



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

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

11 July

Welcome to our weekly newsletter

Flowers by Sue Blakeburn, picture Karen Start



Sunday Service – 11th July

**Worship Online and in
Abbey Lane
at 10:30 a.m.
Led by Tina Wilson**

**This week our
worship is an all-age service so there will
be no separate Junior Church.**

In person places remain limited in accordance with social distancing requirements. Face masks should be worn at all times inside. 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.

This is a bumper edition! However, please note that for the school summer holidays the newsletter will take a break; the last edition will be for Sunday 25th July. if you have views on how the newsletter should continue in the Autumn, please let Elfreda know. We will make sure the Order of Service is circulated in simple form for anyone worshipping from home and to avoid as yet a return to printing pewsheets. We will also pause the Zoom meet and greet with slides for worship from home during August, as some of our tech team take a break. You will still be able to watch the service via YouTube on the Abbey Lane website, as a live stream or recording.

Reminders for your Diary

THIS Sunday 11th July – Church Meeting on Zoom at 12 noon. Meeting details as per Order of Service.

Saturday 10th July – Book Stall Karen Start and Mary Brooks will be in the Abbey Lane car park from 9.30am until noon selling the first batch of second hand books for church funds. If wet, under the porch!

Trying to Reach Young People

This week worship at Abbey Lane is ‘all age’, and as we reach the end of the educational year, it seemed a good idea to consider some issues and news around the young people connected with our church so that is the focus of this newsletter. Church Times reported in 2017 that only half of children with Christian parents grow up to have a faith of their own in adult life. Of the parents surveyed in the report ‘Faith in our Families’ www.careforthefamily.co.uk just 27% of parents talked about their faith with their children. Not only should we want to share the Good News with our young, but surely we need younger generations for our church to thrive as a balanced family across age groups? At our Elders meeting this week we are reviewing progress by our family friendly working group. They are currently working through a long form to return to Synod! However, we already have plans for Junior Church to share leadership of some future services, including our Climate Sunday in September. in Bible Study we considered the text: **Ephesians 6:2-4** **“Honour your father and mother... so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”**

Girls Brigade Julia Attwood writes asking us to consider the future of the local group

*For everything there is a season,
a time for every activity under heaven.
A time to be born and a time to die.
A time to plant and a time to harvest.
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-2*

For myself, this is a time to stand down from my role at Girls’ Brigade as I want to focus on leadership within the

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 offering pastoral care



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Salvation Army. This has not been an easy decision, but it is one I have taken prayerfully, and I have complete peace about it. This leaves the team with a lieutenant, but no one able to take on the leadership of the company. The company is currently small, having lost a few people over lockdown. It will need building up again, as some of our older girls are also leaving. This would involve a recruitment drive, but we have done this successfully in the past. We often find that we get a cohort of girls from one of the primary schools.

Girls' Brigade is a fabulous organisation. At grass roots level there are companies, always affiliated to and supported by a local church. This support is key to the success and mission of the company. Every company is part of a larger District, in our case, Forest Edge District. The District Commissioner and District Chaplain organise training and events with other companies. Above the District is the national GB Support Centre, always on hand for administrative advice and training. They provide resources for badgework and programme planning, as well as online resources for helping young people.



GB's motto is to Seek, Serve and Follow Christ. I believe this can be lived out effectively in a local company. We have been sowing seeds into the lives of girls for many years and have heard testimonies of how God has made himself known to young people through our ministry. We are not like a Sunday School, but every meeting will conclude with a devotional time and a prayer; for several of our girls, GB is their church experience. From time to time, we will be more Bible focused, but everything we do has the Christian message running through it. Our activities are typically based around games, crafts, drama and cooking (when we are allowed). Our girls range in age from 5 to 18 and they mix very well with each other. It is one of the strengths of the organisation, creating opportunities for older girls to become Young Leaders (this is an established GB training scheme run by our District) and giving younger girls a chance to mix with those outside their school year group.

Like all good youth organisations, it is the relationships that are key, and the team have good experience of getting alongside girls in a way that doesn't happen at school. This is perhaps particularly pertinent in the current circumstances. We have worked hard to encourage our members during lockdown with zoom meetings and have resumed meeting face to face as soon as we were allowed to. We are not finding the restrictions

easy to negotiate, but we believe we are providing some kind of normality for the young people.

I hope reading this has encouraged you. Please pray about the future of the company, and whether yourself or someone you know might be able to take it on. I'd be really happy to talk to anyone about that, Greg Watson has my contact details. **The question I'm asking myself, and would like the church to pray into is "what season is Girls' Brigade in?"**

Senior church talks to Junior Church!

Val Bowtle, our Church Secretary, spent some time talking to Luke Ford, from Junior Church, to find out more about how his age group has experienced the pandemic.

"Near the beginning when Covid was in China Dad said it would never shut our school down and a few months later, look at it? And we're in a global pandemic! Schools have stopped, shops are shut, it's just a complete change. Because I was a key worker's child, I only went to school some of the time; they didn't want you there continuously just the days when your parents were working. It was different because you were in and out of school, home learning, and then a completely different timetable in school. At the very beginning all the Juniors were together, then later there was a bubble of Years 3 and 4. Later it came to a point where just year 4 were together.

