



The
United
Reformed
Church

KINDLE

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

September 2020

We have missed you during lockdown and pray that you have all survived the experience unscathed.

Although we are not yet clear of the virus the Sunday services will resume at our church at Western Road on **Sunday 6th September** at our normal time of 10.00, the service will be led by our soon to be inducted Minister Alison Davis.

All persons attending a *service must always wear face masks* and keep to the government specified

social distance, Hand sanitisers are placed at the entrances to the church and must be used on entering and leaving the building. Elders will show worshipers to their pews. There will be no singing of hymns, all hymns will be pre-recorded. should suffice. Information about the collection will be given

later. There will be no JFC or Fig group until further notice all children and young people are to sit with their parents. There will be no tea or coffee after the service. News about any relaxation of these measures will be given from time to time in accordance with government and URC directives.



Thank you to all those who led, took part in, or attended our zoom services during lockdown and a vote of thanks to Lee for organising the zoom calls.

We also have to give a big 'Thank You' to Lee for setting up the WhatsApp as this enable members to keep in touch with what was going on within the church during lockdown

The Editor

Elders' Letter

Dear friends,

Focus on heavenly treasures

I trust you are well and made the most of the lovely sunny days we had experienced recently. Living in this current time, I believe most us have developed new routines to this 'new normal' way of life. Although we were all in locked down, it has left us with different/mixed emotions. For me it had been a challenging time: working from home conducting assessment through tele-conferencing, skype meetings where the internet connection had sometimes been unreliable and making life changing decisions relying on other people's judgement. On the positive it offered me a break away from all the other social engagements which I always felt obliged to attend; it became a time to take stock, reflect and to discern what really matters to me, appreciating life, time and space without rushing around all the time to meet appointments.

Before Covid 19, our world was taken over by our busy activities of rushing about meeting different deadlines, commitments, self-indulgence, competitiveness, individualism, and self-fulfilment. Covid 19, brought us all to a stop and offered the opportunity to reflect about what matters most. Humanity became important again, and we all checked on and cared for each other. Our relationship with God increased and even some unbelievers asked to be prayed for.

As we are coming slowly out of lockdown, and we are edging towards a 'new normal way of living', let us not lose focus of what really matters in life. "Focusing on our relationship with Christ". Matt 6: 19-21 reminds us not to store our treasures on this earth where moth and vermin will destroy it or thieves breaking in to steal. Our focus should be to perfect our relationship with God – 'storing our treasure in heaven'.... "For where our treasure is, there our hearts will be".

As we are becoming more confident in getting out of our homes and about, working on returning to services at Western Road, school, work and engaging in other social engagements, with our world slowly becoming busier, let us not lose sight of what matters most, "Storing our treasure in heaven".

Best wishes

Margaret



Alison's arrival

Finally, ready to come Alison sadly fell down a step outside her last manse, a badly bruised knee has made unpacking a slower and more painful process. Let us hope her recovery is soon complete. During the next period of time a plan will be worked on so we know what we can expect in terms of ministry from her. Remember we are sharing her with Heaton Way and for 50% of her time she will be supporting ministerial students during their training. So, I suspect that flexibility is the name of the plan.

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Lettings

Ceri is working hard to help groups to start once more when they feel ready. It seems that October may be the general start time but watch notice boards and be in contact with the leader of the group you join in with to know exactly what is happening when.

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A blanket in need of a home

I have just finished a knee-blanket of knitted squares and it is looking for a good home. If there is anyone out there who would like it, or anyone who knows someone in need of a knee-blanket, please get in touch so that I may put it to good use. It does look a bit like Joseph's Technicolour Dreamcoat! I still have a quantity of wool that will eventually make more blankets, so my knitting needles are still 'clicking' and will be until it is all used up.

Betty

Harry Skipp (20th August 1931 – 30th July 2020)

Many of you know Revd David Skipp and will, I am sure, remember his Dad, Harry who was Church Secretary at Chadwell Heath for many years. Harry passed away recently after a long period of poor health and hospital stays during lockdown which were testing for him and the family.

