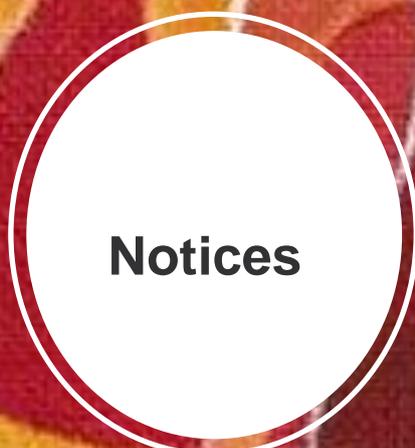


Section News

19 MAY 2021

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Reflection

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Notices

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Bible Month

Superintendent's Thoughts

ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST



In a commentary on the readings for Pentecost Sunday, Jane Williams writes:

“The Holy Spirit has been in danger in recent years of becoming the sappy one of the Trinity. Think about it for a bit – the Holy Spirit doesn’t go off and do uncomfortable and challenging things like getting crucified. The Holy Spirit gives spectacular gifts that add a distinct touch of excitement to what could otherwise become dreary religious lives. The Holy Spirit can be described as the ‘comforter’, which sounds just lovely. The Holy Spirit is very politically correct and not at all gender-specific. The Holy Spirit likes to leave things to the last minute, like some of us, and works best if you stand up unprepared and allow the Spirit to take over. S/he really hates to be called upon by untrusting people who fussily want to prepare several days in advance. All in all, the Holy Spirit is the acceptable face of the Trinity.....Unfortunately, this picture of the Holy Spirit bears no resemblance at all to the Holy Spirit as depicted in the New Testament.”

I sense that many of us long and pray for the boldness of the Spirit’s presence as experienced by the apostles and described by Luke in the second chapter of Acts. But if we look a little more closely at what Peter preaches about in that much-quoted sermon, we find a challenging message that is replicated in the other readings for today (John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15 and Romans 8:22-27). The message is one of judgement – how people react to Jesus and his message is the final pointer to the true cost of discipleship, which will be sacrificial and may cost one’s life. The coming of the Holy Spirit emphasises just what a gift humanity has been given by God in Jesus Christ.

John, too, points out the consequences of how humanity responds to Jesus. John sets out that the Holy Spirit is the means by which the worldly judgement that Jesus was mad and dangerous is reversed and there was, and remains, unity between the Father and the Son. There is both truth and consistency about God’s interactions with humanity. There is encouragement here that if believers remain united to God (remember the image of the vine?), they too will bear witness to the truth of Jesus Christ. Sometimes that will involve amazing gifts of godly power “to do more than we can ask or think”. At other times it will require surrender of the human will to limits that we might not have believed possible.

If we are in any doubt about the demands of the work of the Spirit, Paul’s writing to the church in Rome leaves little room for confusion. He describes it terms of childbirth – not the sanitised version where a beautifully clean and well-fed baby smiles back at contented parents – but the version where there is lots of groaning and pain and blood. For fans of the BBC series “*Call the Midwife*”.....just like that. Jane Williams concludes:

“In the middle of labour it is possible almost to forget that it will ever end and that there will be an outcome. But the Holy Spirit, like the midwife, keeps the world straining and pushing. ‘Come on, you’re nearly there, I can see the head now,’ the Holy Spirit shouts, reminding us constantly why we are doing this.”

So may we continue to embrace the reality of the Spirit, as we seek the Kingdom of God...

Notices

Dates for the Diary

Week beginning	23 rd May	30 th May	6 th June	13 th June
Sunday 4.00 pm <i>Reflection – a short 30-minute gathering using images, music and words led by Revd Rachel Borgars.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235746908	Rachel away	✓	✓	✓
Monday 7:30 pm <i>Discussion Group – originally called the ‘Hot Potatoes’ group, this is an opportunity to discuss current issues with some theology as part of the mix.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84961411119			✓	
Thursday 7:30pm <i>Circuit Bible Study – a more formal Bible study which usually meets monthly on the last Thursday in the month. During June we shall meet weekly following the Bible Month material.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988	✓	✓ Bible Month	✓ Bible Month	✓ Bible Month
Friday 9:15 am <i>Prayer Group – an opportunity to pray together, bringing both joys and concerns in prayer.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82103846709	✓	✓	✓	✓

If you would like to join in with any of these gatherings via telephone, please do ring me on 01256 895878 and I will give you the details to dial in via any telephone. I do hope you will join us, even if you haven't felt Zoom is for you up until now!!

Methodists join other Christians in appealing for peace and an end to provocative actions in Jerusalem

Statement from the World Methodist Council, Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and the Methodist Church in Britain, which are partners in the Jerusalem Methodist Liaison Office.

We stand together to support the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem who have expressed their concern about continuing violence in Jerusalem and who have called on those in the international community to put an end to what they describe as ‘provocative actions’.

We have been horrified by the scenes of violence in east Jerusalem which threaten the fragility of the Holy City, and call on the Israeli Government to permanently halt the threatened evictions of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, where clashes have also taken place.

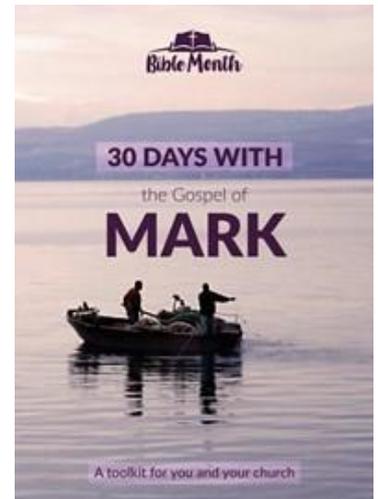
We urge calm on all sides and ask the politicians to enable an environment where justice and healing can be experienced by all and we join with the Heads of Churches to continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We continue to stand in solidarity with our Christian sisters and brothers who live and work in the Holy Land.

The Bible Month book for 2021 is the Gospel of Mark.

30 Days with Mark has been written by Dr Kent Brower (Bible notes) with Rev Michael Parsons (small group study guides) and Dr Paula Gooder (reflection).

If you would like a copy of the booklet, can you please let Rachel Borgars know by Monday May 24th at the latest.

During June – there will be a discussion group meeting on Thursday evenings to look at the study material for the following Sunday. The first meeting for this Bible Month group will be on June 3rd on Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988>)



FOOD ITEMS:- Long Life Fruit Juice (1ltr);

NON-FOOD ITEMS:- Shampoo/conditioner, Men’s deodorant, Shower gel

**JOB VACANCY AT ANDOVER FOODBANK - Warehouse Supervisor
Andover Foodbank - 12 hours per week, £12.50 per hour**

We are looking for an enthusiastic and motivated Warehouse Supervisor to manage the day-to-day warehouse operation including stock management and delivery. You will coordinate volunteers in the warehouse and help ensure that we provide a reliable, accessible, and compassionate service of food and associated support for clients. The full role description and details of how to apply is available in the news section of our website

www.andoverfoodbank.org.uk

Have you been bereaved during the covid pandemic?

You can dedicate a tree to the memory of a loved one



Maybe they loved gardens and nature or you would simply like something to keep their memory alive through the years to come.

Lockdown Woods Newbury has hundreds of beautiful young trees to choose from for your own personal dedication.

In addition to individual dedications a full woodland dedication will take place in autumn 2021, to commemorate all our losses during the pandemic.

Dedicating a tree is easy, please contact us by: Emailing
info@newburyfoe.co.uk or



 Post a message on Facebook group
'Lockdown Wood'



A Newbury Friends of the Earth project, supported by
Newbury Town Council and West Berkshire Council