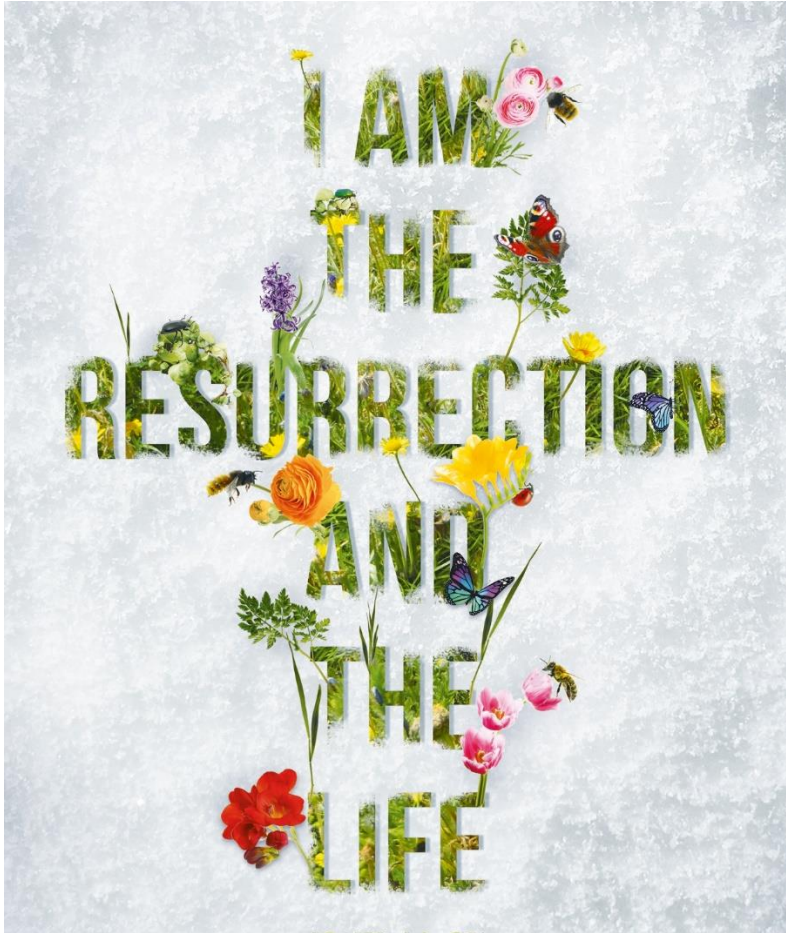


# Connections



Ashbourne Methodist Circuit  
Magazine May 2020

## Letter from the Minister



The Manse, 16 Booth Drive  
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Dear Friends,

*“I am with you always”*

As we continue through this difficult, turbulent and uncertain time, it seems that the end is not in sight.

We make our plans for the future, keep going day by day, look out for one another and ourselves, but it can seem as if we're in a rut, in a groove,

not of our doing, that we can't get out of easily. We are encouraged to take a daily exercise, to go for a short walk near our homes. It reminds me of the walk to Emmaus, when the friends of Jesus were in a situation, not dissimilar to our own. They walked, and as they did Jesus walked with them, though they were unaware it was him! They recognised him only after he had left them, by the words he had spoken, the actions he had done and his presence with them. It was only afterwards that they realised he'd walked with them.

So maybe your daily walk, either at home, in the garden, or down the road, could be an opportunity to have your own Emmaus experience, recalling the promise of Jesus “I am with you always...” I hope the words of this sometimes forgotten song will encourage you at this time:

*Walk with me, oh my Lord,  
through the darkest night  
and brightest day  
be at my side, oh Lord,  
hold my hand and guide me on my way.*

Sometimes the road seems long,  
my energy is spent.  
Then, Lord, I think of you  
and I am given strength.

Stones often bar my path,  
and there are times I fall,  
but you are always there  
to help me when I call.

Just as you calmed the wind  
and walked upon the sea,  
conquer, my living Lord,  
the storms that threaten me.

Help me to pierce the mists  
that cloud my heart and mind,  
so that I shall not fear  
the steepest mountainside.

*Estelle White*

May the conversations we have by phone, text, email, letter and card enable us to remember we are not alone, but that we walk this road with our Christian brothers and sisters who can be Christ to us, even when we are sometimes unaware of it.

Your minister and friend,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Tomis". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

## **Ashbourne Church Family News**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7*

We extend our love and prayers to all who will miss Dorothy Critchlow who passed away on 9 April. Dorothy, 96 years, had done so much for the Alstonefield community and died at Dove House Residential Home.

Congratulations to Andrews Sales who, from the end of September, will be a Graduate Development Planner at AECOM (an American multinational engineering firm) in Chesterfield.

