



Bunyan Meeting

News Letter/50

SUNDAY 11 APRIL 2021

Dear Friends,

When Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked upon his desert island, he sat down and began to consider the negatives and the positives of his situation: *“I am cast upon a horrible, desolate island, void of all hope of recovery. But I am alive and not drowned. I am singled out and separated, as it were, from all the world, to be miserable. But I am singled out, too, from all the ship’s crew, to be spared from death. I am divided from mankind; one banished from human society. But I am not starved, and perishing on a barren place, affording no sustenance. I have no clothes to cover me. But I am in a hot climate, where, if I had clothes, I could hardly wear them. I am without any defence, or means to resist any violence of man or beast. But I am cast on an island where I see no wild beasts to hurt me. I have no soul to speak to or relieve me. But God wonderfully sent the ship in near enough to the shore, that I have got out as many necessary things as will either supply my wants or enable me to supply myself, even as long as I live.”* He concluded: *“Upon the whole, here was an undoubted testimony that there was scarce any condition in the world so miserable but there was something negative or something positive to be thankful for in it.”*



Crusoe had come to terms with his situation and was able to be thankful for all the various circumstances of his life, both good and ill.

The apostle Paul similarly knew both bane and blessing as he went about his ministry, but was also able to come to terms with his circumstances. Like Crusoe, we can find Paul balancing difficulty with a “but”: *“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”* (2 Corinthians 4 v 8 - 9)

We might say today: *“We are locked down, but we have comfortable homes to live in. We cannot meet with our friends, but we can see them on Zoom. We are hesitant about visiting the supermarket, but our groceries are delivered to our door. We have been afraid of contracting Covid, but now we are vaccinated.”*

Here surely is the secret of serenity. When we weigh our adventures and misadventures one against the other, we usually find that life is far more balanced than might at first appear. No trial or peril need be intolerable or overwhelming. God is faithful and He will not fail those who dare to place their trust in Him.

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

“God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

(1 Corinthians 10 v 13)

Easter Sunday Service

Our Easter Sunday service was well attended and the sun shone on us! It was good to be together again for a service and being outside we were allowed to sing.



CCC Face to Face worship

We will meet again in the garden for our CC&C All Age Service, next Sunday, the 18th April, at 9.30am.

Sunday Worship

Due to the current Covid restrictions and the redecoration of the church, Bunyan Meeting will remain closed for regular face to face worship, although with the warmer weather coming we will hold some services in the garden. Details of these services will be advertised in this newsletter.

The weekly services will continue to be distributed by email and delivered to those without access to the internet.



Website update

Here are some new resources we've added to the Church website:

Worship

<https://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk/copy-of-this-month-s-services>

'You raise me up'. HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Helen Nellis, brings a virtual service to the people of Bedfordshire to reflect on the Easter message of rebirth and renewal as we move forward and strive to shape a better world.

News and activities

<https://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk/copy-of-forthcoming-events>

'Building Life Flourishing Communities' - a series of webinars on contemporary issues being offered by the Council for World Mission Europe.

Monday 12 April 14:00 - 15:30 Priya Lukka, 'What would life-flourishing reparations look like?'

Monday 26 April 13:00 - 14:30 Rev. Julie Sim 'Big data in the age of surveillance capitalism'

Monday 10 May 14:00 - 15:30 Maxime De Palm 'Art & life-flourishing communities'

Monday 24 May 14:00 - 15:30 Prof. Dr. Anthony Reddie 'Theological implications for the legacies of slavery: Some preliminary thoughts'

For each presentation, individual Zoom links will be provided.

Contact Sai & Michael at cwm.europe@cwmission.org

You can view on YouTube recordings of those that have already taken place.

Mission

<https://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk/mission-at-bunyan-meeting>

Easter at Hope Spaces Bedford. There is a link to a video about their new window display which is focussed on Easter. You can find Hope Spaces Bedford next to Costa Coffee at the Midland Road end of Allhallows.

Thank you for your ideas for new web resources; they are always very welcome! We'd also love to receive any feedback you have about these web pages.

Ann Davies, Ian Rowlands, Lydia Saul, David Walker, Janet Wootton



So, who was up the ladder and why?

A couple of people thought they recognised my jacket but didn't think it could be me. Well, it was!

If you look at the wall just above the porch into the museum entrance, entering from the church garden, you will see a small piece of equipment attached to the wall. That is a crucial part of our Hanwell monitoring equipment for the Library, Museum and Museum Store where there are sensors which monitor the levels of temperature and humidity to ensure our valuable books and artefacts are not damaged. The equipment outside allows the data to be sent to the computer in the curators office where it can be stored and checked

regularly. It prints the stats as graphs and alerts the curator to any changes which occur and may need remedial action; for instance recent damp problems on the outside wall

of the library had soaked through into the library and so books were moved before damage was done and a dehumidifier installed.

