

# The Corona Chronicles



I wonder if you are making plans to do things that you have not been able to do because of lockdown? Some people are planning holidays and others family get together or simply going out for a coffee with a friend. All these things will make such a difference after a long 15 months.

At church we have been planning towards opening fully but going cautiously because the experts say that each new stage needs 6 weeks before it is known how successful it has been. To enable that to happen we will be holding in person services every other week at Welwyn Garden City and Harpenden, live streaming to those who are joining us from home. Wheathampstead also have in person services planned. This will go on at least until August in case caution tells the government to push back the 'fully open' date of June 21<sup>st</sup>.

I wonder what we have included in our plans to do something for God?

Last Sunday we listened to that lovely hymn 'I the Lord of sea and sky' with its words that are a conversation between the person singing and God and then the awesome chorus that says. 'Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord where you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart.' This set me thinking about our plans as a family and I was reminded of that verse in James chapter 4

<sup>13</sup> Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." <sup>14</sup> Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

James goes on to say that this is arrogant and not the way to do things! I couldn't help laughing because so often what we plan does not turn out as we originally thought it would but somehow ends up being

much better. I guess it is a lesson in holding lightly to our plans and living in the moment where God is rather than in the past or the future where God isn't!

Jesus tells us often what he wants of us –

- to remain in him, like the branch on the vine, so we will bear much fruit and bring God glory (John 15)
- to be one as he and the Father are one (John 17:21)
- to keep his commandments “‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Matt 22:38-39)
- when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. (Matt 6:6)
- yet we are to be faithful in public worship as Jesus promised that even where ‘two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.’ (Matt 18:20) and his disciples were found in the Temple daily (Acts).

This is all about how to ‘be’ rather than ‘do’.

The doing came when he ascended into heaven and he commanded his disciples to ‘Go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to keep my commandments and baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.’ (Matthew 28).

I wonder if one flows from the other?

When we looked at Fruitfulness on the Frontline we have 6M's for fruitful living so do we also need 6m's for fruitful being? Some years ago, Rev'd Jim Dalgleish put this together for Synod Discipleship Committee as it was then:

**‘6Ms’ for fruitful being:**

### **Muse on the wonder of creation and its creator**

Ps. 8.3-4 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

### **Meditate on his amazing love for us**

Ps. 8.5-6a Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honour. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands ...

### **Marvel at his presence within us, and we in him**

Ps 46.7 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

### **Mark his unfailing faithfulness to us**

Ps. 100.5 For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

### **Magnify his glorious name with singing (in your heart)**

Ps. 100.1-2 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

### **Maintain silence, filled with his loving presence**

Ps. 46.10a Be still and know that I am God!

As we enjoy our summer weather and wait to see what will be why not reflect on these 6M's and see where God leads you? It may well be that we find more contentment in a more contemplative lifestyle. We are human beings not human doings after all!!

Where does that leave our plans? Well, I am still saying 'Here I am Lord' but I hope I am more content to wait and see.

Every blessing, Jane

I realise that the lockdown has affected so many people's mental health, so I have asked God to make me more aware of people who are facing a challenge and may need prayer. I pray that I may connect to those who need to talk or want comforting by prayer.

One such meeting occurred in the car park. I noticed a lady walking towards her car and when she saw me (perhaps I had that 'why are you parking here look on my face'!), she asked if I was from the church. She then went on to tell me how she had lost her husband (now I really started feeling guilty thinking a few minutes previously that she shouldn't have parked in our car park) and how happy they had been. She became quite emotional relating her thoughts and feelings about her late husband and I heard myself saying; "may I pray for you?" She agreed and I suddenly heard the words flowing from me without any hesitation. She thanked me afterwards and said that she felt more at peace. I have seen her car parked there again several times but not seen her. I now carry a small pack of scripture verse cards in my bag in case I meet her again or anyone else that just need a listening ear and a prayer.

## Centenary Celebrations



A Worship Service will be held at 2pm on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021 which will be jointly led by the Revd Jane Weedon and Revd George Watts (the new Thames North Synod Moderator). After the service an Afternoon Tea will be

served. We will keep you posted with all the exciting plans but will need your help going forward to ensure that this is a success.

## **Hall Hirers**

We have 3 additional hall hirers. A lady called Mary starting her Line-Dancing group on Friday 21May; Anna our Pregnancy Yoga lady now offering Baby Yoga classes on a Monday morning and Julie, our existing Slimming World lady, offering an additional class on a Monday morning.

## **Communications Team**

Communication is vital to ensure everyone in our church family and the wider community is kept informed of what is happening in the life of our church, our vision for the future, regular worship, special worship services, church events and projects which will enhance and improve our premises to name but a few.

To ensure we keep everyone in the loop we need to form a proactive Communications Group which will include at least one member of the congregation. Could this be you? Please refer to article below with more details regarding this.

## **Facebook**

Please like **The URC Community Group of Welwyn Garden City** Facebook page and feel free to share any of the posts that you feel may be of interest.

**Thank you for reading my article. God Bless you and your loved ones – Liz  
(Mission Developer)**

## **Your Church Needs You**

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To ensure we keep everyone in the loop we need to form a proactive Communications Group which will include at least one member of the congregation. **Could this be you?**

Please give this request consideration and if you think this might be something you could offer your time to be a part of please contact Joyce or Liz (Please note that Liz is on holiday from 27 May until 8 June) by the 18<sup>th</sup> of June for further information.

At present we think this will involve

One bimonthly meeting to discuss and action the following

- Information which needs to be shared
- The best way to ensure the information is circulated and received by our target audience
- The effective use of the resources we have ie Website, Face Book, Magazine, News Sheets, What's App, Prayer Chain, Posters, Notice Boards etc.

Looking forward to receiving your offer of help by the 18<sup>th</sup> of June

Joyce and Liz

## CHURCH FAMILY CORNER

June is a very popular month for birthdays and first on the list is Mary Y. who will be 96 on 6<sup>th</sup> (see my note further down), followed by Paul Mc. On 13<sup>th</sup>, Ruth G. on 16<sup>th</sup>, Pat C. and Irene S. both on 17<sup>th</sup>, (Pat's 99<sup>th</sup> and Irene's 90<sup>th</sup>!), Joanna D. on 19<sup>th</sup> and last but not least, Liz L. on 20<sup>th</sup>.

Moving on to July, we start with Michael C. on 1<sup>st</sup>, Norma C. on 8<sup>th</sup>, Jessica A. who will become a teenager on 10<sup>th</sup>!, Barbara P. on 17<sup>th</sup>, Roger W. on 20<sup>th</sup>, Jenny R. on 22<sup>nd</sup> and Matt R. on 24<sup>th</sup>.

We wish all our friends a very Happy Birthday when their date comes round and hope that they each enjoy their special day.

We send our congratulations to Melvyn and Joyce Deans who will be celebrating their 57<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on 27th June.

Nadia, Mary Yacubian's daughter, told me that Mary has been living in the RAF Care home in Glasgow for 6 years now and that she had been able to get up to Scotland recently to visit her.

We were all very sorry to hear of the death of our dear friend Howell on April 11<sup>th</sup> and send our heartfelt sympathy to Nano and her family at this very sad time.

Marie Machen, who had not been able to come to our church services for some years due to her severe hearing loss, sadly passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> May at the age of 96. Some of her beautiful botanical watercolour paintings still grace the corridors at Woodside House where she lived for many years.

Thankfully our prayers have at last been answered and Howard will be transferring to Lakeside SEN school in September after a very stressful time for Jenny and Scott. Jenny asks that we continue praying that both boys will settle into their respective educational settings when the new school year starts in the Autumn.

Please continue to remember those in our church family and others for whom prayers have been requested and pass any new concerns to Jane or members of our Pastoral Team.

Thank you

Ann Meers On behalf of WGC URC Pastoral Teams



May 2021

**From:**

**The United Reformed Church Finance Committee**

**To:**

**All members and adherents of**

**United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

It would be fair to describe the year-and-a-bit since March 2020 as having been “different”, wouldn’t it? Lots of us have experienced loss of loved ones, loss of income and perhaps jobs. All have experienced periods of lockdown; periods without ‘non-essential’ shops; and continuous and extensive disruption to our ‘normal’ social interactions and relationships. The world we thought we understood and could take for granted has been utterly transformed. How many of us imagined at the start of 2020 that we could go months without a haircut or without people not in our ‘bubble’ entering our homes?

As members of United Reformed Church congregations ourselves, we understand much of what your church community has experienced since March 2020. The absence of what is now regularly labelled “in-person worship” for much (or all) of this time has compelled us to turn to other ways of being church. Buildings in which we used to praise God regularly have been shut, both to regular worshipers and others who might have sought solace within their walls during these desperate and troubling times. It has been hard to maintain close fellowship with people we only meet over Zoom (or the like) – if we are digitally enabled.

Financially, things have been extremely tough too. Plate offerings have collapsed; some regular givers have had to reduce or entirely stop giving to support God’s work; and those churches which hire out their premises have seen income from that source disappear.

At denominational level, we feared that these financial troubles would spell disaster for the URC’s Ministry and Mission (‘M&M’) fund through which the URC has always supported and developed our stipendiary ministers and Church

Related Community Workers. It would have been all too easy for congregations to forget that for almost 49 years this fund (under various names) has provided stipends, pension contributions and training for all ministers throughout the three nations in which the URC operates: so that ministry reaches where synods judge it to be most needed and is paid for according to each congregation's ability to contribute (though the ways of determining that vary from synod to synod). It was all very well to remind ourselves that the M&M fund is meant to be the first call on every congregation's resources if the undertaking to financially support our ministers is to be honoured. We feared that drastically reduced income would make that impossible and that, because the need was less visible than the other calls on your diminished resources, payments to the M&M fund would have stopped first.

We are sorry if we ever doubted you.

