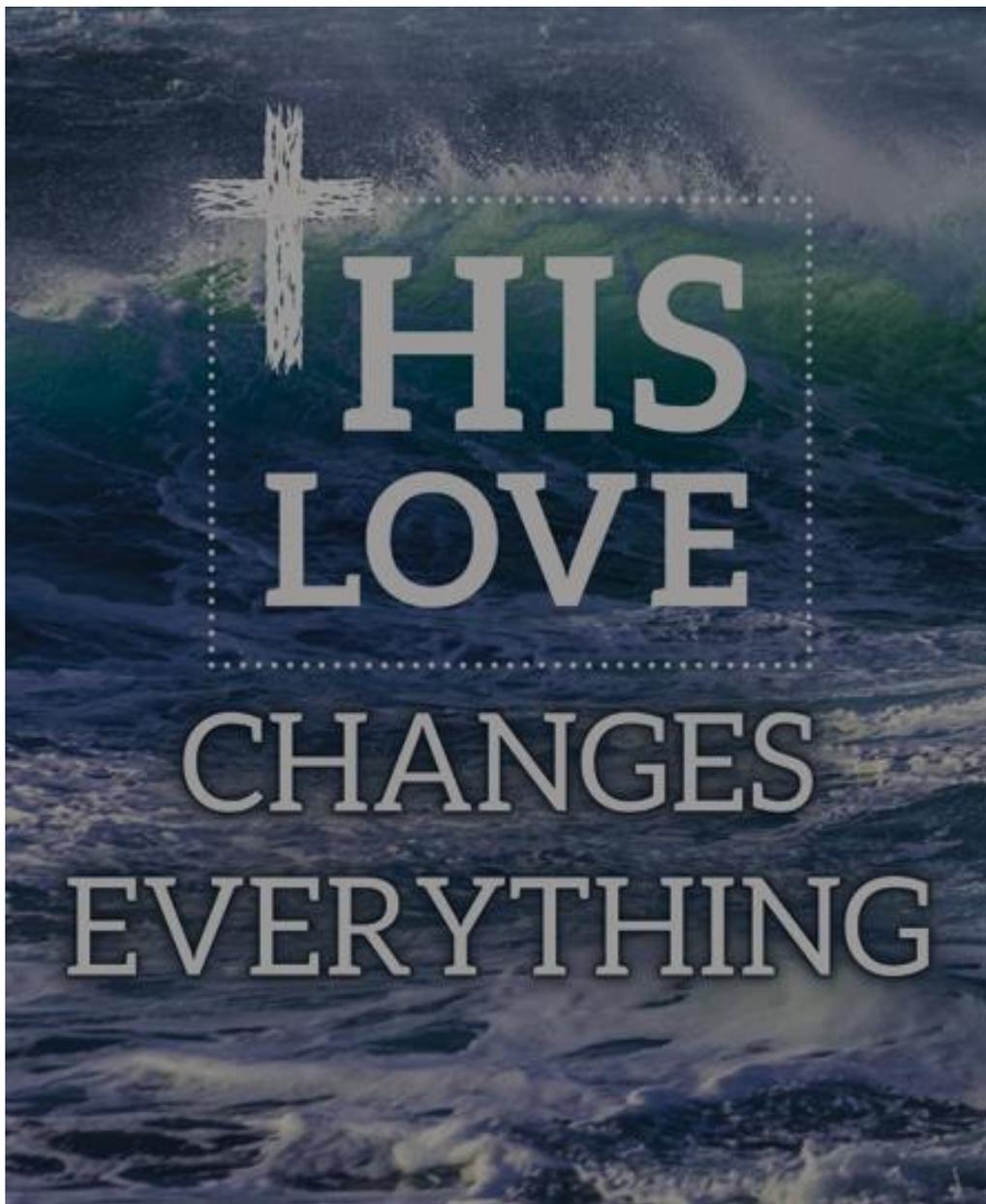


APRIL – JUNE 2020



MESSAGE FROM THE MANSE

I recently discovered a poem by Ross Gay entitled 'Ode to buttoning and unbuttoning my shirt.' It is a glorious poem which speaks about the importance of taking note of the simple things in life, recognising that what we do impacts on areas of our life which seems to be disconnected.

You can read the poem here <https://onbeing.org/poetry/ode-to-buttoning-and-unbuttoning-my-shirt/> and listen to it linked from this article.

I'm writing this at the point in which our social distancing has been extended for another three weeks, and all speculation is that this will continue in a variety of ways for much, much longer.

In a world where we have lost our freedom, and where our relationships are much more different than we could ever have imagined, a poem about how we button our shirt is either a beautiful gift or a cynical perspective on life. I choose to take it as a gift.

- ✓ A gift which reminds us that it is important to stick to routines,
- ✓ especially when our wellbeing is challenged.
- ✓ A gift which reminds us to notice the simple things, as they ground us to the present, and enable us to focus our emotions
- ✓ A gift which reminds us that we are still connected, even when we are alone

So – please find a way this week, to set yourself a ritual, and ask God to speak to you through it. It might be getting dressed. It might be in the garden. It might even be baking. But whatever it is – find a gift of space and routine and simplicity which helps you to engage with God and with your own emotional responses to what is happening in the world around and about us.

Joanne

PRAYERS

Prayers are needed for everyone at this very difficult time whether they are self-isolating, shielding, working from home, or at work - whatever their particular circumstances.

Please pray for those who are housebound, in residential care or hospital, including:

Marjorie: June: Pat: Frances: Pat: Pat: Joan

Please pray for those who are not well, and their carers including:

Lenny: Alan: David and Marion: Marjorie: Pearl: Rod and Yvonne

NEWS

A Prayer for during Covid-19

Loving Father

Be with us now as we are feeling the impact of things closing, particularly our opportunities to worship together and share fellowship with friends. Help us to see this as a new opportunity, a real gift of time, and a chance to be mindful and live 'in the moment', enjoying each day as it dawns with the sound of birdsong, new spring flowers and extra daylight.

