

# Acorns

GOFFS OAK METHODIST CHURCH, NEWGATE STREET ROAD, GOFFS OAK, HERTS, EN7 5SS  
SPRING 2020

## Farewell Alan - it's been a wonderful journey

Rev'd Alan Combes moves on to pastures new after six years at Goffs

*When Alan came to us in September 2013, few could have predicted the impact he would have on our church and the lives of those who worshipped in it. A former engineer, he was brought up as a Methodist in Muswell Hill and in the course of pursuing his career he became a lay preacher. Eventually he responded to God's call to train as a full-time Minister.*

Having lost our much-loved former minister Inez Reid to the Stratford, East London circuit, we waited anxiously to see who would be coming our way. We needn't have worried! Alan presented himself to us as a loving, caring and pastoral new Minister with a penchant for putting people at their ease as well as communicating cheerfully, thoughtfully and enthusiastically. He won us over very quickly and did his work in the circuit and in the pulpit innovatively and with grace and humour.



*Alan prepares to cut his 'farewell' cake.*

Alan presided over the build up to the church's 150th Anniversary with drive and enthusiasm and started by introducing what was named 'Carols by Torchlight' during his second Christmas period with Goffs Oak. Already, in just six years, this event has grown so much that it attracted well over 100 people to the event in December 2019. The Anniversary year was a wonderful success, due in no small measure to Alan's foresight and organizational skills, which he used to good effect throughout the six years he had been with us.

In December, we held a farewell tea for Alan in the church hall, during which we took a look back on Alan's time with us and offered anyone the chance to take the microphone and give their personal take on Alan's wonderful contribution to the church across six years.

Alan's new pastures are in the Vale of Stour Circuit near Wolverhampton. Consequently, a party of Enfield Circuit members, including some from our church, made the 100 mile trip to the Kingswinford Methodist Church for Alan's welcoming service. We can relax in the knowledge that, though we are losing Alan as our Minister, there are a blessed group of people in the Vale of Stour who will get the benefit of his many qualities. Goodbye, Alan and bon voyage!

### ***LOOK WHAT AWAITS YOU IN THIS SPRING EDITION OF Acorns!.....***

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## What usually happens in our Church:-

**Sunday Services** are held at 10.15am every Sunday and at 6.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

**Sunday Club** - All youngsters are welcome to come to Sunday Club at 10.15 am, where there is a variety of activities. Sunday morning worship at 10.15 am is a mix of traditional and contemporary styles.

**Holy Communion** is held on the 1st Sunday morning and 3rd Sunday evening. Members of the Methodist Church, any other Church, and those earnestly seeking faith, are all welcome to take and share bread and wine with us.

**United Services** are held once a quarter and at special times and seasons of the year such as Remembrance and Christmas.

**Prayer meetings** are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 11.30am after Coffee Morning .

**Tuesday Coffee Morning** - Every Tuesday there is a Coffee Morning in the church lounge from 10.00 – 12.00 to which everyone is invited.

### Introduction to Christianity, Baptism, Confirmation (membership), Weddings and Funerals

These are a part of the life of the Church, the community and its people. Those interested in discussing any of these should contact the Minister.

### Uniformed Organisations

The Scout and Guide communities are very active in Goffs Oak. Please see the Hall for Hire page on the website for details of when and where.

**Weddings and Funerals at our Church** - For information regarding costs, please contact our minister Rev'd Papa Owusu on 0208 360 4502. For information regarding booking a hall please contact David Batts on 01707 874092.

**Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, the regular activities mentioned here are postponed until further notice. Watch social media and our website to find out when normal service (and services) might be resumed.**

## EDITORIAL

In the six years during which Alan had been our minister, we had come to accept him as one of our church family. This was, of course, an extended family, as his wife Michele and daughters Rachel and Emma all made fine contributions to Goffs Oak - particularly in the music field. They were wonderful years when the church made great strides and we will all be grateful for the fact that Alan and his family were directed to Goffs Oak in the first place. We also know that people and families do change and move on.

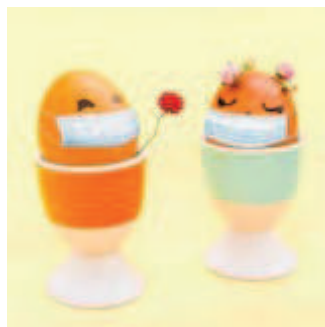
*We are, however, very blessed to have Papa Owusu as our new minister, particularly as we know him already. He has been in the Enfield circuit for five years and has preached passionately many times at our church. We had the pleasure of getting to know him even more at a special welcoming lunch in January and trust and pray the he and his wife Venesha have a long and wonderful period with us.*

The current Coronavirus pandemic is having a profound influence on the life of our church and those of its members. We turn to God for His help and pray that we and the world at large can come through it all with a greater understanding of His purpose for us.

As always, I thank Maureen for her proof-reading and general editorial help. I am also grateful, again, to Hilary at the circuit office, who has printed Acorns so well and for being so positive and helpful in the process.

Bryan King - Editor

## A lighter look at the Coronavirus situation



# Meet our new Minister

## **Where did you spend your early years?**

I am was born in Ghana in West Africa and had my early years there. I had my Primary, secondary and tertiary education before migrating here.

## **Did your calling to become a minister come suddenly?**

No, it has been a long Journey - A journey that may have started in my youthful days.

I was brought up in a Christian home where faith and daily life were inextricably linked. Apart from home the next place you will find me will be in the Church. Wherever I went and whatever I did, the Church was always my safe haven. In my later years here, I served as a Soldier in the British Army and also worked in the City for few years.

For me, discerning the will of God for the ministry started with a deep and a recurrent desire but unlike the fishermen who 'at once...left their nets and followed him' when they were called by Jesus, mine took some time, it was circuitous... there were periods of uncertainty, doubts, vagueness, improbability etc. and the sense of unworthiness; there were times when people would approach me to speak to me to consider the ministerial vocation, but I felt I could serve God better in other ways- nothing more or less.

For me to be here at this stage of my life and in this ministry is by the grace of God. God through Christ relentlessly pursued me and it is through his gracious pursuit, my personal convictions and the Church's support in so many ways that I am where I am now. I am continuously learning and growing and the purposes of God for my life is continually enfolding.

My journey up until this time has never been made in isolation. I would not be here to share in ministry with you if it were not for some beautiful people, friends, family especially, my lovely wife Venesha and our Children, and colleagues in ministry who helped me, challenged me, loved me and prayed for me along the way...I am always grateful to them.

## **Where did you do your training? When you finished your training for the ministry, where did you work?**

I did my ministerial Formation at Wesley House in Cambridge - Wesley House is a Methodist Theological College and it is part of Cambridge Theological Federation. I finished with my formational training in 2014 and I was ordained in 2016 at Chelmsford Cathedral.

I was stationed in the Enfield Circuit of the Methodist Church straight after training as a probationer presbyter and I had pastoral oversight of Grange Park and Bush Hill Park Methodist Churches until recently. In January 2020 I was asked to take over the pastoral charge of Goffs Oak, Ordnance Road and Ponders End Methodist Churches which I humbly accepted.

## **Why Methodism?**

I have always been a Methodist - born and bred! ... and I will always be. I have always loved the traditional summary of Methodist teaching - 'All can be saved. All need to be saved. All may be saved. All may know themselves saved. All may be saved to the uttermost.' I also like the Wesleyan heritage especially the traditional hymns and the church's openness to the modern world.

## **Do you have any particular hobbies or pastimes?**

Do I have any? I think I love reading and interacting with people and occasional sports. I am a Liverpool fan without season tickets.

