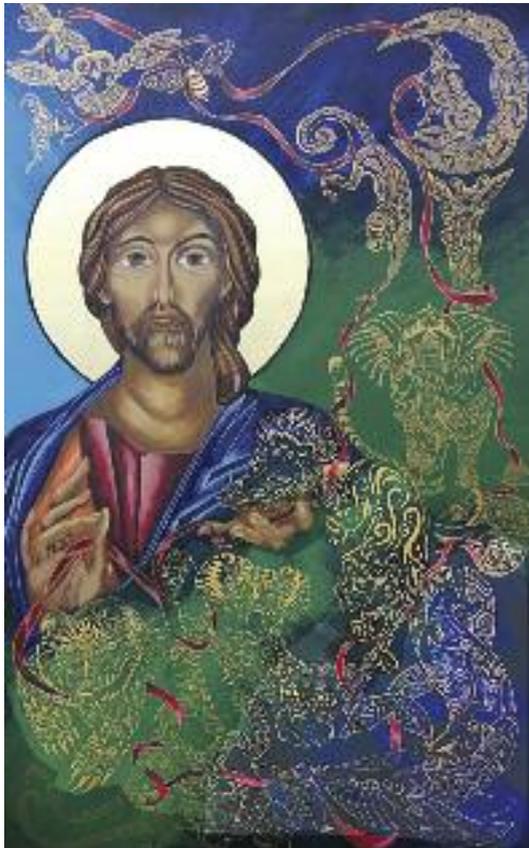


**Swindon Old Town Partnership of Churches
Anglican - United Reformed - Methodist - Est. 1969**

PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2020

80 PENCE



“The first Bible is Creation”

One in Christ - Together in Mission

THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH
Cards available to purchase, details on page 8



Angel Gabriel



Nativity



Parrot in North Transept window



Train in South Porch window

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Partnership Letter

The Manse
152 Drove Road

New Reality, same Mission

Greetings to you all.

For the first time in many months the three churches are celebrating worship again - yet St Mary's cannot, due to size - all with the reality of social distancing, not singing, and a series of other health and safety regulations. Knowing churches as we all do, probably one of the most difficult changes to experience is that most regular church attendees have not been able to sit in the same place they have always sat. Let's hope that doesn't become 'one of the signs of the end of the times', because, in truth, where we sit should not become the definition of who we are and what we do as church.

During these past months the United Reformed Church has issued a number of very helpful booklets, contributing to the reflection of being church under the current circumstances and, even more importantly, what we will be doing over the months ahead. A double movement in a way: looking back to look forward, particularly reflecting on our MISSION in the new times. And this will have a great impact on all of us, particularly within Partnerships of Churches up and down the land, and today I write to the Old Town Partnership of Churches, now travelling beyond its 50th Anniversary.

From Immanuel we have shared this document with the Focus group, hoping that very soon we will consider the wider implications within the Ecumenical set up. As Rowan Williams said, 'Mission is finding out what God is doing, and joining in'. These last few months have *'highlighted existing injustices in society...it has also prompted communities to pull together, and shown the value of bold collective action for our wellbeing'*. And it is clear each of us cannot tackle all this on our own, we will be much more effective when we do it together.

It has often been said that "we are all in this together", but it's not really true, is it? What is true is that we are all facing the same storm, but the boats we are in are quite different - dinghies, yachts, rowing boats ... and some have been

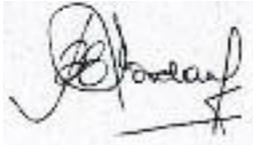
left aside and can barely cling on to floating debris in the sea because injustice doesn't affect everybody equally, and there are people and groups who are more vulnerable and in more need than others. They need our support. We MUST be part of the solutions, even if what we can do is small.

This is a time like no other, and one where we have the privilege of belonging to a PARTNERSHIP that has been going on for over half a century. Working together to live out our faith as a light to the world is a challenge, and it is our responsibility.

A YouGov survey in April 2020 found that 'only 9% of people in Britain want life to return to normal after the coronavirus outbreak is over'. As churches we have a lot to share, and a lot to learn, so these are exciting times. Let me end with another quote from the URC document: ***'Consider which part of God's mission we might we called to join in with and what we have to offer.'***

These are times not one of us has ever lived in. May our response be one which makes God's love clearly visible in these times, because that will be the new reality in which we will be living. Our new normal lies ahead.

God bless and guide us all on this exciting journey.



SPARE MAGAZINES

Due to lockdown and our churches having been closed, we have several copies of the church magazine from the last few months. If anyone is missing back copies, please get in touch with Caroline Pitt who will be pleased to let you have them. Tel. 521732
email: carolinempitt@gmail.com

FAMILY EVENTS

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to the loved ones of

BATH ROAD

June 23 Joan Bircher, 99 years

CHRIST CHURCH

July 1 Dorothy Shepherd, 96 years

July 12 Patricia Ann Wilson, 79 years

July 20 Mark Conway, 57 years

Aug 3 Nellie Cowlshaw, 103 years

Aug 4 Enid Pamela Bowden, 91 years

MARRIAGE

We wish joy and happiness to

BATH ROAD

Aug 8 Sam Gregory and Hannah Barret

CHRIST CHURCH

July 11 Andrew David Raeburn and Rowena Hazel Gee

Aug 1 Paul Mason and Lois Grace Croucher

FLOODLIGHTING

July 25 In loving memory of Henry Crane on what would have been his 100th birthday.

Sep 1 Robert 'Bob' Humerick. Treasured memories of Bob on his birthday. *José, Susan and family.*

Sep 24 Groombridge, Geoffrey, missed and loved lots!
Margaret and his family.

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 email: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk or phone 01793 522832 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 by providing your name, the first line of your address and our postcode.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VJ DAY MARKED IN SWINDON



Daniel Pitt represented the Old Town Partnership of Churches at a celebration on Saturday 15th August to mark the 75th anniversary of VJ day, the end of the Second World War in the Far East.

The celebration was hosted by South Swindon Parish Council in the Rose Garden in Queen's Park. Attending were the Chair of the South Swindon Parish Council, Councillor Chris Watts, other Parish Councillors and officials, the Mayor of Swindon, Councillor Garry Perkins and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Shirley Ludford, together with around 100 invited guests representing a cross section of Swindon communities.

The speeches emphasised the importance of community and the need not to forget those who suffered for our freedom. The Mayor and Chair of the Parish Council unveiled the memorial, pictured, a sculpture by Dr. Mike Pringle representing a civilian rather than a military theme.

On the wall behind the memorial, by the lake, is a new mural featuring the words of the song "We'll meet again". ■



Advance notice:

**Christmas Craft Sale and Coffee,
Saturday 14th November at the home of
Noel and Janet Hunt, in aid of the Partnership Project
raising funds for the Desai Memorial Primary School,
Nairobi.**

This will be subject to government guidelines.

The local craft fairs that many of us would usually attend have been cancelled for this year. We hope to sell our hand-crafted cards and wooden gifts in aid of the Partnership Project from home instead. Please keep the date and check the November magazine for further details. Advance orders are welcomed. ■

Noel Hunt's work goes international

Once again the American Hardwoods Export Council (AHEC), in conjunction with the London Design Museum, has approached Benchmark, the company that Noel works for, to run a promotional furniture design and make project.

This year they have called upon nine international designers to create a table and seating which will suit their new ways of working from and living at home

in these challenging Covid times. The project is called 'Connected'. Although we are separated by distance we are still 'connected' in reality.



All the communication and design development has been done electronically via Zoom calls and e-mail. Noel has been paired up with Maria Bruun from Copenhagen in Denmark. She has designed an office desk/dining table and chair. The table is simple in its lines and shape but is far from simple in its construction. The inspiration comes from a traditional gate leg table. The complexities of the design include wooden hinges to open the legs, a 2 metre long wooden hinge to open the drop leaf and turned feet incorporated onto the square sectioned legs; all this whilst keeping the timber as thin and flat as possible. The timber chosen is relatively unusual, Rippled Maple; its characteristic is a gentle ripple or wave pattern within the grain.

