

Warwick Methodist Church
Keeping in Contact During Covid-19
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Dear Friends,

I have always enjoyed jigsaws. Like virtually all of my many interests, I tend to do them in phases. I have periods when I do one jigsaw after another, and avidly acquire new ones. Then I have periods when I put them aside and don't touch them for months. This jigsaw



had been sitting unfinished in my puzzle holder since last summer. It is taken from a print by the Dutch graphic artist MC Escher (1898 – 1972), famous for his impossible perspective drawings.

Normally when I do a jigsaw, I start with the edges. But that didn't work with this one, because the edges are all background cross-hatching, with very few clues to show you which piece joins to which. So I started with the

distinguishable features – that was hard enough - and beavered away until I had got most of it done by late August. But we had people coming to stay, the dining table was needed, so I had to put it away – and there it remained, until Boxing Day. I got it out with the resolve to work on it until New Year, but then break it up whether I had finished or not so I could start a new one. But I didn't. Maybe I am just stubborn, but I always feel a bit disappointed in myself if I give up on a challenge.

For some people, jigsaws are the ultimate in pointless activity. For me, they have several attractions. They are meditative and relaxing – particularly if you put music or a podcast on in the background. They take you out of the challenges of life and allow you to achieve something. They have a definite end point, and you know when you have done them right. But why do difficult jigsaws? Well, there is something within many of us that wants to push us to greater heights. The greater the challenge, the greater the satisfaction of overcoming it – but with a jigsaw, there is no harm done if we try and fail, unlike some of the risks we might take in life.

Jigsaws can be seen as a metaphor for life. We start out perfect, then become damaged and broken. But with patience, persistence and love, we can become whole again – back to what the maker intended. And, just like a jigsaw, things can go wrong along the way (I

think there are a few of those pieces that may not be in the right place). We may need to backtrack and try again, and work that has been done may need to be unpicked and redone.

When my jigsaw is brought out after being stored away, there is often some mending needed, as the disruption of being moved and jiggled around can cause some of the bonds to be broken. So it is that difficult circumstances, such as the lockdown, and the anxiety which for some of us accompanies the easing of restrictions, can result in the weaknesses in ourselves which we thought we had moved on from being reignited.

It is good to know the things which help us when we are struggling. For me, that includes birdsong, sunshine, laughter, singing, walking outside, connecting with people, and thinking things through. Times like these can prompt serious questions. What is it that is most important? When the shops open again – will you be rushing out to spend, spend, spend? Or has this time revealed other, perhaps deeper ways of being?

Apart from the challenge and satisfaction of the jigsaw, the picture itself speaks to me about the relationship between us and God. God is the author of all life, our maker. But we, in our imperfection, cannot see him as he truly is. We can only see hints and glimpses, and we use our limited human capacity to describe him as best we can. Inevitably, though, our perception of God is incomplete. So as God has made and is remaking us, so we are trying to make sense of God. What, if anything, has lockdown enabled you to learn about God, or about yourself?

A verse from a hymn by Bernadette Farrell, number 496 in Singing the Faith:

God, beyond all names, you have made us in your image;
we are like you, we reflect you, we are woman, we are man.

*All around us we have known you,
all creation lives to hold you.
In our living and our dying
we are bringing you to birth.*

Keep safe; keep caring; keep praying.
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