



**KINDLE**

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

**February 2021**

## **Minister's Letter**

*Dear Friends,*

Winter is here, frost lies on the ground, branches are white, it does look beautiful, yet the frost soon disappears, and everything is green again. Signs of Spring are also appearing, the bulbs in my pots are poking their heads up and I have seen daffodils at least 15cm tall.

For me, this year the cycle of the seasons, disrupted though it is by climate change, seems more important. In a time of uncertainty when planning is difficult it roots us in the creative cycle, resting, growth, flowering and reminds us of the permanence of creation and the world.

We can look ahead, we don't know what the coming year will hold, how long restrictions will be in place, throughout all this bulbs, trees and flowers will continue to grow and give us beauty and colour.

Despite the uncertainty we can dream, reflect, think, and pray about what God's will and purpose is for us as individuals and as fellowships. A period of inactivity in the building, forced by lockdown, enables us to think about using the building and worship space in different ways in the future, maybe starting new activities/groups as we seek to walk the way of Jesus, living the life of Christ today. Worshipping on Zoom, although not ideal, gives us different orders of service, new thoughts about interacting and participation. I'm sure you have other dreams/thoughts/ideas about this and other aspects of church life, please do you share your dreams/thoughts/ideas with me and/or your elder.

I am looking forward to my induction on February 14th although I have now been here for nearly 6 months it will mark new beginnings for us all. Thank you to all those assisting with the preparations and technical matters.

A friend sent me the following which I share with you:

The richest wealth is Wisdom.  
The strongest weapon is Patience,  
The best security is Faith.  
And the most effective tonic is Laughter.

May God bless you today with all of them.

*Alison*



Dear Friends

First, thank you for all your good wishes and support for my taking on the role of Church Secretary. Gill Shepherd has done the job very successfully for many years and we do all thank her for her dedication.

Jill C and Fiona have now exchanged roles. Jill is Church Treasurer and Fiona is the Assistant Treasurer thank you to them both for all they do for our church.

Jim volunteered to take on the role of Lettings Officer. We thank him and wish him well. Thanks also to Ceri for her work with Lettings for 10 years.

Lorraine has taken on the role of JFC/FIG Co-ordinator we thank her and all those who have agreed to help her when JFC/FIG can restart. Thanks to Andrew organising the Advent readings that all the young people read so well.

Zoom is very well used by the Church for Sunday Services, Elders' Meetings, Church Meetings, Bible Studies and Western Road Ladies Club and now after the service on Sundays we can go into break out rooms to chat with our friends. So, thanks to all the technology and Lee, (Fiona or Graham download the hymns and screen share) we can still meet with one another.

We have a Church WhatsApp group and an Elders' WhatsApp group to keep in touch and of course, personal telephone calls.

During Advent Alison lead us through our Advent Bible Studies with Art on Zoom. Two very different pictures were screen shared each week along with explanations about each one and then discussions in small groups. These meetings were well attended and even Olive's friend from Dover could attend!

Alison's Induction Service will be on Zoom on Sunday 14 February 2021 at 2.30pm there will be a separate log in for thus- please note the date in your diaries.

At present Fiona and Ruth are leading our Bible Studies on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm on Zoom. Do join us if you can!

Lent Studies will be on Wednesday evenings on Zoom commencing from Ash Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February through to Holy Week – 31<sup>st</sup> March. Further details to follow.

Our new Elders for this year (Pauline Collier, Joanne Cox, Jean Morrison, and Jim Rivers), were inducted/ordained last Sunday during our Communion Service. Therefore, we have had to reorganise the Elders' Pastoral Groups so please find enclosed a copy of the up-to-date list.

Thank you to all those of you who have returned a signed Consent Form to me.

We all hope and pray that it will not be too long before it is safe for us to return to the church building to worship together again.

In the meantime, please all keep safe and well, keep praying and thank God for all the positives in our lives.

**Pat**

Last year I asked you to save your Actimel pots ready for the Easter cross. Sylvia, bless her, has given me a carrier back full. If you have been saving them for me can you put them in the vestibule, and I will get Lee to deliver them to me. I will put hangers on them and paint them green. We should have enough, if not we can put flowers in the netting.

For Lent we will leave the cross empty, but I will put some of the big stones from when we did the Easter garden round the base with little pots of bulbs hidden in between them. They should help hold the cross upright and also lead our thinking to the stone in front of the tomb.

During the Christmas decorations we had a small tree and the Nativity figures on a table in the vestibule window. They caught my eye as I walked up from the carpark each time. So, I would like to try moving the table from the far side of the vestibule to the window and put a changing selection of posters and artefacts on display. I'll try it and see how it goes.

it is good to hear regular news of people having their vaccines, even though they still have to stay at home it is real progress at coping with the virus. All our 90s are done and many of our 80-year-olds, stay safe.

**Gill**

### From the Trustees

Robin and I have no wish to be “Jeremiah’s”, but we feel that it is fair for you to know the impact that the Coronavirus pandemic has had on Western Road finances. Our lettings income is down by approximately £37,000.00 added to which we have lost £22,280.00 annual rent on the Manse and now have to pay the Council Tax, roughly £2,000.00 per annum. Car park income has stood up well, but we have still suffered a loss of nearly £2,000.00. Totalling ££63,280.00. in all.

Of course, service charges have reduced but not by so much, as the Pandemic has largely been in the warmer months when they are light in any case. The church will have to be heated this winter, irrespective of opening, or not, to preserve the fabric, so the benefit of reduction will be slight. Window cleaning and gardening will proceed as normal. The pandemic renders it difficult to raise rents, as most tenants’ incomes have suffered anyway.

Against the above, we now receive £4,000.00 from Northern College towards maintenance of the manse and their share of the rent, which bears little resemblance to a commercial basis. The Church is very grateful to the congregation for continuing to give generously and we are very happy to say that the offertory remains at much the same level as 2019.

The M&M we are expected to pay in 2021 is £52,891.00, approximately £4,400.00 PER MONTH. This will, undoubtedly, mean that the Trustees will have to liquidate some interest-bearing stocks, not desirable and a further deficit on the Church income next year. From discussion with members of the North Thames Trust, I cannot help but feel that they have the idea that although Churches have lost income irreplaceably .it will be possible to maintain M&M contributions at a similar rate. Very unlikely with generally declining and elderly congregations.

Finally, all is not lost, as our past Trustees have acted wisely, and our Capital investments will see is through. Let us hope that this whole sad business will soon be past, and we can look forward, with HOPE to Sunnier uplands.

With best wishes from the Trustees for the New Year, *Dennis*

### Youth Groups

#### Brownies

Message from Brown Owl to say that the Rainbows and Brownies cannot meet again until the Girl Guiding Association give their permission and a full risk assessment has been carried out and approved. When the Rainbows and Brownies are able to start again all members must stay six feet apart. Before and after any meeting all tables and chairs used together with all other surfaces and toilets cleaned before and after. As there is only ten minutes between Rainbows and Brownies this may prove problematical. Tracey is anxious to begin meeting again face to face but obviously this is impossible during lockdown, such meetings will resume once Girl Guide Headquarters give permission.

Anyone who has an enquiry please contact Tracey direct 01277 355571.



#### The Boys' Brigade



All sections of the Boys' Brigade were able to meet for a few weeks in the Autumn but were forced to close during the second lockdown. At the present time they are not allowed to open but as soon as The Boys' Brigade Headquarters give permission all three sections will re-open. For the present there are activities that boys can take part in by visiting #BBatHOME Activities.

## Whitechapel Mission Spring Clothing Collection 2021

The Spring collection has sadly had to be cancelled. Due to the general 'Lockdown' the van is unable to visit the collection points. But the collection of clothing will still continue and, when the situation changes, the arrangements will be made once more. So please keep saving your adult clothing, shoes, underwear, and toiletries for this very worthwhile Thank you to everyone who has brought items to be stored in our garage, and it will still be available. The date of the next collection will be announced in Kindle. Any queries Betty 01708 760607 Thank you.



### *Margaret Foster 17.12.1932 - 12.12.2020*

I am writing to let you know about Margaret's Funeral Service which took place on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 as some of you will have been unable to access the Service via the Webcast.

The Service was held at Thames View Crematorium Shorne Kent and due to current restrictions was attended by just six close family members.

Her friends from Western Road U.R.C. were warmly welcomed by the Minister via the Webcast.

Her son Trevor delivered the Eulogy and amongst other details of Margaret's life he mentioned her faith and how important the Services at Western road were to her. He also spoke about "Soup and Cheese" and the Women's Guild and how much his Mum had enjoyed being part of them.

The Hymns included "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds" and "Great is thy faithfulness." They closed with "Somewhere over the Rainbow."

Margaret's daughter Beverley will be sending me the official Order of Service shortly and so I will leave a copy in the vestibule. Rest in peace our friend.

*Annette*

*"Those we love don't go away  
They walk beside us every day  
Unseen, unheard but always near,  
so loved, so missed, so very dear"*

### **The shortest Chapter in the Bible is Psalm 117.**

The longest Chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119.

The Central Chapter in the Bible is Psalm 118.

There are 594 Chapters before it and

There are 594 Chapters after it.

594 X 2 = 1188.

The Central verse in the Bible is.....

Psalm 118:8.....

"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man".

God is in the Centre of His Word

*Ruth Mitchell*

## Yvonne – A Thank You

Dear Friends,

Thank you, all the prayers, cards, and many messages following the death of my lovely Mum, Yvonne, on 17<sup>th</sup> January; your support at this sad time for our family has been invaluable.

I was blessed with loving, supportive parents who cared deeply about me even in their frail later years. My dad died in 2013.

Not seeing Mum other than video calls during lockdown was particularly cruel for her as dementia took a greater hold but my brother & I will always be grateful we were allowed to spend time with her in the care home before she passed.

However, love, as you know, lives on and now, as I cherish the love of my parents, I see it passed on through my children & grandchildren...

Whilst I was thinking about fitting poems for Yvonne's funeral, I came across these words of encouragement I would like to share with you...it seems particularly pertinent in these chaotic and challenging times: -

### The Tragedy of Life – Anonymous

The tragedy of life is not death, but what we let die inside us while we live.

Decide to be happy

Render others happy

Proclaim your joy.

Love passionately your miraculous life

Do not wait for a better world

Be grateful for every moment of life

Switch on and keep on the positive buttons marked:

Optimism

Serenity

Confidence

Positive thinking

Love

Pray and thank God every day

Meditate

Smile

Laugh

Whistle

Dance

Sing

Look with fascination at everything. Fill your heart and lungs with liberty.

Be yourself fully and immensely.

Feel God in your body, mind, heart, and soul and be convinced of eternal life.

\*\*\*\*\*

With love

**Jill Hunt**

Thank God for dirty dishes,  
They have a tale to tell.  
For by this pile that I have here  
It seems we're living well.  
While others they are starving  
I've not the heart to fuss  
For by this pile, it is evident.  
God's awfully good to us!

Amen

I received these words and thoughts from Sheillah Wilson and offer it to you as a New Year gift **Betty**.

After all the doom and gloom I (Sheillah) have decided to look out for a silver lining each day and thought that you may like to hear 24 of them for Advent, so here goes.

1. A full moon in a clear sky – at last.
2. A little ‘Jenny Wren’ has come to live in the garden.
3. Wonderful pink and white cyclamen flowering so well.
4. Smiling eyes greeting you everywhere over masks.
5. The local shop’s always open – thank you Richard, Norman, and Elaine.
6. Primrose flowers in November.
7. Elizabeth with the service sheets, keeping us in with
8. Frances – thank you for uplifting words each week.
9. Phone calls to and from family and friends.
10. A warm home.
11. Our two new cats. tuppence and sixpence.
12. Books -currently reading ‘Swallows and Amazons’ and Terry Pratchett collections – all second hand.
13. Tiny newt about one inch long – apparently once they have grown limbs. They leave the pond (we have several adults) for two years to mature before returning.
14. The quiet with no planes.
15. The sunrise on the first clear day for ages
16. A car which gets there and back with no haste.
17. Good food.
18. The Repair Shop on tv.
19. The sea, whatever the weather.
20. The starlings fighting over the fat balls and mealworms.
21. Christmas cards.
22. Sufficient money for my needs.
23. Waiting with joy and hope.
24. THE LOVE OF JESUS.

**Betty**

### **Everyday Blessings**

Fruit from the market, vegetables too, Supermarkets open welcoming you.  
Clean water that is always there to make your tea and coffee too.  
Good food in the fridge to cook every day, to roast, fry, whatever your way!  
Trees all around to clean the air, shampoo on hand to wash your hair.  
My mobility scooter to go on my way give me such freedom every day.  
Central heating to make our homes snug and warm, to keep our bodies from coming to harm.  
Toilet paper that is always there for our needs, fresh tomatoes that we have grown from our seeds.  
Washing machines keep our clothes fresh and clean,  
Washing-up liquid keeps our plates a sheen.  
Refuse collections that come every week without fail, the postman who brings the welcome mail.  
Neighbours who tell us every day “Just call us for anything, we’ll be on our way”.  
A comfortable bed for a good night’s sleep, where, after a long day, we are happy to creep.  
Greetings and smiles from each friend behind masks a wonderful world, what more could you ask.  
But most of all, Jesus, who is with us always, to hear our prayers and will answer and say,

”

“I give you these blessing that you have every day and will listen to you when you pray •

**Betty**

Thank you, Betty for this poem but it does remind us that we are in that group known as “the haves”. We should remember all of those people living in our country who are known as “the have nots”:

Those people who do not have a home and who but for lockdown would be living on the streets.

To those who do not have garden but live-in high-rise flats and who are not able to get out, those children forced by lockdown restrictions spend up to 24 hours each day in a small flat.

Those whose jobs have been terminated and who do not have enough money but live on food parcels and food from foodbanks.

Those who live on universal credits.

Those self-employed who are unable to work during lockdown and have no income at all.

Those home schooling with no electronic aids, those whose children live on inadequate food parcels.

Yes, we have many things to be thankful for, but let us think of, give practical help to and pray for the have nots.

**Editor**

### **The Work of Christmas**

When the song of the angles is stilled  
When the star in the sky has gone  
When the Kings and Princes are home  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks  
The work of Christmas begins.....

To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoners,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To make music in the heart.

**Howard Thurman.**

**Found by Joyce Clif**

### **Children's Howlers**

1. The people who followed Jesus were called the 12 disciples.
2. The epistles are the wives of the apostles.
3. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity.
4. He preached the Holy Acrimony, which is another name for marriage.
5. A Christian should have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

minister

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