

St John's United Reformed Church

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Outdoor Worship, 23 August, 10 am, 11 The Fairway *Julian writes:*

The Elders' Meeting has decided to hold a one-off outdoor service to which all St John's members and friends are invited, weather permitting, in the Manse garden. Regrettably, no congregational singing is permitted. If the weather is wet or cold, you will instead be sent an email invitation for a Zoom service that you can access from your home. The above photograph gives an idea of the limited shade available under the apple tree. In order to avoid the heat of the day, note *the earlier starting of 10:00 am*, and bring a sunhat or parasol and a bottle of water. Please also bring a face-covering. At this stage we are not requiring face-coverings to be worn outdoors, but if you need to go inside the Manse to use the toilet you will be required to wear it, and the toilet will be sanitised after each user.

If it is feasible, please bring your own folding chair; if not, a chair will be provided. Households may sit together; all other chairs will be spaced 2-metres apart. In order to plan the chair-spacing, the stewarding, and to keep a register of attendees, *you must contact me in advance if you are intending to come*. Email julian@templeton.me.uk or telephone 020 8441 0499. Please enter the garden either from The Fairway through the Manse garage to the patio at the rear (noting that there are 10 steps to descend from the patio to the lawn); or through the back gate accessed via Greenhill Gardens. Note that a full risk assessment for this event will be completed and agreed by the Elders' Meeting in advance, and if the Covid-19 R-rate in Barnet increases to an unacceptable level you will be notified that the service will instead take place via Zoom. We hope to video-record the service and make it available later on YouTube. Those who consider their own health, or that of their household, to be at risk from this outdoor gathering are advised not to attend.



Outdoor Worship, 23 July, Manse Patio

11 people, most of whom have not been able to access our Zoom services, gathered for a short service on 23 July on the Manse Patio. At that stage we were allowed to sing (or so we thought!) and Andrew Mills accompanied us on guitar for 'Morning has broken' and 'Be still for the presence of the Lord'. Vance McCall read the Bible reading, and Julian led the service.

And you call me coloured?

Tony Alderman quoted the following poem, written by an African child, in the service he led via Zoom on 2 August.

When I born, I black
 When I grow up, I black
 When I go in sun, I black
 When I get scared, I black
 When I sick, I black
 And when I die, I still black

But you white fellow
 When you born, you pink
 When you grow up, you white
 When you go in sun, you red
 When you get scared, you yellow
 When you get sick, you green
 And when you die, you grey

And you call me coloured?

Night Shelter Lockdown

While we have all been isolated in our homes with only the occasional trip out to the supermarket or a walk round the park, I expect many of us have wondered what has happened to our guests in the Night Shelter?

Thankfully, the amazing work done by Homeless Action in Barnet and Together in Barnet has not stopped and this time of lockdown has brought respite to many.

At the beginning of lockdown the night shelter guests were all being cared for by a motley selection of volunteers at one venue, St Andrew's Church Hall on Totteridge Common. This gave time for HAB to work together with Barnet Council Housing Dept. to find accommodation for these guests along with most of the other clients attending HAB on a daily basis. Currently over 100 guests have been placed in hotels, hostels, rented flats or rooms across 8 different boroughs. Each guest receives an essential care package containing food and toiletries twice a week, which involves an army of volunteers to prepare the packages, and drivers working in pairs to deliver them.

HAB receives some supplies for the guests from the council, and other charities and supermarkets are donating goods and also personal donations are made.

If you would like to donate you can take non-perishable food items suitable for use by individuals and toiletries direct to HAB at 36B Woodhouse Road, N. Finchley, N12 0RG (open Mon-Fri daily, 10-3), or let me know and I can collect from you. But to save you shopping yourself, you can also donate by going to the Amazon Wishlist Page: <https://amzn.eu/5DT7ICj>

Clearly, some of the guests will need to leave their temporary accommodation at the end of lockdown. Others will be able to remain, but this time has given all the guests stability and relative comfort, time to reflect on how to rebuild their lives for the future. HAB and TIB are currently thinking about how to continue caring for those that will need to leave their accommodation, along with those that find themselves newly homeless as lockdown eases. Whether we at St John's and St Peter's will be able to run a night shelter venue this winter remains to be seen.

Lesley Calder

Phyllis Brown RIP

With sadness we report the death of Phyllis Brown, long-serving Treasurer of St John's Church. A short Funeral Committal Service was held on 22 July at the New Southgate Crematorium Chapel, with the permitted maximum of 30 mourners in attendance. Other mourners were able to view the service live via a webcast link.

