



August 15th 2021

**Greetings in the name of our  
Risen Lord Jesus Christ.  
In this time of uncertainty,  
we declare: Jesus is Lord!**

## **Stay Awake!(2)**

Last week I shared thoughts from an article by a church leader in London, Jason Swan Clark, entitled "Stay Awake: Why this might be the most dangerous time," highlighting the reality of loss during the pandemic, and the need to make space for grief. As Christians, denying loss is not only unhelpful but unbiblical. The article cites NT Wright, the New Testament scholar, who suggests that we stop trying to explain 'why is this happening' and instead practice the biblical notion of lament:

*"The point of lament, woven thus into the fabric of the biblical tradition, is not just that it's an outlet for our frustration, sorrow, loneliness and sheer inability to understand what is happening or why. The mystery of the biblical story is that God also laments. Some Christians like to think of God as above all that, knowing everything, in charge of everything, calm and unaffected by the troubles in his world. That's not the picture we get in the Bible."*

Nowhere is that more true than in the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. And it's significant that Jesus takes three disciples with him - Peter, James, and John. What does he ask them to do? To pray and watch with him. But of course, they don't. They fall asleep, not simply because of being physically tired but because of their deep distress and sorrow (Luke 22:45).

Swan Clark writes: *Falling asleep in the face of trauma is a psychological protection mechanism. After everything the disciples had experienced with Jesus, it all seemed to have unravelled and come crashing down. Not only did they have their own losses to bear, the investments they had made for the mission of Jesus, but they could also see the anguish Jesus was in.*

*I tried to imagine going from the highs of the miracles and intimacy and experiences of ministry with Jesus to that moment in the Garden. A moment when all seemed lost, and even Jesus was in despair, telling the disciples, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death" (Matthew 26:38). I suspect I would have closed my eyes too and wished I could escape, hoping this was not really happening.\**

This story warns of the danger of falling asleep in the face of loss. It's tempting to fall asleep through denial and throwing ourselves into anything that avoids dwelling with our losses. But staying awake is something Jesus wanted the disciples to learn in Gethsemane – hence he asked them three times. May we have the grace to stay awake in the coming weeks and months as we look back and forwards;

With my prayers and love, *Anita*

## **Sunday worship Service of Holy Communion**

Our worship this Sunday will be a celebration of Holy Communion. If you are joining us via zoom please have bread/crackers, wine/juice to hand. Thank you.

## **Praying for the Persecuted Church: Syria**

Syria has about 677,000 Christians, about 3.6 per cent of a population of almost 19 million. The number of Christians in the country has decreased in the past decade, as many have fled conflict and persecution.

Persecution remains extreme in public and private life for Christians in Syria. Christians from a Muslim background are vulnerable to pressure from their family and communities, who perceive conversion from Islam as bringing dishonour. Sometimes these families even request that local officials covertly monitor Christian converts.

In areas controlled by Islamic extremist groups, public expressions of Christianity are banned and most churches have been seized or destroyed. In government-controlled areas, this threat is less – but there are still numerous abductions of church leaders, and Islamic dissidents are still active. Violent attacks continue, while Covid-19 has exacerbated many existing vulnerabilities in the past year.

Syria's continuing civil war has made the country a breeding ground for Christian persecution. The unrest, which was beginning to lessen, has been exacerbated by the economic crisis caused by Covid-19.

"Covid-19 has a big impact on Qamishli [in northern Syria]; normal life is almost non-existent," Pastor George explains. "The number of poor people has increased. Especially those people who are daily labourers who, if they don't have work today, receive no wages."

Many Christians are still internally displaced or refugees in other countries because of over a decade of war and rising Islamic extremism. In northern Syria, invasion by Turkish forces in late 2019 caused greater instability, and seems to have been used by some Islamic extremists as a cover for opportunities to target Christians.

Pastor George is an Open Doors partner who, like many such partners, has stood with his church through years of conflict, persecution and difficulty. Now he is making sure that his church can be a light in the darkness: "I see men, women and children crying of hunger. It's tragic. Our church saw that now was a time to stand by the people, support them and show Jesus' love in difficult times."