Just before lockdown, Louise Roberts, Sarah Butler and Kevin joined us in worship and we give them a warm welcome.

Let's remember those of our young people who would have taken external exams, Beth Peers and Molly Dawson, Thomas Haines and Jacob Morris with GCSEs. They have a waiting time which can be stressful. David Haslam has returned to work in Beijing.

Many of us are benefitting from the service sheets that are sent out week by week or by accessing the sheets on the internet so that we can worship together on a Sunday morning or at another convenient time. We are appreciative of all those who take part in leading our worship together and those who are skilled at using technology for our benefit. There are at least 42 people mentioned in our Prayer Diary who live alone but who have the opportunity to feel part of the congregation on a Sunday as we worship the living God who knows each of us by name.

A number of our fellowship work in the NHS, or have children who work in the NHS or in social care, so we need to pray for them as they would often like to support their families but are unable to be with them.

Emily Peers, a young nurse from our congregation, is looking after Covid-19 patients. A number are working from home or are key workers.

I have been so encouraged by hearing of phone calls made, texts and cards sent, emails, video calls, 'zoom' meetings and offers of shopping to mention a few. Let's keep up the caring, sharing and praying for those we know. Carole Thorpe, David Franklin, Barbara Hollands, Sally Wall, Betty Hadley and Jenny Waring are still on our prayer list as well as those who live alone and cannot have the visits from family or friends that they used to have.

If you have specific matters you would like to share with someone for prayer, contact your pastoral visitor or housegroup.

*Joyce Odell, Pastoral Secretary 15.04.20*

## **'Lockdown'**

### **A poem by Father Richard Hendricks**

Yes, there is fear.  
Yes, there is isolation.  
Yes, there is panic buying.  
Yes, there is sickness.  
Yes, there is even death.

But,  
they say that in Wuhan, after so many years of noise,  
you can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet  
the sky is no longer thick with fumes,  
but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi  
people are singing to each other  
across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open  
so that those who are alone  
may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.  
Today a young woman I know  
is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood  
so that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today churches, synagogues, mosques and temples  
are preparing to welcome and shelter  
the homeless, the sick, the weary.  
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.  
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality.  
To how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters.  
To Love.

So we pray and we remember that  
yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the soul  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.  
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.  
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic  
the birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
and we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul  
and though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
sing.

*(contributed by Tim Dutton)*

## **Visit to Nepal**

**by Richard and Joyce Odell**

On 12th February 2020 Richard and I arrived back in Nepal, just 50 years to the day since I had first arrived. What a joy to meet friends who had been nurses in training then, and who now have their own children and grandchildren. We talked about the changes we saw in Nepal and we had many curry and rice meals in the houses of friends.

There have been many changes since we retired in 2011, but also much that remained the same. In the remote villages, subsistence farming remains the main occupation apart from dangerous labouring in the cities of India, Malaysia and the Middle East. Poverty also remains a big problem in these villages and the International Nepal Fellowship has recently started a very remote community health and development project in Kalikot District, in the Far West.

Kalikot is the least developed district in Nepal these days and will in every way be similar to Burtibang, where we worked 30 years ago – remote, no roads, little education, poor health facilities, many girls illiterate, no clean water supply or toilets and also little in the way of income generation, via agriculture and handicrafts.

In Burtibang, in the early '90s, health was largely tackled through development in women's literacy, income generation, vegetable growing, toilets and clean water, school health and forestry. We saw big and lasting progress, and it was a joy to visit Burtibang again for a couple of nights, after a nine-hour bumpy ride in a crammed jeep. However, the amazing mountain views made up for the discomfort. The only less palatable difference was the growth of multi-storey houses on what had once been beautiful rice fields around the village.

The churches we had known from long ago had also changed. In 1970 there was one church in Pokhara, where we lived. Now there are about 60 there and in the surrounding villages. Christians in Nepal now number over a million in a population of about 28 million. On the three Saturdays we went to different churches. The first in Pokhara was full to overflowing with a congregation of about 400. This is the oldest church in Nepal, established in 1952. The following week we were in Burtibang, a young church of about 80 people and then we worshipped in our old church in Kathmandu.

Nepal is now a country in lockdown as we write this, but without our NHS. But the churches do have a social arm, doing all they can to feed returned migrant workers and the very poor who only have enough food for the day.

So, our visit has been a delightful though challenging time. A big thank you to those of you who prayed for us. We kept safe from accident and illness and saw a country rapidly developing in business, industry, health and education.

# **Our families in the NHS**

**from Mike and Cherry Dennison**

No doubt some reading this article have families, friends or neighbours working in the NHS. We are applauding them for their dedicated work at the present on our behalf. All of us have personal concerns for their safety and welfare. Of course we recognise too those with acute financial insecurity and social need.