I missed after school clubs, normally I do 4 or 5 but I'm just doing one now, summer sports, I have also missed seeing family members because most of them live up in Scotland and we couldn't travel. We were having to do a shop once a week which was a bit of a rush. When some foods were limited, we had to remember, "Don't buy single oranges, buy a packet." Then it all got a bit chaotic! I have missed having parties and eating sausages. Instead, we have gone out for a day. My friends and I had promised to come to one another's parties, but nobody has got to come round yet.

I think many people have thought more about the environment. Being allowed out once a day and told not to go more than 5 miles from town in a car has encouraged people to walk and have exercise, we have walked to Bridge End Gardens. Some people have been stressed, and some more relaxed not having to go into work and worry about being on time. Home learning and working from home and not doing as much as you used to can be less stressful. We've learnt new technology. I hadn't heard of Zoom before lockdown and now everyone is using it. Normally we are all on Face Time but now we are using Zoom.



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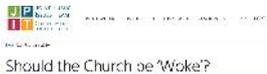
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Lots of people have been saved from Covid and unfortunately lots haven't. With help from God, people have been encouraged to do things like Captain Tom Moore who walked 100 laps of his garden and raised millions. God has kept the doctors going, through people supporting them and encouraging them to keep doing their job and all who work in the hospitals."

Do 'Public Issues' Matter to the Church? (Elfreda Tealby-Watson)

'Following prayerful consideration by the whole Church, the Methodist Conference has voted to confirm provisional resolutions on the principles or qualities of good relating, understanding of cohabitation and same-sex marriages conducted on Methodist premises or by Methodist office-holders.' This decision last week means that the Methodist Church has agreed in principle consent to the marriage of same-sex couples on Methodist premises, and individual churches will be able to register to do so. In 2015 the URC General Assembly approved the use of URC buildings for same-sex marriages; this requires the approval of the Church Meeting and for the URC, there is a conscience clause allowing individual ministers to decline to officiate. These decisions will have been painful to some as much as cause for joy for others but they are certainly topical to the younger generations.



Throughout June you may have seen rainbow flags and symbols marking LGBT+ Pride month. I know it has certainly been a well discussed topic amongst my children and their friends. The 'Pride' tradition, originally from the USA, culminates in Pride Day, the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York, 1969. These rights are just one example of 'identity' issues that may challenge us. And whilst many Christians are happy to discuss poverty or climate, discussions of racial equality, gender and sexual rights, are perhaps seen as either irrelevant or controversial. Nonetheless, speaking to younger people it is clear that they want to be able to talk about contemporary issues; I think if we as a church are to seem relevant to young people we need to be aware of the issues that they consider relevant. The Joint Public Issues Team last year wrote an article "Should the Church be Woke?" The article states that at a basic level 'wokeness' can 'simply mean advocacy on behalf of an identity group...usually associated with the arguments of modern feminist, anti-racist, and pro-LGBTQ movements.' The article

continues, 'Despite the equality and dignity of all people being a key tenet of Christian belief, the Church as a whole is yet to substantially engage, either in support or opposition, with the language and arguments of these modern movements.'

Whilst notable Christian figures such as Tim Farron MP argue that any such "identity politics" are "counter-productive" (May 2018), others believe that Christians need to engage with ideas of identity, and inclusion or exclusion. Bishop Christopher Senyonjo, an Anglican priest in Uganda, in the forward to the Stonewall pamphlet 'Christian Role Models for LGBT Equality', writes, "Whilst some of us find it easier to embrace greater diversity, seeing it as part of God's great design, others can find it confusing and difficult." He argues that "As Christians, we must learn to accept people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT) as children of God. There have always been LGBT people in the Church, and there always will be."

Whatever your viewpoint on this issue and others, I believe we must be willing to listen to young people about their views if we want them to engage with us. You can read the articles quoted in full via these links: Methodist Conference decision <https://www.methodist.org.uk>

JPIT article

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/should-the-church-be-woke/>

Bishop Senyonjo

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/christian-role-models.pdf>

Tim Farron's speech to the Oxford University Union

<https://www.libdemvoice.org/a-long-read-for-a-wednesday-lunchtime-tim-farron-on-vince-vulcans-the-centre-ground-and-identity-politics-57575.html>

Scouts AGM (Stephen Rapkin)

Last week we had the 61st AGM of the 5th Saffron Walden Scouts – the Free Church group set up by the Baptist, Methodist and, as we were then, Congregational Churches. The group goes from strength to strength. Here are just a few of the highlights of the year as reported by [Dom Maloney](#), our Group Scout Leader: "Since the last AGM, we have gone from fully virtual meetings to being the first in the District to return to in-person Scouting; to blended (virtual and face to face)





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meetings; back to virtual and finally back, at last(!) to in-person adventurous activities

Our busy Beavers had an 'Adventures in Science' virtual camp where Mole ended up muckier than any of the Beavers and an amazing kayaking session in Clavering. Our Cubs met fellow Cubs from other countries during our District International Day and had a blast on Zoom with Space Dave from the Te Awamutu Space Centre in New Zealand.; took part in UK Parliament Week where we were joined by Kemi Badenoch; hiked, cycled, made fires and tried out kayaking, archery and shooting. The



Scouts have been industrious, making coracles and cardboard canoes; headed to Skreens Park for an activity day including axe

throwing and climbing; hiked; lit beacons; had a slightly gory CSI visit and did lots of cooking on Zoom!

