

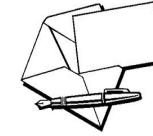


Scent from heaven

**St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch**

June 2020 Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends,

I don't know about you, but ten weeks into lockdown and social distancing has left me feeling a little unravelled around the edges. Normally I'd be out and about, doing all sorts of things, and clocking up the miles on the car; now, it's still got half a tank from the middle of March, and the last time I ventured beyond the boundaries of Whitchurch was for Freda Hanlon's Funeral a couple of weeks ago. There are different pressures, and different strains, on us all. Nevertheless, God is with us!

One thing that it has reiterated to me is that "it's OK not to be OK", and that we shouldn't feel guilty of what you might call "Self Care". For example, normally I'm something of a News Junkie - the BBC News Website is my most visited, and as often as not I'm listening to Radio Five Live in the car rather than Music; however, do that at the moment and I find my spirits drop - so now I limit my news intake. Even so, I have to own up to having had a few wobbly days.

I think quite a few of us have had our moments over the last few weeks, and I'd urge you to remember - this is a difficult, almost unimaginable situation we have been going through. Be kind to yourself, and to one another; take time out to enjoy God's world where and when you can; and remember that the Holy Spirit, the comforter and guide, is always with you.

God Bless

Rob

Collection Envelopes for 2020-2021

The weekly collection envelopes for the year beginning June have been issued to current users who live locally. For those who live outside of town I hope to deliver them soon!

Clearly in these difficult times with services not taking place, we have to realise that the church still incurs running costs. Having envelopes for each week is a help in disciplining ourselves to lay aside our offering on a regular basis.

If you currently do not participate in the envelope scheme but would like to please give me a ring and I'll do my best to get them to you. I like walking!

Stay safe,

Mike

Network (MWiB)

A message has come through from District MWiB, via Bronwen Degg, for churches to use a Count Your Blessings sheet for the month of June for the summer fund raiser instead of holding an event.

If anyone is interested in using this sheet as a means of donating please get in touch and I will either email it to you or drop a paper copy round to you.

Contact Chris Crowther

STEWARD'S LETTER



As I write this letter most of you will have spent the last 40 days plus in what could be described as a 'Wilderness' experience – deprived of physical contact with our families, deprived of visiting the places we enjoy, unable to meet up with friends or just being able to have a coffee out. We have had to adjust to new routines; our days appear to have more hours in them. Those households with others living in them have played games, taken up new hobbies, spent extra time in the garden or tackled those extra jobs in the home, that we often put off. We have been very fortunate with the weather, so dry, after those many weeks of rain, this has enabled us to go outside. We thank God for this.

As Moses neared the end of his wilderness journey, he sent out spies to have a better knowledge of what lay ahead for the people who would enter the Promised Land.

Boris Johnson has begun the slow process of Unlocking and in so doing, is testing the waters to see what lies ahead, how we proceed, vaccination!

At last as part of this process, the opening of Churches have at least got a mention.

During the next few weeks, your Church Stewards will be putting in place Safe Procedures ready for when church services can be resumed. With Social Distancing likely to be with us for some months to come, even with church this will be a new normal.

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Derek Morris our very long standing and committed organist, (see tribute in this magazine).

Many of our members have been looking after each other by telephoning and emailing, keeping up the fellowship we have so much missed from our Sunday gatherings. Others, shopping, knitting and continuing the vital work of the Whitchurch Food Bank. On behalf of the Church, I say Thank You for all the Christian Witness that has taken place at this difficult time.

Guide me oh thou great Jehovah is a favourite hymn with many. As we continue this journey of lockdown, I remind you of a few lines from verse 3

When I tread the verge of Jordon
Bid my anxious fears subside.
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of Praises
I will ever give to thee

MHB 437

On behalf of the Church Stewards, we look forward to welcoming you back to St. John's, when we are able to open again and when you feel safe to join us.

In the meantime, God Bless you till we meet again.

Brian.

"Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky."

Khalil Gibran

(Lebanese-American writer, poet, visual artist and philosopher)

Hello Everyone

Hope you are all faring well during these unusual times & finding plenty to keep you occupied & sane. There must be a lot of wonderful looking gardens around with all the time we have spent in them along with the lovely weather we have had. What a pleasure it was to be able to get in the car & go for a drive last week, even if it was just to visit a different supermarket & buy some plants from Maurice.

