

Connections



Ashbourne Methodist Circuit
Magazine June 2020

Letter from the Minister

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Dear Friends,

“O breath of life, come sweeping through us”

I was asked recently what a favourite Pentecost hymn for me would be. My mind went straight away to a hymn sung at my ordination some 26 years ago, by the great hymn writer Charles Wesley - O thou who camest from above. At an ordination it tends to be sung to the tune *Hereford*, but I really like the tune *Wilton*!



1. O thou who camest from above
the pure celestial fire to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

2. There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return,
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

3. Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me --

4. Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete



John Wesley had a heart warming experience of the love of God on 24th May 1738. Charles had his three days earlier. This set them, and many others, ablaze with a passion for sharing the Good News of God's love in Jesus with all, and everyone.

Their faith was in the Christ who came from above to impart the celestial fire. He was the one who would kindle a flame on the “mean altar of my heart.”

The phrases that do it for me are “stir up thy gift in me” and “make the sacrifice complete”. It's God's gift, not mine; his grace, not mine; his will, not mine; his work, not mine. Sound anything like the Covenant Prayer? As Christians we are to live our lives as a sacrifice, a gift to God. So at the end of this life, the sacrifice we are making now is complete.

I hope and pray that, during these difficult days of uncertainty, bewilderment, loss, but also of hope and new found abilities, the flame of faith, hope and love, kindled in each of us, will continue to burn, not for our benefit, but for the glory of God.

Your minister and friend,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Morris". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ashbourne Church Family News

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

We extend our love and prayers to Ian Lemon and family on the death of his sister Christine Lemon, to Chris Dakin and family on the death of her brother John Harrison, both on 24 April; to Alan Wright and family on the death of his sister Olive in the Cayman Islands on 19 May; and to Pearl Webster on the death of her niece Bea on 23 April.

A message from Mike and Cherry Dennison: “We would like to thank the church family for their prayers and kind messages over these last weeks for our grandson, Alfie (3), who is having chemotherapy for lymphoma; also particularly for our newest grandson, Gem, born to Ali and Ollie but very sadly, due to a congenital disorder, only lived 16 days.”

We assure them of our love and continued prayers in their sadness.

There are many in our church who spend much of the day alone and it can be especially lonely when, for one reason or another, it is not possible to go out or for others to come in. For others, relationships at home can become stressful. So many have been grateful for phone calls, texts, cards, Zoom meetings and WhatsApp etc. to keep in touch with one and another.

There are a number waiting for hospital appointments, tests, results or treatment, slowed down by the current situation. As we pray for each other, let's remember Carole Thorpe, Cathy Scott, David Franklin, Barbara Hollands, Jenny Waring, and Sally Wall (at Ashbourne Lodge) and others you know who may not be well, along with those who care in one way or another.

Congratulations to John Dakin as he celebrates his 80th birthday on 20 June. Also to Jennie Ferry on the birth of her great-grandson Archie, and Jean Wathall on the birth of her great-granddaughter Rose Alice, both born on 5 May.

School for our young people is uncertain at the present but we should remember those who leave primary school this summer and move on to QEGS: Daniel Alton, Bronwen Flux, William Glossop, Wesley Green, Matthew Jeffery-Walker, and Sara Stosik.

Because of Covid-19 worldwide, Erik and Lena Tettelaar have now returned to the UK.

Although there is no prayer in the vestry on a Thursday morning, we are encouraged to take time to pray, not only for our church family matters but for nation and world issues. As we are reminded in the verse at the top, God has a plan for us, but he also asks us to bring our thanks and intercessions to him.

Currently Ruth Barratt, Chaplain to Businesses in Ashbourne, and Elizabeth Spencer, part of the Chaplaincy team at the Royal Derby Hospital, are not able to work in those places, but Ruth is still chaplain one day per week at a GP Practice in Ilkeston. Ruth is considering how she can take the work forward in Ashbourne.

If you have specific matters you would like to share with someone for prayer, contact Rev Tim, myself, your pastoral visitor or housegroup.

Joyce Odell, Pastoral Secretary 20.05.20

John Harrison

We would like to thank everyone for your prayers, love, many phone calls, lots of cards and flowers. They have all been a great comfort to us. Special thanks to Rev Tim for all his love and care, also to Tom, our pastoral carer for his wonderful support and to Don for his Sunday morning surprise, such a lovely thought. We feel richly blessed in every way. Memories of John will never leave us.

With love to you all, Chris and John (Dakin)

DOROTHY CRITCHLOW

Dorothy was a lovely lady and a real “Alstonefield girl” through and through, attending the village school and keeping friendships from those days all her life. Friends were important to her and, as well as those old friends, she always made new ones who came along later and who were welcomed and accepted, as Ken and I were. She spent a lifetime involved in village activities and served on the Village Hall Committee for 60 years, many as treasurer, retiring just a few years ago.

Dorothy attended the Methodist chapel in Alstonefield until it closed in 1981 when she was one of the two remaining members, with her “Aunty Ethel”, Ethel Riley. The last wedding to take place in the chapel was that of Dorothy’s daughter, Jacqueline, to David Drew on 21st March 1981. Tragically Jacqueline died of cancer two years later.

Following Jacqueline’s death, Dorothy, together with some friends, raised thousands of pounds for Cancer Research by organising an annual Carol supper each Christmas in the Village Hall, which has taken place ever since and is a vital part of village life today. Indeed it is so popular that it has to be held on two nights.

Since the closure of the chapel in Alstonefield, Dorothy has attended Ashbourne Methodist Church, occasionally attending St Peter’s in the village, especially when it snowed. She brought Jenny Waring to church for a number of years.

