

As Christians we believe that God is actively at work in the world all the time. Creation is going on all the time! But in a world of natural disasters and terrible acts of evil, how do we understand how God is active? The reflections in this article are based on a chapter called 'Providence' in a book called *Café Theology* by Michael Lloyd. He begins by exploring providence (how God is active in the world) by contrasting it with fate and chance. Fate would say that everything is pre-set, pre-arranged and predetermined – there is absolutely nothing we can do to change the course of the world or events in our lives. An alternative way of making sense of life's events is to see them as the consequence of chance, or perhaps we might say good luck or bad luck.

Michael Lloyd writes: 'There is a degree of luck in what happens to us...When one person gets stuck in traffic and misses a plane and another gets to the airport early and catches it, and the plane then crashes, it is not because God wanted it that way. It is because luck has played its part...But to acknowledge that there is an element of chance at work in our world is not to accept that chance is *all* that is at work in our world. Chance is a player, but it is not the whole game.'

As Christians we believe in providence, that God is always active in creation, working with us, through us and even despite us. 'Providence is the belief that God works within events – messy and obscenely tragic and blasphemously inimical to His will though they may be – to bring about his purposes.' As St Paul puts it: 'We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose' (Romans 8.28). God is always working for good and calls us to join him in that work, especially where there is great evil or suffering.

We also believe that the creation itself is moving towards what the Bible describes as 'the new heavens and the new earth' when evil will be finally and fully destroyed. The death and resurrection of Jesus points the way to the new creation where sin and evil will cease to exist. We might call this God's final providence.

As Christians we believe that prayer also makes a difference. As Michael Lloyd puts it, 'If we lived in a universe ruled by fate, intercessory prayer would be pointless because everything would turn out the same whether we prayed or not. And if we lived in a universe ruled by chance, then there would be no-one to pray to.' Yet, we believe that our prayers, our actions and our words can and do make a difference. Jesus said 'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you' (Matthew 7.7). Jesus' words help us to perceive that our prayers are a means through which God can and will bring new life and new possibilities to our lives and the life of the world. Our prayers also prompt us to align our wills to God's loving purposes; to become agents of God's providential love and care for us and for the whole the world.

Diary for July

Wed 1 st	10.15am	Holy Communion
	11.00am	Welcome Coffee Morning
	2.00pm	Mothers' Union in church
Fri 3 rd	7.00pm	Choir Practice
Sun 5th	10.30am	Eucharist at the Parish Church
Mon 6 th	9.00am	Walking for Health Group
Tues 7 th	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Wed 8 th	10.15am	Holy Communion
	11.00am	Welcome Coffee Morning
Fri 10 th	7.00pm	Choir Practice
Sun 12th	10.30am	Eucharist at the Parish Church
Mon 13 th	9.00am	Walking for Health Group
Tues 14 th	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Wed 15 th	10.15am	Holy Communion
	11.00am	Welcome Coffee Morning
Thurs 16 th	2.00pm	Mothers' Union
	7.00pm	Men's Group
Fri 17 th	7.00pm	Choir Practice
Sun 19th	10.30am	Eucharist at the Parish Church
Mon 20 th	9.00am	Walking for Health
Tues 21 st	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Wed 23 rd	10.15am	Holy Communion
	11.00am	Welcome Coffee Morning
Fri 24 th	7.00pm	Community Choir in Church
Sun 26th	10.30am	Confirmation Service with Bishop Mark
Mon 27 th	9.00am	Walking for Health
Tue 28 th	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Wed 29 th	10.15am	Holy Communion
	11.00am	Welcome Coffee Morning
Fri 31 st	No choir until Fri 4 th September	

**STAY SAFE &
ENJOY THE SUMMER**

THE BRANCH CHURCH HUMPHREY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE

**SUNDAY July 5th
10.30am Morning Worship**

Brownies 6.00pm Every Tuesday
Meeting in the Parish Hall

Contact Samantha

5urmstonbrownies@gmail.com

Advance notice

COFFEE MORNING

&

GOOD AS NEW SALE

In The Parish Hall

From 10.30am

SATURDAY 15TH AUGUST

Coffee and refreshments
available while you browse the
stalls for all the bargains on
offer.

