

Together as One

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

Verses for the week

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32: 3-5)

What we need to dispose of

I went out early one morning to add a few extra items to the recycling box I had put out for collection the evening before to discover, not for the first time, something extra in it. I knew we hadn't put it there, partly because it had not been disassembled and flattened, but also because it was cardboard packaging that had contained a brand of fine champagne and chocolate truffles!

There was space in our box, clearly someone else's was full, and so I was quite happy to share. I am not so image conscious or so

obsessed as to imagine those who empty the boxes analyse the contents and so form an opinion of the occupants, an opinion which would then be distorted by this untypical packaging. Having said that I imagine you can learn a lot from what we throw away.



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I also recently passed a skip that had fixed to it a plastic notice indicating it was for one particular property and not for general use. The skip had clearly provided a great opportunity for others to do some clearing out and to dispose of what was unwanted. Thinking further about this I was reminded of something Adrian Plass, the Christian writer and humourist, wrote about his experience of having a skip outside his house and finding his neighbours using it to dispose of their unwanted items. The skip and the recycling box perhaps remind us of the collective need we all have safely to dispose of our unwanted thoughts and regretted actions. We have a great privilege in being able to come before God in confession. God is the one before whom we can be honest and to whom we can give all the unwanted rubbish within our inner lives and thoughts. The wonderful truth of the Christian faith is that God is not some kind of cosmic skip to receive the rubbish but that he has the authority and power to bring forgiveness and change to our lives. That can only begin as we bring all those unwanted wrongs, all that hinders and entangles us, all that obscures Jesus' likeness in us, all which we must rightly call sin, to him in absolute honesty. There is always space in his refuse bin. As the refuse, the dirt and shame, the failure and guilt accumulate across the day, across the years, bring it to him and find the freedom and new life he offers. It is a glimpse of the new resurrection life which is to come and which begins now.

With love and prayers, Peter.



Les Jardins des Arts

Les Jardins des Arts is the home of a retired Methodist Minister, Bob Whorton, brother of Bruce from the Newbury congregation. It is run as a centre for retreat and reflection but because travel from the U.K. to France is going to be difficult for some time to come, events are going online. Here is what is planned for the rest of this year, all via Zoom:



- 5 May 8 pm (U.K. time) - a Zoom call for all who want to explore a regular creative reflection workshop.
- 22 May - Make a Joyful Noise singing workshop led by Sue Whorton.
- 14-18 June Introduction to Centring Prayer. A retreat led by Diane Clutterbuck.
- 4 September Your Kingdom Come. A workshop exploring the Lord's Prayer creatively, led by Bob and Sue Whorton.
- Also Bob is road-testing a monthly poetry workshop where original poems are shared. Please email to express an interest. Full details are on the website [Click Here](#)

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Sabbatical

As most of you will know from 1st May I am planning to take a sabbatical which the church has kindly offered me and which was postponed last year. This will allow time for study, reflection and renewal. I am hoping to spend some of the time exploring Biblical aspects of so called green economics as an aspect of our response to the pandemic and the challenge of climate change. I am also hoping to continue some family history research, to do some walking and to take a short

holiday. During this time Rachel Borgars will be covering pastoral work and Emails and phone calls will be redirected. Church stewards will continue to be responsible for day to day church activities and for ensuring worship in person can take place where this is possible. As Chris and I will continue to be living in the manse during most of the Sabbatical I am sure we'll see some of you as we are out and about. Please don't think you have to avoid speaking to us!

It is planned that the newsletter and Worship at Home will continue to be provided and distributed either via Email or by the same dedicated team of volunteers. So the good news is that you won't have to endure any more of my 'and finally' jokes! I am due to be back at work on 1st September ready to begin a new Methodist year together.

Easter poem

I enjoyed this performance poet sharing a contemporary take on Easter truth which I was sent last week. To watch [Click Here](#)

Big Church read

If you have thought that perhaps you would like to read more Christian books then here is an opportunity that might be just what you are looking for. It runs along the lines of a Christian book group. There are discounts for the books too! For more details [Click Here](#)

And finally

What do you call a Frenchman wearing loose fitting sandals? Answer: Phillipe Phillope.