I have kept busy with weekly security checks of the Church during my walks (a requirement of our Insurance) & letting in contractors. The porch to the hall has now been reroofed so no more leaks, and damaged & missing tiles on the church have been replaced. I also discovered a leak in the heating pipes so have had to have the plumbers in which took a while to happen. This has lead to a section of cast iron pipe needing to be renewed. Extra expenses that we could have done without as our finances are very low.

You will notice some changes in the church when you can return. A while back the Church Council decided a review of the staging should be done & it was decided to remove the stage on safety grounds & look at portable staging in the long term. A space for a wheelchair or disability scooter has been made at the rear of the church. A storage cupboard is being built in the East transept to tidy up the Church. This has been enabled by a generous donation from 2 of our members. A big THANK YOU to them.

I look forward to the day we can all return to worship face to face, until then stay safe & keep well.

Pete (Property Secretary)

Derek Charles Morris



The first thing you noticed about Derek Morris was his voice. What a soothing, yet powerful voice he had – deep rich brown and comforting! And then it was his warm, all embracing personality which hit you. Despite this, Derek was a very private man, so It has been difficult to trace details of his life, even as a school master. We have managed to access some comments about Derek (or “Decker” as he was known by his pupils) and I have tried to arrive at some sort of consensus about him.

Reading these tributes to him, I get a flavour of the man from his pupils’ aspect. Derek was a libertine, “one of us”, “an eccentric”, an unconventional teacher who was wacky and off-the-wall, - always willing to push boundaries.

He once said to a class: “boys, some people will tell you that your schooldays are the happiest days of your life. They’re not. There are much better things to come.”

Many comments mention “a real good egg”, “an absolute legend”, “a very special person”, “a true gentleman, a lovely guy”, “he was a larger than life character with a wicked sense of humour”, as well as “being a great guy and an inspirational teacher”.

As a teacher of A Level English, Derek became heavily involved in Drama productions. He produced dozens of successful plays at the school and until recently was an active member of the Moulton Drama Group. Again, he used his enthusiasm to encourage others to become much better performers. Derek also organised the Film Society at school – with some of the content being very modern and “edgy”. Once Derek retired, he spent some time invigilating A Level & GCSE Examinations. Some of the comments about Derek by his pupils are, perhaps, a little out of place in a church magazine – was his father’s legacy perhaps hovering over him so we never saw all of Derek?

Derek Morris died on 6th May 2020. He was aged 85 years old and had been our organist at St John’s Methodist Church for nearly 50 years, and he will be sorely missed.

He was first appointed in 1971 and was paid an honorarium of £50 per annum and had been faithfully serving our church until a couple of years ago.

It is hard to think that Derek did these journeys from Moulton to Whitchurch and back (50 miles in total) every week for over fifty years.

Sometimes there were extra meetings – Derek served on the Worship Committee for over 30 years, was a member of Church Council, as well as the Property Committee. There were many other things he was engaged in. I certainly didn't know that Derek had organised the Songs of Praise service with the BBC in February 1989; he was also a strong supporter of our Midday Concerts each Summer and played the chart hit tune to Amazing Grace in the 1960's. He often brought in "talent" from Northwich to boost our own special events here at church.

It was almost as though Derek had two lives - one life at school, with his drama and plays and school teaching, and another one at church with the organ and his music.

Derek's father had been Superintendent Minister of the Castle Hill Circuit and later Superintendent of the Whitchurch Circuit. Derek lived in the Manse next to our current building. He went to university and afterwards became Head of English at Sir John Deane's Grammar School in Northwich, which eventually became a Sixth Form College. Some felt that Derek was somewhat inhibited when playing the organ with his father in the background, but once his parents had died, the shackles were off and he "broke free" so to speak!

Despite Derek's desire for privacy I am grateful to those people who have helped me to fill in the details.

Derek had two passions in his life; his music, (and in particular the church organ at St John's) and his school career in Northwich. Sometimes there was a crossover when Derek invited some of his Northwich friends to come and help us at St John's - and we were grateful for this new energy provided by soloists and other performers.

Meanwhile, back here in Whitchurch, Derek continued to lead our worship. He treated the organ with so much tender love and affection – almost like another person! His commitment was not just one of love and care. In the 1970's Derek had a "twelfth" stop added to the organ in memory of his parents.

I was amazed to learn on becoming Church Treasurer some years ago that Derek had been paying all the servicing and repair bill for the last few years. Sometimes, when a service had finished, he would "open her up" and make the building reverberate – and then give an impish wink – just to show everyone what the organ could do! He attended the Property & Finance Committee so he could keep an eye on what people were doing with the organ. He defended that instrument with a passion!