It quickly became apparent that, although some congregations had to reduce their pledged giving to the M&M fund, many more of you were continuing to meet the 2020 commitments you had made during better times, despite the struggles that required. At the start of that year we had been expecting churches and synods to contribute around £18.5 million to the fund. By the year end, all but half-a-million pounds of that had been received. Since Church House staff and committees managed to reduce their budgeted expenditure by almost £1 million, your money enabled us to meet the full costs of our Ministries, Education & Learning, Children's and Youth Work and Mission departments in 2020 as well as covering amounts spent on safeguarding, denominational governance and communications.

What is perhaps even more amazing is that, collectively, you have pledged to give £17.3 million during 2021 despite the financial problems caused by the pandemic being fully apparent well before your offers for this year were made.

We are always grateful for the financial support given each year to the M&M fund by all of you; but this past year has been phenomenal.

Thank you to those of you who have been able to maintain or increase financial support for your church congregation through this difficult time. That has enabled those responsible for your congregation's finances to keep more money flowing to the M&M fund than we expected.

Thank you for all your previous financial support to those of you who, after prayerful consideration, have had to reduce or stop giving in response to your changed financial circumstances.

Thank you for the pledges your congregation has made about contributing to the M&M fund during 2021 even though you were by then aware of the impact the pandemic was having on your local congregation's finances.

Thank you in anticipation for what you agree to offer to the M&M fund during 2022 to enable the denomination to deliver ministry, education and learning, children's work and mission activity on God's (and your) behalf.

We are aware that synods have played a significant part in encouraging and supporting many congregations with their contributions to the M&M fund. We have separately written to Synod Treasurers to express our thanks to them and their colleagues too.

Of course, our giving for God's work is in response to the amazing generosity and love of God which we see in Jesus. Nonetheless, it is important for us to thank every one of you for what you do for God, your congregation and its and our denominational finances.

**Thank you!**

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

**Ian Hardie (Treasurer) and John Piper (Deputy Treasurer)**

**- On behalf of the whole United Reformed Church Finance Committee**

## Harpenden Church's blessings jar

We are grateful for:

Family and friends  
Walks in the fresh air  
Sunny weather  
Birdsong  
Smiles from strangers  
Music and laughter  
Spring flowers in the garden  
Spring flowers on our walks  
Busy birds on the feeders  
A mouse helping itself to bird seed  
Getting out and about again



The rain (the garden was looking a bit dry), but now the grass needs cutting!

A Wonderful afternoon at Whipsnade Zoo seeing my Mum and sister with our Grandson – socially distant with masks but love

Seeing our youngest son on Good Friday – unwrapping Christmas presents in

April 😊 in the garden.

We had our first family gathering (for “Christmas” lunch with turkey etc, Christmas tree, crackers and presents) on Easter Saturday – it was really lovely to see everyone, even without hugs!

The Covid-19 vaccinations!

Count  
-YOUR-  
blessings

# FAMILY FUN AND WORSHIP AT WGC URC

Please contact Wendy to be added to her mailing list for all the activities she is planning, and to book in to any of the sessions.

Email: [wendy.lidgate@outlook.com](mailto:wendy.lidgate@outlook.com)

Telephone: 07904 517384

- ❖ FamilyWorship@10 is planned for June 13<sup>th</sup>, July 11<sup>th</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup> and September 12<sup>th</sup>. 10am til 10.45 in church followed by outdoor activities.
- ❖ Junior church is meeting many Sundays at 10.30am in the church garden.
- ❖ Playdate with bible story for families in the church garden 10am til noon many Saturday mornings.
- ❖ Babygroup is meeting Wednesday afternoons, 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Please remember to call or email Wendy as given the weather and covid guidelines changing, she needs to know who is coming.

As yet, we do not have guidelines or dates for re-opening toddler groups – but welcome any prayers from the Church fellowship in this matter.

## Remembering Howell

Howell in his own words – or there abouts! ‘The year Howell was born Sir Malcolm Campbell set a new land speed record; England won the Ashes with Wily Hamond scoring a whopping 336; the average weekly wage was £2.85 for a man and £1.30 for a woman; petrol was 1.6p a litre; a loaf of bread cost 3p and perhaps more importantly so did a pint of beer!’

He goes on... ‘I was born in a Mining Village Cwmllynfell in Swansea Valley where both families lived and worked. Primary schooling was all in Welsh and it was only when I transferred to Grammar School that I learnt English for the first time. The trip to school was 5 miles down the valley by train.

During my schooling Father was made to join the Royal Artillery for 6 years. He served in Africa in Madagascar and I didn’t see him at all during this time. I remember being sent for by my head teacher to inform me that he was on his way home and we met on the bus!! His homecoming gifts were rather exotic – Chocolate and bananas which were an exotic fruit in those days.

After secondary school I decided to take up the offered place at ‘Brum Uni’ to qualify for Mining Engineering but I changed my mind to ‘Hands on Study’ at Technical College on day release to combine my study with practical aspects of mining such as mechanical and electrical Engineering, surveying and mining techniques. I worked for the National Coal Board for 8 1/2 years using a variety of these trades at two different mines and was promoted to Deputy GRI and Shot Firing. But mines were closing and redundancies were rife effecting my career prospects. After family discussions I decided to change career opting for teaching or the Police force. I thought I am more than adequately qualified academically so here goes!’

