

Christ Church

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NEWSLETTER

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FAMILY NEWS

WELCOME to God, WELCOME to Christ Church and WELCOME to all our readers to our July/August Summer edition of our Newsletter. Our time together is the best. All are WELCOME here. You are WELCOME here.

We remember Peter's close friend Christine, who sadly passed away recently. She is now free from pain after battling with Cancer. Christine attended services over the past few years to support Peter, particularly when he was preaching. We think of Peter and all of Christine's family and friends at this time.

It is with great sadness that we also remember Joyce who died on the 15th June. She had been suffering over recent years and experienced heart difficulties during the past few weeks and sadly died of heart failure. We send our sincere condolences to all her family and friends at this sad time (see Women's Club report to follow).

We especially remember Christine and Joyce in our prayers and pray for all who have been bereaved, including Jean following the recent loss of her sister, Alma.

It has been suggested that people put a light in their window on the evening of the 4th July in remembrance of all those lost to the Coronavirus pandemic. Places like The Shard, the Wembley Arch and Blackpool Tower are to be lit up in blue.

In many areas around the World there are sadly many suffering from Coronavirus and we think of them at this time and thank the overworked medical staff who work continuously to save lives.

Remember to pray and clap for Keyworkers and our NHS at 5pm. on Sunday 5th July on the 72nd Anniversary of the NHS in what may become an annual tradition.

We thank Ruth for putting together the Pentecost Prayer Book recently and also for her further efforts on a recent very hot Thursday morning to create the Prayer Labyrinth on the Church lawn.

WOMEN'S CLUB

It was sad to hear of the passing of our dear friend Joyce on Monday 15th June. Hopefully we will have an opportunity to join in remembering the life of Joyce later this year, once the Corona Virus numbers allow us to meet again.

I have known Joyce for many years from the time the Baptist Church at Grove Road joined together with Christ Church URC. in Friern Barnet Road.

On retirement I joined the Women's Club and at that time Doreen led the group, Val was Secretary and Joyce was the Treasurer and Birthday Book Secretary, sending cards to the members on their special day.

The Women's Club eventually moved from the Grove Road Christian Centre to the parlour at Christ Church and Doreen stood down to be replaced by me and Joyce continued in her role.

In all this time Joyce was very active in the Women's Club and its work at the Church Summer Fete on one of its stalls, very often the cake stall and the Church's Saturday Coffee Morning with her Viennese Whirls.

Joyce was very good at recognising the efforts of others and generously supporting them with a kind word of thanks and showing her gratitude for any kindness or time given to her. Even towards the end Joyce had put to one side items from her Spring Clear Out for a Bring and Buy at the Women's Club. Her son Steven and wife Anne have given these to me and the money will go to a Charity and any remaining items to a North London Charity shop at North Finchley.

Joyce is being missed by so many of her family and friends.

God Bless you Joyce.

Jane Gibbins

CORONA CHURCH

Dear all,

With lockdown restrictions and regulations, sadly it is still not possible for us to open our buildings and hold services. The Deacons are constantly reviewing the situation and following advice from Government and the Baptist Union and URC. We feel it is better to keep producing good online services that we can all enjoy till the end of September when we will review the matter again.

In the meantime, may I strongly encourage you to take part in church life in the following activities:

Prayer Labyrinth

I have created a grass labyrinth on the church lawn, please do take time to use it for prayer and reflection. It is designed also for those who sit on our benches to explore as well. It is a temporary installation and will fade as the grass grows, so take the chance to visit in the next two weeks!



New prayer labyrinth to enjoy at church

Prayer triplets

We encourage you to get together in groups of three to pray. This could be outdoors or online, or by phone as you wish.

Please contact Clare if you would like to be in a triplet but are not sure who to join with and she will be able to help you. Clare's email is: christchurchnsfb.sec@gmail.com

Zoom homegroup

Diana is hosting a fantastic study on the book of Acts on Tuesdays at 2pm fortnightly via Zoom. Please do email her if you'd like to join (christchurch.diana@gmail.com). All welcome.



Do feel free to call, email or write in the meantime. I'm always happy to hear feedback on the services too.

Although these days are testing and now in limbo perhaps even harder, our faith is built on the rock of Christ who does not fail us ever. God will continue to build his church and each of us in our spiritual lives.

