

Issue 22

16 August 2020

Together as One

Newsletter of the Methodist Churches in Hungerford, Lambourn,
Newbury and Thatcham during Coronavirus Pandemic

Verses for the week

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24

On a journey together

I like steam trains. I really enjoy travelling on our heritage railways which started with the Dartmouth to Kingswear line on a Devon holiday as a child with my parents. Have you travelled on any of these lines or trains? Watercress Line, Swanage Railway, Bluebell Line, Jacobite Steam Train, Flying Scotsman? I love the squeaky springs and the patterned fabric of Southern railway seats, the camaraderie of chatting with the people opposite you, and above all, the smell of the steam/smoke. All too often I've forgotten to close the window and ended up covered in soot! If I can't actually go on the railway, the next best thing is cycling or walking a disused line, e.g. The Camel Trail in Cornwall (via the Camel Vineyard of course!). Now, here in West Berkshire we have the recently opened Hermitage to Hampstead Norreys section of the old Newbury to Didcot Railway. It's a level, easy walk/cycle of approx. 1.25 miles surrounded by trees and wild flowers. As you can imagine, when I walked it last week for the first time, I was watching out for signs of the old railway line. To be honest, I couldn't recognise much of days gone by, but there is the occasional reminder. This photo was my best find! But where is it? Many of you will have been past the remains of the white gate over the years and probably not realised it was there! Just for fun, ring me or email me to tell me where it is. Tel 07444 851606. Email pastoraldevelopmentworker@outlook.com I'll bake and deliver a cake to the first person who contacts me with the right answer.



Railways led me to thinking about my faith and church journey. Sometimes I feel a little nostalgic about the way things were, when all I had to do was turn up at Sunday School (St Augustine's class) with my attendance card, take part, sing a few choruses and walk home for my roast lunch. Those days are long gone, just like some of our railways, but they were beautiful just like a carriage in the Flying Scotsman. St Mary's Church, Chessington and Ruxley Methodist Church helped to shape my faith in the risen Christ, and just like the railway lines themselves, I pray my faith will go on forever. We can't remain in the past, we need to travel on. What will our travelling in faith look like going forward as we do church and life in general, differently, as we learn to live with and recover from Covid-19? Pastoral care has never been so vital, keeping everyone connected within our church communities just like stations along a railway line. We certainly need to walk (or ride) in faith together, creating new or different ways in which we do gathered and scattered worship. We need to let go of the past. We can remember much of it with nostalgia, just like my Sunday School days, yet I believe we must journey on, going forwards together. We need to listen to God, and when He blows the whistle and waves the green flag we must be ready to go with Him and act for Him.

With my love and blessings, Karen

Royal Berkshire Hospital – a new way of working at the Emergency Dept (ED)

4 August saw the start of a month-long pilot for treating frail and some older people aged over 80 – to provide a separate, quieter more spacious area and easier access to specialist care and bathrooms in an Older Persons ED. Once routine tests like bloods and ECG have been done, older people and people living with frailty will be directed to the special area where a range of professionals will work together to stop patients having to move from one specialism to another. It is well known that some people find all the moving around within an ED very disconcerting, causing confusion or worsening their health problems. Let's hope it's a great success.

West Berks Foodbank

Urgently needed: Custard, rice pudding, sponge puddings, sugar (500g bags), deodorant, tinned fruit, meat meals in a can (chili, stew etc).

Low on stock: toothbrushes, instant mash, tinned potatoes, chili mix, cup-a-soup

Donate at your local large supermarket or contact your church rep. Thank you for all your support.

Cuties!

Lots of you have been asking whether we've seen our beautiful twin grandchildren since lockdown. The answer is "yes" and "no"! We enjoy a Whatsapp video call each weekend with George & Loui, and our babies, Mabel (left) and Alfie. They're now 7 months old, we haven't seen them physically since they were 8 weeks old. Like so many of you with your nearest and dearest, we're desperate to cuddle them. We hope to see them in a couple of weeks' time and even then, a cwtch is unlikely to be on the cards as we'll need to be socially distanced. Karen & Richard



Nite Blessings

Malcolm Duncan, Pastor of Elim Church, Dundonald is a Christian author and speaker. If you or a family member/friend has access to Facebook, go to the page, Nite Blessings.

May you be given the gift of noticing: the beauty around you, the colour of a flower, the whisper of the wind; the light of the fading sun. May you see the gift of today rather than longing for tomorrow and may you breathe in the Spirit of Life with every breath. Amen

May you rejoice in the gift of being alive. Whether it is dancing in the rain, resting in the sun, or waking to the morning light, may you be given gifts of appreciation and intentionality. May you savour each moment, and learn to celebrate life rather than fearing it. Amen

Going forward...

I'm starting to think of ways in which we can stay connected with older members of our church communities who won't be returning to gathered worship during the next few months. If you have any ideas, let me know. Email and phone number on page 1.

And finally

How does one train know when another is coming?

It listens to its engineers!