

# AMERSHAM FREE CHURCH

(A Baptist Union and United Reformed Church)

Woodside Road, AMERSHAM, Bucks, HP6 6AJ

Minister: The Revd Ian Green BA MTh

Associate Minister: The Revd Erna Stevenson BTh MSc

Registered Charity Number 1137287



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Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Friends,

At our Church Officers' Zoom meeting this morning we concluded that it's possible to spend all of Sunday watching and listening to the church services currently being broadcast on the Web. However, one of my favourites is still the Morning Service on BBC Radio Four. This week it was presented by Catherine Fox, the writer and wife of the Bishop of Sheffield. During the course of the programme she said: *The Holy Spirit hasn't been in lockdown.* That's a great thought and so apparent in all the positive and wholesome contributions people have been making over these last ten weeks. Our churches may well have been empty but the activity of God in the world has been wonderfully evident.

So, on Sunday, in our audio-service we'll celebrate Pentecost. I'm delighted that Hauke Vogel, our former Time for God volunteer, will be taking part alongside one or two other members of his family. It's also been a joy to work with Matthew over these recent weeks. He's written an enormous amount of music for the services. He'll still do this from time to time, but, along with many other teachers, he's returning to school on a more full-time basis as of Monday. We offer our prayerful best wishes to all who are teachers in our church community.

Bob, our treasurer has this message for us at this time:

*It is now nine weeks since the church building was closed and we last met together as a gathered church. The effect of the closure of the building has affected us all in many ways including the way in which we support the church financially. The major portion of our income comes from the support of our members and friends. Our Free Will Offerings through the Bank and Envelope scheme for the first four months of 2019 amounted to £32,288 and for the same period this year amounts to £32,220. I do sincerely thank all our Members, friends and supporters who have carefully considered their stewardship and made changes to their giving.*

*Income from lettings was a significant portion of our income but this stopped from the middle of March. If most of our hirers are not able to restart their activities before the end of the year the reduction of income will be about £30,000. We can remain hopeful that future changes to the lockdown restrictions will enable us to welcome back our regular users before the end of the year. With less activity our expenses will be reduced with savings in cleaning, energy costs, repairs, organists fees, general expenses etc. The deficit for 2020, in the region £20,000, will be met from our accumulated reserves.*

We are grateful to Bob for all he has been doing behind the scenes over recent weeks.

This week's we've had a trial run at a webcast from AFC. This is a possibility once we are allowed back into the building for worship. We are aware that not everyone will be able to join us so we are working on ways of getting the service 'into people's homes'. Watch this space – literally!!

Thank you for all your ongoing support of AFC and for the way we are all trying to play our part in encouraging one another – all of it clearly showing that *The Holy Spirit has not been in lockdown!*

Erna joins me in sending you our prayerful best wishes,  
Ian