



# Abbey Lane & Newport United Reformed Church incorporating Saffron Walden Methodist Church

Proclaiming the Gospel – Growing in Faith – Reaching out in Service

14 March

## Welcome to our weekly newsletter

### Sunday Service – 14<sup>th</sup> March

**Worship Online at 10:30 a.m.**

**Led by Rev. Roy Fowler**

Reflection by Mike Dyer

**Zoom meeting and Passcode details are listed on the order of service sent separately, or call our Church Contact on 01799 528325**

If you prefer to watch live on the website please go to <http://saffronwaldenurc.org.uk/services-recordings> where you will also find a recording of the service to YouTube each week available from Sunday afternoon.

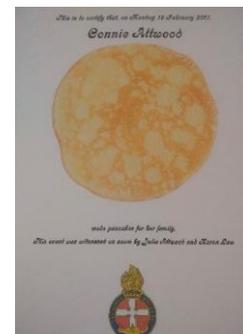
## World Day of Prayer celebrated online worldwide

Thank you to Alison Jiggins who led a small group of us celebrating World Day of Prayer last Friday. The service was centred on the nation of Vanuatu who had prepared worship material. We enjoyed a video created by the Canadian WDP group introducing us to Vanuatu and listened to music selected for what would normally have been a live service, recorded for us by Stephen Rapkin. As Alison pointed out, despite not being physically together it was still very meaningful to know that worship sessions and services were happening in relay across the world through a 36 hour period, all focused on Vanuatu, all using their material. It gave a great sense of a worldwide community of Christians which was very moving. If you would care to make a donation please post in an envelope through the Church letter box or to Val Bowtle at 20, Sweet Mead, Saffron Walden or Val can collect from you.

## News from Girls' Brigade (Julia Attwood)

We are continuing to meet weekly on zoom. We are doing a badge called "Approaching Easter" which covers topics such as reading the Bible, prayer and sharing our faith. Some games work better than others! We like

Scattergories and scavenger hunts. Pictionary also goes fairly well. We have met various pets, watched videos, tried breakout rooms and have had the inevitable technological hitches, some of these have been very funny. We have also enjoyed zoom pancakes and making Mother's Day cards on zoom.



We are very much hoping we will be able to meet face to face after Easter, at least outside and hopefully in the hall. Some of our members are not able to meet us on zoom and we have really missed them. It's now a year since our last meeting all together and we are so excited to see everybody. The girls will all have grown!

Our leadership team remains strong and committed and I thank God for all of them, as well as the privilege of leading GB. We look forward to all God has for us in the future.



## Psalm 127: 3-4

"Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward"

## Reminders for your Diary

### 14<sup>th</sup> March – Mother's Day: Mother's Day or Mothering Sunday?

Taken from the BBC website: Most Sundays in the year churchgoers in England worship at their nearest parish or 'daughter church'. Centuries ago it was considered important for people to return to their home or 'mother' church once a year. So each year in the middle of Lent, everyone would visit their 'mother' church - the main church or cathedral of the area. Inevitably the return to the 'mother' church became an occasion for family reunions when children who were working away returned home. And most historians think that it was the return to

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the 'Mother' church which led to the tradition of children, particularly those working as domestic servants, or as apprentices, being given the day off to visit their mother and family. Another thought is that the name comes from one of the Bible readings for that day, which refers to motherhood in a different way. "But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26). However, in recent times this Sunday is also celebrated akin to the May time USA festival of Mother's Day – a day founded specifically to honour motherhood. Whichever meaning or name you prefer it is a day when many families will hope to share time together somehow.

## Churches Together in Saffron Walden – Lent Talks

During Lent 2020 CTSW prepared a series of talks by local church leaders around the theme of "The Cross". The first two talks were given in early March last year, with Rev John Goddard speaking on "The Cross in Art" and Rev Caroline Vodden on "The Cross of Reconciliation". Unfortunately, the remaining talks had to be cancelled when the nation went into lockdown. CTSW is delighted to announce that this Lenten series is now continuing and two further short talks are available on YouTube using the links below:

Father David Clemens - "The Heart of the Cross" - <https://youtu.be/unGbj6tKXo0>

Pastor Jonathan Burton - "The Cross - Something for us to carry" - <https://youtu.be/jY-XpFOIXuA>



**Thank You from a Mother...** "My 6-year-old son got a Christmas box today at school and he was very excited about it. I would like to say thank you for making children all over the world happy and smiling.

God bless you all!" – A delighted mother in Serbia.

This is one of the messages received by Val and Elfreda from Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse. You probably remember photos of Val's amazing collection of gifts and boxes, and we have now heard that several of our boxes were safely delivered to children amongst 48,445 sent to Belarus; 29,409 sent to Serbia; and 16,073 sent to Georgia. Operation Christmas Child write, "Every shoebox, packed with love and fuelled by prayer, has the potential to impact a child's life in a very special way! Thank you once again for partnering with us to share God's love with the world's children!" Those of you

who included their own QR code, please share with us when you hear where yours went.

## ... and from our friends Maribel and Louis in Bolivia,

Stephen Rapkin has heard that they too have benefited from Samaritan's Purse. "The children's club at Maribel's Mums has started with all the necessary biosecurity and had its Samaritans Purse discipleship graduation recently." Additionally, they are planning the Church Anniversary and hope this will be a physical meeting in the new building. Bolivia is in the middle of a second wave of the Covid Pandemic and they recently lost a good friend to the disease, but the first vaccines have now arrived.



Maribel has finished an actualization course with the Child Evangelism Fellowship and finished her Bolivian Sign Language Course.

