



Welcome to our weekly newsletter

Flowers by Margaret Hurst photographed by Stephen Rapkin



The start of the new tech team: Photo: TW family

Sunday Service – 24th January

Worship Online at 10:30 led by Rev. Roy Fowler

Reflection by Tina Wilson

We continue our weekly worship with the benefit of Zoom and having said farewell to the Luke family it was time on Sunday for their first trainees – Greg, Phoebe & Rhona -to run the Zoom operation for church. The service went relatively smoothly although Greg has been scratching his head a little a bit about how to put the recording up on YouTube!

Stormy weather: Psalm 69:15



“May the flood of water not overflow me”

The Granta flooding at Great Chesterford; photograph: Ruth Fothergill

Annual Church Meeting: delayed from 2020 we held our first on-line Annual Church Meeting.

Our Annual Church Meeting in 2019 was prevented by the restrictions of lockdown number one. Subsequently, Synod approval means that Church Meetings can take place remotely, and with changes in our Eldership it is good to be planning ahead. John Ford and Val Bowtle were unanimously supported to join our Eldership. Stephen Rapkin has become Treasurer to replace Louise Luke. Meg Nettle and Louise Luke, both retiring as Elders, were thanked for their many years of service. John Luke will continue in post for a little time to ease transition to a new church secretary (to be recommended from within the new Eldership). Elfreda becomes our Synod representative, Mary Duxbury will keep our Church Directory, & Ruth Fothergill has taken over Fairtrade responsibilities. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered in some new way; we look forward to the Social Committee taking responsibility for Church Breakfasts – a treat to relish when we can eventually meet again in person. As well as the Lukes retiring to Scotland, Mark Hayes is now pursuing his calling to ministry so has also resigned with wife Janet from Abbey Lane. Whilst we were wishing the Lukes good luck last week with “a gentler lifestyle”, we are saying Farewell to Mark and Janet knowing that they are taking on a brand new set of challenges. It was agreed that we should offer them a gift appropriate to their new roles, and if you wish to contribute then please contact Stephen Rapkin or drop a donation into him or Caroline whilst out on your daily walk or other ‘essential journey’.



Ministers	
Revd Caroline Vodden	01799 524 416
Revd Roy Fowler	01279 814 809

Church Secretary	
John Luke	C/O 01799 530175
	07968 730 079

Elders	
John Ford	07969 850109
Val Bowtle	01799 526271
Stephen Rapkin	07730 393 603
Karen Start	01799 522 096
Elfreda Tealby-Watson	01799 530 175



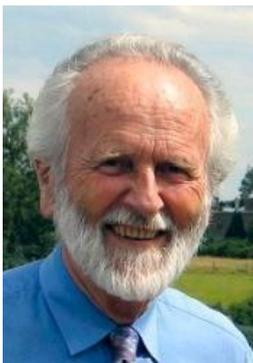
Julia Atwood from Girls Brigade writes:



“ We thought you might like to see a couple of photos from our GB Christmas nativity zoom. As you can see, we dressed up. We had all the characters from the Christmas story, including a donkey and a sheep.

We have started a new badge in the theme of “Living Well”. Please would you keep all the girls in your prayers, praying especially that God will protect their mental well-being in these challenging times.”

New hope from a new President ‘For the healing of the Nations’



On the left is Fred Kaan (1929-2009) who wrote this hymn. He was born in Haarlem in the Netherlands, survived the Nazi occupation and witnessed his parents deep involvement in the resistance movement. The other photo is from televised pictures of the Inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris.

In our service this week one of our hymns is Kaan’s “For the Healing of the Nations”. With his youthful experience Kaan was certainly well positioned to

write of the hope we find in Christ for healing and especially for the healing of the nations.

Many comments were made on Inauguration Day about Joe Biden’s Catholic faith, but alongside that I found it inspiring to see his efforts in this important ceremony to surround himself with people representing many races and backgrounds. They included the youngest ever speaker at the event, 22 year old poet Amanda Gorman, singer J-Lo who reaffirmed her pledge of allegiance in Spanish and country singer Garth Brooks (known for his activism for disadvantaged youth and gay rights) performing Amazing Grace.

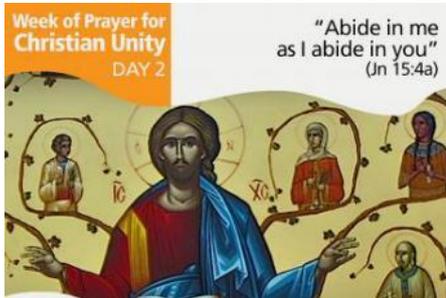
Whatever your views on politics or activism, I surely took hope in seeing a world leader speak clearly of faith and prayer, promising reconciliation within his country’s divided communities. Most of all I saw hope in these words: “Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children?” and pledging to “repair our alliances and engage with the world once again.” Surely this is an encouraging echo of Kaan’s hymn: *For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord, for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.*

Suggestions?

