



Bunyan Meeting

News Letter/30

SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2020

Dear friends

This Sunday, most organised Remembrance services will be cancelled due to the second lockdown, but many of us will still be remembering in our own particular way, those who have lost their lives in war and conflict.

Wars continue to scar this world. The fighting in Yemen and the more recent conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh remind us that war is still a reality for countless millions of people across the world. We wonder if there will ever be any end to the evil of war and conflict? Even the most optimistic individual must surely doubt that such evils will be wiped from the face of the earth.

But our Christian faith speaks of a world restored and redeemed; it tells of a new heaven and a new earth; we are citizens of an ever increasing kingdom of justice and peace. This faith which we proclaim is no mere theory, no vague hope that ultimately all will be well. Here is a faith which strives and struggles against the powers and principalities of this world; here is a fighting faith that seeks to overcome all that diminishes and damages the lives of men and women; here is a faith that will conquer evil and wickedness. It is a faith whose power and force is released in our efforts and by our service.

This is the spirit of a real and living Christian faith. We are to strive, we are to struggle, and we shall overcome this world. Somebody once noted that "Christianity is the most optimistic creed in the world." It is optimistic, for it is founded upon the sovereignty of God, whose nature and purpose is that of a loving parent.

But Christianity is no easy going optimism which places an extravagant load on faith alone at the expense of effort. Our Christianity demands activity; it is the faith of men and women who throw themselves into the struggle of life without reserve, and whose belief in both inspires and matches their action. The ever present evil or war and conflict must never tempt us to fall into the pessimism of weariness and despair.

We possess a faith which strengthens the mind and gives courage to the soul. A faith in God and His ultimate purpose, which is so clear and deep that the soul is guarded from both despair and false optimism, but a faith that knows that in Christ, all will ultimately be well.

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

"He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'"

Psalm 46 v 9 - 10

This Week at Bunyan Meeting

Wednesday 11th November **Deacons' Meeting** 2.00pm via Zoom

Sunday Worship at Mill Street

There will be no face to face services at Bunyan Meeting until at least Sunday 6 December, due to the new lockdown. Our Service Sheets will continue to be sent out by email (and on paper to those without the internet) and will also be available on our website - <https://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk>. During November we hope to have a camera installed in the church to enable us to live stream our services on the internet. Once live streaming is available we hope to be able to broadcast a service each Sunday from the church. There will be more information about this in the next few weeks.

Helena Kent

We had such a beautiful service to say farewell to my mother yesterday afternoon and I wanted to give my heartfelt thanks to all of you at Bunyan Meeting who made that possible. To Chris for creating such a lovely atmosphere of peace and deep feeling; to Brian for terrific music; to Sue Gauley and Jo and the stewards for welcoming us most warmly and making it so effortless to be in Bunyan in these Covid-restricted times - and to all who made the church warm, organised, extra clean, and operated the sound system.

It was very special to see (the upper half of) familiar faces - so much a loving part of my mother's church life. Thank you.

Fiona Thurburn-Huelin

Audrey Mehew writes:

Thank you very much for giving details of how to 'zoom in' for Helena Kent's funeral this afternoon. I followed all the instructions hoping I was clicking correctly and was so relieved when I saw Chris standing at the front of my screen. I really felt I was there. There was a slight echo but I could follow the service and joined in the singing and listening to the family brought back so many memories of Helena and Paddy. They were indeed a couple who will always be remembered with great affection.

Audrey



The R38 airship in its shed at Cardington.

A Tail Story

One of the early airships built at Cardington was the R38, it flew successfully and was sold to America. The Americans sent a crew of 20 men to Cardington to take part with an English crew in proving trials before flying it back to America.

It was while the R38 was crossing the Humber estuary in Yorkshire that it took a sharp turn that caused it to crash with the loss of 44 lives.

The Lookout man in the tail end cockpit was **Harry Bateman** from Bedford. Harry realised the airship was crashing so decided to bail out. In doing so, before his parachute could open, the harness got caught up on the tail fin of the airship and Harry was left dangling in the air with

no choice but to float down with the airship. Lucky for Harry he landed on a sand bank in two feet of water and was the sole survivor.

