

HEATH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

June - July 2020



Newsletter 1055

OPENING PRAYERS

Dear Lord God,

we come to you in these special times. May you guide us, fill us with your hope, and give us patience to wait out the storm. We thank you for your light and calming presence as the storm rages around us. Thank you for surrounding us with that love and that calming so that we may find peace. We pray that you will help us stand together as a congregation and as a community, to support and encourage one another; that we may lean on each other and support one another. We thank you for these precious moments to gather in our homes, listening to one another's voices and to your voice, bringing a light into our lives during these difficult times, and reminding us of the community that lies just outside of our homes. We pray for all the essential workers, who place themselves at great risk to protect us. We pray that they may feel the warmth of our prayers and that you may bless them and their families as they work tirelessly, and under great stress. And for that we are eternally grateful. We pray for those who are isolated, sick, scared, lonely, or living in an unsafe home. May you fill their

hearts with your light and love, and help us to support them in these times. We pray that times like these may help us grow nearer to you, to our families, and to our communities. May you cover us in your love, your patience, your light, and may you give us hope for the time ahead.

Amen.

Dear God,

we pray for the scattered Church. Though many meet in new ways, it is not the same. We pray for creativity and innovation so we may feel connected in this uncertain time. We pray that no one feels left behind or out of touch as we move into this new phase. We pray for those who live alone. May they find connection and new means to communicate with the ones they love. We ask that your presence comes in power. May no one feel alone at this time. We pray for our key workers: the doctors, the nurses, the delivery driver, the shelf-stacker, the bus driver, the teacher, and the many who go unnamed and unthanked. Those who keep moving even as it seems the whole world is standing still. We pray for that first time we may again

get coffee in a bustling coffee shop, for the first dinner with extended family and friends clambering over far too small a table. We pray for the next run in the park with friends. We pray for the first handshake with a stranger. We pray for the first time we can hold our distant loves ones.

We pray for community, we pray for peace, we pray for health, we pray for your Spirit to come.

Amen.

Thank you, Lord,

that you are with me. Thank you that your presence is not bound to a building or place. Thank you for being with me wherever I am. Thank you that we can count on you however our circumstances may change, or lost we may feel. You, Lord, cannot change, and yet you can change everything. We celebrate Easter and remember what you did for us: how you took on so much pain and darkness to bring us your love and joy. You gave us your Son so we may live. We celebrate your victory over death, and this makes us rejoice. Fill us with your joy. We pray that

you give us strength for our challenges and help us trust you more. Let us experience your hope, and share this hope with others. Give us patience and kindness, and help us to concentrate on you and not on our worries or fears. We want to share your love, your hope, your joy, and your strength with others. Help us to be there for each other, even from a distance. Show us how we can serve our families, our friends, our neighbours, within the limits. The limitations we experience are nothing for you. The empty grave of your Son showed us your might, and we trust that you help us grow and learn with you. When the night is holding on to me, God is holding on.

Amen.

LETTER FROM LUCA

Dear Ewan,

I could not bring myself to write you earlier. I work on the children's intensive care unit in the Royal London, and now we are taking care of adult intensive care patients too. The situation is dire, the morgue is full of corpses and we can't write the death certificates quick enough.

Previously well middle-aged persons die within days. The hospital is reorganized, wherever possible, they converted the wards to treat COVID patients. Our intensive care nurses are very frustrated, because they can't provide the care they are used to, for example where they had one ventilated patient per nurse, now there is two-three-four. While they used to do

cares four hourly (brush teeth and clean eyes, for example), now they can barely do once a day. I must say this is still much better than the standard care in most other countries of the world even in non-COVID times.

Amidst all the exhaustion and frustration, there is a great team spirit. People are taking care of each other better than normally. It is very touching how much the public supports us. We have plenty of food donations on shifts and when I heard the clapping on my way to work I cried.

Happy Easter to your family, Ewan, and take care,

Luca



CONCERNING THE HEATH STREET HOME COMPANION

The lockdown has brought its fair share of hardship. However, due to its restrictions, a hidden blessing has emerged in forcing us to think outside of the box and be creative. Responding to the need to provide a virtual space every week for worship, the Heath Street podcast brings us a hallowed and whimsical atmosphere that allows us to come before God as children. Instead of pointing a camera at Ewan and having him talk at us, like some news reporter, the podcast hits us deeper with its use of music, poetry, reenactments, and prayer, creating an immersive and reflective space where the Holy Spirit can dwell more than a live stream could ever do.

