



Bunyan Meeting

News Letter/37

SUNDAY 10 JANUARY 2021

Dear friends

The beginning of any new year is a time when we think of change and hope for a brighter future. Many of our hopes for a brighter future, at least in the short term seem to have been dashed as we again go into lockdown. The virus appears to be almost out of control, our hospitals are struggling to care for an ever increasing number of patients and even though a vaccination programme has begun, we do wonder if this time of difficulty will ever come to an end!

But deep within, we know that things will ultimately come right, that our current difficulties will come to an end and that we will be able to return to more regular pattern of life. Throughout the ages, people have struggled with the various difficulties that have come their way, and against all manner of things that diminish human living, often under the most trying circumstances, and yet with perseverance and steadfastness, they have overcome their adversity.

We all hope for greater things and look forward to a brighter day. Whether we struggle just to get through our current circumstances or if we are working towards personal improvement or directing our efforts towards transforming the world around us, we know that such endeavours are never easy. We do our best, but instead of moving forward, there are often those times when we feel as though we are merely standing still or even losing ground.

Although there may be occasions when we feel pessimistic, we must press forward for if we do not, the battle will most certainly be lost. This is true in many areas of life. In sport, the competitor who thinks that the race is already won, or the team who don't pull together quickly experience defeat. The gardener who slackens their efforts supposing that "it will do" will soon find that the weeds have beaten them. On the field of battle the combatant who believes victory is theirs and loosens their efforts, quickly discovers that their enemy gains ground.

If these things be true for our lives in general, how much more are they true for our spiritual lives. As Christian people, we face a constant battle as we wrestle with unseen powers and principalities and meet the continuing struggle against our own weakness and our own poverty of faith.



We can quickly become tired with the struggle, we can readily be worn down by setbacks and it is at times, tempting to give in to defeat. Our hopes seem to be beyond realisation and our dreams are often unfulfilled.

So how might we find the strength that is required for the living of these days? Where might we discover renewed hope and increased vigour? The secret is for us to have a vision which looks beyond time and space, and having a goal which is beyond our earthly life. It is the secret that Paul speaks of when he writes "I don't say I'm already there and have won the race. But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." (Philippians 3 v 12)

May we be inspired to greater actions and dedicated service, strengthened and sustained by our Lord as we journey into the year that lies ahead.

Please keep sending your articles for our News Letter direct to me at chrisdamp@mac.com or by post to the church office for my attention.

Your friend and Minister
Chris

"I know how to live humbly, and I know how to abound. I am accustomed to any and every situation, to being filled and being hungry, to having plenty and having need. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

Philippians 4 v 12 - 13

Sunday Worship

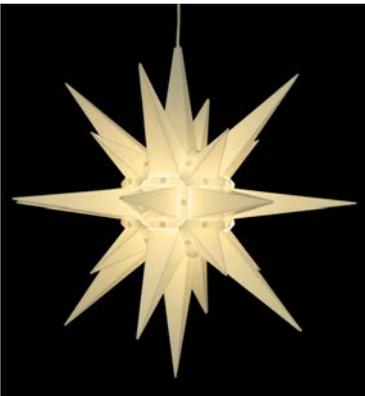
Due to the current lockdown and the local increase in Covid infections, Bunyan Meeting will now be closed for face to face worship until further notice. Our services will continue to be distributed by email and delivered to those without access to the internet.

Live Streaming of Services

We are still preparing for the eventual live streaming of our services, but we do need more volunteers to assist with this. If you might be able to help with this please do speak to the Minister.

As a first step towards live streaming we will try to record parts of our services and make these videos available on our website.

Christmas at Bunyan Meeting



Christmas at Bunyan Meeting was very different, but we still held many of our Christmas services. We moved into Tier 4 at midnight on the Sunday morning before Christmas and many of our congregation stayed at home for safety's sake.

Our Nativity service was sparsely attended, and many of those taking part in the service did so on video. In spite of the difficulties, this was both a moving and inspiring service and we must thank all those who took part and particularly David Walker who co-ordinated this service.

At our Carol service, we had live singing in the church for the first time since March. Our choir, was safely distanced across the front of the church and they sang behind face visors and masks. Even so, the sound of their singing was not hindered and we heard the Christmas story retold once again, through music and readings. We must thank our choir and Brian for his work in preparing this service.

We cancelled our Crib Service on Christmas Eve and were uncertain about holding a service on Christmas Morning, but many of the congregation on the previous Sunday had expressed a desire to attend a service at Christmas. So on Christmas morning almost fifty of us gathered for a service. It was lovely to see some of our young people present and we welcomed several visitors. At the close of the service, many of the congregation spread themselves around the church garden and we were able to sing a number of carols before returning home for our Christmas dinner.

A Farewell to 2020

Those of you with perfect eyesight are said to be blessed with 20/20 vision, how ironic then that in the year of perfect vision (2020) nobody saw the pandemic coming!

Brian Cornish

Unwanted Questions

In the build up to Christmas, I'm sure many parents & grandparents were asked some awkward and odd questions, but I think this question from Leah (5) would have been in the top 5.

“Daddy, why is it raining indoors?”

As it happened, mummy was having a shower, totally unaware that the waste pipe from the shower had split.

Brian Cornish

This Reminds Me ...

On the theme of raining indoors, I am reminded of an incident from my very early years. I suppose that I must have been about five, it was a Saturday night, my parents had gone out for the evening and my grandmother was looking after my sister and I. During the evening I went up to the bathroom which was above the hallway, I put the plug in the sink, turned the tap on and went back downstairs. When it was time for us to go to bed, we made our way up the hall and my grandmother was amazed and alarmed by the water pouring through the ceiling in the hallway above the front door! I still remember saying “Oh look grandma, it's raining in!” I was put to bed, but I did not get much sleep for when my father got home, I was awoken and given a good telling off!

