

# WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



## #WeCanBreathe

Who cannot be shocked by witnessing the viral video of the asphyxiation of “gentle giant” George Floyd in police custody, arrested for use of a forged \$20 note.

#Wecantbreathe has ricocheted around the world. Rightly so.

There is a dreadful irony that in this global pandemic, when Covid-19 causes death by asphyxiation, we are asphyxiating a black man in custody in the “leading nation of the world”.

Russian author, who suffered eight years forced labour of another leading nation in the world, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, wrote this: “The line dividing good and evil does is not between nations, or peoples, but it divides every human heart”.

Lancaster’s prosperity has derived in part from it being the fourth largest slave port, built on the reputation of the slave trade. Slaves would try to avoid Lancaster as a final destination by attempting to drown themselves in the sea.

The Christian festival last Sunday, was called “Whitsun” or Pentecost” where we remember how Jesus sent his breath, his Spirit on people from every nation on the Jewish festival of Pentecost in AD33. I believe Jesus can send His breath can come on us again in our time, if we invite this. As Ranerio Cantalembessa, preacher to the Papal Household said: “We need a new Pentecost, today and every day”.

There is no hierarchy of nations, no hierarchy of peoples, races, stations in life. We are all precious sons and daughters. Dearly loved. Even in this time of international lockdown. Even against the evils of racial injustice – past and present. May we breathe the fresh air of the breath of Jesus from heaven. #WecanBreathe

**Rt Rev Dr Jill Duff**  
**Bishop of Lancaster**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES