

Swindon Old Town Partnership of Churches
Anglican - United Reformed - Methodist - Est. 1969

PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

MAY 2020

80 PENCE



1 Corinthians:13
Meanwhile these three remain:
faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

One in Christ - Together in Mission

*Our wildlife is blissfully unaware of Coronavirus
and nature carries on as normal.*



*Photo by Janet French
with the message:
'Something to lift your
spirits from my morning
walk.'*

*Margaret Williams
loves her garden
and took this photo
of Primulas that
are currently giving
her great pleasure.*



*These chickens in a
Buckinghamshire
garden haven't
been told about
social distancing.*

Your Contacts

BATH ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

Minister: The Revd. Mark Barrett, 147 Drove Road, SN1 3AQ
Tel: 529263 e-mail: markrev55@aol.com
Web site: www.bathroadmethodistchurch.org.uk
Weekly news items: marietai1@gmail.com

CHRIST CHURCH with ST. MARY'S, Cricklade Street **St. Mary's**, Commonweal Road (off The Mall)

Vicar: The Revd. Canon Simon Stevenette, The Vicarage,
26 Cricklade Street, SN1 3HG. Tel. 529166
e-mail: simon.stevenette@gmail.com

Associate Ministers::

Revd. Daphne Hardwick. T. 693721; daphne.hardwick@gmail.com
Revd. Norma McKemey. T. 845917; mckemeyn@talktalk.net

Web site: www.christchurchswindon.co.uk

Weekly news items: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Friends of Christ Church: c/o The Parish Office

PARISH OFFICE: at the Community Centre, SN1 3HB. Tel. 522832
e-mail: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk Usually the Parish Office is open Monday-Friday, 9.00am to 1.00pm, Thursday evening 5.30pm-7.30pm, Sat 10am-12 noon, but it is closed at the moment.

COMMUNITY CENTRE: Manager: Chris Smith, T.617237 or 07582 305760
email: chris.smith@cccswindon.co.uk

IMMANUEL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, Upham Road

Minister: The Revd. Robert Jordan, 152 Drove Road, SN1 3AG
Tel. 513039. email: robert.jordan1@btconnect.com

Secretary: David Leadbeater, Tel. 694663. email: davidl1944@live.co.uk
Web site: www.immanuelurc.org

Weekly news items: immanuelweeklynews@yahoo.co.uk

WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER CHURCHES IN OLD TOWN

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTOR:

Mr. George Kennedy, Tel. 772589. george.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com

MAGAZINE EDITORS:

Mrs. Diana Swann, 58 Sandown Avenue, SN3 1QQ. Tel. 529897
e-mail: d.swann6a@gmail.com

Mrs. Margaret Williams MBE, 39 Sandown Avenue, SN3 1QQ. Tel. 421102
e-mail: margaretwilliams111@gmail.com

PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL:

Secretary: Barbara Aftelak, Tel. 536815; email: barbaraaftelak@ntlworld.com

Chairman: Daniel Pitt, Tel. 521732; email: fdpitt@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer: David Bevan, Tel. 336667; email: david04bevan@yahoo.co.uk

PARTNERSHIP WEB SITE; www.sotpc.org.uk

Partnership Letter

The Manse
152 Drove Road

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we don't see" (Hebrews 11:1)

Greetings from my isolation to your isolation.

I'm writing during Holy Week having had a Zoom house group meeting last night where we went through the daily events of Jesus and the disciples leading up to the great statement: **He is Risen indeed**. You will be reading this in early May, and none of us can even imagine what life will be like then, but that uncertainty can never diminish the importance of that statement: He is Risen indeed. It is the rock of hope on which we stand, and have always stood.

And this is what I want to share with you at this time - we live in the hope of the gift that comes from God - we are God's children, in easy times and in difficult times, in dark times and when the light shines, whether we come (physically) together or in the space of deep affection, memories and love.

God holds us in the palm of the Divine Hand: we can't see that but we can be certain of it; this is the hope that sustains us when life gets tough, and I am sure many of you will be able to give testimony of this in different ways. God hears our laments, our questions - even the ones that seem to have no answer- and God will continue to say "I have heard the cry of my people and I will come down" (Exodus 3). This Easter this certainty acquired a whole new meaning to me, and I hope it did to you.

