



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

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

31 January

Welcome to our weekly newsletter

Sunday Service – 31st January

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

If you wish to join us online please telephone our church contact 01799 528325. Or join us via the website at

[Http://saffronwaldenurc.org.uk.services-recordings](http://saffronwaldenurc.org.uk.services-recordings)

Thank you for the kind wishes sent to Greg & Rhona after running last week's Zoom operation.

Whilst you may not wish to get involved in the technical operations you can support worship in other ways. For instance, if you would be happy to read the Bible text on a Sunday do please contact Roy or Caroline to volunteer.

Looking ahead our service 7th February will include the Ordination and Induction of John Ford and Val Bowtle as Elders, and the celebration of Holy Communion, so get your provisions ready ahead to have bread, wine or juice available if you wish to share Communion. Full details next week.

All Creatures: Psalm 148:1-14

“Praise the Lord!...Beasts and all Livestock, creeping things and flying birds”

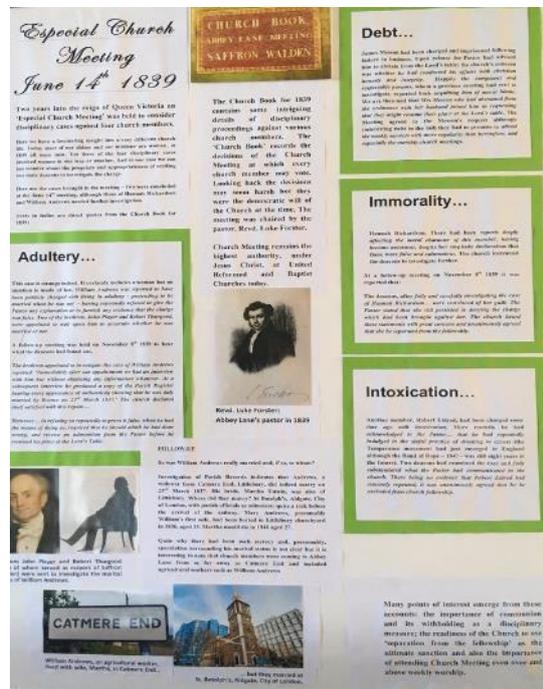


Ruth Fothergill reminded us on WhatsApp that the Birdwatch is this weekend.

Ministers	
Rev'd Caroline Vodden	01799 524 416
Rev'd Roy Fowler	01279 814 809
Church Secretary	
John Luke	C/O 01799 530175 07968 730 079

The Way Things Used to Be

Following our Annual Church Meeting, Stephen Rapkin has shared a photograph of this poster he made for a church display a few years ago. As you can see the items under discussion were somewhat different from current day practice, although the moral imperative still applies.



Fun Facts on our Hymn R & S 195

“Lord of the Dance” written by Sydney Carter in 1963.

The melody is from the American Shaker song "Simple Gifts", written and composed in 1848, generally attributed to Elder Joseph Brackett from Alfred Shaker Village.

Aaron Copland's iconic 1944 ballet score Appalachian Spring, written for Martha Graham, uses the now famous Shaker tune "Simple Gifts" as its melodic basis.

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



R & S 195 continued - Jessye Norman sang **Simple Gifts** in the arrangement from Aaron **Copland's** Old American Songs at the ceremony for Ronald Reagan's 2nd presidential inauguration.

Two January Memorials...

Late January may bring snow or snowdrops but always marks two contrasting memorial days, both celebrated the world over. One is Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January – Stephen offers a personal insight on this. The other is Burns' Night & Elfreda reflects on the life and heritage of the Scottish poet and folk song collector Robert Burns.

Snowdrops pictured at Ickleton Churchyard by Ruth Fothergill



The Immortal Memory ...
Elfreda TW writes:

The Immortal Memory is the title given at a traditional Burns' Supper to the speech paying tribute to the poet and his work, & perhaps some relevance to life today. But Burns also offers insight into the past of the Reformed tradition. He lived at a time when a rift was



beginning to appear within the Church of Scotland between two branches of Presbyterianism – the 'Auld Lights' who represented 'fire and brimstone' style Calvinism versus the 'New Lights', who put more emphasis on morality and the human aspects of religion, rather than just being blindly faithful.

Hanging in the religious section of the Burns' Birthplace Museum in Ayrshire is Alexander Carse's painting 'The Mauchline Holy Fair', a depiction of the gathering described in Burns' poem 'The Holy Fair'. Notes from the museum say: *Mauchline Kirk is painted at the left, the pub*

on the right, and between them the village community, caught up in a kind of moral tug-of-war. Carse depicts the villagers as Burns would have recognised them, as individuals caught up on the tension between religion and traditional culture... Burns was not an enemy of religion... but we can be sure from his satire that he hated religious hypocrisy.

... & One Personal Memory

Stephen Rapkin writes:

Last week I attended the funeral (via YouTube) of my old boss – a gentleman called Mike Warburg. Mike and I worked closely together in the 1980s and I learnt much about his life story. Often, as we spent time travelling around Germany, he told me of his childhood. How strange to hear the same stories repeated at the crematorium last week.

Mike had been born in Kiel to an intellectual and politically active Jewish family. Even in 1930 things were getting difficult for the family (that's a euphemism for 'grandfather shot by the Gestapo') and they moved to the relative anonymity of Berlin. But things got worse for prominent Jews. With passport rules about to change at midnight the family fled – getting into Holland just in time, and then to England. Mike would recall how, on arrival at Harwich, his baby sister pulled a glove away from an English policeman. His mother recoiled in fear. But the policeman just smiled and patted the baby's head.

