WINCHESTER NEWS
April 2020

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Scenes from the video, filmed, by Rachel Lampard and a friend, for the JPIT conference. The children all presented ideas of how the world could be improved. (See report on p9)
Dear Friends,

Since I wrote my article for the newsletter a month ago, the world has changed a great deal. Our country is now suffering from the spread of the coronavirus, and the government has put social distancing measures in place. Our churches have closed, and the elderly and the vulnerable encouraged to stay at home. It can feel quite frightening.

When I read the story of the resurrection, I am reminded of the women who went to the tomb, early, with their spices, in order to embalm Christ’s body. They must have been frightened too, having witnessed the death of Jesus on Good Friday, and seen his body taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb. If I imagine myself into the story, I would have been scared too.

But a surprise awaited them on that first Easter morning. In Matthew’s gospel, we read that the women first meet an angel who tells them there is nothing to fear. As they were leaving the tomb, they meet the risen Christ who tells them to go to Galilee where they must share the good news of the resurrection with the disciples. Suddenly their mourning and sorrow was transformed into joy and happiness.

In the Bible, there are 365 verses that say, ‘Do not be afraid’, - that’s one verse for every day of the year. As we approach Passiontide, Palm Sunday, Holy Week and then Easter, remember those comforting words. Jesus understands our fear and our suffering, but he also wants us to know that he is with us, particularly when we are most afraid and in need of support.

You should have received information from your Pastoral Visitor to enable you to continue worshipping in your own home. Material for you to do this will be available for as long as the current situation continues (see p. 6)

The words ‘Happy Easter’ may seem a bit trite, as our current circumstances feel far from happy. But I want to encourage and reassure you, that whatever the next few weeks and months may bring, the presence of the living Lord will be with us. He is available 24/7, so you can talk to him any time. He will
be pleased to hear from you, and will walk beside you and will give you peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Hilary

“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

OUR MISSION
We are a church at the heart of Highams Park which seeks to discern and follow God’s direction.
Our aim is to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour through the life of the church and outreach to the community.
We promote worship and fellowship enabling us to grow towards God.
We are an inclusive church where all are welcome.

OUR STEWARDS
Senior Steward: Carole Merriman
Stewards: Janet Evans, Hazel Mathews, Carol & Dumisani Moyo, Pat Ovenden.

OUR SAFEGUARDING OFFICER
Laura Pease
Pastor visitors should have been in touch with you to offer alternative ways of worshipping. Including TV and online. Many were also able to share Dallion’s Mother’s Day service which she so kindly made available.

Those Pastoral Visitors not in isolation, did their best to deliver daffodil posies for Mothering Sunday to members of the congregation. We realise that not everyone would have received one because of the difficult circumstances. Please accept our apologies and know that you are not forgotten.

You are all in our thoughts and prayers.
God bless us all.

**WORSHIP DURING APRIL**

All services have been cancelled due to the current situation.

The Methodist Church are producing a service sheet that can be downloaded each week from their website.
https://www.methodist.org.uk

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**2020 Dates for your diary**

As church services and meetings have currently been cancelled, those in April and May are unlikely to take place. We hope to resume later in the year and will keep you informed.

**Wed 3 June:** Church Council Meeting, 7.30pm

**Sun 14 June:** Young Church Anniversary, All Age Worship

**Mon 27 – Fri 31 July:** Holiday Club

**Sun 2 August:** Holiday Club Service

**Thurs 8 October:** Church Council Meeting, 7.30pm

**Saturday 28 November:** Church Bazzaar
Ways you can worship at home,

Songs of Praise – Sunday afternoon

Radio 4 Daily Service = DAB and catch up on BBC Sounds

Daily Prayer each morning on Radio 2 for early risers,

Choral Evensong on Radio 3 Wednesday afternoon (repeated Sunday afternoon)

Radio 4 service on Sunday mornings following 8am news

Online Resources:

Worship at Home sheets

https://www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming
(where you will also get an option to go on to the You Tube site)

For morning prayer Mon – Sat at 10am (with Keith Riglin & Jen Smith)
Sunday services 8.15am 10.00am and 7pm


