



TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH WOKING
Weekly Newsletter
Sunday 6 September 2020

Message from Rev Sam Funnell

Dear Friends,

There is a quote, often attributed to the Irish poet, W.B. Yeats that says: 'There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met.' It's debatable as to whether he actually said this but I like the sentiment – so I hope that he, or someone else, did. And even if nobody famous said this at all – maybe we can just say it for ourselves!

I know that many of us haven't yet met each other but I call you 'friends' as I hope and pray that is what we may become to each other as we get to know each other over the coming weeks and months. My coming to be with you has been a little out of the ordinary and my leaving from the South Kent Circuit and my official welcome into the Wey Valley one have been different to the normal but life is all rather 'unusual' at the moment, isn't it - but that doesn't need to mean that it's all bad; just different! In the 'different' things of life, we can find new opportunities to reach out together, with the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ and the indwelling and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

We have a wonderful precedent for calling each other friend; from John's Gospel (15:12-15) we read these words of Jesus to his disciples:

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."

So, as friends together with Christ, we can surely be friends to each other, even if we have not yet met. In our shared faith is our shared purpose

and I look forward to working with you as we discern what, how, where and to whom God would have us be, and do and go.

There's a prayer in the service of welcome for a minister coming into a new appointment – which may or may not have been used at my service on the 2nd September but I think it's really relevant to the starting out of our time together, as the friends of Jesus at Trinity and here in Woking. I offer it to you as a prayer we may use in these coming days, weeks and months.

'God of all grace,

*you call your Church to be a holy people
to the praise of your name.*

In the power of your Spirit,

fill our hearts with your love

and our lives with your glory;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.'

(Methodist Worship Book, pg 357)

Yours, in the love of Christ,

Sam.

Message from Rev Jackie Case

Dear Friends,

I write my last weekly greeting to you all with the memory of my last few days as your minister still fresh in my mind. I have been deeply touched by all the cards and notes of thanks and appreciation I have received. The generosity of your gift to me was most unexpected in view of the limitations upon my work at Trinity, imposed by the brevity of my time with you and the geographical distance between Woking and Reading, where I live. Personally, I regret that these constraints have prevented me from getting to know many of you as well as a minister should, but I am extremely grateful for the warm acceptance and willing support of those with whom I have worked most closely during the past year. Their conscientious commitment to Trinity and its folk has, with God's blessing, made the little that I could offer go a long way. (The miracle of the 5 loaves and 2 fish comes to mind!) This has been an extraordinary twelve months. Who would have thought when I first joined you in September last year that within 7 months all church buildings would have to be closed indefinitely and that all personal contact would be strictly limited to the absolutely essential? Some may have thought that this might be the end of the Church in the UK, being unable to function without its buildings, but our gracious

and creative God has continued to work in and through his Church during this time. Painful and difficult as this time has been (and we are not free of Covid restrictions yet), I do believe that God's recreation of his Church to make it fitter for mission in the 21st Century and beyond, has been advanced through our having to seek and find new ways of being Church in the Covid environment. This need has pushed many of us, myself included, to step outside our comfort zone, to attempt things we would not have imagined doing, and to accept doing things in radically different ways. I wrote some time ago about the caterpillar's melt down within the chrysalis in order to transform into a butterfly. In many ways the Covid pandemic has forced the Church into that chrysalis stage, when a lot of us might have preferred to remain caterpillars! The transformed Church that eventually emerges will be a miracle of God's creating.

It has been a real privilege for me to have shared in this part of your church's faith journey. I do not know how things will work out for you in the next few years, but one thing I do know is that within the church community at Trinity there are a lot of God-gifted, faithful people (poets, painters, song writers, musicians, singers, sewers, pastoral carers, DIY geniuses, gardeners, organisers, administrators, IT technicians, evangelists, teachers, preachers, worship leaders) the list is endless.

With Rev. Sam's leadership the discernment, development, encouragement and offering of all your gifts in God's service will, with God's blessing, continue to create an increasingly vibrant worshipping community and a resource for the continuing work of God's Kingdom in Woking. My prayer for each one of you is that you listen for God's call to the special work that he has for you at this time in your journey of faith, and respond to it with trusting enthusiasm. God calls everyone to some work within the Kingdom and those whom God calls, he equips.

'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.'

[Numbers 6:24-26 NRSV]

Jackie

A Word in Season 24 – He Restores My Soul (III) 'From every end there is the hope of a new beginning'.

This was true for us as a family as our holiday entered its last couple of days.

It is also true for Trinity as we come to say goodbye and thank you to Rev Jackie for all she has given us, and to welcome Rev Sam and God bless her Ministry with us! For us as we share a time of celebration and hope. Timothy Dudley-Smith put it this way:

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided, urged, and inspired us, cheered us on way, (In spite of Covid and Lockdown), sought us and saved us, pardoned, and provided, Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us. Self on the cross and Christ upon the throne; past put behind us, for the future take us. Lord of our lives, to live to Christ alone. (StF 470 vs 1, 5)

Day Five and Six on the canal boat: This sense of celebration and hope was particularly the case for me as I sat on my bed reading, when Clara crept through the kitchen area, singing beautifully with a gorgeous, mischievous grin: *"Happy Birthday to you! You are no longer seventy-two, Happy Birthday, dear Opa, Happy Birthday to you!"*

"I just made it up as I came from my bed", she said. What a magical way to start the day, I just gave her a big hug, and kissed the top of her head, with very misty eyes!

It was indeed my Birthday! When we moored the night before, we were only ten minutes' walk from the main railway line. After shouted "Happy Birthdays" from various parts of the boat I told them as it was my birthday I was going to walk down to the railway line for about half an hour, and take some photos. I was told breakfast would be ready when I got back but not to be late as Bern was cooking one of his specialities – 'pancakes!'

After about ten minutes I found a bridge and noticed that the canal and railway line were running more or less parallel, but the railway tunnelled under Stowehill, and the canal looped round it. As an Historian I was well aware that the railways have followed the canal routes and sometimes were actually built on old 'filled in'

canals. The technological developments over the past 250 years had moved from travelling times measured in hours to over 100 mph, but God's time is eternal:

'A thousand ages in your sight is like an evening gone,' (Isaac Watts StF 132 v 4)

I was excited by the opportunity to see the new *Avanti Pendolino* tilting trains hurtle by. It gave me 'itchy feet' as due to lockdown I had missed my occasional days out by train to visit Cathedrals on my 'bucket list'.



I returned to the boat to a fabulous birthday breakfast with cards and best wishes. We were due to meet Dan and Paul for lunch at 12.00 at Bugbrooke Wharf. There were seven of us, which created some problems because the maximum on a table was a bubble of six. The pub restaurant had two tables in a raised area, and we had it to ourselves. We had a nice meal and Dan and Paul joined us for a motor up the river towards Stoke Bruerne where we planned to stop for the night.



They enjoyed the ride, but as we dropped them off it began to rain a little. They set off under a big umbrella walking back along the tow path. We pulled out into the mainstream and set off for Stoke Bruerne and, as we travelled the rain became heavier. Bern and I were on deck exposed to what was now driving rain and we got very wet, although we had our light raincoats on. Jess stayed indoors with the Girls, passing us hot cups of tea/coffee. We knew that the only

place to turn the boat was just the other end of Blisworth Tunnel (3076 yards) to get us back in time to be at Weedon and hand the boat back at 9.30am tomorrow morning. Consequently, we carried on through the rain which eventually eased off.

I didn't know then what God had planned for me. The tunnel had been closed a few years ago because of a cave-in but had been repaired using the techniques to build the Channel Tunnel as a test bed. It was straight and you could see the light at the other end all the way through. It was lighter and airier than Braunston Tunnel and wider which made navigation easier. In the back of our minds was what we would do if we couldn't find a place to moor before the turning point. Coming out of the tunnel in the 100 yards towards the turning point there was limited space for our 72 feet.

Bern decided to turn and moor with about two feet of the boat in the reserved area for wider boats waiting to go through the tunnel and none were moored there. As I held the centre rope to pull us into the edge, I noticed the gentleman behind us in a short boat looking decidedly uncertain. He asked me if we had been able to use wireless on our phones/computers before the tunnel and we told him we had, but reception was varied.

He replied that there was no signal here at all. I was concerned, as he looked very unhappy and asked him if he was alright. He replied with tears in his eyes that he had recently separated from his wife and had just returned his sons after a few days with them. He was due to pick up his daughter and her friend tomorrow further up the canal. Unfortunately, he was not able to meet them due to the thunderstorms. With no technology available he was really lost, on his own. My heart went out to him. All I could say was I'm sorry, have a good, safe journey and God bless you! He thanked me and waved farewell as he set off towards the tunnel. As he entered the tunnel, and Bern eased 'Tasselweed' into the vacant mooring, I left him in God's hands knowing that when the name of the Lord is used in this way it does not return empty (*Isaiah 55:11*). I have kept praying for him, we never know what the outcomes of these 'Brief Encounters' are, but we keep on praying, with

faith, and hope. It was an unexpected end to a good day. Before I settled down to sleep, I thanked God for his love to me and for my family, and raised all those who had similar difficulties to the man on the boat to God's care.

Day 6: I was disturbed in the night by heavy rain, and in the morning, when I looked out across the towpath, there were puddles and twigs scattered about. There had obviously been a storm. I was sitting outside with a cup of tea when two passing National Waterways Volunteers told me the tunnel was closed because a tree had been blown down and was blocking the other end. It was not likely to be cleared until the afternoon. That didn't concern us too much as we were going for a walk over the top of the tunnel and into the village of Stoke Bruerne and didn't intend to leave until about 2.00pm. We put on our walking gear and climbed up the path towards the top of the hill. We could see one of the large concrete rings used in testing the design of the Channel Tunnel and many interesting pieces of industrial archaeology associated with the canal and the remains of the railway line closed back in the mid-1960s.



When we reached the crest of the hill we turned onto a footpath which would bring us back a different way. Within a few paces we were surrounded by cornfields with blackberry bushes around the edges. We enjoyed the sweetness of the ripe fruit. As we stopped to view the scene and checked our way on the GPS on Bern's phone (he is very much an adult of the 21st Century!) I noticed a living parable; as we walked around the edges of the fields or across them on the marked footpaths the Parable of the Sower became real. I could see at the edges where the wheat struggled against the vegetation, where the ground was stony, the wheat was rather scrawny, yet in the fields themselves the grain ears were a golden brown, rich and full. I took some photographs to illustrate the parable for use in a future service.



As we continued along the path crossing the fields we saw barley, oat, rye and wheatfields.

When we arrived back at the boat our footwear was very muddy and we changed into something more appropriate. The news was that the tunnel was still closed until at least 2.00 pm.

Consequently we had a snack for lunch and then walked the 400 yards into the pretty village of Stoke Bruerne where we had ice cream...! We also took the opportunity to wander through the village, which had been cut in half by the canal. I took the opportunity to buy some souvenirs. Among some of the interesting things to see in the village was a bench made from old lock timbers by prisoners. I remembered my visit to Coldingley Prison in Bisley many years ago. It had been recently opened for men serving long term sentences, to prepare them for release by giving them relevant work experience. They worked for a small amount of money, in the Commercial Laundry, providing a service to a local hospital or in the Workshops making road signs.

There was also a sign of the times for us at Trinity in Stoke Bruerne, a beautiful Chapel converted to a private home. The challenges facing Trinity loomed large.



As we walked back along the towpath I bought some duck and swan food for the girls to spread

when we travelled back. On our way we met the Volunteers again and they told us the tunnel was now open, and we could see other boats moving towards it. When we got back and cast off the queue had dispersed and we entered the tunnel about three hours later than intended. The site of the fallen tree had been tidied up but it was obvious it had come across the entrance. The journey back was calm and peaceful. We were moving from rain shower to rain shower but it was not raining heavily. We had some fun with the girls who were 'playing' on their technological equipment by shouting out when we saw ducks or swans approaching and they scampered to the front deck to feed them and then returned to their play, until the next time. Jess took a turn on the tiller and Bern and I worked out where we might be able to moor as close to Weedon as possible.

Our plans were disrupted when after coming round a bend a boat was straddled across the canal blocking the waterway from both sides. It was obviously unattended and sealed up. After a quick look in the canal guidebook, it was clear that we would have to deal with it.

