

# CORNERSTONE

The Magazine of  
**WITNEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**



Christ Jesus is the chief cornerstone.

In Him the whole fabric is bound together, as it grows into a temple,  
dedicated to the Lord (Ephesians 2:21)

**Autumn 2020**



The last time I wrote for the magazine was back in February, the first edition to be published in 2020, and, due to the unprecedented global situation with Covid-19, this is now the Autumn edition, but not in the usual format, and even though the situation is improving all the time there is still some way to go before things get back to as near as 'normal' as can be, and hopefully the contents will enable you to take your mind to other things. I pray that in this unusual and, for many, difficult situation you are continuing to find joy and strength in the Lord.

So much has happened since the pandemic, especially concerning Churches; the months since lockdown began have been an extraordinary time – apparently the first period without public worship and the sacraments in England in more than 800 years. This has been, and still is, an incredibly difficult time for the whole country, especially for those who have been ill, who have suffered financial hardship, the loss of livelihoods and indeed, for many, those they love. This is not yet over and the Church has a task ahead to bring consolation and hope.

So, on that note, I now turn to some of this month's contents: Pip Cartwright continues in the short history of our Church with Rev George Auty; Lesley Barter gives us the Deacon's Letter; there is the continuation of Ken Lee's Bible Study; Judi Holloway gives us an update on Zoe Byrne (now Zoe Stanford) and family; David Kinchin, Beryl Cartwright & Kathy Shaw have given us some reflections and articles have been extracted, by myself, from books given to me by Theo Howells, to name but a few

Many thanks for those who have contributed for this edition, but would encourage anyone to consider submitting article(s) for the next edition by either:

E-mail: [terrypowlesland@uwclub.net](mailto:terrypowlesland@uwclub.net)

[jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net](mailto:jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net)

or, just plainly written on paper, which can be typed up

The next 2-monthly edition, covering December 2020 & January 2021, is due on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

Your Editor



**BST ends 25 October  
Clocks go BACK**

The vicar had his bike stolen and the police duly recovered it and the overjoyed cleric immediately pedalled down to his church to thank God for its recovery; he went in to pray, but when he came out it had gone

Mother to young daughter after first day at school: "Well, dear, what did they teach you today?"

Daughter: "Not much. I've got to go back again tomorrow."

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## Reflections during COVID-19 pandemic

10.30am weekly & arrive at 10.15am - services will be short and reflective due to the fact that we are not allowed to sing

### Sept

6<sup>th</sup> Rev Judi Holloway  
 13<sup>th</sup> Rev Elaine Kinchin Booton  
 20<sup>th</sup> Rev Judi Holloway  
 27<sup>th</sup> AGM Rev Judi Holloway & Rev Elaine Kinchin

### Oct

4<sup>th</sup> Rev Judi Holloway  
 11<sup>th</sup> Rev Elaine Kinchin  
 18<sup>th</sup> Rev Judi Holloway  
 25<sup>th</sup> Rev Elaine Kinchin

### Nov

1<sup>st</sup> Rev Judi Holloway  
 8<sup>th</sup> Remembrance  
 15<sup>th</sup> Rev Judi Holloway  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Rev Elaine Kinchin  
 29<sup>th</sup> Rev Elaine Kinchin

David Kinchin **Note: There will NOT be a service at War Memorial**

### Dec

6<sup>th</sup> Rev Judi Holloway

**Sept** 09 Judith Bungey  
 23 Clare Ellis  
 28 John Garrett

**Oct** 08 Rita Hayes  
 10 Susan Wass  
 13 Luke Lau  
 15 Chris Esapa  
 17 Anthony Hathaway

**Nov** 18 AJ Hathaway  
 19 Nanna Blackman  
 26 Ellie Rose Esapa  
 Elaine Kinchin  
 Hilary Pratley  
 29 Marina Bowerman

**Dec** 06 Sue Birdseye  
 07 Charlotte Hathaway





## WITNEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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14 August 2020

Dear friend

We are writing to let you know that we have been working hard to find a safe solution that would enable us to come together again to worship, hopefully starting on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am. However, to enable us to do this, we have had to make several changes to the layout of the church to comply with Government guidance.

Firstly, ALL people attending the church must wear a mask (unless of course you have health reasons which would make this difficult). If you forget to bring your own mask, there will be a supply at the door.

On entering the building, you will be required to sanitize your hands and also to sign in. This is required for the track and trace system. You will be given a sticker with your name printed on, which must be placed on one of the chairs in the sanctuary. This will be your chair until further notice so please leave the sticker on the chair when you leave. Please do not move the chairs. They have been organised to enable us to keep a safe distance.

Following Government guidelines, we are only allowed to have 30 people in the Sanctuary at any one time. It has also been decided that there will be no children's activities for the time being. Please keep any children with you and ensure they are not running around. Safe distance is for all!

Once in the building, please follow the signs as there is strictly a one way in and one way out of the sanctuary. It is also important that you keep 2 metres away from everyone and there will be markers inside and outside of the building to ensure this happens.

Only one toilet will be open during the service and that will be the disabled toilet. Should you need to use the toilet, there will be cleaning products and hand sanitizer for your use and to enable you to leave the toilet safe and clean for the next person.

Services will be for just 30 minutes until further notice. These will be mainly reflective as there is strictly no singing allowed, although we are able to use music during the service. The doors will not be opened until 10.15am so please do not arrive before that time.

It is important that you do not attend church if you are unwell or are showing signs of Covid-19 – new and persistent cough, high temperature, unable to taste food. Although these are known symptoms of Covid-19, it is also possible not to have symptoms at all and still have Covid-19. If in doubt, please get tested.

Please be assured that your safety is a very high priority for us and if you are unable to attend for a while, we will do our best to ensure a safe visit to you should you so wish.

These times have been extremely difficult for us all and it is our hope and our prayer that we will soon be able to worship together in the “new normal”.

Until then, God bless you

The Diaconate, Witney Congregational Church

## Deacon's Letter

On behalf of us all in the Diaconate, a very warm welcome back - to all of those who are ready to take a step back into normality and attend church again, and a virtual hug for those for whom it is still a step too far. We are all together in spirit – indeed in THE Spirit.

We have each responded to this most surreal of seasons in a different way. For some it will have been a positive experience: a chance to reflect upon what their faith really is and how to live it. For others, it has been a struggle to remain committed without the strength that fellow travellers provide on the bumpy road of life. For those of us who struggle to find time for God, it has been a blessing, but it has also brought us face to face with our doubts and our insecurities.

