



April 2023

GREETINGS FROM LUDLOW METHODIST CHURCH



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Poor Martha

Jesus comes to Bethany, the home where he is always welcome and apparently made to feel at home. Martha, conscious of her duty as hostess, sets about preparing a meal. Her younger sister Mary prefers to sit and listen to whatever Jesus has to say to those who would inevitably have gathered there. And, not surprisingly, Martha is put out. "Lord, tell my sister to come and help me". But Jesus sides with Mary! "She has chosen the best part".

You could hardly blame Martha if she had promptly whipped off her apron and sat down with the others. From what he says to the disciples when they urged him to eat at the encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4) it seems that Jesus would easily have coped with this, but one wonders how the others would have felt. Most likely Martha went back to her work, filled with resentment.

I think too, of the Prodigal's Older Brother. In this case, the younger one has taken one third of the capital out of the family concern, cleared off and left his brother to pick up the pieces. Now he comes

crawling back, well aware that he deserves nothing, yet their father is so pleased to see him he goes quite over the top, kills the fatted calf and gets a party going. Meanwhile, the older brother is at work in the fields. He doesn't even know what is going on until he returns from work. They might have let him know. No mobile phones in those days, but they could have sent a servant. Understandably, he is resentful, like Martha. (The fatted calf would not have been pleased either.)

We need to remember that the account of what happened at Bethany is a story from real life, while the other is a parable, intended to alert us to our human failings. Can we sing "The vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives" and mean it? Is it fair? That those who have borne the heat and burden of the day should get the same recompense as the late-comers? Yet that is what infinite love means. The Pharisees knew when Jesus was thinking of them; do we?

Maurice Coleman

An Obituary *(written with tongue in cheek)*

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who had been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were lost long ago in bureaucratic red-tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

knowing when to come in out of the rain; why the early bird gets the worm; life isn't always fair; and maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn), and reliable strategies (adults, not children are in charge). His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned, but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a six-year-old being charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teenagers suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly off-springs. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun-lotion or a dispirin to a child, but could not inform parents if a student became pregnant and wanted an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live when churches became businesses and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a severe beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault. Common Sense finally gave up on life when a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilt a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by: - his parents, Truth and Trust, - his wife, Discretion, - his daughter, Responsibility, - and his son, Reason.

He is survived by five step-brothers: - I know my rights, - I want it now, - Someone else is to blame, - I am a victim, - Pay me for doing nothing.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone. If you still remember him, please pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing. *(Supplied by a reader)*

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Helping the Helpless

We live in an extremely unstable world – literally and metaphorically. If we feel totally helpless, on the edge of a precipice, try to imagine how our Turkish and Syrian neighbours are feeling in their immense suffering, grieving and facing a bewildering, unknown future.



Flood waters in Pakistan

Meanwhile the suffering and exile of Ukrainians continue and in the aftermath of the floods in Pakistan (remember them?) six months ago which drove 33 million from their homes and left a third of the country submerged, 8.6 million are still facing hunger – more than the population of Scotland).

This is one more example of the poorest people facing the catastrophic impact of human behaviour and actions which have created the climate crisis, for which they bear the least responsibility. The International Rescue Committee has identified that the 20 poorest countries contribute less than 2% of global carbon dioxide emissions.

By February 13th this year the volume of sea ice surrounding Antarctica was smaller than at any time since satellite measurements began in the late 1970s. And the current summer melt still has some way to go. Last year the record melt was recorded on February 25.

Disasters are not always the result of 'natural' catastrophes caused by the climate crisis. Tragedies also arise from greed, both political (the invasion of Ukraine) and economic (cutting corners by not building to earthquake-proof standards in Syria). These events hit the headlines and our human response has seen millions raised for the victims of the Turkish and Syrian earthquake.

The other arm of Christian Aid's activity, its long-term development work, does not grab the headlines in the same way but the suffering of impoverished communities, months or even years after disasters strike or as the result of drought and conflict is equally immense and life-

threatening. Recently announced UK humanitarian aid will target malnutrition in four regions of rising insecurity in Ethiopia and in Nigeria, where poor harvests have left millions short of food.



East African hunger crisis

We can do something to help and play a part in relieving want across the world. There will be an opportunity to do so in Christian Aid Week (16 – 22 May) with a retiring collection at most local churches during this week. Thank you all for your ongoing and generous support.



Claire Wilcox

View from a Church Window

See through these words, through window clear
See to the fields and sky beyond
See all His gifts and truly hear
His word

Look to the sky so clear and blue
Look to the things He asks and then
Look to your deeds and all you do
In life

Give thought to mistakes we often make
Repent of the wrong we sometimes do
Give thanks for the bread and wine we take
And praise Him

Lynda Young

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More volunteers needed to ring church bells for the King

The Coronation's 'Ring for the King' challenge is still urgently looking for more volunteers – several thousand more of them, in fact.

The new recruits will be needed if all the church bells in the country are to be rung on 6th May, the day of the Coronation.

As we go to press, so far the Ring for the King campaign has attracted less than 500. But there is still time, and organisers remain upbeat.

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR) says that new recruits need about 15 hours of training to be able to manage a bell alone. And the CCCBR hopes that once volunteers have discovered the fun of bell-ringing, "they'll want to continue to grow their skills and friendships made through this journey of discovery."

There are 6,000 sets of bells across Britain, containing almost 38,000 bells, which require one ringer per bell. However, there are only about 30,000 bell-ringers across the country, with some teams working across several churches.

Anyone aged eight and over can get involved in bell-ringing. It has been described as "gentle exercise" and does not require a certain level of fitness, although ringers often have to climb a church's spiral staircase to get to its belfry.

With Holy Week and Easter in mind...

The death of Christ was the most dreadful blow ever given to the empire of darkness. - *William Plumer*

The world cannot bury Christ. The earth is not deep enough for His tomb, the clouds are not wide enough for His winding-sheet. - *E Thomson*

A vicar planning an Easter pilgrimage to the Holy Land was shaken when he found it would cost him £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. He protested to the travel agent that the cost was ridiculous. "That might be true," replied the travel agent, "but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord Himself walked."

"Well," said the vicar, "at £50 an hour for a boat, I am not surprised!"

TEME SPIRIT CHOIR PRESENTS

Hosanna!

An Easter Musical
By Andrew Newton & Barry Curtis

METHODIST CHURCH LUDLOW

SY8 1NH

SATURDAY APRIL 29th
7.30 PM

Donations at the door to
Ludlow Methodist Church and Teme Spirit Choir

Refreshments provided

Contact Numbers:

Minister: Rev Kim Stilwell
01584 318628

Church Administrator: Mrs Sarah Kellett
01584 879233

Community Chaplain: Mrs Ruth Downes
01584 890186

Website: www.ludlowmethodistchurch.org

Church Stewards

Geoff Edwardson 01584 879895 Maureen Farmery 01584 874590

Janet Williams 01584 875220 Annie Jones 01584 876105

Cathy Pritchard 01588 660579 David Evans 01584 890670

Roger Clayton 01584 319413

Church Secretary Joyce Evans 01584 890670

Church Treasurer David Harlington 01584 879614

Junior Church Cathy Pritchard 01588 660579
Christine Paulden 01584 319072

Prayer Coordinator Heather Price 01584 876480

Pastoral Secretary Elizabeth Wright 01584 874548

Sunday Church Notices John Eadie 01584 877761

Magazine Ron Gittings 01568 780733
rongittings47@yahoo.co.uk

Traidcraft Stephen Dalton 01584 873405

Room Bookings Church Office 01584 879233

Church Website Church Office 01584 879233