

Issue 27

11th October 20

Together as One

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

Verse for the week

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (Psalm 19: 1)

Look up

One of my childhood memories is of going into the garden on a cold winter's evening with my Dad and being invited to stretch up to my full height, screw up one eye and with the other to peer into the tiny eyepiece of a telescope to see what wonders it would reveal. Therein I saw craters and seas on the Moon, Jupiter and its four most visible moons and the curious fuzzy shape of Saturn surrounded by its rings. From our garden we could see more or less as much as Galileo saw when he first pointed his rudimentary telescope to the night sky. I was hooked. At that time space exploration was just beginning with the first Moon landings and artificial probes sent to Mars and Venus.



I was reminded of this early boyhood enthusiasm, and doubtless the rather tedious display of geeky knowledge that went with it, when recently I was walking to the post box one evening and saw the Moon, Jupiter and Saturn in close proximity in the southern night sky. Our awareness of the wonder of these nearby but foreign worlds has been increased many-fold by discoveries over the last 50 years. I used to know the names of the moons of Saturn and Jupiter but now so many more have been discovered remembering their names is impossible. Saturn's rings have proved far more complex, numerous and beautiful on closer inspection.

Worshippers of God have long found the stars and planets in their order and beauty leading them to praise God. 'Lord, our Lord ... You have set your glory in the heavens. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?' (from Psalm 8)

Now we know so much more about the universe of stars and galaxies in their mind-blowing number and size flying away from each other at astonishing speed. If you haven't done so lately why not take a moment to step outside on a clear night and look up again. There are many things that serve to keep our heads down, earthbound, at the moment. There is much around to trouble us and to fear but a few moments of lifting up our eyes, chin up, to see what God has made can give us a better perspective, greater awe and cause us to worship and recover the inner 'wow!' I knew as a boy. With love and prayers, Peter.

Some sad news

Revd. Andy Warren died last week after suffering from lung cancer for some time. Many of you will remember Andy and be grateful for his ministry in this area. Please remember Jan in your prayers.

Prisons Week

This week is marked annually as Prisons Week and gives an opportunity to remember all who are in prison, work in prison and particularly all who support prisoners and their families through the chaplaincy service. I was shocked and surprised to read that there are 81,536 prisoners in England and Wales at the moment and that 95,228 children have a parent in prison. Here is a prayer to pray during this week.

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen.

You can find more information including challenging and informative videos to watch and prayers throughout the week here [Click Here](#)

Harvest donations

Thank you for all your donations to the West Berks Foodbank. All are gratefully received and much appreciated. If you have food donations that have not been collected and you can't get to a collection point please let us know and we will help you arrange a collection from home.

Safeguarding Sunday - 11th October

Today is Safeguarding Sunday - a day to raise awareness of safeguarding in our churches and an opportunity to highlight all that is done to create safer places for children and vulnerable adults and to publicly thank and acknowledge all those working tirelessly behind the scenes to make it happen, for more details and a prayer [Click Here](#)

World Mental Health Day - 10th October

This year has been a tough one for us all. The months of lockdown and loss have had a huge impact on our mental health. According to research by Mind, a leading Mental Health charity, more than half of adults (60%) and over two thirds of young people (68%) said their mental health got worse during lockdown. We know that many developed new mental health problems as a result of the pandemic and, for some of us, existing mental health problems got worse. For more details [Click Here](#)

Reset the Debt

A campaign calling for debt cancellation for people who have been swept into unavoidable debt in recent months was launched this week by a group of four denominations including the Methodist Church representing two-thirds of a million Christians and ecumenical charity, Church Action on Poverty. The campaign called 'Reset the debt' calls for the Government to create a Jubilee Fund to provide grants to pay off and cancel unavoidable debt accrued by the poorest households during the lockdown period, giving them a more stable platform from which to face the difficult winter ahead. For more details [Click Here](#)

And finally some things to consider

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

How is it possible to have a civil war?

Photo by Matthew Ansley on Unsplash