In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the cancellation of worship services, the District will be broadcasting a worship service at 10:30am on Sunday morning via Facebook Live and it will also be available on the District Website:
https://www.facebook.com/Birminghammethodistdistrict
http://www.birminghammethodist.org.uk/
Church Review
This has now been cancelled but we hope to make a new date later in the year

Join us for a vision and mission planning day focussed on the future of our worshipping community; how we might challenge ourselves and build on our strengths. We will be joined by facilitators from the Learning Network to explore our past, present and future and begin to discover where God is calling us next. It should be an energising session, full of celebration and excitement. Please be praying for the day; that all our hearts would be open to hear the Spirit’s words and that we would draw closer to God’s will for us. Do reflect on where you already hear God speaking and whether you personally, feel called to work in a new way in our church.

Lunch will be provided at the end of morning worship to share before the meeting.

Christian Aid

Many of you will have been planning house-to-house collections and events. We are looking at alternative ways to virtually meet, share and pray with supporters over the coming months in the likely absence of physical church services.

We are working on alternative plans that will allow people to take part in Christian Aid Week in different, creative ways – by post, by text and online that strengthen our communities during this challenging time. Christian Aid Week is our single-most important fundraiser, so we would welcome your ideas on how we can creatively show love for our neighbours at home and abroad, as a community. From the organisers of Christian Aid
**JUMBLE SALE**

The final total for the Jumble Sale was £1,006.34.

Thank You to Hazel for organising & everyone who helped on Friday and Saturday, including those who helped to clear away.

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**To Think About!**

If you would be interested in being a Synod Representative please have a chat with Hilary.

The Circuit is urgently seeking more Circuit Stewards. Please will you consider this important role, even if you can only manage to be a steward for a year. If you can help, or would like further information please speak to Hilary

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**On a lighter note this Easter:-**

What do you get if you spill tea on a rabbit?
A hot cross bunny!

What do you call a group of rabbits doing the conga backwards?
A receding hareline

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My housemate was just leaving the other evening when, realising we were running short of a few household supplies, I called out “Hey, while you’re out can you buy a bottle of milk? And if they have eggs, buy a dozen.”
He came back with 12 bottles of milk.
“Twelve bottles of milk!” I exclaimed “Why the heck did you buy 12 bottles of milk?!”
“They had eggs.”
Renewal and Rebellion : Faith Economy & Climate

On Saturday 7th March I caught an early train to travel up to Derby for a conference:- organised by JPIT). I had decided to go after Rachel Lampard had filmed members of our Young Church raising questions ‘What if…….’ (See pictures p2).

On arrival I was given a small ‘paper’ name label to attach to a ‘borrowed’ lanyard. We had been asked to bring our own cups for coffee! The conference was introduced by Rachel and opened with the video made by our youngsters! It was brilliant! We worshipped, sang songs and said prayers but the day itself was focussed on the problems of the world outside of the church. There were representatives from government, the financial world and those passionate about the environment. All Christians! In the afternoon there was a panel of remarkable Young People all involved in caring for the environment and improving the lives of people around the world. There were also smaller workshops where people were able to discuss the issues and put forward their ideas.

It certainly made me question the responsibility of being a Christian in the world today. Yes, the church is important for worship but there are many problems outside needing our attention: - the unfair economic system; taxes; welfare; poverty; the climate crisis and more. JPIT work to raise these, and other issues, with the government and other bodies.

There was very little time to chat to people, but over lunch I was told about Christians who have come together to locate empty properties, some owned by the church and others private houses, and work with the council to offer new homes to Syrian refugees. Others had been actively involved in peaceful demonstrations alongside ‘Extinction Rebellion’ as well as leading worship in their churches on this and other issues.

There were many stalls with information about a whole range of groups working to change the unfairness in the world. Churches making sure their funds are invested in ethical institutions, not fossil fuel producers. Groups encouraging Fairtrade, an end to poverty and the need for Foodbanks. Recognising that short-term aid is needed alongside efforts to reform systems. I came home challenged to think about my role as a Christian!

Jan Dent
Twins!
Alex Fletcher gave birth to twin boys on 19th March at 12.43pm.
Isaac 2.2kg (4lb 13oz) and Eli 1.7kg (3lb 12oz)

John Henderson
Sadly John Henderson died on Wednesday 25th March. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jo, Alex and Matt at this difficult time.

