

# Christ Church

New Southgate & Friern Barnet  
(Baptist/United Reformed)

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## NEWSLETTER

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[www.christchurchnsfb.org](http://www.christchurchnsfb.org)

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## **PASTORAL LETTER**

### **WHAT NEXT?**

These are indeed troublesome times, what with a global pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests, the government saying that it is safe to go back to school and work (although some have never stopped) the issues around mental health, unemployment set to rise, and an economic slump, it is no wonder that many people are so fed up with 2020 that they are wishing that it can't be as bad in 2021! ... But we are not finished with 2020 yet, and it will go down in history – as a worldwide event such as this must.

In the church we are planning to say goodbye to Grove Road, a big part of our Church history, so many events have been held there big and small, and while it is sad that we have to let the building go, it also gives us hope for the future and planned development around the Sanctuary.

With Covid in the mix, we must take precautions, some may not be able to attend church in 'real life' even when we do open the doors again. We must remember that our God is with us when we are in the church building, or on our own, when we are online or meeting in smaller groups.

So where am I going with this? The media occasionally talks about the Church re-opening – but hey we have been here all the time! Church is the people not the building. We can 'do church' wherever or whenever we want. Can't get to the service – watch the video later in the week. Miss singing – play some music and sing anyway!

Of course, we do all want to meet in person, but what will that look like, we do not know, we do know that we will not be able to share fellowship in the same way. And this may go on for quite a while yet.

In our Bible Study, we had a response that I would like to share – it is called a 6-minute retreat. It is a time when we can stop being in the now and focus on the eternal.

**3 mins** – read a short passage (I have used a daily verse), ask 3 questions

1. What does this tell me about me?
2. What does this tell me about God?
3. What do I need to do to take this passage and live it?

**2 mins** – Pray – God loves to hear your voice, you can cry, laugh or complain, no clever prayers are needed, Share thanks as well as your needs. Start simply – Hi God...

**1 min** – Listen. God wants to talk to you, take a moment to listen for him. This might be a sense or feeling. If you hear nothing, don't worry, you still sat with Him. End by saying Amen.

**BUT REMEMBER:**

Romans 8:38-39 "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

When you are fearful – Pray, God loves to hear from you. Read the bible, learn a favourite verse, lean into it, go for a walk and wonder at Gods Creation.

There is nothing, not Covid, not politics, not race, not mental health, not social distancing, not fear, that can separate us from the love of God.

Blessings

*Diana Bensted*

(6-minute retreat – adapted from Spring Harvest Bible Workbook - Church what we can learn from Acts by Beki Rogers available from EssentialChristian.com).

## **FAMILY NEWS**

Whilst recent weeks seem to have flown past, some have been able to get away for a short break or holiday of sorts, although others have remained at home, still trying to cope during these unusual times. We pray that everyone has been able to recharge their batteries wherever possible.

Unfortunately, we know that there have been a number of our Members and Friends who have been unwell lately and we think of them at this time and trust they now feel somewhat better. Some have sadly suffered injury or have been in hospital and we pray for their swift recovery.

We think also of all youngsters who have not been at school for some time now and pray that as they return this month they will quickly settle back into a safe and welcoming environment and together with all their friends restart their learning. Following the debacle with exam results recently, we think of all who have now received their grades and especially those moving on to college and university.

We are pleased to inform everyone that Roger and Molly Scopes celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in August. Congratulations to them both.

The Reverend Doctor Roger K. Scopes was minister here at Christ Church during the 1970's. Although having moved to Thame a few years ago Roger keeps in contact and like other previous members and friends continues to receive our monthly Newsletter.

Whilst their anniversary celebration plans may have been hindered by the Covid-19 regulations, we trust they had an enjoyable day and will both remain in good health and continue to share many more happy memories together in the years ahead.

## **BREAKING OPEN – Brian Draper**

I was reminded, recently, of a Hasidic tale which evokes Deuteronomy 11:18, and seems especially apt for now:

‘The pupil comes to the rabbi and asks, “Why does Torah tell us to ‘place these words upon our hearts’? Why does it not tell us to place these holy words in our hearts?”

‘The rabbi answers, “It is because as we are, our hearts are closed, and we cannot place the holy words in our hearts. So, we place them on top of our hearts. And there they stay, until, one day, the heart breaks, and the words fall in.”’

It’s often the case that our own break-throughs seem to happen when we, ourselves, break open, isn’t it? Certainly, some of the more spiritually mature people I’ve known seem also to be those who’ve gone through a disintegration of sorts.

In the process, they’ve become more soulfully connected to life, somehow. Their words may sometimes be fewer, but any they do care to speak arise from deeper down within those opened hearts.

This has been, without doubt, a time of breaking open; if not for us personally, then almost certainly for some of those we know and love.

And we’re all affected, in different ways. We’ve all experienced disorientation. We’ve all lost direct contact with people we love. Many still have no physical contact with others. There’s a place for keeping calm and carrying on, but there’s time enough to honour sorrow, too.

It doesn’t have to be an individual heart that’s hurting, either. Families, of course, and friendship groups have suffered; churches

will know grief within their communities; organisations have lost work and people; villages, towns and cities, even nations – each are having their own experience deepened.

I think of the words of the Aaronic blessing that have flowed so beautifully through the world, in song, this season. So often, it's when 'all is well' that we perceive God's blessing in our lives. But how resonant, those words, from within a place where all is not?

Perhaps we can treasure those words that may have rested gently on our hearts, awaiting the time they fall a little further into place. May we thus be open, within this historic opening. And may, indeed:

'the LORD bless you  
and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face towards you  
and give you peace.'