In our shut-up family we have four hospital doctors some of whom are working “on the front line”. We also have a number of friends in general practice. At this time of writing (the first week in April) we are praying and hoping for a fuller supply of resources for the medics. In particular testing is an issue. The availability of more testing for Covid-19 would greatly improve personnel and contact management.

Our eldest son Nick is an anaesthetist working partly in Intensive care (ITU) and therefore is more liable to be in contact with the virus. His family situation highlights the difficulties and risks of health care workers in the hospital and medical environment and concerns about their families.

He and Bex have a three-year old son, called Alfie, who is having intensive chemotherapy to treat blood cancer and therefore is immuno-suppressed. After his successful intense induction of treatment in Southampton Paediatric Oncology unit (8 days), Alfie has been admitted twice already in the last few weeks for temperatures, and in this current admission has had blood transfusions and his mother has to stay in hospital with him.

As a result (some of you may know) that Nick has had to isolate from Bex, Alfie and Oillie (11 months old) and is living in a campervan outside his house in Camberley, Surrey. Nick at the moment is in conflict as he is an officer in the Army and might be redeployed from his regular hospital (Frimley Park). We are very much hoping for a resolution of this on compassionate grounds.

If in your family you have similar connections, then share with church friends and find support and some peace. In these difficult times, please let us all draw closer to God and pray for the many “on the front line.”

*Psalm 46 promises:*

*“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”.*

## Royal Derby Hospital

As part of the chaplaincy team at the Hospital, I have received a letter from the Head of Chaplaincy asking if we can all join together in prayer at 3.00 pm each day to remember everyone in chaplaincy, the patients and the staff at the hospital. To spread the word and to stand strong together bringing compassion for each other.

*Elizabeth Spencer*

## **I'll tell you a tale that's been recently written...**

*This poem is a message of hope written by Matt Kelly, who works for the Wigan Council parks team, initially for his partner Jill Scully, a district nurse, who shared it with colleagues and on social media. Matt was inspired by Jill's hard work on the frontline of the Covid-19 response, and her daughter, Lily, expressing concern for her mum.*

I'll tell you a tale that's been recently written,  
of a powerful army, so Great it saved Britain.  
They didn't have bombs and they didn't have planes,  
they fought with their hearts and they fought with their brains.  
They didn't have bullets, armed just with a mask,  
we sent them to war, with one simple task:  
to show us the way, to lead and inspire us,  
to protect us from harm and fight off the virus.  
It couldn't be stopped by our bullet proof vests,  
an invisible enemy invaded our chests.

So we called on our weapon, our soldiers in blue,  
all doctors, all nurses, your country needs you!  
We clapped on our streets, hearts bursting with pride,  
As they went off to war, while we stayed inside.  
They struggled at first, as they searched for supplies,  
but they stared down the virus, in the whites of its eyes.

They leaped from the trenches and didn't think twice,  
some never came back, the ultimate price.  
So tired, so weary, yet still they fought on,  
as the virus was beaten and the battle was won.  
The many of us, owe so much to so few,  
the brave and the bold, our heroes in blue.  
So let's line the streets and remember our debt,  
we love you, our heroes, lest we forget.

*(contributed by Elizabeth Spencer)*



## **Ashbourne Food Bank is seriously short of food.**

None of the shops will allow them to bulk-purchase, so they are relying on individual donations. When you next do some essential food shopping, please consider whether you can buy something for the food bank and put it in the collection point in-store. DO NOT make a special trip to buy food for the food bank. Items needed: tinned meat for a main meal, tinned vegetables including potatoes, tinned fruit, rice pudding.

### *Signs of Hope*

Friends of our churches having been taking photos of things that symbolise hope. View them on our website at:  
[www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk/photos](http://www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk/photos)

## **Church Lunch Club**

It is 20 years since we started Luncheon Club. In the year 2000, the Lent Lunches which until then had always been held at St John's, were held in the Century Hall because of renovation works at St John's. Some of our ladies found that other churches held Church Lunches. Why didn't we? John Hurfurt came back to the Tuesday morning housegroup and asked if we would give it a go. So the Lunch Club was born.

The first one was held in May 2000, when the menu was pork casserole and fruit tart. The price was £3.00, and we have always used the Community Bus to bring people in (free to the user!). I think there were 30+ at that first lunch.

We have served roast pork 44 times, roast beef 34, sausages 26, roast lamb 27. We have also served chicken casserole, beef casserole, gammon, trout, various pies etc. The first two Christmases we served pork, but since then we have served turkey and all the trimmings.

Although some of the Tuesday housegroup are still involved, we now have a lot of other volunteers who help. Hopefully we will keep the Lunch going for a while to come.

Unfortunately, because of the circumstances prevailing at the moment, it appears unlikely that we shall be able to celebrate our 20 years anniversary at the end of May, but hopefully we can do this later in the year.