Help us to replenish our energy levels and feel refreshed in your love as we press the pause button and listen to your calling, rather than rushing from one task to another.

We pray for those who feel isolated and alone. Guide us, Loving Father, to be able to discern where there is a need, and how to meet that need, as we learn new ways of outreach and being a Christian in a different way.

In the Name of Him who understands all our needs and anxieties. Amen

Ros

Action for Children

During 2019 Trinity raised the following for Action for Children

Donations:	£400.00	
Ladies Tuesday Club Concert:	£500.00	
Home Collection Boxes:	£798.12	
Total		£1696.12

A very big thank you to everyone who contributed

Valerie and Gareth have now retired as secretaries after about 25 years

Peter - has kindly volunteered to take over as secretary. If you wish to become a box holder, please contact him.

Message from the Gift Aid Secretary

I shall soon be preparing my claim for tax refund on behalf of the Church for the financial year 5 April 2019 to 5 April 2020, and I would be grateful for your help. Could you please check your tax position for the above year to confirm that the amount of tax I shall be reclaiming on behalf of the Church is fully covered by the amount of income tax and or capital gains tax, which you have paid in the year. If not, please let me know, as you may need to formally withdraw from the scheme.

The total tax paid must be equivalent to at least 25% of your charitable giving. If it falls below this the HMRC have the right to recover the shortfall, either by direct demand or by restricting any refund due to you. Please remember to include any gifts made to other charities in your total giving. If you need any help in making your calculations do not hesitate to contact me.

Tax recovered for the year to 5 April 2019 was in excess of £10,000, and I should like to thank everyone who made this possible. If you would like more information about the gift aid scheme, please get in touch.

Mavis Gift Aid Secretary

Jane and Trevor Starling



We moved to Codsall in January this year after living for 30 years in Chasetown, near Lichfield. We are both retired and have a daughter Lucy, who lives with her partner, Daniel, in Worcester.

Jane was born in Folkstone and as a child moved house a lot as her father was a Methodist Minister. At the age of 11, her parents decided to send her to boarding school in Southport, to provide some continuity to her education. Unfortunately, it closed after 4 years and she had to return home. She hastens to add it was nothing to do with her!

At the age of 19 she qualified as a nursery nurse and moved to Codsall with her parents, where her father became the minister of Trinity Codsall for the next 6 years. During her time at Trinity, Jane was a member of the drama group and progressed from playing a maid to taking leading roles.

When her father moved to Devon Jane decided to stay in Codsall and went to lodge with Helen & Peter Share for what was supposed to be a short period of time, but ended up being 18 months. It was during this time that Helen & Peter introduced Jane to Trevor who played in a worship group with Helen & Peter. So, it's all their fault....

Trevor was born in Chasetown and has three brothers. When he left school, he became a telephone engineer but became interested in computers and changed career. Over the years he held a number of senior positions in the IT industry. For the last 15 years he was also a management development coach, which was probably the most rewarding part.

During our time at Chasetown both of us were active in the church holding a number of roles, including senior stewards, Sunday school, bible study and house group leaders. Trevor has been a local preacher for almost 30 years.

Jane was actively involved in charity work which led to paid jobs. She was a cook and manager in a Christian coffee shop, cooking full English breakfasts. (Which she never let Trevor have boo hoo!) Later she became the manager of a Romanian Charity shop. She also worked for a Dementia charity for some time.

Over the last 10 to 15 years we have both had major health issues which led to retirement and a change in lifestyle. At the same time, we had responsibilities for elderly parents, with Jane's father being a long way away in Devon.

Jane loves gardening and is looking forward to getting to grips with the new garden. She likes

to spend time baking and wants to get back to her old hobbies of drawing and playing the piano.

Trevor still plays guitar, though he no longer plays in a band but takes every opportunity to play with others. He also loves to tinker and has gone back to playing with electronics though it has changed a lot in the last 40 years. As a keen Sci-fi fan, he also makes scratch-built Sci-fi models.

This is a new beginning for us both and a new season in our lives. We pray that God will lead us to whatever he has in store for us.

Jane and Trevor

Things we have done

As I have said on numerous times over the last few weeks, although the church building is closed – we are still church as people, and we are still working and building relationships within the community. Over the last few weeks, we have:

- Sent materials for Holy Week and Easter to our families, and contacted the families of our Busy Bees preschool work.
- Contacted every member with the Easter services and various pastoral support material.
- Developed the helplines document, for the wider Circuit as well as for our use.
- Offered 'Potatoes for Peace' to the wider community.
- Given away Palm Crosses from the Manse driveway.
- Built a labyrinth on the car park to help people be more centred – which is being used by people for soulful purposes, and by families as a maze. It is a really popular part of the walks past Histons Hill.
- Encouraged members to 'sew some hope' and place a flower on the cross in a way that represents our scattered and our gathered nature as church.
- Given away Easter Eggs from the manse driveway.
- Sent treats (doughnuts, cupcakes, and most recently chocolates) to our local medical centres, thanking our NHS frontline staff.
- Encouraged people to join in the campaign to make scrubs for the NHS workers.
- Used Holy Week to hear the accounts of frontline staff, in order to help shape our prayers, our understanding, and our own journey through Holy Week.
- Signed up to Zoom, so that we have secure access to the platform to enable as many people as possible to access community and worship together.
- Produced an Office of Commendation for use where families cannot attend a funeral, and for our use, so that we can pray for the bereaved as a community together.
- Skyped in a worship service for residents at Springfield House.
- Displayed a banner at the front of church to thank our keyworkers and our NHS.
- Produced postcards of the decorated cross and labyrinth so that even those who are isolated have visual access to what is happening.
- Produced rainbow thank-you gifts for passing keyworkers from the manse, and used them

in Brewood as a craft-bomb.