More information can be found on www.Benchmarkfurniture.com

Christ Church with St. Mary's



CHURCH CLOCK SPRINGS BACK INTO ACTION – TIME TO LOOK UPWARDS AGAIN

We are delighted to report that the clock on the outside of Christ Church is again in working order. It was replaced in the tower on 16th July 2020 and is now keeping good time. The Friends of Christ Church are pleased to have paid for the overhaul and repair – we are a separate charity dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the Christ Church building.

The clock dates from 1843 or even earlier and was installed originally in the old parish church of Holy Rood on The Lawn. It was moved to Christ Church when the church was built in 1851. When it was first installed the clock had to be wound by hand twice a week.

In February 1996 the parish magazine carried a plea for some donations to allow the clock to be regilded and overhauled, and for an automatic winding device to be installed.



The clock still had to be adjusted by hand to and from British Summer Time until September 2018 when an auto-regulator was installed. This was a radio signalled solenoid switch to the pendulum, which acted as an automatic timer and enabled the clock to switch automatically from Greenwich Mean Time to British Summer Time. This installation was paid for by a bequest from John Plaister, a member of the Christ Church congregation, Trustee of the Friends and expert horologist.

Unfortunately the rest of the clock mechanism was too worn to cope with the new regulator and it began to run erratically. The Cumbria Clock Company removed the mechanism to their workshop in September 2019 and started a complete overhaul and repair. The work was nearly complete before lockdown. The reinstallation of the clock took place on 16 July 2020 as soon as travel restrictions were sufficiently lifted. (Photos by Janet French)►

The clock is one of the most obvious outside parts of the church. Having an accurate clock on the spire is a good indication that the church itself is a going concern and is keeping up with the times. Several members of the public who walk past the church have expressed their dismay that the clock has not been working and we hope that they will be pleased to see it back in place.

Caroline Pitt

GARDENERS TAP INTO FRIENDS RESOURCES

Many of you will have admired the beautiful new tubs of flowers round the edge of Christ Church, particularly at the east end by the rose garden.

These have been planted by Ian Handy and his colleagues. As a Friends member, Ian asked for a new outside tap by the vestry steps to help with watering. The Friends paid for the parts for this installation, incorporating an isolating valve which includes double check valves to ensure compliance with Regulations. The work was done by Gervin Senior and Daniel Pitt and looks very good, so gratitude is due to them.



This project is part of the much wider and more ambitious project of implementing a significant upgrade to the rose garden when resources permit.

Beautiful cards from Christ Church stained glass windows

Angel head or Nativity scene Greetings cards, with envelopes.
Blank inside for your own message: 50p each or 6 for £2.50.

Post cards of train in South Porch, 30p each or 4 for £1.00

Post cards of green parrot in North Transept, 30p each or 4 for £1.00

Cash or cheque, or BACS transfer.

For delivery, contact Caroline 01793 521732

Sold in aid of The Friends of Christ Church

Dorothy Shepherd **7th December 1923 to 1st July 2020**

We were very sorry to learn of the death of Dorothy, a lovely lady for whom we had a lot of respect. She was a stalwart of the congregation at St. Mary's in the Mall. Dorothy joined the Mothers' Union branch at Christ Church with St. Mary's in 2000 and was treasurer of the branch for many years, and regularly attended MU Deanery meetings and Festivals. When walking to branch meetings became too difficult, she was always ready on time to be collected by car and did not mind waiting until after the clearing up was done to be taken home. This was even when her sight was fading and she could not see who was there or what was happening. Dorothy was also a very supportive member of the Friends of Christ Church and also enjoyed going to the monthly meetings of Tea & Chat arranged by Christ Church at the Goddards.

Dorothy went through the sadness of losing her daughter Pam to cancer, but she was well supported by her grandsons – James, Jonathan, and twins Nathan and Thomas, and we send our condolences to them.

Annie raises £1,538 for GWH

In our July/August magazine, we featured Annie who has been raising funds for the Children's Ward at Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust by running a mile every day for a month! Having been a patient herself, she felt they needed new toys. She is really pleased to have raised £1,538 and thanks everyone who helped her to reach this fantastic total.