*Alma Swan*

# Primitive Methodism in Ashbourne

by Don Cox

I have been asked to put a few words down about Primitive Methodists in the Ashbourne area. Ashbourne was first mentioned early after the foundation of Primitive Methodist Connexion in 1811. Hugh Bourne, one of the co-founders of Primitive Methodists, was quite familiar with Ashbourne.

The first Primitive Methodist chapel was built in 1819, in what became known as Birch's Woodyard, which was just off Compton in Ashbourne. This, I believe, eventually became a Wesleyan chapel, because a new Primitive chapel was built in Dove House Green in 1862, just where the houses Nos 6,8 and 10 now stand.

Ashbourne first appeared on the Tunstall Primitive Methodist Plan of 1819. In the 1840's, Ashbourne Prims became part of the new Circuit of which Kniveton was the head. Then, in 1860, Ashbourne Prims became part of the Wirksworth Circuit and remained in this circuit until 1890, when the Ashbourne Circuit was formed. This was the last Primitive Methodist circuit to be formed in this district of Derbyshire.



*Beulah Primitive Methodist Chapel,  
Station Street, Ashbourne 1895-1965*

The Primitive chapel on Dove House Green was sold around 1894-1895, as it was becoming too small for the attendance. Then Beulah Chapel commenced building in Station Street in 1894. The cost to build Beulah was approximately £1,800, and it was opened with the first service taking place on Good Friday, 17 April 1895. The attendance for this service was around about the 300 mark, the special preacher for this service was the Rev G.R.D. Austin.

Now a little bit about worship at Beulah. Having been baptised, and then married there, it was close to my heart. We had the morning service at 10.45am and an evening service at 6.30pm. We used to have regular visits from the Salvation Army band and songsters: each Christmas they used to sing and play carols around the town, and then give our church a concert in the evening. Every Whitsun we used to have a trip to Cliff College to join in their worship weekend.

The Sunday School used to organise a visit around the other Ashbourne churches to celebrate each other's Sunday School Anniversary in the summer months - each time to packed churches. The other churches were: Trinity Methodist, the Congregational, Elim Hall and St Johns. When it came around to Harvest Festival time, we always had a sale of produce and supper on the Monday evening, but it all came to a sad end.

In later years, Beulah Church struggled with poor attendance and, after much thought and discussion, it was decided to close. Beulah had approached the Trustees of the Trinity Methodist Church, along with the Congregational chapel, with a proposal that a new united free church should be built in Ashbourne. The proposed site was where the Waitrose supermarket used to be.

The Trustees of Beulah met on Thursday 3 December 1964 to discuss the reply from Trinity, which was they could not see their way of accepting the Beulah proposal. Instead they suggested that a new joint trust should be formed, and Trinity modernised. This was when the decision to close Beulah was taken: "an opportunity missed".

The last services took place on 5 September 1965. After 70 years of worship, the morning service at 10.45am was taken by the Rev Eddie Smith, and evening service was taken by my cousin, Mr Donald H Dakin. I had the privilege of playing the organ for these services.

The members of Beulah then joined Trinity to form the Ashbourne Methodist Church we have today. Beulah Chapel was demolished and eventually, after many years, replaced by the three houses of Chapel Terrace.

## MISSION MATTERS

### News from Isabel and Jonathan Hill

Last week I received this update from Jonathan and Isabel Hill who are serving the Lord as missionaries in Zimbabwe. We need to pray for them in their responsibilities and for the children in their care, as well as the nation of Zimbabwe itself. They refer to the Victoria Falls (north of where they live) in full spate. I visited it in the 1960s, see my picture. Their three children are in the UK and Jonathan's mother lives in Burton.



*Richard Odell,  
World Mission Secretary  
[richard@richarddodell.co.uk](mailto:richard@richarddodell.co.uk)*

As everywhere, things are not normal. We are in 'lockdown' and trying to find new ways of doing whatever we did before. School term was originally planned to end on April 2nd, and indeed the government was saying that it should be so,

until a sudden change of mind on Thursday evening 19th March, when it was announced that schools would close on the following Tuesday, the 24th, which meant for boarding schools like Thekwane High the children would actually start going home on Monday morning.

No time then to give end of term tests or even to write reports on the basis of the term's exercises. There wasn't time to give classes work to keep them busy during the enforced absence, knowing as we did that the return date was impossible to predict. I quickly set up some blank websites, one for each of my classes, and gave them the addresses so that by the time they started to get fed up of sitting at home, I would have put something online for them.

The nationwide lockdown was announced on 27th March and it began Monday morning, 30th March. Public gatherings had already been banned, so the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, at Connexional level, hurriedly organised a live-streamed Sunday morning service for 29th March on Facebook. In Hillside Circuit, I asked the preacher who had been due to take the service at our Hillside Methodist Church to send me her sermon notes, so that I could post them on the circuit website.