The video recording of the 20-minute service is available to be viewed via the link:

www.obitus.com

Enter the username: Wovu5536 and the password: 711949 and then click "Log in".

Please remember Phyllis's sister, Sylvia, and her family in your prayers. We hope to have a Memorial and Thanksgiving for Phyllis's life at a later date, and to include an obituary in a future edition of the *Record*.

URC Daily Devotions

Would you like to receive a daily devotion by email with a Bible Reading, reflection, and a prayer? And would you also like to receive a full Sunday Worship text and audio service by email? Click on the following link: <https://devotions.urc.org.uk> and when the webpage opens, click on the 'Click here to subscribe to the Daily Devotions' title at the top of the page, type in your details, and subscribe.

An experience of the NHS



The NHS is open for us and, as I found, the measures to prevent spread of coronavirus within at least one hospital extremely rigorous.

Sipping a hot cup of tea overlooking central London on the hottest day so far this year is a pleasant activity if one has nothing else to worry about. I revelled at the scene. The Shard, in the distance was in bright sunshine. St Paul's Cathedral's dome caught my eye as did the "Walkie Talkie" Building, the 20-storey commercial skyscraper in Fenchurch Street with the best aerial view of that part of London from its sky garden. Within the same cityscape are the London Eye and the top of UCL's library. The BT (Post Office) Tower with its revolving advert "Control the Virus.... Stay Alert.....Save Lives" brought me back to the present. I was viewing all this from University College London hospital where I had just come round from open surgery to repair a hernia.

It was a delight to be awake. Any medical operation is packed with risk. And during these times of pandemic there is that additional factor to take into account too. Why would one submit to any procedure when the battle of the virus is still raging? Hospitals must be one of the highest risk areas for catching coronavirus. Or were. We were told that the NHS was open for us if we need it.

Full measures were in place to avoid any spread of Covid 19. A telephone call one night from the consultant replaced a trip to the out-patients department. A swab down the throat and up the nose in a nearby carpark checked to see if I had the unwanted disease a couple of days ahead of the operation.

Cleared for surgery it was an early 7am start. Agnes took me to the hospital by car - public transport was out and hospital transport at this time could be a risk. I was quizzed at the hospital entrance whether I had a persistent cough or lost my taste or smell. Also whether I had been in contact with anyone with these symptoms. After confirming no indicators of possibly having Covid plus little contact with the outside world for weeks my temperature was taken for a third time.

Upcoming Events

Sunday 9 August, 11:00 am,
Worship via Zoom led by Julian
Templeton

Saturday 15 August
9:30 am, Working Party;
10:00 am Community Garden

Sunday 16 August, 11:00 am,
Worship via Zoom led by David
Paul and Richard Harvey

Tuesday 18 August, 7:45 pm,
Elders' meeting via Zoom

Sunday 23 August, 10:00 am,
Outdoor Worship, 11 The
Fairway, led by Julian Templeton,
weather and circumstances
permitting

Wednesday 26 August, 8:00
pm, Social Gathering via Zoom
hosted by Malcolm Bond

Sunday 30 August, 11:00 am,
Worship via Zoom led by Alison
Bond

Sunday 6 September, 11:00 am,
Worship via Zoom with the Lord's
Supper led by Julian Templeton,
followed by a *Special Church
Meeting*

Tuesday 8 September, 7:45 pm,
Elders' meeting via Zoom



Then up to the surgical preparation area. While I thought I was on a short list of three patients requiring medical procedures it turned out I was the only one to turn up. It is easy to appreciate why patients awaiting surgery might wish to delay any hospital treatment until after the end of the pandemic. Only four of the eight operating theatres were in use.

Even so it was weird being in a fully staffed hospital with so few patients. I am now convalescing at home after less than half a day spent in hospital. I thank our NHS with its massive team for giving me top class treatment when in its care. We are so fortunate to have hospitals close to hand to look after us when needed. Be assured, after the setbacks of halting the progress of the pandemic and the fact that hospitals were primary conduits for spreading the virus during the initial stages, they are now on full alert to stop this happening again. As far as I could see UCH is very "Covid secure".

David Porter

Friends of Khasdobir

Like most events for this year, the annual friends of Khasdobir London Walk has been cancelled. This usually takes place on the first Saturday in September and this year's walk was to be the last.

After 20 years of planning the routes and writing the quiz questions, the organisers have decided that due to the reduction of numbers of people taking part it is not raising the money that it used to.