I've just received a message from a friend (I promise this is the truth) which says: "2020 is a unique Leap year. It has 29 days in February, 300 days in March and 5 years in April". Einstein might call that an example of the Theory of Relativity! No matter how long each day seems to last, it continues to have 24 hours, with 60 minutes per hour, and 60 seconds per minute even if it sometimes feels eternal. No matter how long a day feels, God is in each second of that day. No matter how long this all seems we believe things will not go on forever like this; it also means we will all have to come together to construct a better way forward. ►

So let us keep the good we have shared: people smiling at each other, the "Hello" or the "Good morning/afternoon" from total strangers. Let us not go back to the rush by which we ignore those around us. Let us appreciate the importance of the small things so often overlooked. And let us always give thanks for those who have been and continue to be there to help, to sustain, to care; because that is the way to build the better life we all need: solidarity, generosity, kindness, inclusion, love, hope. These are all marks of our faith and these reach all people everywhere.

**May the love of God sustain, guide, comfort
and walk with you now and always.**

From my isolation to your isolation - but in the close proximity of shared affection.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

A view from an Indian doctor

Social distancing is a privilege. It means you live in a house large enough to practise it. Hand washing is a privilege, too. It means you have access to running water. Hand sanitisers are a privilege. It means you have money to buy them. Lockdowns are a privilege. It means you can afford to be at home. Most of the ways to ward off the Coronavirus are accessible only to the affluent. In essence, a disease that was spread by the rich as they flew around the globe will now kill millions of the poor. All of us who are practising social distancing and have imposed a lockdown on ourselves must appreciate how privileged we are. Many Indians won't be able to do any of this.

Heard on the television news

A commentator from New York where a high death rate from Coronavirus is amongst the people living in the Bronx area which has a much poorer population: 'Separated by a river from Manhattan but they might as well be a world away.'

FAMILY EVENTS

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to the loved ones of

CHRIST CHURCH

Mar	11	Kathleen Elizabeth Winifred Dowson, 98 years
Mar	13	Sheila Mary Saxby, 88 years
Mar	15	Joe Charles Purvis, 55 years
Mar	30	Patricia Hide, 90 years
Apr	2	Daphne Joan Smith, 90 years
Apr	3	Elsie Marshall, 95 years
Apr	4	Patricia Ann Smith, 77 years
Apr	5	Linda Elizabeth Garner, 69 years
Apr	10	Dennis James Bull, 93 years
Apr	10	Enid Beryl Matthews, 90 years
Apr	11	Pauline Shergold, 91 years

IMMANUEL

Mar	13	Anthony John Wilkinson (Tony), 91 years
Mar	28	Jean Elizabeth Timbrell, 88 years
Apr	11	Ashley John Smith, 90 years
Apr	12	David Kingsley Rebbeck, 84 years

FLOODLIGHTING

Apr 15 Paul and Teresa Squires married at Christ Church on 15th April 2000.

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting of Christ Church in celebration of a birthday, wedding anniversary, special occasion, to advertise your Company, or in memory of a loved one, the minimum gift per evening is **£30.00**.

Cheques to be made payable to 'Christ Church PCC'. Please write to the PARISH OFFICE, COMMUNITY CENTRE AT CHRIST CHURCH, SWINDON, SN1 3HB at least a week before the date of the floodlighting. GIFT AID:

If you are a UK taxpayer and wish Christ Church to reclaim the tax, you may Gift Aid your donation.

Christ Church with St. Mary's

Easter Regeneration 2020 sculptures unveiled at Christ Church

In these challenging days, two unique modern sculptures have been created on the green outside the front of Christ Church entitled Easter Regeneration 2020: The Crucifixion Recycled and Resurrection Retreaded.



The exhibition is the work of Gervin Senior who constructed a similar Crucifixion Recycled, out of tins, fifty years ago this Easter, for a school project and town-wide exhibition in Didcot. When Simon heard about this, he asked Gervin if he would do it again as the Old Town Partnership of Churches were becoming four eco-congregations, challenged by the Psalmist's words; The earth is the Lord's, the world and all that is in it', Psalm 24 verse 1.

The second piece, the Resurrection Retreaded, was to enable us to share the whole Easter story. The Garden Tomb, from which Jesus rose from the dead, has been made primarily from old karting tyres from Gervin's son Alistair's kart. It wasn't easy resourcing parts for the sculptures and it took 2-3 weeks of painstaking work to produce them. Thank you, Gervin.

The modern Regeneration exhibition will stay in place from the start of Holy week, 5th April until the end of Eastertide, 31st May. ■



Our Parish Contact list has more than 80 members – some of whom have asked for support and some who want to help others. The KIT scheme builds on this list to create a picture of those in our community who need the support of their neighbours and friends.

We are initially targeting people in our Old Town, Swindon Parish and community. However, we will still be happy to support others not in this specific area if needed.

Don't suffer in silence, please get in touch with us.