Over the past week or so, I have been trying to redesign the website to make it more of a place to find worship resources. I have also been building up a network of communications so that information can quickly be spread around the members and friends of the circuit. “Steep learning curve” is the expression that could be applied here. We are not used to posting online worship, so it is not yet quite working as well as we would like, but at least something went out on Palm Sunday (yesterday) and the website smashed all previous records of visitor numbers, especially to the “Sunday Worship” page. We are now preparing for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day services.

Isabel is trying to monitor volunteers in the rural parts by phone, which is no substitute for visiting, but people are being strongly dissuaded from travelling. It was announced that security forces would “assist” people to observe the lockdown if necessary (“assist” being a euphemism for something much stronger!).

Isabel usually helps destitutes from her office in the city centre of Bulawayo by giving them food from time to time, but that is also impossible, so in one or two cases she is sending money instead. Many children around the district are struggling to pay school fees, so Isabel is sourcing money and helping to pay for 35 children at both primary and secondary school level, and to buy school shoes, uniforms and stationery, and so keep them in school (when schools eventually reopen).

It’s amazing how much needs to be done in the garden. We haven’t yet run out of jobs that need to be done. I specialise in mowing, clipping, pruning and wheelbarrow pushing; Isabel mostly does planting, watering, weeding, raking. The lockdown rules don’t allow for going out to exercise, unless you are walking to your nearest supermarket to buy essentials, but there is enough to be done in the garden that the Fitbit is kept happy.

I have been out a couple of times and supermarkets don’t seem to be replenishing their fresh produce very well, but hopefully that will improve. Isabel, like so many people in Zimbabwe, keeps a very good vegetable garden, and we also have a banana plant which might give us a bit of a harvest in the next few weeks.

We had been providing food for the children at Thekwane Primary School and there were still some non-perishable foodstuffs there when schools closed, but I don’t know how exactly the volunteers will be able to use them now that children will not be allowed to gather at the school.

You may have seen on the BBC some weeks ago that they were wondering if the Zambezi River, and hence the Victoria Falls, might be drying up. Well, I can assure you that there are now about four and a half thousand cubic metres of water going over the Falls per second. That's enough to fill over a hundred Olympic-sized swimming pools every minute. This will flow into Lake Kariba and raise its level sufficiently that they will eventually be able to increase the amount of electricity generated. Meanwhile they have managed to find other sources of electricity, so power cuts are much less frequent.

The rainfall here has not been as good as that in the Zambezi catchment area, so Bulawayo still has to be very careful with consumption levels if we are to get through the rest of the year without the city's taps running completely dry.

Susannah's graduation ceremony is supposed to be held in July. As with everything else, this is subject to confirmation nearer the date. We are looking forward to it, whether then or later. Stephen and Tony are not going to work at the moment until some sort of normality returns. My Mum continues to recover well from her hip replacement, but like many others, she is frustrated by not being able to go out.

*Jonathan and Isabel Hill*

## **'Cover our community with love' - a Craft & Chat project**

Even when we are separate it is good to do something together! Every week Craft & Chat at home is continuing to 'meet' on a Monday afternoon between 2 & 4pm. We have a Craft & Chat prayer we use to pray for one another. We also phone one another and share photos of the things we are creating via our WhatsApp group, Facebook page or by email. New 'members' are always welcome wherever you are, please join us!

So many people are showing love to one another at the moment in so many practical ways that we thought it would be a great idea to demonstrate our thanks by knitting and crocheting hearts. We are calling this project 'Cover our community with love'.

Whilst we knit or crochet, we sometimes choose to think of someone special to us who we would like to give that heart to. Already hearts have been knitted for grandchildren, and one has been knitted to remember a family member who has died, and a photo of it has been sent to grieving relatives.

We are also hoping that plenty of hearts will be created for people in our community whose names we may not know. What we would love to do is decorate our neighbourhoods or our town with lots and lots of colourful hearts once 'normal life' resumes. Our heart yarn bombing will show how much we appreciate the love and care shown to us. It may be that we eventually yarn bomb individual streets, yarn bomb shops, or decorate individual houses. We will see what the heart creators want to do!

Already some hearts are hanging in a tree outside a house in Ashbourne – something else for neighbours and passers-by to enjoy on their daily walks.



Some crafters are making one heart each day as part of a new daily routine. Some are making one every week. Others are enjoying manufacturing them in quantity. The project is there for everyone to use and enjoy as they wish. Anyone of any age is welcome to have a go. We know that lots of people already are – some are regular crafters, some are learners, and some haven't knitted or crocheted for years. We only know of one male knitter so far – more are very welcome!