- Developed a pattern of evening prayer.
- Supported the Spring Harvest at Home resources.
- Worked with Wolverhampton Council to develop their advice and policy on funerals and death procedures.

It is highly likely that we will remain outside our own building for a while yet. There will be a range of ways that we will continue to serve the wider community, as well as finding ways to worship together into the future. I hope that you are able to worship with us, and if I can resource your own soulfulness during these strange times, please let me know.

Joanne

'Why Jesus walked on water'

A tourist, planning a trip to the Holy Land, was aghast when he found it would cost £50 an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee. "Goodness," he objected to the travel agent. "In England it would not have been more than £20."

"That might be true," said the travel agent, "but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord Himself walked."

"Well, at £50 an hour for a boat," said the tourist, "it's no wonder He walked."

(courtesy of Parish Pump)

Prayer Course

At the start of the year, we offered a prayer room for the month of September. For many of the congregation it was a helpful and challenging place to come and pray. For others, however, it raised the question of how, why, and where we pray. We wanted to make sure that we engaged in these questions and provided us all with the space to explore the theme of prayer together.

The Prayer Course is an 8 week course, written by the international prayer and mission organisation, **24-7 Prayer**. It follows the outline of the Lord's Prayer to enable participants (us) to deepen our prayer life, and to learn more about praying and prayer. Look out for more details about when this will be offered to us – whilst we are in lockdown and beyond. It will be a powerful and exciting invitation to us, and I look forward to sharing this together.

Baby sitting

We encouraged our 18-year-old daughter to find a job to help pay for her college education. One day she came home with five applications, and later that evening we read them. Under 'Previous Employment', she listed 'Baby-sitting' and 'Childminding' (Sitting for the children in the house) (The same as home'.



Spring Harvest 2020 could not go ahead in the three destinations this year (Minehead, Skegness and

Harrogate) due to obvious reasons. This meant that the planning group had 3-4 weeks to sort something else out. They managed to come up with Spring Harvest Home.

This was an online version of some of what we would experience if we were there in person. They had filmed worship leaders, preachers/speakers, bible studies etc, for us to watch on YouTube. The format was well-attended, and the evening celebrations were watched by over 7000 households some nights (this is a bigger number than the amount they would get in a venue).

They had a group on Facebook where people could comment on things, and there was also a live chat on their YouTube channel, which was full of people saying hi, asking for prayer, offering prayer etc.

There was a great community spirit. The theme this year was 'Unleashed'. In a way it couldn't have been more apt for the current situation. Everyone is learning how to be church, away from church. This seemed to fit in nicely and give us ways and means of doing just that.

Needless to say the feeling of worshipping with 4000-5000 other Christians in the same room wasn't quite the same, and I personally felt like I wasn't worshipping in the same way. I feel the Spring Harvest team did really well with how they organised it, especially in the short amount of time they had. I was also blown away with the generosity of the Spring Harvest congregation. I felt the most challenging point that was raised was that Acts ended in chapter 28. But Acts doesn't end How can we write Acts chapter 29? How can we be the Acts church?

However, although I love the live event, Spring Harvest Home did also have a lot of positives! The beds and seats at home are a lot more comfortable. It was also not far to walk to get to the talks!

The group of us that would have been going from Trinity this year, agreed to have two Zoom meetings each night (one in the afternoon to catch up on events in the day, and one in the evening for more fellowship). This was really good, and everyone had a chance to say how they felt. It was uplifting to see everyone when we feel so isolated, so knowing that they were the other side of the phone was really good.

We all wondered how this will affect the future of Spring Harvest, as they have reached many more people on the online version. There were suggestions of whether Spring Harvest could stream the live event to people who couldn't afford to go, or people who couldn't physically get there, (disabilities, time off work) on YouTube for a small fee, in an attempt to reach more people than the live event could hold.

Naomi

(PS: since the above was written Spring Harvest has emailed the following: *'With your help, the event has reached more people than we could ever have imagined and allowed us to impact people's lives with the word of God. So far, we've had around 950,000 YouTube views in the past seven days! It's overwhelming to see the reach this has had, with people joining us from Dubai, Ukraine, Uganda, Pakistan, Indonesia, USA, South Africa to name a few, so thank you to everyone who was able to join us. The feedback we have had has been so incredibly encouraging'*)

Just sent a dove out my window. When it comes back with a piece of toilet paper

I will know the virus is finished

(courtesy of Maria Miller, Facebook, Christian laughs)

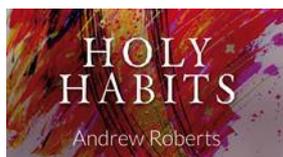
News from the Church Mission Society

Church Mission Society has opened a space on its website for anyone to use. It explains:

"Our world, and our lives, have changed radically. Are you sad? Angry? Scared?

"Well, then you're not alone. Lamentspace is a place where we share our grief with God and each other. About the big things as well as those that may seem trivial."

Go to: <https://churchmissionsociety.org/lamentspace/>



The successful Holy Habits discipleship initiative is going virtual and offering everyone – groups and individuals – the chance to join a live Holy Habits home group, starting on 21 April 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Holy Habits pioneer Andrew Roberts will host eight sessions on Sharing Resources, one of the ten holy habits practised by the early church in Acts 2:42–47 and, arguably, one of the most important habits to develop as we seek as Christians to make a difference in our current circumstances, responding faithfully and creatively in the light of Jesus’ example.

Join the home groups and the watch parties by following the links below. To join the watch parties, simply join your group of choice even if you cannot manage the first date, and tune in.



APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER

Please note one or two things from their latest newsletter

These are exceptional days for all of us! The impact of COVID-19 means the demand for our emergency food parcels and toiletries is continuing to rise. We are extremely thankful for all our wonderful volunteers and faithful supporters - but we urgently need to grow further. Can you partner with us to help our City?

ARNOLD’S STORY

Soon after COVID-19 shielding came in, we were asked to support an elderly man who had little food left. His son had travelled back from abroad so had to self-isolate & he couldn’t get a slot for an online shop for his dad for 2 weeks. The elderly man left this message on our phone:

‘I would like to thank you very very much for the food you sent me. I’ve made a lovely stew that will last me a few days. I can’t thank you enough. The gentleman who came down said the food was free. I’m so thankful to sit down and have a cup of tea, even a bit of toast. Thank you again.’

*name has been changed to protect identity

Quite obviously we cannot use the trolley in the Porch at church at the moment. However, The Well is still collecting from certain regular drop-off points, including Nationwide, Codsall: Co-op Codsall: Co-op Fordhouses
If you are self-isolating or shielding, and you want to contribute, then let Peter or Helen know, and they can arrange safe delivery from The Well personnel

Shopping List includes:

Milk (UHT), Cereal, Tea/Coffee, Sugar, Jam/Spreads, Squash/Fruit Juice (UHT), Meat/Fish (tinned), Vegetables (tinned), Pasta/Cooking Sauce (jar), Fruit (tinned) Puddings/Custard, Snacks/Biscuits, Nappies (sealed packets: size 4,5,6), Baby Wipes/Toiletries, Baby Food (long use by date), Ladies/Men’s Toiletries, Household Cleaning products

NO BAKED BEANS PLEASE!

Finances

This year has been a particularly difficult one for the church finances, even before Covid-19 happened. The Church Council has taken measures to respond to this challenge, but we are in a significant and worrying position. There are two main contributors to this – the loss of the preschool as a regular booking, and the impact of having to shut the church.

Please continue to give your offering to church. Our overheads have not changed much since our closure, and so we still have all the usual expenses. If you are able to sign up to a standing order that is the most helpful for our budgeting. If you use the envelope scheme, please use these on our first few meetings back. Please also consider signing up for gift aid, so that we can maximise your tithe and offering. To do either of these things, please contact Rob Turton or Mavis Nunn.

When we are able to discern the way forward for the church and for our community there will be a need to be intentional about our fundraising efforts for the foreseeable future.

Please note that the Church Council are doing all they can to mitigate our dangerous position, and that there are plans in place to make sure that we are able to meet our responsibilities.

I remain indebted (no pun intended) to Mavis and Rob who have both gone above and beyond in order to see the church through these trying times. A new treasurer will need to be appointed before September, so please pray that the right person is found for this critical leadership role.

Joanne

How has self-isolation been for me?



It seems a long time since we first heard of Corona Virus affecting people in China. I admit that it was not until I heard it described as a pandemic that I felt anxious, thinking how easy it could transfer in a world where travel is so easy from country to country.

It is now 18 April and the lockdown seems to have gone very quickly. What have I done with this precious time? Well, I haven't done the amount of sorting and cleaning I intended to do! But I have spent time really appreciating how beautiful the days have been and to wonder at God's creation, a time to stand and stare and think.

Like many families we have missed being together at Easter. We are a tactile family and we have missed our hugs and cuddles. I never thought I would say hurrah for technology!! But I love to hear the iPad " ping " and then see the family on Facetime, we have even had three-way family quizzes.

Mentally I have spent many hours with the medics feeling their tiredness and stress and their isolation from their loved ones. Sadly, we have had a relative die unexpectedly, but, of course, we will not be able to attend the funeral although the service is being streamed. The hardest part has been being unable to visit and to offer physical comfort to the bereaved when you can hear their pain.

The lockdown seems to have brought out the best in most people. We have had so many offers of help. We have spoken to many people, apart from our church friends, such as the friends on our Christmas card list. Parting words have often been " we must meet up when all this is over ".

What the future holds we do not know, but Jesus told us not to be afraid, and we know how he cares for us. We only need to look at the Cross and have trust in the hope that the risen Christ gives. Prayers go up and blessings come down. We just need to remember that Jesus is the light at the end of this dark tunnel.

Edith

Top Ten Silliest Questions asked on a Cruise Ship

- Paul Grayson, Cruise Director for the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line

1. Do these steps go up or down?
2. What do you do with the beautiful ice carvings after they melt?
3. Which elevator do I take to get to the front of the ship?
4. Does the crew sleep on the ship?
5. Is this island completely surrounded by water?
6. Does the ship make its own electricity?
7. Is it salt-water in the toilets?
8. What elevation are we at?

(courtesy of Parish Pump)

AGM

The AGM was due to take place on 30 April. There are obviously some things which need to be agreed upon by the Church Meeting. The Church Council will meet online to decide some ways forward. Please continue to pray for the leadership team and the Church Council in these unprecedented times.

One of the key things that we were going to discuss is the pattern of worship offered at Trinity. There were, unexpectedly, some significant highlights and areas of a majority agreement. In our unusual circumstances, some of the decisions may need to be deferred to the Church Council in the first instance. However, it is prescient to note that two of the key indicators from the consultation were MUSIC and PRAYER. In light of this, all the worship being offered includes a range of music sources and styles, and spaces for reflection as well as participation. In terms of prayer, the evening prayer service will provide us with a range of styles and communities to pray alongside; to both encourage us and stretch us.

We will also be offered The Prayer Course online, to help deepen our prayer life even more. Even if we think we have prayer all sorted, this course will help us learn together and be resourced during this strange season in which we find ourselves.