I would like to make a personal tribute to Harry who was one of my first Sunday School teachers when I started at Chadwell Heath aged 7. Harry and his wife Peggy were a great influence on my childhood and journey towards Christianity and became lifelong friends.

Harry was a great family man and a faithful servant of the church, and I have many happy memories of Sunday School, Scripture Exams, parties and outings, church bazaars and picnics, choirs, pantomimes and musicals, house groups and...whatever the activity Harry and Peggy were there!

Due to current restrictions, I was unable to attend Harry's funeral but thanks to a webcam link I was able to pay my respects from home. It was a little strange, regulations meant the service could have no singing for a man who sang his whole life, but David led a great tribute to his Dad.

Rest in peace, Harry, safe with your Lord; singing, I am sure, in heaven.

Jill Hunt

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Our local Refuge.

I watched a programme this week about the increased need for Women's Refuges during the pandemic. It was a really moving programme talking about the need for more and more places to be made available for families escaping from abusive situations. I have heard odd comments on the news about the need but hearing stories of families in such need really made an impact. I am asking the Elders at our next meeting to authorise an immediate donation of £500 to our local home. Usually we have our donations box in church filled with food donations but of course during lock down that has not been happening. So, I am asking you to bring gifts of food and toiletries as soon as you can to help fill their larder.

Harvest is our traditional time to take donations there but I suspect that the larder will be empty of donations at the moment so shopping bags will be out in the vestibule for immediate action and then again for our Harvest Festival Service.

I wept during the programme for the families filmed, for the physical and mental abuse they suffered. What dreadful situations families live in day by day that make them leave their homes for a place of safety.

I have been spoilt for my lifetime growing up in a happy and secure family situation, being in a happy marriage and able to provide a safe family home for my three children. I look at my grandchildren enjoying new experiences as they grow into secure happy adults.

The contrast is enormous when looking at damaged families in need of support and a fresh start.

I know that there are so many demands on our purses and shopping lists for so many good causes but this one is very local, on our own doorstep. So, if you can help bring your gift to church and I will deliver them to the Refuge.

Gill

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October Whitechapel Mission Clothing Collection



The date of Sunday OCTOBER 11th has been booked for the 2020 collection for the Whitechapel Mission, to be picked up on Monday October 12th. Please start gathering your items together now so that we can have another 'bumper' collection. The Mission has been open throughout the "lockdown" supporting the homeless in East London and needs support now more than ever. The need is for every type of male and female clothing, footwear, toiletries, in fact anything that is required for maintaining your lifestyle. The Mission is entirely dependent upon volunteer support as it does not receive government finance and has been operational since the 1880's. If the church is not open to accept items, they can be stored in Tom and Betty's garage so please telephone them anytime and they can be stored right away. Thank you all in anticipation of a good response.

Betty 01708760607

Here is a sermon preached by a previous Minister of our church Lythan on Sunday 16th August on the same theme as that preached by Ruth

Sermon

Are you sitting comfortably?

That is the way Listen with Mother would start on the radio. Bliss for me as a child as I would snuggle in for a cosy story. Bliss for my mother as she would get 10 minutes peace... So, are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin. Make sure you are comfortable now as you may not be later. Because this isn't a cosy story. This may involve some wriggling, some giggling, and some downright uncomfortable feelings. Not 10 minutes of peace at all. But if you can, stay with me. Here's the thing. I had a plan for this sermon. It involved opening with a not really that funny joke about a baptism for a dog and a few mentions of what the Greek words used actually mean. And then two things happened. Followed by a third. The first thing was the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis – a black man killed by a police officer in a horrific manner. In the outpouring of anger and outrage that followed I started to listen to what black people are dealing with. I thought I had listened before. I thought I was a good advocate. I now know I was wrong.

The second thing was learning about a method of Bible Study advocated by Fresh Expressions called "Discovery" where the first question you ask is "If the story happened today what would it look like?" And I sat and imagined what it would look like. I visualised a black woman facing up to Jesus and telling it to him straight. And the story became real and fresh in a different way. And I tore up my notes and realised I was going to have to have a rethink.

