



**Palm Sunday
28th March**



KINDLE

**Newsletter of the Romford United
Reformed Churches at Western
Road and Heaton March**

March 2021

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

Thank you for all the cards and the garden token you sent to mark my induction. The service was very uplifting, and I was humbled by the numbers attending. Thanks to all who took part and worked the technology. Zoom may not be ideal but in this case, it worked well and enabled friends and family to join from far and wide.

We are now in the season of Lent, traditionally associated with self-denial and giving something up. This year I think we have all given up quite a lot already with not being able to meet family/friends, staying at home etc, so we need to be more positive and take something up, not anything onerous, maybe a random act of kindness daily, making a telephone call to someone who might be lonely. We could also take up a spiritual discipline, increasing the time we spend in prayer, or reading the Bible as we journey through the 6 weeks looking towards Holy Week and Easter.

During Lent this year we will mark 12 months since we first went into lockdown and we have no idea when restrictions will be eased a true wilderness experience for many. But as with Jesus' time in the wilderness and the darkness of crucifixion, there is light and hope we are journeying towards new life and resurrection.

During Lent we also mark Fairtrade Fortnight 22nd February- 7th March, a reminder that Lent is not only about our own personal spirituality but is about the world as well. As we seek to draw closer to God, we realise that we cannot ignore God's call to work for justice and fairness, buying Fairtrade goods is one way of showing our care and desire to fulfil God's will.

Alison



**Joan Vilma Young
16th Sept 1936 - 29th Jan 2021**

We were sad to learn that Joan Young passed away peacefully, with Richard and Helen holding her hands, on the 29th of January 2021.

The funeral will be held on Monday 1st March. The hearse will leave from our church at approx. 2.10pm for the service at the Crematorium led by Revd Martin Wheadon. Due to government restrictions currently in place we can watch the service via the internet. Details for the link from Helen Young.



Alison's Induction Service on 14 February went very well. It was a meaningful service and was good that we could see so many people on Zoom – friends and family of Alison and our own church family. Thank you to Lee, Hazel and Fiona who so ably managed the technology with approximately 100 screens participating. Truly a memorable occasion.

On Ash Wednesday Alison led us in a quiet, meditative service based on the Charcoal Gospel by Neil Thorogood.

Every Wednesday evening during Lent there will be Lent Groups on Zoom. Please do join us if you can at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start. Log in details from Alison or me.

Olive has had a good idea for fundraising for our charity project - Sunshine Bags! Olive will explain how it works, Details are set out below.

Church Meeting will take place on Zoom after the Service on March 14th.

Our Sunday services for the next few weeks on Zoom are:

- February 28 – Graham and Jim
- March 7 - Revd Martin Wheadon
- March 14 - Jill Hunt – Mothering Sunday – Church Meeting to follow
- March 21 - Revd Alison Davis – Holy Communion
- March 28 - Revd Ruth Mitchell – Palm Sunday
- April 4 - Revd Alison Davis - Easter Sunday – All Age Holy Communion

Hopefully, we can all meet back in our church building soon when it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, please all keep safe and well, keep praying and keep focused on all the positives we have.

Pat

Black History Monthly

A new initiative from the URC's Legacies of Slavery task group, Black History Monthly will take place on the third Monday of each month 7.30 – 8.30 via Zoom. Starting Monday 15th February each session will have a different emphasis -sometimes focussing on and discussing an article or book, unpacking a film we have watched, taking a dive into poetry from Black writers and maybe even sharing an eye-opening quiz – discovering some of the many achievements we may not have realised are attributable to Black people. We are confident there will be something of value, interest, and enjoyment for everyone.

Here's the Zoom Codes for our conversation:

<https://zoom.us/j/99060809545?pwd=YlFOR2k2TUozbmJiWVZPSkxMQjNXUTo9>

Meeting ID: 990 6080 9545 **Passcode:** 264326

“The Poet's Gospel

Our Lent group material is produced by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. It is a retelling of Jesus' story in blank verse with rhymed parables.

We meet on Wednesdays evening 7.15pm for 7.30pm starting 24th February through till 31st March. Zoom details as follows!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83000875372?pwd=ZStxb2ZSeEdycUEzUSt1TUxiYUgzdz09>

Meeting ID: 830 0087 5372

Passcode: 614113

Taste and See” Stepwise Through Webinar Series

Find out more about Stepwise, what it is, who it's for, and how it can help you develop your discipleship and faith journey through a series of five webinars.

Each webinar will focus on one of the five Stepwise streams, beginning with Faith-filled Life, the starting point for the other streams. You can pick the one that interests you or attend them all – the choice is yours.

The series begins on 23 February with Faith-filled Life, followed by:

9 March	Faith-filled Worship
23 March	Faith-filled Community
13 April	Faith-fuelled Leadership
27 April	Faith-filled Confidence

All webinars in the series begin at 7pm and will last no longer than one hour.

