



TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH WOKING
Weekly Newsletter
Sunday 23rd August 2020

Message from Rev Jackie Case

Dear Friends,

What a difference a week makes! When I wrote last week we had all been sweltering in a heat wave. My dogs spent most of their time lying on cool pads under a fan, and we walked late in the evening when it was nearly dark and slightly cooler. I was trying to work in short bursts sandwiched between periods of resting in a chair sharing the dogs' fan. The water butt was empty, and so I had to lug heavy watering cans from the kitchen sink, choosing which plants to expend my energy on and which to leave wilting. When the weather broke it was a relief to most of us, although we soon began to wish it would stop raining.

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly nature recovers. Despite a few casualties, most of the plants that had wilted are lush and green again, although the brown, strawy lawn is only just beginning to recover. Most surprisingly, the tender, young gooseberry plant that was half eaten before I discovered several green caterpillars and picked them off, now has new leaves growing alongside the scant remains of those that were eaten. Out of curiosity I had sacrificed 4 stray brassicas in the flower bed (I don't know where they came from) to hundreds of tiny cabbage white caterpillars that seemed to move on the leaves in waves like a flock of birds. They completely stripped the large leaves back to the central stalks and even the tender flower/seed heads. I thought that having been so ravaged they would surely die but it was too hot to bother pulling them up, so I left them untouched in the wilting flower bed. Now, amazingly, I find new leaves growing alongside the stripped stalks and fresh heads forming. Where have all the caterpillars gone? I presume that, sufficiently gorged, they are now hidden

away in chrysalises beginning their transformation process into butterflies.

All this new growth after such devastation gives me great hope for the future of our churches and the currently ravaged communities in which they serve. It is also an encouraging message, I hope, for individuals going through tough times at the moment. My heart goes out to those recently bereaved; those still isolated; those whose working lives have been curtailed by redundancy; those young people whose academic plans have been turned upside down by the unexpected downgrading of exam results. Their current pain and worry cannot, and should not be underestimated, but in most cases there will eventually be new life beyond the decimation. It won't be the same life as before, perhaps, but it can still be fruitful and purposeful.

In the last analysis, as Christian people, we know that beyond the experience of the Cross there is resurrection and new life in all its fullness. Why? Because, our God, whom Jesus called Father, is eternally gracious and faithful. God not only comforts us with his presence in the dark times, but also unerringly guides us into the light. The Lord be with you in whatever circumstances you find yourself today.

Every Blessing

Jackie

Message from the leadership team

In my message today I just wanted to thank everyone for their kind words and wishes on the sudden death of my mother, Jean. It has been a source of great comfort to me to receive messages about your meetings with Jean and memories of her as she had only recently moved down to Woking and then Covid-19 got in the way.

I have always found it difficult to know what to say to someone who has been bereaved but now I have a little more insight, as the prayerful reminders of my mum's life have been a real blessing. You have shown that God is beside me and will carry me through these difficult times. For this I thank God and the wonderful community of Trinity Methodist.

Ruth Taylor

A Word in Season 22 – Restoring the Soul

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want; he makes me lie in pastures green, he leads me by the still, still waters; his goodness restores my soul. And I will trust in you alone, and I will trust in you alone, for your endless mercy follows me, your goodness will lead me home (StF 481, from Psalm 23, Stuart Townend)

As you know, on Monday 10th August I joined Bern, Jess, Isobel and Clara for my unexpected week's holiday on the Grand Union Canal. We should have been together with Dan & Paul on a week's holiday in Lugano, Switzerland. I was really looking forward to it, as Christine and I had spent our honeymoon weekend there. We were married on 10th August 1974 at the Lutheran Church in the village of Landiswil in the Emmental region – yes, where the cheese comes from! This year, that day would have been our 46th wedding anniversary, so it was a day full of happy memories but tinged with sadness.

However, once we had had confirmation from the chalet owner that he would move our booking back by one year; Bern booked the canal boat trip to give the family a summer holiday and invited me to come along. We were all looking forward, with a little hesitancy, to the experience. Dan and Paul were going to join us for the day on the 15th to celebrate my birthday. Suddenly the stress, concern, darkness, and uncertainty of lockdown and Covid 19 appeared less threatening. I was going on a Canal Cruise with God, and my family. As the Psalmist said, "to green pastures and still waters", but as with everyday life it would not be trouble free, there would be difficulties and exertions, but also rest, peace, and relaxation.

We collected 'Tasselweed' our home for the week from Weedon Dock in Northamptonshire. She is a seventy-two-foot-long six berth narrow boat.



