



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

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

16 May

Welcome to our weekly newsletter

Sunday Service – 16th May

Worship Online at 10:30 a.m.

Led by Tina Wilson

Reflection by Rev. Roy Fowler

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.



Photo by Dave Clough of Water Lane URC for Zoom last Sunday

What happens next?

From Monday 17th May restrictions are relaxed and we are able to

meet family and friends in each other's homes within limits. At the end of the week we will open Abbey Lane – with limitations – for communal worship once again. For the last year, under varying pandemic restrictions, we have shared this newsletter weekly with information for our Zoom worship, snippets of church and community news and photos, and other 'features' we hope you enjoy; whilst we were not together physically this has been one attempt to keep connected. As we return to physical church for our services and hopefully soon for other gatherings, it may be time to reflect on how we continue to stay in touch across our church family, and keep members informed.

Thank you for your continued kind remarks about receiving this weekly sheet, but are there still benefits in a weekly newsletter or should we circulate something simpler? Could we make better use of our website to be our newsletter & magazine? The printed items we used pre-pandemic were costly in time, print

and paper - perhaps emailed or web media are the way ahead? Conversely, anyone without appropriate technology (such as smart phones, computers or printers) may still need printed copy. In short: how best do we stay in touch and keep information accessible to all, but 'live' and up-to-date, cost-effective and eco-friendly? I have already been in touch with some of the people involved in producing our previous Pew-sheets and The Link but views from any members would be welcome! Then ideas can be shared with Elders and Church Meeting. So if you have views or suggestions please email me at contact@saffronwaldenurc.onmicrosoft.com.

The pandemic months have brought innovations from which we have benefitted – I hope we find ways to combine the best of the new with the best of the old.

In the meantime, this week the newsletter really does seem to be 'news' more than 'features'! We have a reminder about Church Meeting, information about how to attend our Pentecost service both physically or online, and items from our local community. (Elfreda TW)

Psalm 122: 1

I was glad when they said unto me:
We will go into the house of the Lord

Psalm 98:1

O sing unto the Lord a new song: for
he hath done marvellous things



Church Meeting: this Sunday

Val Bowtle reminds us, "We will be holding a Virtual Church Meeting this Sunday 16th May at 12.00pm. The link is as for Morning Worship. We will be updating you on returning to the Church for Pentecost on Sunday 23rd May and how to book your seat. Also, we have some exciting suggestions about how we will be including our whole church family in worship. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible."

Ministers	
Revd Roy Fowler	01279 814 809
Church Secretary	
Val Bowtle	01799 526 271
Vestry Phone & Church Contact	01799 528325

Elders	
John Ford	07969 850 109
Stephen Rapkin	07730 393 603
Karen Start	01799 522 096
Elfreda Tealby-Watson	01799 530 175
Margaret Howell & Meg Nettle	Non-serving Elders offered pastoral care



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

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

16 May

“When restrictions start to be lifted it is essential to recognise that people are in different places on their own journey out of lockdown...For some the wounds of the pandemic will take a long time to, or may never, heal. We must continue to support and love everyone for who they are and their own individual situations.”

(Synod Moderators, April 2021)

Bearing these words in mind, we will open Abbey Lane for in person worship again on Sunday 23rd May and simultaneously we will stream the service on Zoom and YouTube so that all can come to church either physically or virtually as suits. **John Ford** outlines here what you can expect at Abbey Lane.

“We are looking forward to returning to face-to-face services on Sunday 23rd May. For those deciding to come to the church, the services will be different to what they used to be so here’s some advice about attending:

- At the moment, we have a limit of 28 bubbles. While we think this will be enough for everyone, we are operating a **booking system** just in case. You can still turn up if you haven’t booked, but priority will be given to people who have. You only need one booking for each bubble. You can book here <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/abbey-lane-sunday-service-at-1030am-tickets-150314794597>

If you have difficulty booking or can’t access the website, please call 01799 528325 to leave a message.

- On the day, please don’t come if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been told to self isolate.
- Please bring a face mask to wear during the service (unless exempt) and, if you’d like, a bible because they won’t be at the end of the pew.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided.
- We will have the doors open during the service, so if it’s a cold day you may wish to wrap up warm.
- Initially there won’t be any congregational singing during services; because of this and to facilitate continued Zoom streaming we expect to use recorded music until after restrictions ease further in late June.
- To reduce touch we will not yet be using hymn books nor printed pew sheets: please bring your own device

or print copy of the order of service from the weekly email, to follow hymn words or responses.

- Please maintain social distancing and the one way route while inside the sanctuary. The pews will be clearly marked with people there to direct you to seats.
- For those wanting to contribute financially, there will be a plate for collection at the door. We won’t be passing round collection plates and would encourage people where possible to use bank transfers to avoid anyone having to handle cash.
- After the service, we will not have tea and coffee. However, up to 30 people are allowed to gather outside after May 17, so there may be an opportunity to have a chat with others afterward, but please be mindful of one another’s wish for space and caution.”

Website updates

Greg Watson puts up a recording of the weekly WEBS Zoom service on the Abbey Lane website every week. He will continue to do this with the services recorded at Abbey Lane in future. Greg and Elfreda have also now added all the newsletters from 2021 to the website – so if you missed a copy you can go and look back! In future, we will try to keep around 3 months of services and newsletters available direct on the web, but you can request back copies from earlier.

