



Bunyan Meeting

News Letter/10

SUNDAY 21 JUNE 2020

Dear friends

I have sometimes wondered if I would have enough material for our weekly News Letter. One or two items will have arrived by the beginning of the week and it seems, at least momentarily, that the coming Sunday's edition will be very short indeed! But usually by Wednesday, there is a rush of material and so far, we have had plenty of items to fill our News Letter. Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far. Please do feel free to contribute regularly and if you have not sent anything for publication as yet, please consider writing something.

In this week's edition we have news of individuals, more memories of the Second World War and we hear from several people of how they became a part of the Bunyan Meeting family. We have some thoughts from the Deacons about the possible timescale for reopening the church for worship and there is also a note about our lock down worship material. Next week we hope to distribute a brief questionnaire about our worship material and we would welcome your thoughts and comments.

All items for the News Letter should be sent direct to me at chrisdamp@mac.com or by post to the church office for my attention.

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well.

Your friend and Minister

Chris

'O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; For his steadfast love endures for ever.

Some wandered in desert wastes,

Finding no way to an inhabited town;

Hungry and thirsty,

Their soul cried to the Lord in their trouble,

And he delivered them from their distress;

He led them by a straight way,

Until they reached an inhabited town.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love...'

Psalm 107 v 1 & 4 - 8



Coffee via Zoom

At 10.15 today we will be holding our first Zoom Chat, Coffee and Croissants! If you would like to join, please click the link below and hopefully we will be able to meet via the internet with our coffee and croissants for a catch up.

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77217598237?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77217598237?pwd=doVFeGRGTmRGYitsanZJdncrRTY5Zz09)

[pwd=doVFeGRGTmRGYitsanZJdncrRTY5Zz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77217598237?pwd=doVFeGRGTmRGYitsanZJdncrRTY5Zz09)

Meeting ID: 772 1759 8237

Password: 9FsfKE



Lockdown Lexicon!

When the virus officially became a pandemic, some words came into greater use in press releases and press conferences: ‘unprecedented’ and ‘exponential’ being the first two. These occurred in many sentences and if you were very lucky they may both have appeared in the same sentence!

Then along came:

1. **Sage:** no, not the herb you might use in cooking. In this case we hope it is some “wise and judicious” people advising our government.
2. **WHO:** is that the Doc or even the pop group you might just remember?
3. **PPE:** some think it is a “posh” degree.
4. **PHE:** aren’t they the firm who empty the sanitary bins in the toilets at church?!
5. **Gowns:** but not the ones worn by our choir.
6. **Flattening the curve:** what we try to do by dieting or going to the gym.
7. **Furlough:** not to be confused with furlong. Remember the table those of us of a certain age had to learn at school: 22 yards in a chain (the length of a cricket pitch), 10 chains in a furlong (something to do with horse racing?) and 8 furlongs in a mile. Now why did we need to know that? But more to the point, how come I can still remember it.....
8. **R:** something my dear old GP, Doc Murdie asked me to say when he put a spatula in my mouth to have a look at my tonsils!
9. **Covid-19/Corona virus:** I thought I might be immune to the virus as I drank a lot of Corona as a kid....
10. **Cobra:** sounds like a venomous snake.
11. **Social distancing:** 2 metres or 6 feet – depending on your age! But there is a difference of 6.74 inches!!
12. **Anosmia:** lack of smell or taste – well, I didn’t know that one.
13. **Bloviator:** (C19) a speaker of empty rhetoric; someone who talks a lot but says very little.
14. A **“barny castle”:** a colloquial Northumbrian term meaning to give a poor excuse.
15. **Capacity:** what you might be able to achieve, but not what you actually do.....
16. **Spike:** no, not Milligan, but scary anyway especially as we might be heading for another one.
17. **New normal:** anyone who can define that deserves a medal.
18. **Bubbles:** I’m forever blowing them – actually I was quite good with the bubble gum as a kid!!
19. **Zooming:** Suddenly we all became experts, but it can be a bit scary having too many people’s faces on your computer screen at one time, but are you looking at the hairstyles or what’s on the wall behind them?
20. **And finally:** sadly this could rumble on for some time and the list will get longer, but for now it’s been a bit of fun.



When we heard about disinfectant injections or drinking bleach to fight the virus, and the best way to test your eyesight after being unwell is to do a 30 mile drive in your car, we really thought we had lost the plot.