If you know of someone who would benefit from this service, then, with their permission, we would also like you to refer them to us. They can phone us on 01793 522832 or use the link below to join the KIT scheme: <https://bit.ly/KITscheme>

What is KIT? It might just be a regular phone call to check how our friends are. It could be offering help with practical things like shopping, IT support or other needs. We are a community of friends who are intent on finding hope in these difficult times by connecting with and supporting each other.

Loneliness can be disabling, and our clergy team can also offer prayer, pastoral support or just a listening ear.

Headline seen in the Daily Telegraph...

'With butlers in isolation, the wealthy learn housekeeping'.

People are having to launder and iron and fold for the first time, and everyone wants tips. An agency in London reports that clients are asking for advice on how to change bedsheets, iron and clean - **AND...**

nearer to home, your editors know of two people who didn't know how to empty the dust bag on their vacuum cleaners and had to look this up in the instruction book.



Friends of Christ Church Newsletter

Now that 2020 is proving difficult, it is worth remembering that 2019 was a successful year for the Friends of Christ Church. We have made major contributions to the new church roof, and to the refurbished organ and South Transept window. We bought ten new ridge stones for the roof in memory of previous Friends members and Trustees.

Now that the organ work is finished we have put up a plaque to celebrate the work and the significant contributions of Peter Ford and John Sondermann.

There were lots of occasions last year when the church was full of people for events. The Christmas market in November was well attended and raised over £4000 for the various charities with stalls. This welcoming continued into 2020 as nearly 100 people came to the Come and Sing Messiah in February on a rather nasty day. It is a pity that such activities are no longer happening.

Some of our stained glass is particularly interesting. We have sold cards showing the GWR train in the south porch and the nativity window in the north transept. The pictures were beautifully created by Janet French, one of the Friends Trustees. More cards are being prepared and we hope these will be available for sale in due course.



The Friends are paying for the overhaul of the church clock, which we hope will be reinstalled in the church when the current travel restrictions are lifted.

We also have an exciting new project to celebrate 20 years of the Friends. In 2000, to raise funds for the Skyline Appeal to mend the spire, Brian Bridgeman and Teresa Squires wrote and published a book on the history of Christ Church, entitled "The Old Lady on the Hill". Copies have now sold out. We are delighted that Mark Bridgeman, son of Pam and Brian the original author, is revising and updating the book to coincide with the church's 170 years. It is hoped that the book will be on sale at the Friends Christmas Market on Saturday 21st November 2020, as well as through Waterstones and Amazon. This book will pay tribute to all the Friends that have contributed to the work in Christ Church over the last few years. ➤

The Friends AGM is postponed until further notice. The full Annual Report and Accounts, as approved by the Trustees, have been distributed and are available on request from Caroline Pitt (tel 01793 521732). All the Trustees are happy to continue to act, and I am very grateful to them all for their contributions to the success of the Friends. Thank you also to all those who have renewed their membership subscriptions and made donations.

Caroline Pitt

Chair and Membership Secretary, Friends of Christ Church

Poem to cheer us up

I used to think it would be good
To have time to myself,
No meetings or appointments fixed
And plans put on the shelf!
But now that we've been forced to keep
Indoors and not go out,
It all seems rather strange and weird
So now I have my doubts!

I've offers to go shopping
Which is really, really kind
And people wave as they go by
They're so friendly now, I find.
But oh, I have a problem,
A problem which I'll share
Although I've time upon my hands,
But what about my hair?

Each week I used to make my way
To Nick in Joiners Lane
And in one hour he'd use his skill
And I'd look good again
So, if in three months time you see
A stranger with long hair
Just look again, beneath that mane
It's me, I do declare!!!



Margaret Williams



Looking good!

With Care Homes being closed to visitors, Margaret Williams was so pleased to receive this photo of her sister Val in a Care Home in Swansea, and was greatly heartened to see her looking so happy.

Good news! £420 raised for Homeless Charity

Alistair Senior, currently studying at Cambridge University, took part in the Cambridge Half Marathon, completing the run in 1 hour 28 minutes. He would like to thank all who supported him in raising £420 for the Cambridge Homeless Charity 'Winter Comfort', now needed more than ever during the present pandemic.



EVERYONE SANG

by Siegfried Sassoon



Siegfried Sassoon (1886 - 1967) was a British patriot and is recognised as one of sixteen "Great War Poets" on a plaque in Westminster Abbey. "Everyone Sang" is his most famous poem.

An extract from the poem is also engraved on the VE Day Memorial in the Town Gardens, Swindon. This was installed 25 years ago to commemorate VE Day but over the years it had become covered in moss and lichen. It has now been cleaned and restored for the 75th Anniversary.