In his remembering Howell forgot to mention that in the meantime he had married Nano and they had been blessed with a daughter – Annette.

‘I decided to learn to teach and completed a 3 year course in 2 years. This was a bold step uprooting myself, Nano and Annette who was 4 years old at the time and had to transfer from Welsh to English education. With strong parental support we succeeded and I gained employment in Welwyn Garden City. It was a new town with guaranteed housing so we decided to take this for two years. It was very lonely before my family arrived, I had digs in Hatfield and knew no one having moved from a village where I knew everyone.’

Nano reminded us that Howell always said he was coming here to educate the English!! ‘So I took up the position at Applecroft School as a class teacher The

family eventually joined me on in our new home in Haldens on a very cold Boxing Day. I was promoted to Deputy Head at Woodend in Harpenden after only 5 years of teaching, then Head at Little Munden School and finally to be Head at The Ryde School in Hatfield. I was chairman of the Midherts National Association of Head Teachers and a Life Member.'

There were a couple of other significant family events along the way, in the birth of Steven and Richard.

'It didn't take long to make friends and in those years of teaching I was also Secretary and coach of Welwyn Rugby Club, I joined the Welwyn Garden City Male Voice choir as a chorister – sometime teacher of Welsh and secretary and eventually a Life Member. Latterly also sung with Whitwell Singers and the little choir we had at church. I became Community Chairman of the QE11 Fete committee And a founder member of the Mid Herts Welsh Society. Nano and I became members of the United Reformed Church, having first been involved with Panshanger Church. I was an Elder at the Free Church, part of the Bereavement team and a helper at Tuesday Coffee when we took it over from Space where I had also been involved.'

We also know how much Howell loved his family, treated everyone equally and with great generosity and always loved it when they were all together.

Nano said that with Howell 'What you see is what you get!' He was quite straight forward, a home bird even, not one for eating out or for long or extravagant holidays but he didn't shy away from being salt and light both in his family and in the community, no matter what he was doing. He added flavour wherever he was, with his humour, his wise words, his knowledge and life experience. Whatever he was doing he showed huge passion in what he believed in and he made a difference not just to please and satisfy himself but living out his faith from a kind heart and out of a desire to help people improve their lot. He was a good friend and a proud Welshman without a doubt! Someone wrote that he has left a Howell shaped hole in our lives.

The wonders of eternity are open to Howell now, he knows the truth of all Gods promises and maybe the answers to life's conundrums that he couldn't fathom on earth. I guess like me you are all glad to have shared some small part of Howells journey. Farewell our friend. One day we will meet again.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

I must confess to nepotism this month! 2 of my second cousins had books published recently, and I have enjoyed reading both. They have both had further books commissioned, if you enjoy these.

### **Royal Witches by Gemma Hollman**

Gemma writes about the lives and fortunes of 4 medieval women with royal connections. These women were strong, but vulnerable in a world ruled by men. Joan of Navarre was the richest woman in the land, at a time when war-torn England was penniless. Eleanor Cobham was the wife of a weak king's uncle – and her husband was about to fall from grace. Jacquetta Woodville was a personal enemy of Warwick the Kingmaker, who was about to take his revenge. Elizabeth Woodville was the widowed mother of a child king, fighting Richard III for her children's lives. They are all linked by accusations of witchcraft which brought them to their knees in a time when superstition and suspicion was rife.

I recommend it for everyone who enjoys well-written history!

### **Damaged by Dan Scottow**

A journalist is sent back to her home town to investigate the disappearance of a young girl, echoing the disappearance of her childhood friend twenty-five years earlier. She renews old acquaintances and reconnects with her estranged brother, but finds that not everyone welcomes her investigation. Lies that have been told for twenty-five years begin to unravel and she is drawn deeper into the mystery.

I don't usually read murder mysteries, and wasn't sure after the first chapter that I wanted to go on, but I did and it's a really good plot! I'm glad I finished reading it!

**Sarah Connor Harpenden URC**



## Harpenden Church – a letter from Hagrid

To my dear friends at Church, I meant to write to you months ago but sadly have been so busy during lockdown, doing very little. Don't worry it's not just you, I haven't written to anyone lately! During the first months of lockdown, I would walk past the church and stop and sit by the door waiting to be let in. Then Becky would say, IT'S NOT SUNDAY HAGRID! Every time I stopped, she would say the same thing. I ask you, how am I supposed to know the day of the week when she rarely knows it herself? Eventually we got into the habit of sitting together on the low wall, just to watch the world go by. Sometimes she would give me a dog cookie. Yuk! I had my heart set on a Church cookie!! It's the times, we have to take whatever cookies we can get these days. As you can imagine I do enjoy my shopping trips. Daily. I was very sad when all the shops were shut. I sat outside the doors and Becky would say. ITS SUNDAY HAGRID, THEY ARE CLOSED. We are talking, NO WIN SITUATION. It was very frustrating! During the early dark days people were afraid to pat me. What's that all about I ask? Times are better now, my cookie suppliers have opened their doors and I am back in business. SIX DINNER SID! I got the hang of queueing! I love it. You just stand and wait and move a little every now and then. It's an art. I mastered it. In fact last week we went into W H Smiths. Becky was busy looking for a new sketchbook. I wandered off and what did I find?? Yes! The Post Office queue! I was half way to getting to see my ladies in the boxes, when she drug me away!! I have to forgive her, she's my bag lady. And as she pointed out years ago, no one in their right mind would choose to be your bag lady!! Point taken! During lockdown I had a niece, baby Dawsey, but they call her Lasagna. Go figure. Becky says it's because they love Italian. Looking forward to when she bites my



