

St. John's Methodist Church

Whitchurch

LOCKDOWN EDITION

July 2020 Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Dear Friends,

Lockdown has affected all of us in different ways; and we need to bear that in mind as we look to the next steps for our church.

Some of us can't wait to get back to church - a place that is special, but also as a way of feeling that connection with others. I know that for some, that lack of connection has been a particular hardship, and we need to be aware of that need to re-connect and simply enjoy the company of others. Some of us have weathered this reasonably well, and simply look forward to something like normal life resuming. Some of us though will be looking at this change of situation with some apprehension - even fear. After all, while the threat from Coronavirus may have receded somewhat, it's far from resolved - and it may be many months yet before we have an effective vaccine in wide distribution.

So what can we do, and what should we do? There is guidance from the Government, guidance from the Connexion, and discussion ongoing more locally about how all of this might work. However and whenever we reopen, this will need to be done carefully, prayerfully, and with an eye to ensuring that we do our best to help the situation we are in rather than hinder it. It will be a long haul, and things will inevitably be rather different. But, as we are often reminded, God is still God: we continue to worship, serve and proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, and ask for the Holy Spirit to be with us in these uncertain times

God Bless Rob

FROM THE EDITOR

This is a very special edition of our Newsletter-July on it's own! We usually have a combined July and August Edition, but in these unusual circumstances July has it's own edition! Of course, this is a unique copy - no rotas, and no events.

I wanted to make this edition different, to reflect the different situations we have found ourselves in over the last three month. I was astonished at the talent we have at our disposal as many people who have never written in the Newsletter before have come forward to demonstrate their skills. I am very grateful to all our contributors - people like Lynn Fowler, Brian Acty, Norman Gollins and Rob Spinks

Lastly, we still remember those friends of the church we have lost during Lockdown. We think of Gordon Davidson, Freda Hanlon and Derek Morris. Please keep them in your thoughts.

STOP PRESS! Churches may re-open very, very shortly. Yippee!

JRW

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

During Lockdown, we are anxious that everyone receives their copy of the Newsletter. Consequently, we have divided Newsletter Distribution into three groups, They are:

Group 1: Those who have Internet Access. You can see the Newsletter on St John's website which is:

stjohnswhitchurch.org.uk (all lower case)

Group 2: For those of you who live "out in the sticks" a copy will be posted to you.

Group 3. This group will receive their copies by hand. A member of the church family will bring it to you personally.

If you want to check which group you are in (or have been missed), give me a ring on 01948 662778

STEWARD'S LETTER



In my Steward's letter I usually write about what we have been doing in and around church, but this letter is unusual in that we have been under lockdown since March 16th Monday. The calendar has no social dates or Church events on it, but, for the Latham household the biggest event each month is our regular Tesco delivery. Back in February this year I installed a new letter box on the back door of the Church for the letters, messages etc. It was paid for by a church member and it should become very useful. At the beginning of March I saw our postman in the garden. He told us that he did up to 23,000 steps a day, so by installing a letter box it saved 40 yards a day which was a considerable saving!

At the time of writing the number of positive infections and deaths were starting to slow down, from roughly 350 deaths a week when the pandemic started. However, we cannot become complacent and we must remain ever vigilant. The disease has not finished with us yet.

Our attention has become centred on the terrible murder of a policeman in America. The "Black Lives Matter" campaign has been taken over by the far right thugs following the murder of George Floyd and his death has become the catalyst for huge demonstrations all over the world. This event has stirred all the racial tension again, with people attacking statues if their lives were, in any way, connected to the Slave Trade. Our country was guilty of investing in sugar cane, tobacco and coffee but trying to air-brush some of our history away will not change it.

In a similar way, factories in this country were once operated by men, woman and children working long hours, seven days a week for little or no pay. The children were so weak and malnourished that they were unable to better themselves. The only other alternative. was the workhouse.

John Wesley campaigned for the abolition of slavery for many years. He handed the baton to William Wilberforce to a successful conclusion, but it took another 40 years to finally eradicate slavery. During last week's demonstration the statue of Edward Colston pushed into the Bristol Docks. The Methodist Church should be campaigning to replace it with one of John Wesley in recognition of his bravery in his antislavery work. Removing statues does alter our history.

God bless you all as we look forward to our reopening of Church.
Stay Safe, Maurice.