## **Has there been a single most influential person in your life?**

I have two - my late father, my grandmother and my mother - may their souls rest in peace and rise in glory... ....I wouldn't be who I am today without their love, care and support. I still miss them

## **Did any specific event have a big influence on your life and beliefs?**

It was the sudden death of my mother in 2012 - I went blank and suddenly, my 'morning turned into darkness' when I heard of the news... it indeed challenged my faith for a while... questions like 'where is our God?' kept coming to me for some time... It affected me so much... but the power of God has continually enabled me to journey through it; and through it all I have learnt to trust Jesus the more.

## **What of the future?**

It is in the hands of God! In these few years in ministry, I have gained and continue to gain a deeper understanding of the ministry in the church of God and in the life of the community which I am serving. I have come to appreciate the fact that my ministry is rooted in God through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. I know and believe that the Almighty God who has brought me this far will continue to journey with me and carry me through irrespective of how difficult the journey becomes...

Thank you for the opportunity.



*The Rev'd Papa Owusu*



# A portrait of.....**Natasha Raskin Sharp**

Born 1986, in Glasgow, Natasha is a Scottish TV presenter and antiques & art expert. She is probably best known for her appearances on BBC's *Bargain Hunt* and *Antiques Road Trip*. She is the daughter of successful artist Philip Raskin, being the middle of three children.



***Son of  
'Folk at  
the Oak'  
by Phil  
Seaman***

After leaving school, Natasha initially studied Law at Glasgow University, but left after

1 year after deciding that Law was not for her. There followed a number of activities, including a placement at the *Alice Temperley Fashion House* and working in the primary elections, for *Barack Obama*, in New Hampshire. Obama referred to her as 'The Scottish Contingent' of his team.

After returning to Glasgow University, to gain a degree in the history of art and French, she joined *McTear's Auction House, in Glasgow*, where she was tasked with packing shipments of artworks. But with a personality as lively as hers that was never going to be enough. "After being at Mc Tear's for 6 months, I told them that they would have to let me onto the rostrum!" So she became auctioneer and then Head of Pictures. She says that her first day with the gavel was horrific. Her mother was at the front and filmed her. "I remember watching the film and thinking I had a really red face!" Despite this inauspicious start Natasha was bitten by the bug and, more to the point, the punters loved her cheerful disposition, attractive smile and outrageous puns!



*Now happily married to TV executive, Joe Sharp, she shares her auctioneering & valuation duties with her TV career. Since 2017, as well as her TV work, Natasha has presented a weekly programme, on BBC Radio Scotland, playing an eclectic mix of music. She also occasionally presents story segments for BBC 1's 'The One Show'.*

*She's certainly in the fast lane and has become a TV favourite, thanks to her warm, quirky character.*

**Oh yes, the portrait, here it is. I'm looking forward to delivering it to her!**

**'Go into your houses,  
my people, and shut  
the door behind you.  
Hide yourselves for a  
little while until God's  
anger is over.'**

No. This not advice from the Methodist Church about coping with Coronavirus! Mind you, many will say that this is just what we have to do to get through the current world-wide crisis.

*The quote, as many of you will already be aware, comes from Isaiah Chapter 26, verse 20 and was picked up by Maureen, whilst following the UCB 'Word for Today' booklet. She was taking an advance peek at the reading for 20 March and at the end of it found verse 20. It caused us some amusement as we were just coming to terms with having to hunker down at home for an indefinite period.*

**Life has changed so rapidly over the last few days. Most of the anchors in our timetable require us to go out and meet other people - at church, meetings, village hall, sporting venues and shopping. Planned excursions and holidays are postponed or abandoned.**

We can no longer complain of having too much to do. Now we have time on our hands! But this is beginning to have the effect of releasing the pressure of everyday living and helping us to relax and enjoy the moment.

*Of course, these are early days and it will be interesting to see if we still feel the same after a few weeks of self-isolation.*

**Watch this space!**

**Editor**

## *Ruth's Recipe of the season*



## *Fish Pie*

### **Ingredients**

- 1kg Maris Piper potatoes, peeled and halved
- 400ml milk, plus a splash
- 25g butter, plus a knob
- 25g plain flour
- 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- 1 x pack fish pie mix (cod, salmon, smoked haddock etc, weight around 320g-400g depending on pack size)
- 1 tsp Dijon or English mustard
- ½ a 25g pack or a small bunch chives, finely snipped
- handful frozen sweetcorn
- handful frozen petits pois
- handful grated cheddar

### **Method**

1. Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas mark 6.
2. Put 1kg potatoes, peeled and quartered, into a saucepan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, then simmer till tender.
3. When cooked, drain thoroughly and mash with a splash of milk and a knob of butter. Season with ground black pepper.
4. Put 25g butter, 25g plain flour and 4 finely sliced spring onions in another pan and heat gently until the butter has melted, stirring regularly. Cook for 1 -2 mins.
5. Gradually whisk in 400ml milk using a balloon whisk if you have one. Bring to the boil, stirring to avoid any lumps and sticking at the bottom of the pan. Cook for 3 – 4 minutes until thickened.
6. Take off the heat and stir in 320g-400g mixed fish, 1 tsp Dijon or English mustard, a small bunch of finely snipped chives, handful of sweetcorn and handful of petits pois. Spoon into an ovenproof dish or 6- 8 ramekins.
7. Spoon the potato on top and sprinkle with a handful of grated cheddar cheese.
8. Pop in the oven for 20 - 25 mins or until golden and bubbling at the edges. Alternatively, cover and freeze the pie or mini pies for another time.

***Willow, aged 10 (Ruth's daughter), cooked this and it comes with the recommendation of the whole family!***

**Although Brexit has been driven from the headlines by Coronavirus, it is important to look back a couple of months to a significant move by church leaders.....**

## **Pre-Brexit statement from Church Leaders and letter to European partners**

Church leaders, including the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, have released a joint statement (below) regarding the UK's imminent exit from the European Union. This was accompanied by a letter (right) from the Church leaders addressed to partner Churches and Church organisations in Europe.

**Statement from British Church leaders and representatives delivered shortly before as the UK prepared to leave the European Union.....**

*"We, the leaders and representatives of ten British Church denominations and networks, speak together as the UK prepares to leave the European Union on Friday 31 January 2020.*

*Three and a half years after the UK voted to leave the European Union, the point of departure has now been reached. The process of arriving at this point has been bruising and divisive. For some this date will mark the realisation of a long-held ambition and a moment of celebration. For others, however, it will be an occasion of great loss, marking the moment when deeply held desires for the nations of the UK are placed beyond reach.*

*Church members in good conscience continue to hold a wide range of views about Brexit. As Church leaders and representatives, we are united in wishing to seek God's guidance and a sense of common purpose as we move from this chapter of the Brexit process into the next.*

*As the UK leaves the EU there are important choices to be made about the values that we as a country live out. As Christians, we affirm our belief that all people are equally created in God's image. Our country should be one that offers sanctuary to refugees and is intolerant of those who hate because of a person's race or nationality. Both Leave and Remain campaigns agreed on this – we must now make it a reality.*

*The continuing challenges of the climate crisis, global inequality and conflict will require both resolve and close international cooperation to be addressed effectively.*

*We greatly value the love and friendship of our sisters and brothers in other European churches, and a group of us are writing to them publicly today to assure them that these relationships will continue. We also recognise that 31 January will bring uncertainty and anxiety to many EU citizens living in the UK and British citizens living in the EU. Leaving the EU cannot mean abandoning our responsibilities towards these families.*