Everyone suddenly burst out singing:
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields:
on-on and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun;
My heart was shaken with tears: and horror
Drifted away. . .O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless;
the singing will never be done.

Margaret Harber sent us this poem, mindful that this month is the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe.

Bath Road



BATH ROAD CUB PACK

While we are unable to meet at Bath Road Church with our Cubs, due to modern technology we have been meeting via the internet and having Virtual Cub Meetings.

Every week we start and finish with Grand Howl and then play a game. This has included a Scavenger Hunt, where we say an item and the first one to find it in their home and return to the screen wins, Kaa Says (Simon Says) and Kim's Game, which is a tray of items that you show to them and then you take away one item and they have to guess what is missing. Also, we play Port & Starboard, which has actions where they are jumping around at home and Baloo has run a Tai Chia type exercises session.

We then do Badge Work as the Scout Association has highlighted badges that can be done at home. So far we have completed the Home Help, Home Safety and Gardening Badges.

On the Easter weekend, we held a camp where the Cubs had to build a tent, indoor or outdoor, with things that they had indoors. They then had to sleep in it overnight. This was a very popular activity with the Cubs, but I don't know about the parents!

At the end of the meeting, we remind the Pack to keep the Cub Scout Law & Promise, which tells them to "think of others before themselves and do a good turn every day"

There are 4 leaders and each of us take turns in running one of the sessions during the meeting, and we meet on the internet weekly to plan the next meeting. Modern technology means we can still meet and it is good to keep in contact with the Cubs who all seem happy to be meeting in this way. Hopefully, it will not be too long before we can meet in person again.

Akela, Kaa, Baloo and Chil.

EASTER EGG DECORATING COMPETITION

Usually at Bath Road we hold an Easter Egg decorating competition and so we continued the tradition even though we are social distancing, The congregation sent in photos of their eggs and then a vote took place. We had two categories, Under 11 and Over 11.

Congratulations to the winners: Evie Monis (Under 11) and Macy Monis (Over 11), a double family victory! *Photographs of the winners' eggs are on the inside back cover of the magazine.*

It's also tradition to have an egg rolling competition and Kiana and Kenzie didn't want to miss out, so they staged their own in their back garden which is ideally situated on a slope. They also told us they had added a tunnel for egg-stra fun!

Allison Davies

Marion Gibbs



We were sorry to learn of the death of Marion Gibbs who died on the 19th March, aged 96. Marion left Swindon in November 2008 and moved to a flat in Hitchin to be near to her younger son, Geoff. Three and half years ago she moved across the road to Elmside, the Methodist Homes for the Aged in Hitchin.

Older readers will remember her as a long-time member of Bath Road Church. Her family life revolved around the church, her father having been present at the opening ceremony in 1880 and her grandfather was involved in the building, some of the wood carving having been done by him. Bath Road Church was also where Marion was christened and married her late husband, Harold as well as regularly attending worship and being involved in various activities, for example, Luncheon Club. Family involvement continued with her elder son David who was Director of Music for several years until he and Joy moved to West Sussex.

We send our condolences to David and Geoff and their families.

Junior Church continues

These days Junior Church is more than just for Sundays or video-conferences. We're here to offer assistance with keeping our youngest church family members entertained.

Having provided more books for enthusiastic reader Gabriel to dive into over Easter, we also recently dropped off an activities pack to Khalifa and Romeo. Here's a picture of the two lads getting down to business.



Working on the Coronavirus...

Pauline Sibley's granddaughter Laura and her husband Tom both work for Public Health England at Porton Down. Laura has just returned from maternity leave but had previously been involved with TB research, whilst Tom has been working on the Ebola testing. Both of them are now working on the Coronavirus effort, Laura with testing and Tom with finding a vaccine.



Beware - bubbles, bubbles everywhere!

Win Sayer's daughter and her husband have lived in France for 11 years. In a recent phone call she said that the French have very strict rules during the Coronavirus pandemic. You need a permit to go out, only three people can be in the supermarket at a time and there is a note on the window to disinfect all shopping and wash shopping bags in a washing machine. She put the bags in her washing machine and, by habit, put in the powder for a big wash. Her machine is in the basement of their home, and when she went to see if it had finished its cycle there were soap bubbles everywhere, they were even coming out of the cat flap and the cats had fled. Win phoned her the next day to see if everything was O.K. and she said 'Mother, the walls are lovely and clean and the carpet is sparkling.'

Methodist Church grants to help overseas Churches meet coronavirus challenge...

The Methodist Church of Britain has released almost £65,000 in grant aid to support partner Churches and overseas projects that have been affected by the Coronavirus crisis. The money has been made available from the World Mission Fund, donated by the Methodist people to support mutual partnership with Churches overseas. The emergency, 'solidarity' grants are given in response to an urgent crisis and to provide immediate aid for humanitarian or mission purposes overseas.