They think it's all over – it isn't you know!
Life in Lockdown

What a strange few weeks it's been. Here at no. 2 there's been a fair bit of gardening, a bit of clearing out of cupboards, very limited shopping and a lot of soup making and baking (can't do without cake can we?)

There is always the excitement of what has reappeared on the supermarket shelves to look forward to, first toilet rolls, thankfully now back to normal, then flour – who would have thought we could be so delighted to find a bag of self raising flour – it's that cake thing again, I'm still struggling to make bread as obviously it became a must do thing and brown bread flour is still scarce. All in all we've managed though and a wartime mentality has crept into cooking and nothing goes to waste if it can be made into soup!

For many people I think it's been a time for reflecting on the things that are important in our lives. I've tried to make time most days to chat to a family member or friend, some we don't see that often and it's good to have an excuse to catch up. Keeping in touch with our daughter Lois and her family and son Adam has been a mainstay of our wellbeing. We have had family chats, done family quizzes and even had grandson Isacc's 11th birthday party complete with three different birthday cakes with candles – all via Skype of course. A regular supply of WhatsApp photos and updates on what everyone is doing has kept us going on a daily basis.

Lois has been home schooling the two boys and working from home, fortunately she is part time so has managed to do both. She has risen to the challenge magnificently and thoroughly enjoyed it, as have the children. We have been helping out with some work with them, me doing Science lessons with Gabriel and Lawrence doing History topics with both boys, so there's always some research to do – surpris-

ing how much you've forgotten or didn't know at all! Today's lesson for me has been Marie Curie; Gabriel and I have both enjoyed learning more about her.

I had great intentions at the start of Lockdown of writing up the story of my early life to add to our family history research. I realised that although I think it is very ordinary, it was a very different upbringing to the one our grandchildren have experienced. That hasn't got off the ground yet, but it's still on my to do list.

My work for Severn Hospice has had to stop obviously, the shop reopens next week but I won't be able to return as I have reached that magic age that starts warning lights flashing! Anyway I can still do the PAT testing at home, so can continue to make a contribution though not be able to work with my colleagues in the shop.

At the beginning of Lockdown Lois and Dave's church in Ely put services online and I have continued to watch them on Sunday mornings, they are good services and I know we are all sitting down watching on different sides of the country and we can feel closer to one another as God brings us together.

As I say, it's not all over unfortunately, so stay safe everyone, I've really missed doing my afternoon tea for St John's this year, but we'll catch up again soon.

A quote from Marie Curie, as true today as it ever was:
"I was taught that the way of progress is neither swift nor easy"

Lynn Fowler

What I Did During the Lockdown.

Strangely, there are loads of obvious things that I ought to have done during these weird days of calm and panic, that I have not done. Cancelled holidays, no bowling season, no part-time job. Plenty of free time. Yet I have still not read 'In Search of Lost Time', by Proust. The six volumes sit unopened, ready, but unread. Very little writing or painting has got done either, although some drawings have appeared, some of which are not bad, and a couple which might be quite good. Maybe the abundance of spring sunshine has had an effect, better to be outdoors than in front of a computer screen, or inside the shed [aka 'the studio'].

So, what has got done? My allotment plot is now, at long last, more or less weed free. Dot's allotment plot now has [almost] all the little paths that she has been requesting for a year or so. We (Dot, me, and Roxy the dog) have also found some different walks to do. However, there has been one main project that has taken up most of my spare time during the past two or three months. The Greenhouse.

Before the plague, we didn't have one. Now we do, made up from some bits of old wood, and some bits of new wood, plus two sheets of roofing plastic and six panes of 'plastic' glass. And lots of screws. Before the greenhouse existed, there was a tool-store on that spot, for my toolbox, my boxes of screws, my saws, my bits of wood, my drill, etc., etc.

The tool-store was situated alongside the conservatory. Look out of the conservatory and there it sat, made up from bits of old wood, some bits of new wood, and lots of screws. It was long and low. And ugly. One morning I looked out of the conservatory and had an idea. Destroy the tool-store. Build upwards, replace it with a greenhouse, recycle all the wood and the screws, replace it with something beautiful. And at one end I could keep a couple of plastic storage boxes, for my tools.

Ricky the roofer lives next door to us. Forced to stay at home for the duration, and now having lots of time to play in the garden with his young son, have the odd barbie, sunbathe, etc., during two almost rain free spring months. All accompanied by the pleasant sounds, coming from our side of the fence, day after

sunny day, of sawing and drilling. And yet Ricky and his family all still smiled and waved at us at 8 o'clock on Thursday nights when we all clapped for the NHS, the binmen, the care workers, the women on the tills at Tesco, and the rest of the heroes.