Revd David Salsbury, Stepwise Programme Manager, said: “Stepwise is a resource for the whole church. It is interactive and intergenerational offering something for everyone who wants to develop their faith. These webinars are an opportunity to discover how Stepwise can inspire you and deepen your discipleship”.

To register, please email the Stepwise team, and you will be sent the Zoom log on details. More information about the streams and how the programme works, visit the dedicated [webpage](#).

Alison

Easter flowers will be different just as everything else is, but we need even more to make visual sign of the Resurrection.

The pots will be placed on the cross on Saturday. A bucket of water will be placed there so please will you bring your flowers on Sunday to put in one of the pots, which you need to fill with water. The flowers need to have stems. about 3 inches long do please prepare them at home.

We want to send out a message of hope to our neighbours so please do several pots.

Thank you

Gill

Tom and Betty received the following card from Wendy Cooper.

I have an update to tell you about Sheila (Tack, a former Church Secretary).

Over recent months she has been increasingly developing dementia.

A couple of weeks ago, the carer went in and found that she had fallen in the bedroom and needed to be taken to hospital.

She has now been taken to a care home; she has had the vaccine so will be in isolation there for her first two weeks. They will assess her needs after about 4-6 weeks. The address is:

Brooke House Care Home,
Brooke Gardens,
Brooke, NR15 1JH.

Her niece, Gillian, has been really helpful and will visit when it is possible.

Laughter is the best medicine.

There is an old saying that “Laughter is the best Medicine”. Just lately I have taken a different view! Having been silly enough to have sustained a fall and bruised my ribs to laugh is not the best thing to do. In fact, to laugh is absolute torture! It is also painful to cough or blow one's nose. All this made me think what bliss it is to have an undamaged body, and to sympathise with those suffer such difficulties permanently. As a family, we have always had a humorous streak, so it is difficult to resist the urge to laugh. But hopefully things will become a little easier very soon and I will be able to join in the fun without any problems. Until then my laughter will be very restrained!

Betty

Sunshine Bags

To raise funds for our church charity this year, Womens Aid, I suggested to Pat, that we try an idea we used at my previous church. We gave a small cloth bag to each household, and each day that they saw the sun, they put a coin in the bag- even if the sun was only there for a moment. If there were several hours of sunshine, many felt that was worth more. Each member of the household contributed, according to their means.

As we are unable to meet together at the moment, if you agree to try this, please save that empty jam/marmalade jar, or find a small pot/jug to put your donations in. If we agree to do this. I suggest we start on April 1st and continue until June 30th. I hope you feel this might be a fun way of contributing, as well as a reminder to be grateful for the way the sun cheers us on our way. Perhaps by July it may be possible to meet together for some of the more usual ways of fund-raising.

Olive.

Articles

40 Activities for families in lent. How many can you do?

Tell a friend something you really like about them today.

Make someone laugh!

Be the first to say sorry or to offer help today.

Make something to give away – paint a picture, bake a cake, or do whatever you do well.

Find out the names of some local people like shopkeepers or policemen, then greet them by name.

Smile at five people today.

Secretly chalk a nice message on a neighbour's or friend's drive / path / front step.

Let someone else choose what to watch on TV.

Chat about issues that matter to you and research a new charity to support.

Leave something nice to eat on a neighbour's doorstep, ring the bell and run!

Record a video love note or write one and send it to someone you don't see often.

Return a supermarket trolley and leave £1 in it. Or tape £1 to a wall where it would be really useful.

See if you have a loyalty card with lots of points on or a gift voucher and give it to someone as a gift.

At a drive-through, fast food restaurant or café, pay for the person behind you and leave a note.

Hide some small toys at the park with a note saying: Take one home and remember you are special!

Tape change to a car park payment machine or parking meter.

Make a treasure hunt for a friend.

Give someone a shoulder or foot massage.

Choose and buy food for a local food bank or look into volunteering for MakeLunch.org

Write a thank you note – it could be a Post-It, email, text or card!

Make someone special a cup of tea (or whatever they like!)

Do a not-so-nice-job without being asked! (Change a nappy, take out the bins or sweep the floor.)

Make a 'Things I like about you' book or card for someone. Take time to play with someone younger than you.

Say hello or chat with someone new.

Build a den and spend time in it thanking God for all He has given you.

Pick up litter or gather a litter picking team to tidy up an area near where you live.

Cheer up someone who is ill.

Hide encouraging notes in unexpected places.

Donate some clothes, toys or hobby items to charity.

Plan a fundraising idea, such as a cake sale. Send the money you raise and the money in your jar to a charity.

Give someone flowers – buy them, pick them from your own garden or make some out of paper.

Or you can think of others. Some may be difficult but that will only make the tasks more satisfying when completed.

Fiona

Prayers for the Nation

Recently, someone on the WhatsApp chat reminded us of the call to 'Pray for the nation' which came from Archbishop Justin Welby. I have since downloaded the PDF containing all the prayers. These have joined the many other bits I have stuck to my kitchen cupboards!!!