Later in life Harry became the Churchwarden at St Andrews Church in Bedford.

Ken Wells

Church Finance - Do We Have Any?

It is a daily occurrence that on the news and in the newspapers we are told about business/charities struggling financially due to either being fully closed or working restricted hours and charity donations falling so it seems appropriate at this time to update you on the situation for the church. At the start of this financial year, when things were normal, I estimated that there would be a deficit of £9K and your immediate thoughts may well be that this this would increase due to the situation we find ourselves in but in fact when I did a review in September my forecast was a surplus of £5K. How could this be when we were closed and therefore income from room lettings and the coffee shop/Wednesday lunches was no more? On the expenditure side savings have been made on salaries due to the furlough grant scheme introduced by the government which enable us to claim a total of £13.65K, on the gas/



electricity bills and by virtue of a National Insurance allowance of £4K from the government. These combined with other savings brought the original estimate for expenditure down from £150K to £114K. Conversely on the income side there are plusses and minuses and I have already mentioned room lettings and coffee shop/Wednesday lunches and if I add Church use which in total I estimate has cost the church £19K but on the plus side we received a discretionary grant from the Council, (funded by the government) for £6K to offset some of the lost income.

The other main source of income are the freewill offerings and in 2019 these totalled £61.8K and my estimate for this year is £56K. The difference of £5.8K is due to a drop in loose cash which reflects the lack of visitors to our services due to the fact that we have been closed. On the subject of freewill offerings I wish to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support either by setting up standing orders or by sending cash/cheques to the office. The amount currently being received by standing order has increased by a little over 100% since lockdown. Similarly to the expenditure position if I take the above the original estimate for income totalled £142k and the revised amount is £120K which leads me back to my estimated surplus of £5K compared to the deficit of £9K because if we start with $-\text{£}9\text{K} + \text{£}36\text{K} = +\text{£}27\text{K} - \text{£}22\text{K}$ leaves a position of $+\text{£}5\text{K}$ where the £36K is the drop in expenditure and the £22K a drop in income.

Moving on to 2021 the picture is possibly going to be totally different. I have assumed the worst possible situation whereby there are no room bookings, coffee shop or Wednesday lunches but the expenditure increases with no government support as was the position at that time and my forecast was deficit of £40K. Since then the new Job Support Scheme has been announced and it appears that we can claim £1.2K each month providing our “returning” staff work just 20% of their usual hours. The scheme starts on 1st November and runs for 6 months and the government will fund 61.67% of the cost of hours not worked but as employers we have also to fund 5% of these hours. If in 2021 only 20% of normal hours are worked the claim could be £4.8K which will

help but we are still looking at a possible deficit of approx. £35k. If the number of hours worked increases then the amount of claimable grant will decrease.

With Christmas fast approaching can I remind you all of the “easy fund raising scheme” we have running whereby purchases made online from participating companies generates income for the church. To use this you first have to go to the easyfundraising.org.uk website and on the first page look for Bunyan Meeting Church and then follow the instructions.

Allan Linger
Church Treasurer



Volunteering in our Museum

If we think of a museum as a cake, we can divide it into three main layers.

The Icing - **The visitors**

The Tasty Bit - **The collection**

The Base - **The finance**

Then we have the *encircling ribbon* - The **curator** and **volunteers** holding it all together.

Although not quite ready for the icing, our cake has to be kept fresh, so after a long Covid pause **Roy Martin, Sue Csoka** and I are masked, spaced and gelled ready to resume our work on 'the tasty bit'.

Along with most other museums we have many artefacts which for one reason or another are rarely displayed, but they need to be kept and cared for. Next year our museum will celebrate its 75th anniversary so it doesn't take much imagination to envisage the mountain of photographs, prints and china etc. we are currently holding.