ears ! I could go on and on but you have probably nodded off by now. I can't wait to go back to Church and see you all!! With lots of love, from your old friend, the one and only BABY HAGRID PRECIOUS CHEESEBURGER DAWSEY.

xxxxx



## News from Wheathampstead URC:

The Chapel Gym work is proceeding very well. We now have an insulated and beautifully painted ceiling, no more very old cobwebs we have been looking at for many years, unable to reach them. We have ongoing work on the floor and a lot of digging going on outside to resolve the damp in the walls. The site has been cleared of so much plant and small tree overgrowth and there has been much outside painting; it is all beginning to look very smart once again.



Another crowdfunding campaign is doing very well. Our congregation were so happy to meet once again on Palm Sunday for a walking service on the edge of a football pitch. We hung readings on trees and asked people how they would have felt if they had been in Jerusalem on that day, and hosannas featured a lot! It was very windy but despite this we had a good turnout, some even walking quite a long way up the hill to get there!



## **A few admin issues**

Well, it seems that this is the last issue of the Corona Chronicles as we will be returning to the normal style of magazine for August & September. It was started after a conversation with Joyce about how to keep in touch with everyone during the lockdown. To share experiences, helpful tips on keeping the boredom away and just a sense of fellowship. Hopefully we achieved this and you found it useful. It was expanded to include the other Churches in the cluster, Harpenden and Wheathampstead, and I hope they have enjoyed the sense of fellowship that WGC URC has always maintained. I must admit I have been amazed to see the tenacity and perseverance shown by the small congregation of Wheathampstead. You have truly put my lockdown efforts to shame (I still haven't decorated the living room as those who see me on zoom can testify too).

As we will be soon hopefully getting back to normal (whatever that looks like) I would like to suggest that those of you that are happy to have the magazine sent via email as opposed to a printed copy, please let me know. This way we can save paper and printing costs, but please if you prefer a printed copy we will still provide them. I know this was discussed before and decided against by many, but after having got used to it over the last year, some may prefer to have the magazine emailed.

Please continue to book in with me([allisongiles@hotmail.com](mailto:allisongiles@hotmail.com)) if you wish to attend the Sunday service, as at present we still have a limit to how many are allowed in the building. You will still need to wear a mask, hand sanitise on entry, sit apart from others if you are not in a bubble with the person you are sitting with, socially distance and no singing. I know this seems unfriendly, but it is to keep everyone safe. We would be delighted if anyone from Wheathampstead or Harpenden wished to join us too.

As you will have read earlier, we are putting together a Centenary cook book, which will be sold and all profits will go to the Air ambulance. So if you haven't already submitted a recipe, please do as I would like to have a hundred recipes. You can email me, send a photo of the recipe or post it to either myself (c/o the church) or to Joyce who will pass them on.

Many thanks

Allison,x

Dear All,

Since last time, I'm pleased to say that life on the farm in Somerset and by the sea in Sandwich has carried on apace. Sarah and Rose are getting on well at work and school respectively. We hope to see each other a lot more soon, now that it is relatively safer to do so, at least given the latest easing of restrictions; and of course half-term is just around the corner, so Sarah and Rose will be spending some time down here!

The cold and dry weather in April was a curate's egg because it meant that groundwork preparation for potatoes and other vegetables could be done but on the other hand the frosts we had kept the grass from growing. I did very little of the annual chain harrowing of the fields laid up for hay and silage for fear that frost following such action would lead to more damage. A close eye was kept on the weather forecast so that our small patch of potatoes went in on 27<sup>th</sup> April, the day before it started raining. And now it hasn't stopped a lot since...

The cattle were turned out to fresh grass (including the new arrival previously mentioned, named Olaf by Rose, after a certain animated snowman!) on 1<sup>st</sup> May, and were OK for the first two weeks because the rain soaked into the dry ground. But after last week (9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> May) when we had 58mm in 5 days, the field now looks like the autumn when it is time to shut the gates and feed some hay. However, today (17<sup>th</sup> May), was weaning-off day, so the calves are now in the shed and the cows are back out in the field – but at least there are now less feet to trample the turf into mud. The calves, apart from a few heifers that we intend to keep, will be pre-movement tested for Tb, and then we hope to sell them to another farmer friend of ours. Due to the Covid situation last year, he bought our calves privately, which saved us sending them to market; so we're hoping to do the same again – saving the auctioneer's fees plus transport costs.