The equipment outside needed new batteries and Raj was going to install them for us but on the day we had planned he was unwell, so having driven into Bedford and paid to park the car I didn't feel inclined to waste the opportunity. With the help of Helen and with Sue Stewart keeping a watchful and wary eye we got the ladder out and into position. I decided to have a go and see how safe I felt. I had to take a towel from the kitchen to put over the very sharp spikes along the edge of the porch (to keep the pigeons away) to stop my jacket from being ripped. Two rungs short of the top of the ladder and I could reach the sensor and lift it off the bracket and lower it down to Helen in a shopping bag. As Helen had not only to replace the batteries but also had to ensure the equipment was working and relaying to the computer I decided to come back down. Once satisfied all was working, up I went again. I have to confess it felt more of an ordeal the second time but that might be because Sue looked so anxious and had her finger on the 9 button on her phone ready to call the paramedics and ambulance!

However, the monitor was replaced and all was well. Not too sure I will be doing it again though, but not bad for 73+ eh?!

Cherry Protheroe

Equality

Is it me or has there been a noticeable increase in the number of female news presenters and reporters on television over the last year? Now this may have been due to male bias in the past and TV and radio companies are trying to redress the balance so I just raise the issue and do not comment.

This reminded me of the conversations in the press and media about the lack of females represented on statues throughout the UK. This was no doubt down to male dominance of the senior positions and the role of women in earlier years so perhaps a redress is proper.



But it did prompt me to want to highlight Bedford as a possible pioneer in this area. We do have a female represented on a statue, it is of Queen Æthelflæd. She was the leader of the Mercians who defended Bedford against the Danes back in the 10th century. Charles Jagger was commissioned to create a war monument to honour the men of Bedford who gave their lives in the great war of 1914-18. When he heard of the heroic exploits of the Queen he softened the features of the soldier to make it feminine. It now stands proudly on the embankment.

Having seen the display of great lives at the Higgins, I have no doubt there is a strong argument for more female statues, and of course, without Mary's forbearance, would John Bunyan still have had the courage to continue his defiance of the king and church?

Keep safe, **Ken Thomas**

All's well that end's well

When my late wife Kirsteen and I and friends Pam and Peter were walking in Swaledale in Yorkshire we arrived at our pre-booked B/B to find the lady had forgotten we had booked. She explained how she had recently lost her husband and was in some distress.



Kirsteen Wells (left), and a friend, in hiking gear

However, she rang a friend up in the village and fixed us up for our night's stay. There were already two other couples in the house and the lady said she could provide us with an evening meal. After the meal we retired to the lounge for coffee and one of the other male guests asked if we could have the TV on as he wished to look at a special programme. The film was one taken during the Normandy Landings on D-Day in WW2, and included the building of the Mulberry Harbour on the landing beach. It was an amazing film and when it was over he proceeded to describe the part that he played in the building of the harbour.

He was a sergeant in a R.E.M.E. Battalion, and prior to D-Day they were moved and billeted near Hayling Island. He was trained there to take control with a small crew of a concrete Blockship, one of many that had been built on the mudflats around the island. On the given signal, they and their Blockship were towed across the English Channel. They experienced all the mayhem that was going on around the beaches and eventually were successful in positioning their Blockship on the seabed which went to make up part of the Mulberry Harbour.

This Mulberry Harbour was a great feat of engineering that had never been done anywhere in the world before.

Once this man and his crew had sunk their Blockship on the seabed, they landed and took up their place with the rest of the Battalion as part of the invasion force.

In no way was this man boastful of his exploits but was so interesting that we didn't get to bed until 2.00 am. We had met many men and women who had taken part in the D-Day landings but never a person who was involved in the building of the Mulberry Harbour.

Ken Wells

Redecorating of the Church

There are quite a large number of repairs required to damaged plaster so we have had to engage a specialist company to complete this work before the painters can continue their painting of some of the upper walls and ceiling.

BMS Birthday Scheme

If you wish to support the BMS through their Birthday Scheme, please contact Margaret Ormerod. It's a great way to celebrate a birthday. Thank you for your support.

This week, **Doreen Watson** celebrates her birthday.

Members of the Scheme can make donations online at bmsworldmission.org quoting our church reference number which is 7. Or you can send your donation to Margaret Ormerod at 32, Wheathouse Close, Bedford. MK41 8JX. Or simply wait until we are back at church and hand it to me there.

Many thanks, **Margaret**





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: **Bob Allen; Brian and Anne Tolley; Pam Drysdale; Wendy Carter; Jocelyn Harper.**



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