Reminders for your Diary

15th May Private prayer at Abbey Lane, 10 am - noon

16th May Christian Aid week ends today
On line Church Meeting 12 noon

17th May Final date for online Census submissions

18th May ‘Doing Justice:’ A National Service of Reflection on the Anniversary of the murder of George Floyd will be recorded to be broadcast on **25 May 2021 at 7pm**

Tools with a Mission

Alison Jiggins writes that our friends at the Thaxted UR support TWAM (Tools with a Mission). See <https://www.twam.uk>. Their Ipswich depot has intimated they are particularly short of sewing machines. It doesn’t matter what condition they are in as they are all reconditioned and serviced prior to being sent abroad to developing countries. Alison is happy to collect any items, please email her at urthaxted@gmail.com Alternatively, Saffron Walden Rotary Club also support this Christian charity and are



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

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

16 May

arranging another tool collection in June. They have told us that their van will be in the Common car park from 10am to 1pm on Sunday 6 June to collect unwanted garden, garage and trade tools, sewing and knitting machines and working IT equipment.

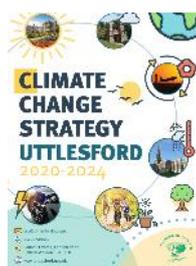
Local community notices:

Affinity Water wrote to customers in our area in March to advise them of changes to the water supply.

Previously they have partially softened our naturally hard water that is taken from the chalk aquifer. Unfortunately, the equipment that does this has come to the end of its life and the company has chosen to prioritise their investments elsewhere, “to adapt to a changing climate and to provide a long-term sustainable supply of high-quality water for a growing population, whilst leaving more water in the environment.” Affinity Water have asked local community groups to encourage people to take action with domestic appliances such as adjusting the settings on your dishwasher or using limescale prevention tablets in your washing machine. There is more advice at <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/my-water/water-quality/hardness>

Thank you from the Census

We received a thank you from the North Essex Census co-ordinator for publicising it in the newsletter. The response to Census 2021 has exceeded all expectations, with 97 per cent of households across England and Wales responding (above the target of 94 per cent), making sure they count when it comes to local services like school places, GP surgeries and hospital beds. Although Census Day - Sunday 21 March 2021 – has been and gone it is not too late to respond online. It only takes around 10 minutes per person. **For those who haven't yet completed the simple online form, the questionnaire closes 17 May.**



#AmenToClimateJustice in Uttlesford

Mindful that this year's Christian Aid week material is focused on the poverty caused by the climate crisis you might like to visit our own Council's four year strategy which refers to actions we can take locally:

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s21936/CLIMATE%20CHANGE%20STRATEGY.pdf>

Uttlesford Foodbank are looking for two trustees to join their team. More details can be found at



<https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/opp/trustee-638>

Prayer

Last weekend Elfreda watched the 75th Anniversary Service held via Zoom, celebrating the work of Christian Aid. It was a moving service with lovely music, video and slides (one pictured). This Benediction was offered by one of the worship leaders, Bob Kikuyu.



In your rising, in your resting, in your walking, in your speaking,

In your praying, in your striving, in your giving, in your crying,

May you know the Spirit of the Lord upon you.

May she labour through you and in you, and all those who stand with you, until that day when freedom resounds

Throughout God's earth, and justice rolls down,

And righteousness streams out,

And all God's children know

The blessing that belongs to us all. Amen.

Church Family

Margaret Clement has written following her recent birthday: “Thank you so much for the lovely plant, cards and good wishes, all of which made my day not just ‘special’ but ‘extra special’!”



From WhatsApp...

Abbey Lane bakers sprang to help Jo Ford find heart cookie cutters for junior church



Red legged partridge visiting Ruth Fothergill



Blue bells, Little Chesterford wood (Elfreda TW)

... and calling out for art & photos!

URC Children's and Youth Work fill its social media channels with images of God's world. They need more! Please email your photos or drawings to lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk Or upload direct on www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth between 28 May & 18 June. Prizes of RSPB vouchers and books.

ROY'S LETTER for 12th May 2021



Dear Friends,

Last Spring, the painter David Hockney found himself stranded in Normandy when the Covid lockdown was introduced. He found himself a house and settled down to record the unfolding of Spring through a series of sketches made on his I-pad. These sketches have now been turned into a series of paintings that form an exhibition to open soon at the Royal Academy in London. The few examples of the painting I have seen, in an article in last Monday's Guardian, are noticeable for the vibrancy of the colours that he captured. They are so vibrant and joyful. As I remember back to last Spring, I, like many of you no doubt remember that it was the warmth of the weather and the brilliance of the Spring colours all around us caught by the sun that provided a perfect antidote to the darkness of the pandemic. I well remember the joy of discovering a local wood carpeted with bluebells.

It has not been so easy this year. The weather has been less kind and we have had some pretty dreary days this spring. Many of are simply weary, but hoping for better days ahead. I believe it was Whistler who was approached by someone who remarked that they had never seen sunsets like in his paintings. His reply was that you will. Art helps us to see the world differently. David Hockney's paintings woke me up to look again for the colour all around me. The two photos that accompany this letter were taken the same day that I read the article about him in the newspaper.

We all need snatches of beauty in our lives that remind us of goodness deep down in all things. This in no way detracts from the ugliness and darkness, we encounter as being very real. Just as Christ accompanied us into the darkness of the cross as a sign of God's presence in even the darkest places, so we need to be ready to accompany others through darkness. The resurrection of Christ also calls us to help one another to see the beauty that can flash into dark moments whether that is in nature or in the kindness of someone who journeys with us. This is the love of God continually dawning upon us.



Where have you seen colour?

Where have you seen beauty?

Where have you seen kindness?

Where have you glimpsed
the love of God?



God be with you,