The Greenhouse is finished now though. And it is a great success. Looks lovely, Dot is very pleased with it, she can see all the tomatoes and aubergines, and all the other veggies, getting bigger by the day, she has a new garden to look at, while she whiles away the hours, sewing and making, sitting in the conservatory. However, there were still a few bits of wood [and plenty of screws] left over. So, I had another idea.

Instead of keeping my tools in plastic crates in the greenhouse, use the spare wood to make a new, smarter, matching, tool-store, tacked onto the end of the greenhouse where the sun don't ever shine. Free up more growing space in the greenhouse too.

So, another week passes and the new tool-store is now done and dusted, and there is even enough room to fit in one or two crates of 'art stuff' from 'the shed', which was struggling to contain everything arty. Win win. Looks smart too, matching paint and everything. Just a bright red knob to fix to the door, like the ones on the greenhouse and then that's it. However.....

As I write this there is a big green refuse bag sitting on the slabs, between the shed and the greenhouse. In it are the last and final bits of wood. The scraps, the cut-offs, the bittiest bits. I do hate wasting things. So, I have had an idea. Another one. Garden planters. Got the bits of wood, got a saw, and got my Black and Decker workmate. Got plenty of time. Got loads of screws. In fact somehow I seem to have more screws than I started with, two months ago. That's very odd, but then so is life these days. Are screws self-seeding? Or perhaps it is the greenhouse effect?

Anyone out there want to buy a garden planter? About 300% recycled. Very well screwed together. Happy days folks. Bob.



Called

For Moses it was a voice from a burning bush saying “. . . the place where you are standing is holy ground.” For Isaiah it was a vision with the words “Whom shall I send?” For Ezekiel there was a message from a cloud – “Son of man, I send you to the people . . .” For two sets of brother fishermen it was the command “Follow me!” For Saul it was an encounter on the Damascus road. Different calls to service over the centuries and they, with many others, responded to God’s call.

For me, my call to ministry, happened in a room in a Liverpool city centre church. It was October, 1973, Sue and I had been married for 6 weeks. We were living in Southport, with Sue having qualified as an Occupational Therapist and I was finishing my training with a large building company to become a Quantity Surveyor. We had dreams of emigrating to New Zealand to start a new life. This particular Monday evening I had driven through to the church in Kirkdale, where Sue and I had grown up, to attend a Christian Endeavour meeting – this was a group of about 20 friends who met regularly for worship and fellowship, sometimes we had a visiting speaker. It was during a time of prayer when the preacher said “Maybe there is someone here who will hear God’s call to be a minister?” - and I thought that those words were for me. I didn’t say anything to anyone there, instead I drove home and asked Sue if she would mind putting our plans on hold so I could test if this ‘call’ was true. Fortunately she said “yes”!

Back, in those times, the URC had a number of committees - at District, Synod and National levels – who would question would-be ordinands to see if it was right for them to go on to Theological College. Apparently, these people thought that I was suitable, so in September, 1974, Sue and I moved to Manchester and I began my 4 years of theological training.

In my final year of college, representatives of the Moderators interviewed the candidates to find suitable churches where we would begin our ministry, following ordination. My response was that I felt called to an urban or suburban church in the North of England. They returned asking if I would be interested in being a minister to a church on the Isle of Dogs, London? My response was an unequivocal “No”! So in September, 1978, I was ordained as a URC minister in West Leeds. Three years here, was followed by nine years in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, five years in Southport, seven years in Wallasey serving a URC/Methodist church, eleven years in North Wales and, finally, five years in Sale, Manchester.

So after forty seven years from hearing God’s ‘call’, here we are enjoying ‘retirement’ in Whitchurch! Reflecting back, over those years, I realise it wasn’t a one and only ‘call’, it has been a continual call to service in different places, with different people who had different needs and offered different gifts. Even now I feel God’s prompting to continue preaching and serving.

We are going through a bizarre period in our history. Who knows how and when we will emerge? Our ‘certainties’ will have to be re-examined. Our way of doing things will undoubtedly have to be scrutinised. Some may find this a challenge, others may see this as offering new opportunities. Whatever the future, of one thing I am sure, our God will keep on calling me (and you) to new possibilities of service and mission. Hopefully I will respond accordingly, trusting that God will continue to bestow on me His love and blessing.

Brian Acty

God has a plan - From Rob Spinks

On the 30th May, Rob spoke on the Audio Reflection about making plans for the future. It has been said, where there is no vision the people perish.

Butch Cassidy in the Wild West was a visionary a pioneer, for all the wrong reasons, he was renowned for Robbing Trains.

He once said I have a vision where the rest of the world looks through bifocals.

It could be said that the Methodist Movement, is like a train as it thunders down the same track year after year stopping at the same stations, you could call this Tradition; in itself there is nothing wrong with Tradition it brings stability and purpose, and often a measure of security. As pioneers we must always look for new horizons, we must think outside of the box.

Over the last couple of years, I have been asked to perform as Santa Claus, on the train in Llangollen, the train whizzes past the old familiar Stations, then suddenly stops at an old familiar Station that had been transformed, and renamed Lapland. At the Station there is a Sleigh, Giant Models of toy Soldiers and artificial Snow. This transformation is a delight to Parents and Children alike .

Last year the Tree Festival was a great contribution to our Church.

I do believe as the Train thunders down the track, we must stop and ask God ,what do you want for us what is your plan for us, and where are we heading?

You have heard the Old Testament words in Isaiah 43: 19 .(behold I do a New thing). Our plans and works are important to God.

Works of the flesh, profit nothing, the Bible says the flesh cannot please God at anytime. (Romans 8: 8.)

God has purposed in his heart that are works and all are plans are led by his Spirit.

Over the last year, I have endeavoured to write my feelings and thoughts in (Pew News,) and occasionally the (Newsletter) in a way I feel God has prompted me, for the moment, to contribute in this way However we must learn how to put the brakes on, at any given time, and listen to his voice.

A competent train driver, must always be alert in any given situation, keeping his eyes on the track,as he chugs towards his final destination.

Thank you Rob. Very thought provoking. (Editor)

Some Day We'll Fly Away!

During lock down we have all felt that our freedom has been curtailed in many ways. I got to thinking, it was so similar to war time when lives were changed so much.

Here are some of my thoughts and memories: I was born in the potteries in 1942 in the middle of the war. Air raids were common, black out curtains to our windows and shops limited as to what we could get.

I remember my blue child's ration book – and the queues at the butchers and bakers for scant supplies, one wonders how we ever survived on these rations!

There was powdered egg which looked a horrific yellow colour but tasted alright! Corned beef seemed to feature in a lot of our meals and home grown vegetables to be made into a pie or some other concoction! Corned beef hash was a staple in our diet and I still make this today and it is still delicious!

Bananas came into our shops when I was tiny, but I remember the queues when the word 'the co-op has bananas' were shouted to the housewives. And then there was a riot!

My father was a soldier and spent a great deal of time out in India so he was not around to see me growing up much. When he finally appeared in his soldier's uniform, I remember running away from him as I did not know who he was!

Parcels arrived from America with clothes for the children of soldiers and I remember being amazed at the beautiful dresses they sent. America was another world to me where film stars lived and drove big cars, so different from the grey world of the potteries!

Sliced bread came in later on. It was a revelation to us and saved so much time, but now of course, we clamour after an unsliced loaf and have all sorts of fancy Artisan breads.

We did manage a holiday occasionally- always to Blackpool where we would stay at a boarding house and some of the proprietors were very strict and had lots of rules and regulations, but it was a break from the hum drum of our everyday lives.

We also had gas masks to wear in case of emergency – mine was a Mickey mouse one and used to hang behind the cellar door in my Grandma's house – I was so scared of both the mask and the cellar – who knows what lurked down there!!

I have many more memories, too many to write in this article maybe another time.....

I am sure that you all have many memories of that war time that you could remember more than I, so get writing them down!

Lockdown has brought 'wartime spirit' back to us all when a chat with a neighbour albeit over the fence was a God send. Also a cup of tea seemed to cure all our depressions then so different from today!

I also think that our children who are so used to living in a largely affluent country and to have so much, will remember this time when human contact was denied and who knows, it may have done a little bit of good for them to see this other side of life and appreciate what they have.

Our freedom will return soon we hope, and this morning I will relate something that happened to me. I went into the passage by our kitchen and there was a tiny baby bird fluttering away - it was so scared, so I gently coaxed it into my cupped hands and took it outside to fly away – it did so with gusto and gladness – maybe that is how it will be with us once all this has ended and we are finally freed, and like the little bird, we will fly again and be free.