CANCELLATION

It is with regret that we have had to cancel The High Sheriff's Concert which was tentatively scheduled for 28th November at Christ Church. It was felt that it would have been difficult to adhere to the necessary restrictions imposed by Coronavirus.

CHRIST CHURCH AUTUMN FAYRE CANCELLED

Due to the Coronavirus, our Autumn Fayre, normally held in September has been cancelled...

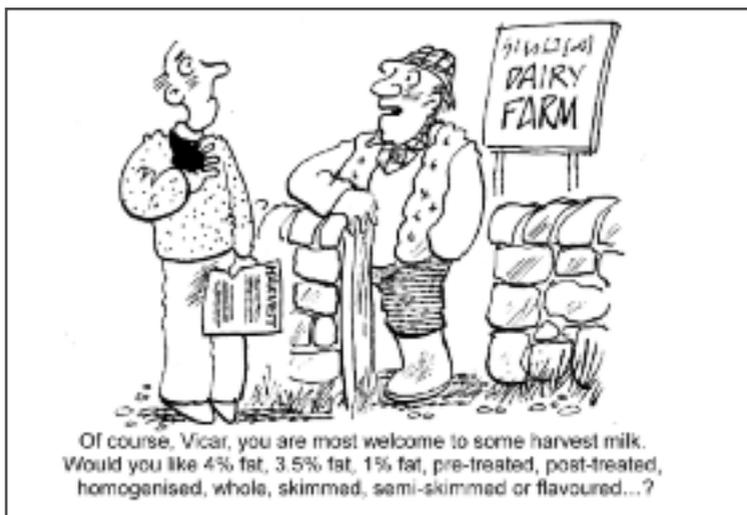
...but the good news is that

The Community Centre at Christ Church is now open for controlled bookings. We have put specific measures in place to make the centre Covid secure. For more information about our changes or to make a booking, please visit our website: www.book-online.co.uk/cccc or call: (01793) 617237 or e-mail: ccooperations@christchurchwindon.co.uk.

Bishop of Bristol to take up national safeguarding role

The Bishop of Bristol, Bishop Viv Faulk has been appointed a deputy lead bishop for safeguarding. Her focus will be on liaison with diocesan bishops on behalf of the National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) and with the wider Anglican Communion, and to speak on safeguarding in the House of Lords.

She will work closely with the lead safeguarding bishop, the Bishop of Huddersfield, Jonathan Gibbs and the other deputy lead Bishop Debbie Sellin, who took up their roles earlier this year.



The icon on our front cover is based on the ‘Pantocrator’, an Icon in St Catherine’s Monastery in Egypt. The first bible is creation, so here I have removed the usual Bible from the original image and put in its place the first ‘bible’ - Creation in all its glory. The saints more or less seemed to find spiritual experiences outside, rarely in our buildings. I have also removed the traditional red surround of the Byzantine icons, because creation is borderless, and instead used the red ribbon as a symbol that links all beings together.

The icon explained

Hedgehog: Christ holds a hedgehog....I was taught these creatures carry fleas....and are prickly. They are seriously endangered because people like me have used slug pellets for our precious plants... I feel this small shy creature is missing from my life, I’m missing it eating the slugs and snails of my soul. Yet here Christ shelters the creature, unbothered by some spikes and a few fleas. Christ’s palm is open, this hedgehog can escape, he’s not held against his will, nor are we.

Bear: Christ’s hand of blessing hovers over Mother bear, her huge claws a sign of her strength, fearsome strength, yet warm embrace.

Snakes: In Peru snakes represent the underworld, an underground place from which nutrients are drawn; the ‘underworld’, about which we know little, but perhaps Christ is a bit more familiar with.

Bees and insects: Who would have guessed in the past these are so important to us and our food chain.

Whale: Reminds me of the underworld journey Jonah took, mirroring Christ’s underworld experience, and that we are all invited into it if we want to really grow up spiritually and fulfil what is only ours to bring to this earth.

Tiger: In Buddhism Tiger represents the transformation of anger into wisdom and insight, willpower strength and courage.