So what now? How can we all move forward, fortified by the conviction that God is with us. No matter how weak or strong our faith may be, God knows, understands and stands ready to prop us up. As a church community we shall need to remember that in the months to come. He has a plan for our little family and it may not be 'more of the same'. This may be the time to rethink our future, accept our limitations and concentrate on the things that we CAN do. We have an amazing pastoral network, which has flourished during these months.

We have a beautiful building and garden in the centre of a town which will need rejuvenating after the economic ravages of the last few months. Let's start to think about how we can use our assets to turn our faith into a living, active thing.

My breakfast time guru Bear Grylls says that when something catastrophic happens *'that's precisely the time for you to have vision and hold on..... It's easy to have vision when the days are clear and the going is smooth. But vision counts most when a storm hits and you can't see through the wind and debris. That's when you learn to depend on God and not your own strength.'*

We have the time now for some radical thinking – let's move forward in faith and hope. God will be with us.

*'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you plans to give you hope and a future'. Jeremiah 29:11*

May He bless you all and keep you safe and well  
Lesley Barter

\*\*\*\*\*

## Gamston Family

Hi Judi, Ruth passed on your message so I know you've heard our good news. Baby Theo is a delight and we are so pleased to have them at home with us. Do please pass on our good news and greetings to all our friends at Witney Cong. We will certainly try to bring him and introduce him if the lockdown eases before Ruth returns to work in Jordon.

God bless,

Peter & Phoebe



## Treasurers Update

Friends, I have been unable to do so much in the past four or five months. I have not been able to set a Budget for 2020/21 for starters. I could try and prepare a budget but just so much is unknown at the present time I think it would be a real work of fiction – and I always try to be totally honest with members in my reporting of finances.

So here goes. The tenants in the Manse have experienced some financial difficulties and we allowed them to pay half rent for three months. They are now paying the arrears and will stay in the manse until the end of their agreement in December. Likewise, we have allowed the Book shop to pay a contribution towards rent for one quarter. All other tenants appear to be doing well. In these times, that is the best we can achieve. The tenants in the flat are a constant as are the payments for the Carpark from the Halifax Building Society. So rents continue to be paid.

Clearly there have been no weekly offerings for some months. That has been a concern, but fortunately a good number of members contribute by Standing order and that money has been maintained – even increased in some cases. My thanks to all of you for this financial support.

- When we do return to services, offerings will be taken slightly differently in order to maintain social distancing. Money can be placed in the offering bowls or in the box in the entrance way. I ask that you try and restrict yourselves to either notes or cheques – *avoiding coins where possible*. These offerings can then be counted and banked after a suitable delay (in line with Government Guidelines).

Our expenses have been greatly reduced. The cost of fuel and water is almost zero (but the companies still insist on taking Standing Charges). The Insurance is a constant obviously. However, we have purchased no consumable recently so that is a big saving. The church has spent money preparing for the return to services and new hand sanitizer facilities are being set up and signs and screens closing off parts of the building. Only the disabled toilet will be in use in the short term.

We have taken this opportunity to get some work done in the church. All of the wiring now has new Circuit Breakers fitted. This cost around £2,400 but is actually a blessing because in doing this work the electrician's found two faults within our systems. Both have been rectified. We have also had the minister's office and toilet redecorated in full, and the Townsend Lounge redecorated in full. This painting work cost a total of £900. All is now paid for.

So, in mid-August, this leaves us with a steady balance of £50,500 in our deposit accounts and approximately £4,000 in our current account.

**Lendwithcare** had been suspended for three months with all loans frozen. Now, some loans are being repaid again as people start to return to work around the world. However, we **MUST** be prepared for the fact that some entrepreneurs will default on their loans. For them, repaying our church is the least of their worries. At the end of July we received a total of £284.21 in repayments and these have been promptly re-invested in new loans. The **"Impact on Poverty"** diagram shows the precise figures linked to our accounts.



I do hope to be able to present approved Church accounts at the Annual Church Meeting at the end of September. These receipts and documents are with the accountants at the time of writing this report.

Every blessing, **David Kinchin** (treasurer)

### Witney Congregational Church's impact on poverty



 **214**  
Number of loans  
[My loans](#)

 **1812**  
Entrepreneurs helped

 **5277**  
Family members helped

 **313**  
Jobs created

**£0.00** Credit available

[Add credit >](#)

**£2,600.00**  
Credit added

**£7,484.57**  
Lent

**£5,552.56**  
Repaid

**£437.99**  
Donated  
[Make donation](#)

**0**  
£0.00 total  
[Buy a gift voucher](#)

**£230.00**  
Withdrawn  
[Withdraw credit](#)

### A Moderator Clang

I was once at a scout camp where the service was taken by a bishop

It was a hot humid summer day and the moderator of the Free Church Federal Council had turned up in his full robes. Standing around sweating buckets and getting hotter under the dog collar, he turned to our minister and bellowed:

‘When is that flipping bishop going to turn up?’

A man standing close by in Scout’s shirt, tie and short trousers said: ‘I’m already here’





## **PRAYER LETTER No 194**

### **Psalms and Singing**

Since Lockdown we have been unable to Worship physically together and at present when we do meet, the Government's restrictions mean that there can be no physical singing in Church, although we can listen to hymns and recorded songs.

However during Lockdown many of us have joined in singing in our homes whilst listening and watching Services on the radio, T.V. or on line through streaming, U Tube, or Zoom. Did you give thanks for the people who worked to provide these opportunities of 'virtual worship'? We take our modern communication for granted. The early worshippers of God worshipped in their tents or homes before Temples, Synagogues and Churches were built.

Even today in many countries Christians gather together in their homes to worship God. Not forgetting those who find themselves isolated or in prison, they will find a way audibly or silently to sing their praises or laments to God.

Why and what is it that makes singing with others so important to our quality of life? From early times communities have gathered together to sing in celebration of people or occasions, including life and death.

Music whether singing, composing, playing instruments either solo or in a group, band or orchestra or just listening to music is important or even a vital element to our human development and appreciation of God's gifts to mankind of all ages.

Many concerts this year have been cancelled due to the Coronavirus disappointing singers, instrumentalists and audiences who might have had an amazing musical experience. The outcome of this is that many musicians are now without income and the audiences have not had the pleasure and joy of these occasions.

The Psalms of the Old Testament include many songs of praise and thanksgiving but also of lament and Mercy. The word 'praise' can mean approval, admiration, glorifying, gratitude and appreciation. The physical action of Praise can be, clapping, shouting, dancing, singing, which many of us can identify in responding to different situations.

Many of the Psalms are full of praise, rejoicing and thankfulness to God for His goodness to mankind.

Psalms 145 Celebrates God's greatness, His abundant goodness, righteousness, faithfulness, compassion and loving kindness to mankind.

Psalms 137 When the Israelites were in exile they sang their laments by the rivers of Babylon. Even their captors asked them to 'sing their songs of Zion'!