*Brexit exposed and exacerbated divisions in British society. The deeply held convictions that fuelled the Brexit debate will not simply go away, but our Christian faith urges us to be people of peace and reconciliation. If the bitterness of the last four years is not to persist in polluting our national life, we will all need to resist the temptation to hold on onto the hurts of the past, or to act in ways which will be perceived as triumphalist.*

*We will only be able to move towards having a sense of common purpose, despite our differences, when we choose to act with kindness, humility and respect towards those with whom we disagree. We call on our political leaders to set an example over the next weeks and months as we move towards negotiations which will require further decisions about priorities for the nations of the UK.*

*For our part, our Churches will be working and praying for:*

- *a society where the poorest and most marginalised are at the centre*
- *a society that welcomes the stranger*
- *a just economy that enables the flourishing of all life*
- *a planet where the environment is renewed*
- *a world which actively works for peace*
- *a politics characterised by listening, kindness and truthfulness"*

### **Statement signatories:-**

Revd Dr Barbara Glasson and Professor Clive Marsh, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference  
Revd David Mayne, Moderator of Council, Baptist Union of Great Britain

The Right Revd Colin Sinclair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

Revd Nigel Uden and Mr Derek Estill, Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church

Most Revd Father Olu Abiola OBE and Archbishop Fidelia Onyuku-Opukiri, Council of African and Caribbean Churches UK

Yvonne Campbell, General Secretary, on behalf of the Council of the Congregational Federation

Revd Dr Noel A Davies, Chair, Cytûn: Churches Together in Wales' Working Party on Wales and Europe

Bishop Simon Iheanacho, Overseer, UK World Evangelism Churches

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain

Most Revd Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church



## ***A look back at the open letter sent before Brexit from Churches in Britain to Churches in member states of the European Union***

### **Dear sisters and brothers**

At 11pm GMT on Friday the 31st of January 2020, the United Kingdom will no longer be a member of the European Union. The UK is leaving the EU, but we are not leaving Europe.

Our Churches have contributed to and been enriched by the Christian tradition in Europe for centuries. The early evangelists to these islands came with the Roman empire. They were followed by the missions of St Augustine of Canterbury (who came originally from what is now Italy) and St Columba of Iona (from what is now Ireland). The faith of Christians in these islands has from the earliest days had its roots in the European Church. The impact of the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands has contributed significantly to the Churches, societies and nations of our islands, an impact that is still felt to this day. We have congregations of our Churches in many cities in Europe and we maintain close fellowship with partner Churches across our continent. We are, and will always be, European Churches, as part of the worldwide church.

The diminishing of political ties and accountability will not affect or impede our commitment to our partners in other parts of Europe. We will continue to play a full and active part in European ecumenical organisations and we will support our congregations and partners in other parts of Europe.

Our Churches will continue to promote the values we share with you, to promote peace and protect human rights and dignity.

We will continue to pursue the concerns we share with you, to ensure the welfare of all citizens and that our Governments are held to account for issues about security, freedom and the sharing of prosperity.

We will continue to work with you on the great challenges of our time; how European nations respond to forced migration, and how we adapt and respond to the climate crisis.

We will continue to remain committed to the principles of solidarity, that have bound us together for many years and to which we must hold fast in a time of increasing xenophobia, religious discrimination, wealth inequality and national self-interest.

We have appreciated your support and interest in our situation in recent years, and we ask you to stay with us as we learn what our future holds, and how we can work together to offer hope and reconciliation to all our communities as we seek to follow Jesus in our everyday living.

Please pray for us, as we will pray for you.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are

indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

*1 Corinthians 12:12-27*

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in

love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

*Ephesians 4:1-6*

*Yours in Christ*

*Revd Dr Barbara Glasson and Professor Clive Marsh, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference*

*Revd David Mayne, Moderator of Council, Baptist Union of Great Britain*

*The Right Revd Colin Sinclair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*

*Revd Nigel Uden and Mr Derek Estill, Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church*



## **"I am not a 'charity starts at home' person" - Rory Stewart**

**Rory Stewart, ex Tory Secretary of State for International Development and a former member of the Labour Party, told the audience at a Christian Aid event on 24 February that Britain retains a "moral obligation" to help people who are "much, much poorer" than those in the UK and declared: "I am not a charity starts at home person".**



Mr Stewart, who was speaking in front of hundreds of people at St James's Church, Piccadilly, praised the work of Christian Aid, which is this year marking its 75<sup>th</sup> year. He said: *"If you don't support Christian Aid, you should support Christian Aid. It is a very, very good organisation. It's a very good organisation because it is good at doing development projects in other people's countries. But it is also a good organisation because it keeps a very good grassroots connection to British citizens, and people here in Britain."*

Mr Stewart, in answering a question about the Government's approach to the Department for International Development (DFID), said: ***"I think there is a decent way of asking testing questions about international aid and then there is a bad way of doing it...We should all begin in this room with the fundamental observation that we have a profound moral obligation towards people who are much, much poorer than Britain is. And we ought to be working morning, noon and night to think about how we can engage with those people and transform their lives. So I am not a charity begins at home person."*** He added: ***"I don't like the Conservative tradition that questions whether we should be helping people in other countries."***

On recent speculation that DFID would be folded into the Foreign Office, Mr Stewart said: *"I think the problem with that is that if I was looking for one institution to take over the other, I would probably want DFID to take over the Foreign Office rather than the Foreign Office to take over DFID. The reason for that is...DFID has the skills the Foreign Office doesn't."* He went on: *"If you start spending that money on bullets rather than babies you've missed the point of what that money is there to do...Don't call it international development if you're spending it on soldiers. The point about international development is to have funds available which are genuinely designed to try to engage with issues of poverty, and for my money, environment, climate change and education, health...That's the space we're talking about, not the space of every other idea that you can come up with when you want to talk about doing things in other people's countries."*

On climate, Mr Stewart, who has left the Conservative party and is standing as an independent candidate to be mayor of London, said Britain "must take the global lead" and warned against "lack of political will, lack of energy, lack of imagination, lack of dedication." He added that this was a "litmus test" for the Government. On Syria, he said: "This has been the most catastrophic failure of international statecraft of every sort. We have been humiliated by Syria, out manoeuvred by Russia. The cost to the Syrian people has been beyond imagining. The naivety that we displayed repeatedly, the promises we made to communities that we were not able to keep, our inability to be able to actually understand and be honest about the Islamist presence and the relationship between them and the Syrian army, the miscalculations and the betrayal of the Kurdish population around north-east Syria...is just horrifying. And I think we need to be much, much more honest as a country about the fact that from the beginning of this we talked a much bigger game than we should ever have talked. We never had the resources, we never had the people, we never really had the money, we never really had the knowledge, we barely had the people on the ground."



## Pray without ceasing

**When I first became aware of the idea of praying without ceasing, it was as part of a hymn which I was taught while at school, when the words meant very little to my juvenile mind.**

As I grew older and became involved in the Methodist Church, I developed a sketchy understanding, but was still rather sceptical about the idea of praying for a long time. Activities like praying for 24 hours non-stop were organised and still I took the sceptic's view that, surely, this was not really possible, except by some sort of meaningless rote fashion in which words were ritually spoken. But, surely, sheer tiredness would take its toll and various bodily needs would need to be carried out during this 24 hour period, which would inevitably, I thought, become an arduous route march of a day. How could anyone focus on praying for that length of time anyway? I had enough trouble, on occasions, in staying awake during the times I was meant to pray (church services, etc), let alone keep it up all day!

*Then it struck me!*

God was not asking me to parrot words for a day; he was asking me to live prayer! Yes, I know this sounds like another trite phrase, but it makes perfect sense if your aim really is to live your life according to the way He wants you to. It's rather like turning your computer on, going on-line... and staying there!