I miss seeing you all at church services but pray that you will be blessed in taking part in these new activities. Love Ruth

PS. If you'd like to do a video reading or prayers, please do let me know. It would be great to see everyone! Clare or I are happy to record you outdoors if required.

PASTORAL LETTER

I write this on the day after the Government guidance for safe use of places of worship has just been published and await the BU and URC interpretation of these dry documents. So instead of trying to understand them I will write this letter...

For inspiration, I have just been up to Christ Church and checked the grounds for litter and marvelled at the height of the grass on the Bellevue side.

Ruth has used the growth of the grass next to the car park to lay out a prayer labyrinth. As the name suggests this is a maze cut into the grass. The instructions are to use the route to direct your prayer. Walking and praying and then listening when you change direction - which with our labyrinth has lots of turns so we are challenged to listen regularly.

I also note there are nearly blackberries ready to be eaten amongst the very long grass on a longer prayer circuit round the church building. So maybe something to taste in the next few days...

On my return home I spoke to the new people in what was Boyden's kitchen - a Caribbean street food social enterprise which will be selling vegan and vegetarian food is in the process of setting up. They aim to give disadvantaged people new opportunities. Something to watch as it becomes clear what they will offer and how we might work with them, if appropriate.

Back to the future - a very bad set of films...

This period of lockdown has been very different for many of us - some people have been shielding and not gone out at all, some people are vulnerable and have been out less, some have had no difference to their normal routine but with small changes, others have had to balance working at home and child care. I could probably write a sentence different for everyone in the church congregation.

As the Deacons plan for meeting together, and we try to understand the Government, BU and URC guidance, we need to proceed with caution.

We need to be aware of the very different experiences people will have and the different needs that we will each have. We may not step rightly at all turns but we aim to follow the spirit of God.

How do we move forward? We can only see the way through prayer - of the individual, and together. I encourage you all to find ways to pray about the future together, using Sunday after service “zoom”, prayer trios/triplets or your individual devotions, to discern the mind of Christ.

Clare Jenkins

Albert and Social Distancing

Richard Littledale

Illustrations © Heather Heyworth

Further stories are available from Lionhudson.com

Albert and the Big Boat

Albert and the Sling Shot

Albert to the Rescue - From the Baptist Times 29/04/20

During a period of self-isolation, Richard Littledale, Baptist Minister at Newbury Baptist Church, wrote a child-friendly book about social distancing. He explains more

I have to confess that I am a little cautious of all the ‘fighting talk’ relating to the Coronavirus pandemic right now. To describe it as a battle suggests that it can be won by grit and determination alone. The emphasis on the ‘front line’ leaves those who are on the back lines in the support roles cast out of the limelight.

However, there is one positive element to it. The sense of ‘doing your bit’ for the ‘war effort’ has brought the best out of all of us. This crisis has made many of us more inventive and more resourceful than we ever thought we could be. This is where Albert comes in.

Albert the Mouse is a little character I invented a few years ago. He is now in the process of telling six children’s bible stories for Lion Hudson. The first two *Albert and the big boat* (Noah) and *Albert and the Slingshot* (David and Goliath) came out in January. Two more are anticipated later this year, and two more in 2021. It was out of a conversation with a friend at Lion that Albert’s latest project was born.

In mid-March I had to self-isolate for two weeks, as I was showing some symptoms which suggested it was wise to do so. Thankfully the symptoms are all gone now.

In the second week, my friend at Lion suggested that I might like to write another book in the time I had, and I quipped that I could always write ‘Albert does social distancing’. The idea simply wouldn’t go away.



The next day, I contacted Heather Heyworth – whose gorgeous illustrations have brought the Albert books to life. She was keen to ‘do her bit’ to help as well – and Lion signed off on the project. Just over a month later *Albert does social distancing* was launched. It is a free, downloadable PDF book which explains in a child-friendly way why we need to isolate. There is even an interactive page at the end. It has been formatted for A4, so that parents can download and print it at home if they would like to.

Since the project went live, many in health and social care have been advocating it as a resource, and in its first 24 hours, Albert’s little story had over 400 visitors. It seems like Albert is ‘doing his bit’ and I am glad to help him!

You can download *Albert and Social Distancing* by visiting the [Newbury Baptist Church website \(newburybaptistchurch.org\)](http://newburybaptistchurch.org)

Richard Littledale is also the author of “*Marvin the Maple Tree*”, a small book to help children as they process the death of an adult in their lives. All royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to NHS Charities Together

From Rev Sandra Crawford, Wigan Baptist Church

I marvel as I watch the master sculptor chip away
forming something other; his design.
Wood, marble and stone require hammer, chisel, patience and skill
in order to shape them into a masterpiece.

