can possibly have. Please offer as much time to this as you can – we will need supporting people in the kitchen as well as some 'up-front' folk.

The gazebos will be put up after Toddlers on Monday 3rd April.

Thursday 11th May

Tickets are now on sale for an event in North Road Church, Durham, starting at 7.15pm. **An evening with Adrian Plass** – an internationally known writer and evangelist, who will appeal to both young and old. This is part of the Circuit's Faith and Arts programme.

Saturday 3rd June – Thy Kingdom Come

This is the day chosen for Durham's participation in a nation-wide ecumenical event called "Thy Kingdom Come" – more details will follow but the idea is to have round the clock prayer stations and events, from mid-night to mid-night.

In connection with this, on **Sunday 4th June** (Pentecost Sunday) there will be a Circuit Service in Elvet Methodist Church at 6pm.

Circuit Assessment

Our circuit assessment this year is £10,468. If anyone would like to support the church financially by taking the weekly giving envelopes, please see the treasurer, Mr. Malcolm Wadge.

May the joy and wonder of Easter fill your hearts