



Bunyan Meeting

News Letter/40

SUNDAY 31 JANUARY 2021

Dear friends

Questions are a daily part of our human living. There are those questions which deal with trivial or superficial matters, requiring little time or attention from us, whilst there are questions which deal with the merely practical issues of our lives. Some questions are more significant, as we are challenged by various courses of action which may significantly affect our future, or the future of others. Such questions have the potential to perplex and trouble us as we wrestle with possible courses of action and the consequential outcome of each.

One of the greatest questions that we may ever ask is “Why am I here?” Such a question may sound reasonably simple and straightforward, but the answer which we give to such a question affects the future course and direction of our lives.

Many would answer this question by saying “To have a good time” or “To enjoy myself”. But this is nothing new. Down the ages people have sought to live lives that bring them gratification. But does gratification truly bring us satisfaction? Happiness that is pursued for its own sake frequently eludes us, for true happiness is often the by-product of some other search.

Another answer to our question that we might often hear is “To get what I can out of life”. The pursuit of money, celebrity, status, and possessions is the quest of many people today. Selfishness, and self-centredness stems from this attitude that says “You have to look after number one!” As we look at the world about us, we can see little to recommend this approach to life.

Some have almost given up altogether in their attempt to find an answer. They simply try to make the best of a bad job, and press on doggedly and hopelessly. They work to get the money to pay the ever increasing bills for food, heating and housing so that they might be able to go to work to get the money to pay the bills, and so life drags relentlessly on. But if this is the answer to our question, what is the point of carrying on, certainly, some must be tempted to give in to despair?

Surely, the Christian answer to the question “why am I here?” must be given serious consideration. The Christian could answer this question by saying “To enjoy God and to glorify Him for ever”. In other words, our reason for existence, our reason for being here is God’s reason.

It is because of God’s plan that we are alive, and it is part of God’s plan that we should continue to live even when this earthly life is over. It is God’s plan that we should be happy and fulfilled members of His family. It was God’s purpose that Jesus should demonstrate what God is truly like, and what humanity can become in Christ. It was God’s purpose that He should give grace and strength to humankind so that we might become the children of God.

No answer to our question, less than this, can ever truly be adequate. There can be no real transformation or renewal of our world until humanity realises that our answer to the great question “why am I here?” deserves their serious consideration.

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

“Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Philippians 4 v 8

Sunday Worship

Due to the current lockdown and the high level of Covid infections locally, 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.

Anne Legg’s Funeral

Anne Legg’s funeral will be held at Bunyan Meeting on Friday 5th February at 11.00am. If you wish to attend this service in person, booking is essential as numbers are limited. The service will also be live-streamed and you can watch the service by following the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXUjR5w2IAazr8gPBDYCyAA/live>

If for any reason you cannot make the live stream work, there is a back up Zoom meeting which you could join. The link for this is below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86510929097?pwd=NUVlOWRTQWZ4RoxWeDEyZG1pRkFRdz09>

Meeting ID: **865 1092 9097**

Passcode: **191047**

Allan Linger’s Funeral

Allan’s funeral will be held at Bunyan Meeting on Friday February 5th at 3.30pm. If you wish to attend this service in person, booking with the church office is essential as numbers are limited to a maximum of thirty mourners. The service will also be live-streamed and you can watch the service by following the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXUjR5w2IAazr8gPBDYCyAA/live>

If for any reason you cannot make the live stream work, there is a back up Zoom meeting which you could join. The link for this is below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89988543285?pwd=ZUpRcUlhR2xTelczUjFWZWdlZWt6ZW09>

Zoom details continue
over page ...



Meeting ID: **899 8854 3285**

Passcode: **471493**

Andy Graham

We were shocked to learn that Andy died on the afternoon of Saturday 23rd January. Andy was involved for many years with the Social Committee here at Bunyan and more recently has been the Editor of Bunyan News. We remember Andy's wife Susan and keep her and all of Andy's family in our prayers at this time.

Andy's funeral service will be held at Bunyan Meeting on Saturday 6th February at 11.00am. The service will be live-streamed on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXUjR5w2IAazr8gPBDYCyAA/live>

If for any reason you cannot make the live stream work, there is a back up Zoom meeting which you could join. The link for this is below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84916722138?pwd=akV1T2duT3doUEY2Q1VZTGZiSnFTQT09>

Meeting ID: **849 1672 2138**

Passcode: **962347**



Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow ...

Don't you just love the snow? Well I do, but I guess it is a bit like Marmite: love it or hate it. I was very lucky as a child, we had a large garden and Dad was always keen to help me build a snowman. My older brother and Mother didn't like snowball fights as they said we ganged up on them! It seemed that Bedford Park Lake froze solid most winters and Dad strapped some skates to my jodhpur boots and taught me to skate there. Great fun.