My thanks to all the leaders who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure we jumped through all appropriate COVID hoops, got paperwork in place and persisted with attempts to socially distance young people who seem magnetically attracted to each other whenever they meet! We continue to attract new adult volunteers to the Group, necessary to balance the growth of the sections, and provide succession planning... but we could always do with more!

Finally, thanks to the Young People and their families. You've stuck with us through a tough year, supported crazy activities at home and we've all come out stronger for it. Thanks for making Scouting as fun for us as we hope it is for you!"

If you would like to keep up to date with what the Busy Beavers, Clever Cubs and Super Scouts of the 5th Saffron Walden (Free Church) Scout Group are doing, then please follow us on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/5thSaffronWalden> #skillsforlife #adventure

Church Family

Roy Fowler is retiring on 18th July, but meanwhile [Christine Fowler](#) led her last service at Abbey Lane last Sunday. She



shared some fascinating experiences from her years both before and during ministry, and concluded with the words, "Don't stop reading your Bibles!" Val Bowtle thanked Christine for all the support she had given WEBS over the years, mentioned her work at Little Baddow, and presented her with book tokens, and cards from Junior Church. Christine says, "Please thank the kids for their wonderful large cards to Roy and myself. Now both of them taking up most of the mantelpiece! Terrific. Thank you for the book token also. Very unexpected but wonderful as I have been reading so much more and libraries have of course often been closed. I have enjoyed my time with you all at Abbey Lane."

Stephen Rapkin spotted this news in URC Communications about [Elizabeth Gardiner from Water Lane](#): "A solicitor who helped draft the Government's coronavirus pandemic legislation has been made a Dame Commander of the Order of the Bath (DCB) in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Elizabeth, who lives in Manuden, was the first ever woman to be appointed to her current post of First Parliamentary Counsel when she landed the job in November 2015. She is now one of the country's leading civil servants. She was made a dame for her



services to government and the legislative process, and said: "It was a lovely surprise, although I'm still getting used to the idea! Dame Elizabeth and her husband are members of the

fellowship at Water Lane United Reformed Church in Bishop's Stortford." Full article:

https://www.bishopsstortfordindependent.co.uk/news/manuden-solicitor-who-helped-draft-covid-pandemic-law-become-9203411/?dm_i=2JB1,1R7II,2VWP3W,61OTP,1

and from WhatsApp...



From Janet and Marion: "We are so pleased to announce the total raised at the cake stall is £582. Many thanks to everyone who helped make cakes." Massive congratulations and thanks to Marion and Janet, pictured with some of the produce at the cake stall.



PASTORAL LETTER for Sunday 7th July 2021



Dear Friends

The artist David Hockney has told his friend and collaborator in writing books about his views on art, Martin Gayford, '[M]ost artists are going to be forgotten. That's their fate. It might be mine too, I don't know. I'm not forgotten yet. It's OK if I am; I'm not sure that it is that important. Most art will disappear.' Well, Hockney now has a window he designed in Westminster Abbey and so is unlikely to be forgotten very soon. I had a ministerial colleague once who used to collect the more bizarre examples of hymns from the Victorian period that have not survived into modern hymnbooks or never made it into any regularly used hymnbook. History moves on. Just as our memories move on. We filter the past. How many routine journeys do you remember? Life would be intolerable if we spent all our time reliving the past minute by minute. Nothing new would get done. We would stop developing.

How many of my own sermons can I remember? Very few. It has been interesting to read through some of my past sermons from the last twenty years or so as I have disposed of the paper copies of them ready to move. I still have copies of most of them safely stored on my computer. I can remember preaching some of them – a few where I thought that was interesting, some I didn't want to be reminded of, many more that were a word for the moment that has now passed. It would be good to think that at least some of what I have prayed over and worked on through the years has left a mark on someone's heart or mind. In the end it doesn't matter if my sermons are remembered or forgotten.

Art helps us to see the world differently and to appreciate it in new ways. That's why some of it lasts and some fades away into obscurity. Preaching might be the same. Except, preaching is never about the artifice of the sermon. For, behind every sermon, there is something deeper happening. God's Spirit is seeking to engage with us drawing ever deeper into communion with God, and the love that God has revealed to us in Christ so that we both receive and share that love. All that any preacher can hope is that they have not hindered that connection. Although I have often been surprised that, when I felt a sermon to be inadequate, someone has come up to me afterwards and said that they had really got something out of that today. God works in ways we often do not understand. Then forty years on, I am still surprised that God called me into ministry and sustained my ministry.

It is my prayer that you will continue to make the mysterious connection with God that is at the heart of our spiritual lives that both sustains us inwardly and gives an impetus to our lives in the world.

God bless you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. J.' followed by a long horizontal stroke.