But all of a sudden along came: ULTRACREPIDARIAN (just in case you don't know what it means it's "the habit of giving opinions and advice on matters outside of one's knowledge") – a Trumpian virus?!

Mrs Merkel of course, outdid them all with this: Offnungsdiskussionsorgien (orgies of debate about opening things up!)

And last but I am sure not the least, what is the correct way to say this number: 6,128,947,540.00?!

Cherry Protheroe

Memories of WW2

I have always lived in Bedford and was ten years old when war was declared. My father was called up a few days before as he was on the reserve for the Royal Navy and he was subsequently on the Arctic convoys.

When the evacuees arrived in Bedford, I reported to the local school and helped the teachers take the children to their billet, some were welcome, some were not!

During the bombing of Coventry and London could see the glow in the sky from our back garden. I believe that three landmines were dropped on Bedford and a number of bombs - one landed on the theatre near the station - attempting to bomb the railway.

To get home from the town in the evening I had to catch a bus in St. Paul's Square, so I used to listen to Glen Miller's Band playing in the Corn Exchange. When the American forces arrived in Bedford we thought how smart the uniforms were, especially the officers!

One day when walking with my little brother along Clapham Road, a convoy of American trucks passed us and threw sweets and oranges. When we first saw a 'Jeep' we were quite intrigued.

On D-Day our Headmaster assembled all the pupils in the hall to listen to the action on the radio.

After the War (including the war in the east) I remember standing on Midland Road railway bridge and watched the Japanese prisoners of war arrive home - so many times I had stood on that bridge to welcome my dad home on his leave!

Liz Jones

How did you to come to Bunyan Meeting?

Pat Stevens writes:

I first came to Bunyan in February 1935 when I was three weeks old to be baptised by Rev Ralph Turner. My mother was a member of Bunyan Meeting and her family had been members going back to Victorian times. As a young girl we lived in Kempston and I attended Kempston East Methodist Sunday School which was at the bottom of the road in which we lived. After the war we moved to Bedford and as my mother was still a member of Bunyan Meeting it was only natural that we came back to Bunyan.

I attended Children's Church and Sunday School and I joined the choir at the age of 13. I still sing in the choir 72 years later and choir practice on a Friday night has long been part of family life. I also belonged to the Young People's Society and Tennis and Badminton Clubs. Bunyan had a tennis court just off Devon Road, which is now Tiverton Road. Along with other young mums I joined Wednesday Circle, which is now called the Friendship Group. The group was started by Marion Glyn Evans (wife of the then minister Rev Glyn Evans) and original members included Cath Gipson, Brenda Carter, Kirsten Wells and Dorothy Nicholas.



I remember New Years Eve parties in the large hall followed by a service in the church at midnight. We also used to gather on Bank Holidays for some lovely guided walks through the Bedfordshire Countryside with our families. These amongst many other social events have meant that I have made so many friends throughout the years at Bunyan.

I was married at Bunyan in 1961 and when my daughters, Gillian and Jane, got married at Bunyan they became the fifth generation on my mother's side of the family to be married at the church.

Since attending Bunyan I have seen five ministers and four organists and choirmasters. Bunyan Meeting has always had a strong tradition of preaching and music and I feel very blessed and grateful for the love and happiness I have had from attending Bunyan Church.

Andy Graham writes:

I first came into contact with Bunyan meeting around 1994/95. It was not at the church but at a Barn dance they were holding (in an actual barn) I think on the Cople Road. Could it have been Alastair's farm? (Age fogs ones memories).

I was actually out on a ride on my motorcycle when I came across the sign reading 'All are welcome' at the front. So I pulled in. I was met by Miss Eileen Ruff who welcomed me and took me over to a seat, or rather a straw bale. I was invited to share in the Barbecue and later with the dancing. I got into conversations with different people and felt involved with them although we had only just met.

I learnt about Bunyan Meeting and was invited to their Sunday meeting. I was unable to attend but a few weeks later I decided to walk up to Mill Street and just 'pop in'. (I lived in Howbury street at the time). The minister was a Mr Peter Protheroe and I liked the style of service and his ministry. So I started to visit more often when work allowed me the time. The more regular I went the more people I got to meet. My attendance was more at an evening service as sometimes I would have to go out on work business during the day, so it became my 'norm' to attend the later services.

Eventually I was asked if I wanted to become a 'member'. I really did not know what this involved but said I would give it a try. On the designated Sunday I was supported by Eileen alongside Arthur & Peggy Pestell. It was Arthur who talked me into climbing up a ladder to help clean the circular windows in the hall. Health & Safety checks??? No I would be ok, Arthur would hold the ladder

From then on I became more involved with Bunyan and their events. I was invited to join the social committee which meant I was involved with the extra events that would run to help church funds (or at least help contribute). Events would be varied: Pancake evening, Christmas craft fair, Quiz night, Beetledrives, Social outings etc. One year we arranged to be part of the River festival float event. We recreated the cell in which John

Bunyan wrote Pilgrims Progress. Got Ray to hire the flat bed lorry from his works and to drive it for us and the Friday evening prior we spent hours building and painting the cell and fixing it to the flatbed. Eileen was Mrs Bunyan and John (?) was the man himself both dressed in suitable clothing of that period and John with his quill gazing out of his cell window, plus volunteers walking alongside the float with their collecting buckets. We came 3rd in the visitors choice of most impressive float. We had also built the Swan Hotel complete with signage as was in those days. This was inside the hall. Sue (Gauley) helped get together the serving maids who also dressed the part. Those in the kitchen certainly were busy when the Swan was open. I think it was all a great success. The cell and the Swan when dismantled were held in the basement for a number of years and then moved out. I also help man the café on Sunday evenings via a rota and became a 'Listening Ear'. Now I act as editor for the Bunyan News. (I only said to Chris that 'If I can help in some way?' when he was asking for people to think about the role)

Thank you to all who help contribute to the magazine. It can be a challenge at times with both Susan and myself still working on it until 1 am in the morning then having to send it over for printing and dispatching that same day. I am hoping we can get it up and running again around September.

I enjoy being a part of Bunyan Meeting and look forward to being with you all again.

Until then, stay safe. My kindest regards,

Andy

Meeting for Worship



As lockdown starts to ease, many of our folk have been wondering when face to face worship is likely to resume again at Bunyan Meeting.

It is a difficult question, and there are a number of factors we need to take into account:

First and foremost, the safety of all our people. This includes our worshippers (especially as many are in older age ranges or have health concerns), our minister, organist, and all those who greet and lead; and our staff.

We have to consider not only the safety but also the welfare of all our staff, whether furloughed or still working. In all that we do, we must act with their wellbeing in our minds.

Advice from a number of church bodies has been not to rush into reopening. There are a great many issues to take into consideration, and we will want to give careful thought to matters such as sanitising, face covering, safe distancing, and so on.

Evidence suggests that singing, in particular, has been a means of transmission of the virus. We may want to think about what worship would be like without being able to sing God's praises!

The view of the Minister and the Deacons is that the building will not open until the autumn at the earliest, and possibly not until the end of the year.

However . . . that doesn't mean that nothing can happen. We all appreciate the excellent worship that has been provided right from the very beginning of lockdown in March. Indeed many have said that they hope something of this kind continues to be produced in the long term.

And there is a possibility that we could hold gatherings outdoors, perhaps in the church garden, in the summer months if restrictions allow for this. This needs careful planning, and numbers would be limited, but it would give the opportunity to those who wished and were able, to meet face to face for fellowship and prayer.

We will keep you informed as the summer proceeds, and the situation moves on. In the meantime, please continue to enjoy our 'remote' worship, and keep each other in prayer.

David Walker writes:

Stevie Wonder, Julie Walters, Narendra Modi, Harriet Harman, Richard Branson and Princess Anne ... may all be wondering, as I do, where has the time gone? We who were born in 1950 have lived through some wonderful decades ... the 'golden era' of the 50's, the 'swinging' 60's, the 70's, 80's, the eras of creativity, of huge technical leaps ... and of Apple computers!

But for me, one of the best decades has been the 2010's, and the 'Bunyan Meeting' years. Being 'head-hunted' by Chris (we share the same hairdresser); developing the Basement at Bunyan; working with Janet, Chris, Brian and Steve, the worship team; and seeing the birth of 'Christ, Coffee & Croissants'. Above all this has been 'meeting' all of the wonderful people of Bunyan, and the welcome and friendship you have shown me ... in the worship, at the Wednesday lunches, with the Museum staff and volunteers, within the office, and, best of all, over coffee and frangipane tarts in the Lobby.

A selfie taken by my niece, Niky, of the family celebrating (on the common in Redbourn) two birthdays: mine and second niece Hannah's; last weekend.



These past three months have been tough in many ways, although life in Redbourn with its common, footpaths, fields, river and hills has been a good place to be 'restricted' in. But I have missed being with everyone at Bunyan ... so being able to be involved in the preparation of the weekly emailed services has helped so much in bringing many of you back into my current lockdown life.



Your remembering my birthday on the 12th of this month, has meant a lot to me ... and I want to thank all of you who sent cards, emails, e-cards, gifts and greetings. I was overwhelmed by your kindness, and I'm so sorry that I couldn't thank you in person.

There were several socially-distanced events in Redbourn – with family and friends, some of whom shared my birthday month - so this, and your sharing of it, has made in a very special birthday year.

Audrey Mehew writes:

I am sorry for the delay in thanking you for yesterday's lovely service and News Letters. I am fine - it is my computer giving me problems! I enjoyed reading once again how people first came to worship at Bunyan. It is a good idea. I have managed to locate my diaries so will plough through the many years and hopefully send a contribution! Hope David had a Happy Birthday.

Norman and Jean Browning write:

I thought I would let you know about us and our appreciation of being kept in touch with happenings at Bunyan. The News Letter is great, in some ways we feel this keeps us in touch more than we have been for some time. I suggest it may be good if this could in fact be continued after "lockdown". The services are also much appreciated, in fact I

think that I have gained here because for some time with my hearing problem getting worse I now get a sermon! Wonder what the new system in church will be like? Unfortunately it will not help when I am in the foyer for coffee because no aids have been able to solve the fact that background noise overrides the voice of people that you are speaking to! It is very trying and I know all people that I am aware of with hearing aids find the same thing. So a big thank you to all who produce the goods!



Jean has had some heart issues and had to spend a night in hospital which was a bit concerning during this period of Covid 19. After a number of tests they found that she had been overdosed with a certain tablet that had caused her to have a seriously low heartbeat, so she was immediately taken off them and has been better since.



Some years ago I made contact with a lovely lady who lived almost opposite to us. She left Bedford about 15 years ago and wanted us to have some poppy plants from her garden. I think we managed to keep them for two years and then they vanished as things do in the garden. Over the last 2 years we have been organising our main flower bed to make the upkeep easier. This spring we noticed two poppy plants appearing in a rather unsuitable place. We were not sure whether to leave them or take them out. We decided to leave them and they grew to large plants and produced magnificent blooms in delightful colours. They are the same type of flowers we were given all those years ago. One wonders if they could have laid dormant for all those years?

The 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 coming week, **Evan Griffiths** celebrates his 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**

Lockdown Heroes

You may have seen the Congregational Federation's Prayer Resource: A Secluded Place. There is a link from our website. I put last Thursday's edition on the Bunyan Meeting Facebook Page, as it was asking who our Lockdown Heroes are – not the big ones like the NHS, but the people we know.

I would like to mention two heroic teams, who have risen to the challenge at Bunyan Meeting, and ridden to the rescue. This week I would like to celebrate our Lockdown Worship Heroes: our minister, Chris Damp, Brian Caves and David Walker.

The worship provided by this group has been hugely appreciated by people inside and beyond our church fellowship. It is produced to a highly professional

standard, with well-sourced music, clear teaching, and a host of activities and resources, encompassed in a sumptuously illustrated order of service.

We value Chris's theological insight, in the way the whole service works together, but most of all, in the sermon, which is always to the point, inspiring and practical. Brian draws on his wide knowledge of Christian hymns and music by providing You Tube recordings that help us reflect on the message of the service, and bring their own inspiration.

And the whole service flows from page to page, with the most amazing design and well-chosen images. David weaves together pictures sent by church members, art works from a whole range of resources.

We praise God for these, among the many Lockdown Heroes at Bunyan Meeting. Hallelujah!

Janet Wootton

It has been said, that people don't care how much we know, until they know how much we care.

A missionary is not a person who crosses the seas but a person who sees the Cross.

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 **Ruth Blake, Wendy Carter, Delia O'Halloran, Linda Garner and her family.**



Bunyan Meeting

Mill Street
Bedford MK40 3EU

email bunyanmeeting@gmail.com

website www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk