



TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
Weekly News
Sunday 22nd March 2020

Welcome to our first weekly newsletter. It will be circulated to members by email, posted on our website, and sent by post to those who need a paper copy.

If you know anyone who would benefit from a paper copy, please let me know by email to: trinitywoking@btinternet.com
Daniela

Letter from Rev Jackie Case

Dear Friends,

We are living in unprecedented times! Certainly, during my lifetime, I have never before known the cessation of gatherings for acts of Christian worship, and we will miss the encouragement and support that gives us in living out our faith day to day.

It seems particularly hard since it coincides with the period leading up to and beyond Easter, a time which many of us look forward to as the focal point of the Christian year. May I take this opportunity to pledge to you that, since every Sunday is actually a celebration of that first Easter day, the very first Sunday service I am able to lead at Trinity after this period of extreme social distancing, will be an Easter Sunday celebration with all the trimmings!

In the meantime, whilst gathering together for worship and fellowship is very important for Christians, this period will remind us that because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, we all have direct access to God and therefore we can all worship at home. To help you with this the leadership team and I will be endeavouring to provide you with resources to use and the BBC will be broadcasting a service each Sunday morning, initially led by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Those who have access to the internet will find a lot of resources there, but whatever resources you do or don't have, please don't worry about "doing it right." Just as when a child talks to a loving parent, there is no approved formula essential for effective communication with God.

My advice is keep it simple and be honest with God about your thoughts, feelings, and needs. You can worship silently or aloud, it's up to you – God can hear you either way! Some people find it helpful to set aside a particular place - a chair in a quiet corner or by a window will do. Some are aided by having a visual reminder of the presence of God (eg. a flower, candle or cross.) Music can be helpful (recorded or just sing some of a familiar hymn). Read a Bible passage (chosen or at random). When you pray tell God what you are thinking about your own needs, those of others you know and the rest of the world. Most people would use the Lord's Prayer. If you do use additional prayers written by other people, don't just read them, pray them ie. make them your own.

Please be assured of my prayers, Jackie

Hugh Bowerman shares his 'Thoughts on a crazy week'.

Exactly a week ago (as I write on Thursday) I was sitting outside Holy Trinity, Knaphill trying to discern whether to cancel the Woking ROC conversation. Back at Trinity preparations were already swinging into place. After all this effort, do we pull the plug? A few phone calls and arrow prayers, and I was none the wiser. I decided to pick-up Holy Trinity's projector as planned and went into the office. There I met Sarah. I explained our predicament. Go with government advice, she suggested. A few texts with ROC's CEO Debra Green drew the same conclusion. We were on.

Thus started a very busy day, but a very successful one. Plans fell into place. Debra arrived. Everyone was briefed. Guests arrived, 185 of them. The prayer room was praying. Debra was on form. The tables were filled with talk. It was a successful ROC conversation. I eventually

got home at about 11pm. Drained but buzzing with excitement. There then followed an early start on Friday to dismantle, followed by a de-brief breakfast with Debra and the local organising team. What had gone well? What could ROC do better? What are the next steps? Lots of idea's; so positive.

Though only a week ago, that was in the "COVID is relatively remote" world. How things have changed! Over the weekend I helped my son-in-law hang some doors, a good DIY day, but on the journey home, I started feeling unwell. I knew a couple of other people who had also fallen ill. COVID?

Sunday was a washout. Ruth thankfully filled the breach with respect to giving a ROC update to the church. I just slept. When I woke on Monday, I was in a new world. The government was starting to ramp up its measures. Self-isolation extended from 7 to 14 days. Churches to close. And no idea whether I had a minor cold or the infamous COVID virus. And now, 4 days later, that is still where I am. It might be COVID. It might not. I'd like it to be as that should give me immunity, which would be useful in supporting others.

Of ROC? Sadly, other planned ROC Conversations have been postponed. ROC Woking was the last conversation of the pre-COVID era. We continue to process information gathered at the event so the report can be produced. The next stage for us is an Action Group – set-up to decide what actions we're going to take based on what the conversation uncovered. No gathering permitted, so Woking may be about to trial the first virtual action group!

Are there any bonuses to a week like this? Kevin Bown invited me into membership of TANSIC – The All New Self-Isolating Club. As a church we now have a lot of TANSIC members. More seriously, I know many of us are concerned about the impact this will have on our lives. My aim is to recover quickly, and be available to support as guidance will permit. Trinity is a community, a good community, and it is at times like this that good communities

come into their own.

As I reflect on this week, my prayer is that we will remember that we are in the charge of a Great God. Thanks to Jesus we can see life on an eternal landscape. It is in us to be able to be the hands and feet (or perhaps in the current context the fingers on keyboard and voice) of Jesus to those around us. Let us not retreat into ourselves, but in the power of His Spirit strengthen our community. And may we do all we can to ensure that our light shines brightly, for a bright light will be seen clearly, even by people who keep their distance!

Hugh Bowerman

A wonderful version of the Beatitudes, courtesy of the Othona Community, Dorset:

Blessed are the gel users – with them you are in safe hands
Blessed are the sneeze-catchers – for they will bin their tissues
Blessed are the shelf-stackers – for they mitigate panic-buying
Blessed are the ventilator makers – yesterday they built cars or weapons
Blessed are the stranded tourists – may their minibars never run dry
Blessed are the epidemiologists – for they will crunch the numbers
Blessed are the caring neighbours – for they will spot who needs some help
Blessed are the asymptomatic carriers – for it is not their fault
Blessed are you when you self-isolate – for you shall re-read every good book, eat every tin of beans and maybe even tidy the attic
Blessed are the carers, the health workers, the frequent handwashers – for their touch is welcome and their conscience clear
Tony, Othona Community. Thanks to Ruth Taylor for sharing.

Would you like to contribute to this newsletter?

If so, send your question, article, reflection, joke to trinitywoking@btinternet.com by Thursday lunchtime each week.

I'd also welcome feedback on content, layout and length.

'With people it is impossible, but not with **God**; for all things are **possible** with **God**!

Matthew 19 v26, *Jean Normington*