Derek was very proud to be presented with a certificate to acknowledge his outstanding service as organist. We here at St John's are devastated by the

loss of Derek. He was not just our organist but a lovely man, a real gentleman who always had time for you. Once Derek became too ill to attend services regularly, he was happy to hand over his playing duties to Ruth Mulliner and Gwen Reeves.

Gwen, in particular, is to be commended for keeping Derek informed about what was happening at St John's. We thank Ruth & Gwen for all their help – they found his help and support invaluable, during this difficult time. I can still hear Derek's deep and polished voice booming across the church



Some of us were privileged to attend Derek's 80th birthday party. This was a very cultured affair. Not only were Derek's favourite people present, but also one of his past students who had become an opera singer. We were regaled by this lady whilst we nibbled on very delicious food! He was obviously well loved by all the guests at his party!

As organist, Derek was often “out of sight” – usually hidden behind a pillar. Derek played with feeling and empathy – is that HP 90 I can hear him playing – or is it HP 465? But his contribution towards our life at St John’s was far from hidden. He was the orchestrator of most things that went on in services.

He was a polite, gentle man with a vast general knowledge and a sparkling sense of humour. If the Traidcraft stall was open, he told everyone that the dark chocolate was definitely the one to be taken with a glass of good red wine.

Farewell Derek, You will never be forgotten! I wonder if you will be playing the organ and quoting Shakespeare in heaven?

An opening

*Hope grows up through the cracks of our well paved lives.
Despite the odds, hope still thrives.
Stones go askew, and concrete cracks.
Where it finds a weak point, hope attacks.
Persistently*

A prayer

*May hope dwell long in our hearts.
May love fill our minds.
May kindness spill from our mouths.
May generosity tumble from our hands.
In the name of the infinite well of love.
Amen*

From 'Liturgies in a dangerous time' by Simon Cross



Fund Raising during Christian Aid Week

Thank you for showing love for your neighbours near and far this Christian Aid Week. Coronavirus has impacted us all. It's meant that we couldn't deliver envelopes, serve up Big Brekkies at school, or gather in our churches for worship this Christian Aid Week.

But despite all of this, people all over the country as here in Whitchurch, have shown great love for their neighbours near and far, in so many remarkable ways. Great-grandfather John Hindson walked one million steps in his garden and raised £2,000 for Christian Aid Week. The One World group in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, raised nearly £6,000 online – more than they were hoping to raise from their usual house-to-house collection and coffee morning.

Many of us here in Whitchurch have helped to raise hundreds by taking part in daily quizzes on the Christian Aid website. We also joined together in our own local on line united service to pray for an end to poverty. The total received in Whitchurch so far is £692 plus another £210 from Beth's challenge. There is plenty of time left to give if you haven't already done so, either via the 'Just Giving' pages on line or by post to Briony or me.

Helen Trigg

We're responding now

Christian Aid is responding to the coronavirus outbreak in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.



We're working together with partners and faith leaders to inform people about the risks, offering hygiene and hand washing sessions, equipping health facilities with supplies and providing training to frontline aid workers.



We're providing food packages to some of the most marginalised families and ensuring protection for women affected by domestic violence.

Heaven's Grocery Store

I was walking down life's highway a long time ago;
One day I saw a sign that read Heaven's Grocery Store.
As I got a little closer, the door came open wide,
And when I came to myself I was standing inside.
I saw a host of angels, they were standing everywhere;
One handed me a basket and said, "My child shop with care".
Everything a Christian needed was in the Grocery Store,
And all you couldn't carry, you could come back next day for more.
First I got some patience, love was in the same row,
Further down was understanding, you need it everywhere you go.
I got a box or two of wisdom, a bag or two of faith,
I couldn't miss the Holy Ghost for it was all over the place.
I stopped to get some strength and courage to help me run this
race,
By then my basket was getting full, but I remembered some grace.
I didn't forget salvation, for salvation is free,
So I tried to get enough of that to save both you and me.
Then I started up to the counter to pay my grocery bill,
For I thought I had everything to do my master's will.
As I went up the aisle I saw prayer and I just had to put that in,
For I know when I stepped outside, I would run right into sin.
Peace and joy were plentiful, they were on the last shelf,
Songs and praises were hanging near, so I just helped myself.
Then I said to the angel, "Now how much do I owe?"
He just smiled and said "Just take them everywhere you go".
Again I said, "How much do I owe?"
He smiled again and said,
"MY CHILD, JESUS PAID YOUR BILL A LONG, LONG TIME
AGO!"