Many of you have enjoyed exploring different areas of London. The first walks were in the City which was quiet on a Saturday and we were amazed by how many green spaces there are when you look for them.

Originally the walks were to raise money for Toc H projects but in recent years the money raised has been for Friends of Khasdobir activities in Sylhet, Bangladesh. These have included schooling for children, allowances for widows and sewing and computer classes.

Because of the Coronavirus pandemic many families are suffering as their regular jobs as rickshaw pullers and labourers have stopped and they have no income. The Friends of Khasdobir are hoping to send an additional fund of £2000 to provide relief to families who are most in need. This will buy food packs and essential items to protect health including soap and detergent.

If you would like to make a donation to this, the link to the Golden Giving page is: <https://tinyurl.com/yd86n87v>

Thank you.

Valerie Mills

Will the 'new normal' of church life be both scattered and gathered, and more inclusive?



We have for a long time accepted as almost inevitable that the 'A' mode of participation in church life involved coming fairly regularly to worship in our church building. This used to mean that those who for health or other reasons could not or chose not to worship in this way were consigned to a 'B'—read, 'less involved'—mode of participation in church life. However, the Covid-19 lockdown and the continuing uncertainty about infection has meant that none of us have been able to worship in our church building for some months. Most, but not all, have instead participated in worship and meetings via the internet application Zoom, and the screenshot above shows some of the participants in worship on the 5th of July. Not everyone, though, has been able to access our Zoom services and meetings, and most of these have either watched the later video-recording of the service via YouTube, and/or have had the national URC worship service text delivered by their Elder.

At the time of writing, there are still new cases of Covid-19 emerging, and an effective vaccine is still some way off. Our Special Church Meeting on the 6th of September will provide an opportunity to gauge members' views about the safety of resuming worship and meetings again in our building. Might it be the case that some will regard the situation as being safe for them to gather indoors again but others will not? If this proves to be the case, I can foresee that if we are serious about being an inclusive church—that is, a church that includes as many people as possible in church life—we will need to work towards providing access to church life both for those willing to gather in our church building and for those scattered at home.

In the current July/August edition of *Reform*, our national URC magazine (extracts of which are currently available to view online for free, see: www.reform-magazine.co.uk), Lawrence Moore makes an impassioned plea to churches to use digital and internet technology to include those no longer able or willing to gather physically.

To do this would involve, first, the Church investing in a robust wifi and an integrated camera/microphone system to add to our existing sound system and screen. Second, in order to bridge the so-called 'digital divide', we ought to supply the support needed for those willing to give Zoom a try on a tablet or computer or smartphone. I've noticed that some of those who have participated in our Zoom services and meetings have relied on a spouse or family member to supply the initial know-how and confidence to give it a try. Not everyone has such a person they can call upon. But if we as a church are serious about inclusion, we ought to offer technical support to those who want it.

Third, we need to adapt the format of worship and meetings in order that they are appropriate both for those who are gathered and those who are scattered. Most will have noticed that since we began using Zoom for worship we have adapted its format: it is shorter and simpler, while notices and news sharing and fellowship mainly happen at the end. Some worship leaders have included images and video and pre-recorded interviews. No doubt this format will evolve: for instance, how could we make it more accessible to children? But I think the most stunning success that Zoom has enabled is the widening of participation in worship, all from the comfort and convenience of our own homes: one person hosts and welcomes, another leads the service, someone else shares the screen to play the hymns, another person reads the Bible Reading, another leads the prayers, and yet another edits the video-recording and posts it on YouTube. And we have in recent weeks effectively deployed the Zoom function of 'breakout rooms', whereby participants are randomly assigned to smaller groups for fellowship or for discussion in Church Meeting. This has meant that there has actually been more mixing—for instance, with people we don't know very well—than when we were meeting physically.

But why confine the widening of participation just to worship? Lawrence Moore argues that it would be perfectly possible for elders and committee members to operate effectively whilst scattered so long as they had internet access. As we have already demonstrated, Church Meetings can also operate effectively in scattered mode via Zoom. Other churches have been operating Junior Church and children's clubs via Zoom. Ought this to become the 'new normal' of church life?

Then there is the important matter of reach. Most may not be aware that some of the video-recordings of our Zoom services have been viewed over 100 times! And those who have participated in live Zoom services will know that we now have a regular worshipper from Glasgow, and we have also had worshippers from the Czech Republic and the USA. Ironically, we are reaching more people in scattered mode than we have been in recent years when we were only worshipping physically.