There is a themed one for each day of the week plus general ones. If you wish to view these the link is <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/prayer-nation>

Ruth

We beseech thee, Master, to be our helper and protector.
Save the afflicted among us; have mercy on the lowly;
raise up the fallen; appear to the needy; heal the ungodly;
restore the wanderers of thy people;
feed the hungry; ransom our prisoners;
raise up the sick; comfort the faint-hearted.

Clement of Rome, 1st Century

Lord God,
You have called your servants
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go out with good courage,
not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us
and your love supporting us,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer For All Those Affected By Coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

Small things make a big difference.



One particularly miserable dull morning I was on my scooter going into Romford when, looking into a garden I was startled to see a beautiful bright yellow daffodil - the first I had seen this Spring! What a wonderful message it gave - the warm brighter days are just around the corner. I was thinking about this bloom while shopping and saw it again on the way home. As I passed down the road looking into gardens once more. I sensed the most wonderful perfume. Turning to see if someone had just gone by with some expensive scent, I saw a lovely Choisys shrub in full bloom with the pretty star like flowers. I paused for a few moments to enjoy the pleasure again, and what a difference the daffodil and perfume made to the morning - wonderful world.

Betty

Friends

A friend is one of the nicest things you can have, and one of the best things you can be.'
My life would be rather empty without my friends, and I am truly grateful for them all. I recently came across recipe for friendship which I am sharing here:

Take a cup of kindness
Add three tablespoons of trust,
Plenty of love sprinkles then mix.

To this mixture add
Two tablespoons of sharing,
A can of smiles,
Plenty of listening, then mix.

You are now ready to add:
Three tablespoons of cheerfulness,
A cup of laughter and respect,
A can of love with a dash of
Harmony, then mix.

To complete this recipe now add,
A can of gentleness laced with
helpfulness,
Half a bottle of honesty
And finally,
A cup of generosity, then mix.
You now have a great recipe for
Friendship!

Which ingredients would you choose?

Jill Hunt

Wonderful Supermarkets

I had a worrying moment just recently, as I wanted to go shopping on the scooter and meet Tom outside ASDA. On trying to open the garage door it would only rise about six inches. After trying for some time, we decided that ~Tom would drop me off in Dolphin Approach and I would wait for Tom with a wheeled basket outside ASDA as usual and use the wheeled basket as usual for support. When I arrived at the place, I went to the Customer Service desk and asked if they had any scooters to borrow. Well, what a surprise I had when they called an assistant to go and collect one for me! I could not believe my luck. So, I got on their scooter, which was a bit larger than mine, and proceeded around the shop with Tom as usual. What a wonderful service to offer customers with mobility problems, so that they can do their shopping in comfort.

Betty



Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is a yearly celebration and tradition in the Christian calendar and is one of the most important for orthodox Christians year.

Many churches across the world interpret and celebrate Palm Sunday in many different ways. For example, Russian orthodox Christians will mark the occasion by hosting donkey walks across towns and cities. In many cultures, a donkey is seen to be a symbol of peace – and it is one of the most enduring symbols of Palm Sunday for obvious reasons. There are even more cultural differences in Scandinavia. In Finland, for example, Palm Sunday marks the emergence of ‘Easter Witches’, as children dress up and offer willow branches for sweet treats. It is somewhat similar to trick or treating – without the tricks.

In the Philippines, grand gestures are made to get rid of evil spirits on Palm Sunday. A statue of Jesus Christ riding a donkey or a priest riding on horseback is brought to the church to enact the scene of Jerusalem and bring in the holy presence. Children of the town will dress up as angels and scatter flowers on the road for the statue or priest to walk on. Traditional tunes will be on the air, and the palm branches are brought home. This is believed to ward off evil spirits or any other danger. Cockfighting also was a major part of the day in the old days. But it was later banned.

In Wales, Palm Sunday is called ‘Sul y Blodau’ which translates to flowering Sunday. The most important part of the day is decorating the graves of dear ones with flowers. The origin of this Welsh custom is a mystery. On the days before Palm Sunday are spent scrubbing and washing the tombs. With the grasses are cleared out, the graveyard is a beautiful sight on Palm Sunday. People often put on fresh, new clothes while visiting the graves.

English Palm Sunday traditions included burning ‘jack o’lent’ figures, which are quite different from ‘jack o’ lanterns’! These straw figures were burned in an effort to, it is thought, fight back against the traitor Judas Iscariot, who arranged for Christ’s arrest and crucifixion.

Palm leaves and crosses must never be cast away. Once they receive blessings, they must be burned to ash, and then used to mark the heads of those attending service. The ash-marking will not occur until Ash Wednesday the next year, which also marks the beginning of lent once again.



Lord, you know the fears and anxieties that fill our hearts at what today will bring.

Free us from panic and worry.

Anchor our thoughts and minds in your great power and love.

Send us into this day with your peace in our hearts and sure confidence in your fatherly care.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer found by **Andrew**.



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