Elephant: Strength power intellect, loyalty, social group - companionship and unity (beat humans on that score!) They live in societies with their own cultures, self-medicate with plants, protect people and other animals in trouble, and Yes, Paint!

Monkey: Mischievous, playful, reminds me of the innocent sage...a unique playful wisdom, that can laugh and yet resounds with a wisdom of depth, rare to find.➤

Giraffe: What is a giraffe's perspective? What can we learn from these elegant creatures? The Grounded-ness to earth and yet the far sightedness they appear to have with a flexibility to see in both directions and behind.

Moon: The cycle of the moon — gives us a regular view of the cycle of life. And many faiths use the calendar by moon cycles.

Wolf: A symbol of wildness and of family values.

Butterfly: In many cultures this is a symbol of the soul. Its journey on earth is initially crawling around, eating leaves, then it literally goes into the 'tomb' - a chrysalis and becomes like a 'cell soup' from within what science calls 'imaginal cells' that start firing, and then this amazing beautifully coloured butterfly appears lasting only a few days.

Owl: These silent mysterious creatures have such amazing night vision. They see beyond seeing, a wisdom we lack, and so are drawn to them.

Koala: Much more endangered now after the horrendous bushfires we have recently witnessed (due to global warming).

Leopard: Solitary animals, persevering for their offspring, such attentive mothers.

Turtle: Reminds me of the fragility of our eco system and of the waters they live in, yet they are one of our most ancient fellow beings; what do they know that we don't?

Gecko: A favourite animal my children so enjoyed spotting (and still do), an animal that fascinated them and they could get close to, have a good look at and wonder.

Chameleon: So well-known for changing to match their environment – oh why don't we?

Dragonfly: I recall the fascination of watching one of these emerge from its skin and this stunning blue creature appearing.

Snail: I put this in because I feel bad about having used slug pellets and my contribution to the loss of habitat for other creatures because of it. I'm working on this!

Sue Mansfield

This is a shortened version of Sue's explanation of her icon but you can see the full version on Christ Church website or on a paper copy from the Parish Office.

Bath Road

From Mark at Bath Road:

On Saturday 8th August it was my joy to conduct the wedding of my daughter Hannah Barrett to Sam Gregory. On a very hot and sunny day we shared in a small service with family, bridesmaids, groomsmen and friends. Just the weather for a three piece suit. It was a wonderful occasion and, amidst the tears of joy, there was much celebratory laughter. A truly happy and glorious day.

See photo on inside back cover.

Sing Along With Us

Shortly before we went into lockdown, Bath Road Council agreed that I could set up our new project - Sing Along With Us. This was to be a social singing group for adults with memory concerns: Alzheimer's, Dementia etc and adults on the Autistic Spectrum.

I planned to begin work on this once I had retired from work in April, but of course we were beaten by lockdown and this unique project is now on hold until it is safe for groups to meet and sing. This group will offer, through singing, enjoyment, wellness, fellowship and a weekly uplift for all involved.

My plan is to bring together these groups as all can have difficulties with communication and relationships, but in the right setting all can benefit greatly, and I know of many adults on the spectrum who would be an amazing support to those with memory issues, whilst benefitting themselves from the enjoyment of singing with others.

Due to the current restrictions, I suspect it may be sometime before we may be able to get this off the ground. Therefore I would ask if you could (a) spread the news and (b) register an interest, so that I can get an idea of numbers and what roles people would be wanting. If you have family or a carer that you need to support you, we would love them to be involved too.

I have for most of my career worked with people with various disabilities, mental health concerns and autism and I have over the last few years been introduced to the trauma of Dementia/Alzheimer's through my mother's battle with it. ➤

I have over the last six years been running therapeutic sessions for individuals who find socialising fun, but I am not an expert on singing, just someone who enjoys a good sing-song.

The group is not about creating great choral works, so we will be just enjoying the songs we learn and the plan is not to become a performing group.

Training on how the group will run for volunteers and supporters will be given.

If you are interested in any part of this, please email: singalongw@gmail.com and let me know if you would like to join us as a member singer, member supporter, member volunteer or a carer

Please also state if you are ok with being put on an email list to be contacted in the future re Singalong With Us.