As well as our friends knitting in Brailsford, we know we have

knitters in Scotland, Dorset and possibly Suffolk. Hopefully, they will use their hearts to cover their communities with love too.

Crochet and knitting patterns for hearts are available to download on the Craft & Chat page of the church website:

<https://www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk/activities/social/craftchat/>

Please dig out your needles and have a go. If you have no needles or wool and live in Ashbourne please get in touch – we have a stash we can access and will be able to deliver to your doorstep.

Happy crafting!

*Clare Sales(342321 or gatefarm10@btinternet.com) & Fiona Green*

# Messy Church?

by Jane Bowley

So what is Messy Church? Who is the audience? Why does Ashbourne Methodist provide it? Who is involved? 'Messy Church is a way of being church for families and others. It is Christ-centred, for all ages, based on creativity, hospitality and celebration'.<sup>1</sup>

Messy Church is so-called not simply because of the messy activities that are provided for the families, although that is part of its DNA. Rev Justin Welby declares that Messy Church 'is not church for children but that it is church for church, church for everyone'.<sup>2</sup> It is a different way of being Church for its regular attendees, many of whom may not have been to church before. It aims to nurture faith in God and disciple believers in their journey to follow him.

Messy Church endeavours to be a safe space in which to celebrate and learn about God. It is not just 'a bit of fun'. Every effort is made to create space for spiritual encounters, 'striving to be Christ-centred in everything it does, with a distinctly Christian identity in name, values, teaching themes and a short time of worship as standard practice'.<sup>3</sup>

There are currently nearly 3,000 Messy Churches registered in England, with the help and support of the Bible Reading Fellowship. Ashbourne Messy Church attracts on average three families not connected with any church every session which last two hours during school holiday times.

A team of volunteers who are happy to share their experiences with the families that come, delivers Messy Church. Every helper has a specific role. There is a door person to ensure our families are safe within the building and a kitchen team who look after the food and drink. A 'front of house' team lead and assist with crafts but are also able to share something of their journey with God. They listen to the concerns of the families. As you can see, there is a need for a variety of gifts and talents.

Currently, Ashbourne Methodist Messy Church is 'on hold' like most church activities. However, every venture needs to be underpinned with prayer and so I would urge you to pray about helpers, the families that attend regularly and those 'new' families we would like to keep attending.

If you would like more information or have any suggestions, please contact me at [familywork@virginmedia.com](mailto:familywork@virginmedia.com). Thank you.

<sup>1,2</sup>: [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk)

<sup>3</sup>: Church Army Report into Messy Church, 'Playfully Serious', Jan 2019



# My Derbyshire

by Pearl Webster

I was born in Derbyshire,  
but not the pretty part:  
just nine miles from the Crooked Spire,  
in its industrial heart.  
Its landscape speared by winding wheels,  
where men with blackened faces  
trudged home to share their meagre meals,  
forgetting the dark places  
where they had toiled on padded knees  
to wrest the earth's black treasure;  
time spent at home with families  
was all their simple pleasure.

Oh we had fun when I was young -  
no smart electric toys;  
with playtime always shared among  
our friends, both girls and boys.  
We gathered flowers from 'down the fields',  
pennycuons and cowslips and trembling grass;  
how memory yields  
the pleasure of those friendships.  
Though now we're scattered far and wide,  
my inward eye can see  
those friends who shared that countryside,  
so beautiful to me.

We caught newts in the quarry pond,  
and frogspawn by the jar;  
The second tunnel - and beyond -  
was just a bit too far  
to venture without grown-up kin;  
we stayed up on The Monnies  
and watched the coal trucks clanking in  
t't pit-yard. Oh how one is  
carried back to childhood days;  
forgotten scenes and faces  
come into focus through the haze  
of those remembered places.

The bank where shriekingly we rolled,  
a score of us and more;  
and listened while the grownups told  
us tales of country lore.  
With bread 'n' jam, and p'raps a bun,  
we'd gather there to eat,  
and watched the long-legged spiders run  
across our sun-browned feet.  
And while we played, the winding gear  
relentlessly revolved,  
and Chamberlain said, "Peace this year"!  
But nothing was resolved.

As I look back to childhood days  
And those idyllic places;  
re-treading those now vanished ways,  
and conjuring up the faces  
and voices of each girl and boy  
who shared those childhood pleasures,  
I know that nothing can destroy  
those pictures the mind treasures.  
Though now past my allotted span  
Of three score years and ten,  
That inward eye, like Wordsworth's, can  
Being childhood back again.



## **Cliff Festival at Home**

**Friday 22nd - Monday 25th May 2020**

Over the Festival weekend, Cliff College will be hosting a free-to-access 'Festival at Home'. This will be offering exciting online content and opportunities for conversation and community for all ages, with many of communicators and artists from across the UK and around the world.