This story has always had a profound influence on me. It was difficult not to become misty eyed as Mike recalled the family's arrival in Harwich. I realised that Mike was the only real refugee I knew personally. And I'm sure we like to think that our country is equally welcoming to all who are forced to flee their homes. Sadly, the world still witnesses genocide, there are more refugees than ever before and not everyone fleeing to our country is welcomed. Holocaust Memorial Day should remind us not just of unspeakable events now disappearing from memory but the horrific realities that still confront many. What can we do? Surely, they need our prayers but also much more?



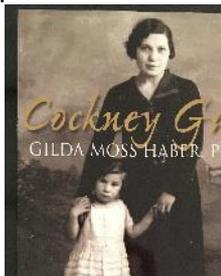
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

Learning from genocide
for a better future



Further notes on the Kindertransport

There were at least two Kindertransport Refugee homes local to us. One for boys was in Ware in Hertfordshire, the other for girls was even closer, situated at The White House in Great Chesterford, pictured above and still standing as a family home, although somewhat extended.

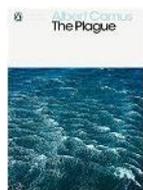


The picture has been submitted by the current owners of how the house looked in the 1930s. One of the children sent there has subsequently revisited her former home to give a talk about her book on her

experiences: *Cockney Girl* by Dr Gilder Moss Haber.

Disaster Days or Call to Action?

This week Caroline Vodden starts her pastoral letter (see below) reflecting on the book "Dear Life" by Dr Rachel Clarke, an uplifting look at palliative care. It seems books about disease



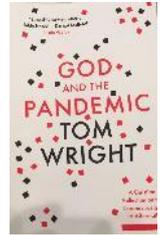
and death are rather topical – Tina & Elfreda discovered during Zoom chat last week that they have both been set fictional books about pandemics in their reading groups...

The Plague by Albert Camus (17th century typhus) and *The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donahue (1918 Spanish Flu).



Another book specifically about "God and the Pandemic" is a thought provoking read, very short, and comes recommended by Justin Welby amongst others.

The writer, Tom Wright, talks about the idea of urgency and single mindedness in following Jesus, and its relevance to the pandemic. Wright says, "Jesus of Nazareth came into Galilee saying Now... now is the time to repent and believe the good news" and goes on to explain that "so often when people look out on a world and its disasters, they wonder why doesn't God put things right?" but actually that "God works in all things with and through those who love him" – bringing us to reconsider what that call to action might entail. In a Daily Devotion this week Rev. David Scott of Edinburgh echoed that idea of 'now' looking at Mark 1:14-20 as "a passage about activity and action so what works best for you? When you are asked to think about doing something or when are asked to do something?" The words of Jesus are very direct "Follow me and I will make you fish for people". Rev. Scott offers this prayer:



God of Grace

Give me the courage to use the words I want to say.

Show me how to say them.

And make them reflect all that you call me to be and do.

Amen.

and from
WhatsApp....



Postcard views from Scotland as the Lukes settle there.

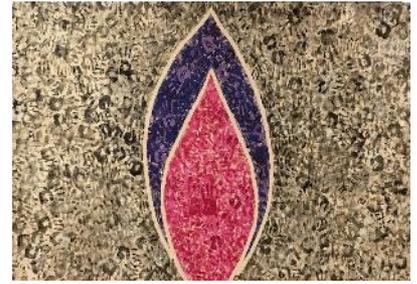


Local colour in Bridge End Gardens, photograph from Mary Duxbury.

Caroline Vodden's Letter for Sunday 31st January 2021

Dear Friends

One of the books I am reading at the moment (I usually have several on the go at any one time) is "Dear Life", written by palliative care doctor Rachel Clarke. It was recommended during one of our WEBS Bible Study sessions last term when we were discussing material prepared by the Anglican Alliance on "Faith in the time of Coronavirus".



Now, you might expect this to be a rather depressing read, being a medic's reflections on the experience of working with patients approaching the end of life, but you only have to look at the reviews to realise this is far from the case: "Brilliantly alive" (Sunday Times); "A truly wonderful book" (Henry Marsh); "Shows us the very best of human nature" (Adam Kay). Clarke's focus is not on dying but on squeezing every precious drop out of each day we are given to live, a focus which surely we all need in this week when the death toll from Coronavirus in the United Kingdom has passed the 100,000 mark and globally now stands at over 2 million people. As Clarke writes, "Nothing throws longevity into sharper relief than other people's lives cut short."

As Clarke reflects on the process of ageing, during which our once youthful vigour steadily declines, our skin wrinkles and our bodies suffer from an increasing and unwelcome variety of aches, pains and ailments, she comes to realise that, with the passing of each successive decade, the very fact that we are still here to experience them makes these things not something to bemoan but "to embrace with lusty gratitude". Ageing, she concludes, "[is] neither a right nor a challenge, not something to fend off: it [is] a privilege".

In a year when so many lives have been cut short (yesterday's news bulletin calculated that these 100,000 deaths represent about one million lost years of life), we surely owe it to all those who have died directly or indirectly from this pandemic to live to the full every blessed, wonderful, God-given, breath-filled moment which it is our privilege to enjoy. Which brings me to another book: Henri Nouwen's "Daily Meditations for Spiritual Living", in which he offers this reflection:

"Learn the discipline of being surprised not by suffering but by joy. As we grow old[er]... there is suffering ahead of us... But don't be surprised by pain. Be surprised by joy, be surprised by the little flower that shows its beauty in the midst of a barren desert, and be surprised by the immense healing power that keeps bursting forth like springs of fresh water from the depth of our pain."

Jesus declares: "I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10.10) There is always joy waiting to be found. We may just have to look a little harder for it at the moment.

May you be surprised by joy today, and God bless you.

Caroline