I look forward to hearing from you

Ceri Gardiner

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

What a lovely surprise to receive a visit from Janet Hunt bringing a small gift. Going back over 10 years, Janet and Noel have invited the MOPS group to tea in their garden in July. Unfortunately, with lockdown, they are unable to do that this year, and so they brought us all a small box of homemade cakes and a beautiful card which Janet had made, showing colourful views of their garden.

We shall miss seeing their lovely garden, looking at the rabbits on their lawn, the fish in the pond, and all the flowers, fruit and vegetables.

I would like to say a further big thank you to them as during this lockdown they have been helping several members with their shopping and Janet has been making cards for all sorts of celebrations.

We oldies do appreciate all that the younger ones are doing to look after us through this difficult time.

Margaret Jones

The card depicting Janet and Noel's garden is on the inside back cover of this magazine.

Back to Church

After our long absence from Church, it was a joy to be walking out in the sunshine on Sunday morning the 12th July to meet with others for our service. It was a lonely walk as I didn't pass anybody until I got to Wood Street, where I met a young father and his two little daughters. The youngest one was chattering away until I met up with them. The father said "Hello" and when I replied "Good Morning", the little one cried out in a loud voice "Good Morning". It was a happy meeting.

On arrival at church, I parked my trolley and climbed up the ramp where I was met at the door by one of the stewards to anoint my hands. I was then directed to my seat which had my name on. I think there were about 30 people in the congregation. The theme of the service was 'The sower and the seed': we accept that we are the sowers of the seed – and what seeds had we sown and are sowing in our lives?

The music group played all the hymns and we had to sit and read them on the screen. At the end of the service we were told we could meet up outside for a chat.

Margaret Jones.

The Brownies

Due to relocation and work commitments, the leadership at 12th Swindon Brownies has notified us they are unable to continue and the unit will be closing in due course - date to be confirmed. The leadership has made us a very kind donation from their funds and wanted to thank all at Bath Road for giving them the opportunity to run the unit on our premises for all these years.

We are sorry to hear the unit will be closing and for the children who will not now have the benefit of the team's leadership in the future. We wish Jenny and Kayleigh all the best and are grateful for all they, and their predecessors before them, achieved with the girls.

We were blessed to have two units on premises and we continue to welcome and support 8th Swindon Brownies who meet on Thursday evenings.

zoom!

In August, my eldest son Andy, who lives in Manchester, was in Swindon for a short stay. He is a member of a Baptist church in Fallowfield, part of Manchester, and sometimes leads services there. Last Sunday was one of those occasions but he was in Swindon! Thanks to modern technology, he was able to lead the service remotely...by Zoom!

Jess, my granddaughter and I sat in one room with her laptop—Andy in the room next door. On the screen, we were able to see each member of the congregation joining the service, each in their own home: adults, children and one sleeping baby (who was in Indonesia)! At the appropriate time Andy started the service and we shared prayers, Bible readings and thoughts on Jacob and Esau and their families. It was an amazing experience and certainly a first for me!

Having been to Union Chapel many times while staying with the family in Manchester, I recognised most of the congregation, about 30 in all.

The strangest thing was that at the end of the service I really felt as though I had been in Manchester sharing in that service in person; it is difficult to explain but the feeling was so real. The miracles of modern technology!!

Marion Howes

GENESIS GROUP



At a recent Genesis Junior Church meeting about that great Bible property steward and temple-building visionary, Zechariah, the session included questions about 10 great buildings - did you know the Leaning Tower of Pisa took 200 years to build and was observed to be leaning before they had finished in 1373? We had a first-place tie between Dan and Jonah that got settled through a game of Jenga.

Projector Screen: A projector screen has kindly been donated by Ceri and Oly and is now installed in the Roberts Room. Thank you both.

BATH ROAD FEATURES IN THE METHODIST RECORDER

Majority of churches ‘not yet’ reopening

Bath Road church in Swindon opened for worship on July 12. The Rev. Mark Barrett paid tribute to the church officers who had worked so hard to make it possible and commented that across the ages represented in the congregation it had been the oldest worshippers who had been most keen to reopen.