My father has good days and bad days. On good days, like today, I help him walk up to the farm or up into a field where I may be working so that he can get involved and see the cattle. After weaning-off the calves today, he was able to go up to see them in the shed. We have an old kitchen chair up there; this gets moved around so that he can sit near any jobs that are going on. I know that he would want to help out with the jobs he used to do, so I try to keep him involved where possible. On bad days he doesn't feel so sturdy, and so the call of a comfy chair and Classic FM is best heeded.

Meanwhile, fence repairs have been on the do-list. Fencing on the farm is a never ending cycle of replacing stakes that have rotted and tacking the still-good barbed wire back up onto the new ones. Some stakes last longer than others. There are still a few railway sleeper gate posts around the farm that my grandfather would have put in. It always gets us reminiscing when we go fencing!

Back in the autumn before all the leaves had fallen, we had a huge branch crash down from an oak tree and this flattened a section of fence and a gate post. Over the last couple of weeks I finally got around to the job of sorting this out, and it took me four afternoon sessions with a chainsaw to cut the branch up into manageable pieces. I must confess that a chainsaw is not an implement I relish using. When my father was fit and healthy, he would do the chain-sawing and I was happy carrying the unsawn, or sawn timber from A to B. Over the last three years however, I have had a go and, hmm, a chainsaw is still not an implement I relish using! Despite that, as you can see below, we will have plenty of fuel next winter to put into our log-burner.



Another tricky job tackled on the farm was the fitting of a new tyre and tube to a wheel of a bale trailer. For those who may remember such old lorry wheels and their sizes, the tyre is a 7.5 by 20 inch specimen. Rather than the modern fixed rim wheels, this old wheel has a spring rim on one side. Getting that off, and

the old tyre, wasn't too bad, but getting the spring rim on again to squeeze onto the new tyre was like one of those tricky puzzles where you have to get a ball bearing out of a bottle without losing your temper and smashing the thing... ..it is one of those jobs where a lot of hammering is no good unless you know where to hammer. Next, you have to take special care when blowing the tyre up. The safety aspect here is to make sure you assemble the tyre on the wheel so that the valve pointing away from the side with the





spring rim. When you inflate the tyre, the spring rim is then facing the ground, so that, if it were to pop off it won't fly up and hit you.

And I thought statistical analysis could be tricky! All this makes me think about how God has given us the ability to solve problems. We often need to stop and think a bit more about the best way of going about a task, and sometimes God's advice seems to be about stopping us in our tracks, so that we can, as it were, reset our minds and try a different, more sensible, approach. It can help a lot when we offer up our problems to God.

Best wishes,

Steve, Sarah and Rose

### **Harpenden Church – ShelterBox and Us**

Dear Friends,

I was happy to find our Church has chosen to support ShelterBox this year. With so many disasters in the world and so many refugees caused either through natural disasters or man-made disasters, there is such a need for practical assistance. If we can help to keep one family on their own plot of land with the necessities to rebuild their homes and lives, then we have given the best gift possible. To become a displaced person, is our worst nightmare. You lose your dignity, your identity, your roots and so much more.

According to Norman we have raised £475.00 towards a ShelterBox. On average a ShelterBox costs £590.00. I would like to see us find a fun way to raise the remaining £115.

As our homes are pretty full we might consider being creative in the garden. How about Birdhouses and Bird feeders? We could purchase or assemble a collection of birdhouses and feeders. Then we could get together and decorate them. Painting or decoupage. Have a fun afternoon. Put our results on show in the church. We can buy back our work for ourselves or as gifts or we can buy someone else's work. I would provide all the materials and inspiration necessary. No skills required!

I remember when we worked on the fish together. Seeing everyone happily working away was lovely. We did have a nice afternoon.

If there is any interest, then you can let me know. And we can proceed with plans. Hagrid and I look forward to seeing you again soon!

With love,

Becky

# SIGNS OF HOPE

URC Harpenden have been sending in their pictures 'signs of hope'

Here are a few of the photos

The pictures are displayed in the church at URC Harpenden



I wonder what your picture would be? What gives you Hope?



# Harpenden Church

## 'Signs of Hope' in Lockdown

Members of the community at URC Harpenden have been sending in their pictures of hope,

I wonder what has given you hope in Lockdown,

Has it been something in creation that we can thank God for?

Has it been a member of your family or a friend? Give thanks

Has it been a new hobby? Give thanks

Has it been work or furlough? Give thanks

Take a moment to reflect on God and the things that have brought you hope in Lockdown and thank God for the things that we can do as we emerge.

Have a look at the photos and enjoy the gallery.



Thank you for all those who participated,  
sending photos.





# 50 in 5 - Pentecost

Coffee time Fun !!



Make a cuppa and see how many words can you find from the word PENTECOST in 5 Minutes

Unjumble the words

1. Pen
2. Eco
3. Notes

How many did you get?