John’s funeral will be on 15th April at 9.30, for close family only. We are invited to light a candle in our own home at that time.

Another new baby!
Bridget gave birth to a little girl on March 31st.
A sister for Joel, Davinia, Larissa and Jason.

Brenda Dowsett
Brenda has moved into another Care Home. Hilary says that she has had a series of falls recently and needs more attention that the Home at Felsted could provide. This new home has 24 hour care.

I managed to phone Brenda and she sounded much happier and we had a good, if short, conversation. She would love to hear from her old friends at Winchester. I have her address if anyone would like it. I am sure she would appreciate hearing from her old friends. Dorothy Clarke
Joan and Ron Taylor
I've now joined her in St Ives Lodge Care Home. Regrettably the Home has now closed its doors to non-residents so visitors are not allowed in, or any of us, out.

I think Joan thinks that people will forget her, though of course with Olive and John here too, that would be extremely unlikely. If anyone needs to speak to her they can either ring St Ives or they can call my mobile. (Jan Dent & Hilary have the updated details.)

Joan is doing quite well although her leg is still painful and the rod which was inserted means she can't bend that ankle. She manages to walk with a frame although not very far, her main problem is actually standing up after sitting or lying down. I think this is more a case of lack of confidence than a lasting condition.
She has asked that a note of thanks be put in the WN for the prayers and thoughts of our friends in the Church family which have helped us both to come to terms with our situation.
Thank you
Ron Taylor

N.B: Ron has updated this information. They did have a joint room but as Joan had a cold and temperature they were separated although they have been able to be together during the day. Ron has changed his mobile and they hope to get Joan a suitable mobile soon. Ron enjoys calls from friends at Winchester
Margaret Chapman is settling in well into her new home in Felixstowe. She is making friends with her new neighbours and enjoying car rides to sit and watch the sea.

She had a lovely birthday and thanks us all for the cards and the flowers which were a lovely surprise. Margaret was also very pleased with all the New Home cards.

Margaret says she often thinks of us, especially on Sunday mornings and sends her love to us all.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name’s sake.
Amen.
World Day of Prayer

Every year, on the first Friday in March, there is a service celebrated by Christians across the world. It is written by Christians in a different country each year. This year it was written by women in Zimbabwe, with the title: “Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk”. It took as it’s text John 5: 2-9, the story of the paralysed man laying by the pool at Bethsaida.

The meditation that followed considered how the man might feel; did he in fact want to be healed and take his place back in society where he would be expected to fulfil an active role. Do we sometimes make excuses when we are asked to follow God’s plan for us?

Everyone at the service was asked to make their own commitment to support their community with actions of love, peace and reconciliation.

There were only about 16 people at the service held in All Saints Church, but it felt good to be joining with thousands of Christians across the world, sharing the same readings and prayers, singing the same hymns, and making their individual pledges.

Many thanks to Mary Burgoine for organising the service and for All Saints who opened their church and provided refreshments at the end of the service.

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Prayers from the service

God is Love: -
Let us rise with our hearts full of love.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace: -
Let us take up our mats for peace among us!

God made all things new. In Christ we are reconciled to God. Let us walk towards a new life of reconciliation Amen.
Self quarantine!

Throughout history the response to disease epidemics on a community scale and pandemics which spread worldwide has been to quarantine those affected. One of the scourges of the past, before the discovery of anti-biotic drugs, was Leprosy which was a bacterial infection now called Hansen's Disease. In the Bible there are graphic descriptions of the disease to guide the priests who were required to identify the disease and deal with the sufferers.

*A person who has a dreaded skin disease must wear torn clothes, leave his hair uncombed, cover the lower part of his face and call out "Unclean unclean!".........and he must live outside the camp, away from others.*
(Leviticus 13 v 45-6).

Victoria Hislop in her bestselling novel 'The Island' tells the fictional story of two sisters living apart due to this disease. She set the story on the Cretan island of Spinalonga (shown below) which existed as a leper isolation colony during the twentieth century until 1957 and is now visited by tourists.