*This is not to say that formal spoken (or silent) prayer is unnecessary. Prayers are rather like writing a Google message seeking guidance from God. The answers may not all come at once, but He will ensure that they come through when and where they are needed if we remain on-line to Him by staying committed to living the life He wants us to live. This we can do for 24 hours - over and over again. It means that we can live a non-stop 'prayer' life.*

**Living our lives by leaving the line open to God will help us to respond in His way to all the situations we come across - in our dealings with our families, all other people, our work lives, our leisure lives - indeed, God will be there for us 24 hours a day.....without ceasing.**



**Philippians 4:6** says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

We're not meant to worry, and we waste too many minutes doing just that. Next time something weighs heavily on your heart, visualise yourself extending it up to God and letting Him hold it for you. Ask Him what your role is and if there is something you need to do; if so, do it. But don't take back the weight of the worry. Then start thanking God for who He is and what He has already done for you, and you'll feel the weight lifting off your shoulders as the words come.

## DON'T FORGET OUR WEBSITE!

If you can access  
the internet,  
log on to...

**[www.goffsoakmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.goffsoakmethodistchurch.org.uk)**

David Batts is supervising our website, so please log on regularly and keep up to date with what is going on at Goffs Oak Methodist Church.

**Current and past  
Acorns  
also on website!**



*It's Café Church again! - left, right and below. The congregation tucks in to breakfast, while exploring God's word. Barbara also gets great help from the children*



## At Your Service



*The Acorns camera brings you images of some recent services and related activities. ....*



*Tim Swindell (above) gets the children involved on 29 September at our Harvest Festival Service.*



*Hundreds (left) attended the Remembrance service at the war memorial in November, Also, Isabelle Waddington (right) receives her baptism with serenity, to the delight of her family!*



*....and the band played on! 'Carols by Torchlight' lit up the night of Tuesday 17 December as Alan, aided by the wonderful brass music of the Potters Bar Town Band, led a Carol service at the War Memorial (right), followed by a bonus burst of music, with mince pies etc, in the Church Hall (below left). On the way back to the hall, the patrons of the Goffs Oak pub (above left) gave generously to our collection for Action for Children!*







*At Your Christmas Service...  
....the Acorns lens misses nothing!*



*It's December 15th and the Carol Service. The children (above) present a wonderful Nativity, while Michele, Joanne and Frances (below) provide the music and the scene (left) is set for the Nativity.*



*Just before the Carol Service we had the Holiday Club/Sunday Club Christmas party (above left and left) featuring a visit from Father Christmas(above)!*

## A 'Church Without Walls'

*As the coronavirus continues its rampant progress around the world, we now find ourselves facing the sorts of restrictions that up until last week, only affected our counterparts in mainland Europe and beyond. We are to stay at home – many shops are closed, parks are closed, visitor attractions are closed and worst of all, our churches are closed. We find ourselves unable to meet for regular worship – perhaps the greatest challenge we've faced in a generation.*

It is so vital that we carry on being in fellowship with one another during this shutdown, not just for our own well-being, but the well-being of our churches. As Christians, we cannot survive in isolation, so it was a joy to see so many options for joining in streamed services. Sadly, the new restrictions will make that more of a challenge as we're not supposed to congregate in groups larger than two unrelated people. Week One was bad enough, but now our determination to keep prayer and fellowship going will be challenged further.

I am reminded of the words of Paul in Romans 8:37-39

*Romans 8:37-39 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)*

*<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (from Biblegateway)*

If we believe the words of Paul, we have assurance that no matter what happens with the pandemic, nothing can separate us from the love of God. To help us support and encourage one another, we need to be a church without walls. A church that sustains itself because it no longer relies on the bricks and mortar – no longer a sanctuary in which to hide ourselves away, no longer the convenience of a kitchen to gather for a meal. No longer limited by our ability to turn up at 10:15 on a Sunday morning.

If we can genuinely be a church without walls, there is the possibility that we can encourage others to come into our midst. There is the possibility of welcoming people who would otherwise find coming into a church absolutely terrifying. There's no cumbersome liturgy, no pressure of knowing when to sit and when to stand. No pressure of looking out of place.

A Church without walls, a welcoming church, a missional church, a thriving church. God's Church, just as God intended it to be.

Joanne Mead





We will miss Alan's 'blessings' as it was always nice to get a "God bless you" from him.  
*Julie Taylor*

## Some memories of Alan's time with us



Above all else, without his encouragement to understand my faith, I might not have become a member. He helped me realise that faith can be expressed in so many different ways, utilising our various 'gifts and graces'.

Other than that, I have several memories of working closely with Alan, most obviously on technology issues, including 1) His support for installing projectors in both church and hall; linking the two together, including the church based camera. 2) The new sound system for the hall, which he proposed to be portable - thus used at the war memorial, etc. Obviously this really helped with Remembrance and especially his innovation 'Carols by Torchlight'. 3) Making such great use of the equipment, e.g., videos during services, the Holiday Club. 4) CCTV. Also, working together on building issues including a) Preparing proposals for circuit grants, all successful - eventually (loan > grant for flat roof) b) Extending the scope of the annual spring clean c) He and Nigel going through historical material (unfortunately unfinished). D) Alan working up a tower and on the roof, painting and repairing the cross. In other words, he was a real 'hands-on' minister, involved in every part of church life.

Nobody is irreplaceable, but we will really miss his particular skill set and will have to work hard to develop our own 'new' way.

*David Batts*

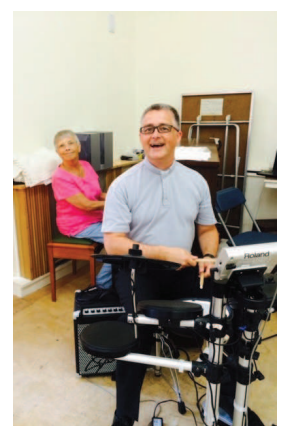




## Alan - at the centre of our church for six years



I think he was the best person for a minister I have ever met. He helped me tremendously with regard to the work I did on the Data Protection Act. I shall miss him very much. He was always kind, friendly and approachable. *Linda Harrod*



The things I appreciated most about Alan's ministry to our Church were his enthusiasm and the infusion of energy he brought to everything - it was infectious! It was also wonderful having so much support for anything to do with our young people. He is a true disciple. *Alison Rapley*

It was a wonderful surprise when Alan appeared at Goffs Oak as our new minister, since Maureen and I remembered him as a young boy from our days at Muswell Hill Methodist Church. His parents, Margaret and Joe were in the church's Twenty Plus group. The influence of his parents and the Muswell Hill church was immediately apparent. Alan brought a vibrancy to Goffs Oak and his ebullient personality gave us all the encouragement we needed to continue God's work with renewed enthusiasm. *Bryan King*





## Hope

Hope is a little word, but with a lot resting on it. We all need to have hope, and to be without hope is to be facing a very bleak future indeed. Hope is what we live for – it is our assurance that whatever lies ahead, that everything will work out for the best and it requires us to have trust. For the Christian, faith, hope and love are all integral to our lives. The hope that comes through faith in Jesus Christ is the ultimate assurance we can have.

Sometimes we find ourselves in difficult situations, there's no light at the end of the tunnel and we begin to lose hope. When hope is lost, suddenly the world becomes a hostile place and we struggle to find a way forward. It can be for all sorts of reasons – illness, unemployment, a relationship breakdown, bereavement, but whatever the cause; the effects are no less devastating. We can become incapable of rational judgement; we can be pushed over the edge.