Last, but by no means least, there is a theological imperative to grasp. When the prophet Isaiah announces: "Let every valley be raised, every mountain and hill be brought low, uneven ground be made smooth, and steep places become level" (Isaiah 40:4), he is challenging the people to clear away all obstacles that might hinder the Lord's coming. The envisaged 'highway' through the wilderness is a metaphor for salvation. Isaiah challenged the Israelites then, and challenges the Church today, to remove the obstacles that prevent people from responding fully to God's steadfast love. I believe that the current pandemic—as devastating as it has been in its effects—also challenges us to share the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ to those who are both gathered and scattered.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

10-16 May 2020



Thank You!

Christian Aid Week was out of necessity very different this year but I know many of you still supported it very generously through your gifts and prayers. The following thank you comes from Christian Aid:

Christian Aid Week 2020 was a week like no other. Coronavirus locked down the country and suspended our plans for a celebration full of fundraising efforts. We feared for our global neighbours. But while coronavirus impacts us all, love unites us all. Our supporters reached out to neighbours near and far without even leaving the house. Thank you!



This year, I am unable to tell you how much St John's raised but I would like to thank all of you who donated through the e-Envelope scheme, through the website or by any other means. Thank you as well to everyone who joined us on Zoom for a Christian Aid/Red & White themed quiz and congratulations to Helen Snider who once again impressed us with her wide-ranging general knowledge!

We hope that as a result of all the money raised throughout the country, other communities will be helped in the future, giving more people like Florence in Kenya, easy access to a reliable regular water supply and many other basic necessities.

Alison Bond

P.S. At the date of writing, Christian Aid is seeking donations for its Lebanon Crisis Appeal: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk>

At my request, Alison Bond emailed me the prayers that she led in our Zoom service on the 9th of August to include here in the *Record*. You may like to pray them (again) with me. Julian

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Loving God,
 Before the world began, You loved us.
 Before You had created us, You were faithful to us.
 And we, as Your people, are thankful for Your great and abiding love,
 shown again and again down the ages.
 You have never abandoned us, even when we have abandoned you.
 You have never forgotten us, even when we have strayed far from the path.
 We give thanks for the steadfast love which has always guided and comforted us,
 for the promise which has never faltered, for the light which has lightened our way,
 for the story which has reminded us of those who came before us.

Gracious God help us to meet you as you come to us.

Help us to prepare your way in our lives,
and to announce your coming in love to others.

Hear now our prayers for those rough places in the lives of others that we bring before you:

Comfort and be with all those who are treated inhumanely:

-we think of all victims of racism, modern slavery, persecution and all who are denied a fair trial.

We give thanks for all those who speak out to confront injustice and pray for those in positions of influence who can bring about long-lasting change.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Comfort and be with all those who are being affected by the coronavirus pandemic:

-we think particularly of countries in our world who have inadequate health systems and infrastructures to cope with the growing numbers of victims of the virus

-we remember too all those in financial difficulty because of the economic impact

We give thanks for the work of so many voluntary agencies who have helped to alleviate suffering in these challenging times and pray for sustaining strength for the medical professions and decision makers in their search for safe solutions.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Comfort and be with all those who are affected by disasters, both natural and manmade:

-we pray for all the victims of the Beirut explosion earlier this week, for the many injured and for those trying to rebuild their livelihoods after the widespread devastation caused by the blast

-we remember too that wildfires continue to be an issue in many parts of the world, alongside soaring temperatures. Help us to continue to strive for climate change action to prevent further damage to the fragile planet you have entrusted to our care.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Comfort and be with all those known to us who are particularly in need of our prayers:

-those undergoing medical treatment

-those living with lifelong conditions for which there is no known cure

-those who are still unable to venture out in to the community

-those who mourn the loss of loved ones.....

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious Lord,

May all the earth be captured by the will to love.....

May all the earth be touched to change.....

May the valleys be filled with your light....

May the uneven paths be levelled with your grace....

And may your Holy Spirit so move us and others,
that your saving presence might be visible to all.

These and all our prayers we ask in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ, our Lord, and our Saviour, **Amen.**

The foodbank continues to distribute emergency food and would be pleased to receive your donations of food: Click on the link below to find out the current shortages: <https://chippingbarnet.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



Thanks to Richard Harvey

It was only when Richard went away on holiday and I volunteered to prepare the hymn slides and matching audio, and later the video editing, for the Zoom service, that I realised just how much work is involved! I presume few people are aware of the time and expertise Richard devotes to this work, as well as playing and recording all the music for worship. Thank you!

Laura Templeton