Around 35 people attended, with seating positions identified. ‘We are approaching this with care and caution as well as with a feeling of joyful, if muted, celebration. After each Sunday there will be a review of the situation’, he said.

One minister spoke of having four members in two of his churches who, for various reasons, had decided that they would not be returning when their church reopened.

In one case, having been relieved of the burden of keeping a small chapel going, they did not want to take up that responsibility again.

On the other hand, a steward in another church had resigned because he felt that the church was not reopening quickly enough.

While many more Methodist churches may have reopened, it is clear that the majority are saying ‘not yet’. Typical was the response of the superintendent minister of the Ely and Newmarket circuit, the Rev’d. Colin Watkins, who said that a few of the churches were aiming for an August reopening but most were hoping for September.

A co-superintendent minister of the North Kent circuit, the Rev’d. Bonni-Belle Pickard said that consultations were underway and that 10 per cent of the churches might reopen in the next few months. She felt that there was a definite lack of available stewards and preachers, but ‘online worship and fellowship is alive and thriving and growing’.

Some miscellaneous observations on life...

The heaviest thing you can carry is a grudge.

One thing you can give and still keep is your word.

Be kinder than necessary to people you meet because they may be fighting some kind of battle.

PREMISES UPDATE

We're on the final leg of major works to have a building fit for the next 30 years. Following around 35 years of wear and tear, our carpet must be replaced before the end of 2021. This will be throughout the building except the worship area which was relaid around a decade ago.

This will be a considerable expense of around £15-£17,000 and so we are delighted to announce we have secured donations from South Swindon Parish Council (£2000), £1,500 from Allchurches Trust, part of the Ecclesiastical Group, and The Leonard Laity Stoate Family Trust (£500). We are extremely grateful for these donations. This takes us up to £4,000 in grants from organisations so far. We have more applications currently being assessed by fund trustees and we will keep you informed with our progress.

We thank all of you who have continued to maintain your financial giving during these challenging times. At our recent P&FC meeting it was clear that without your giving we would be in a very bleak position indeed. Thank you for your continued support.

Property & Finance Committee

Seeds Sown

After reading the articles by Margaret Jones and Marion Howes in our Newsletter, I thought about what seeds I have sown over the years.

My son Alan lives in Pedmore, near Stourbridge. He became an Anglican Lay Reader some years ago, so is able to lead services, although he and his wife have changed churches fairly recently. He has also been a Group Scout Leader, a role that he held for several years until 1-2 years ago. Two of his children were confirmed when they were teenagers.

My daughter Mary belongs to Royal Wootton Bassett Methodist Church and has been involved in various roles. Her son Adam is studying at Loughborough University and is very involved in church and Christian Union. As a family, they have enjoyed time at Spring Harvest, a Christian holiday/conference.

A lot of thanks are due to my late husband Clifford, the Bath Road Methodist Church community, as well as the Scout Leaders and many others.

Pauline Sibley

Church Mice at work - the human kind



The Bath Road Property & Finance Committee would like to thank Juan and his dad Sujay for their fine efforts repainting our church bench.

We would also like to thank Gary, Keir and Martin for finishing the painting of the walls and ceiling in the Roberts Room - a project that was first started by others three years' ago!

Eleanor has been busy painting over 35 years of bumps and scrapes to Bath Road's staircases.



Joan Bircher
28th February 1921 – 23rd June 2020

Joan, with her husband Ken, came to Bath Road Church about 30 years ago and she was our oldest member. As a friend and her pastoral visitor it was always a pleasure to visit Joan in her flat at Mill Court, out would come her bone china tea-set and a lovely cake she had made. Joan loved entertaining folk and she was a warm and friendly person who had a large circle of friends to the end.

Just before lockdown she had celebrated her 99th birthday and her room was full of flowers, balloons and nearly 60 cards.

Joan continued driving into her nineties and was seen regularly in church sitting with a row of friends—she outlived them all!



In recent years she was not able to get to a service but kept an active interest in church life, read the Church magazine and produced lots of knitted garments for the Shoebox Appeal etc.