Nathalia Bell

John Moffatt SJ, who has often led services at Heath Street, recently offered a guided meditation instead of our midweek Home Companion. He helped us focus on the disciples' encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Those who took part found his way of helping us to be part of the detail and meaning of the story was very important at this strange and troubling time – despite the unfamiliar electronic format. Instead of accepting any payment for his time, John asked us to make a donation to Bow Foodbank, which we were pleased to do.

Gaynor Humphreys

L E T ' S

M A K E

T H I S

L O V E

N O R M A L

COME RAIN OR SHINE

MURDER MOST FOUL: A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A rolling piano and bowed bass, Dylan's voice sounding more vibrant than it has for years, heralds the arrival of the song and dance man's longest ever song (just shy of 17 minutes); though maybe it's less a song and more a poem chanted over a maudlin soundtrack.

And 57 years after the event, Dylan is reflecting on the assassination of President Kennedy. This is the murder most foul that has seized his imagination and brought forth his most sustained and effective 'protest' song since 1975's Hurricane.

His voice has railed against the untimely deaths of America's heroes for most of his career; from the Ballad of Hollis Brown on. On the title track of the same 1963 album, Dylan laments the death toll and asks (like the psalmist), "How many deaths will it take 'til we know / That too many people have died?" (Blowin' in the wind).

Spend any time in Dylan's musical world and you are pitched into the Bible and the language of faith, that faith in which America wraps itself like the flag and yet seems to betray at every turn.

Murder Most Foul reflects on the events of November 1963 in biblical tones but it

also reads like a radio DJ's playlist (Dylan having hosted a radio show for the past few years). He calls on Wolfman Jack, the legendary radio DJ immortalised in American Graffiti, to howl and set up the turntables. And Dylan's playlist is a retelling of post-war American popular culture. Why these songs? We'll return to that.

The opening 22 lines sets up an apocalyptic interpretation of the Kennedy assassination. He is not a president, he is the king; he is the sacrificial lamb subjected to a mock trial. 'You know who I am?' 'Of course we do, we know who you are.' But as the reflection deepens, a telling couplet,

But his soul's not here where it was
supposed to be at
For the last fifty years we've been
searching for that

is followed some seven or eight minutes later by an even more telling triplet:

I said the soul of the nation has
been torn away
And it's beginning to go into a slow
decay
And that it's 36 hours past
Judgment Day

BY SIMON JONES

This is not the chance killing of a much-loved president, it's the slaying of the dream of American renewal,

The day they killed him, someone
said to me, 'Son
The age of the antichrist has just
only begun'

References elsewhere to the slaying of black men, Kennedy's brother, and others suggest the forces of darkness and reversal were unleashed in the face of the promise of Camelot. And they seem to be winning. With echoes of 1965's It's Alright, Ma, Dylan rails against the swamping of equality and civil rights by the cold cash of consumerism,

When you're down in Deep Ellum,
put your money in your shoe
Don't ask what your country can do
for you
Cash on the ballot, money to burn...
I'm going down to the crossroads,
gonna flag a ride
The place where faith, hope and
charity died.

So what about the playlist? Is Dylan suggesting that pop culture, in the form of the Beatles storming the States in the

wake of Kennedy's death, comes as the smothering tit of a consumerist nightmare erasing the hope of a better future? It could be read that way. But I wonder: Dylan reaches back into American pop culture history, the culture that made him as well as the culture that he helped to shape and calls these artists and their music as witnesses to a better world, one the conspirators tried to snuff out with the "murder most foul." But it's one that tenaciously hangs on, pointing to a better, brighter future. It's not that music will save the world; it's that music is a road map to a world beyond this one where Kennedy's ideals are realised.

The listener is left reeling at the end of this litany of hope. The forces of darkness have tried to take over but they have failed; look at the human spirit rising in the protest music of generation after generation of pop, jazz, hip-hop and rock singers, of which, of course, Dylan himself is a pivotal part.

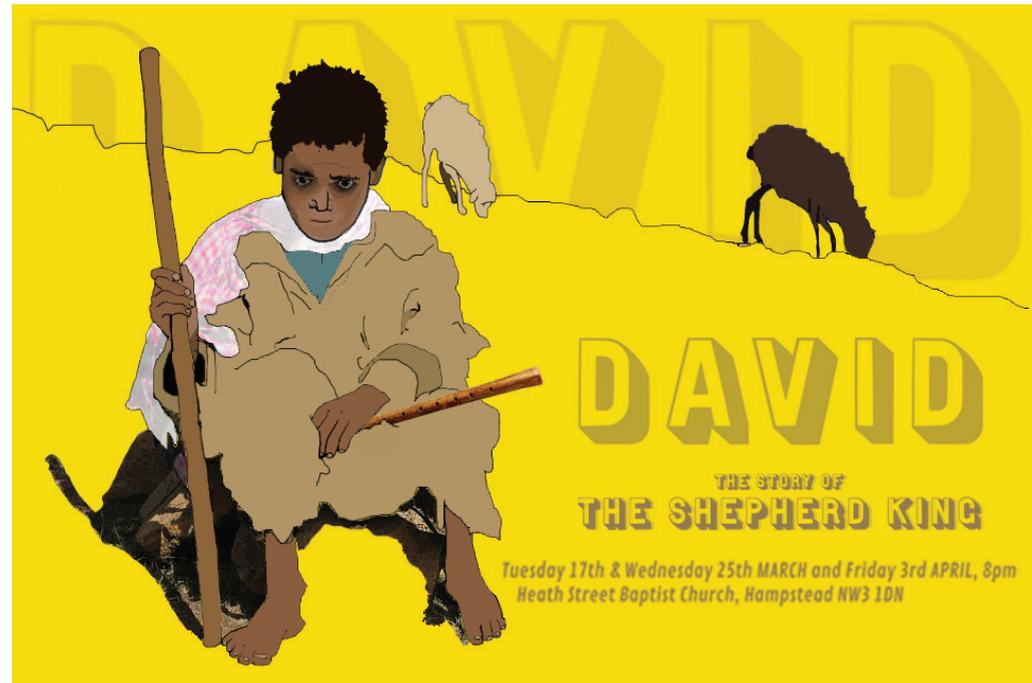
The old song and dance man returns in the age of Trump, throwing shapes, casting shadows, provoking thought, and weaving dreams. It's why we love him.

LETTER FROM OUR CHILDREN'S WORKER

Time for a public confession, an old Christian practice that I'm sure Heath Street could do with some more of! As maybe you will know, I was meant to be doing a storytelling series for adults over Lent, David: The Story of the Shepherd King, and the new restrictions led the diaconate to ask me to record the story and release it as a podcast. Well, here we are at Ascension, and I still haven't finished! I am currently working on episode 5, and there is progress. But I cannot deny that the grand finale is weeks overdue. One of my excuses is that recording stories is a vastly different prospect to performing

them to audiences, and so I am learning as I create. But also, while I'm OK to release these episodes before I've really fussed over them, there are few things more painful to a storyteller than telling a story before it has found its structural integrity. One simply has to wait for them to find their shape. And so it is in defence of the tale that I must stand in defiance of any deadline! To reference the popular in-joke from our wonderful (if irritatingly punctual) 'Heath St Home Companion', if Gabby can be 14 months pregnant, then I can take my sweet time over a podcast!

Wilf Merttens



TREASURER'S NOTE

May I say an enormous thank you to people who have carried on with their regular commitment to supporting Heath Street and lots more who responded to Wilf's recent appeal and reminder that costs roll on even when we cannot hold services at the church, and income shrinks with no hall hire lettings or concert bookings. For anyone who can afford to remember us, the payment options are:

- Use BACS to pay into our account at CAF Bank Ltd: Heath Street Baptist Church, account number 00014178, sort code 40-52-40

- Set up a standing order from your bank account (weekly, monthly, quarterly). If you do electronic banking you can do this yourself, but if not, ask me for a form you can complete for your bank.

- Contact me by email if you have any queries about how to support us or where to send a cheque (gaynor@

eandghumphreys.plus.com).

If you do contribute, don't forget to include your name in the reference (or your Gift Aid PIN if you have one).

The Deacons have agreed that Heath Street should respond to the Baptist Union's appeal to support Baptist churches in a worse position than we are, with fewer resources and real challenges keeping going while the COVID-19 crisis runs on. We are sending £500. If you want to chip in towards that, any contribution would be very welcome.

And now two new ways you could help.

First the long term one:

When you are about to renew your home insurance – building cover and/or contents – consider using Baptist Insurance. They don't just insure churches like ours but also offer home cover. If you decide to switch to them, they will give £100 to the Baptist church of your choice,

i.e. US!

You can find out more and obtain a quote by calling 0345 0702223, quoting BIC100 (8 am – 6 pm Mon-Fri), or via www.baptistinsurance.co.uk/bic100.

The second option seems tailor-made for lockdown when you might be buying more than usual online. We have signed up with a website called "easyfundraising". You can register with this site and link to Heath Street Baptist Church, then use easyfundraising as the path to your chosen retailer. (They link to 4,000 of them, including all the big names.) When you order something, the retailer will send some money to our account. You can raise money for us every time you shop online, at no cost to yourself.

The link is www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/heathstreetbaptistchurch or if you order via your mobile phone there is an app: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/

easyfundraising-app/

There is a donation button on our easyfundraising page too, just in case anyone new stumbles across it, but the important message is that the retailer takes care of your donation when you buy something (e.g. John Lewis promises to give 2% of the value of your order).

Thank you so much!

With love and best wishes,

Gaynor

OUR BRAZILIAN FRIENDS

Just before lockdown closed the church building, a Brazilian church community started using our building once a week for their service. Their Pastor, Jackson Pereira, joined in one of our Sunday Zoom coffee sessions recently.

Pastor Jackson writes about this tough period of lockdown:

Our members are cooking food for the Brazilian community every day, because some haven't got any support at all. Now as a Church, we became the support giving food for them. Thank you for praying for us, we are doing the same, praying for you guys and for all churches.

C O M M

U N I T Y

L I K E

N E V E R

B E F O R E

COME RAIN OR SHINE

READINGS AND PRAYERS

May 31-June 6

Acts 2.1-21

31st May	Anselm King
1st June	Michael Bloxham
2nd	Wilf Merttens
3rd	Nesa Thorne
4th	Beryl Dowsett
5th	Laura Somers
6th	Nathalia Bell

June 7-13

Isaiah 40.12-17, 27-31

7th	Beza Geberegiabher
8th	Fiona Ranford
9th	Evelyn Baker
10th	Coco Ellenbogen
11th	Nomsa Ndebele
12th	Rhona MacEachan
13th	Jen Finamore

June 14-20

Genesis 18.1-15 [21.1-7]

14th	Isabel Somers
15th	Margarite Biadun
16th	Tom and Susan Brandt
17th	Leo Patterson
18th	Frida King
19th	Annie Fang
20th	Leila Ranjbar

June 21-27

Genesis 21.8-21

21st	Victoria Tjirimuje
22nd	Robin Thorne
23rd	Elya Ghasempour
24th	Andrea MacEachan
25th	Lydia Baker
26th	Sarah Harper
27th	Ottilie Johnson

June 28-July 4

Genesis 22.1-14

28th	Francesco Giannoccaro
29th	Theresa Thom
30th	Ewan King
1st July	Birgit Leuppert

2nd	Jane Johnson
3rd	Nathan Biadun
4th	Cole Ellenbogen

July 5-11

Genesis 24.34-38, 42-49, 58-67

5th	Christina Cairns
6th	John-Henry Baker
7th	HK
8th	Susan Le Quesne
9th	Edward Humphreys
10th	Thaddeus King
11th	Tom Somers

July 12-18

Genesis 25.19-34

12th	Joachim King
13th	Ali Ghasempour
14th	Eleanor Patterson
15th	Mysie Johnson
16th	Gaynor Humphreys
17th	Jeremy Fletcher
18th	Josh Somers

July 19-25

Genesis 28.10-19a

19th	Gabrielle Falardeau
20th	Beauty Kunene
21st	Selena Barrera
22nd	Judith Peak
23rd	for all in hospital
24th	Thomas Falardeau
25th	Hildegard Williams

July 26-August 1

Genesis 29.15-28

26th	Paul Conrad
27th	Rebecca McLeod
28th	Josi Mbombo
29th	Ethan McLeod
30th	David Neil
31st	for the bereaved
1st August	Neil McLeod



ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Sundays 11:00am *The Heath Street Home Companion*

Online collective worship.

www.heathstreet.org/activities/the-heath-street-home-companion

11:30am *Sunday morning coffee*

Both Heath Street regulars and first-time 'visitors' are invited to join one another each Sunday for coffee and an online catch-up.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87179878823>

Wednesdays 4:30-6:00pm *Storymakers Club*

An after-school club aimed at children age 7 to 13. Wilf is pleased to announce that Storymakers has moved to the digital realm for now.

Skype wilf.merttens or email childrensworker@heathstreet.org for help

7:00pm *The Heath Street Home Companion*

Songs, prayers and news from Heath Street people far and wide.

www.heathstreet.org/activities/the-heath-street-home-companion

Anytime *Storytelling*

David: The Story of the Shepherd King. Storyteller Wilf Merttens' retells the legendary centrepiece of the books of Samuel for the 3rd millennium, and finds it is just as full of shock, longing and ambiguity as it was originally.

www.heathstreet.org/media

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

By arrangement

Oldtime Nursery

If you would like to arrange a virtual session from the Minister's house to yours.

please contact Ewan at ewan_king@me.com

Anytime

Psalm Memorisation Challenge

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiRSgpgpdTQ&feature=youtu.be>

Please see the church website for updates: heathstreet.org

For requests regarding church membership, Baptism or opportunities for Christian ministry in the church, please contact the minister.

Copy for the next newsletter should reach Eleanor Patterson (eleanorlaise@gmail.com) not later than Wednesday 15th July.

HEATH STREET BAPTIST



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