I was surprised at her size and wondered how on earth, Bern & Jess would manage to steer it. I didn't mind how many locks I would help to open but the thought of steering her in a straight line, let alone round bends and in and out of locks terrified me. But our God knows our limitations and when Bern asked me if I wanted to take a turn at steering, I declined. He grinned, as if to say, 'I didn't think you would' but I jumped at the chance to learn how to work the locks – it is much more complicated than it looks, but with practice becomes easier.

We were shown around our boat and then met our instructors on the quayside – It was agreed that Bern would be the 'Captain' and Jess the other 'Skipper' at the helm. It reminded me of a chorus I learned at the Salvation Army, Sunday School in Bromley as a seven-year-old,

*I have a Pilot who guides me night and day.
Through cloud and sunshine, I'll trust Him come
what may. Dangers may threaten but I'll never
fear; I'm full of confidence while he is near.
I have a Pilot who guides me along life's way.
(A H Vickery)*

How true that would turn out to be during the week.

All of us attended the training and safety talk. We were instructed about water safety, the children, although good swimmers had to wear their lifejackets when on the deck, as did I, as non-confident swimmer. I also needed to wear it when we were in and around the locks.

We then embarked with one of the instructors on board and set off for the first lock. Bern took to steering like the proverbial 'duck to water', and the Instructor guided us, with advice, and help for the two and a half miles to the bottom of the Buckby Lock flight. Here Jess and I were given our training.



It is quite complicated knowing which paddle (sluice gate) to open first to empty or fill the lock – we discovered when filling always open the ground paddle first and when the lock is half full open the gate paddle, the water comes in much more forcefully then. When full, close the paddles, then open the gates. When emptying the lock open all the paddles, when empty close all the paddles. Before shutting the gates check whether other boats are waiting to enter, then leave the gates open. If not, ensure the paddles are shut and close the gate. This process helps to save water and inadvertently empty the canal; an awful responsibility.



We handled the second lock on our own, under supervision, and then were informed about the rules concerning mooring and the secure way to do it. Then we were left alone!

Jess and I had discovered just how hard it was to raise the paddles and move the lock gates. By now, we were ready to moor for the night. There were several empty moorings, so we took the first one available. After dinner we sat down to discuss where we intended to go for the week.

and we turned to, what was to become our 'bible', 'The Waterways Guide' with all the information we needed about routes, watering and refuse points and hints and tips about places to stop, eating places, points of interest and about the scenery. We eventually decided to make our way towards Warwick.

Yes, it really was like a Bible. As Christians we follow the Holy Bible in the same way as we travel through life. The similarities with life in general were obvious, training, instruction, experience; so like the Christian life. Over the next twelve hours we were to realise how much we needed to change our mind set. As we got ready for bed we found out, too late, we were moored between the M1 and the main railway line to Birmingham and the North-West of England. Not the quietest place for a good night's sleep but we all did, eventually.

We set off early and soon discovered that locks had the capacity for two boats side by side and the camaraderie this brought made the tasks easier and we shared in tasks and conversation and found a real community spirit. When we reached the top lock, having jointly shared the previous five, we felt confident, but extremely hot and sweaty. Over a welcome ice cream, we realised that canal travel is governed much more by time than distance. We decided to aim for Braunston for the night and then head towards Warwick.

Our first objective was to pass through the 2042-yard Braunston Tunnel then go down the five Braunston Locks and stop for the night. But, as in life, it didn't quite work that way. Our instructors had warned us that sometimes the Canal bank shelved and instructed us how to reverse off and push away from the bank. We were looking for a spot to moor for lunch when we found a reasonable place to stop. As Bern approached about half a metre from the bank, we heard the grinding of the silt along the bottom of the boat. We had run aground.

After a few minutes we had released ourselves. The next spot we tried it happened again, but using the experience gained we were able to free ourselves quickly.

As we set off Bern became concerned that the steering was not working properly and began to think that the rudder was damaged. We found a spot where we moored safely for lunch and Bern phoned the hire company to ask for their advice. They said an engineer would be there in about an hour as they didn't want us to go through the tunnel until they were satisfied it was safe. Steve arrived within the hour and, after checking, reassured us that all was well. He showed us how to use the pole to test the depth of the water, and travelled with us to the next mooring point.

The Psalmist said that God would be with us in times of trouble, and at this time of lockdown and concerns about the future, we can know that our Lord is always available for help and support. How much more does God, not just reassure us, but is our constant companion, that Pilot who guides us, the Shepherd who leads us, our God who does hold us in everlasting arms of love and support. Night and day, we are never alone.