Please pray for our sisters and brothers in Syria.

(From the Open Doors website)

## **The Disabling Church: Diocesan Open Meeting**

Inclusivity in our churches is a key area for reflection and development. Our experiences of being unable to physically join together in worship during the pandemic may have been painful, but they have highlighted a reality which we have overlooked for too long – that many are regularly excluded from engaging in worship in what we might have called ‘normal’ times.

Here’s an opportunity to get involved in doing something about it, alongside others in the Diocese. It would be great if a few of us from St. Peter’s were able to attend this meeting and to bring back questions and reflections to share with the rest of us as we engage with the challenging and vital question of how to make the life and worship of our church accessible and welcoming to all.

If you’re interested in being a part of this please speak to Anita or Nick. Thank you!

### **The Disabling Church...**

And what to do about it!

**A Report...**

**A Conversation...**

**Leading to Action...**

Shaping the future for d/Deaf,  
Disabled and Neurodiverse people  
and those who journey with them  
across the Diocese of Derby.

With Bishop Malcolm Macnaughton  
Meeting on Zoom  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September  
2pm - 4pm

For zoom details, a copy of the report  
and an accessibility pack,  
please contact Tim Rourke

07853 167061 - [tim.rourke@derby.anglican.org](mailto:tim.rourke@derby.anglican.org)

## **Prayer Meeting**

A reminder of our weekly prayer meeting every Tuesday at 11am via Zoom. It's wonderful that a group are gathering each week to pray (and there is so much to pray for!) – please do come along if you can. For more details, please contact Geoff.

## **Prayer ...**

In this testing time, do not hesitate to ask for prayer for any concern you have. We all face difficulties and challenges, but prayer makes a difference. In an emergency, call Bren (07967 183601), and she will ask those on the prayer chain to pray for you.

## **Zoom Joining Details for the 10.45am Service:**

**On a Computer, Laptop, Smart Phone or Tablet:** Click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/450891605?pwd=czNCTTJuaUJpQ3VlOVlnUm1zS0tKQT09>

Alternatively:

1. Open Zoom and select 'Join' or 'Join a Meeting'
2. Enter the Meeting ID: **450 891 605**
3. Select 'Join'
4. When prompted for the Meeting Password, enter **73837**
5. Select 'Continue' or 'Join Meeting' and you will be connected

### **By Phone – these are the numbers you must now use:**

1. Pick any one of the numbers below (doesn't matter which), if one doesn't work, pick another: 0330 088 5830; 0131 460 1196; 0203 481 5237; 0203 481 5240; 0203 901 7895; 0208 080 6591; 0208 080 6592
2. Dial the number and when prompted for the Meeting ID press: **450 891 605#**
3. You will then be prompted for a Participant ID, just press **#**
4. Finally, you will be prompted for the Meeting Password, press: **73837#**
5. You will be connected and able to hear everything that is happening

If you have difficulty connecting, please call Anita

### **St. Peter's in the City Staff**

**Acting Vicar/Associate Priest:** Revd. Anita Matthews [anita@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:anita@stpetersderby.org.uk)

**Curate:** Revd. Nick Parish [nick@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:nick@stpetersderby.org.uk)

**Vicar's PA and Church Administrator:** Hilary Streek [office@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:office@stpetersderby.org.uk)

**Inside Out Project Worker:** Wayne Summers [wayne@insideoutderby.org.uk](mailto:wayne@insideoutderby.org.uk)

**Building Manager:** Melvyn Wood  
**Kitchen Supervisor:** Gillian Wood

**Church Wardens:** Tim Benson, Liz Runcorn

**We are a community of faith, hope and love in the heart of the city**  
**Follow us on Twitter:** @stpetersderby; [www.stpetersderby.org.uk](http://www.stpetersderby.org.uk)

**Parish Safeguarding Officer:** 07828 280455

**Please note that copies of the Safeguarding Policy are available in the Church Office or at**  
**[www.derby.anglican.org/safeguarding](http://www.derby.anglican.org/safeguarding)**

**The church office is currently open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9.30am and 1.30pm. Telephone:** 01332 360790, [office@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:office@stpetersderby.org.uk)