Whilst in my first teaching post in Northampton, there was heavy snow in 1969 or 1970 and after 2 weeks of no PE lessons (no sports halls in those days just 1 gym and a shared use of the hall with the drama dept.) we decided to take all the classes to the large park just across the road (called the Racecourse). We had snowmen building competitions which needless to say nearly always ended in snowball fights. H&S and Risk Assessments would never allow this today – but we never got a single complaint from a parent. The children loved it!

Towards the end of my career whilst at Hinchbrook School and a time when acting Head, we had some snow overnight, so at 6am a call to the police to ascertain whether they thought it was safe to open was the first step in the Emergency Closure

Procedures. Then I called my colleague and we agreed to stay open thus averting too many angry phone calls from parents! It continued snowing during the morning and a phone call from the bus and coach companies said if we didn't send the children home by lunchtime they couldn't guarantee getting out to all the villages. So, much to the disgust of the catering staff we closed at lunchtime – although I know some students and staff grabbed a slice of pizza as they left!

The Performing Arts staff persuaded me to allow their rehearsal to go ahead as parents would collect their children later. By 3.30pm I wondered if any of us would get home that night. It was 4.30pm by the time the last student and staff left the school and I



could make my way home. I slipped and slid in my car at no more than 10mph and somehow made it back. A normal 30min journey had taken me nearly 1.5 hours! I heard later that some of my colleagues didn't reach Cambridge until 10.30pm. It snowed through the night. The school busses couldn't run and most staff couldn't travel so it was an easy decision to stay closed that day. The emergency procedures kicked in and by 7.30am most families (we had 1800 students!) would have received a phone call or heard via the local radio that we were shut. (No internet, website or social media then!)

Two secretarial colleagues who lived near the school volunteered to walk in and deal with phone calls from parents. Unfortunately they were inundated with calls from angry parents and even one who dropped their child at the school and went off. I had to deal with that one, but by then I instructed the 2 colleagues to go home and switch off the answer machine!

We did manage to open the following day but with a few staff and a good many students not able to get in.

There were snowball fights and complaints from parents about that.

Bring back the "good old days" I say ...

Nowadays it's nice to sit in a warm house looking out at the snow – reminiscing.

Happy days.

Cherry Protheroe

ALLAN LINGER

Many messages of condolence have been received in the Church Office.

Hanna, Poppy and Freddie Reavley write:

We keep him and his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers, along with the NHS workers who helped him.

Irene Day writes:

I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Allan. He was a lovely man and I know he will be missed very much.

Rachel and Tony Shield write:

We are so sorry to hear this news. Please add our thoughts and prayers to the list of condolences that I'm sure you have.

Bob Allen writes:

Obviously very sad to hear the news about Allan; he was a lovely man!

The Barwood family write:

What a sad loss.

Pamela Jameson writes:

This is very sad news about Allan - he certainly will be missed.

Clare and Jean McGall write:

I'm so sorry to hear this news. Mum and I are deeply saddened having known Allan for such a long time. Such a kind man who, as you rightly say, will be much missed at the church in particular.

Margaret Walden writes:

I opened the message this morning hoping that it would be better news of Allan. I am so sorry to learn that his long life of service has come to an end. He was a man of such courtesy, warmth and kindness that he will be remembered and missed by all who knew him. We send our thoughts and prayers to all who loved him.

Patsy Ingray writes:

So sorry to learn of our sad loss of Allan - my condolences and sympathy to his family.

Veronica and Chris Gerig write:

That is such sad news and he will be missed by everyone.

Steve Sleight writes:

Really sorry to hear about Allan, he was such a kind & friendly man and a huge part of the church.

***Rev'd Angus McCormick
of Shillington Congregational church writes:***

Please accept our sympathy on the untimely passing of Allan. He has served us faithfully in leading worship at Shillington and was very much appreciated. His witness to faith lives on: his strength endures. Every blessing.

***Bernard Hooker
of Roxton Congregational Church writes:***

We were so sorry to hear that Allan has died after contracting Covid-19, especially as we are so close to being vaccinated. Allan was a true Christian who was always willing to do whatever he could to help out in any way with the talents that God gave him. It was Allan we could go to if a preacher let us down at short notice, or we needed advice on a biblical interpretation, plus many other things. I am sure that your Church will miss him at every meeting for a very long time.

Michael Thomas writes of Allan:

I first got to know Allan well, when he took over the running and organising of the PA system. He took on the responsibility after Paul moved to Somerset. I think I am right in saying that I was his first recruit. Allan trained me how to operate the system and once he considered me competent, let me loose on the Bunyan congregation. He put together a small team of operators, and as far as I know, all the services and appropriate events were covered, he never let anyone down.