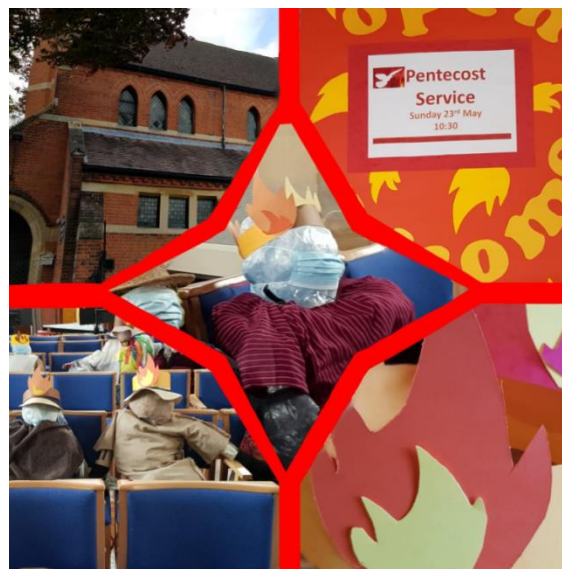
# Welcome

Our Father  
who art  
in heaven,  
Hallowed  
be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them  
that trespass  
against us.  
And lead  
us not into  
temptation,  
but deliver  
us from evil.  
For thy  
is the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever  
and ever  
Amen.

# Amen

## Pentecost at URC

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May is Pentecost Sunday, we will also be celebrating our 199<sup>th</sup> year anniversary at Harpenden URC, we are opening our church for the first time this year on Pentecost Sunday. It is ideal to open and celebrate our anniversary at Harpenden on Pentecost as it is the churches birthday worldwide. We are planning and getting ready, the scarecrows are ready. Are you ready for the churches opening? On the first Pentecost the disciples were in a room feeling afraid and isolated. Pentecost is 50 days after Easter, the Spirit came down as a helper, the spirit is the promised gift that came to help and can strengthen and encourage us as we emerge from lockdown, how do we need help?



**Banners in the porch to welcome visitors**

Checkout our FB Page to connect and keep

up to date with us, events, activities, and church opening. [Harpenden United Reformed Church | Facebook](#)

## **Remembering Laura**

Laura was born in 1926 in Mansfield Nottinghamshire. She was an only child for parents Maurice, a policeman, and her mother Marjorie. She spent most of her childhood in Retford, Nottinghamshire. She missed significant amounts of school due to medical issues and World War Two took over her teenage years.

Laura started training to become a hairdresser in her late teens, but she had to stop this to look after her mother who had developed cancer and died when Laura **was** 23. After that Laura left home and had a number of jobs including working at Boots the chemist where part of her job was to gift wrap purchases a skill that always remained with her. Laura frequently visited her cousin Stafford's family on their farm at Nether Broughton. Sometimes she would go for a midweek dance at the village hall after which she would catch the 6am bus back to Nottingham in order to get to work.

It was while working in a children's home that she met George Gorton. They had taken the children on holiday and there was a group of boys there too being supervised by George. They got to know each other and corresponded by letter. Laura bravely decided to move to Plymouth to get to know George better and they were married on November 30<sup>th</sup> 1957 in Plymouth.

They lived in Plymouth, Droitwich and Barrow in Furness then in 1965 Laura and George moved to Perth in Scotland where they designed their own house with fantastic views over the highlands. To their delight in January 1966, their son Ian was born. They enjoyed a happy time in Perth, they had fantastic friends and neighbours and enjoyed going to the theatre and concerts and being closer to George's parents who lived in Aberdeen. This was much easier than 2 day drive from Plymouth to Aberdeen with an overnight sleep in the car.

They also enjoyed visiting the beautiful Scottish countryside and often this was linked with -visiting potential foster homes as part of George's job as a social

worker. They were also quite adventurous in taking holidays in Spain in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

George was a keen golfer and although Laura didn't play, she liked watching golf. They would go to watch pro-celebrity golf at Gleneagles and particularly enjoyed a trip to the seaside at St Andrews where they would often watch golfers playing on The Old Course. Although not an extrovert, Laura always like to chat to people. She would chat to anyone. This could be a stranger sitting next to her on the bus, a new member at church or even James Bond! - she went and had a chat with Sean Connery after he had finished his round of golf at St Andrews.

After George died in 1995, Laura moved to Harpenden in 2000 to be close to Ian and Felicity. Laura joined the United Reformed Church where she was made very welcome and found a lot of friends. She also enjoyed being a member of the Townswomen's Guild. Later after its inception, she also made a number of friends through visiting Wesleys coffee shop where she could go and have a coffee and a chat while out shopping.

Laura became a proud grandmother to Sandy in March 2002. She loved looking after him and would often take him out on trips. On one occasion Sandy (aged 3) surprised his vegetarian parents when he came home and said that Grandma had taken him to McDonalds. It turned out that McDonalds was the only place in St Albans they could find to get an ice cream!