More details are available on the Cliff College website.



## **Christian Aid Week** **Sunday 10th – Saturday 16th May**

In May we had planned to organise our usual house-to-house collection for Christian Aid Week and to have a cake stall at Tissington Well Dressings. Sadly, these events cannot happen. We were expecting to raise about £3,500 for Christian Aid. It will be the same situation in towns and cities across the country, so you can imagine that this could have a serious impact on Christian Aid's work around the world.

We have therefore planned some new "virtual" events which we hope will raise some money for Christian Aid. Please support them. We also realise that some people will struggle to make a donation this year. Please join in anyway and enjoy the events!

### **Coronavirus Prayer**

We invite you to join us in prayer for all those affected by this new virus, both in Britain and overseas, for all those working on the frontline and for wisdom for our leaders. Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all. The world's poorest countries have the weakest health systems, and many of the most vulnerable people will be exposed to this deadly virus. They will struggle to cope with any costs of healthcare, and the costs of being unable to earn a living while ill or quarantined. Prayer resources will be available soon.

### **Virtual Quiz**

Join us for a fun online quiz starting at 7pm on Saturday 9th May to start Christian Aid Week.

### **Christian Aid Week e-envelopes**

Christian Aid are developing an "electronic" envelope you can share with friends, neighbours and family. We hope you'll help to spread the word so we can encourage as many people as possible to donate.

### **Show your Support for Christian Aid and our global neighbours**

Could you show your support by displaying a Christian Aid logo in your window during Christian Aid week (10-16 May)? We'll have a version you can print, but why not make your own with a message saying, "I support Christian Aid".

## Coffee & Cake with a virtual visit to Tissington

We usually sell over a thousand portions of cake at Tissington Well Dressings. Join us for coffee & a cake, from the comfort of your own home, from 2pm on Sunday 24th May. We're also hoping to share some photos from previous Well Dressings.

## Recipe Swap

Do you usually bake for Tissington? Would you share your recipe with others? Let us know if you'd like to be involved.

## Make a donation

You can make a donation using Ashbourne's own fundraising page for Christian Aid: [www.justgiving.com/ashbourne-christian-aid](http://www.justgiving.com/ashbourne-christian-aid)

We're finalising the details for all of these activities. Look out for details in the weekly notices or contact Stuart & Catherine Green (300338) for more details.

Thank you in advance for your support for Christian Aid and our global neighbours. Even though we can't do our usual fundraising activities, let's do our best to provide prayer and practical support.

# *Climate: Why Change?*



This event was planned to happen at St Oswald's Church Hall, but instead took place as a live online event on Facebook.

It was organised by the One World Group of Ashbourne Churches Together and hosted by Stuart Green. He was joined by Carry Somers, who founded Pachacuti and Fashion Revolution, and Godfrey Meynell who is a volunteer speaker for Christian Aid and owns Meynell Langley estate.

The event was run as a panel discussion, exploring how our choices impact on our environment. At the end of the session, Godfrey and Carry answered questions from the audience.

The event lasted about an hour and the video is available to view at: [www.facebook.com/ashbournechristians/live](http://www.facebook.com/ashbournechristians/live)

*Ashbourne One World Group*

# **BLESSINGS TO COME OUT OF CORONAVIRUS**

by Lorraine Hawkins

In the current situation it is so hard to see anything good - we realise we are most certainly not in control. We are beginning to understand, perhaps for the first time, how fragile life is, how much we don't know, and how little power we have to change things. Millions of people worldwide are suffering from ill health, bereavement, or the fear of those things. Many people's finances are in a very serious state and they have grave worries about their future. Many people are suffering from isolation. All this can be very damaging to our mental health.

Despite all that, there are many ways in which blessings are coming out of the coronavirus pandemic.

## **1. We are coming to realise what really matters**

As someone said on the radio today, holidays, new cars and so on are just fripperies. We no longer take for granted so many things including our health (and of course our health service), our friends, everything we could possibly need in the shops, travel, freedom and those who care for and about us.

## **2. Co-operation is spreading on an unprecedented scale**

Before the coronavirus pandemic, huge numbers of people suffered from anxiety, loneliness and mental illness. While the current situation is in many ways causing more of all these, it is also providing an antidote to these problems for many people. Most of us will have received many offers of help from friends and also from complete strangers. If you have been able to help others, you will, I'm sure, have found great satisfaction in helping them.

We hear of small independent retailers and supermarkets working together, instead of competing with each other, to meet people's needs especially the elderly, and of factories and laboratories changing their work to build, for example, personal protective equipment for NHS staff and ventilators for people in intensive care.

On a much bigger scale, world governments are now co-ordinating preventive measures with a degree of cooperation never seen before and implementing economic measures to assist the economically vulnerable.

