



LINK UP!

'How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People are refuge in the shadow of your wings.' Psalm 55:6

A Prayer, taken from 'The Giver of Bread and Fish (Matthew 7:7-11) by Walter Brueggeman

'Now...we are driven, some of us, to *unutterable prayers*.

We are driven to such prayer by awareness that our usual reliabilities are gone.

We are driven to you, the abiding God when other helpers fail and comforts flee.

Thus we are bold to pray:

We are bold to *ask*, because it will be given!

So we pray for the end of the virus, for the health of the neighbourhood, for the recovery of the economy.

We are bold to *seek*, because you will be found!

We seek your mercy and your goodness and your generosity, so let yourself be found by us.

We are bold to *knock*, because it will be opened.



Dear church family

Isn't this photo fantastic?! Anne Waite sent it to me this week - she'd spotted the little family while she was out on a walk, and was quite happy for me to share it with all of you! It's like one of those competitions, isn't it - 'how many cygnets can you see?!' It might be easy, if you weren't looking closely enough, to miss the little one hitching a ride on Mum's back! A cygnet after my own way of thinking, I think! After all, why get wet when you can have a perfectly good, soft, warm 'boat' to sail along in?! I love the fact that God speaks to us through His creation. He always has - you've only got to look at the first chapter of Jeremiah to see that (you can imagine the young prophet out on a walk when God says to him in verse 11 'Look, Jeremiah! What do you see?', and because he's in front of an almond tree perhaps, he says 'I see a branch from an almond tree', then God uses that as an

We know many doors slammed shut, doors of health and safety and comfort and fun.

Open to us the door of life, and love, and peace, and joy.

Here we are in your presence:

We ask for *bread*: the bread of life, the bread of abundance, the bread of neighbourly sharing. Do not give us a stone or a crumb.

We ask for *fish*: the fish of a good diet, the fish of your abundant waters, the fish that signs the gospel. Do not give us a snake or the hiss of poison.

We dare to pray, not because we are at our wits end, but because you are at the centre of our life.

Our hope is in no other save in thee alone!

So hear, heal, save, restore!

Be the God you have promised to be!

Amen.'

From 'Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty' (Cascade Books, 2020)

illustration for His message). There are so many verses comparing God to a mother bird, and this one in Psalm 55 is just one. If you look at the four cygnets, which one is the most protected? Surely, the one taking refuge under her mother's wings! That little bird (which I think seems to be the smallest of the brood) is quite safe from all dangers - and there are plenty of those in the river. Sometimes in our lives, we're swimming alongside God....and sometimes He scoops us up and carries us. As these uncertain times stretch forward, don't feel you have to hold back the tears of sadness, loneliness and 'oh, I've just had enough of all this now' - but know that our wonderful, loving Heavenly Father has got us safely in His arms, and is ready to give us the strength and comfort we need at the exact moment that we need it!

Keep trusting - all this will pass. Meanwhile, let's keep praying for each other, our neighbours, our families, friends, communities, nation and world.

With love, your Pastor,