**Donate a Vaccine?** The news from Bolivia highlights that we are fortunate to be so far ahead in the UK with the Covid-19 vaccination programme. Last week Caroline shared news on WhatsApp of this scheme <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/donatethecostofyourvaccine>

Rebecca Rogers, who is a vicar in King's Lynn, West Norfolk is fundraising for 'Gavi', the [Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization](#), now co-leader of COVAX, a program specifically created for the development and manufacture of COVID vaccines, and to guarantee fair access of these vaccines across the world.

Rebecca has written, "I'm sure, like me, you are hugely grateful that your loved-ones and everyone in the UK by the end of this year will have been offered this potentially life saving treatment. Tragically, this is not true for millions of people in the world. Many will have to wait until 2024. The Astra-Zeneca vaccine costs between £5 and £10 for two doses. Would you consider donating this much to enable someone, somewhere else in the world, to have the vaccine?" You might like to donate this once your own vaccine letter comes through, or even in the knowledge that you'll be getting it soon. It could also be a gesture of thanks for a loved-one's treatment."



## Abbey Lane and The World

Continuing with our connections to the wider world, this was the subject of a recent conversation between



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Caroline and Sophie Willis, about ‘Saffron Walden and The World’, part of a nationwide initiative intended to support UK aid and international development (reports Val Bowtle). Sophie is responsible for 13 local groups in the south and south east of England and explained that “Saffron Walden and the World aims to engage with local people in and around Saffron Walden on international development and UK aid, refugees, climate change and the environment. We aim to raise awareness of the progress and positive change happening around the world, encourage people to take action in support of these issues in their own communities, and think with kindness and compassion for others around the world.” The group is supported by organisations such as Oxfam, Unicef, Save the Children, Christian Aid and others. Sophie was most interested to hear what we at the URC are doing and I felt very encouraged by our involvement and care concerning world-wide issues and those nearer to home. I am also aware that many of you support causes of particular interest and concern to you individually or as families. Sophie will keep me updated about the initiative and what might be of interest locally. You can find out more by visiting their Facebook page Saffron Walden and The World.

You can find out more about their “Six Hopes and Five Priorities” for 2020-21 on their website at <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/>. Current campaigns range from working alongside Church Action on Poverty to understand what groups of people are being affected by the lock-down and social isolation measures put in place to control the spread of COVID19, to supporting ‘The Time is Now’ and ‘Climate Sunday’, ahead of the UK hosting the United Nations climate summit in Glasgow in November this year. The monthly newsletter always makes challenging reading about how our faith relates to the wider world.

Elfreda TW

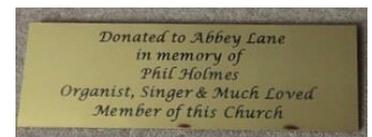
## Church Family

**Tina Wilson** has unfortunately had a nasty fall which will require an operation. Her shoulder is broken so remember her in prayers this week.



With gratitude we share these pictures of the Clavinova donated by **Sylvia Holmes**. A beautiful plaque is on it commemorating her much missed husband Phil. We

all look forward to the time when we are able to join Sylvia in person and enjoy listening to one of our talented musicians play for us, but meanwhile we remember Phil and thank Sylvia for her generosity.



**Matthew 22:39**  
tells us to “love  
your neighbour  
as yourself”.

**Similar to Saffron Walden and the World**, there are Christian organisations looking at worldwide issues, including The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) made up of the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. They produce a monthly newsletter and campaign regularly, working together for peace and justice: “Christians are called to act justly and to work for God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. What does this mean today, and how can we make a difference?” The Joint Public Issues Team aims to:

- equip Christians to act and pray on issues of injustice,
- resource churches to reflect and campaign effectively,
- help our Churches to speak out with a distinctively Christian voice on injustice.

## and from WhatsApp...



**A variety of  
springtime growth**

**From  
Meg,  
Mary,  
Ruth & Elf**



## Caroline's Letter for Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Friends

*"Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land." (Song of Solomon 2.11-12)*

These words form part of the Biblical ode to love known as "The Song of Songs". Here the writer urges his beloved to come away with him to the countryside, abloom in the splendour of Spring.

We have had a tantalising glimpse of Spring recently, with warm, sunny days and air filled with the sound of birds echoing nature's love-song. We have also glimpsed another Spring, with the continuing roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme and the infection and death rates following the downward trend. But we are not there yet. Today's weather forecast is for heavy rain and strong winds, and the UK's Chief Medical Adviser continues to urge caution. Woe betide anyone who "casts a clout before May is out"!

This Sunday the nation, still in lockdown, will celebrate Mother's Day, the second year in a row in which pubs and florists have seen their businesses severely affected at what should be one of their busiest and most profitable times of year. Households are still unable to mix, although the opportunity for carefully managed visits to elderly relatives in care homes will bring joy to some of the most vulnerable people. Online orders and deliveries of flowers are, of course, possible and many can expect to receive a sunny bouquet or bunch of bright tulips or daffodils as a gesture of love and care this week.

The simple yellow daffodil has a wonderful way of bringing brightness to a dull day, as does the vivid summer sunflower. The French word for sunflower is "tournesol", which means one who turns toward the sun. If you have ever driven past a field of sunflowers in bloom or watched a stately specimen in your garden border, you will have seen how the face of the flower follows the sun as it moves across the sky before bowing its head at sundown and turning again to await the dawn.

With our back to the sun we see only our own shadow, but if we face towards the sun we put the shadow behind us.



As we continue our journey through Lent and lockdown, may we keep our faces turned toward the "Sun-Light" so that we may know the warmth of God's care and the passion of God's love and be filled with the joyful hope and promise of Spring. Happy Mother's Day, everyone!

God bless you all.

*Caroline*