For so long your church has been defined by her building,
the meetings held within, songs sung,
sermons preached, prayers offered, fellowship over a cup of tea.
But now they have stopped. For how long we have no idea.

Our spiritual life once dependent upon familiar
rhythms, now a different journey into
the unfamiliar, the unknown. Solitary. Listening. Waiting.
Time to pause and take a breath. What now Lord?

We can choose to stop and mourn all we have lost; services,
Bible studies, Toddler groups, youth clubs;
to long for what was. Or we can choose to see the Sabbath rest for all
of creation, including his church.

Let us make use of these empty spaces. To pause, wait, listen
and allow God's spirit to change us.
Time to read, reflect and think, stop long enough to stand and stare, to
allow his active presence to shape us once more.

Can you feel the chipping, crafting and chiselling of the
master as he reveals his design?
Carefully but radically re-shaping this tough and unyielding
material, allowing so much to fall to the ground.

Sculptor, help us see with your eyes, not to focus on the parts
discarded by you but to re-imagine
and watch in awe as you re-create something beautiful.
Your masterpiece. Your treasure. Your bride.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING OVER RECENT WEEKS?

Where have you been going to get your daily exercise? Perhaps your only exercise is just going on a trip to the supermarket. Perhaps a walk or run around the block, or down to your local park, or have you been further afield? (Take a look at www.barnet.gov.uk/discoverbarnetparks)

We've watched a number of theatre productions at weekends over the past weeks on You Tube, go to www.youtube.com and search "The Shows Must Go On". Have a look though at your favourite theatre web sites for other performances. Stream Opera or Ballet for free from The Royal Opera House (www.roh.org.uk), or go to The English National Ballet (www.ballet.org.uk) and view "Watch Party: Cinderella-in-the-round" online for 48 hours from 7pm. on the 8th July, also for free! Check out The Royal Shakespeare Co. (www.rsc.org.uk) and watch productions on BBC iPlayer or Marquee TV and much more.

If you're a book person check out the Hay on Wye Festival site (www.hayfestival.com) and go to the Hay Player and for an annual subscription of £10 get audio and video recordings going back to 1995. Pick up and read your Bible or the Pentecost Prayer Book 2020, which Ruth compiled recently.

A few children have started going back to school but things may be somewhat confusing. Some adopting a sort of part time routine (see the online guide to Help Children Back to School at www.barnet.gov.uk/backtoschool).

The Coronavirus pandemic is having a huge impact on people's mental health. Take a look at www.mind.org.uk or www.anxietyuk.org.uk.

You can find information about Sleep Support at www.thesleepcharity.org.uk.

If you live in Barnet and still need any help at this time go to www.engage.barnet.gov.uk/communityhelphub and for financial help and support look at www.barnet.gov.uk/covid19. For those in Enfield search at www.enfield.gov.uk. Other information can be found at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or check out www.ageuk.org.uk.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Many of us have found time in lockdown rather bizarre. Our days appeared to have gone faster than normal. This to me was odd, considering we were indoors and many did less, compared to before the lockdown. One of the reasons for this according to some was the fact that our day had become sort of repetitive and predictable. I am unsure of the reason.

However, my experience of time during this lockdown helped to draw my attention to what the Psalmist meant when he said, *'For you, (i.e. God), a thousand years are as a passing day, as brief as a few night hours.'* Psalm 90:4. God's timing is obviously beyond our understanding. Hence, whatever we are waiting or hoping for, but think God is taking too long to answer is not long to God at all. It is our impatience and perception of time that makes us feel God is taking His time to answer us.

Friends, as we slowly enter a new 'normal' after this pandemic lockdown, be patient. God is faithful and always gives us what we need at the right time. Let us continue to put our trust and hope in our loving Lord God to grant us all we need to cope with the 'new normal'. When in doubt, remind yourself with the words of Moses written below.

Deuteronomy 7:9 (NLV Translation)

Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.

Ola Lawal

All 14 charities within the Disasters Emergency Committee (www.dec.org.uk) have now launched appeals to combat the Coronavirus pandemic including Christian Aid (www.christianaid.org.uk). Unicef are also collecting funds to send particularly to Yemen (www.unicef.org.uk). Please donate if you can.