Psalms 150 Describes why, where and how to praise God using the instruments of the day.

Psalms 23 is a favourite Psalm for many people either through reading, singing, playing an instrument or just listening. It is probably the one most played or sung at Weddings and funerals.

What is your favourite hymn or chorus? What is the theme and why is it your favourite?



Give thanks for all the hymn and songwriters for all their God given talents which bring comfort and joy to others.

Every Blessing  
Beryl

### **Psalm 150**

Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!

Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!

Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

*Please note that for up-to-date prayer requests contact Beryl (703717)*

The following Psalm, by Canon Paul Hardingham, has been extracted from Paris Pump, and considers a best-loved psalm, and is entitled:

### **Psalm 23 - *a psalm for the pandemic***

There are few psalms as personal and real as Psalm 23. It records David's experience of God as his Shepherd going through dark times. In the midst of the effects of a global pandemic, this psalm speaks to the fears that can overwhelm us.

*He Knows Me: 'The Lord is my shepherd...'* Just as a good shepherd knows every sheep in his flock, so God know each one of us intimately.

*He Provides for Me: 'He makes me lie down in green pastures...'* Just as the shepherd knows the needs of his sheep, so God will provide what we need in our lives and circumstances.

*He Guides Me: 'He guides me along the right paths...'* Just as the shepherd leads the sheep to the best pastures, so God provides the best for us, as we listen and follow Him.

*He Protects Me: 'Even though I walk through the darkest valley...'* Just as the sheep have no need to fear danger when following the shepherd, so we live knowing God's presence and protection.

*He Comforts Me: 'your rod and your staff, they comfort me.'* As the shepherd's rod defends the sheep, and the staff enables him to control the sheep, so God comforts us through His Word and discipline.

The final verses of the psalm (v5-6) offer the security of knowing that our lives are in His hands, even through death, as He leads us to the home we've been looking for all our lives.

Some years ago, a great actor was asked to recite Psalm 23, but asked one of the other guests to do the same. His remarkable rendition was followed by the other man, an older Christian speaking from the heart. Afterwards the actor said: *'The difference between us is that I know the psalm, but he knows the shepherd.'*

The following has been written & submitted by David Kinchin, and is entitled:

## Reflection

I overheard Elaine talking to an old friend earlier in the week. They were discussing the nature of Jesus; Elaine said that as Jesus was fully human, sometimes he must have failed, as he experienced everything that we humans do. Her friend was sceptical about it – and I just don't know.

Pain changes people and unfortunately Elaine's pain is worse this week. She is grumpy and short-tempered and I understand completely because I know all about pain. And so did Jesus. On the cross, when he cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (quoting from psalm 22) he was in pain. He knew that his heavenly Father was still with him – but his human side was in pain, excruciating pain. Excruciating actually comes from the Latin for "I torment", and people's minds are altered under torture.

I remember listening to a sermon on the words that Jesus spoke from the cross – although I can't remember who was preaching. The minister suggested that when Jesus said "My God, why have you forsaken me..." he was using shorthand for the rest of the psalm. He was also saying "Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help" v.11. Psalm 22 is considered prophecy as verse 18 reads: "They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." And then, in seeming contradiction to its opening words, verse 19 reads: "But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me." It is a lot to think about.

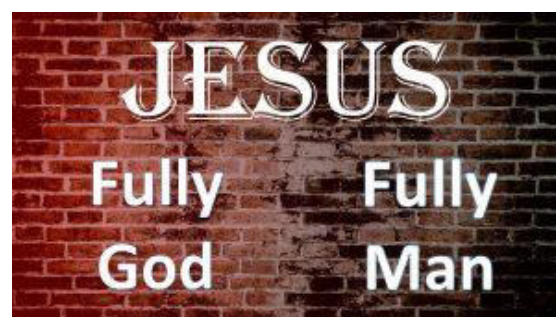
I am not sure Jesus was specifically quoting psalm 22 from the cross; I think he was feeling dreadful both physically and

mentally. He was asking God to deliver him from pain – a very natural human reaction.

Another human emotion is fear. Are we fearful as the lockdown eases? I sat as a magistrate in the court in Oxford for the first time in months last Friday. Social distancing was observed and rigorous cleaning was carried out. I was too busy to think about it, but I know Elaine was worried about me being out of the house among other people. It was a happy coincidence that the post that day brought her a letter asking her to take part in a Covid-19 research project. Towards the end of the month she will be tested for the virus – so if I have caught it while out and about, and brought it home to Elaine, the test will show her, probably before she gets any symptoms. Did God have a hand in her being randomly selected to take part in the research?

Following on from psalm 22 is the most famous psalm of all, which contains the words: "the valley of the shadow of death". We have all been walking in that valley; we are told by politicians that we are nearly out of that place; but as Christians whether we are in that valley or not, we know that God is with us, he has not forsaken us and he never will.

Stay Safe. David



The following article has been written and submitted by Kathy Shaw, and is entitled:

## **All things bright & beautiful**

The hymn that most people know is '**All Things Bright and Beautiful**', is a favourite sung at many wedding and baptism services. The first verse of the hymn starts with 'Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings....' and I am reminded of this every morning when I wake thanks to a small tree outside our bedroom window.

My husband, Phil and I have lived for many years in a pre-war terraced house where the only garden we have is a small area at the front of the house, which contains a flower bed.

About five years ago, our local City Council decided to make the streets in our area tree lined. They planted a slow growing tree on the pavement outside our house, which struggled to survive until my husband took responsibility for watering and feeding it regularly. Slowly the tree has struggled to gain strength and this year the tree blossomed for the first time, and my husband has hung a bird feeder in its branches. Every morning we now wake up to birdsong, usually blackbirds and magpie's, and an occasional finch or pigeon.

This summer we were surprised to see unknown plants growing underneath its branches. To our surprise and delight we now have a crop of about a dozen beautiful sunflowers, with huge golden heads growing upwards beneath 'our tree'. We realised that some of the seeds that my husband has been giving to the birds were sunflower seeds, some of which must have fallen beneath the tree and taken root. This reminds us of the Song of Solomon and its springtime rhapsody - "The flowers appear on the

earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land". Song of Solomon 2:12



As people pass along the pavement and pass the tree, it isn't the tree that they notice but the sunflowers growing tall underneath its branches, often stopping to admire them. Even the local children have left them to grow.

During the last couple of months, we have had so much pleasure watching the sunflowers grow and flower, and it would be easy to forget about the tree that has nurtured the birds and the flowers around its trunk. Without the branches of the tree the birds wouldn't have sat sharing their song with us each morning, my husband wouldn't have put up a bird feeder, and the sunflowers wouldn't have grown. Sometimes it is easy for us to forget that each of God's creations need him and each other in order to reach their full beauty and potential. Working together they have produced something beautiful for all to enjoy.