Joan was part of a close family and loved talking about how she and Ken met in a church at Churchdown, Gloucester where her daughter Gill and grandchildren and their families still live. We remember them all at this time, thanking God for Joan's long life well lived.

Marilyn Vizor

Hi-tech security...!!!

A kangaroo kept getting out of his enclosure at the zoo. Knowing that he could hop high, the zoo officials put up a ten-foot fence. He was out the next morning, just roaming around the zoo. A twenty-foot fence was put up. Again he went out. When the fence was forty-feet high, a camel in the next enclosure asked the kangaroo, "How high do you think they'll go?" The kangaroo said, "About a thousand feet, unless somebody locks the gate at night!"

Immanuel

Morning Service is back:

On Sunday 9th August, Immanuel celebrated its first service since mid March. Even with the limitations that are in effect, it was still a lovely moment which was both emotional and celebratory. Being able to use the Immanuel CD, the choir led us in the recorded singing, which was lovely to have, as well as the organ playing, even though we only followed the words. We expect the next few weeks will see more people joining in.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Buildings and Grounds Committee, the Elders and the Worship Group, and all who worked so hard to get everything in order for this celebration, it was welcomed and recognised by all.

Virtual Coffee Mornings



The church elders have been holding regular meetings via Zoom so we felt it might be a good idea to hold a

'zoomed coffee morning for those Immanuel members and associates who wanted to meet up via their computers. Granted it wasn't quite the same experience as we might have had chatting over coffee in the church parlour, and we did have to make our own coffee and provide our own biscuits but there was a real buzz as some 27 of us gathered to swap news.

All of us really appreciated the chance to talk and more importantly see each other – for some the first time in over three months! It was the overwhelming decision to repeat the event, so do look out for the invitation via weekly news (and it really is very easy to do – providing you have a computer, tablet or smart phone!) *Our photo shows a small section of those who took part, as wasn't easy for Steve to get a good photo of the whole screen.*

Virtual Tea Party



Following on from the zoomed coffee morning' held back in June, a similar group of Immanuel friends and associates joined up on-line over an afternoon cuppa on the 18th July. Much fun and laughter was

shared 'over the ether' and one of our number (who will remain nameless) made us all very envious as she tucked into a delicious-looking chocolate éclair!

At one point there were 19 of us who had managed to link up (including one couple enjoying themselves in the sunshine down in Dorset!) and it was really good to be able to share tales of what we'd all been up to as well as news of others from the Immanuel fellowship.

Like the earlier coffee morning, it wasn't quite the same experience as being able to talk literally face to face, but let us hope that it won't be too long before we will all be able to meet up in the church parlour or hall and really enjoy each other's company.

Prayer in a time of Coronavirus

Love never fails. Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope.

Love compels us to fight against Coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty.

Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far.

Love compels us to give and act as one.

Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before. As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family.

So, let us pause and find a moment of peace, as we lift up our hearts together in prayer. (Christian Aid)



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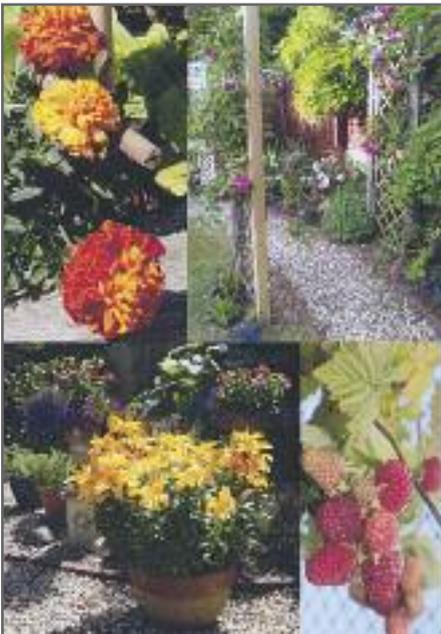
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**Wedding of Hannah Barrett and Sam Gregory
Saturday 8th August**



A collage of photos of
Janet & Noel Hunt's garden



Onion harvest at
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