Andy Dye, Programme Team Leader in Global Relationships, commented, "Grants from the World Mission Fund are a response from the Methodist Church in Britain to a partner who is facing particularly difficult circumstances or an emergency situation. Although the grants may seem quite small in the global scale of things, they are a rapid response that express solidarity in partnership and can often open the door for our partners to receive other funding from around the world. For us and our partners these grants are an important part of our shared work in God's mission."

"As the crisis develops and the infection spreads to some of the world's poorest communities, we are going to be working with our sister organisation 'All We Can', the international development and emergency relief organisation of the Methodist Church, to provide further response to the unfolding situation." ■

The Methodist Conference will meet in an alternative form this year...

The Methodist Council has agreed that the Conference cannot meet as planned in Telford in June and will look at ways for the Conference to meet in an alternative form. The officers of the Conference will bring proposals for the functioning of this alternative meeting to an additional meeting of the Council. The restriction on groups meeting has meant that some Synods have not been able to meet and give full consideration to *God in Love Unites Us*, and the Council therefore also agreed that the debate and voting on the provisional resolutions will be deferred until the 2021 Conference. This also means that any other business (eg memorials) relating to those resolutions will not be considered this year. ■



Methodist
relief and
development

All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain are responding across the globe, enabling vulnerable communities to access the support they need.

We are working to maintain essential health services, deliver soap and hygiene items, and provide vital community healthcare education to Rohingya refugees living in the camps of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh; in Cameroon internally displaced families are being provided with vital hand sanitiser to help protect themselves from the virus; and in Uganda, families who have no means of accessing markets following the banning of public transport by the Ugandan government are being lent regularly sanitised bicycles.

All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain have already begun responding by providing essential grants to help churches overseas meet the challenges posed by Coronavirus, as well as providing staff on the frontline of Maua Methodist Hospital in Kenya with essential personal protective equipment. Anything that you give today will help us do more of this vital work.

We know that many people are facing financially difficult situations at this time – and so we are only asking you to donate if you are able to. Any gift, no matter how small, will help equip vulnerable communities to face Coronavirus.

PRAY GIVE SAVE LIVES

Thank you. *Graeme Hodge*, Chief Executive

You can donate online or telephone by calling one of our friendly Supporter Care team on +44 (0)20 7467 5132. For more information about the Emergency Coronavirus Appeal, you can email info@allwecan.org.uk. All We Can, 25 Marylebone Road London NW1 5JR

Not very good at Maths! (A true story)

A friend's grandson was off school due to Coronavirus but continuing to do lessons on line. He phoned his grandad to ask how to do fractions, but grandad wasn't very good at maths so he asked a friend who was. Subsequently this friend then had a reply telling him that the fractions had been completed satisfactorily and saying that "only half of the population could do this, whereas the other two-thirds could not"!!

THE HYMNS OF THE WESLEYS

by Canon David Winter

Later this month, on the 24th May, the Church calendar celebrates the lives of John and Charles Wesley. John's great gift to the Christian cause was the little matter of founding the world-wide movement known as Methodism. His brother Charles had an equally profound impact through his hymns. He wrote over 6,000, most of which aren't sung nowadays, but among the ones we do still sing are all-time favourites – 'Love divine, all loves excelling', 'O for a thousand tongues to sing'. 'Jesu lover of my soul', 'Hark the herald angels sing' – and scores more.

40 years ago almost everybody knew quite a lot of hymns, but sadly that's no longer true. Traditional hymns aren't usually sung at school assemblies, not even in church schools, and while the audience for 'Songs of Praise' on BBC TV is substantial, most of those watching are over 50. People who rarely go to church will be familiar with Christmas Carols and 'Jerusalem' and 'Amazing Grace' because they are frequently heard outside church.

Singing hymns is a wonderful experience at its best – just ask a Welsh rugby crowd singing 'Bread of heaven'! It seems a pity to lose it.

It's not a bad idea to take ten minutes and think about what is your favourite hymn, and why – ancient or modern doesn't matter. Then try singing it in the bath or under the shower – a very purifying experience!

Weekly Sing-Along: Thank you to Helen Dixon and her daughter Eleanor who have combined to arrange for the music for the hymns in Mark's weekly service to be sent out via email.

Sad news of two old friends:

Mavis Turton

We were sorry to hear of the death of Mavis on April 4th at the age of 104! Mavis had been living at MHA Stanton Fitzwarren for the last few years, but we remember a lively person who brightened us up at Bath Road, especially with her poems and flowers.