We have so much beauty in the world, and sometimes that beauty shows itself in the most unexpected ways. We need to also remember that without God none of this would be possible. We also need to remember that "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever". Isaiah 40:8

The following articles have been chosen by myself and extracted from the book 'Tell Everyone' by Rev JR Edwards, and was given to me by Theo Howells:

## 1. Why ?

A little while ago it happened that I met a small boy who, I should say, is the champion questioner of the world. If there is anyone who can beat him at his own game I should like to hear of him

It's a fine lesson for a man who thinks he knows it all to have to spend an hour with a youngster who professes to know nothing, but who wants to know everything, and who thinks that the man who is old enough to be his father should be able to help him

You mustn't say WHY so often I once remarked to a little boy who had given me no rest during a long evening, and the boy demanded why mustn't I? Thinking about it I was probably wrong, no doubt, to discourage someone in his search for knowledge; but what is a man to do at question time if he is busy, or doesn't know the answers?

My dad, he didn't go down town  
Last evening after tea,  
But got a book an' settled down  
As comfy as could be.  
I tell you I was awful glad  
To have my dad about,  
To answer all the things I had  
Been trying to find out.

And so I asked him why the world  
Is round instead of square,  
And why the piggies' tails are curled  
And why don't fish breathe air.  
And why the moon doesn't hit a star,  
And why the dark is black,  
And jest how many birds there are,  
And will the wind come back,

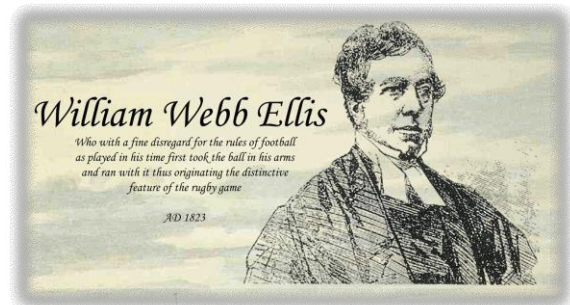
And why a horse can't learn to moo,  
And why a cow can't neigh,  
And do the fairies live on dew,  
And what makes hair turn grey.  
And then my dad got up an, he !--  
The awful words he said !  
I hadn't done a thing, but he  
Jest sent me off to bed.

## 2. The Boy who ran with the ball

Rugby football, compared to associated football (Soccer), is not very old. It was born in the year 1823, and came about such:

Those who know anything about soccer will know that one of its rules is: 'A player, other than the goalkeeper, shall not intentionally handle the ball', and this rule was in force in 1823, and a tablet on the wall at Rugby School explains what took place:

The stone commemorates the exploit of William Webb Ellis, an Anglican clergyman, who, with a fine disregard for the rules of soccer as played at his time, first took the ball in his arms and ran with it, thus originating the distinctive feature of the Rugby game



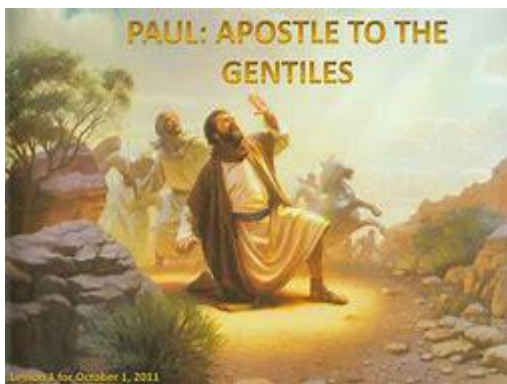
Rugby football therefore sprang out of a fine disregard for the old order of thing. Webb Ellis, no doubt, had an uncomfortable time with the diehards of his day, but succeeding generations have rejoiced that he lived and dared



We are all debtors to those fine spirits who could not be satisfied with things as they were, thus bringing into existence something that has enriched the lives of all who came after – Think of some of them!

- **Paul:** In Paul's day it was held that God was for the Jews only. Men had introduced the rule that Gentiles were debarred from the blessings of the Gospel, and religious privileges were for the chosen people, and for none beside. Heathen folk were beyond the pale

Paul's great heart and eager spirit could not be content with that condition of things; everybody knows he broke away from the rules of formal Judaism. No longer would he be governed by petty limitations and regulations. Christ was too wonderful to be monopolised by any one race of men, and he is today known as the Apostle to the Gentiles – men of every tribe and tongue. But suppose he had been unwilling to disregard the old rules!



- **William Tyndale:** in his day, the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there were rules forbidding the publication and printing of the Bible for the common people. There were severe penalties for those who didn't play the game. Tyndale, however, could not be bound by those restrictions, which he

believed to be contrary to the will of God, and the best interests of men

His exploit cost him cruel martyrdom, but he didn't mind that. He had, by his daring, made it possible for the Bible to be put into the hands of the people, and that was all that mattered. But, suppose he was afraid to do what he believed to be right!

**Note:** Tyndale was educated at the University of Oxford and became an instructor at the University of Cambridge, where, in 1521. Tyndale became convinced that the Bible alone should determine the practices and doctrines of the church and that every believer should be able to read the Bible in his own language.

After the Church in England prevented him from translating the Bible there, he went to Germany in 1524, receiving financial support from wealthy London merchants. His New Testament translation was completed in July 1525 and printed at Cologne and, when Catholic authorities suppressed it, at Worms. The first copies reached England in 1526. Tyndale then began work on an Old Testament translation but was captured in Antwerp before it was completed; he was executed at Vilvoorde in 1536.



The following article has been written & submitted by Beryl Cartwright, and is entitled:

## **Encounters with and without Rufus**

We looked after our Daughter's dog Rufus from last October until the start of Lockdown when Penny returned from Dubai to collect him. This last week he has been back with us as Penny and family are away on holiday.

This addition to our family last October required dog walks twice a day which I undertook. Most of the walks were along the Windrush Valley or along the Woodford Mill Gravel Footpath running parallel to the river. Not only did I experience the peace and beauty of the Windrush Valley but I also observed human behaviour.

If you pass people on a 'walk' you either 'nod' in recognition or smile or say 'Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening. If you have a dog with you the gesture invariably leads to a longer conversation than two words.

When Rufus went back to Kent just before Lockdown I continued my daily walk by myself but only going once a day as stipulated by the Government. I noticed that more people were walking but as I didn't have a dog with me it was more difficult to engage in a 'chance conversation'. As the Lockdown lengthened I did eventually have short conversations with people I had originally just smiled or said Good Morning to in passing. Relationships build up slowly.

Jesus engaged in conversation with two lads mending their fishing nets who soon became His disciples. Jesus approached and engaged easily with people of all ages, races and religion when walking in the streets and countryside.

During Lockdown many people were starved of personal contact and conversation. How do we engage with people we do not know who may be lonely, isolated or new to the area? Some people prefer to be alone, others

would welcome interaction with another person.

So whether you have a dog or not be aware of people you meet or pass by on the streets of Witney or footpaths in the countryside. You will be guided to know if it is appropriate to engage in conversation or not.

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## **Churches enjoy Zooming**

Most churches who used digital channels during lockdown, in order to keep in touch with their congregations, found that their favourite platform was Zoom.

A recent survey by Ecclesiastical found that Zoom was used by 78 per cent; Skype by 12 per cent, and other platforms, including WhatsApp, by eight per cent.

Nearly one third of churches who used digital channels have also reported an increased attendance at their virtual services.

That has led to some 38 per cent of churches saying that they would continue to use digital channels, even now that churches are physically open again.

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## **Why singing in church is the same as shouting at the pub**

How dangerous is it to sing in church, when it comes to spreading coronavirus? About the same as it is to speak loudly in a pub.

So say researchers at the University of Bristol. They have found that speaking loudly and singing generate about the same amounts of aerosol droplet – tiny particles of liquid – which are thought to carry Covid-19

Of course, the louder you sing or speak, the more the aerosol droplets.



The following article, written & submitted by Pip Cartwright, is a continuation from the last edition, and is entitled:

### **The Growth of WCC: 1938 - 1953**

With the departure of the Rev. Cunliffe Jones in 1937 the pulpit was filled from January to March 1938 by a Mr A Quarterman; from April to June 1938 by a succession of Mansfield College students and from July to August 1938 by a Mr D Jenkins of Mansfield College, Oxford.

In the latter part of 1938 the Rev. George Sheard Auty of High Wycombe was invited to be the Minister on a stipend of £200. He accepted and was inducted on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1939. He was one of the longer serving Ministers of our Church, and spanned the World War II years and after until 1953. Present members might recall that our lounge in our new Church is named after the Rev. Auty and his wife Elsie. In 1938 Mr and Mrs A E Sellman of High Street, Witney were received into membership. As you may know their son Peter and daughter Rita (Hayes) are long serving members of our Church.

It was during 1938 that the Marlborough Lane Hall was entered at The Land Registry Office as the property of Witney Congregational Church with New College London being the Trustees. In 1939 the Sunday School served 27 children and the annual outing visited Wickstead Park, Kettering which was noted for its array of children's swings, roundabouts and slides and a lovely setting for a picnic.

During World War II winters were often severe and with the fuel shortage, some services were held in the Schoolroom (usually January and February). There was concern over the effect upon the pipe organ if there wasn't any heat during the winter. No mention is made of any solution. At the prompting of the Rev. Auty, the schoolrooms were let to different organisations during the week as a gesture to the war effort. There is

mention of the Red Cross and Canteen Workers. I believe the building in the High Street where Lomax and Staines is today, was a Social Club and Canteen for Service Men who were billeted in and around the town. Perhaps the Church rooms were similarly used. We know that the St John's Ambulance used them for years. In 1945 the Rev. Auty moved that Life Deacons should become Elders of the Church, who could attend Deacons Meetings at their own discretion. This motion was carried.

At the time there were eight Deacons (including Secretary and Treasurer). Mr G Ling resigned as Secretary after 15 years of service and he, with Mr T Crawley, were made Elders.

There was a problem filling the part of Church Secretary, but Mr A E Sellman agreed to act 'pro tem'. He remained Church Secretary until he suddenly died 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1965 (21 years).

During 1946 Ralph Hicks agreed to be Choirmaster. Due to the VJ Day (Victory over Japan) celebrations the Sunday School outing was cancelled and, shortly afterwards, several members who had served in H.M. Forces were welcomed back including Mr L Stayt, Mr Graham Wheeler and Mr Wally Crawley.

In 1948 the Marlborough Lane Hall was let to the County Education Committee for Batts School and at their request during 1949 the floor was repaired and the stage was extended. An electric blower was installed for the organ, because previously it had to be hand pumped. As a boy, Tom Worley often performed this important job as did Peter Sellman. It was during this year that a mention is made of a monthly Newsletter edited by Mr and Mrs Stan Smith. Fundraising efforts such as a Bazaar were an annual event, however a proposal for a Whist Drive met with an objection from the Rev. Auty, so after a discussion it was not followed

up. Tragically Mr Margetts died, having served as Church Treasurer since 1931 and as a Deacon since 1924 (24 years).

Conversations between the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches of England and Wales took place in 1949. Discussions during Church Meetings were generally in favour and it was decided to recommend that talks should continue for eventual union. Mention is also made concerning the inadequate heating in the Church and it was felt that the boiler should be examined.

The 1950 Sunday School outing was aboard the Oxford to Abingdon Steamer and involved 19 pupils and 10 adults. At Christmas 20 children attended the Witney Pantomime. It was during this year that the Rev. Auty became ill possibly due to the fact he was gassed in World War I.

The following year in 1951 the minimum annual stipend for Ministers rose to £300 and the Church was given a grant from the Home Church Fund to meet the cost. Sadly a past Deacon (1924-1945) Mr Warner died.

It was during 1951 that plans were made to help Langford Congregational Church. The Rev. Auty held afternoon Sunday Services there and it looks like they became part of the Witney Church who had 43 members on the roll. The boiler sprung a leak!! With the Smiths' leaving, the Newsletter was taken over by Miss Lea and Mrs Wright and the duplication of issues was carried out by Daphne Sellman (sister to Rita Hayes and Peter Sellman. She later married Philip Turner who later became our Church Secretary).

1953 was a sad year for the Church. A former Church Secretary and Deacon (1905-1927) and Life Deacon (1931) Mr Tom Littleton died and also the long serving servant of the Church Mr Frank Berry passed away. He was the Church Secretary (1905-

1919), Deacon (1919-1930) and Life Deacon (1935)

The Rev. Auty had never been a well man but since 1951 he suffered bouts of ill-health and as a consequence the Church received his resignation on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1953. It appears that the Church accepted with sadness a proposal he should consider part-time retirement. However soon after in 1954 the Rev. Auty died which was a real loss to the Church.

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### **Louis Pasteur: 'father' of microbiology**

A tiny invisible thing that brings disease and death .... where have we heard that before?! But Louis Pasteur, who died 125 years ago this month, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1895, was not interested in a virus from China, but in tiny living organisms that brought disease and death in other ways.

Pasteur made some outstanding breakthroughs. He discovered the principles of vaccination, and then created the first vaccines for anthrax and rabies. His medical discoveries provided support for the germ theory of disease and nullified the theory of spontaneous generation.