There are lots of references to hope in the Bible, but one really speaks loudly to me right now is this one:

### Romans 5: 1-5

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. (NIV)*

This is a wonderful situation we are in as Christians. Not only do we have a personal relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, but we can have confidence that His purpose for our lives can be realised. God shapes us so we can fulfil His perfect Will. That sometimes involves suffering, but we do not suffer in vain, difficult though the path we travel may be. As these verses from Romans tell us, it is through suffering that we gain the strength, the perseverance that makes us the character God wants us to be. We are all a product of our personal experiences, both good and bad. Through such experiences we also gain hope, and as Paul states clearly in his letter to the Romans, that hope does not disappoint.

The hope we have as Christians doesn't necessarily mean that we will always find ourselves feeling optimistic about things, but the hope we have is that assurance of God's love. We have that assurance, that whatever happens, no matter how dark a night it may seem to us, we walk hand in hand with God.

Joanne Mead

*Although this is not a new article from Joanne, I feel it has a particular resonance with the situation the whole world finds itself in today.*

Editor

## A look back to Summer 2019 and...**Holiday Club!**

**It seems such a long time ago now, but last August saw our 27th Holiday Club, based this year in true Blue Peter style on one we did earlier. A few years back we did 'Space Academy' and for 2019 we decided to repeat it.**

The usual suspects were on duty and although our numbers were less than we would have liked, the week was wonderful for all concerned. Our week had a 'space' theme and we explored the early chapters of Daniel, including how Daniel and his friends stood up for their faith in a foreign land, despite the opposition and, also, how God was faithful to them.







**Whitechapel Mission**  
Bringing hope where there is despair

## ***The Mission***

### ***...and its Coronavirus policy***

The Whitechapel Mission has been serving the homeless and marginalised for 143 years – including a day centre, skills training and career advice, activity programmes and specialist support for complex needs. By encouraging each person

to address the issues which caused their homelessness, we help them to gain the skills and confidence to make lasting changes in their lives.

We believe everyone deserves a chance, regardless of their background, race or religion. We are open to all, without exception.

We are open every day of the year and expect to see as many as 300 homeless and vulnerable men and women each day. And we do this without public funding.

**We know that we can, and are, making a positive and lasting difference to the people who ask for our help.**

## **The Coronavirus situation**

We are closely watching the situation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and doing everything we can to make sure guests, volunteers and staff are safe.

Thankfully, none of the team has been directly affected by COVID-19 and we have taken preventative measures to ensure this remains the case. None of our guests have currently been effected by the COVID-19. Our Office Support team is on hand in case you have any questions and can be reached on 03000 111 400

We are suspending all volunteering and outside service provision. Our current evaluation of risk, is that people should not be travelling to the Mission unless absolutely essential.

Food is the highest priority for those sleeping on our streets. Warm clothing, medical attention and support must be sustained as long as possible.

### **The Mission remains Open and Serving**

## **Stay safe**

We are grateful for the offers of support. We always need clothing, food and toiletries and will still need these items after this pandemic has been beaten.

**Please do not travel to bring donations during this time. We will manage and we all need to stay safe.**

### **The view from GOMC**

Both as individuals and as a church, we at Goffs Oak have been supporting the Whitechapel Mission for many years. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they deal with the increasingly heartbreaking problems and difficulties endured by so many homeless people, which are exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic. We pray also that the volunteers and workers at the Mission stay safe, both for their own sakes and so that they may continue their wonderful work.

## News from . . . . . The Methodist Church

### **A selection of the guidance (updated 24 March) on use of church buildings, baptisms, weddings and funerals.**

The Methodist Church has announced the closure of all its church buildings for the foreseeable future. The only exception will be for churches that are offering essential social outreach such as foodbanks, soup kitchens and night shelters, but these must be carried out closely within Government guidelines. The Methodist Church suspended worship services last week with some churches still opening for quiet prayer and reflection. This must now also be suspended. We would encourage people to use our online resources at home which include downloadable services and links to online worship services.

The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference said: "We are asking people to change their way of 'going to church' to help to protect themselves and others. We have put in place measures that will enable Methodists still to be part of the worshipping community, whilst for everyone's sake staying away from church buildings. There is a range of resources available for people to use at home which we hope will help them to continue their cycle of prayer and worship. The Methodist Church is more than its buildings and if in these unprecedented times we can continue our life as Methodists without using our buildings we will help to reduce the chances of transmission of the virus."

If you are running a foodbank or soup kitchen we would urge you to seek advice on how and whether to continue operating as safely as possible from central bodies such as the Trussell Trust or IFAN.

In terms of Church business, we recommend that all meetings including church councils and circuit meetings should be cancelled. Districts chairs will be in touch about Synods. The next meeting of the Methodist Council has been suspended and we will advise on how essential business will be carried out. We will be issuing further advice on this.

### **Other community activities**

The Trussell Trust has also issued guidance on how churches can support volunteer supported charities.

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) have produced a simple guide on how you can support foodbanks during the coronavirus pandemic.

Other community events like lunch clubs, after school clubs, playgroups and fellowship groups should be suspended.

### **Pastoral concerns**

Churches must only consider carrying out pastoral 'visits' by phone. You should refer to the Government guidelines on visiting vulnerable people if you are considering doing this. Remember that many people are anxious and a reassuring phone call and an offer to pray might be very much appreciated.

If you're a minister, consider what your plan might be if someone in your congregation is diagnosed with the virus.

### **Coronavirus FAQs:-**

Can we hold baptisms, wedding and funerals?

### **Baptisms**

There will be no baptisms until further notice because of the closure of churches. In case of an emergency please contact your Minister.

### **Weddings**

In line with Government guidelines weddings will not take place until further notice. Where a wedding is postponed, the Minister will work with the couple of help them find a suitable future date.

If you have any questions please email: [mvw@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:mvw@methodistchurch.org.uk)

### **Funerals**

- Funerals can, and should continue in the name of the Methodist Church as part of our pastoral response to the coronavirus crisis.
- Methodist Church buildings should only to be used in the last resort, and simple graveside/ crematorium services are to be preferred.
- If a Methodist Church building is re-opened for a funeral, Church Stewards who are classed as vulnerable should not be present.
- The minister or trained local person under the direction of the Superintendent should make the arrangements by remote media (telephone, skype etc).
- The number of people attending a funeral should be kept to a minimum - with those in attendance observing suitable social distancing as per the government's advice.

- Those over the age of 70 and those with an underlying health condition are strongly discouraged from attending in the present circumstances.
- The service may be broadcast via social media or recorded to be shared later. The minister should explain to people what is happening (especially those not physically present).
- The service should include prayers and a message of Christian hope.
- There is no requirement for a musician to be present.
- Do not use communal hymn books or service books.
- People should avoid social contact, such as hugging.
- There should be no social gathering such as a wake before or after the service.
- Consideration should be given to offering a memorial service when the emergency is over.
- Local councils will have guidance around what is possible or permissible in crematoria and cemeteries.

Where a preschool is offering care for children of key workers – is it ok for that group to continue you using our building?

Safeguarding would exclude anyone else whilst they are on the premises, so if the Local Authority wants it to continue it should, but we should not expect anyone from the Church to unlock or support its meetings (and certainly not the over 70s) .

#### **Can support meetings like AA still continue to meet in our buildings?**

No they must stop too as the buildings are closed. Groups can look at how to continue using online means.

We have been using our church to record worship materials – can this continue?

No-one should be going into the church buildings, worship resources can be recorded by individuals at home.

#### **Can we livestream with a small and well distanced group taking part?**

This should stop in church buildings. Our website has a list of places who are offering livestreaming and you should use these where possible.