It is amazing how many people actually seem happier at the moment because they get a buzz out of changes in their life and new challenges to deal with and being part of a worldwide 'family' struggling together.

### **3. We are finally slowing down**

Overwork and over-consumption have been problems for many of us for years, but now most of us are having to stay at home and slow down, spending more time with our family (although for some that is not a happy time), learning new skills or brushing up old ones, getting jobs done in the house and garden that have been waiting for ages, and having long telephone conversations with new friends and old.

### **4. We are finding meaning and connections, even in isolation**

Our thoughts and prayers go to those who must stay away from their loved ones for now. We are so thankful for the technology that allows many of us to talk to, and even see on a screen, those we can't be with in person.

It seems very strange to deliberately step well away from anyone we meet on our daily walks. It is hard to accept that the most important and helpful thing we can do at this time is stay at home, but we are doing so to save lives and take care of one another.

### **5. Those who know the Lord have the blessing of knowing that he is with us.**

We may need to remind ourselves that God is in control, that he loves us unconditionally, and that, through his Holy Spirit, he is with us to support, guide and comfort us.

We are thankful that we can turn to God at any time and pour out our troubles, receiving his comfort in return. There are several psalms in which the psalmists poured out their troubles to the Lord and, as they did, felt he was hearing them and blessing them, and they ended up praising the Lord for his goodness to them. Try Psalm 13 for a model of how you might pray.

Let us thank God for the blessings we have received through these troubled times and pray that, when this is all over – which we realise may well be a long time – the benefits of the new ways of thinking and of living will continue, co-operation will continue, the new friendships made will thrive, people will continue to put others' needs before their own. Perhaps this will be the dawn of a new era.

*(Inspired by "Five ways our world is already better from the global response to the pandemic - There Is Good News About the Coronavirus" by Samuel Paul Veissière Ph.D., and the Methodist Church's website.)*

# REFLECTIONS

by Tom Parkinson

It is Mothering Sunday as I write this, the sun is shining, and it is a beautiful day. We have just had a lovely meal - a takeaway, due to the restrictions on society by the pervading virus, and, for the meal, we say "God bless the Royal Oak" as it was, indeed, a superb meal!

Yes, Mothering Sunday, and a relation's birthday, and no doubt other birthdays and anniversaries to boot. I just sent one card to folk I know who celebrate an anniversary in the coming week, and another is ready for another anniversary this coming weekend.

Looking out of the window of the study, I see primroses growing in the hedgerow, and some in a fenced off area, near a bit of water we have on the farm, where we planted trees in memory of Geoffrey and Jessica, Ann's mother and father, and one planted in memory of my mother.

As I look at it, it brings back memories of her. One of which was that, for a week, she never spoke to me - yes, she made my meals and got me ready for work, but not a word passed her lips to me. She talked to Dad, but not to me. Then I realised I had forgotten a card for her on Mothering Sunday! Never again did I make such an error.

Looking out of the window, I also see birds. Blue Tits, Great Tits, Sparrows, Dunnocks, Chaffinches, Long Tailed Tits and Nuthatches, feed off our bird tables, flying between it and the bushes and the trees.

The cows are still bringing us forth little calves, and they suckle their young, and love and lick them all over to clean them, even though one can almost hear them say, "Oh, Ma! Not again"!

Why this reflection? Well, for all the trials and tribulations of this world at this time of the coronavirus, and what it has in store, bringing out the best and the worst of what we call civilization, and our fears for the future and what might happen, it brings to mind that, whatever life throws at us, life does go on!

Yes, it is a very hard time, and for some, a time of great anxiety, and for some, a time of tragedy, great tragedy!

But life does go on, and will go on, so please do not forget it, as I forgot the card to my mother, on the day of all days I should not, and note also, our God goes on with us,

God bless you all.

*Tom Parkinson*



*Easter at Ashbourne 2020*

## **From the editors**

Whether you read this issue of Connections on-line or on paper, we hope you have found it interesting. Thank you all for your varied contributions which have made this possible.

We welcome contributions from all our readers – please let us know about your experiences and the thoughts which come to you as you have more time to reflect than is usually the case!

If you have an idea but are not sure whether it is suitable, we will be happy to discuss it with you.

We also welcome photos suitable for the magazine.

## **Next edition**

Please send us items for the next edition **June 2020**, including photos. We are unable to include items which are copyright unless permission is obtained from the copyright-holder.

Last date for contributions: **Wednesday 20th May**

Publication date: **Sunday 31st May**

If possible, please e-mail your items to us at [dysters@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dysters@tiscali.co.uk)

If this is not convenient, please contact us on 01335 344086

*Daphne and John Dyster*

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[www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk](http://www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk)**