But Louis Pasteur is best known for his invention of the technique of treating milk and wine to stop bacterial contamination, a process that was named after him: pasteurisation. In doing so, he saved the French beer, wine and silk industries.

All in all, this gifted French biologist, microbiologist, and chemist well deserves his title as the 'father of microbiology,' and to be seen as one of the three main founders of bacteriology.

## Bible Study

In this edition, and with permission from Ken & Marjorie Lee's family, and in memoriam to Rev Ken Lee, a series of Bible Studies, written by Ken and first submitted back in 1999, will be re-produced and is entitled:

### MEANDERING IN MARK

*"Meander" means "To wander deviously or aimlessly". Perchance this is not too accurate a description of these studies; it is hoped that they are not too devious nor totally aimless. However, the term "meander" is used to indicate an approach which takes its time, stops as needful to let a thought, an idea, an insight develop - all with the purpose of seeing what the Lord has to say to his people. May He speak, and to Him be the glory.*

#### 14. Mark 5:21-43

An uneventful crossing of the sea has taken place: Mark makes no comment as regards the weather, the calmness of the sea or indeed the calmness or otherwise of the disciples. Mark merely records that Jesus had crossed the sea again in the boat. Effectively Mark has moved his story back into Jewish territory, back into the region of Galilee. Mark gives no precise location, anywhere on the sea shore west of the entrance and exit points of the River Jordan to the the Sea of Galilee is a possible location of the events which he about to relate. However, as a great crowd rapidly gathers around Jesus, it seems likely that Jesus and his disciples landed near to one of the towns such as Capernaum or Tiberias. Mark now has the scene set for the remaining two of the four acts of power which he records at this stage in his gospel account.

Into the crowd comes a man called Jairus. He is described as "one of the leaders of the synagogue". The term used is literally "Ruler of the synagogue". The title is that given to the supervisor of worship in a synagogue, although it was also used more generally of the prominent members of a synagogue congregation. Whether Jairus was the

"Ruler" or simply a prominent member of the local synagogue, he was an important and highly respected figure in the religious life of the community centred on the particular synagogue; what he said and did would have influence upon other people. This man came looking for Jesus; his meeting with Jesus was no chance encounter made while he was wandering around because he was unable to bear to remain in his house where his daughter was so seriously ill. Jairus had set out to look for Jesus. The members of his household knew what Jairus intended to do and so, when they needed to send a message to him (v.35), the messengers knew where to find him - with Jesus.

Jairus finds Jesus and falls at his feet and begs for his help. The similarity to the action of the demoniac on the other side of the sea is apparent even though it is difficult to imagine a greater contrast between the two men. However, in their need, before Jesus, they are as one in becoming humble supplicants for the mercy of God. Jairus pours out his heart to Jesus; "My little daughter is at the point of death". "Little daughter" - the form of word is the diminutive, the affectionate form used by a loving father for whom his daughter is most precious, one to be treasured and protected; we can hear the anguish as Jairus says: "My little girl is dying." Jairus is certain of this and there is nothing more that he can do, that anyone can do. Unless - this Jesus, can he do something? Is Jairus snatching at a last straw of hope, or does he have faith in the power of Jesus? The words which Mark records do not enable us to be sure: "Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." "Made well" could be translated as "saved". If Jairus held a faith similar to that of the Pharisees who believed in a life beyond this life, then his plea might be interpreted as seeking a blessing on the dying girl that she be saved from any torment in the hereafter. Equally it is possible that Jairus was pleading for Jesus to save his daughter from dying, to heal her disease. Whatever Jairus's meaning or faith,

he certainly saw Jesus as one whose touch would make a difference in his child's life, so he wanted Jesus to come to his house and touch his daughter. Jesus responds by acting; he follows Jairus.

So do the crowd. Anything Jesus gets involved with is worth watching. A crowd collects a bigger crowd. As Jesus moves along with Jairus, the crowd gets bigger, pressing in upon Jesus, slowing progress. We can picture Jairus getting agitated by every fresh delay. Then there is a major delay caused by a woman. Mark tells us nothing about the woman except her tremendous need. She had been suffering from a discharge of blood for twelve years. The sheer physical drain of such a constant blood loss is difficult to imagine. At the very least she must have felt constantly "under par". Even worse though was the fact that she was an outcast because she was ritually unclean. Leviticus 15:25-27 lays down the rule under which anything she lay upon or sat upon became unclean, as did anyone who touched these things. Effectively this rule barred the woman from all public places where she might sit and bring contamination, uncleanness to others. It certainly barred her from the synagogue, from participating in the worship of God. No wonder it is recorded that she had spent all she had and endured much from many physicians! Mark's comment that the physicians had made her problem worse rather than better reflects a common theme in the Near East of distrust of physicians exemplified in the Greek version of Ecclesiasticus 38:15 - "He who sins against his Maker, may he fall into the hands of the physician."

The woman was in dire need, yet, despite all her sufferings, she remained a woman of faith who believed that there must be a way for her to become whole. Somewhere she had heard about Jesus and of the power that seemed to reside in him. She appears to have believed that such power could be tapped at will merely by touching the power-filled person rather in the way which

today one might touch the live terminal of a powerful battery and receive an electric shock. It is as though the power is there but it is not directly under the control of the person who has that power. The woman sees Jesus and thinks that if she can but touch his clothes she may get the power to be healed. It would all be done so quietly and without anybody knowing. She manages to get close enough; she reaches out her hand and touches his cloak. Immediately she feels the haemorrhaging within her stop, she feels renewed, healed, made whole. But before she can even turn away, Jesus knows that someone has touched him with a purpose, that someone has called upon the power of God within him. So he asks: "Who touched my clothes?"

Lots of people were continually touching Jesus's clothes - the moving crowd was large, people were jostling and brushing against one another; many of them must have touched Jesus. The disciples, puzzled by the question, point out the obvious to Jesus. Jesus, however, knew that this touch was not just a casual touch but rather a deliberate, purposeful touch. An action of faith had impinged upon his person and drawn from him of goodness. "He looked all around to see who had done it." For the woman, it must have seemed as though Jesus was looking straight at her. No doubt, she had been thinking of hurrying off home to remove her soiled clothes, to wash and to double check that she was indeed healed. The words of Jesus stop her in her tracks. Conscious of what had happened to her, his words draw her back. Like Jairus but a short while before, she fell down at Jesus's feet and poured out all her story; she told him everything, she held nothing back - such is the force of Mark's words here. We may well wonder at the reaction of those of the crowd who could hear her story; we can also picture the impatience of Jairus and yet perhaps also an increase in hope as he saw evidence of the power that came through Jesus. Jesus addresses the woman: "Daughter". Jesus has adopted her into his

family, the family of faith. "Your faith has made you well, go in peace, and be healed of your disease." It is the faith of the woman which has brought her salvation, which has allowed the power of God to act within her. The healing of her disease is the outcome of the peace of God within her. "Go in peace" were the words of Jesus to her: we can picture her going on her way, a renewed woman. Mark tells us nothing more of her; she has been the central figure in the third of these mighty acts of Jesus which Mark here records; now she vanishes from the story.

Events move on rapidly in Mark's account: even while Jesus is still speaking to the woman messengers arrive from Jairus's house. Picture them pushing through the crowd to reach Jairus. Maybe their arrival actually moved the woman away from Jesus so that he did not give to her his customary admonition to tell no one about her healing.

With almost brutal directness they deliver their news to Jairus: "Your daughter is dead."

These messengers are quite sure that this is the final act in the girl's life; she is dead; there is nothing further to be done. "Why trouble the teacher any further?" they ask Jairus. Why indeed! Jairus had come seeking help for the living while life still remained; death had put an end to all hope. But not for Jesus! Jesus hears what is said and appears to ignore it as he quietly (it surely must have been quietly) says to Jairus, "Do not fear, only believe." The word from the same Greek root is used here for "believe" as was used earlier when speaking of the faith of the woman who touched him. Was Jesus here reminding Jairus of what the faith of a woman had achieved for her but a few minutes earlier? Her faith had brought her back from twelve years of what might be described as a "living death", twelve years which matched the life span of his daughter.

It is almost as though Jesus is saying, "There is more life beyond twelve years."

Once again Jesus turns from words to action; somehow he gets free from the crowd as he takes with him only three of his disciples.

Perchance the other disciples were given the task of holding back the crowd; Mark does not record how Jesus got away from all the people. Neither does Mark give us any guidance as to why Peter, James and John were chosen to go with Jesus. Certainly, these three disciples became leading figures in the life of the Early Church but we can only speculate as to whether Jesus was here beginning the preparation of an inner circle of disciples. Jesus and the three disciples, together with Jairus and (probably) the messengers who had come to fetch Jairus, arrive at Jairus's house. They are greeted by a commotion. The word used here is the same one as used for a riot. The impression given is of a great number of people weeping and wailing. It almost seems as if they were trying to outdo each other in the noisiness of their grieving. It may well be that many were professional mourners who could be called in to add bulk and impressiveness to a time of mourning - the more mourners, the more noise, the more it showed how great was the grief of the family and the value to them of the dead loved one. Jesus enters the house and speaks to the mourners. Quite wonderfully his presence seems to have quietened them enough for them to hear him speak. He asks them why they are making all the fuss. We may speculate as to what their answer would have been. Were they weeping and wailing because they grieved for the child and for her parents, or because such behaviour was expected of them in the circumstances, or simply because they were "paid mourners"? Faced with the reaction of people to a death today we may often want to ask the same type of question as to what meaning is attached to the ceremonies associated with death.

Jesus does not wait for these mourners to reply but gives to them a reason for not mourning and weeping: "The child is not dead but sleeping." Their response to his words was immediate: "They laughed at him." They had been at many deaths and they knew that the girl was dead. There is no doubt at all that in recording this story, Mark

was also quite certain that the child was dead. Whether Jesus accepted that the child was dead, we do not know. We do know that the Early Christians spoke of their dead as "being asleep", so sure were they of resurrection from the dead. Possibly Jesus was using this moment to teach that death is not the final event in a person's being. However, the word used here for "sleeping" - καθύδω, which is the same as used earlier to describe Jesus asleep in the boat, is not the same as that used by other Gospel writers and by the Apostles Paul and Peter who use the word κοιμάω to describe the dead who are asleep in the Lord. However it may well be that Mark used this word here to emphasise that just as in the moment of peril in the boat the disciples could awaken Jesus from sleep to save them from death, so with Jesus, even if death came, there was still an awakening.

Jesus "put them all outside". Again we may marvel at the personality of Jesus that he can turn these mourners out of the house. Then, taking with him his three disciples and the child's parents, he enters the room where the dead body of the girl lies and touches her. To touch the dead was to become ritually unclean. The touch of Jesus once more breaks down this barrier between ritual observance and the demands of responsive love. So too do the words which Jesus speaks to the girl. Miracle workers so often used magical words in a foreign language as part of the mystique of the art. Jesus speaks in the child's native tongue, in Aramaic, as grasping her hand he says, "Little girl, get up!" Here is no elaborate ritual, no prolonged rigmarole, but simply an act of love. "Immediately the girl got up and began to walk about." Those present were amazed. Mark is really saying that they were caught up into a state of ecstasy. They were almost beside themselves with wonder, amazement, and, no doubt, joy. We can but wonder what the twelve year old girl made of it all, as to what were her memories and experience. Jesus affirms the reality of her living by telling her parents to give her something to

eat. What greater sign could they have of a healthy living child than to see her enjoying food?

So the fourth of these mighty works of power in this portion of Mark's Gospel are completed. Once more Mark states that Jesus tells the girl's parents to tell no one about what has happened. We may question as to whether Jesus did in fact so command for it was undoubtedly impossible to keep the story quiet - the many mourners outside the house would spread the news the moment they saw the girl alive and well. Perhaps here we have Mark once more trying to emphasise the need to meet Jesus face to face rather than simply hear about him from others. Hearing about Jesus is important but the final decision as to who he is can only be made following a personal encounter with him.



The following poems have been extracted from the book 'Moments with Mary' by Mary A Wells, and given to me by Theo Howells:

### 1. God's Gifts

Two hands God gave us to do His will  
 Two feet to run errands and never be still  
 Two eyes to see what ought to be done, the  
 good Lord gave to everyone  
 Two hears to hear his pleading voice, music,  
 sweet sounds, our heart to rejoice  
 A nose to smell life's sweet perfume, the  
 special fragrance of roses in June  
 A mouth to smile to make others glad, that  
 curves in a smile or drops when sad  
 A tongue to speak and praise His name; to be  
 kind, consoling, or like a flame, to be cruel,  
 hurtful, full of spite, or joyful spreading only  
 delight  
 He gave us a brain, that we might use the  
 rest of His gifts and never abuse  
 Most precious of gifts was a loving heart to  
 give in His service, as we play our part  
 While he dwells within secure in our soul  
 combining all these parts into a whole



## 2. Little things mean so much

A helping hand when things look tough  
An encouraging word when the road is rough  
A smile, a lift, a cheery greeting  
A gentle kiss, a lover's meeting

### Little things mean so much

A handout when you're down and out  
Is better than a cuff or clout  
A meal that's shared, however meagre  
A 'Come on in' that's warm and eager

### Little things mean so much

A blossom cut with you in mind  
A friend with whom you can unwind  
A laugh, a joke when you feel low  
Can send you off with heart aglow

### Little things mean so much

A baby's gurgle or a smile  
A tiny hand held out awhile  
Pattering feet, arms opened wide  
The joy of being held inside

### Yes, little things mean so much

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The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

### Eternity in the human heart

*'He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.'* (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

The 60s hit *'Turn! Turn! Turn!'* by the Byrds is based on verses in this chapter: *'There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.'* The different seasons of life are not random, for God is in control and His timing is perfect: *'He has made everything beautiful in its time.'*

The verse goes on to say that God *'has also set eternity in the human heart.'* This means that we all have an in-built sense that there's more to life than what we can see, as we search for meaning in life.

However, we can fill our lives with other things: career, pleasure, shopping and relationships. While good in themselves, these things can never ultimately satisfy. It is only a relationship with God through Jesus that truly satisfies. How does this challenge us?

Firstly, we are to live for God in all that we do, knowing that it all counts for eternity. This includes helping others find a personal relationship with Jesus Christ for eternity.

Secondly, we accept that there is lots in the current *'season'* where it's difficult to know what God is doing: *'no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.'* However, we do know that everything has consequences for eternity.

Finally, how can we be more aware of eternity every day? Spending time with God in worship and prayer will bring us the true pleasure that belongs to eternity.

*'You made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.'* (St Augustine).

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### Lockdown by Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan:

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.  
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
Is offering free meals and delivery to the  
housebound.

Today a young woman I know  
is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood  
So that the elders may have someone to call  
on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and  
Temples  
are preparing to welcome  
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary  
All over the world people are slowing down  
and reflecting

All over the world people are looking at their  
neighbours in a new way

All over the world people are waking up to a  
new reality

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that;

Yes there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the  
soul

Yes there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to  
live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your  
panic

The birds are singing again

The sky is clearing,

Spring is coming,

And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul

And though you may not be able

to touch across the empty square,

Sing

The following article has been extracted from  
Parish pump, and is entitled:

### **All in the month of September**

400 years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1620, that  
102 English Puritans (now known as the  
Pilgrims) set sail aboard the Mayflower from  
Plymouth, for a new life in America. After a  
perilous journey they landed in what is now  
Provincetown Harbour, Cape Cod,  
Massachusetts on 11<sup>th</sup> November. They had  
intended landing in Virginia, but were unable  
to reach it because of heavy seas.

150 years ago, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1870 that  
Rome was captured. Italian forces defeated  
the Papal States and captured the city of  
Rome at the end of the wars of Italian  
Unification. The Papal States were dissolved.  
Rome was annexed, and it became the  
capital of Italy in 1871.

125 years ago, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1895 that  
Louis Pasteur died. This French biologist,  
microbiologist and chemist was one of the  
main founders of the field of medical  
microbiology. Best known for originating the  
pasteurization of foodstuffs to eliminate  
micro-organisms that cause disease. Pasteur  
saved the French beer, wine and silk  
industries and developed vaccines against  
anthrax and rabies.

65 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1955 that  
Britain's first independent television channel,  
ITV, was launched. It ended the BBC's  
monopoly. Regional franchises were rolled  
out across the whole country by 1965.

60 years ago, on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1960 that  
Sylvia Pankhurst, suffragette leader, died.

50 years ago, on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1970 that  
the first Glastonbury Festival was held, at  
Worthy Farm near Pilton, Somerset. About  
1,500 people attended (compared to  
135,000 today). It became an annual event  
from 1981 and is now the world's largest  
greenfield festival. The first festival was  
billed as the Pilton Pop, Blues & Folk Festival.

40 years ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1980 that  
the Solidarity movement was created in

Poland, with Lech Walesa as its leader. It was the first independent trade union in the Soviet bloc.

25 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1995 that the auction site eBay was founded (as AuctionWeb).

20 years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2000 that Paula Yates, TV presenter (*The Tube*, *The Big Breakfast*) died of a heroin overdose, aged 41. Wife of the musician Bob Geldof, she was also noted for her relationship with the musician Michael Hutchence. She was the daughter of Hughie Green, host of the talent show *Opportunity Knocks*, though she did not discover this until late in life.

15 years ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2005 that the IRA decommissioned its last remaining weapons in front of independent inspectors.

### **The voyage of the *Mayflower***

If we find it difficult to cross the Atlantic just now, it was even worse 400 years this month. On 6<sup>th</sup> September 1620, 102 determined Puritans climbed on board the *Mayflower* and set sail from Plymouth. They had 30 crew to steer them across 3000 miles of open, perilous ocean.



Those Puritans, or 'Pilgrim fathers', could never have dreamed that their journey would become one of the most influential in world history. Their courage and purpose for the voyage would help shape the very history and culture of the USA.

The Pilgrim fathers themselves were in search of religious freedom and a new life. Years before they had rejected the Church of England, due to its Roman Catholic past, and

in 1608 they had moved to Holland, where they could worship freely. But life was very hard there, and so the New World beckoned to them.

They had originally intended to use two ships, but the *Speedwell* sprang a leak shortly after sailing, and so they crowded as many as possible into the *Mayflower*. After a long and difficult 10 weeks at sea, they reached America, but could not reach their intended destination, Virginia, because of heavy seas. They finally landed in Provincetown Harbour, Cape Cod, Massachusetts on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

That presented the next great challenge: the bitter, harsh winter of Massachusetts. Half of the Pilgrims perished that first winter, of hunger and cold. Without the help of the local Indigenous peoples to teach them food-gathering and other survival skills, all of the colony would probably have perished.

After months of hard work, by the 'Fall' of 1621 the tiny colony had its first harvest. They celebrated this great achievement with their new Indigenous friends. It became Thanksgiving. The Pilgrims had been convinced that God wanted them to go to the New World. They wrote: "We verily believe and trust the Lord is with us, and that He will graciously prosper our endeavours according to the simplicity of our hearts therein."

The *Mayflower* was one of the earliest pilgrim vessels, and so became a cultural icon in the history of the United States. This year, until coronavirus put a stop to things, many celebrations in the USA, England and the Netherlands had been planned.

### **Like father ....**

'Dad, did you go to Sunday School when you were a boy?' Dad replied: 'Yes, my son' and the boy replied: 'Well, I think I'm going to quit; it's not doing me any good either'

# FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

An intimate message from God to you.

*My Child,*

*You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2 I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28 For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4 I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7 I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15 My question is... Will you be my child? John 1:12-13 I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32*

*Love, Your Dad  
Almighty God*