Joan Allen, a Local Peacher who was well known at Bath Road, has died in a Care Home near her daughter Joy.

We remember our friends and give thanks for their service to our Lord.



When war commenced, I was living in the village of Chandler's Ford, Hampshire. Being only 5 miles from Southampton and 2 miles from the railway town of Eastleigh, it was a scary place to be with air raids both day and night.

I started primary school in 1939 and a lot of my time there was spent in the air raid shelter singing songs: 'One man went to mow a meadow, two men went to mow,' and so on... Another song was 'Ten green bottles hanging on a wall, one green bottle accidentally fell and then there were nine green bottles hanging on the wall' etc., etc. I think we must have all become very proficient at adding and subtracting.

I remember one weekend, when playing in the garden with a friend, a German aircraft came out of nowhere, or so it seemed, and it was flying so low that we could see the pilot.

Chandler's Ford had lots of tree-lined roads which were excellent camouflage for the troops waiting to go overseas. Sometimes, when we were walking to school, convoys of American troops on the move to Southampton, threw out bars of chocolate and other treats from the back of their lorry and we rushed around picking up our bounty.



This is a photograph of some of the nearby residents in the road where I lived, taken at a VE Party to celebrate the end of the war. In the evening we had a large bonfire on top of which was an effigy of Hitler which had been drawn by one of the residents. *Diana Swann*

Immanuel

...and the Coronavirus

Well, it goes without saying that the past few weeks have been a most unusual time for all of us as we've tried hard to come to terms with the pandemic sweeping the country and being 'socially distanced' from friends and family as well as the church community.

I had to drive past Immanuel the other day and was really saddened to see the car park completely empty - normally on any weekday it is always half full with cars belonging to various local groups and societies who make the most of our facilities. It has been even more depressing to think that on Sundays the building has been closed and no worship has taken place inside.

But, of course, the church is more than just a building: we may be separated physically but certainly not spiritually and in true Immanuel style we have been trying hard to keep up our contacts with each other in various ways.

The elders have been busy ringing round their lists of members and associates and checking that everyone is well and managing to cope. And it is not just the elders who have been using their phone. I am sure that I am not the only one to have received very welcome phone calls from members and friends at Immanuel to check on me.

The church choir has devised a splendid mechanism for keeping in contact via 'round robin' emails, and several messages have been sent by various choir members, including a splendid electronic Easter card (thanks to John Blakesley who acts as postmaster) and they have all been much appreciated.

By way of a mini sermon, Robert has been posting a weekly 'reflection' on the church website (immanuelurg.org) and there were three very thought-provoking ones on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday

A lot of thought has gone into organising on-line elders' meetings using Zoom', so that before long we shall all be able to see and speak to each other from the comfort of our own home and still keep a sense of 'being church' - who knows where that might lead...might we yet see Robert leading worship from the kitchen of the manse? ►

One development the elders willingly agreed to was the creation of a new banner to grace the front of the church - an idea that came from our friends at Bath Road - so if you are passing the building for any reason, look out for it. It's one little way that as a church community we can say thank you to the NHS, carers and all those working to see us through the present crisis.



As I write this, it certainly looks as if we shall have to face a further three week period of lockdown before any possible relaxation of the stringent rules takes place, but I am confident that we are still a church that is caring and praying for each other, and remember...we are called Immanuel - God With Us.

Steve Brain

Muriel Baker thought we might enjoy doing this quiz during the lockdown

FURNISHINGS AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS QUIZ

1. City with crooked spire
2. Fish are covered with these
3. Alphabetical place to sleep on
4. Place a golfing aid
5. You could call the sun this
6. Descend to the depths
7. In control of the meeting
8. Would a toad sit on one?
9. South African mountain
10. Celtic costumier
11. A nurse's apron
12. A 6ft adolescent
13. Imagines
14. Miniature ripple
15. Dandelions make one
16. Senior politicians
17. Mechanised dishcloth
18. Alexander Graham Bell's invention
19. "Quiet pixies!"
20. Monte of Uruguay
21. Final – no more

Answers on page 26

**Barbara Furguson's article this month is based on
Christ Church's Bible Verse for 2020:**

***'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it; the world
and all who live in it.' Psalm 24, v.1***

We cannot dispute that an owner can do what he pleases with his own possession. But didn't we do well to directly obey God's voice when He said, "Come, my people, enter into your rooms and shut your door behind you. Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation is past."
Isaiah 26

David's prophetic words telling us to remember that the earth and all that is in it belongs to our God ring down through the ages and assure us that nothing has changed. These words are still true whatever forces of darkness try to prove otherwise. But His world is hurting and in deep need of divine healing. We have been and are being tested almost beyond endurance. Do we have to have world crises to prove that we trust Him?