We passed safely through the tunnel in the dark with our lights on and the boats approaching us, lit up too. It was an interesting experience and re-enforced the truth that Jesus gave us, that a light hidden under a bushel is useless, we will not see the way without a clear, shining, light.



Coming out of the tunnel the sun was shining brightly and it was hot.

Jess and I had rested and were ready for the next six locks going down. Surprisingly, it was a little easier going down but as we got lower the sun seemed to get stronger and by the bottom lock, we were ready to stop. In the mile between the bottom lock and the junction for Warwick we made a significant decision. The idea of this holiday was to slow down and enjoy the views not to wear ourselves out, and Jess and I had sweated through two of the hottest days of the

year and didn't want to face the 26 locks towards Leamington Spa and Warwick. We fancied a wander through the countryside without any locks for a while; to be able to sit and enjoy the scenery and spend time as a family together chatting and sharing in games with the Girls. Like the time when Jesus took the disciples away to a quiet place for rest.

What an important decision it was to be as we all agreed to turn down the Oxford Canal and soon found a quiet shady spot and moored for the rest of the afternoon and the night. Clara and I walked along the towpath picking blackberries which she served up as a blackberry and yogurt dessert after dinner.

The next morning I was awake early and saw the sunrise through the bridge behind us, lighting up the side of the boat, and I remembered Harriet Beecher Stowe's words I used in Newsletter 12. *Still, still with thee, when purple morning breaketh, when the bird waketh and the shadows flee. Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight, dawns the sweet consciousness I am with thee.*



We set off early after breakfast and meandered through green pastures with grazing sheep, and golden cornfields along quiet waters. It was so lovely after two heavy days. The children thoroughly enjoyed spells of cycling along the towpath and when back on board looking for the multitude of fluffy ducklings and baby moorhens, they called them 'floofs'. It reminded me of my

childhood in Dorset and the words of Rev Christopher Wordsworth,

For golden sunshine, vernal air, sweet flowers and fruits your love declares. Where harvests ripens, you, God, are there, who gives us all.



We paused at Napton to top up with water and eat lunch in a canal side garden, then walked up the hill, the children cycling, to the village of Napton on the Hill for the village shop to get bread, milk, and the ubiquitous ice creams. It was just like Palmer's Store in Alderholt, the village shop of my childhood, except for masks and social distancing, but the ice lollies and sweets tasted just as good as when I was a child. Sitting on the little green by the converted chapel it could have been the chapel at Cripplestyle, where my childhood faith began to mature, all those years ago.

Jess and I enjoyed the exercise of working the two locks up to a quiet place where we moored for a picnic tea and a lovely family time together, before going to bed. God had indeed brought me to the green pastures and quiet waters and touched my soul. It was so cleansing looking at the beauty of the countryside. It was very restorative. The cares and worries of Today began to pale in the light of the reality of the presence of Jesus in both the good times and difficult, worrying, and threatening times.

We were halfway and tomorrow we would start to wend our way back. As I lay in bed having watched the sun setting and completed my evening devotion and prayers some words of the poet John Greenleaf Whittier came to mind (*StF 495*),

Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways; reclothe us in our rightful mind; in

purser lives your service find, in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard beside the Syrian sea the gracious calling of the Lord, let us, like them, without a word rise up and follow you. O sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share with you, the silence of eternity, interpreted by love.

With that deep hush subduing all our words and works that drown the tender whisper of your call, as noiseless let your blessing fall as fell your manna down.

Drop your still dues of quietness till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of your peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desires your coolness and your balm; let sense be dumb, let flesh retire; speak through the earthquake wind and fire, O still small voice of calm!



Sun of my soul, my Saviour dear, it is not night if you are near.

O may no earth-born cloud arise to hide you from your servant's eyes!

When the soft dews of kindly sleep my wearied eyelids gently steep,

Be my last thought, how sweet to rest for ever on my Saviour's breast!

Come near and bless us when we wake ere through the world our way we take,

Till in the ocean of your love we lose ourselves in heaven above. (John Keble, from H&P 646)

Next week we will travel home together with God and the family. Until then may God richly bless us all. *Graham*

All photos: Graham Warr

Unconscious bias

At our service on Sunday, Rev Julia Monaghan gave us an alternative view to the usual

commentaries on the faith of the Canaanite woman. Julia's approach was - here was a feisty woman who through her persistence caused Jesus to redraw his line in the sand and widen his ministry to heal her daughter.