Allan was also very excited about the new audio visual system that has now been installed. The audio installation was a project overseen by Allan from start to finish. Because of his enthusiasm and generosity we now have a PA and recording facility second to none. Allan also spent endless hours getting the streaming in shape, so that Bunyan, could well and truly be brought into the 21st century. In future, every time I hear the microphones click in, I shall think of Allan. This will be a lasting legacy.

Of course I haven't forgotten the work he did as keeper of the church coffers, and the fact he continued in that role, even though he would liked to have retired as Church Treasurer a few years ago. Allan was a doer and made things happen. Treasurer, Deacon, Trustee and Preacher; he did the lot. Once I got to know Allan, it didn't take long to realise he had a lovely sense of humour. His faith of course, was without question. One of the last communications that came from a nurse caring for Allan said "he was peaceful and unafraid". The old cliché, nobody is indispensable comes to mind, well; we shall see.

Between us, Pearl and myself will miss his laugh, his banter, his hands on, his kindness, his friendship and his wonderful prayers.

It was indeed a privilege to know you Allan. Rest in peace, you will be sorely missed

Michael

Manpower v Womenpower

During the time when Bill Clinton was President of the United States of America he and his wife Hilary drew into a garage to fill up their car with petrol. The garage attendant filled the car up and Hilary got out and went to the office to pay the bill. On the way back to the car the garage attendant gave her a big hug. Once in the car, Bill Clinton said, "what was that all about?" Hilary said, "He is one of my ex boyfriends." Bill said, "If you had married him, your husband would have been a garage attendant." Hilary replied, "On the contrary, if I had married him, he would have been the President of the United States of America".

Ken Wells

Great Lives

Radio 4Extra is repeating a series by Matthew Parris called *Great Lives*. His guests; some of whom have written biographies of the subject discuss the person but tend to deal with the more personal aspects of their lives.

Like the crooner Frankie Vaughan (*left*). His signature song, 'Give me the Moonlight' with his little saucy chuckle in the middle made him into a star of the day. But like many entertainers he used his stardom to help others. During the 50s there was terrible gang crime in Glasgow. Born in Liverpool and Jewish, he actually went to



Glasgow and mixed amongst the gangs to try and make a difference which many commentators believe he achieved.



Barbara Castle, for some a pioneer for women in politics, for others a thorn in the side is applauded for the lives she has saved by introducing seat belts, the breathalyser and speed limits on motorways. Remember at one time there were none and with modern cars capable of 150mph, the alternatives could have been horrendous.

We did a survey of the ages of bowlers at the club I played with a few years ago. Over 82% were over 60 with 8% over 80, and that meant I did attend more than my share of funerals. As a relatively new member I didn't know the history of the players until I heard their eulogies. The times I sat there and wished I could have just one more hour of their time to explore their younger days.

With public figures having such a poor reputation these days the programme allows a moment to uplift the mood when Matthew Parris discusses each individual at a personal level, after all, not all politicians are cruel and self-serving, are they?

P.S. Allan Linger. I have been treasurer of the museum for just over a year now and sadly, mainly due to Covid, I never did meet Allan, we only conversed via email. But his emails, albeit on a business level did indicate such a friendly tone that his passing will leave me with such regret that I never had the opportunity to enjoy his company.

Best wishes and keep safe, **Ken Thomas**

“TeleCare” installed?

Bob Allen thought that there may be some readers who could be interested in Bedford Borough Council's emergency help line known as TeleCare. It is designed to allow users, in their own home (where many emergencies occur) to gain instant access to the Emergency Services, when they are unable to do so by normal means, such as when immobilised due to a fall or by some other similar emergency, and unable to reach a phone.

The service is funded by Bedford Borough and provided to vulnerable people, through Social Services, by an agency. Bob had it installed a number of years ago and has used it several times! If anyone is interested and wants to know more, Bob is happy to help.

Prison Fellowship Project – Angel Tree

A letter and poster came through to the Church Office from the Prison Fellowship thanking us for our participation in the Angel Tree, which provided gifts for children of those in prison.

Dear Friends at Bunyan Meeting

Please see the enclosed Angel Tree poster to say a large thank you for your dedicated support of Angel Tree. We could not do this without you; our prisons are a little brighter because you care.

The wording of the poster:

Bunyan Meeting

Thank you for bringing joy to families separated by a prison sentence this Christmas! Your support makes a lasting difference in the lives of prisoners and their families.

Signed

Peter Holloway CEO, Prison Fellowship England and Wales.



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 **Dilys and Roy Leeder; Jean Goldsmith;**
Chris Wootton's sister Judy and all her family, and the families of
Anne Legg and of Andy Graham.



*Two photos of River Street
in the snow - by Janet*