The verse in Isaiah goes on to say 'He will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in Him'. So this could be an amazing opportunity to prove that we can be still and trust in Him more deeply than ever before and waiting for Him to act.

It is our privilege to call upon Him for the earliest possible complete lifting of the lockdown so that our churches (closed for the first time in history) can be reopened for prayer and praise.

And after it is all over we can go back to worrying about the flood that this same God has clearly said will never happen! ■

The United Reformed Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) is a busy ministry.

CRCWs respond to and challenge the issues facing in their neighbourhoods, work with a wide range of community groups and organisations, develop initiatives and projects to transform individuals, churches and communities.



But life has dramatically changed since the Coronavirus lockdown.

Marie Trubic, a CRCW based at the Priesthill & Shawlands project in Glasgow, explains how she continues to find hope and inspiration.

“As the days have gone by, I have noticed that more and more pictures of rainbows are appearing in the windows of the houses and flats that I am passing. Some have even appeared on the pavements.

“I have always been fascinated by rainbows, even before I became a Christian, after which they then became more significant. Rainbows are signs, they are signs of hope and they have appeared to have become the sign of hope during these unsettling times, regardless of whether folk are familiar with the story in the Hebrew scriptures.

“At the moment, it feels as though we, like Noah, are all sheltering from the storm. We no longer know what normal is - or what it will be. But as Christians, in the eye of this storm, we are called to share, in whatever way is appropriate, our hope of that rainbow, of a safer future, of a God that is with us always and who, as our faith tells us, will restore the world.”

THERE WILL BE A RAINBOW AFTER THE STORM



As mentioned in my article in the April magazine, Christian Aid Week is going ahead this year despite the Coronavirus lockdown and associated restrictions. However, it will inevitably be very different this year!

First of all I must confirm that, not surprisingly, the collection at the Railway Station that I gave details of in last month's article will not be taking place. We have also been advised that delivery-only envelopes will not be able to be used now either. There is a possibility that house-to-house collections may be held in the autumn instead.

Christian Aid Week this year was going to focus on Kenya and the Climate Crisis. However, in view of the Coronavirus pandemic, the focus has been changed to encompass the need to reflect that Coronavirus will have a huge impact on Christian Aid's partners and their work in vulnerable areas. They will be concentrating on the themes of "Love never Fails" and "Love Protects". More details of these themes are set out separately on page 24. As part of this:

- Christian Aid will have a special recorded message by Dr Rowan Williams, so we hope that this can be shared around your churches.
- There will also be a daily worship event online and a daily quiz. Please check out their website as this will contain all the updated information.
- Facebook has proved to be a valuable platform for many during this crisis and they will be using this to issue challenges from 1st May.
- There will be an opportunity to use "e-envelopes" to pass around family and friends and these will be available after 18th April.

Any fundraising that does take place will have to be done "virtually". Set out below are some ideas that have been suggested by Christian Aid: Use 'Just Giving' to arrange home based sponsored events:

Sponsored Silence ■ Skip ■ Treadmill walk/run ■ Sing ■ Read
Run a marathon! (round and round your garden)
Climb Kilimanjaro (up your stairs)

continued...

Write a book to sell after we come out of lockdown:

Recipes ■ Poetry ■ Favourite places to visit guide
Short stories ■ Favourite walks

Virtual meetings (via zoom or other platform) donate online or later:

Coffee morning ■ Breakfast/lunch/tea ■ Quiz

Create items which can be sold after lockdown.

Make a money collecting box – add 50p for every healthy day in lockdown.

If you're not spending on travel – donate half of your usual expenditure each week.

Get organised – plan a fundraiser for the Autumn

Declutter – box your unwanted goods and put to one side, arrange an attic sale for the Autumn

Create a quiz for your group/village/area and pass around electronically – collect pledges or donate online.

Plant seeds to nurture plants to sell later in the year.

Get youth groups/ children's groups involved (resources available online) – especially about Climate Justice - they can create posters whilst not at school or write letters.

These are some of the ideas that have been suggested but if anyone has any other ideas do let us know.

Please continue to pray for Christian Aid, their staff and the communities that they help and if you are able to organise something or make a donation please do so.

Thank you in anticipation.

George and Dorothy Kennedy (Tel: 01793 772589,
email george.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com)

The power of your love

The Coronavirus impacts us all. As this virus spreads across the world, love rises up in response. You have already shown incredible kindness to your neighbours.

Will you help more of your neighbours today? You could help us reach the poorest communities with clean water, soap and medical supplies.