We all have lines in the sand and unconscious bias. We form our views from our world and background and sometimes cannot see another point of view as it is outside our experience.

Last week I attended a course on unconscious bias and it made me think of where I fail to be inclusive of all.

This is what I learnt that I thought would be useful to share: -.

"Every human being makes immediate snap decisions about new people. It is purely instinctual and happens fast. Once the brain has made these decisions it will then categorise the person based on past knowledge and influences, such as family, friends and the press, creating a positive or negative judgement. This process is called unconscious bias. We can't stop this but we can learn how to use logical thought to make sure it doesn't impact negatively on our church. Once it is clear where your biases may lay you can become more conscious of working to counteract more negative biases."

Some practical steps to counter unconscious bias:

- Be aware of our Micro-messages – these are small subtle messages which are communicated between people without saying a word
- Counter stereotypical images – advertising is one of the worst for stereotypes. We saw an advert by a pharmaceutical company promoting delivery of prescriptions. All the people in jobs were shown as white males – the doctor, the pharmacist. All the people needing prescriptions delivering to them were shown as helpless females. You can imagine how I felt about that as a working woman!
- Use positive imagery – reflect the diversity of the organisation on the website and in leaflets. Check whether

any groups are under or over-represented.

- Check language used – how do we refer to our community? Is the language used positive?
- Undertake further reading and research into unconscious bias.

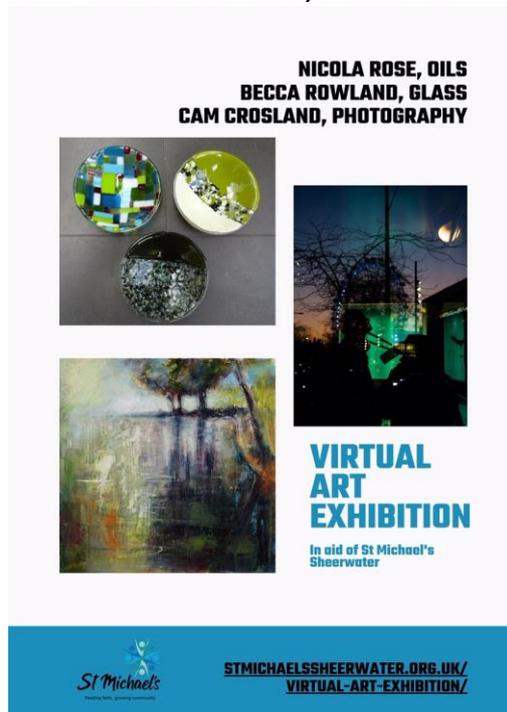
Julia gave us a few titles to read on Sunday.

(Notes taken from a training course by Equality and Diversity UK Ltd)

If as a church community we all pledge and attend to some of these practical steps then we will have made a start to counter our unconscious bias.

Ruth Taylor

St Michael's Sheerwater, Virtual Art Exhibition



In this virtual art exhibition by 3 friends of St Michael's 50% of sales are being donated directly to the church. Buying something beautiful and original from our website not only helps to continue mission and ministry in an area of high deprivation, but also supports artists in lockdown. New artists will be added each month. With our deepest thanks for your prayers and support,

Gillaine

Rev'd Gillaine Holland

St Michael's Shared Church, Sheerwater

Quiz Corner is back from its heat induced absence (not really, Valerie had teething problems with her new computer last week!)

Answers from two weeks ago:

1. North Sea
2. Lewis Carroll
3. Leather
4. Base of the brain
5. Cape Horn
6. Katherine Jenkins
7. Pacific Ocean
8. Jupiter and Uranus
9. Italian
10. Sleeping sickness
11. Brazil
12. Wright
13. Xenon
14. Franc
15. Penguin

This Week's Questions

1. Who wrote the novel "My Cousin Rachel"?
2. What is the capital of Colombia?
3. The Israeli city of Tel Aviv is at the eastern end of which sea?
4. German Theologian 1906-45?
5. Which type of art will you find in The Tate Gallery?
6. As well as being a classical guitarist, what other instrument does Julian Bream play?
7. What does the acronym NASA stand for?
8. In which Spanish city is the unfinished cathedral Sagrada Familia?
9. In which year did the National Health Service come in into effect?
10. Who did the American dancer Fred Astaire partner in many films?
11. What is Tufa?
12. Where did the British exile Napoleon to?
13. What are spats, full name spatterdasher?
14. Who wrote "Little Women"?
15. Which nuts are used in the manufacture of Marzipan?

Valerie Slyfield