Jess guided Tasselweed to the bank where Bern and I jumped off. I took the centre rope to hold us in place and he used our boat hook to pull the other boat in. Fortunately, it had only pulled out the stern mooring from the rain sodden bank. With the help of a passer-by he was able to get the boat back to the bank and to re-moor it, very securely. The incident delayed us by another half an hour, so we adjusted our mooring point for the night.



Over dinner we agreed that as I was the earliest riser amongst us, I would wake Jess and Bern with a cup of tea at 6.30am as we wanted to get underway by 7am for the last two and a half hours back to the boatyard. This also gave Jess the time she needed to finish cleaning the boat. She enjoys cleaning and get things neat, tidy and ship shape. Perhaps that is because she comes from Bristol?! She refused any help and left Bern and I to the boat, while she and the girls

packed up. We stopped to top up the water to enable Jess to have a good supply of hot water, and made the Boatyard right on time!

I wasn't sure how to finish this saga until I began work on it earlier this morning. At the start of Lockdown, when I was in isolation, I made a playlist entitled Sacred Isolation of some of my favourite sacred music to listen to when I was feeling a bit down. I was listening this morning when this song moved me and God said 'use it' so, I offer it to you in love:

Who can cheer the heart like Jesus, by his presence all divine? True and tender, pure and precious.

O how blest to call him mine.

Love of Christ so freely given, grace of God beyond degree, mercy higher than the heavens, deeper than the deepest sea. Every need God's hand supplying, every good in him I see; on his strength divine relying, Christ is all in all to me. All that thrills my soul is Jesus, he is more than life to me and the fairest of ten thousand in my blessed Lord I see. (T Harris, Youth Praise, 1969, No 55)

I had thoroughly enjoyed the time together and the experiences shared with God and the family on the narrow boat.

I had travelled through green pasture and still waters and felt my soul restored and recharged ready for the challenges of the future.

May God go with us as we start a new Church year and seek Christ's way forward for us with Rev Sam. God bless you all.

Graham

'I'll Lift You Up' by Glen Penfold

The song I am releasing this month was written ten years ago. It aims at encouraging in times of much disappointment and frustration. I wrote it at such a time when the telecommunication industry, (that I had enjoyed working in for over forty years), was ravaged by mergers and acquisitions that lost thousands of people their jobs, with few equivalent replacement jobs being created at that time. I want to release it now as I believe that we are entering a similar situation, (because of Covid, exam results and other incompetent, bullying policies/self-interests worldwide etc), but much worse this time as all industry sectors are affected, and millions of

people will be feeling these emotions very intensely. I remember those feelings only too well and my heart goes out to those affected.

The need to hang on to faith in Jesus, faith in oneself and past achievements, (that no one or no situation can rob us of), and also the faith and belief in our ability to hold to our faith, is very important. My prayer is that the song will "Lift You Up" if you are in a situation when everything seems to be going wrong at once.

Here's the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lBceg8J9Oc>

Every blessing. *Glen*

Valerie's Quiz Corner is back!

- Who was Joan Collins' second husband?
- What type of pasta can precede the word 'Western' to produce a film genre?
- Founded in 1870, which organisation was formerly called British National Society for the Aid of the Sick and Wounded in War?
- What is hepatitis?
- Which country lies immediately east of the Dead Sea?
- Which animal is also known as the Hunting Leopard?
- What is the common name of Rubella, a viral disease?
- From which country did minestrone soup originate?
- What is a shallot?
- What is the largest city and port of China?
- Who is the patron saint of dance?
- What is a glockenspiel?
- What is the smallest bird in the world?
- What nationality was Zane Grey? Author – Dentist?
- Which Class do lobsters belong to?

STOP PRESS - NEWSLETTER NEXT WEEK.

As I will be on holiday, Jean Normington has kindly agreed to compile the weekly newsletter.

Please send all content to Jean directly.

Thank you Jean!

Dan

STOP STOP PRESS!

The church email address is

trinitywoking@btinternet.com

Please delete all other addresses from your

address book to avoid confusion.

Dan

We finish this week with a picture of the Sanctuary as it looked last night, set up for Rev Sam's Welcome Service. It was a real team effort last night, and we're grateful to everyone who helped make this special Service for Sam pass off so smoothly.

