

Hope Siesage, a member of our parish, works in the chaplaincy division of Methodist Homes. She has written this piece for their internal newsletter and has agreed to share it with friends in St Mary's and St Guthlac's.

Take a moment

Instead of alongside the River Derwent at Epworth House [HQ of Methodist Homes in Derby], I write this from my new workspace - the summerhouse in my parents' garden in Knighton; where I'm sure I'll be joined by my mum (a teacher) in the coming days. (*As it stands – 24 March - she is still in school*).

Although I don't feel 100%, and anxious thoughts have peaked and troughed for me over this period of change, within this moment I feel a real sense of gratitude. Now, don't worry I'm not trying to be all 'holier than thou' and suggest 'you too should be feeling grateful, you just need to think differently!'. No, not at all. Because it's difficult to adjust to new surroundings and change, and it's likely I'm not going to stay grateful consistently over the coming months. However, for now, in this moment, I'm grateful as I look out the window, as the spring sun shines and the birds chirp and nibble away at the feeder that Dad so diligently tops up. I'm grateful for a space separate from the house, to allow for a mental shift from work and worrying to home.

For this moment I'm at peace. And these are the moments, I would encourage, that we should seek and hold onto each day. To take a minute; a minute to breathe, to soak up nature, to listen to calming music or to just be still. If it feels like you are too busy to 'take a moment a day', let me steer you towards a quote that is said to be from Martin Luther - "I have so much to do, that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." This may sound contradictory but if we take that moment, then we should have more time to be pastoral and productive in our work.

Psalm 57:1 says "I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed". I love this image and it's something I've kept coming back to this week. As well as meditating on this verse, maybe within those moments that we take, we can remember those things that still stay the same: God hasn't changed, and love and nature all remain the same. Archbishop Justin Welby stated that we must try to be "hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world." He also refers to another lovely psalm, Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble".

The following is an adapted hymn that I thought might help with reflection, from the Methodist Church website, inspired by Psalm 18:

When life is shaken to its core,
when clouds and storms arrive,
we find it difficult to know
God present in our lives.
Yet there's no misery or grief,
pain, doubt, or emptiness,

that is not known by the divine
and filled with tenderness.

When we are tempted to give up,
and purpose drains away,
where is the God of hope and joy?
Can peace replace dismay?
God, in the centre of our pain,
makes of our dark a tent,
a holy place of tearfulness
as life splits and fragments.

We need to learn to trust and know
God in our lives, God here
hidden within the clouds and storms,
one with our doubts and fears.
This is our peace: that in the depths
of our adversities
we find a God who shares our pain
and life's cruel miseries

Hope Siesage