#### **I am concerned about church finances – what can I do?**

During this period of great uncertainty people are concerned about the financial impact on churches and circuits. At this stage we are asking any church that experiences financial difficulty to talk to the leadership team in their Circuit, and any Circuit that is in difficulty to talk to their District. Any concerns that arise at a District level can be taken up with the Connexional Team's Finance department. Contact: Matthew Tattersall: [tattersallm@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:tattersallm@methodistchurch.org.uk)

#### **What happens if we lose income because groups who rent space in church buildings can't meet or through a loss of rental income?**

It's our understanding that this would not be covered by insurance as coronavirus is not a specified disease.

#### **What is happening to Methodist Council meetings?**

This month's Council meeting will not go ahead as planned, and plans are being made to ensure that the essential business is carried out.

#### **Should my church council/Synod still go ahead?**

We recommend that all meetings including church councils and circuit meetings should be cancelled. Districts chairs will be in touch about Synods.

#### **Is the Methodist Conference still going ahead?**

No decision has been made yet, although we are having regular discussions about this and will heed Government advice when making a decision.

#### **Can we keep our church open for people to pray?**

All church buildings are to remain closed for the foreseeable future. Where possible you should offer other ways for people to pray and worship online.

#### **A message of thanks and support.....**

*Dear Friends,*

*We in the Connexional Team are working hard to support you all in Mission and Ministry to fulfil your calling. We wanted to say how grateful we are for the way you have responded to the challenges of these current times. We have seen so many of you going the extra mile in producing web based worship, in sharing resources, and in building one another up. This last Sunday we saw hundreds of examples across the Connexion of true connexionalism and we are so encouraged. This will be a marathon and not a sprint, we are committed to serving you as you serve the world, take care of yourselves and please feel free to make contact if we can offer more, or you spot gaps that you might have ideas on filling. Thank you.*

**Please note that this advice was correct at time of going to press and may have been updated by the time you read it. For an up-to-the-minute account, please see the Methodist Church Website Editor**

**Jude Levermore Head of Mission and Paul Wood Interim Director of the Ministries Team**



## ***Imran Hussein, Action for Children's director of policy and campaigns responds to three vital issues.....***

### **1... the Education Policy Institute annual report on access to child and mental health services in England**

*"The government is failing to address the growing crisis in children's mental health, which millions of vulnerable young people battle with daily.*

*"Our frontline services see the pain and anguish that children and teenagers experience as they struggle to understand how they fit into the world - from self-harm and eating disorders to depression and anxiety.*

*"We know from our own school programmes how vital it is to step in early with support to stop problems in their tracks and dial down the agony these young people face. The government must grasp the reality of this crisis and commit to adequate funding and specialist services to stop a generation of children from suffering in the future."*



### **2... the Office of National Statistics release on child abuse in England and Wales**

*"Today's figures are shocking but with increasing numbers of children going into care after facing the trauma of issues such as abuse and neglect, things could get even worse.*

*"The emotional scars of child abuse can last a lifetime with sufferers more likely to experience domestic abuse as an adult, as well as long-term mental health problems as they struggle to cope with the devastating experiences they've had as a child.*

*"We know from our own services that when children are given support early it can make the world of difference. Young people suffering from abuse must be able to access the help they need as soon as possible - not only to stop the abuse in its tracks but also to deal with the impacts before they lead to a lifetime overshadowed by crisis. The new government must bring in a National Childhood Strategy, with proper funding for children's services, to give all children the chance at a safe and happy childhood."*

### **3...Health Equity in England: Marmot Review 10 Years On**

*"This landmark report delivers a devastating judgement on a decade of crippling cuts to frontline services like Sure Start and benefits for families fighting to keep their heads above water.*

*"While politicians hail the end of austerity, every day at Action for Children our frontline services tell us child poverty levels are at the worst they can remember with parents coming to us desperate for help to keep their families warm and well fed.*

*"It's long past time for the Government to deliver ambitious policies to tackle child poverty and restore the real value of children's benefits to what they were before they were cut - as well as bring in a National Childhood Strategy to give all vulnerable children a safe and happy childhood."*

## Poetry Corner

### First Signs

When the turkey's finished, the tree's come down,  
echoes of Auld Lang Syne have ebbed away  
and unwanted gifts been returned to town,  
keep watch. Look closely past the dismal grey

until you spot green, hard-tipped shoots appear  
through frozen soil or pierce the icy crust  
on a blanket of snow. They will sprout near  
the roadside, in woodland, borders or just

in the wild, narrow leaves, blooms of milk white  
that hang, nod open, dance in chill-fringed air.  
These small, bell-shaped flowers bring fresh delight,  
remind of seasons to come, quash despair.

Fair maids of February: sparkle, zing;  
a drift of snowdrops: messenger of spring.

Nicky Phillips

*February may have gone, but some types of snowdrop are still blooming in March! - Ed*



*Two works from our resident poets - one highlights a wonderful springtime product of the natural world. The other prophesies a world where human activity has laid the natural world to waste, but offers scope for optimism in the future.*

### Prophesy

There will come a time when mountains fall and crumble to the plains  
and the seas spew forth unbridled fearsome rage,  
when the moon will turn to blood and evil shadows stalk the land  
as the final chapter ends on history's page.

As destruction, war and hatred grow with every passing day  
and fanatics take all names of God in vain,  
Mother Nature is preparing and will have the final say,  
as she takes her bitter vengeance for the pain.

In a fury she will vent her wrath on foolish, wasteful man  
and erupt with passion, cruelty and fire;  
as the Earth begins to shake and comets fall from blackened skies,  
we will reel at God's supremacy and ire.  
Maybe then we will remember how we threw it all away  
through our ignorance, or quest for power and greed—  
all those countless blessings showered on us freely and with grace  
now destroyed by each imagined, pointless need.

We will weep to lose these treasures and in terror we will flee,  
while the scales descend from unforgiving eyes—  
yet from out of devastation there will come a time of peace  
when the heavens and a new Earth will arise.  
From the deepest ocean chasms to the towering peaks on shore,  
from calamity will grow a perfect land,  
where the salivating wolf will trot beside the harmless lamb—  
and a little child shall lead them by the hand.

Catherine Lee



## *The Fosters in Chile ..... and Goffs Oak!*

# Mary, Luke, Barnabas and Martha Foster..... ...return to base - and visit us at Goffs Oak!

**When the Fosters arrived from Chile in December for a three-month break in the UK, one of their first visits was to us at Goffs Oak Methodist Church. The icing on the cake was provided by the presence of Mary's parents - Isabel and Mike King. It was wonderful to see them all together in our church for the first time in many years.**

It all happened on the afternoon of Saturday, 7th December when Luke and Mary - aided by their children, Barnabas and Martha - gave us a PowerPoint driven talk about the progress of their long missionary adventure to Chile.

*Many of the audience in the church hall that day had not met the Foster family and, consequently, knew little about the family's deeds in South America. By the end of the afternoon all that was put right as, after a splendid 'bring and share lunch', Luke and Mary described in detail their purpose in being in Chile and much about Chilean life in general - including their position in the football world!*

Luke and Mary are deeply involved in the ministry of the Centre for Pastoral Studies (CEP), an Anglican training college in Chile's capital city Santiago. CEP seeks to serve the church in Chile and beyond by training Christian leaders so they might love the Lord Jesus more deeply and be equipped to preach the gospel more faithfully. Luke teaches Church History and Doctrine while Mary supports Luke by looking after the family and building relationships with staff and students' families.

**Part of the talk was given over to a fascinating and informative quiz about Chile, and there is little doubt that many of those present learned much that they didn't already know about Chile itself and its Christian influence.**



An informal and unplanned game of football involving Mary, Luke, Martha and, in particular, Barnabas, along with some of the more sprightly of our congregation, finished the day on a light-hearted and energetic note.





## *The Fosters in Chile - prayer update*

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13*

As we pray for the Lord to be at work in our world this verse is a precious reminder of what that work involves. We see God at work as people find their deepest joy and peace in the Lord Jesus and their greatest hope in the future held out by him. We wanted to share a few stories of that work of God amongst some of our friends here in Chile so that you can join us in giving thanks and praying for them.

### **People**

We have already shared a little bit about Alex in previous prayer updates. He is a student in his first year at CEP but needed to put his studies on hold in the middle of this year when he was diagnosed with a cancer of the lymph nodes. At the moment he is in the midst of various cycles of chemotherapy and we ask that you join us in praying for him, his wife Karina and his daughter Emily. In the midst of the uncertainty of the situation and the difficulty of the treatment, they have together spoken of how precious it is to know the peace and hope that is found in the Lord Jesus. Please pray that God would bring healing to Alex and continue to fill the family with joy and peace as they trust in him.

Earlier in the year we also mentioned Alejandro (a part-time student at CEP) whose wife and new-born baby were in a critical condition after birth. It has been a painful and difficult few months but this week we had news that his wife had been officially given the all clear by doctors. We give thanks for her full recovery and pray on for their son, Josué, who is needing to put on more weight before doctors can properly treat a condition of his heart.

Please also pray for a friend of ours and member of our church called James. He was a former student at CEP but has been ill with various conditions over the past couple of years. Just a few months ago he was diagnosed with cancer and it now appears to be reaching a critical stage. It has been a physically and emotionally painful time for him over the past few weeks and while we long to see the power of God work to heal, it has been extraordinary to see God work in power to give him a deep trust in the love of him and a firm hope in the resurrection to come.

We would also like to introduce you to Camilo, a pastor who graduated from CEP a few years ago. We had the chance to spend some days with him and his church family when Luke spoke at their church weekend-away in the middle of October. When we first arrived in Chile, Camilo had just been appointed as the pastor after a painful split. In the years since, there has been deep healing within the community and the church is now flourishing. Please give thanks with us for the way that the Lord is using Camilo and pray for him to continue to find his joy and peace and hope in Jesus as he seeks to care for the church family.

Just as I finished writing a draft of this prayer letter Santiago was rocked by a series of protests and riots. These were triggered by rises in the cost of public transport but express something of the anger and division that has been boiling under the surface of Chilean society. Please pray for resolution to the conflict – and that Christians would know how best to share the good news of Jesus who alone can bring true unity, reconciliation and hope.



*This prayer update was completed just before the Fosters left Chile for the UK, at the end of last year. We hope to publish a more recent prayer bulletin in the next edition of **Acorns**. - Ed*

### EASTER

The Easter story of Jesus crucified and rising from the dead, happened at the time of the Passover in Jerusalem, so the Christian Church celebrates Easter about the same time. The date of the Passover, however, depends on the Jewish lunar year, which is 11 days shorter than a solar year, so, for most of their history, Christians have calculated Easter independently of the Jewish calendar. In 325, the Council of Nicaea established that Easter would be held on the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the northern hemisphere spring or vernal equinox.

Since the early Middle Ages, the calculation for this has been named the *computus* (Latin for "computation") as it was considered the most important computation of the age. It involves applying lunar months to the solar year, calculating "golden numbers" and cross-referencing tables.

The simple way is to check a lectionary or the Church of England Common Worship book or Book of Common Prayer, which provides a table of calculated dates.



**Brush  
up on  
Lent and  
Easter!**

### EARLIEST AND LATEST

The earliest and latest possible dates for Easter are 22 March and 25 April, in the Gregorian calendar. However, in the Orthodox, or Eastern, churches, while those dates are the same, they are reckoned using the Julian calendar: 4 April and 8 May.

### SHROVE TUESDAY

Shrove Tuesday is the last day before the penitential period of Lent begins and is traditionally used to finish off anything in the cupboard you are giving up for Lent. Hence, Pancake Day using up the fat, flour, eggs, milk and sugar, with a little lemon juice or maybe maple syrup.

### LENT AND ADVENT

Lent and Advent are periods of reflection and preparation (penitential periods) for Christians in the run-up to the most important Christian festivals. Lent reflects the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the desert, or wilderness, before starting his public ministry and during which he was tempted by Satan. It begins on Ash Wednesday (26 February this year) and continues until Maundy Thursday or Holy Saturday according to tradition. That is more than 40 days as Sundays (days of rest) are not included.

Traditionally, Christians have given up things for Lent, eaten more frugally or fasted following Jesus's example in the wilderness. More recently, some have committed to taking up something for Lent, like new studies, doing things differently, sharing Lent lunches or giving to charity.

### MOTHERING SUNDAY

The fourth Sunday of Lent is Mothering Sunday. It is also called Laetare Sunday, Refreshment Sunday (a break from Lent), Simnel Sunday or Rose Sunday (clergy of some churches will swap their purple or Lenten vestments for rose-coloured ones). It is not the same as Mother's Day, which began in the United States early in the 20th century.

Mothering Sunday was traditionally observed as a day for returning to one's mother church: the church where you grew up or were baptised, the local parish church or the nearest cathedral, being the "mother church" of all the churches in the diocese. Later, it became a day when domestic servants were given the day off to visit their home church and see their mothers and families. Today, it is mostly a day to honour mothers.

### PASSION SUNDAY

The fifth Sunday of Lent is celebrated as Passion Sunday in various denominations, notable Anglican, Lutheran and Methodist. It starts the two-week period known as Passiontide.

### SIMNEL CAKE

Simnel cake is a light fruit cake with lots of marzipan originally eaten on the fourth Sunday of Lent/Mothering Sunday, but today more commonly associated with Easter Sunday. It includes two layers of marzipan, one in the middle and one on the top. On the top layer is placed a circle of marzipan egg or balls, lightly browned under a grill. There are either 11 or 12 marzipan balls: 11 traditionally represents the Apostles without Judas, while some go for 12 being Jesus plus the 11 remaining Apostles.

Simnel cake has made a bit of a comeback recently with some help from well-known bakers.

### HOLY WEEK

Holy Week is the week from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday.

### PALM SUNDAY

Jesus's entry into Jerusalem has been celebrated on the Sunday before Easter since the early days of Christianity. He entered the city triumphantly with crowds waving palm leaves and spreading them on the path of his donkey as they shouted "Hosanna" in greeting. Christians mark the day with crosses made from palm leaves and public processions, often with donkeys.

### MAUNDY THURSDAY

Christians celebrate the day Jesus shared the Last Supper with his disciples before his death. Maundy Thursday services often include a priest (including the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury) washing the feet of the people, as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, showing that He serves us as we serve him. Some will also share an Agape meal from the Greek for love. Maundy comes from the Latin *mandare*, to command, reflecting Jesus's command to "love one another, as I have loved you".

On Maundy Thursday, the Queen visits one of the Anglican cathedrals to distribute Maundy Money. Maundy gifts used to include clothes and food but are now specially minted coins. One man and one woman are chosen for each year of the Queen's reign. They receive Maundy Money to the value of that number of years in pence in a white leather purse. They also receive coins to the value of £5.50 in a red leather purse in lieu of the food and clothing once given.

### GOOD FRIDAY

On Good Friday, Christians remember the crucifixion and death of Jesus. This is the most sombre day of the Easter period. The altar has been stripped of all ornaments, the cross covered with a sack or draped in red cloth. Christians may join a walk of witness through their area, attend a three-hour devotional service of readings, talk and hymns or work their way through the Stations of the Cross, a series of depictions of the events of Good Friday with devotions and prayers.

### HOLY SATURDAY

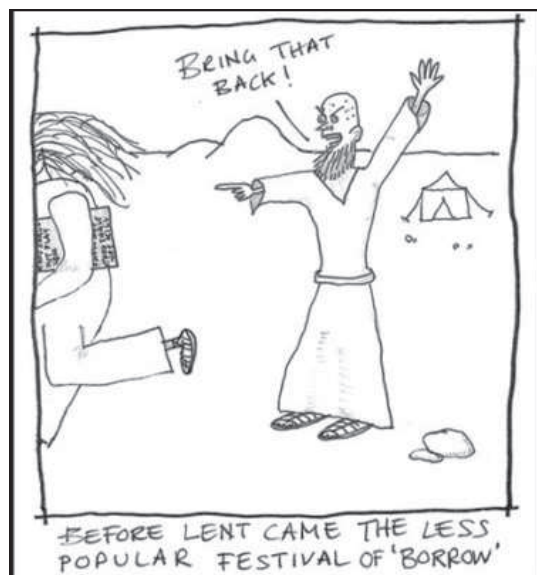
This is often referred to as Easter Saturday. It is not, however, the day before Easter but a week later – at the end of Easter Week. Holy Saturday may end with an Easter vigil, waiting for the resurrection, as the first service of Easter. This generally includes the lighting of the Easter candle from an outdoor fire, bringing the light into a darkened church and the congregation lighting their candles from that light.

### EASTER DAY

Easter Sunday sees Christians celebrating the resurrection as Jesus died for our sins and rose again on the third day. The altar is decorated in white or gold, the flowers return to the church after the stark days of Lent, there may be an Easter garden on view celebrating the empty tomb and the service is happy and joyful, with the feel of a party. There may even be Easter eggs, said to symbolise new life, Jesus's resurrection from the tomb or, maybe, the rock rolled away to open the tomb. People have been decorating eggs for Easter since the 13th century, which may have been because they were one of the things you did not eat during Lent. Chocolate eggs may be just as important to those who give up chocolate for Lent.

### EASTER WEEK

Easter does not end on Easter Day or even Easter Monday, a bank holiday in the UK. Eastertide continues for 50 days and includes Ascension Day, marking Jesus's ascension into heaven 40 days after the Resurrection, and ending at Pentecost (what used to be called Whit Sunday) when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, the third part of the Holy Trinity with God and Jesus, and the birth of the Christian Church. That day, as the Apostles and other followers of Jesus celebrated the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on them with the sound of a strong wind and with tongues of flame and they could suddenly speak in various languages.





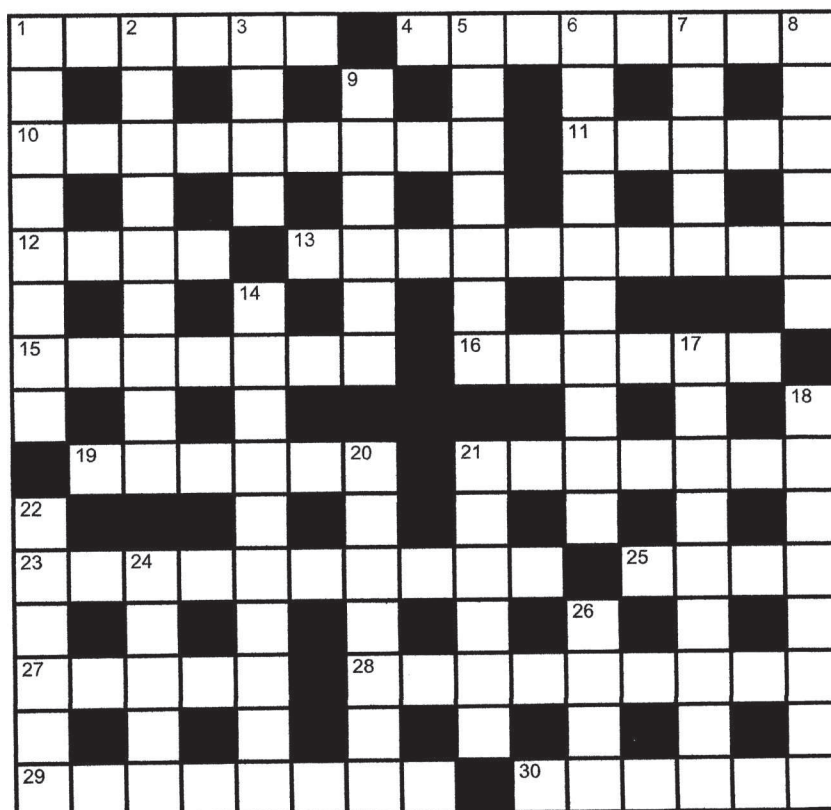
## Spring Bible Crossword (plus some of your editor's spring jokes!)

### Across

- 1 An ancient weight (6)  
 4 Seemed (8)  
 10 New Testament book (9)  
 11 Unit of length (5)  
 12 '...it is a \_\_\_\_ thing  
 the king requireth'  
 (Dan 2:11) (4)  
 13 Contemplation (10)  
 15 Abigail supplied David  
 with one hundred  
 clusters of these (7)  
 16 A son of King David (6)  
 19 Concurred (6)  
 21 Light sources (7)  
 23 Propitiations (10)  
 25 A false god (4)  
 27 Gather (5)  
 28 Abimelech was hit by  
 this (9)  
 29 Instructors (8)  
 30 Hastily (6)

### Down

- 1 Skilled animal  
 workers (8)  
 2 Inspiring (9)  
 3 Compass point (4)  
 5 Intense emotion (7)



by Philologus

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6 The words of Jeremiah  
 said not to listen to  
 these (10)

7 Jewish leader (5)

8 'He is proud, knowing  
 nothing, but \_\_\_\_\_  
 about questions and  
 strifes of words...'  
 (1 Tim 6:4) (6)

9 Bread makers (6)

14 In this year of King  
 Nebuchadrezzar's reign,  
 Nebuzaradan arrived in  
 Jerusalem (10)

17 Ancient city of Og, King  
 of Bashan (9)

18 Stringed instrument (8)

20 Joseph, perhaps? (7)

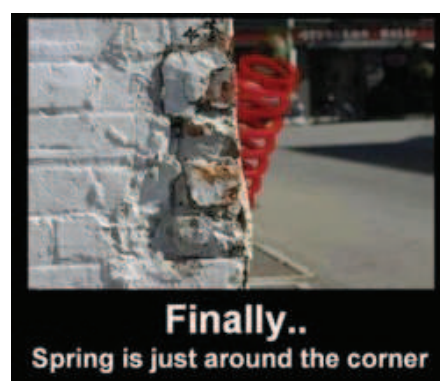
21 Tiny amount (6)

22 Jesus did this with  
 authority (6)

24 Last letter of the Greek  
 alphabet (5)

26 Province of the Roman  
 Empire (4)

My spring onions have started singing hip hop.  
*The little rap scallions!*  
 The spring lambs were in the field gambolling.  
 I told them, "When the fun stops, stop!"  
 One of the spring lambs was arrested recently on the A10  
 .....for doing a ewe turn.  
 A snowdrop in my garden told me a joke.  
 Then he said *he was just pollen my leg!*  
 I saw a daffodil giving an ultimatum to the daffodil  
 growing next to her. *She told him once and floral.*



**Finally..**  
**Spring is just around the corner**