



Yours

Magazine of
The United Church
Winchester

JULY & AUGUST 2021



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Opening Letter

At the recent Circuit Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting, we had an engaging discussion about how worship across the circuit has changed as a result of the pandemic. However much we might like it to be the case, it's clear that we can't go back to the way things were. There is a range of reasons for this. First, our presbyters are already thinly spread and face increasing pressure to prioritise outreach and growth over the care of existing congregations. Then there's the fact that the pool of Local Preachers and Supernumerary Ministers which we have been hugely blessed to count upon in previous years has reduced significantly over the course of the pandemic. And finally, the continuing development of online offerings, which has brought new dimensions and possibilities to our worship, must also be resourced if we are to connect with those who prefer to worship in this way.



All this means that as a local church, as in the circuit, we must begin a process of exploring how we continue to offer worship as a church. A fine line has to be walked between meeting the needs of our wonderful congregation and providing a range of new opportunities – some in-person, some online – that engage with new audiences. In truth, we've known that this has been on the cards for a while, but the pandemic's squeeze on resources has made it imperative that we act now without further delay.

As your Minister, I want to reassure you that your worship needs are hugely important to me. I love the services we share, and they have become a cherished part of my diet of Christian worship. But the challenge we face is to sacrifice some of our patterns and preferences to make space for new ways of being church. We must not lose sight of what our discipleship series has recently taught us. That worship (regardless of format) is what we

make it. When we do offer our worship with faithful and gracious hearts, God (the audience) will take great delight in that offering, perfecting it in Christ beyond our wildest expectations.

God bless, Tim.

A Big, Big Thank You!

This is the last issue of *Yours* which will be edited by Barbara Dunton, who has been sole Editor for over three years and a member of the editorial team for much longer. Barbara, on behalf of the church and all our readers, may I take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for all that you have achieved during your time as Editor and as part of the *Yours* team.

Every blessing, Tim.



Yours Editor



It is a little disappointing, but not at all surprising, that no one answered the call to keep our Church Magazine going (although Tim now tells me that he's had a breakthrough which I'm thrilled to hear – watch this space). It is not an onerous task – but up to now I thought it an important one. Though the 'new normal' that we are experiencing has strengthened the place of instant online news and views, many of us still value a physical magazine which tangibly brings together news and views from our church.

It has been interesting to observe the way things have changed at The United Church since Ken and I came with our four young children to Winchester in 1977. Then United was a busy church and had two ministers to cope with the workload. We had a large congregation with many activities and groups for the congregation to join. We even had a choir back then plus a large number of children in Junior Church. We used to put on concerts, plays, entertainment at the Harvest Supper, breakfast at Crab Wood, organised walks, we even sported a football team if I remember correctly.

Gradually, or perhaps not so gradually, lifestyles have changed. With more distractions at weekends to keep families busy elsewhere, Church activities are no longer at the centre of people's lives. This is reflected in all areas of The United Church with fewer people willing to commit time and interest to the various jobs needed to keep the wheels running smoothly.

When we had a large congregation with many willing volunteers it was easy to fill all the rotas, but now life has changed so we need to take a long hard look at reorganising life at United to reflect the present situation. We should perhaps cut right back to basics – employ an accountant to look after our finances, and a secretary to deal with all administrative tasks. Look at

drastically reducing, or eliminating, any jobs that require volunteers – stewards, mission, pastoral, coffee bar, toddlers, to name a few.

These are, obviously, my personal views on coping in our changing times. I hope my comments will generate other ideas as to how we can move forward because we certainly cannot stand still any longer.

Barbara Dunton

How Not to Read the Bible – A Revelation

See what you make of this extract from URC daily devotions:

‘And it came to pass, at the end of the day, there was a battle between the Road of the Crowned Ones and the People of the Utter East. But when the final day of the seven days had come, the Victor approached dancing in a stern manner.’

No, not a quote from the Bible, but a description of something that happened in England within the last twenty years. Can you deduce its meaning?

If you need a clue look on page 12.

One Person's Reflection on How he Reads the Bible

I included this reflection in the service on 16 May. A number of people have since asked if it could be shared more widely. It was written by a friend of ours, Revd Leao Neto, who is currently a member of the Methodist Connexional Team working in ecumenical relations. Leao reflects on how he reads the Bible and what happens when he does.

