

Section News

29 JULY 2021

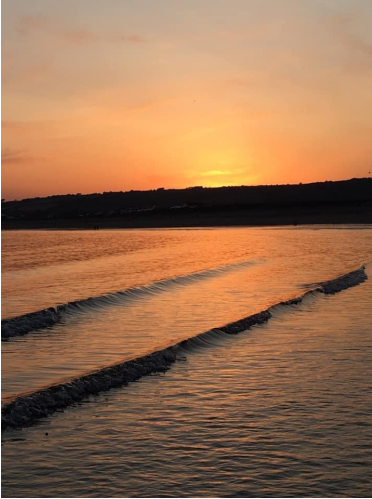
Reflection

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Superintendent's Thoughts

... AND BREATHE...



This is the final newsletter of this Connexional year – the next one will be sent out for the first weekend in September.

Well, what a year it has been! Lockdowns, lifting of restrictions, then more lockdowns, then a sort of lockdown and finally a lifting of restrictions but many still wearing masks and keeping a safe distance from others...

Church – as we have never known it before, on paper at home, listened to or watched at home, joining in with congregations across the country or even the world and, finally, some gathering in buildings still wearing masks and keeping a safe distance from others...

This week's gospel reading from John's gospel (chapter 6 verses 24-35) is set on the day following the feeding of the five thousand. The action is now on the other side of the lake at Capernaum, to where Jesus and the disciples have sailed. Jesus challenges the crowd about why they have followed him, saying that he thinks this was because their stomachs were full, not because they had seen signs of the kingdom. He continues that they should not work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures to eternal life. The crowd then ask what the work of God looks like...

Jesus' answer seems quite simple, "... believe in the One whom God has sent". This leads to a degree of confusion with the crowd asking for a sign so that they might know who is that One: they are looking for something akin to that which the Israelites experienced in the desert with the gift of manna. The passage concludes with the much-quoted statement from Jesus that he is "the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst".

So, as life becomes less restricted and more of us become double-vaccinated, what is the work of God going to look like in this part of the kingdom? Are we going to look for signs that were seen back in the old days? Are we going to re-establish what church looked like before the pandemic and hope that this will produce more disciples and the spiritual growth that we should be looking for? If so, I think we need to think carefully about that version of the kingdom and our commission from God to grow more disciples, because I don't think it has been working all that well up to now.

Jesus is the bread of life, and no one should leave an encounter with God in Christ, experienced through the Holy Spirit working in us, feeling hungry or thirsty. What is the bread that endures to eternal life that our churches are offering? If you're not sure, perhaps you could spend some time during this holiday period reflecting on what it is about our faith that we should be offering to our communities that is the unique gift that faith brings into a person's life?

Peace,
Rachel.

Notices

Dates for the Diary					
Week beginning	August 1 st	August 8 th	August 15 th	August 22 nd	August 29 th
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	✓	✓			
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.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988	No Meetings during August – next meeting will be on September 30th				
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	✓	✓			

Pastoral News



God of all hope we call on you today.

We pray for those who are living in fear:

Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other’s reactions to them.

May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.

For those people who are worried about attending worship.

For those needing to make decisions in order to care for others

For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.

Grant us your wisdom.

Holy God, we remember that you have promised that

Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.

Help us turn our eyes, hearts, and minds to you. Amen

“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)

Resources



SHOEMAKERS BOOKSHOP (Newbury) is now open again from Tuesday to Saturday opening at 9:30 a.m. and closing at 4:00 p.m. The café remains closed at this time.



11 tips to cope with anxiety about coming out of lockdown

Easing of lockdown will allow us to get back to the people and things we love, but it's OK if you feel worried about going back to something more "normal" as lockdown restrictions loosen.

Top tips for taking care of your mental health as things change can be found here: [Tips to cope as lockdown lifts](#)



Christians Against Poverty (CAP) provides free debt help and local community groups across the UK. Their free services, run with local churches, provide practical and emotional support, and show people that there is always hope.

The Newbury group support people in all sorts of ways, and there are plenty of opportunities that will arise where a bit of extra or specialist help is needed. Examples of

these are:

- BSL interpreters
- Event organisers
- Cake bakers
- Hosts
- PR

If you have a particular skill, or way you want to get involved in the centre please get in touch with:

Lisa John
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Christians Against Poverty
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