Chris

Kay Munro

We are sorry to learn that Kay Munro died on 2nd January. Kay has kept in touch with us over recent months through the pages of this newsletter. We give thanks for Kay's life and Christian witness and we remember her family at this time.

Happy New Year

2021, a new year, a new beginning and fresh hope. It's a time we all think positive for the future, promising that things will be different and new resolutions fulfilled, but sadly new year comes when the weather is cold or wet and our compasses are low, and this year we have Covid.

The one time I, among millions of others showed some fear of the new year was at the millennium; or as Victoria Wood would say, Minnellium. I was working that evening and as the clock struck twelve we all stood around to see if the computers would change the year. By the third gong it had and we all linked arms and sang Auld Lang Syne. All our fears were washed away.

Of course the thousands normally in Trafalgar Square will not be there; or hopefully will not and towns and cities all over the country will be different. But that should not stop us in our own little bubble raising a glass and retaining our hope for a better tomorrow.



2020 has been challenging for many and 2021 will raise sad anniversaries of who they were with this time last year but we will get through it. Life springs up these adversaries from time to time and we have to deal with them and look for the rainbow which always comes after the storm.

Ken Thomas

When worms are scarce hen's don't stop scratching, they go deeper.

A lecturer is a person who talks in other peoples' sleep.

Neither men nor turtles go very far unless they are willing to stick their necks out.

Submitted by **Ken Wells**



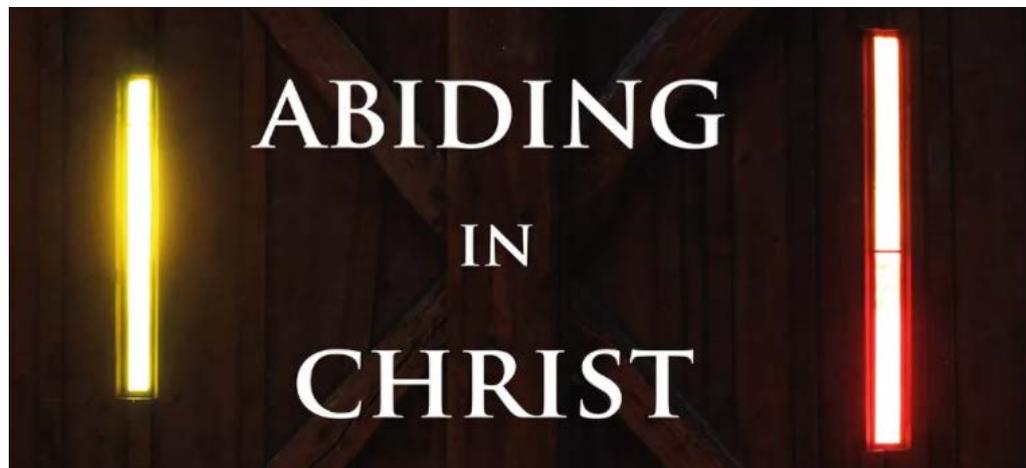
Daily Hope - 0800 804 8044

Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

For Your Prayers

Please remember **Brian and Heather Caves; Gilly and Alan Millbery; Dilys and Roy Leeder; Anne Legg; and the family of Kay Munro.**



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

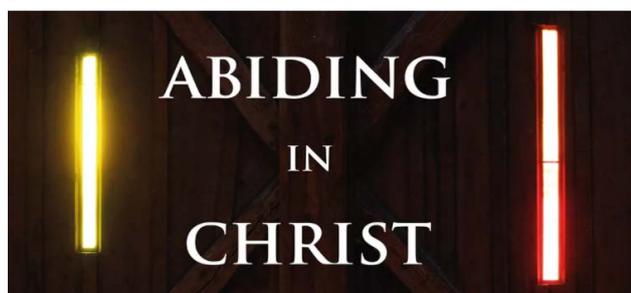
Bedford Churches Together

<https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>

Daily reflections <https://ctbi.org.uk/go-and-do-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>

Due to Covid-19, and tier 4 restrictions, services for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 2021 will take place online and in a smaller format than usual.

Each church is encouraged in their own way to have part of their prayer focus on the unity of all Christian churches and our joint witness to the peoples of Bedford.



You are invited to join with other congregations - 18th to 25th January - at ...

Monday 18th	St. Mary's	7:30pm on Zoom: https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76614219800?pwd=cjZyWHVsNWwhKUFVpN1RtSkJIZGQoZz09 Meeting ID: 766 1421 9800 Passcode: 888Zpa
Tuesday 19th	Holy Cross RC	10:15am https://holycrossbedford.org.uk/
Thursday 21st	Quaker Meeting	12:15 for 12:30pm on Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89048844344?pwd=VmpITW16L2tBSVJBcXJBbVUwSnpCZz09 Meeting ID: 890 4884 4344 Passcode: 744479 <i>As you know this is largely or entirely silent.</i>
Saturday 23rd	Polish RC Church	5.00pm details to follow
Sunday 24th	We all pray for each other and for Christian Unity in own church services	
Monday 25th	Priory Methodist	12:00noon on Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89285200403?pwd=VoRFbjZvb1N3ZG1SWGFoTTFoUHhEZz09 Meeting ID: 892 8520 0403 Passcode: 247455
One tap mobile	+442034815237,,89285200403#,,,,*247455# United Kingdom	



Bunyan Meeting

Mill Street

Bedford MK40 3EU

Telephone 01234 213722

email bunyanmeeting@gmail.com

website www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk