



Bunyan Meeting

News Letter/1

SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2020

Dear friends

It is good to be back to my regular duties as Minister at Bunyan Meeting. Thank you for your cards, telephone calls, prayers and good wishes during my absence, these have been much appreciated. I must thank David Walker, Janet Wootton and Brian Caves for their work in producing the services that we have enjoyed during recent weeks and all those others who have worked so hard to ensure that the work of Bunyan Meeting continues during these difficult days.

I mentioned my return to regular duties, but this is far from the reality of the situation. We live in strange, uncertain and troubling times. The usual fellowship we enjoy at our Sunday worship now continues through services on the internet, telephone calls or perhaps through social media. Our many and various activities at Mill Street have ceased. My pastoral visits now comprise of a telephone call. So in order to help maintain our sense of fellowship and belonging I hope that we will be able to produce a regular News Letter with some information about the practical matters connected with the life of the church, but more importantly, containing our own news; the news of what we are doing during these difficult days. I appreciate the contributions from several of our folk that we include in this first news letter.

Please could I encourage you all to pass on something of what you are doing, your photographs, thoughts and experiences at this time so that these can be shared in this news letter with the rest of the church family? These can be sent to me by email minister@bunyanmeeting.co.uk or by post to me at the church office.

We have missed our regular prayer list which we usually use during worship. If you would like your name to appear on the church prayer list, again, please contact me and let me know.

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well.

Your friend and Minister

Chris

Lamentations 3:22-23

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

Ken Wells writes

It is said that out of all evil comes some good.

Because of the Virus I can report on 4 acts of kindness shown to me--

A young couple moved in nearly opposite me 3 years ago and I called at their door to to welcome them to Putnoe Lane. Since then my only contact with them was an occasional hand wave. Recently they pushed a note through my door offering to do anything for me during this time if I had a need. They gave me both their phone numbers.



My butcher in Castle Road kindly offered to deliver my meat order each week. Upon delivery not only was there the meat, but a bag of goodies made by his wife such as Sausage Rolls, a portion of Cream Sandwich, and even a Bacon and Onion Roll.

On Easter Saturday I received by post all the way from Hampshire a Simnel Cake made by my Daughter-in-Law.

Numerous cards and phone calls from our Church folk.

I consider myself truly blessed by our Lord in my hours of isolation.

Reflections and Restrictions in Redbourn by David Walker

The coronavirus threat does hang over us all, and we cannot be unaware of the suffering of those who are infected and the heroism of those who care for them. We also know how hard it is for many during these lockdown days. These are realities, but so are the positives that have come out of the restricted times.



As I was queueing in line (2 metres apart) at the Co-op in Redbourn, I reflected that the patience and acceptance of having to wait to get shopping had slowly become the norm. Time is expanded and simply 'being' in a country that is normally a 'doing' culture, is very refreshing to me – it reminds me of life in rural Tanzania.

The spring weather helps too. As I walk the footpaths and woods around the village on my daily permitted exercise, the birdsong is clearer (no aeroplanes) the air seems cleaner (fewer cars), and, in contrast to our constrained lives, nature is bursting, extravagantly, on every side. In one walk alone, I will see a haze of bluebells, cowslips, stitchwort, and blackthorn blossom. Twig-bearing birds flit by the hedgerows and rooks 'caw' over their nests high up in the trees above me.

When I cycle – again in my one-hour time slot – in lanes heading out into the Chiltern Hills, other cyclists outnumber the cars. There are the MAMILs (Middle-Age Men In Lycra), crouched over their handlebars, putting the energy that would normally drive their working day into trying to get up a hill without changing gear. There are also families, mum and dad, and children on bikes that have hardly lost their stabilisers, enjoying the traffic-free roads and the simple pleasure of being out in the countryside together.

We have lost – and are losing – a lot in these challenging times, but we are also gaining much, not least a greater appreciation of the importance of the balance between ourselves, and our lifestyles, and the rest of creation.

Audrey Mehew writes about the Good Friday Service

What a wonderful service. It had me in tears. My daughter living in the West Midlands has had to guide me over all this new technology this week but has obviously done a great job as you certainly have. Being over 80 I am staying in apart from walking round the village on a 20 minute walk, but have looked forward to mastering this new technology each day and I felt I was at church. Thank you. I have also discovered I am not a great singer!!

Mary Hicks writes of the Easter services

Thank you all who have done so much to keep me in touch with all the services and news over this major festival

IT HAS BEEN SUCH A HELP.

Andy Graham writes

Thank you for this Easter Sunday service. I really felt as if I was with you although in reality in spirit. It gave me a real boost. Thanks to all involved.

Life in Lockdown in Little Staughton

That's quite alliterative!

As our "new way of life" was just sinking in it was also (for me anyway!) quite hard to accept that we found ourselves in the "elderly and vulnerable" bracket. Not being able to get a home delivery slot from a supermarket in anything under 3 weeks ahead, I find myself once a week in the queue at Waitrose St Neots at 7.40am ready for them to open at 8.00. I am usually about 6 in the queue, with gloves, anti-bac wipes and sanitiser. Last week I was delighted when the queue supervisor asked my age (as he wanted to ensure only the elderly and vulnerable go in during the first hour). He's my favourite!

Not a day goes by when we don't give thanks for living in a rural area – it seems safer somehow. We are normally aware of the birds singing but now like everyone else they are even more clearly heard and appreciated, as are the blue skies, the colours of all the plants in the garden and the stars and the moon at night. The silence is almost deafening.

Our village has set up a "Good Neighbour" scheme so there is always someone on hand if needed, to help with shopping, collect prescriptions from the next village or just lend a friendly ear. The village farm shop are doing sterling work keeping us and surrounding villages well catered for with anything from fruit and veg, to newspapers, bread and most other grocery items and dog, cat and horse feed! And we live less than a ¼ of a mile away.

I felt quite privileged to be asked by Doreen Watson to pick up the Church Contacts List for Bromham and have enjoyed some lovely conversations with my "flock" who I call each week. Nicola is still working on Museum things partly from home and partly in the office so I am in touch with her regularly. The Easter Egg Hunt which should have happened this week will be going out to 4 local schools where they have children in being looked after during lockdown. And I am trying to support Sue Stewart in the church office as she works hard to ensure we can keep in touch with all of you.

So ... my study is still a bit of a mess; the books I was hoping to read are still unopened and the jigsaw puzzle remains in its box.

Meanwhile, Peter stays fed and watered (!) whilst he retains contact with his flock from Thurleigh by phone and email. I managed to get him out for a short walk two days in a row, but that was a bit much, so I am off now for my daily constitutional.

Stay safe.

Cherry Protheroe

Church Finances

The current situation has placed an increased strain on the church finances. Several people have begun to give their offerings by Standing Order so that funds will be available to the church. If you would be able to give by standing order, please contact the church office and we will send you a Standing Order form for you to complete and post to your bank.



The Chapel by R. S. Thomas (1913–2000)

A little aside from the main road, becalmed in a last-century greyness, there is the chapel, ugly, without the appeal to the tourist to stop his car and visit it. The traffic goes by, and the river goes by, and quick shadows of clouds, too, and the chapel settles a little deeper into the grass.

But here once on an evening like this, in the darkness that was about his hearers, a preacher caught fire and burned steadily before them with a strange light, so that they saw the splendour of the barren mountains about them and sang their amens fiercely, narrow but saved in a way that men are not now.

A selection of photographs showing Church Easter flowers; and spring blossoms & flowers sent in by Bunyan Meeting members



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