'When I read the Bible I look at the text and try to find out about the context – technically, that is exegesis. I think about the colour of the lenses I am wearing – technically, that is hermeneutics. But above all, I try to hear the voice of God in that encounter between myself and the Bible reading. The voice of God, I hear in the encounter! Between me and the Bible, there is a presence, a voice leading, challenging, supporting, inspiring, opening new possibilities, calling. The voice is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. The voice is always inviting me to take the way of love.'

Chris Roles



A Morning in Singapore

My favourite place for a holiday is Singapore. The mix of cultures and traditions is fascinating, and we also enjoy museums and visiting the Methodist Church and the Cathedral – but of course Singapore is mostly known for its food. One morning, during our last visit there, I took the opportunity to join a walking tour of Chinatown.

We started off at a small cultural centre that sells locally made, fairly-traded souvenirs where we found out about the history and establishment of the colony, and then spent about an hour going round the indoor market. Our guide told us about the traditions, superstitions, and history behind many foods. There was one stall that sold vegetables and herbs for medicinal use only. Some fish are also sold specifically for eating after surgery. There were many stalls selling a variety of fresh fish and crabs, including a couple of bream only stalls – we watched one owner scaling the fish with a large cleaver and not even nicking the skin! I must admit that I felt rather put off by the cages of live frogs and was not tempted by the crocodile meat.

There were also stalls that sold preserved foods – many dried fish of all sorts and sizes, dried smoked belly pork, and lots of smoked sausages which are now subject to government regulations by the amount and size of lumps of fat that can be included. There were also a wide variety of vegetables preserved in many ways – dried, fermented or smoked; so many things that we could not recognise.



Amongst the many flower stalls, a couple were selling fresh and silk flowers for temple and home shrine use – we were told that Christians do not buy flowers from these stalls. Loose flower heads are sold to dispel bad luck or misfortune – people float handfuls on water and then wash with the water to wash away bad luck. Lotus flowers are symbolic for both Hindus and

Buddhists because the lotus grows in muddy conditions but produces a pure white bud which flowers – human beings are born in sin but may become spiritually pure.

We were served breakfast in the food market court – small, steamed rice cakes with spicy vegetable paste and chilli, kaya toast (coconut or pandan sweet spread and a slice of frozen butter between 2 slices of toast), deep fried dough balls (butterfly style with sesame seeds on the outside), deep fried balls with red bean stuffing and very strong coffee. We walked along one of the shop/house areas and looked at the bakeries selling traditional cakes – wife cakes and moon cakes. Wife cakes have a filling of lotus bean paste and were traditionally invented and sold by a man who wanted to get enough money to buy back his wife from bonded labour.



We finished up at a shop which made very good boat-shaped custard tarts, and sat and chatted over a cold drink. Our guide had just returned from visiting friends in Waterlooville and she thought that Hampshire was a paradise with thatched houses, cows and horses in fields, and Winchester Cathedral!

Toast Breakfast – kaya is served with coddled eggs, soya sauce, and coffee made Singapore style – strained through a large 'sock' looped on a wire frame. Note the butter slice is about the same thickness as the toast!





Another favourite food is **murtabak**, which we bought on most days. This is a sort of cross between an omelette and a calzone freshly made while you wait. A very thin dough sheet is spread with a raw egg, layered with sliced onions, spices, and a variety of fillings – then folded and fried and served cut into sections with a spicy sauce or thin curry – it is very flaky and layered.

I hope this gives a ‘flavour’ of one aspect of Singapore – an excellent choice for a holiday.

Dorothy Lusmore

Here are more ideas to collect for the Shoeboxes:

- small toys/dominoes/balls/playing cards/cars/yoyos
- candle holders and candles
- if you are knitting, we are usually short of mittens.



Do check out the website www.linktohope.co.uk or look on Facebook where is a short video, which had a huge impact on my granddaughter.

The leaflets have arrived, and I will put some in Church, or please contact me or Yvonne directly. Each box needs a whole leaflet. We would appreciate as many boxes being made up as possible. Hopefully, we will have a coffee morning in September/October.

Many thanks.

Ann and Yvonne



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Ride and Stride



The Hampshire and the Islands Historic Churches Trust is organising its annual 'Ride and Stride' event on **Saturday 11 September 2021**.

People of all ages are invited to spend an enjoyable time raising funds for repairs and restoration to the churches and chapels in the area. Participants are asked to visit as many churches as possible, by cycle or on foot, or even by horse or mobility scooter!

Those taking part obtain sponsorship, the proceeds to be shared between HIHCT and their own church. Last year R&S raised over £80,000, a remarkable sum in view of the anxiety and restrictions caused by the pandemic.