Throughout her life, Laura liked to get out and about, a trait she inherited from her father. She did not drive and when she was young she used to be taken places in her father's motorcycle and side car. Ian asked her recently if she had been to St Pauls Cathedral when they saw it on a TV programme. "Oh yes" she said, my boyfriend took me to London from Nottingham on his motorbike and we went to St Pauls as part of that trip! That was one of several motorbike trips to London. In Perth, Laura had her own moped which allowed her to get around the town without having to rely on buses or lifts. While living in Harpenden Laura really made the most of her free bus pass and used to make regular trips all-round the county.

Laura was also very good at making others feel welcome and would happily go and talk to people on their own at church or wherever else she felt there was a need. Laura enjoyed activities at church. She was an active helper in the creche on a Sunday morning, She enjoyed the Monday group which eventually moved to Harpers coffee shop, and the Tea Party, She was a member of the Pastoral Group and always joined in with the annual trip to St Albans. Her family joined her for Christingle each year which she appreciated greatly.

Laura came across as a kind, gentle lady with an eye for detail and who was always smartly dressed. She never wanted to be any trouble and was always looking to help people in whatever way she could. But she was also very strong and determined, as can be seen by the many obstacles she overcame in her life including colon cancer at the age of 92 and in January this year she contracted Covid and recovered from it!

Laura's faith was very important to her and we can now think of Laura safe and whole, reunited with George, and held in the love of God for all eternity.

**Christian Aid  
Collection 2021**



A big thank you to all who contributed to this year's WGC URC church collection for Christian Aid, whether on our JustGiving page or by donations sent to me. Together we raised a marvellous £575, excluding Gift Aid. This is £200 less than last year but last year's collection included Harpenden and Wheathampstead as well. Many people who are struggling to grow their family's food in constantly worsening weather conditions will be hugely helped. Thank you.

Robert



## Saying Farewell to the Moderator Revd Dr Andrew Prasad



There was an online farewell service for Andrew on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 to celebrate him ministry and his retirement. It was so go to hear from a variety of people who had worked with him in different contexts over the years.

Revd Dr Andrew Prasad served the Church of North India from 1978 -1989 where he was referred to as 'Pastor Uncle' and was warmly remembered by those who were teenagers during his time with them and how his teaching about faith and life had helped shape their lives. He then served the Council for World Mission (CWM) from 1989-99 and brought about changes in the way member churches related to one another and how missionaries worked. He also created the World enlargement programme, enabling people to visit different countries to learn from their context. I was privileged to be part of this programme visiting Zambia and receiving visitors here. After this he had served at Streatham Asian Christian Fellowship before transferring to the URC, where he served at Dulwich Grove, Camberwell Green (2002-2008) and was then appointed Moderator of Thames North.

Our own Revd Heather Whyte, from Luton prepared the service and led the opening prayer, I was invited to pray for the family and for the ongoing commitment of Thames North Synod and Revd John Campbell wrote a hymn sung to the tune of Immortal invisible God only wise.

Revd Nigel Uden, former Moderator of the URC's Southern Synod, currently ministering at Downing Place URC led a short reflection on Andrews life and ministry in the context of the Bible reading from Philippians 3.10-16 , <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. He reflected on the meaning of the name Prasad – gift of God, gift to God or gracious gift and how he had lived his name out in the many different contexts. Nigel also preached at Andrews induction as Moderator.

Andrew's family members participated by reading scripture and offering a family tribute. Tributes were also given by representatives from Church of North India, Council for World Mission (CWM), Streatham Asian Fellowship, Dulwich

Grove URC and Thames North Synod describing Andrew as the 'Best Boss', a listening ear, reflecting mind, visionary and strategic thinker, a good shepherd, guiding light and the best pastor with patience, kindness, humility, passion for justice, perseverance, endurance and above all simplicity. Such lovely tributes at the end of a fruitful ministry.

Gifts and cards were given. The Litany of release, written by Heather was followed by prayers of concern and commitment and after singing John Campbells hymn Andrew gave the final blessing in English and Hindi.

Johns Hymn was most apt!

Post-covid, post-Synod will Andrew find peace?  
A blessed retirement? A blessed release?  
No more chairing meetings in person or zoom,  
will he find real comfort alone in the room?

We pray for his new live not north of the Thames:  
no troublesome churches or other such gems,  
no mods meeting monthly, no pressure to give,  
no tricky decisions, no ex-ec-u-tive.

God watch him and bless him and send him with joy  
to live with his fam'ly – your kindness employ –  
released, may he blossom acquiring new skills  
and flourish by doing just what our God wills.

But bless Thames North also, as we carry on  
exploring our new life once Covid is gone.  
May life after Andrew show fruits of his care:  
God bless him and bless us, yes, that is our prayer!

*John Campbell 21/4/21*

I am sure we all wish Andrew and his family well for the future and as someone commented his wife will be staking her claim on more of his time now!

Jane

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I hope you have enjoyed reading this magazine. If you have please consider sending us an article, I'm sure we would enjoy what you have to say. If you would like to contribute and are not really sure what , please contact one of the people above, who I'm sure could give you some suggestions.

Please can I have any articles for the next magazine by the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Please send by email or contact me by phone for WGC URC & Wheathampstead articles. For Harpenden URC articles please contact Sarah Connor Many thanks, Allison Giles

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