Please donate today to save lives.
Go to: **caid.org.uk/coronavirus**

Love protects

Love never fails.

Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all.

Now is the time to reach out to our neighbours near and far.

Your love protects. From storms, from conflict, and now from Coronavirus.

Your love protects our global neighbours battling the spread of this illness.

Your love protects - with soap, clean water and medical supplies.

You can reach out today and protect people living in poverty.

Love never fails.



Please donate now and save lives,
preferably on line but otherwise by post.
Cheques to be made payable to:
Christian Aid and sent to:
Christian Aid, 35 Lower Marsh, London
SE1 7RL

Turning a negative into a positive



During the gale force winds of several weeks ago, the fence between the two neighbours whose gardens back onto mine was blown over.



Now, during this period of social-distancing, they have put up their table and chairs in their respective gardens, facing each other, and are enjoying a cup of coffee or

tea and a chat together - something it would have been impossible to do had the fence not blown over. *D.S.*

Answers to Furnishings and Household Items Quiz:

- 1) Chesterfield; 2) Scales;
- 3) Z-bed; 4) Settee;
- 5) Radiator; 6) Sink;
- 7) Chair; 8) Stool 9) Table;
- 10) Welsh Dresser;
- 11) Wardrobe; 12) Tallboy;
- 13) Pictures; 14) Microwave;
- 15) Clock; 16) Cabinet;
- 17) Dishwasher;
- 18) Telephone; 19) Shelves;
- 20) Video; 21) Curtains.



ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in this magazine,
please contact

Mr. David Bevan
telephone 01793 336667;

email:
david04bevan@yahoo.co.uk

Whilst care has been taken, no
responsibility can be accepted for
statements made by the advertisers,
neither can we be responsible for
any losses caused by any errors or
omissions in the advertisements.

Do you suffer from Macular Degeneration?

We use a unique lens technology,
to help those suffering from
Macular Degeneration by:

- Increasing the Magnification - giving a larger, clearer image
- Incorporating Prism - to focus the light on a healthier part of the eye
- Special Filters - to enhance contrast and reduce glare, giving more comfortable vision



VISIONVISIT
mobile opticians

www.visionvisit.co.uk 01793 232 588

**COPY for the JUNE MAGAZINE
by TUESDAY 12th MAY, please.**

Contributions ahead of the deadline are always welcome.

**Please send to: Mrs. Diana Swann, 58 Sandown Avenue, SN3 1QQ
email: d.swann6a@gmail.com**

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views of those held by the Old Town Partnership of Churches.

Hillier

Funeral Service

A tradition of caring since 1923

- Family run and independent
- 24 hour service every day
- Pre-payment plans
- Hillier Bereavement Care

A caring support service for the bereaved



www.hillierfuneralservice.co.uk



HEAD OFFICE

170 Victoria Road, Swindon SN1 3DF
Telephone: 01793 522797

CHAPEL OF REST

The Broadway, Whitworth Road,
Swindon SN25 3BL
Telephone: 01793 522145

EMAIL

enquiries@hillierfuneralservice.co.uk

Established in 1900, today's Hills Group is a dynamic Wiltshire business that covers a wide area of western and southern England.

The Group's operations remain dedicated to three core activities:

- Specialist waste management services and recycling solutions
- Production and sale of ready-mixed concrete, sand, stone and gravel
- Building high quality new homes and undertaking contract building projects

Working today...
...for a better tomorrow



www.hills-group.co.uk

T: 01793 781200

BATH ROAD CHURCH EASTER EGG DECORATING COMPETITION



Under 11 winner
Evie Monis



Over 11 winner
Macy Monis



Kiana and
Kenzie
having an
egg rolling
competition
in their back
garden.

DEACONS *for* DIAMONDS



SAME DAY RING SIZING SERVICE ON ALL NEW PURCHASES
Come and view our superb range of new, bespoke and second hand diamond rings.

DEACON & SON (SWINDON) LTD

Established 1848

Items featured subject to stock availability

11 - 15 WOOD STREET, OLD TOWN, SWINDON, SN1 4AN

TELEPHONE: 01793 522072/527530

www.deacons-jewellers.com

B&C MORSE

Painting • Decorating • Property Maintenance

- Local family business
- Interior and exterior painting and decorating specialists
- Wallpaper
- Coving
- Window frames and boards repainted
- Facias and soffits painted or replaced
- Associated building and maintenance work
- Discounts for OAP's
- Competitive rates
- No job too small



For a FREE quotation please call us on: 01793 536867 OR
CHRIS MOBILE: 07754 498760 • BRIAN MOBILE: 07876 074759
EMAIL: chrismorse1974@yahoo.co.uk