Which brings me to my third thing. I remembered that the last time I had to totally rewrite a sermon because current events broke into the Lectionary was in fact the last time I preached about this very same passage. It was August 2011 – when riots happened all across the UK following the death of Mark Duggan, a black man killed by police officers at Broadwater Farm.

I don't believe in coincidences. I believe that when things come together like this, the Holy Spirit is at work. And yet I stilled cried out to God "Lord, isn't this passage hard enough without putting racism front and centre?"

And I sense a reply to my prayer: "What did you think it is about?"

What is it about?

A woman approaches Jesus. A non-Jewish woman. She cries out for help, "have pity my daughter is tormented by spirits". Jesus ignores her. She persists, following and calling out so much that the disciples ask Jesus to send that woman away. (Why couldn't they have talked to her?) Jesus dismisses her "I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel." She falls at his feet. She pleads. And then Jesus says the most difficult to figure out sentence of his ministry - "It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

he gives a smart comeback 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' and Jesus says "you've got great faith" (the Greek is more like "MEGA faith" and her daughter is healed.

Why does Jesus react like this, this is poles apart from what happened with the centurion and his servant – which comes much earlier on in Matthew's gospel

Is it because she is a woman?

Is it because she is not Jewish?

Is he making a joke?

Is he tired and irritable?

Is he trying to get the disciples to intervene?

Is he being sarcastic?

Is he wrong – and the woman changes his mind?

It's even more of a puzzle when you look at the first part of today's reading.

Then Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand! It is not what goes into your mouth that makes you ritually unclean; rather, what comes out of it makes you unclean." Which offends the Pharisees

Yet the very next thing you hear Jesus say is something that the Pharisees would approve of but surely would leave Jesus ritually unclean by his standards. The way Jesus behaves here to start with leaves me cold. This is not the Jesus I love. But he – eventually – listens. He allows himself to be challenged. He is changed. And he acts. There is never such an encounter again. You can- and I probably have in the past – explain this away with Jesus making a joke about dogs (not the one I was going to use but also not really funny).

I think that theory diminishes Jesus. If we believe in an incarnate Jesus, both fully human as well as divine then surely, he can sometimes be tripped up by his privilege. Whether it was because it was a request from a woman or a non-Jew or both, just for a moment he acts in a very human way.

He doesn't see a person, just a problem. This woman filled with love for her daughter and desperately worried, persists. And his eyes and heart are opened.

Are you sitting comfortably now? No? Good. Neither am I.

“If the story happened today what would it look like?” I see a black woman making a lot of noise, running after Jesus, throwing herself at his feet. I see myself like one of the disciples muttering about fuss and hoping she would go away. I’m so glad she is not listening to me.

The Discovery Bible Story method also asks, “what is the story showing me?” That is a question for you to ask yourself later. I think it is showing me that there is always capacity to change my mind and see things from a new perspective.

I think it is showing me that sometimes this feels very uncomfortable. Our ways of understanding how the world works are hard wired into us and it is all too easy to go back to a default position as Jesus does here. But I think I need to sit in that discomfort. To think about whether I am feeling frailty.

I think the Holy Spirit is using this feeling to help me to really see. To open my eyes and heart and become aware of my own privilege and how that can cast a shadow over others.

I’ve approached this from the perspective of a white woman because that is what I am. To those of you who are black, I say – I’m sorry you sometimes have to shout to be heard. I hear you and I am ready to listen more. Challenge me. To those of you of other ethnicities - I say the same.

I hope that for those who are white like me, you are ready to also think carefully about where we are in this story and be ready to listen. And to act. To find out more of what white privilege is all about and work for justice. It’s not comfortable. It’s not easy. But it is kingdom work.

Stay with this story today if you can. Ask what is it showing me? And one last question – could this story make a difference to my life?

This is a rare time when Jesus is not the hero. Instead it is the woman of mega faith. And how awesome it is that a foreign woman– can dare to approach, can dare to question, can dare to challenge, and still be accepted in the kingdom – given a radical welcome.

