

## Cardiff Methodist Circuit Prayer Month – 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

### **Today's thoughts have been provided by Rev. Paul Martin**

A friend once suggested to me that his church prayer meeting is often the setting for big competition. The basis of the competition was who could use the most flowery language. I think the notion is a bit unfair at least judging from prayer meetings I have attended. However, there is when approaching a God of wonders a powerful impulse to use the language of poetry to express ourselves. How else can we approach the One who is beyond our comprehension let alone mundane words?

But prayer can often be more raw than this. It sometimes comes more from the guts than the head. As Anne Lamott has observed the two most real prayers are "Help me, help me, help me" and "Thank you, thank you, thank you." There is something very authentic about such prayers, particularly at this time. We all have moments when such cries are where we are at, but with the current pandemic this is, I suspect, where most of us are. The challenges of the current situation are so great that we are unable to see with any clarity the way ahead. But amidst our very real fears we are grateful for those who help us, even at great risk to themselves

There is a Biblical tradition of lament. We see it in many of the Psalms and particularly powerfully in the Book of Lamentations. Lives have caved in and with nowhere else to turn our authors, often having poured their hearts out, then look in desperation to God whose goodness they recall. After this they beg for God's help. I believe that is our current situation. After all, in a world of change and turmoil the love of God is one thing that is constant.

As we offer thanks and cry for help, we are joining ourselves with others who have lived through tempestuous times. We seek our refuge in the unchanging love of God. As the hymn often sung in times of crisis puts it:

*"O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home."*

May we cry out for help from God whilst not forgetting to thank God for those people and happenings for which we have reason to be grateful.

#### PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

1/. Bring all the anxieties and fears you have to God asking for help.

2/. Give thanks for those who are helping us individually and as a nation to get through these times as well as for all people and resources that make life worth living even in these tempestuous times.