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## Weekly Letter – 4 February 2024

Mark 1:29-39

Jesus the Healer

The National Health Service is a valuable part of our national life. Older members may remember as children that their parents had to pay the doctor before they could get the medicine they needed. We feel it's important that everyone has access to healthcare. We know that it's hard to find an NHS dentist, patient support groups are important for funding research, and most hospice care is provided by charities, but we know that the NHS makes a big difference at important times in our lives.

It may be obvious, but there was no NHS in Jesus' time. There was limited scientific understanding of diseases and their causes. In some ways that meant that there was a more holistic approach to wellbeing, but it also led to fear and social isolation, and for some conditions it restricted access to religious services and forgiveness. We read of lepers left to roam the countryside and women spending all their savings on doctors. In this passage Mark shows that Jesus could heal people, and it attracted crowds.

These events take place on the sabbath, and healing was considered to be work that shouldn't take place on the sabbath. Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law away from public eyes, a first indication that for Jesus compassion was more important than sabbath rules. She gets up and serves them; the first indication that Jesus' healing was not only about cure but re-integrated the person into the social life of the community. Then at sunset, at the end of the sabbath, people came from all around and many were healed.

Healing isn't simple or straightforward and there are mysteries of mind, body and spirit that we are yet to understand. However, there has been more emphasis recently on promoting wellness as well as treating illness, and part of the original vision and future hope for our building at Christ Well is to be an oasis and place of refreshment, a place to promote wellbeing in different ways.

Please pause to pray. Let Jesus come alongside you as a compassionate presence. Pray that we will find ways for Christ Well to be a place to support wellbeing.

***Simon***

**Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Simon Walkling  
We will celebrate Communion.**

**Bible Readings: Mark 1.29-39: Isaiah 40.21-31**

**Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Uniting Church, Sketty**

**Tea and Chat – Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> February – 2-4 pm – Making memory bookmarks**

The funeral for Andy Buxton, Rosie's husband, will be taking place at Lichfield Methodist Church on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 1:30pm. Please remember their family and friends in your prayers. The funeral can be seen on line at <https://funeralvideo.co.uk/andrew-philip-buxton/> using the password BU2024.

## **And God saw that it was good . . . reflecting on God's Creation** Hall Street United Church 24<sup>th</sup> February

The Church in Community Project is organising a reflection day as part of developing a response to the climate crisis. Adella is promoting it as part of her work in churches across the region.

The day will be led by Jason Askew, the URC Synod Training & Development Officer. The Synod is covering the cost of the event which will run from 10:30am to 3:30pm and includes lunch.

There are a few spaces for people from each church, and some of us from Christ Well will be going as members of the Steering Group. If you would like to attend, please let Adella know by the end of Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February. [adellapritchard@gmail.com](mailto:adellapritchard@gmail.com)

### **We are the people of Capernaum**

(Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 40.21-31: Psalm 147.1-11, 20c: 1 Corinthians 9.16-23: Mark 1.29-39)

We are the people of Capernaum  
who have heard of a new political reality in our midst  
the world bearing down, is shouting at us.

And so we press around your door of welcome  
the one that, with grace, you have left ajar  
we know that the folk we rub shoulders with may have needs that are greater still than ours.

But, in this stretched-out evening, you give time, Lord  
to consider and to over each one's ill,  
despatch it to the overpowering darkness and render its voice silent in our hearts

We rise to leave and quickly come to realise  
that the house where we found healing is not yours  
but lent to you for an eternal moment by Peter, the foundation of you Church.

To him you have entrusted keys of power  
to open our lock doors against our pains  
may he lend his house to you anew and swing the door of compassion wide again.

Simon Copley (URC Prayer Handbook 2024)