![Spinalonga Island](image)

In the past there were pandemics of what has become known as The Black Death (usually identified as Bubonic Plague) notably throughout Europe around 1350 and in London in 1665. The word **quarantine** comes from the Italian for forty days, (quarantina giorno) during which passengers and crew on ships arriving in Venice were kept apart, usually on an island, until they were considered free of the plague. Later research has shown that this period is just over the incubation period for the disease. Enforceable quarantine is being introduced in some countries to restrict the spread of the corona virus though the official line here is voluntary 'self-isolation.'

On holiday in Derbyshire we visited the attractive village of Eyam, which carries the title **Plague Village** referring to events in 1665/6 when the villagers sacrificed themselves for the wider community by
going into 'self-isolation.' In September George Vicars, the local tailor, received a damp parcel of cloth from London and spread out the fabric in front of the fire to dry, unaware that it harboured fleas inflected with plague. Within a few days his assistant was dead and the plague was spreading through the village. Rev William Mompesson, the vicar of the parish, and the former vicar Thomas Stanley, who had been expelled from the living because of his Puritan, views took the lead persuading the villages to isolate themselves from surrounding villages. Food and medicines were brought to Eyam and left beside stones set up at key points around the village. Money to pay for these was left in hollowed out stones covered in vinegar which was thought to disinfect them. Church services were held in a hillside hollow where families stood, keeping at a distance from their neighbours. Both clergymen survived the plague though Mompesson’s wife Catherine died from it and is buried in the churchyard. To limit the spread of the disease people were encouraged to bury their dead close to where they died and hence there are graves in groups scattered around the village. The most moving of these, are the Riley Graves named after the farm where they were buried, here Elizabeth Hancock buried her six children and her husband. The stones though weathered overtime tells us their names and are protected by the National Trust. The plague lasted for fourteen months and at its end 260 of the village's 350 inhabitants had died. Their ‘self-isolation’ prevented the spread of plague to Derbyshire and beyond.

Though our situation is not the same as that of the villages of Eyam, the Government hopes that keeping us home will limit, and eventually conquer, this virus. Psalm 91, in the Good News Bible God our protector includes the line *He will keep you safe from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases.* (v 3)
Words and Actions

Jesus had many friends - and He often went walking with them. Once, on a journey, Jesus called at the home of Martha and Mary.

Martha was very pleased to meet with Jesus, and she made Him welcome.

Mary was very excited too and wanted to listen to everything Jesus had to say.

But Martha, was not very impressed with Mary! She thought her sister should be hard at work not sitting around - just listening.

Lord, don't you care that Mary has left me to do all the work by myself?!

Martha, you are worried and troubled over so many things.

Jesus told Martha that there are far more important things in life than just fussing over a clean house!

Perhaps the most important thing we can learn, like Martha, is to make time to listen to Jesus.

See Luke 10.38-42
Mmasape Zihle led the service at which all the groups, and older members, re-affirmed their promises. The church was packed with members of the organisations and their families. Some competed in an egg and spoon relay and were careful not to drop the eggs, as Mmasape had not let them know beforehand that they were hard-boiled!

At the end of the service the new District Commissioner for scouts, Paul Symons, presented Hazel Mathews with an award for over 30 years’ service in the group.
Three of our Young people attended the 3Generate weekend last November and this is their Manifesto!

The CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE at 3Generate 2019 have spoken out

THIS IS WHAT WE CARE ABOUT,

SO LET’S TAKE ACTION TOGETHER TO...

• Make sure God is in our conversations and decisions
• Be kind, helpful and respectful
• Build an inclusive and welcoming church
• Change the stereotype of churches being boring and modernise them
• Make churches more eco friendly
• Be better resourced to support mental health issues, particularly issues that young people face
• Challenge people in power about climate change, poverty and world peace

There's much more to this conversation. Find out more about what we said at www.methodist.org.uk/3genmanifestos
Last year in April we were admiring the flowers our children had planted in the garden. They have bloomed again this year and at the moment, all around us are signs of spring. Showing us the resilience of God’s world.

Sadly, this newsletter can only be accessed online, but please let me have any news or photos and I will hope to produce another in May, until such time as we can produce a printed version again.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR May’s NEWSLETTER
If you would like to submit an article, joke, photo, poem, prayer or item of interest, please contact Jan Dent on jdent7@gmail.com or 020 8527 7193
Deadline to submit items: **Monday 27th March**

This newsletter is available to download as a PDF from our website.