

Issue 26

27 Sept 2020

Together as One

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

Verses for the week

Lord, I put my life in your hands. I trust in you, my God, and I will not be disappointed.

(Psalm 25 v1-2a)

Times, they are a changin'

Last week it was the Rule of 6, this week it's wedding guest numbers down from 30 to 15, pubs having a 10pm curfew and so on. As we continue to live with Covid-19, the landscape is constantly changing – sometimes it's difficult to keep up with all the changes. (Concentration is definitely required when we watch or listen to news bulletins so we get what relates to England, rather than other parts of the UK!) Some of us are more comfortable with change than others. Some like routine, others struggle and want to be spontaneous. However, on the whole I've found locally that most of us have learned to cope with the ever-changing scene and dare I say, it's likely to continue in this vain for several months to come. I'm not pretending it has been or is easy.



Photo: Steven Cottrell

Last week I attended worship in a church building for the first time in 6 months. I was looking forward to it, and thought I'd grasped beforehand what the changes brought about by Covid-19 restrictions would mean. After all, I'm usually an upbeat sort of a person, who takes most things in my stride. Don't get me wrong, I was delighted to be able to share in gathered worship, however my overriding feeling was one of sadness, not from the point of view of whether we could sing or chat over coffee with others, but looking around the church seeing chairs separated. I was particularly struck by the "single" chairs spread 2 metres apart, each denoting a person on their own. I found this change quite emotional, to be honest.

Our Christian faith is all about change and transformation: our faith can grow or diminish depending on our life experiences and how we deal with them. I'm reminded of the hymn "Through all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and in joy, the praises of my God shall still my heart and tongue employ." (STF 638)

Spiritual growth implies that we're travelling, which inevitably means a series of ongoing changes, always learning new facets of God's love. Spiritual life is a call to be in transformation; to become true and whole in the image of Jesus. This means we need to be open to growth and to change, even when these aren't easy or welcome. It's as much about being as it is about doing.

With my love and blessings

Karen

Harvest Festivals & Gifts

We will be giving thanks for God's provision in our worship in church and via online and audio services on Sunday, 4 October. Although it will not be the same as previously the underlying reasons to give thanks, to pray for and to care for God's creation are more important than ever. This Harvest in our churches, we are supporting West Berks Foodbank by donating goods as per the list below. There is a huge increase in the number of people needing assistance and this is likely to continue for many months ahead. Donations can be taken to church on 4 October (Newbury) or at Hungerford fortnightly. There will be a crate outside the church in which to place your donation. For the first time ever Baked Beans are on the "wanted" list! Thanks for your continuing support.



Photo: Myles Munsey

Tinned fish, custard, rice pudding, sponge puddings, sugar, tinned fruit, baked beans, shampoo, cleaning products, instant mash, tinned potatoes, chilli mix, soup, tinned vegetable.

Exciting News! Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer

A project to build a Christian landmark in a prominent location in the heart of the UK between the M6 and M42 motorways near Birmingham: this piece of public art will be made of one million bricks, each one representing an answered prayer shared by people from our nation, over history and by the current generation. Each one will tell an individual's story of them praying to Jesus and the answer they received. It will be public art declaring 'Jesus is alive, He listens and He answers'. There are three elements to this vision being realised: To preserve the Christian heritage of the nation, to ignite a faith for prayer on a national level and to proclaim Jesus to the country. The structure will tower 51.5m (169ft) into the skyline and will be seen by over 500K journeys per week, with expected visitor numbers of 300K per annum. To donate or find out more www.eternalwall.org.uk (Ask a friend or family member to help you if you don't have access to the internet.)



Pastoral Care

Since lockdown people have mainly taken care of each other in their pastoral groups and Pastoral Visitors are keeping in touch with those on their "lists". Remember! It's great to chat too with those who aren't in your group/on your list. If you want to chat with a member of your church and don't have their contact details, please contact me on 07444 851606 (Karen). I can then obtain the other person's consent to pass on their details to you.

Your Prayers Please ...

We especially pray for our Methodist friends in Lambourn who have decided to cease to worship; and for our members at Thatcham as they continue to await the outcome of the insurance claim following the collapse of the church roof.

And finally

"You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen, it said 'Parking Fine.' So that was nice."