As former newsletter contributors take on different roles or move onto pastures new, I have agreed to take on editing this current weekly



newsletter sent both by email and hard copy to those offline. Stephen Rapkin especially has diligently fulfilled the task since we started this newsletter in the first Lockdown, when we had to pause on the production of Pew Sheets and The Link. If you have suggestions on what to include in the weeks ahead or wish to contribute then please get in touch via elfreda.tw@live.com or phone 01799 530175. Thinking maybe puzzles, music notes, reading suggestions, short articles or quizzes?



World Week of Prayer

This week Roy Fowler has

focused his pastoral letter (see below) on the current World Week of Prayer. He includes here Tuesday's meditation from the Week of Prayer material.

Day 2 Maturing internally

"Abide in me as I abide in you" (John 15:4a)

- Ephesians 3:14-21 May Christ dwell in our hearts
- Luke 2:41-52 Mary treasured all these things

Meditation

The encounter with Jesus gives rise to the desire to stay with him and to abide in him: a time in which fruit matures.

Being fully human, like us Jesus grew and matured. He lived a simple life, rooted in the practices of his Jewish faith. In this hidden life in Nazareth, where apparently nothing extraordinary happened, the presence of the Father nourished him.

Mary contemplated the actions of God in her life and in that of her son. She treasured all these things in her heart. Thus, little by little, she embraced the mystery of Jesus.

We too need a long period of maturation, an entire lifetime, in order to plumb the depths of Christ's love, to let him abide in us and for us to abide in him.

Without our knowing how, the Spirit makes Christ dwell in our hearts. And it is through prayer, by listening to the word, in sharing with others, by putting into practice what we have understood, that the inner being is strengthened.

"Letting Christ descend into the depths of our being ... He will penetrate the regions of the mind and the heart, he will reach our flesh unto our innermost being, so that we too will one day experience the depths of mercy."

[The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 134]

Prayer

Holy Spirit,

May we receive in our hearts the presence of Christ, and cherish it as a secret of love.

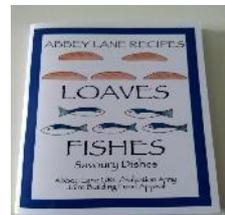
Nourish our prayer,

enlighten our reading of Scripture,

act through us,

so that the fruits of your gifts can patiently grow in us.

and from WhatsApp...



... we remembered this book published for fundraising in around 2007 with savoury dishes. Rev'd Caroline Vodden wondered if we might want to compile a new recipe book? Photo from Jenny Evans.



Birthday wishes to Rhona who turned 14 this week, and from Mary Duxbury 'Anemone Blanda'





Roy Fowler's Letter for Sunday 24th January 2021

Dear Friends

I write this in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity that is traditionally held between the 18th and 25th January. The theme for this year is 'Abiding in Christ'. The base text is John 15: 1 – 17 – Christ the true vine and we the branches of the vine.



The daily meditations and worship material has been prepared this year by the Grandchamp Community in Switzerland. The community was founded in the 1930's by a group of women from the Reformed tradition who were seeking to rediscover the importance of silence and listening to the word of God. The community now has women of all traditions and, as well as maintaining its own life of prayer, is open to visitors who want to share in their life of prayer. As well as the sisters at the mother house, there is a dispersed group of people across the world, who share their daily calling to 'pray and work that Christ may reign'.

In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we are invited for a while to unite with the Community Grandchamp, as part of great worldwide community of prayer that is the universal church. When we are separated from each other and only able to connect with each other by telephone, letter, social media and Zoom or YouTube, it is reassuring to realise that in the community of prayer we are never alone, but part of the body of Christ, joined in the Spirit. On good days, I rejoice in this worldwide communion. On days when I am struggling with meaningful prayer, I take heart from knowing that I never pray on my own, even when I shut the door of the room and go alone to pray. Some of us have ample time for prayer at present, others of us I suspect and see are struggling to make it through each day's responsibilities. It's good to know that we are part of something more extensive than ourselves that is helping to sustain us all.

I was struck how the theme title uses the present continuous tense – 'Abiding in Christ'. In the second day's meditation, after commenting on how Jesus had been nurturing his life in God since his birth, we are encouraged by these words: 'We too need a long period of maturation, an entire lifetime, in order to plumb the depths of Christ's love, to let him abide in us and for us to abide in him.' A moment of prayer, an hour of prayer, a lifetime of fractured praying all help us to reach into Christ who reaches into the heart of God. Today's prayer, snatched or leisurely, is always part of a continuous stream of prayer that flows through our whole lives. It's always a stream that not only flows through us, but in all who are 'Abiding in Christ'. And the stream flows continuously from the heart of God – nurturing, refreshing and enlarging us.

God bless you all,

Roy



Officers & Representatives for 2021 – 2022

Role / Organisation	Officers / Representatives
5th SW (Free Church) Scout Group	Lucinda Bell
Abbey Lane Guild	Joan Bowtle & Val Bowtle
Badminton Club	Audrey Barton
Bible Society, World Day of Prayer	Val Bowtle
Castle Puppets	Meg Nettle, Karen Start; Clara & Abigail
Christian Aid	Elfreda Tealby-Watson
Church Breakfasts	Social Committee
Church Directory	Mary Duxbury
Churches Together in SW	Val Bowtle, Margaret Hurst
Coffee Morning Rota Coordinator	Val Bowtle, Margaret Hearne
Coffee rota	Gill Howe
Commitment for Life	Val Bowtle
Communion table	Ken Bowtle, Margaret Howell and Margaret Hearne
Correspondence Secretary	John Luke (by June 2021. Replacement to be agreed by elders)
Door Stewards' rota	Val Bowtle
Dusting rota	Pat Fisher and team
Fair Trade	Ruth Fothergill
Flower Rota	Yvonne Bishop
Friends of Essex Churches	Pat & Marion Barker, Janet Bazley
Gift Aid	Louise Luke (by June 2021)
Girls Brigade Liaison	Greg Watson
Hall Bookings	Julian Nettle
Heating Steward	Rota: – to be confirmed
Human Resources Coordinator	Val Bowtle
Junior Church	See Sunday Club
Knit and Natter	Karen Start and Meg Nettle
Marriages - liaison	Elfreda Tealby-Watson
Minute Secretary (Church)	Margaret Hearne
Minute Secretary (Elders)	John Luke (by June 2021. Replacement to be agreed by elders)
Music & Zoom music	John Evans
Newport Guild	Brenda Johnson
Newport Lettings	Stephen Rapkin
Role / Organisation	Officers / Representatives
Newsletter/LINK & distribution	Gill Howe, Janet Bazley, Meg Nettle



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

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

24 January

Weekly e-Newsletter/print edition	Elfreda Tealby-Watson/Stephen Rapkin
Open Church	Stephen Rapkin, Karen Start
Pulpit Secretary	Val Bowtle
Remembrance Book	Gill Howe, Meg Reed
Safeguarding Officer	Margaret Howell
Social Committee Secretary	Marion Barker
Sound System, AV and Zoom	Julian Nettle, Joey Hughes, Greg Watson, Rhona Tealby-Watson
Sunday Club	Young people's worship working group considering alternatives (Elfreda Tealby-Watson, Jo & John Ford, Yin & Stephen Rapkin)
SWAT (Assemblies Team)	Val Bowtle
Synod Representative	Elfreda Tealby-Watson
Treasurer	Stephen Rapkin
Vestry Bookings	Joan Draper
Vestry Duty Rota	Meg Nettle
Website Editor	Pro-tem Stephen Rapkin & Elfreda TW with John Luke (by June 2021)
Winter Fair	Karen Start, Margaret Hurst, Kath Senior
Church O365 Site Administration	Elfreda Tealby-Watson

Fabric & Finance Committee

Louise Luke, Philip Marns, Stephen Rapkin, Karen Start, Elfreda TW and Caroline Vodden. Elfreda TW has remained on the committee but handed over being Convener to Stephen Rapkin. Louise Luke will retire from the committee by June 2021 when Louise and John will have settled in Scotland. Volunteers to join us still needed please.

Flower group

Yvonne Bishop, Margaret Hatter, Margaret Hearne, Margaret Hurst, Judith Perry, Meg Reed, Sheila Westwood, Joan Draper

Social Committee

Marion Barker (Sec), Janet Bazley, Yvonne Bishop, Margaret Clement, Pat Fisher, Yin Rapkin, Joan Reed, Meg Reed, Karen Start, Margaret Hurst

Management Committee (URC/ SA)

Val Bowtle, Ken Bowtle, Lt Katriona Thurlow, Rev'd Caroline Vodden, Sergeant Frank Jefferson. Retiring in April: Rev'd Caroline Vodden

History Group

Margaret Clement, Olive Newman, Stephen Rapkin

Serving Elders

Rev'd Caroline Vodden, Val Bowtle, John Ford, Stephen Rapkin, Karen Start, Elfreda Tealby-Watson John Luke will be retiring by June 2021 when Louise and John will have settled in Scotland.