Please note, therefore, that we have listened to the feedback from our congregation, and are using these results in order to shape what we offer in worship now, as well as inform the decisions we will need to make when the building is open again.

Just sent a dove out of my window. When it comes back with a piece of toilet paper, I will know the virus is finished

(courtesy of Maria Miller, Facebook, Christian Laughs)

Building works completed during lockdown

When we re-enter our building, you will notice a few changes! With the substantial help of a grant from Biffa, we have been able to complete our programme of refurbishment. This means that we now have spaces for up to 4 groups or meetings within our premises, in a safe environment.

The refurbishment includes:

- Repainting the hall
- Replacing internal doors in the hall
- Full redecoration of the former choir vestry, so that it is now a multipurpose meeting room or therapy area
- Full redecoration of the minister's vestry
- Decoration of the hallway behind the sanctuary, including new lighting system
- Increased wifi connectivity, so that there is a way of setting the heating in the building without programming it in the boiler room
- Increased AV provision in the church sanctuary, to increase the visual resources, and make sure that we have the equipment we need for future developments of broadcast and resourcing as a church and as a community facility

The premises are only part of our story.

As we learn what it is to be church without a building for a while, our challenge when we return into it, is to discover what it means to have a building to be used for the mission of God in this place. We will continue to need to let go of our past in order to enable God to lead us into the future. The paint and carpet is the start of that journey for us.

We remain indebted to the hard work of Alan Cotterell, and the rest of the property and finance committee who have overseen this work in partnership with Paul Simkin.

*Quarantine has turned us all into dogs.
We roam the house all day looking for food.
We are told 'no' if we get too close to strangers.
And we get really excited about car rides*

Courtesy of Parish Pump

What has 'Shielding' meant for us



23 March morning – my mobile phone bleeps and vibrates a text message has arrived. Nothing too unusual about this except it's quite early. It's from the NHS Coronavirus Service telling me that I've been identified as a person at risk of severe illness if I contracted coronavirus. A sobering message to receive.

My first reaction is was it correct, fortunately I don't have any significant underlying health conditions. Then realisation, this message is for Julie. She doesn't use a mobile (something that I have been nagging her about for some time) and she had placed my mobile number on her record. She needs to be kept apart from the world for at least 12 weeks.

24 March – further text messages. Do we know how to access medication during shielding? Have we family and friends? Advice about what to do if others live with you. Advice to tell someone you are shielding. Advice about ensuring we have enough food in 3 texts today.

25 March – a sobering text today. Have a bag prepared in case you need to go into hospital.

Further advice follows about exercise, routine, mental well-being and keeping connected whilst keeping apart.

This was all further confirmed by letters to Julie in the post.

So as a result, like many others, Julie and I are shielding at home. The advice includes Julie and I keeping a social distance as much as possible even within our own home.

So, we are in this strange place of shielding.

In Exodus 17:1-7 we have one of numerous stories of the Israelites whilst in the wilderness grumbling? They are grumbling because they have no water. They grumble so much that Moses eventually renames the place ‘testing’ and ‘quarrelling’ because the people asked, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’

I must confess that I have been quite critical of the grumbling Israelites in the past. This is especially so as at the end of chapter 15 the people come to Marah and they could not drink the water because it was bitter. So, they grumbled. The Lord showed Moses a piece of wood which he threw into the water and it became sweet. In chapter 16 the Israelites had nothing to eat so they grumbled. We subsequently have the story of God’s provision of Manna and then Quail.

So, by chapter 17 you would have thought that they would have learnt the answer to their question ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’

I have learnt through the present crisis, through shielding, that the ‘wilderness’ is a very disorientating place. Time takes on a new form. The importance of things takes on a new value. Looking forward at times becomes less clear. There are moments when I grumble. Yes, even grumble to God. In an unusual and scary place, it is easy just to focus on the issue of the moment.

However, what the story tells us is it is important not to forget previous times of God’s provision, and the wonderful thing about the story is that even in the midst of their grumbling God provided water from the rock. God bless you all

Alan

TRIBUTE TO KEITH ON THE OCCASION OF HIS THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Rev Mary

Keith Benjamin Madelin was born on the 25 September 1941 to Dad, Ben and Mum, Nell, who passed away when Keith was just 21. He grew up in Laburnam Road Bilston, and Cadman Crescent in Wednesfield, along with his younger sister, Gillian. As a youngster he was awarded a scholarship to Wolverhampton Grammar School where he was diligent and hardworking – qualities that would stay with him throughout his life.

He was a person of many and varied interests. He was a member of the Air Cadets and, as a teenager, joined the Fallings Park Methodist church youth club which was to be a major part of his life. It was here that he met Jill who he would go on to marry on 28 May 1966, as well as meeting and making many life-long friends – Dixie and Anne, Pete and Anthea and Trevor Price. An enduring passion of Keith’s was playing sport, in earlier days football and cricket – he kept the Fallings Park Methodist Cricket team going into the 1990s, and later tennis, squash and golf. Aside from sport, he played drums in a band with John, Dixie, Peter and Trevor.

Keith and Jill married in May 1966, a time during which they moved to the northeast as Keith’s professional life took him to Gateshead and then Redcar. Whilst there, Peter was born in 1969, and

Stephen in 1971. The family moved to Codsall in December 1974, as Keith was appointed Deputy County Surveyor for the West Midlands, setting up home in Oaken Grove.

As a father, Keith was a caring, loving fully-committed family man, always encouraging and supporting Peter and Stephen in everything they did. He always expected them to give of their best in everything they tried and that was enough, whether or not they succeeded. What upset him was not trying or making the best of what they had. He could be strict, but only when necessary. In Peter and Stephen's words, 'You couldn't ask for a better father.' The tragic and sudden loss of his beloved wife, Jill, in 2006 was devastating for Keith and the family but he coped in a manner you would expect from him – just getting on with things.

In his professional life Keith's calm considered manner and incisive mind enabled him to build good working relationships with those around him, his influence was far-reaching. He was respected as a colleague – particularly for being able to come up with solutions to issues in a calm and authoritative way. He was never one who sought authority but would always take responsibility especially when others wouldn't. He used his quiet, considered demeanour, backed with great sense, judgement, and knowledge to great effect in everything he did. In 1982, Keith was appointed County Surveyor for Shropshire. We've had many cards saying that Keith was a great, inspirational leader in this role and was instrumental in putting Shropshire 'on the map.' A fitting tribute for a man who was following in his hero, Thomas Telford's, footsteps. Thomas Telford was the first County Surveyor of Shropshire and Keith, the last.

He was a humble person who was often uncomfortable with praise and recognition, which was never his motivation. His long list of achievements, not least being awarded the OBE in 1994 for services to transport, could almost be a subject of slight embarrassment for him.

After retiring from Shropshire County Council, Keith became a professor at (his alma mater) the University of Birmingham in the civil engineering department. This enabled him to put his great experience, knowledge, and desire for improvement to great effect, both through guiding postgraduate students and publishing numerous research papers.

Keith represented the UK on the Highways Management Committee of the World Road Association for some 12 years. He travelled widely and his calm manner, professional attitude and incisive mind enabled him to build excellent working relationships across language and nationality barriers. Sometimes this involved trying to persuade developing nations it was in their interest to participate. No mean feat.

During the early 2000s, Keith took on the role of Head of, and was instrumental in establishing, Rail Research UK – a university led centre for railway system research with the overriding aim of improving the reliability and efficiency of the network by utilising academic and scientific research. This was a subject of national press coverage, something not new to him. As a family, Jill, Peter and Stephen got used to the occasional tv or radio interview, usually without being warned, which was typical of him.

As a friend, Keith was faithful and reliable. He always made the effort to keep in touch and was someone who could pick up threads of relationships even if months had passed since they last met. He was one of the good guys, whose thoughtful, generous approach to those around him made a difference to many who were struggling. Whilst it's fair to say he was someone who wasn't good at handling compliments himself, his quiet presence and generosity of self in holding a space for others was something which always enabled them to feel safe and flourish.

His Christian faith was unshakeable and vibrant. I had the privilege of enjoying many profound and challenging theological conversations with Keith when the Thomas-Wade side of the Brodie-Madelin clan would gather for a meal on Tuesday evenings. Although a fully committed Methodist, we were delighted to borrow him every so often, as he enjoyed a bacon and egg sandwich in the church centre at Albrighton, when he and Mum attended our monthly United Benefice Eucharist. Even here his

generosity was unbounded – it is in no small way thanks to Keith that we have been able to complete the restoration of the chancel windows at St. Mary Magdalene.

His interest in sport was lifelong, always more of a player than spectator – played cricket for 30 + years and was a longstanding member of Wolverhampton Tennis & Squash club, another source of warm and loyal friendships tennis, squash. Golf was taken up in later years. Saturday remained as sports day throughout his life. He took his cricket coaching badges and he also coached at Wolverhampton Cricket Club with the U-13 side. Later he helped the coaching at Ledene Golf Club with the juniors on a Saturday morning – something which enabled him to share his love of sport with his step-grandchildren, Josh and Harry.

In June 2008, Keith became a Director of the Wolverhampton Grammar School, serving on many committees. Here, once again, his calm demeanour and incisive mind were put to excellent use. He was dedicated, reliable and trustworthy.

In 2011 – Keith was called in to the Nuffield Hospital for an appointment. It was the wrong day, and Keith had been working in the garden when he got the call. But it was here that the stars aligned. Also, at the Nuffield was a certain Ruth Brodie and, for Keith, it was love at first sight. In his very quiet, methodical and considered way, enquiries were made, parish magazines scoured, and Ruth was located at the monthly Church in the Village afternoon tea at the Forget Me Not Club, here in Codsall. An invitation to lunch followed – and, after a few more dates and numerous packets of paracetamol to calm Ruth's nerves – that, as they say, was that. Ruth and Keith married on 8 September 2012 at St. Nicholas Church, Codsall – a lovely celebration of love, life and all that was good.

As a couple they were a force to be reckoned with. Kind-hearted, generous, with huge hearts for hospitality and entertaining, they touched the lives of many people across the two faith communities and beyond. I know that Keith made Mum feel safe and this enabled her to flourish in ways which, I suspect, she hadn't realised were possible, and Keith, through Mum's love for him, also blossomed. He was also infinitely generous with himself amongst the wider blended family – despite us being something of a ragtag bunch.

Mum and Keith loved spending time with each other, opening their home to friends and family and visiting friends far and wide. There are happy and treasured memories of holidays together particularly at Henllys in Anglesey.

A quote from the ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, in many ways sums up their relationship: 'Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.'

Keith was a true gentleman. A kind, willing, caring, considerate man who was committed to those around him in every sphere of life – professional, personal and spiritual. Serious when required, but always quick to laugh with a clever dry humour. Beloved husband, much loved father, stepfather and grandfather, treasured friend, and respected colleague. An inspiration to many.

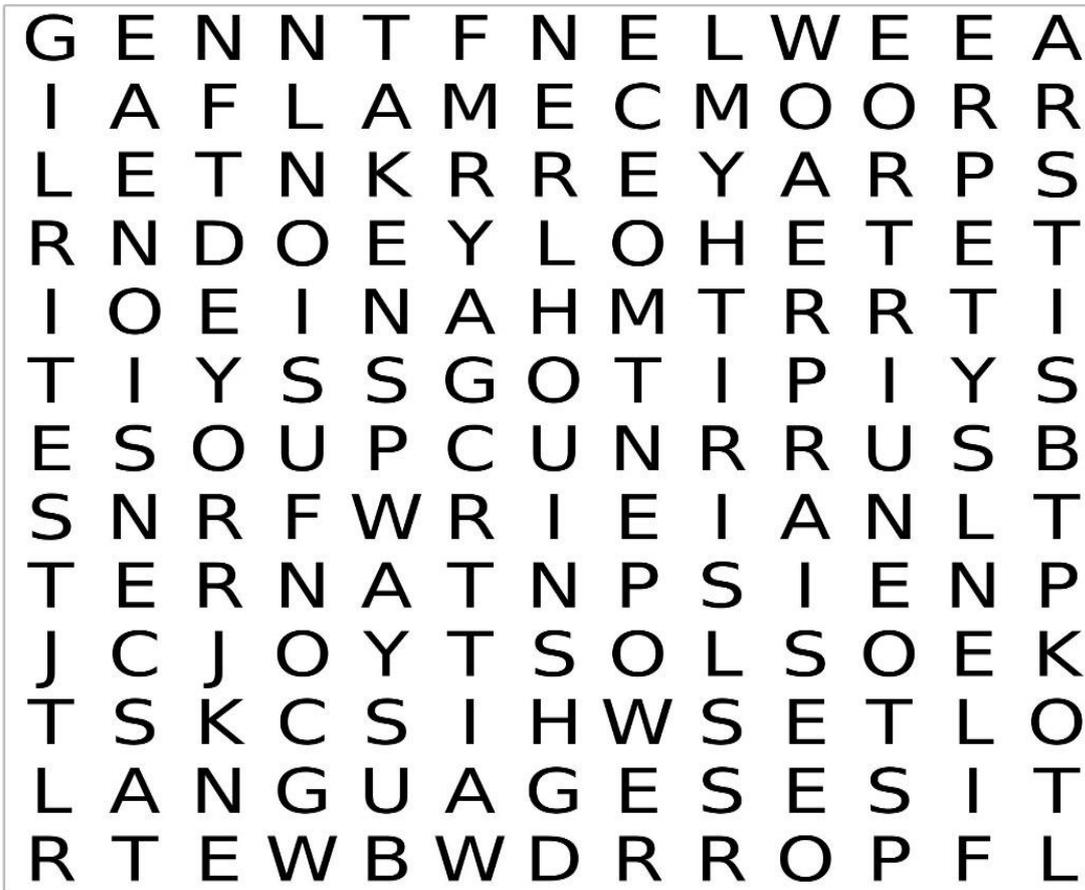
Keith, we love you and we miss you.

By God's grace may you rest in peace and rise in glory.

(This tribute was published with grateful thanks to Ruth and Mary)

Word Search Grid:

(see how many words you can find in this Grid, in whatever direction)



Accessing services whilst the building is closed

Now, more than ever, it is important that we are able to meet together and support each other in our community together.

For this reason, we have intentionally found a way to enable us to worship together, but also meet together face to face. We are not broadcasting services, but we are inviting anyone who wants to and who can, to join in the service together, either online or via the telephone. This is the most accessible way we can think of – and we are doing everything in our power to make sure it is as secure as possible.

The current services are:

10.30am on a Sunday

7.45pm every evening for Compline/Evening prayers

If you are online – click the link that Helen sends around.

If you are using your landline – phone the number...then follow the instructions to enter the meeting room number...then press hash...then press hash again...then add the

passcode...then press hash

There are separate instructions for those using a mobile phone, but if you are online, it would be helpful to use the link provided.

In addition to the services together, we are sending around the orders of service on email, and posting them out to those without internet access – so everyone should have access to our worship together. If you are not receiving them, you know of someone who isn't getting them, or wonder if others might find it helpful – perhaps you could forward the orders on, or let Joanne know so that we can make sure we enable as many in our congregation and community to be able to worship God and meet together in fellowship, albeit online.

The Lord is my Shepherd

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the Psalm, but little Charles did not find it easy to memorise much of anything.

On the day that the children were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Charles stepped up to the microphone and began proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd..." He knew that much, but the rest of the Psalm suddenly deserted him. So, he concluded bravely: "... and that's all I need to know."

Environmentally friendly transport

While driving in the countryside, a family caught up an old farmer and his horse-drawn cart. The farmer obviously had a sense of humour, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand-printed sign: 'Ecologically efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust.'

On Governments and Tax

A politician is a person who urges you to vote for him, and then sends you a bill for doing it.

I believe we should all pay our tax bill with a smile. I tried — but they wanted cash.

(courtesy of Parish Pump)

So here are some thoughts born out of the last few weeks

Things must change

There has been a lot of talk over the last 3 to 4 weeks (is it only that long?) about life after Covid 19 being different to what it was before. For the most part I believe this will be the case. When the time comes that we are free to meet up physically with friends, family, work colleagues, there will be a time when we reminisce about how we lived (or in some tragic cases, died) through the enforced lockdown during the Corona virus pandemic. It will be the stuff of "stories to tell the grand-children", no doubt, in some cases, perhaps with added minor embellishments - intended or not - to make our narratives sound more appealing, memorable, funny, disastrous. I believe history will show that, collectively, through the relatively short time we spent "confined to barracks" as a human race, we became more creative, learned new skills, laughed and loved more than ever, cared and shared more than before, cleaned, decorated, refurbished until there was nothing else to tackle cried and said goodbyes.

For some, these last few weeks will have been a time of torment, best kept locked away and never to be discussed for fear that the memories will burn too deeply, open wounds not yet healed, take us back to the dark and dangerous corners of our lives. For others, being in lockdown has perhaps paradoxically been peaceful, cathartic, energising. And there will be lots of others who fall somewhere

between these two extremes.

Before we return to our church buildings, as surely we will do, my prayer is that we will take a deep breath, slowly exhale and grasp a new dawn, full of new ways of being church. We must continue to “see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day” (Godspell - Stephen Schwartz and John Michael Telebak). But we have been doing this since the lockdown was enforced! Whenever we have been kind, shown love and compassion and helped our friends, colleagues and, dare I say, enemies, we have been doing this to God - for God - because of God. We must be open to new ways of worship (as has been witnessed with the huge amount of worship and services being streamed live through the likes of YouTube and Zoom). These new approaches to worship may frighten some or possibly repel others, but for the vast majority this combination of technology and worship has been deeply embraced by those taking part.

I believe it is witness to a yearning to be church together but also reveals that God can find us and touch us in conventional as well as contemporary settings - for nothing can keep God from being with his children.

Over the last few weeks, we have seen an explosion of Grace (in surprising and tear-jerking moments). Our acts of thoughtfulness towards others have blossomed, our deeply rooted Britishness has produced the inevitable humour to lift our spirits and reinforce our resolve against a vile and indiscriminate enemy. We have felt a deep and closer connection of Community, not just with those close geographically, but throughout the world. There is a growing LONGING to be physically with other people, an emotion which surges to the top of our pool of feelings, and bobbles around energetically, impatiently, desperately.

In the NIV bible version we read in 1 Corinthians 15v51:

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed”.

We must embrace this change, right here, right now, or, like the lost and broken Israelites we turn away from God’s word and stumble along without Jesus as our guiding light.

Please pray with me:

Gracious and ever-present God, guide us and help us to understand how to follow you - in the unknown, in the unfamiliar, in the strange, in the challenge of living today. Bless us richly for following you in new and exciting ways and reaching out to those who are lost, confused and on the edges of “community”. Sit with us as we comfort the grieving and encourage the seekers. Give us confidence to conquer our uncertainties and connect closer with our communities. You are as close to us now as you have always been. You are in our present and you are into our beyond. Be close as we journey further with you, through your Son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Steve

Funerals

This is a particularly grizzly subtitle and topic, but I wanted to make sure that we all had the current details and advice. Death is devastating, especially at the moment when people’s lives are so easily reduced to statistics. Those of us standing in the Jesus-tradition are confident that death is not the end of the story, but death and dying are so often the privilege of the clinical and the cleric.

The aim of this section is to give us some practical advice in these changing times.

You may be aware that all the crematoria and cemeteries are shut to the general public. At the time of writing, funerals are limited to 6 people in attendance, and services are 20 minutes long (they were previously 30 minutes). I am expecting this to be reduced further.

At present, Telford, Streetly and Stafford all have the ability to stream funeral services online. This means that those unable to attend a service can watch it live. This is NOT something

currently available at Bushbury, although there are other ways to enable attendance using Zoom and other platforms depending on the celebrant.

Again, particularly grizzly, but please also remember that should family members be allowed to see their loved one prior to death, the funeral may well be a lengthy wait due to the need for family to be isolated.

If a conversation about death, dying, or process is helpful, please get in contact with Jo. When this is all over, there will be plenty of work in the areas of grief and remembrance, and we will need to be able to respond appropriately.

How the Virus stole Easter

(this is a little late, but I thought it worth adding – Helen)

by Kristi Bothur (with a nod to Dr Seuss)

Twas late in '19 when the virus began
Bringing chaos and fear to all people
each land

People were sick, hospitals full
Doctors overwhelmed, no one in school

As winter gave way to the promise of Spring
The virus raged on, touching peasant and king

People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen
They YouTubed and Zoomed, Social distanced, and cleaned

April approached and churches were closed
'There won't be an Easter, 'the world supposed

'There won't be church services, and egg hunts are out.
No reason for new dresses when we can't go about'.

Holy Week started, as bleak as the rest
The world was focussed on masks and on tests

'Easter can't happen this year', it proclaimed. '
Online and at home, it just won't be the same

The world woke Sunday, and nothing had changed
The virus still menaced, the people, estranged

'Pooh pooh to the saints, 'the world was grumbling
'They're finding out now that no Easter is coming.

'They're just waking up! We know just what they'll do!
Their mouths will hang open a minute or two
And then all the saints will cry boo-hoo.

**'The noise,' said the world, 'will be something to hear.'
So, it paused, and the world put a hand to its ear.**

**And it did hear a sound coming through all the skies
It started down low, and then it started to rise.**

But the sound wasn't depressed.
Why, this sound was triumphant!
It couldn't be so!
But it grew with abundance!

The world stared around, popping its eyes.
Then it shook! What it saw was a shocking surprise!

Every saint in every nation, the tall and the small
Was celebrating Jesus in spite of it all!
It hadn't stopped Easter from coming!
It came!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!

And the world with its life quite stuck in quarantine
Stood puzzling and puzzling
'Just how can it be?'

It came without bonnets, it came without bunnies
It came without egg hunts, cantatas, or money'

Then the world thought of something it hadn't before
'Maybe Easter,' it thought, 'doesn't come from a store.
Maybe Easter, perhaps, means a little bit more.'

And what happened then?
Well The story's not done
What will YOU do?
Will you share with that one
or two or more people needing hope in this night?
Will you share the source of your life in this fight?

So, this year at Easter, let this be our prayer
As the virus still rages all around, everywhere.

**May the world see hope when it looks at God's people
May the world see the church is not a building or steeple
May the world find Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection,
May the world find Joy in a time of dejection.
May 2020 be known as the year of survival
But not only that — Let it start a revival**

All items for the next edition should be sent to Helen by email (or post, depending on whether we are still in isolation)

By Sunday 14 June 2020

To cover the months July/August 2020

Email codsallmethodist@gmail.com

Articles accepted by email, or clearly written/typed

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