If you might like to take part, please speak to me, or you can obtain further information at the website www.hihct.org.uk.



Graham Rolfe

Clue: *Television, for answer and reflection see page 15*



We believe in life before death

Christian Aid Week 2021 – How it Went

This year the usual house-to-house collection in The United Church's 'patch' of Teg Down went ahead but (as I outlined in May Yours) with a significant difference to take account of Covid restrictions.

To cut down on personal contact, we used the new 'Delivery Only Envelope' which acts as one would expect from the name. Our volunteers only had to deliver envelopes and did not need to go back to collect them. Householders were invited to return their full envelope to a named address in their street or local area. Alternatively, the envelope could be returned to Christian Aid or donations could be made online.

Thank you to all our collectors who, between them, delivered over 870 envelopes! As the new process involved a single trip, some collectors generously offered to deliver in more than one road so we were able to cover every house in Teg Down – the first time in many years.

Together with some donations in envelopes via The United Church we were delighted to raise a total of £1,453.50 (including Gift Aid). There is no knowing how much more was raised by us through online donations but it will be interesting to hear what the nationwide total is this year.

Thank you very much if you were able to donate to Christian Aid this year. Thank you too if you were able to deliver envelopes. You will have made a difference.

Helen McTiffin

United Church Coffee Bar NEW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We are looking forward to re-opening the Coffee Bar in September.

We already have an excellent team, many of whom have enjoyed working in the Coffee Bar for several years.

In order to reopen fully: Monday to Friday 10.00 to 12.00 noon we will need more volunteers. Even if you can only offer occasional help, we would be delighted to hear from you.

We're planning some training sessions to take place later in the summer. Once open again, you will be working alongside experienced volunteers.

Please do contact any members of the committee if you would like to find out more.

**The Coffee Bar Committee:
Jen Barber, Pauline Brooks, Margaret Fields,
Pat Fry, Graham Rolfe, Jessica Tringham**



How Not to Read the Bible: Answer

Coronation Street and *Eastenders* were competing to get the best audience ratings over a one-week period. The result: neither of them won, the most popular programme was *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Now imagine your great-grandparents, who knew nothing of television, or imagine people four hundred years in the future, trying to decipher it. That gives you some idea of how difficult certain parts of the Bible are for us. (The writer was particularly referring to Revelations). The people for whom these passages were originally written would have been familiar with imagery from the Old Testament, from Jewish tradition, from Babylonian culture, and from the Graeco-Roman culture of their day, as well as their current political situation. Biblical scholars can help us with some of the imagery, but some allusions are lost in the mists of time.

While some sects, including Jehovah's witnesses, focus on numbers like 144,000, to the people of first century Palestine that was just a figure to symbolise an immeasurably large number. So don't despair if you come on a passage that seems incomprehensible; accept it was meant for a particular time and isn't particularly helpful to you now. The Bible is a library, so just as you would put a book you didn't understand back on the shelf and choose another, feel free to try a different section of the Bible, or if you like a challenge, ask advice on a commentary to help you.

While 2 Timothy 3:16 says 'all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness', I do not take that to mean every verse is useful all of the time for every person, but rather that the overall message of the Bible is essential, and maybe every bit has had its part to play at different times. Perhaps sometimes we are challenged to say an account of a particular incident shows something that

people got wrong, in contrast to the love of God in Christ expressed most fully in the Gospels.

A prayer from the URC daily devotions:

God of eternal truth,

Give us the conviction to stand back from what we read and hear, so that we may test our understanding with other knowledge and with your Spirit within us.

Empower us always to seek your Good News.

Give us grace to welcome fresh insight, to use it for gracious love and just action, in the name of Jesus, in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Contributed by Pat Fry

Railways and the Anglican Church

As a lifelong railway enthusiast (well, from about the age of three, actually, when I must have realised that there were



interesting mechanical things passing the bottom of our Surrey garden) it has occurred to me that there must be some sort of link between the clergy of the Anglican church and railways. This is not to say that those of other persuasions are in any way excluded, rather it is based on the published

writings and photographs of such enthusiasts and the frequency with which individual members are portrayed in films and other media.

I suppose the most obvious person would be the Reverend Awdry, who of course gave us Thomas the Tank Engine to delight generations of children and provide revenue for modern preserved steam



railways. He has even influenced serious railway modellers – I once saw a small diorama at an exhibition purporting to portray Thomas arriving at a scrap yard for his final meeting with Annie the Gas Axe. (Don't tell the children).



There was also the famous film *The Tittfield Thunderbolt*, made, I think, in 1956 about a group of villagers who bought their closed branch line from the then British Railways, and ran it themselves. (The forerunners of the railway preservation movement.) One of the main characters was the Reverend Weech, who finished up driving the engine (rescued from the local museum) with his enthusiast friend, the Bishop of Welchester, having been recruited as fireman. He was seen at the beginning of the film ostensibly writing his sermon, but in reality reading the *Railway Magazine* which had to be hurriedly hidden when his housekeeper entered the room.

In real life one of the most respected railway modellers was the late Reverend Peter Denny, who built a very detailed model railway layout representing the Buckingham area. Being on a very low income, he had to make almost everything himself, but it was constructed to a very high standard of historical and technical accuracy and has been preserved so a group of dedicated enthusiasts occasionally run it today. Erected in the loft of the vicarage, it needed a hole made in the wall to allow the erection of a turning area for the trains 'off-scene' so to speak. (This apparently led to difficulties later with something called the 'Diocesan Dilapidations Board'.) It was operated by his son Crispin who, when he left for university, was replaced by a primitive mechanical computer-like device to reverse the trains which became known as the 'Automatic Crispin'.

Probably the jolliest and most well known in the narrow gauge railway world was the late Reverend Teddy Boston, who built a (very short) two foot gauge railway with a live steam locomotive

in the Rectory garden. It was well known locally, and his widow, Audrey, kept the line open with help from local enthusiasts for twenty years after his death. A story is told about his steam propelled road traction engine, which he was in the habit of occasionally driving through the village. One of his parishioners, an elderly lady, was entertaining a guest with afternoon tea one day, when suddenly the windows were darkened with steam and smoke, and a great rumbling was heard as the engine went by. The visitor looked rather alarmed, but was re-assured by her host: 'Don't 'ee worry, m'dear, 'tis only Rector'.

Ken Dunton



Go Out with Joy

Initially lockdown brought a renewed burst of enthusiasm for keeping fit. Like most of us, I began my prescribed daily walk and turned to YouTube for inspiration. I pulled out my long unused leggings and sports top and sweated my way through routines lead by a young American muscle-bound trainer who promised to make a new woman of me. Sadly, the old woman that I am resurfaced after a month or two and the baked bean tins I used as weights found their way back to my kitchen cupboards. Walks round the city continued with a new

appreciation of the parks, trees and flowers I hurried past in busier times.

Quiet empty streets seemed strange and the constant sound of ambulances rushing to the hospital contributed to my underlying anxiety. This was alleviated by the marvellous library system that allowed me to download books to my tablet. I found the audible versions very soothing. Friends rang to discuss the latest Netflix series or books or radio. The landline was a lifeline with weekly chats with my sister in Scotland. We gained a closer relationship throughout our enforced stay at home.



There have been losses of course. This pandemic has brought such a shift in everything no-one can be unaffected. Insecurity is always there, especially in older age but there is an added fear for our youngsters now which is hard to shake off.

Also difficult is the feeling of having got much older in this time, bringing with it a fear of the unknown. Loss of confidence in one's ability to cope alone. It is not the pandemic that is the sole cause. All the bewildering changes in the way we have to deal with our lives through technology are a struggle, but they are increasing as a result of services being no longer available and lack of human help. I wonder if we will lose our ability to empathise with others.

Yesterday, after my eye test I walked out just as a hearse drove slowly past. I felt sad but then the words 'Go out with joy!' came to mind. I thought it was an appropriate farewell. I continued realising we are all part of humanity and being glad of it.



Rosemary MacMullen

What Have I Gained, Lost or Missed During Lockdown?

This is a question we all have answers for, but here are just a few from members of the congregation:

Tony Wood:

I have missed the personal contact particularly when online – it is now very difficult to speak to a real person on the phone.

On the plus side I have managed to try to learn some new organ pieces and tried to acquaint myself with German.

Pat Fry:

I have gained weight, and lost my waistline.

I've found lots of local walks I hadn't known before, but missed opportunities to travel.

I've missed face to face contact with family, but gained expertise with Zoom and WhatsApp.

Tom & Mary Belshaw:

First our gains:

We have gained a bit of weight!

We have spoken at length, via Zoom, to quite a few people we have not really spoken with before.

We have had an opportunity to revisit sermons and prayers, in our own time.

While taking part in online worship, the feeling of 'togetherness', knowing that we are spread out across the neighbourhood and yet are together in our worship.

Second, what we missed:

We have missed socialising with family and friends and have very much missed the fellowship after worship, being part of the church family in person.

And of course singing in church!

Spontaneous chats with people you meet by surprise.

Freedom to simply go out to where you want, when you want.



Barbara Dunton:

We gained an intimate knowledge of the workings of the NHS as we experienced a few health problems (not Covid we should add).

I have also reluctantly gained the ability to use Zoom, Teams and WhatsApp, and even Ken can now send a text message using my mobile phone (his cleft stick runner was in lockdown).

We missed the ability to just 'go out' for the day to meet family and friends, or attend a model railway exhibition!!!

Discipleship Course

We have enjoyed studying the Discipleship material in our House Group.

As a result of preparing for the session on the Bible, I came across these words from a very old book recommended to me by Revd Michael Fielding. It is called *How to read the Bible* by Frederick C. Grant and was published in 1959, price 15/-.

The Bible was addressed to normal men and women in normal situations, but these were often tragic, and included a vast amount of trouble, suffering, frustration and defeat.

They lived in a real world, not among the Lotus Eaters, not in Shang-la, not on the beautiful 'isle of somewhere'.

Therefore as we read we must picture the characters, the scenes and situations as also completely human.

The prophets who addressed them were human. Christ and the Apostles were human. It is the glory of our faith that Christ was perfectly human as well as truly God.

The Bible is not only inspired but also very human, it was the human authors who were inspired, not sheets of papyrus and bottles of ink.

A bit controversial maybe, but those words speak to and help me to understand the Bible better.

At a recent House Group meeting it was agreed that the Covenant Prayer was one of the most powerful prayers we say in church.

*I am no longer my own but yours.
Your will, not mine, be done in all things,
Wherever you may place me,
In all that I do and in all that I may endure;
When there is work for me and when there is none;
When I am troubled and when I am at peace.
Your will be done.
When I am valued and when I am disregarded;
When I find fulfilment and when it is lacking,
When I have all things, and then I have nothing.
I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you,
As and where you choose.
Glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
You are mine and I am yours.
May it be so for ever.
Let this covenant now made on earth
Be fulfilled in heaven.
Amen.*

Tom Belshaw



Services for July & August 2021



In-person and Live-streamed

4 JULY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle
(HC)

11 JULY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

18 JULY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

25 JULY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Mrs Margaret Axford

1 AUGUST

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle
(Bible Month & HC)

8 AUGUST

10.30 am **Morning Worship** (BM) Mrs Pat Fry

15 AUGUST

10.30 am **Morning Worship** (BM) Revd Tim Searle

22 AUGUST

10.30 am **Morning Worship** (BM) Mrs Margaret Axford

29 AUGUST

10.30 am **Morning Worship** (BM) Mr Tom Belshaw

This Preaching Plan is subject to change in response to changes in Covid-19 Restrictions.

HC: Holy Communion (provisional). BM: Bible Month.

The church is open for morning worship on Sundays. Please do come to Sunday Worship. Despite Covid precautions still placing a limit on numbers, we are finding that we always have spare capacity. Please let Steve Barber know if you would like to attend.

For those who wish to continue worshipping from home, we are also live-streaming morning worship to our website – ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/ – and on our YouTube channel <https://tinyurl.com/ucw-services>.

July 2021 Lectionary:

4 July	2 Samuel 5: 1–5 & 9–10. 2 Corinthians 12: 2–10 Mark 6: 1–13.
11 July	2 Samuel 6: 1–5 & 12b–19. Ephesians 1: 3–14. Mark 6: 14–29.
18 July	2 Samuel 7: 1–14a. Ephesians 2: 11–22. Mark 6: 30–34 & 53–56.
25 July	2 Samuel 11: 1–15. Ephesians 3: 14–21. John 6: 1–21.

August 2021 Lectionary:

1 August	2 Samuel 11: 26–12: 13a. Ephesians 4: 1–16. John 6: 24–35.
8 August	2 Samuel 18: 5–9, 15 & 31–33. Ephesians 4: 25–5: 2. John 6: 35 & 41–51.
15 August	1 Kings 2: 10–12 & 3: 3–14. Ephesians 5: 15–20. John 6: 51–58.
22 August	1 Kings 8: 22–30 & 41–43. Ephesians 6: 10–20. John 6: 56–69.
29 August	Song of Solomon 2: 8–13. James 1: 17–27. Mark 7: 1–8, 14–15 & 21–23.