

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 58 **May 9th 2021**

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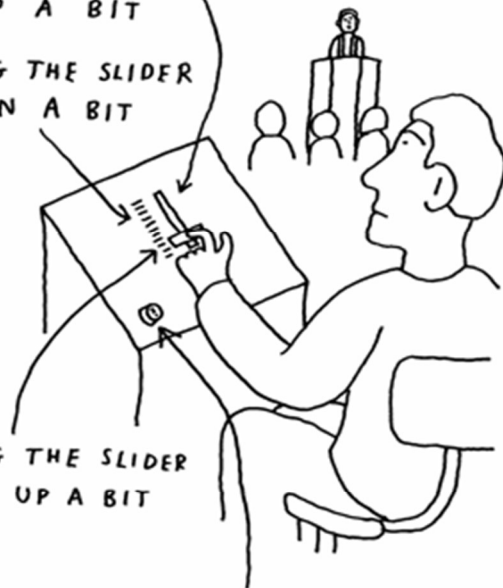
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Contacts

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Prayer requests & newsletter items ask.stpauls@gmail.com

St Paul's website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

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St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 58 **May 9th 2021**

Climate justice: from subduing to tilling and keeping

In this second article, Rev Simon Topping, presbyter in the Gloucestershire Circuit considers how to develop a healthy theology of climate justice. The first in the series was published in the 25th April issue of ET.

It seems to me that Christian engagement in the struggle for climate justice has been held back by the way in which we have interpreted some key biblical passages – so we have some catching up to do!

The command in Genesis to “have dominion” over all living things and to “subdue” the earth has justified a “power over” relationship with the natural world – it is there for us to exploit, control, use and consume as we wish. Most Christians recognise that when a similar “power over” relationship is imposed upon human beings it leads to social injustice and exploitation, but we have struggled to accept that the same relationship with nature leads to ecological injustice, including climate injustice.~

So how do we manage these tricky texts in the first chapter of Genesis if we are to develop a healthy theology of climate justice? Perhaps we can begin by rethinking the word “dominion” in the light of the lordship or dominion of Christ. Jesus turns the idea of dominion on its head – true dominion, true lordship is exercised through loving service of others. So exercising dominion in relation to all living things, as Christ interpreted it, is to enter into a relationship of loving service towards the world around us.

And perhaps we also need to place greater focus on the other account of creation which begins in the second chapter of Genesis. There we learn that God had a specific purpose for humanity when the first human being was placed on earth – according to Genesis 2:15 it was “to till it and keep it”. This feels quite different to dominating and subduing.

To till the earth means to maintain the richness of the soil so that it promotes and sustains plant life. To keep the earth is to take responsibility for its wellbeing. The same Hebrew word (shamar) used in 2:15 is used in Genesis 4:9 when Abel asks of God: “am I my brother’s keeper?” or, in other words, do I have responsibility for my brother’s wellbeing? God’s response makes it quite clear that Abel, and all humanity, has a social responsibility towards our fellow human beings. God’s placing of humanity on earth “to keep it” makes it clear that we also have environmental responsibility for its wellbeing, including the climate.

So if we can reinterpret “dominion” as loving service directed towards the wellbeing of the natural world, modelled on the Lordship of Christ, and if we can understand “subduing” as responsible cultivation, a “tilling and keeping” for the benefit of people and planet, then, as Christians, perhaps we can reimagine our relationship with God’s creation and see more clearly a biblical mandate to engage in the struggle for climate justice.

What's On

Sunday 9th 9:30am in the church spoken service with Jill Brooks

10:30am online worship with Jill Brooks

Sunday 16th 9:30am in the church spoken service with John Starling

10:30am online worship with John Starling

Find all online services on [St Paul's Facebook page](#) and [website home page](#)

Wednesday 19th May 10am Funeral service for Naomi Marguerite Tomsett at St Paul's. Because of current restrictions attendance will be by invitation. Please keep Jim in your prayers.

For Kids and young people

Sundays 12noon Zoom sessions for King's Kids and King's Teens. If you haven't had your invitation please contact Carol or email ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Fridays 7pm Young Peoples' Singing Group

In your prayers

Please pray for Neil Roberts, now out of hospital and living in a care home.

Pray for all local councillors and other officials taking up office following the recent elections. Pray that they act with truth and integrity in the best interests of those they represent.

Continue to pray for the Covid situation in India, for Jim Tomsett, for Lyn and Richard and others you know who need prayers at this time.

Send your prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list

Thy Kingdom Come 13-23 May



With restrictions still in place, just as last year, we cannot have a special event in the church to participate in this year's *Thy Kingdom Come* 10 days of prayer between Ascension Day and Pentecost. But we can join in this worldwide prayer event by using the *TKC Prayer Journal* to refresh our faith, which may have taken a bit of a blow during the last year

and a half. As in previous year's, we can still continue to pray for 5 friends whom we would love to see come to faith in Jesus.

If you receive this newsletter by post, your copy is enclosed. If you are attending the 9:30am spoken services, copies will be waiting for you in the church. Please feel free to take extra copies to pass on to friends and family. They will also be available in the church porch, outside the entrance doors, for a week from this Sunday for you to collect, or get a friend to collect one for you.

For the young ones, there are copies of the *Digital Prayer Adventure Map*, again for collection in the church. This looks like great fun. You need to download an app on a smartphone to follow each day's adventure – give it a go!

All We Can signs up to Crack the Crises

All We Can, the official Methodist relief and development charity, has recently signed up to *Crack the Crises* – a movement of over 70 organisations who are calling on the UK to take action on climate change, Covid-19, inequality and injustice.

As the UK hosts two major summits in 2021 – the G7 in June, and COP26 in November – the UK government has an opportunity to act as a forward-thinking global player. *All We Can*, along with other *Crack the Crises* member organisations, are asking the government to:

- Deal with the Covid-19 crisis, by tackling the virus and preventing future threats;
- Crack the poverty and injustice crisis, by redoubling efforts in this area – ensuring everyone, everywhere, is free, protected, and has access to healthy food, clean water, a safe home and decent education;
- Take urgent action to go further and faster on tackling the climate crisis, prioritising the needs of those worst impacted – often the world's most vulnerable and marginalised communities who are the least responsible for climate change.

Christian Aid Week 2021 – it's this week

There's still time to make your donation and just as with Tesco '*Every little helps!*' With our Government drastically cutting Foreign Aid, this is more important than ever. Many thanks to those who have already donated. Our total now stands at £315 (£381 including Gift Aid) If you'd like to donate, please click this link <https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/stpaulschurchcrawley>

Central Finance Board sells oil and gas holdings

The Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church, and its subsidiary, Epworth Investment Management Limited, have sold their remaining company holdings in the oil and gas sector, including Royal Dutch Shell. This follows advice received from the Methodist Church's Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment ("JACEI") in April 2021.

Methodist preachers in competition final

Two Methodists are finalists in *Sermon of the Year 2021*. Catharine Hughes, who currently attends Mobberley Methodist Church while ministerial training, with her home church being Poynton Methodist Church; and Philip Sudworth, a member of Standish Methodist Church and a local preacher in the Wigan circuit.



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