*Brian Draper*

From London Institute of Contemporary Christianity - 22.05.2020  
For details about Brian's work, visit [www.briandraper.org](http://www.briandraper.org)

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## **CHARITY GIVING**

All Charities continue to find things very difficult at the moment. If you are able to donate to your favourite Charity, go on to their web sites and make a donation which will greatly help them during these challenging times.

# Thanksgiving service for Grove Rd

Sunday 27 September 2020,  
2-3pm

Grove Rd Christian Centre, N11 1LX

As we say a fond farewell to Grove Road,  
this service will thank God  
for all that He has done through this building.

## TICKETS

This event is ticketed with allocated seating to comply  
with COVID guidance.

Please call or email Clare to ask for a ticket  
(020 83611214 / [christchurchnsfb@gmail.com](mailto:christchurchnsfb@gmail.com)).

There are 25 spaces available.

Please state if you are in a bubble  
with another person so we can seat you together.

## PHOTOBOOK

We are collating a photobook for Grove Rd.  
If you have photos you would like included  
please send them to Diana for inclusion  
either by email ([christchurch.diana@gmail.com](mailto:christchurch.diana@gmail.com))  
or by post (see directory for address).

## **REFLECTIONS ON OUR NEW LIFE IN A LAND FAR, FAR, AWAY - PART TWO**

We are writing this update on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 reflecting on how our lives have changed since Part One back in February.

First of all, Dee found the lost chattels although we have no idea what they are or what they are used for.

My mobility scooter is running well and gets me all over North Walsham when walking is a problem.

When we were in London it was not practical to have a dog but here in the country with less traffic and our own back garden, we decided to adopt a dog. After looking on several canine rescue websites we found Norfolk Greyhound Rescue. We filled in the application form, had a home visit from Stuart and Phil, who is his beautiful greyhound, and the result was that on the 5<sup>th</sup> March, Toddy, a black ex racing greyhound arrived from the Republic of Ireland to join our family. He is a typical 40 mph couch potato sleeping for hours at a time, but very alert at mealtimes and when you pick up his collar and lead for a walk, he's always up for that (providing it's not raining). He is very affectionate towards Dee and friendly to all the local ladies and has a fan club of admirers on the estate and at a certain tea shop in town.

Like most we watched the devastating spread of Covid 19 around the world and were not surprised when Boris Johnson announced a national lockdown on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The effect on us was considerable as I had to self-isolate for 12 long weeks on medical advice so Dee had to do all the shopping and dog walking. In all other respects, life went on as normal, we chatted to our neighbours over the fences and they were willing to help if needed, a true example of wonderful community spirit.

As restrictions were relaxed, I eventually ventured out in early July to a completely changed world of mask wearing, social distancing and of course no church services. I have been watching Ruth's services every Sunday on You Tube and going on Zoom when I can get it to work properly.

Late in July as we were walking Toddy down the road to our local shop, we saw a sign outside one of the houses offering a 4-bedroom tent for sale for the princely sum of £35.00 and yes, we bought it. Little did we realise how big it was until we tried to erect the thing, it took 2 days to get it up (no instructions) and when it was done most of our garden had disappeared but inside it is enormous and we have filled it with a coffee table and garden seating plus a bed for the dog so entertaining won't be a problem as long as the wind does not blow.

So, there we are, still happy and contented in this beautiful part of the world and getting ready to visit all our old haunts from our past holidays, - Cromer, Sheringham, Wells next the Sea and the dog friendly beaches of Bacton and Mundesley.

We will finish with 2 bible quotes

“I know that I will live to see the Lord's goodness in this present life. Trust in the Lord, have faith, do not despair, trust in the Lord” (Psalms 27 verse 13-14) and

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father who loved us and by His Grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say” (Thessalonians 2 verse 16-17).

*Tony & Dee Fensome*

## **CHURCH GIVING**

Having been unable to attend Church on Sundays over the past few months we have therefore not been receiving your kind weekly donations in the offertory.

If anybody wishes to make donations at the present time then payments can be sent to the Treasurer or you could arrange direct payments to the Church Bank Account. Ask the Treasurer for the account details. Please remember that if you haven't already, and you have paid sufficient Income tax or Capital Gains tax in the same year, you can complete a Gift Aid form, when the Church can benefit by claiming back from the HMRC the amount of 25p for every £1 you give. We thank all who are able to donate in any way and pray that all monies are used wisely for God's work.

## WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

We thank God that things have slowly started to return to normal after the traumatizing effect of Covid-19. One of the songs that was introduced during the pandemic is ‘The Blessing’ which our minister, Rev. Ruth Moriarty shared with us. The lyrics of the song resonated with many in a new way. It reminded us of God’s love for us amidst the fear and disruptions. Just as it did for the Israelites who had been wandering in the desert for many years when God told Aaron, the priest, through Moses, to always proclaim the blessing on them.

We hear it most Sundays when the minister proclaims the blessing on us as we depart, but barely think or meditate on God’s promises, written below. It had become more of a routine. I believe one of the good things that came out of the pandemic is the reminder of God’s eternal love for us through the song. It reminded us that no matter what we had been through, still going through or hoping for, God’s eternal promises to us, His children, remain firm. His promise to bless and keep us. To shine His face (His love and mercy) on us and be gracious to us. To always turn his face towards us and give us peace.

Brothers and sisters, let us move forward boldly with our Lord Jesus, knowing His promise never fails. Our future is secured. Let us stay in His love and keep trusting Him.

### **Numbers 6:22-26**

The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

““The LORD bless you  
and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.””

*Ola Lawal*