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PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Is it just me, but Spring seems so long ago now and here we are in July, traditionally the month for holidays.

This April was the sunniest on record and seemed to race by, precipitating us into early summer by mid-May.

The sequence of flowers and blossoms flashed by in ultra-rapid fire; dandelion time (and there were so many!), daisy carpet, blackthorn snow, cherry petal fall taking us into the hawthorn blossom and buttercup meadowland, a time that signifies the end of Spring.

Many of us were deprived of enjoying the countryside because of "Lockdown", and we saw little else other than our own garden.

It seemed that we were watching the grass grow! Younger members of our families took to their bikes. Our neighbour pulled out his bike from

the back of the garage, where it had lain untouched for the past fifteen years! I couldn't bear to watch as he wobbled off up the Avenue, but he arrived home triumphantly two hours later. He, like many others, was rapturous to be out in the sunshine at leafing time. There was a tidal wave of emotion as people reclaimed Nature and it seemed that everyone had developed a greater appreciation of the human need for open space, clean air, natural beauty and sunshine.

God is so gracious and generous in sending such amazing weather at a time of difficulty. Imagine having to face "Lockdown" with cold winds and torrential rain! We do not understand the reason for Covid-19, but we thank God that His provision for us at this time is such a blessing. Thank you, Lord!

Daphne Hodkinson



Not my fault...

BUT WHAT DID JESUS SAY? (Luke 6:41)

Over the weeks of the lockdown, my wife reckons I have become increasingly irascible, and in my heart, I know that this is true.

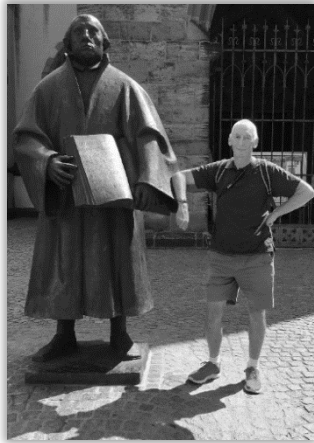
But what is the reason? It can't be for lack of things to do, for with a garden of our size that should never be the case; and it can't be because of the weather, since even in all of the recent sunshine, I've not had a whiff of my hay fever.

So, what then is it?
It's all the TV's fault!

Every time I watch the news someone seems to be blaming (or trying to blame) someone else for something else (did you notice how I've just blamed the TV?).

Over the years our culture - at least in my eyes - seems more and more determined that someone out there has to be blamed. And in the current pandemic this appears to be especially true.

Virtually every item on the news is looking to blame someone (frequently the government) for something, be it lack of PPE, starting testing too late, starting testing the wrong people, not easing lockdown early enough... and so on. And that's what feeds my irascibility.



Martin Luther & Cliff

So how should I respond?

Should there be someone to blame and who is the arbiter as to who decides what's right and what's not?

First of all, let me say that in any situation, there must always be accountability. And that's as true in government, in business and yes, in church life too.

So, in a sense everyone should be prepared to take the blame; after all, who doesn't make mistakes; and there needs to be a real sense of proactively about it. Because there's nothing like holding up our hands and admitting that we got that wrong - which is a great deflector of blame.

But of course, how much easier it is for all of us if we can find someone else to take the responsibility rather than look at ourselves.

One of the great Christian gifts is the ability to see beyond the superficial - whether that be of government or those who just irritate us - to see why people do what they do. We know about sin don't we, and we know how that always seeks to persuade us that we're always in the right.

What did Jesus say about planks and sawdust? (Luke 6:41 etc).

So, will I go on complaining about the media's desire to find a scapegoat? Probably - after all, who else will I have to blame?

Cliff Darby



OVERSEAS MISSIONS PROJECT

I would like to thank everyone for your support over the last year with our WRU Overseas Missions project, which was to raise funds for a Cystoscope for the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara, Madagascar. We will be sending a gift of excess of £5,000.

Doctor Lesley Noghti, one of our OM personnel, volunteers her expertise over there. We have decided, under the current circumstances, to extend the continued support for the Good News Hospital for another year. The Friends of Mandritsara Trust are currently raising funds for a new operating theatre block complex.

Please pray, united in Christ, for our WRU Project 2020/21 and for continued financial support.

God bless,
Lindsey Hedley, OM Secretary



DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Barry and Mary Miller

Lifelong members of Ibstock Wesleyan Reform Church in Leicestershire, celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on Thursday June 11th, 2020. Celebrations were limited because of the Lockdown, but the couple thanked God for His continued goodness to them over the past sixty years.



Caring Cake



Ingredients

425g pineapple in natural juice, crushed
450g (1lb) mixed dried fruit
1 teaspoon mixed spice
4 tablespoons olive (or vegetable) oil
2 medium eggs
225g (8oz) self-raising flour or plain wholemeal flour and baking powder

Directions

1. Put pineapple and juice with dried fruit, spice and oil in pan, bring slowly to boil and simmer for about 3 mins, stirring occasionally. Turn into mixing bowl, cover and leave overnight or until completely cold.
2. Preheat oven to Gas 5/190C. Grease and line a 2lb loaf tin.
3. Add flour and beaten eggs to mixture and stir until thoroughly mixed.
4. Turn into tin, cover loosely with foil and bake for 1 hour. Remove foil and continue baking for about ½ hour or until skewer inserted in middle comes out clean. Cool in tin.