May we all appreciate our freedom and the joy of living in this world.

PS Thoughts on lockdown pursuits - I have been making soups all sorts all kinds and some of them made up! I found this a real relaxation as I am no baker, but enjoy savoury cooking. Why not try this and see what you can come up with -it is good and cheap too and so wholesome and healthy We could all have a recipe swap for our soup kitchens!!!

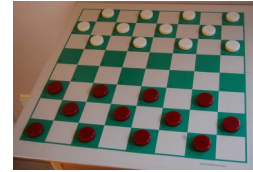
In the words of dear Vera Lynn, who is no longer with us:

“We’ll meet again, don’t know where don’t know when, but I know we’ll meet again some sunny day.”

Sheila

LOCKDOWN AT THE NIMMO'S

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness”. Those words of Dickens from the start of A Tale of Two Cities seem to me to sum up the last 13 weeks.



Many of you may not agree with me in quoting that but, for us, we have “enjoyed” much of our time in isolation although always being mindful of the fact that many people are suffering through illness and loss of loved ones, loss of jobs and struggling to feed their families, cooped up with small children in high rise flats or living by themselves and unable to see their families.

We have been incredibly blessed. We live in a lovely area with some beautiful walks (most of which we did not previously know about) and because it was so quiet and peaceful we could appreciate the different sounds of the birds songs which are probably around us most of the time but we just don’t sit quietly and listen to them. We have a decent sized garden which gives us space to be outside and have thoroughly enjoyed the amazing weather which has prevailed during much of the period. As many of you will know I love the sunshine and the heat and couldn’t stop commenting on the beautiful blue skies with only the occasional puffball of cloud. We have been able to eat the vast majority of our meals outside which has almost made us believe we were on holiday.

Because our daughters and their families don’t live nearby (one lot in Yorkshire, the other in Hampshire) we don’t see them as often as other people whose families live more locally. Thankfully they had all come for a few days at February half-term as we did miss out on not seeing them at Easter. However, step in the wonders of modern technology – Zoom, FaceTime and WhatsApp! We have always spoken to our families regularly by phone but now, during lockdown, we have actually “seen” them more often than usual and thanks to Zoom the three household can chat together. We also take part in a quiz on a Sunday evening, again via Zoom, with our Yorkshire family and their friends and families and via FaceTime we have quiz evening and chat time with our friends in Essex.

Mike and I have always been very competitive with each other so, at the beginning of Lockdown, we decided to set up a Covid19

Games Tournament. The tournament originally consisted of Backgammon, Cribbage, Mexican Train Dominoes, Scrabble, Canasta and Balderdash and we added bowls to the list once the bowling green opened up. Mike made a large chart with all the games listed which is pinned up on the door in the utility room and we mark up our wins. The lead has changed various times during the period but at the time of writing, I regret to say, Mike is leading 56 to 51 – but there is still time for a fight back!

What being “locked down” has given us is time to spend with, and appreciate, each other. I’m not saying that there hasn’t been the occasional flare-up but these have been few and far between. All of the foregoing doesn’t mean that we don’t want life to return to normal – whenever and whatever that will be. Of course we do - we have missed our usual activities; helping at Foodbank, meeting up with friends for a coffee or a meal, Rotary, Inner Wheel, Tangent and, of course, Church. I would like to say thank you to Rob and Fiona for the work they put into their twice weekly reflections which were much appreciated and gave us something to think about as did the Good Friday and Easter Sunday services and the Circuit Service for Pentecost - all of which helped us to remember that whilst we are not physically “in Church” God is still here with us and we must put our trust for the future in Him.

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Meanwhile the Games Tournament goes on!

Scottish Quiz Answers (From May Newsletter)

1. Ness. 2. Rangers. 3. Edinburgh. 4. Steam loco. 5. Roads. 6. British Museum. 7. Cairngorms. 8. Inner Hebrides. 9. Glasgow. 10. Murrayfield. 11. Aberdeen. 12. Ben Nevis. 13. 4411ft 2in / 1345m

Alloway (Ayrshire). 15. David Livingstone. 16. Soldiers in kilts. 17. Jean Armour/ Bonnie Jean. 18. Royal Oak. 19. Duke of Kent. 20. The tartan. 21. Lewis. 22. Beaulieu and Moray. 23. ‘Keep right on to the end of the road’. 24. Lake of Menteith

Substitute Holiday!

As we are unable to take a holiday at the moment we have been reliving the past and would like to share a recent cruise with you.

On Monday 26th August last year, hassle free, we boarded the boat 'Black Watch' at Liverpool and set sail for Lerwick, our first destination. The crossing was smooth apart from 'crossing the bar' where the Irish Sea meets the North



Sea. It was an interesting journey and we recognised various areas of the British Isles. We arrived at Lerwick on Wednesday morning. It was a beautiful day which was fortunate as we could really appreciate the beauty of the Shetlands. Lerwick is the most northerly town in Britain and in appearance typical of the stone built towns in Scotland, the main street packed with small shops selling essential goods, gift shops, cafes and of course beautiful Shetland knitwear. It was bustling and looked festive with colourful flags strung across the narrow streets. We had a coffee in one of the little cafes and then made for the coastal path, it was a stunning walk and we had beautiful views of the curving coastline. We made for Clickimin Broch which is a well preserved Bronze Age house and dates from 600 BC. The stone Broch is a circular building, the family living in the upper area with the animals below- under floor heating is nothing new! Still on the coastal path we walked back to Lerwick and passing a large Tesco super market we visited an award winning multifunctional Museum and Archives centre. It was packed with artefacts from Shetlands past including different samples of Shetlands famous knitwear and an interesting section covering Shetlands geographical formation.

When we hear the shipping forecast now Lerwick has a whole new significance!!

We set sail again and next morning arrived at Bergen, we had a whole day to explore the town but unfortunately we were not able to visit Grieg's home which was a pity, perhaps another time, but were wowed by a ride on the Floyen funicular railway which takes you about 1,000 ft. above Bergen giving a wonderful view of Bergen and the harbour. In the afternoon we looked at the Bryggen Wharf where the famous open air fish market is held and you can choose your fish which is swimming around in a tank, ultimate fresh fish!

The Wharf dates back to the 11th century but the colourful Bryggen wooden buildings along the wharf were built by the Hanseatic League in the mediaeval age.

We sailed further north to Olden and were taken by coach to see the

Briksdal glacier. The last stage of the journey was a long uphill climb on foot- being fairly fit and wearing sensible shoes was recommended! The walk was alongside the river fed by the melt water from the glacier. We crossed a bridge and the spray from a nearby waterfall gave us all a good shower. The water was a lovely greenish blue especially the lake at the foot of the glacier. We were amazed to see how far the glacier had receded over the last 150 years.

When we got back to the boat, because conditions were calm, the Captain decided we could be taken up the Nordfjord which in places is very narrow and very remote homesteads are still occupied, they exist on goat farming and one or two dwellings can only be reached by boat. When it came to turning the boat round we could see why it needed to be a wind free day as the Fjord wasn't much wider than the boat was long.

It's worth mentioning that when we had a coffee in Olden we shared a table with an American couple and got into conversation with them and inevitably got on the subject of Trump. It was at the time when Trump was wishing to purchase Greenland from the Danes, they were highly amused when Norman suggested that when they said Greenland is not for sale they could perhaps swap it for Texas!!

Next day we arrived in Flom and the highlight of the holiday was a railway journey to Myrdal. It is the steepest railway on normal tracks in the world and climbs about 2,800 ft passing through spectacular scenery. The train went through 20 tunnels and the track was very twisting, it was reassuring to know the train has no less than 5 different braking systems

Halfway up we halted and everyone climbed out to be bewitched by a beautiful blonde headed siren in long flowing robes who was dancing and singing high up on the rocks near a waterfall. She was accompanied by very loud haunting music echoing around the valley. Local legend has it that she lures men into her domain but when we boarded the train again all the men were present!!

When we got back to the boat again we had two relaxing days sailing back to Liverpool by which time everyone had recovered!! Our time on the boat throughout the week was very pleasant with varied entertainment, wonderful food and good company, we were even fortunate enough to spot some whales swimming alongside the boat for a short period. We thoroughly recommend sailing from Liverpool.



Norman & Elaine Gollins

Dear All

As we have been unable to hold the Property & Finance meeting I thought I would update you on work at St John's.
All the roof repairs have been completed & paid for.



A small section of floor at the rear of the church has been removed to give a level floor for wheelchairs or scooters.



From the wood recovered from the stage & the original entry doors at the main entrance to the church the Storage cupboard has been built in the East Transept.



This now has all the items that were stored between the pews & the cupboards in the West transept, plus all the spare plastic chairs. So now is our chance to keep the Nave of the Church tidy. The cupboards from the West Transept are now in the tower to tidy that area up.

Whilst the stage was being removed a leak on the heating pipes was discovered due a joint in the cast iron pipes failing. This has been repaired & paid for.

Thanks to 2 of our ladies the church has been deep cleaned so will be ready for opening when we are allowed.

Stay Safe Keep well & I hope we can all meet up again soon.

God bless

Pete

From the Editor:

Wow, Pete, that is fantastic! You (and Craig) have done such a wonderful job! The changes you have made are fantastic!

Julie Andrews—on her 79th birthday!

To commemorate her birthday , actress/vocalist, Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the AARP. One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favorite Things' from the legendary movie 'Sound Of Music'. Here are the lyrics she used:

(Sing It!) - *If you sing it, its especially hysterical!!!*

Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favorite things.

*Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.*

When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favorite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

*Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favorite things.*

Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache, When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

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 members of our church who have moved to the Beacon. We pray that they find spiritual satisfaction in their lives as they join their new church.

We pray for the friends and families of those dear friends who have passed on. We think of Gordon Davidson, Fredda Hanlon and Derek Morris.

We think about those who are ill at the moment. Please pray for Albert Minshall who is ill in hospital with pneumonia and for Jackie who has been having tests. Our thoughts and prayers go with them

Our Town

As the Town Council try to steer our town of Whitchurch out of the pandemic back to "normality"

Our nation

Pray for wisdom for our leaders as they make decisions to lead us out of Lockdown

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.

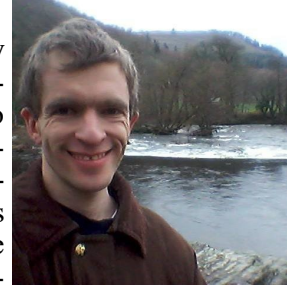
Give thanks for the wonderful examples of heroism, kindness and care prompted by this crisis. The politicians may not always make the right decisions but we pray for guidance and wisdom as they strive to combat this disease.

Our world

Pray for those entrusted with leading us from the dark days of the pandemic towards the bright hopes for the future.

From Maurice Posniak

Hello everybody! A big friendly wave from my house to yours! It's so lovely to have the opportunity to communicate with everybody, and I do so look forward to seeing you all again whenever this becomes possible. I know that I'm usually listed to play the organ at a church in Wales each week, but I do have some weeks off here and there, and I will definitely be taking advantage of the opportunity to come and say hi! Hopefully, my mum will be popping along too!



Wow, what an incredibly unusual adventure we have all be going through in recent times! I guess none of us can say that 2020 has been too much like every other year! I really do hope you're doing OK, my friend. If not, of course, please do say so that we can all be a bit of support. We all struggle sometimes. Overall though, surely you can be so proud of yourself. I don't know exactly what your individual challenges have been in the last few months as I know everyone's has been different, but I do know that you've had your life turned upside down in some form or another and yet here you are still standing, as we slowly get closer to the end of all of this.

Speaking of support, thank you to all of you who have been providing support to others in so many different ways. You're an inspirational crowd! I know that there have been so many people from the church providing such a wonderful support, so I wouldn't want to list them as I'll leave off so many. A particular thank you, though, to our minister, Rob, for all he has been doing this period. It is so appreciated by all of us, Rob. Thank you.

I don't know about you, but I find that my personal circumstances meant that I have had to spend quite a lot of my time at home. In its own way, hardly as glamorous as going all over the place. When I think about it though, I guess how grateful we can be that we can be safe at home. How wonderful too that communication now is so much better than it used to be. I don't know about you, but I find it quite strange to reflect on the fact that, had this been 150 years ago, we would have been completely cut off from the world. Now perhaps all of us have the joys of a telephone, a television and a radio. I find it pretty challenging to think about what we seem to not have, but maybe it is more helpful for us to think about what we do all still have.

One of the joys of this period for me, has been that it has given me the chance to get into contact (phone or message) with many friends who I haven't spoken to in ages – including many of you. If we have been in contact with each other, it was so great to speak and I look forward to speaking again soon. If we haven't, I do so look forward to being in contact soon.

Another joy of this period for me, is one that might need a bit of explaining for those of you who are not on social media on the internet. As many of you know so much more than I do, social media is a way in which to send public messages to anyone who, effectively, signs up to get messages from you. In my case, this means many many people from all the different things I've had the privilege of doing throughout my life. When I realised just how challenging this period would be for so many people, I thought to myself, “Is there some way I could try to use this opportunity I have to communicate with large numbers, to do something a little bit positive?” It struck me that some positive encouraging words from time to time might be helpful so I've done that, but it also occurred to me that music has great power to calm, encourage and entertain. Every two days or so, I've therefore been popping up videos of me playing calming music, singing and playing music with encouraging words (e.g. “You'll Never Walk Alone” and “Somewhere Over the Rainbow”) and singing silly songs to try to make people laugh (e.g. dressing up in my gorilla costume and singing “I'm the King of Swing-ers “ from the Disney film 'The Jungle Book'). How much any of this really is a positive in anybody's life, I don't really know, but I guess all any of us can do is try.

As much as this period does seem to have some positives for us if we look for them, I really look forward to getting to the end of all this, as I suspect you do too. I guess, that's the great thing – challenges do always come to an end eventually. And when we do get there, I guess how much more we will value every little thing and how much stronger we will be to cope with all of life's challenges. I know that I am also so much stronger thanks to the joy of having you as my friend and I am so grateful for you.

I so look forward to seeing you again but, until then, all the very best to you, keep winning through this period and hooray that we know that we are heading toward all the joy that is the future!

Maurice

A Little Humour to end with!

Signs found outside churches

- This is a ch__ch What is missing? (U R)
- Forbidden fruit creates many jams.
- In the dark? Follow the Son.
- Running low on faith? Stop in for a fill-up.
- If you can't sleep, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd.

Going going...

Auctioneer: Now what am I offered for this beautiful bust of Robert Browning?

Man in crowd: That isn't Browning – that's Shakespeare!

Auctioneer: Sorry – just goes to show how much I know about the Bible.



You are what you eat

“Tell me what you eat, and I’ll tell you what you are,” said the pub’s philosopher.

Whereupon a meek little man, sitting a few feet away, called softly to the waitress: “Cancel my prawn salad, please.”

Name three collective nouns.

Dustpan, dustbin, and vacuum cleaner.

Nearly omnipotent

The curate was giving his young daughter a cuddle before she went to bed. As he picked her up and hugged her tight, she said: “Daddy, you’re so strong! I really think you’ll be God one day!”

“Dear Vicar...

– I know God loves everybody but then He never met my sister.
Yours sincerely, Arnold. Age 8.

– My mother should be a minister. Every day she gives me a sermon about something. Robert, aged 11.

– I’m sorry I can’t leave more money in the plate, but my father didn’t give me a raise in my allowance. Could you have a sermon about a raise in my allowance? Love, Patty. Age 10.

– My mother is very religious. She goes to play bingo at church every week even if she has a cold. Yours truly, Annette. Age 9.

– I would like to go to heaven someday because I know my brother won’t be there. Stephen. Age 8.

August 2020 Newsletter

Please let Vic Trigg have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 23rd July.

When will our church be opening again??

People keep asking me this question!

The answer is -I don't know! Nor does anyone else at this moment in time (18th June)

I will repeat official policy, which is:

“ The opening of St John’s Church must be guided by government policy, which currently says that we will be able to reopen for private individual prayer from 13th June. The overriding priority remains to save lives.”

*****Stop Press:*****

The situation is changing all the time. Boris Johnson has just announced that churches can re-open for worship after 4th July. Hooray!

However there are many caveats.

I have read that there can be no more than 30 people in the building at any one time. There can be no singing. It will be up to the Minister, the Stewards and the Circuit officials as to whether a building is fit for opening or not! So, please don't ask me - ask the people who know!

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*Lord, fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff, and
nudge me when I've said enough! - Anon*

*Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any
more than going to McDonald's makes you a ham-*

*"It was June, and the world smelled of roses. The sunshine
was like powdered gold over the grassy hillside."*

Maud Hart Lovelace, *Betsy-Tacy and Tib*

*I love how Summer just wraps its arms around you like a
warm blanket.*

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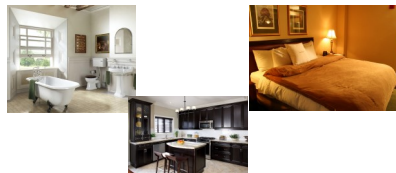
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