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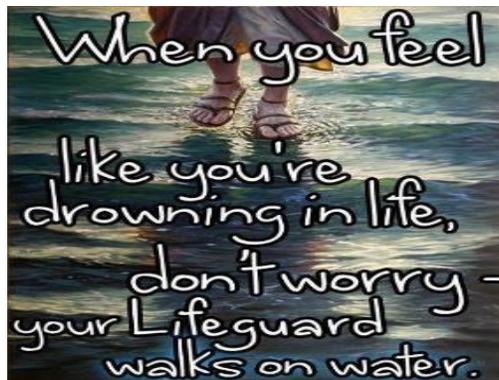
An Apology

It seems a long time ago when I celebrated my 90th birthday, but I still remember how the family tried to make up for the cancelled parties and helped to make the day special. There was plenty of help in opening cars and slowly reading them all. But among the cards was a lovely little ‘comfort bear’ with a rhyme saying that saying that when worried just give him a cuddle and he will help you through! The sad thing is that I cannot find which card it came with. So, if the sender of this special gift reads this, please get in touch so that I can say what a very thoughtful gift it was and how I appreciated my own bear. **Betty**

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After Lockdown

It is quite a while since we were told to ‘Stay Home – Protect the NHS – Save Lives’, and some restrictions have now been eased. But two things we all were asked to do were to wear a mask when going out and to stay two metres apart, especially in shops which were gradually beginning to open for trade. We have been into the town for shopping and to enjoy a coffee, and everywhere special arrangements have been made, with hand sanitisers at strategic points. It seems that retailers are doing all they can to make it easier for the customer. So, hopefully businesses will start to make a profits o that no more jobs will be lost to add to those made redundant already. Unemployment will be a great problem for some time to come, with food banks being a necessity for many families. WE feel very blessed to be able to carry on fairly easily when so many are struggling, so we thank God for our good fortune **Betty**



Farewell Captain

Steve entering
his new home



Steve Palmer started at the 1st Romford Boys Brigade when he was only 12 years old. He started helping the staff before he was 17 years old, taking classes and helping in any way he could.

When Dave Everson retired from being captain after 28 and a half years, the wonderful Steve took over his legacy. Steve has now completed 12 years of being an amazing Captain.

From a boy to Captain he has served for 40 years in the 1st Romford boys brigade. Steve is a great person and would always help when he could. He has done so much for the Boys Brigade from running camp, taking the boys canoeing, cycling, expeditions, Bible classes etc...

He was in charge of the Anchor Boys, which would take lots of preparation every week. He was in charge for over 22 years. The last thing we made in Anchor Boys was Goliath who is still in the church standing guard.

From running Company section, he was often the first person the boys would meet and the last to bid them farewell at adulthood. He was an ever supportive, attentive, and dedicated youth leader and friend. Whether playing songs around the campfire at night before cocoa and bed, to blowing reveille on the trumpet to wake everyone up for a new day, Steve played a huge role in making the company successful through the last 4 decades.

Steve is one of my closest friends, it is going to be hard not having him around. He has always helped me out when I needed it. He is going to be greatly missed. **Lee**

EVERY DAY
MAY NOT BE
GOOD,
BUT THERE IS
SOMETHING
GOOD IN
EVERY DAY.

The Playgroup

I just felt that I would like to fill in the early years of the Playgroup. We started a small playgroup in the 1960's and Sibbie Doust, Roy's wife and a church member was the leader. My son Graham, aged 3, attended the group. When Sibbie resigned another church member Nancy Bell took over and I assisted her for some years. There was no government input at that time.

It was very popular, with a waiting list each school year and a membership of about 36 children. When Nancy moved away Gwen took over and I worked with her for a few years until I went to college for Social Work training and it was then, I think, that Enid joined the Playgroup team.

I just thought that it was right to recognise the work of the church members started the work with our young children and I am so glad that it has been carried on so successfully with Sue and some of our own church members Zena and Joanne. Well done and thanks to all of you and a well-deserved retirement for Sue, and best wishes to the new leader.