Best kept in fridge due to high moisture. Bring to room temperature to serve.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. (Luke 10:34 NIV)

By the time I answered the doorbell there was only an envelope on the mat. Inside was a Lyons individual ground coffee sachet and two

Earl Grey teabags with the message

*Dear Sue,
Although I can't stop and have a coffee with you,
enjoy one on me.
God bless. Love, Pat.*

This little act of kindness meant more than my friend and neighbour could know. It lifted me in a difficult lockdown week and made me smile again.

The Caring Cake has no added sugar and healthy oil making it suitable for diabetics. It could also be made with gluten-free flour. Although the dried fruit is high in sugar, eaten in moderation even slimmers could enjoy it!

The point is, just as my friend knew I needed a little encouragement, when we want to show kindness, we need to think of what would be most helpful.

The Good Samaritan responded to a stranger's immediate needs. At one of the recent racial injustice protests, a black man is seen carrying an injured white man out of danger.

Just a little act of kindness.
Just a reflection of the love of Jesus for each other.

Sue Over



Since 2013, Christian students in Leeds have organised a week of mission after their exams, seeking to bless the community of LS6 (The Student Area). Due to COVID-19 many students were no longer in Leeds and the projects could not happen the way they usually would.

JUNE PROJECT

So, we decided to run mini projects wherever we were experiencing Lockdown. This included writing letters of encouragement, litter picking and baking goods for neighbours. *Family and friends have been asking questions about our June Project and interested in why we were doing it.*

We've seen how God has been involved in the planning since September, when the team felt that prayer would be a big focus for June Project 2020. At the time they were not sure what that would look like, but now we see how Prayer

has had to be the greater focus. *We were able to meet each morning via Zoom and pray together for the area of LS6, and we look forward to seeing how God will use this for His glory in the coming years.*

Mary Wilcock



Reflection on a Dandelion



As I took my permitted daily exercise during Lockdown, I saw masses of dandelions. As a Christian, I think that we can learn a lot from the dandelion. Often the dandelion is seen only as a weed and is rejected.

For quite a large part of the year it is not seen, but if we were to dig up a dandelion, we would discover that its roots reach down a long way. They remain firm.

When the time is right, new buds appear and warmed by the sun, they slowly open out - gradually emerging (as if with hands closed), until eventually they become the radiant flower that gives out so much brightness. If we look closely, we realise that it is made up of countless 'strands', varying in size, but each one playing its part in creating the flower as a whole.

Eventually, of course, in due time it becomes a 'clock' and its seeds are scattered far and wide.

As 'Christian Dandelions', there are times when we might seem dormant, but we need to remember to keep our roots firmly in the solid ground of God's love.

In God's time we are encouraged to be more positive and although sometimes we seem to take quite some time to



respond to the warmth of His love, He still calls us to be radiant for Him, as we live each day.

Let's recognise too, that we are scattering seeds. Like the seeds in the parable of the sower, they will not all fall on good ground.

Fancy being a dandelion?

Muriel Stonehewer

"Be the change you want to see"

This was said on the BBC back in June, by the then Bishop John Sentamu, to the "Black Lives Matter" protesters, who are pleading for change, in society and directly to the "white people of privilege".

Change can be forced upon us, but it can also be intentional. Since March, we have faced massive changes to our lives, and we needed educating on what to do and why. Did you notice how this change was accompanied by grief? I'm sure we all felt it. It ranged from closed coffee shops, to being able to visit friends or the real grief of losing a loved one.

We need to recognise that Change can be intentional and starts when we see it's

needed. We need a vision of what our life could look like if we change, and thirdly, we need the power to see change happen. There has been a lot in the media, about how those living in poverty suffer the most from Covid 19 and how poverty also exasperates the race issue. We need to educate and encourage all those in poverty to lift their eyes and consider how they could change their circumstances, by getting a job, or by learning to drive in order to get to work, or relevant training.

The gospel at its very heart is about change, please look up these verses *Isaiah 40:31, Proverbs 18:10, Jeremiah 29:11*

Andy Wilcock

OBITUARIES

WORSBROUGH COMMUNITY CHURCH Clive Bryant

It is with sadness that the fellowship at Worsbrough Community Church record the death of Clive Bryant. Clive died in the MHA Sandygate Residential Care home in Rotherham on 23rd March. At the time of his death, Clive was President of the church and, over the years he had held a number of offices in the fellowship including that of Sunday School teacher as well as being a member of the leadership team for many years. Clive & Cynthia had three sons Christopher, Stephen and Paul, and five grandchildren. As a fellowship, we will miss Clive but rejoice that he is now in a far better place.

BEACON COMMUNITY CHURCH Mabel Walker

It was with great sadness and yet a heart full of praise to God for knowing our dear sister in Christ, Mabel Walker. She who went to be with the Lord on the 20th May and was laid to rest following a service at Scholemoor Crematorium, Bradford on the 4th June - led by Rev Paul Brown, Minister of Beacon Community Church. Mabel had been a member at the Wibsey Church for many years before its closure, when she transferred to the Beacon Church. She was an active member of the WRU in her roles with the Women of Action and the Young People and fully involved in her local circuit here in Bradford. Mabel was one of the Lord's treasures and will be greatly missed.