Anon

(submitted by Mary Scott)

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for those known to us who are ill, housebound, in care, lonely, bereaved or in any other kind of need.



St John's

Pray for the family and friends of Derek Morris as they grieve over his death. Pray also for the family and friends of Philip Bowcock, especially his wife Jean as they, too, cope with his death.

Pray for Lucy Chidlow as she moves to The Beacon Church. Pray that we can be positive about this loss to our church family.

Give thanks for all those serving St John's in these difficult times. Pray that our church family will be guided by the Holy Spirit as we gradually emerge from lockdown.

Our Town

Give thanks for the work of the Foodbank, which has been especially challenged by the consequences of COVID-19. Also give thanks for the generosity of people who have donated to the Foodbank at this time.

Our nation

Pray for wisdom for our leaders as they make decisions on our behalf managing the current pandemic.

Give thanks for our NHS, care homes, our essential services and the dedicated staff serving in them.

Pray for all who grieve the loss of loved ones, especially through Coronavirus-related death.

Give thanks for the wonderful examples of heroism, kindness and care prompted by this crisis.

Our world

Pray for those parts of our world where there is conflict and famine, and for the work of aid agencies and governments as they deal with the current pandemic, especially in places where lack of water, soap and adequate health care make the Coronavirus pandemic especially difficult.

July 2020 Newsletter

Please let Jim Walwyn have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 23rd June.

This magazine costs 25p to produce. Contributions towards this expense would be gratefully received. The proceeds from advertising in this magazine will be used solely for 'Access for All' improvements to our church. Inclusion of an advertisement in this magazine does not imply an endorsement of the products or services of the advertiser by St. John's.

Circuit Pentecost Service

This service is still going ahead on 31st May 2020—on YouTube



Search 'Wesley Place, Alsager' to access the service. Available for Pentecost and remaining afterwards.

A Somerset parish magazine tells how Methodist ministers from the Welsh Valleys were distressing the older members of the Chapel by the length of their sermons. On one occasion an elderly man greeted the Minister, "And what is the subject of your sermon this morning?"

"The milk of human kindness," replied the Minister.

"Ah," the old man replied. "Condensed, I hope!"

**BENJAMIN'S CAFÉ &
DELI**



Delicious Breakfasts,
Lunches & Brunches at
good prices.

We offer freshly prepared food
from our deli, to eat in our café
or to take out.

3 High Street, Whitchurch, SY13 1AW

Tel: 01948 664726



W HITCHURCH
P HOTOGRAPHY

**FOR ALL YOUR
PHOTOGRAPHIC NEEDS!**

01948 664 664

**Weddings, Passports,
Studio Photoshoots,
Printing, Framing and
Canvases**

whitchurchphoto@gmail.com

A Prayer

*Lead us along soft forest floors and across shallow streams
Let your dappled daylight draw us out of our darkness.
Amen.*

From 'Liturgies in a dangerous time' by Simon Cross

Don't forget that Rob's or Fiona Weir's latest reflection,
their Easter Week videos, the Churches Together
Christian Aid service and Kate Bottley's Christian Aid
quiz are still available on the St. John's website (plus
the latest newsletter):

www.stjohnswhitchurch.org.uk

BARLOWS

Your local electrical retailer

Est. in 1948 By
Thomas Clifford Barlow,
We pride ourselves on great
customer service

**HIGH STREET
WHITCHURCH**

01948 662463

www.barlows-electrical.co.uk



**HEALING THYME
29 HIGH STREET WHITCHURCH**

Wide range of
Complementary Healthcare:

Herbal Remedies
Supplements
Skin Care
Health Food
Practitioners

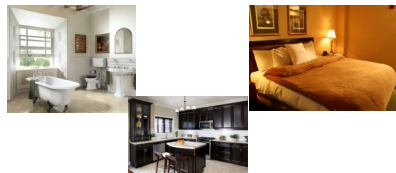
Tel: 01948 665565
www.healing-thyme.co.uk

SPLISH SPLASH

“Olde Worlde Charm”

A Family run
Bathrooms Bedrooms &
Kitchens Business based at 46a High
Street Whitchurch

Speak to Vincent about your new
project! Or re-vamp your existing
kitchen, bathroom or bedroom



**The Most Famous Bread
& Cake Makers in
Whitchurch!**

WALKERS