Our main task is to document their details. This is initially done on a worksheet and later transferred to computer. Briefly we note:

- The object number - every object has (or is given a number);
- Some objects are recorded as two objects, ie. teapot and teapot lid;
- Brief description- not always easy- the reader must be able to visualise the object in their mind's eye;
- Details of manufacture;
- Relevance to Bunyan;
- Acquisition of object - donation, purchase;
- unknown source.

Unfortunately the latter is relevant to a large part of our collection. This is why it is important to complete an object entry form (in a file in the shop cupboard) when an item is offered to the museum. Apart from basic details regarding ownership any anecdotes regarding the history of the object should be recorded, so the object can 'come to life' as it were. If the object is displayed, a note perhaps about the donor as a child only being allowed to play with it on a Sunday after church will conjure up a relatable image in the visitor's mind, creating a link and so making a richer visit.

The object is measured and photographed with particular attention to any marks or damage, before being wrapped in acid free tissue paper or placed (as with paper items) a specially formulated transparent envelope. It is then placed in a numbered and indexed museum quality storage box.

Recording the collection is a work in progress and we are happy to say we are forging well ahead. Our recently built storage space is an enormous improvement on our old library store- now given over to Jennifer and her books. Our ultimate aim is to have a place for everything and everything in it's place.

Our hard copy is currently being transferred to a computer system which will enable us to locate any specific object for display, research, repair etc.

For instance we may need to locate a plate which features the statue of John Bunyan.

A search beginning 'plate, statue' will bring up information on all the plates we have depicting a picture of the statue. This will include photographs, dimensions, location, box number item number - indeed everything we initially recorded. This then allows us to access the object we are looking for without disturbing other artefacts. Job done!

Helen Kennedy

Ruth Blake writes:



Calling all knitters & crocheters - Bedford Hospital Neo Natal unit are looking for tiny hats and 2"- 3" blankets. I only know this because my Cousin has had her little girl last week, at 34 weeks and 4lb 8oz. She is called Sofia, and both Mum and Baby are doing well. My Grandfather is still in the Archer Unit at the time of writing. Getting better slowly, but we're still not sure when he will be home.

Ruth

Tear Fund Big Quiz Night

Saturday 14 November 2020



We hosted a very successful Quiz Night last year but this year will be very different.

This year's Quiz will be held 'on line' on Saturday 14 November at 7.30pm.

Last year Tear Fund raised £250,000 with 562 churches taking part.

If you would like to take part **please email Tom Barwood** who has agreed to host the Quiz again this year.

Email: tommybarwood@yahoo.com

Thank you.

Jocelyn

Keeping safe

When you see people blatantly ignoring the safety measures during this pandemic, it's so easy to get angry. Seeing the crowds outside pubs in Glasgow and Liverpool, shoulder to shoulder and no face covering whilst the sick and dying numbers mount, your mildest comment is, 'Why?' It is our right to demonstrate about what we consider

an injustice of course, but have we not learnt from history that you should fight one enemy at a time, and Covid-19 is an enemy.

Mind you, as I take my morning and afternoon stroll I find most people are friendly. When I move aside to allow space I often say something like, 'Sorry, I'm not being rude.' The idea of doing that is twofold; it makes me feel better because deliberately showing you are avoiding someone makes me feel uncomfortable as it is not my way, it also breaks the ice. Often you will get a smile back but if you pass them another day, you may even get a 'good morning'. Also, I know if I do react negatively to poor safety I may have to face that person again and that could be embarrassing.

With the lack of contact most of us have at the moment we need friends more than ever and I do like the line from the song, 'A stranger is a friend you've never met.'

Keep safe,

Ken Thomas

Bedford Food Bank

Due to the lockdown restrictions imposed on Thursday 5 November, the church will not be open to receive Food Bank food donations for 4 weeks. As far as we know, the Bedford Food Bank is operating, and can be contacted through their website:

<https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk>

or by telephone - **01234 268569**

To donate by post, please make cheque payable to 'Bedford Food Bank' and send them to - 71 Murdock Road, Manton Industrial Estate, Bedford MK41 7PL



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 **Ruth Blake** and **Wendy Carter**.



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