Vera

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During the last few months perhaps, like me, some of you have had moments when you just felt overwhelmed- - from a family event, a news item or situation seen on TV or in real life. I recently sang this song, (new to me) at a Zoom Singalong with my singing group. It spoke to me, so I thought I would share the words with you.

Olive

Just Like A Child

Just like a child who runs along the pathway
Head in the clouds and laughing as he goes
Just like a child who trusts the world around him
And who calls to all he knows.

Chorus

I'm here Lord, I'm here
Here I am just like a child
I'm here Lord I'm here
Here I am just like a child

Just like a child, his hand held in his father's
Who doesn't know just where he is going to?
Just like a child I'll stretch out in the darkness
Where I'm certain I'll find you.

Just like a child that knows that he's been naughty
And hides away so nobody sees his shame
Then runs to you and cries out for forgiveness
When he hears you call his name.

Translated from French by Hilary A. Stokes

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Seen recently online:

*'Faith doesn't always take you out of the problem,
Faith takes you through the problem.*

*Faith doesn't always take away the pain,
Faith gives you the ability to handle the pain.*

*Faith doesn't always take you out of the storm,
Faith calms you in the midst of the storm.'*

Amen

Found by Jill Hunt

Dear Friends at Romford URC

It is hard to believe it is 6 months since I moved to Norfolk. And what 6 months it has been.



We could never have foreseen what 2020 would bring, and many of our plans have been put on hold. I wanted to write to thank you all – firstly for making me feel so welcome when I found myself looking for a new church. It was a hard time for me, but as time went by, I began to feel settled and was beginning to feel part of your lovely church family. However, life moved on and I found myself in Norfolk, in lockdown. I had not had time to settle in let alone find a new church before all our lives changed. So, my second thank you is to everyone involved in the virtual Zoom services. It has been lovely seeing you all on a Sunday morning and having that time of worship

together. I am not sure what my neighbours and my dog have thought about my singing along with the hymns and worships songs! I am sure you are all looking forward to worshipping together in the church building, but I will miss our virtual meetings.

I will find myself a new church, when the current restrictions allow, I have a couple shortlisted to try out! We are slowly getting our bungalow straight, there is quite bit of work to do, which has had to be put on hold, although we have done a lot of gardening! I was lucky enough to get a lovely part time job in a local GP surgery, which has been strange in the Pandemic, but has been most welcome. We are slowly getting back to some normality, at work and at home; and have even welcomed day visits from family and friends.

The best thing about my move has been the arrival of my beautiful grandson Sebastian in April. It was hard not being able to spend time with him, but with restrictions relaxing a little we are seeing more of him now and I thank God every day that he arrived safely and the new family are coping well.

I am sure you are all excited for Alison's arrival and ministry. I wish her all the best as she settles into her new role.

I look forward to visiting Romford, hopefully in the not too distant future and seeing you all again. With love, thanks, and blessings to you all



Jo Weiner

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I REMEMBER BEING
ABLE TO GET UP
WITHOUT MAKING
SOUND EFFECTS....
GOOD TIMES.

from Fiona

1. *What time of day was Adam created?*

Just a little before Eve.

2. *Who was the fastest runner in the race?*

Adam. He was first in the human race.

3. *The good Lord did not create anything without a purpose.*

Mosquitoes come close, though.

4. *Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?*

Because Noah was always standing on the deck

5. *Why didn't Noah ever go fishing?*

He only had two worms.

6. *Did Eve ever have a date with Adam?*

Nope — just an apple.

7. *Why did the unemployed man get excited while reading his Bible?*

He thought he saw a job.

8. *Does God love everyone?*

Yes, but He prefers “fruits of the spirit” to “religious nuts!”

9. *If Mary had Jesus, and Jesus was a little lamb...*

Does that mean Mary had a little lamb?

10. *What is so funny about forbidden fruits?*

They create many jams.

11. *Why couldn't Jonah trust the ocean?*

He just knew there was something fishy about it.

12. *What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?*

Absolutely ruthless

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**Thank you for all your contributions during lockdown, please keep them coming now that restrictions are easing.
Please let me know if you would like to continue to receive your copy of Kindle electronically.**
The Editor



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Details later

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