Latterly Ken and I were able to give Dorothy a lift to church and she would often join us for a Sunday roast at the Bentley Brook on the way home, or we would have a cup of tea together at her house or ours. She would often mention her daughter, Jacqui, especially around her birth date – telling us how old she would be.

Dorothy moved house quite a few times in the village and was still living at Rest Cottage in the centre of the village when the chapel closed. When John and Ruth Lowe went to Alstonefield Chapel, sometimes with John preaching, they would go to Rest Cottage after the service to have a cup of tea with Dorothy. When the new houses - the Harpur Crewe cottages - were built, Dorothy decided to sell Rest Cottage and moved into the end house there - with a good sized garden as she loved gardening.

She shared many memories with us - one of which was when she worked at the home furnishing and fabric shop in Ashbourne, Norman Moore’s (now David Neill). Jacqueline also worked there and was an accomplished seamstress making curtains to order. Dorothy enjoyed her time there, meeting so many people and getting to know them in the town.

She was very fond of her little Westie dog, which went to work with her and sat at the entrance to the shop or by the counter welcoming everyone in.

Dorothy was a person with a sure and steady faith which sustained her throughout a difficult life, keeping up with her daily Bible readings and using the Methodist prayer handbook – mainly each evening – making sure that she always had an up to date copy. When it was appropriate we were able to pray together which was a blessing to Dorothy and to me.

Although folk from the village were unable to attend Dorothy's funeral, due to the coronavirus, a large number of people stood outside their homes to applaud as the cortege passed by, to show their love and respect for a lovely lady and a friend.

Margaret Sharples



Christian Aid Week

Sunday 10th – Saturday 16th May

Thank you for your support of Christian Aid

We were really unsure what would be possible this year, without our usual Christian Aid Week collections or cake stall at Tissington Well Dressings. We needn't have worried as you have been very generous in your support of Christian Aid.

Over 60 people enjoyed the quiz night, ranging in age from 6 to 92, and with people joining from across the England & Wales! As I write this, our final event hasn't yet happened, which is the Coffee & Cake and a Virtual Visit to Tissington.

So far, we have raised £6014 (and there will be around £900 of Gift Aid as well), which is double what we would usually raise. It seems that people are being especially generous because of the unique situation this year, and I want to thank you all. Please continue to pray for Christian Aid's work, especially with people at risk from Coronavirus.

Catherine Green

Bible Month 2020: The Book of Ruth

Throughout June, the Ashbourne Circuit will be joining in with Methodist churches across the Connexion as we study the Book of Ruth.

Set at the time of the Judges, Ruth was most likely written much later, during the post-Exilic period of Jewish history, perhaps even as late as the 4th century BCE, round about the time of the events of the book of Ezra. Most Old Testament scholars regard the book as a story with a purpose, rather than history.



The book explores important truths and ideas about human beings and about God. Ruth is a complex read. It has so many themes that it's hard to categorise exactly the prime aim of the writer. And some of its darker themes make for what is occasionally a less than comfortable read.

Sometimes we might empathise with the characters and at other times we may feel conflicted. One of the interesting things about the book is that it can provoke quite strong reactions. Perhaps more than some books, it invites us to interpret it through the lens of our own world and our own experiences. It's certainly a great challenge!

During June, our online worship will follow Ruth as a Theme Preach. This is the programme should you wish to read the passage in advance:

Sunday	Theme	Preacher and Worship Leader
June 7th	Ruth chapter 1	Ruth Barratt/Stuart Green
June 14th	Ruth chapter 2	Tim Dutton/Jonathan Webb
June 21st	Ruth chapter 3	Fiona Green/Rev Tim Morris
June 28th	Ruth chapter 4	Lorraine Hawkins/Gareth Rutledge

Several house groups are planning to follow the series. You can find resources online at <https://www.preachweb.org/biblemonth>

If you would prefer a paper copy, Rev Tim has a number of spares. Please contact him on 342408.

Fiona Green

Living with lockdown in a care home

Cecil Broadbent, a former member of Ashbourne Methodist Church, now lives at Morel Court, the MHA care home in Penarth, South Wales. He is pleased to receive his copy of Connections magazine each month. Unfortunately he is not able to read it himself, because of his poor vision, but his son Richard reads it to him when he visits.

Except that, at present, Richard is unable to visit because of the lockdown for the coronavirus. Initially a member of staff said he would try and read it to Cecil, but in practice the staff are too busy in current circumstances. So they sent the April and May magazines to Richard, who has now read them to Cecil over the phone.

Richard says that Cecil well recalled the annual walk and service at Milldale on Holy Saturday (a name he says he first heard from Harry Jones!). He also remembered the stall at the Tissington well dressing.

Cecil has lots of great memories. He was interested to hear Alma's article about the Lunch Club. He remembers when it started, as he was in that house group, and he and Heather (his wife, who died last year) were helping with it. He said, "Good old Alma!". He was also interested in Don Cox's article, and Tom Parkinson's - as he always is - as well as other news etc.

In the home, the staff have spaced the chairs out more in the dining room and lounge, and have recently started wearing masks all the time. MHA have had trouble getting PPE supplies and have been in the forefront of seeking to remedy this. The situation has now improved, but the staff are very busy doing a great job.

Cecil continues to keep generally well and positive and enjoys getting out into the garden to walk round and to sit out. If you want to see him "live", you should google 'Facebook MHA Morel Court' and you will see him (and hear him) singing "We'll meet again" on VE Day. If you are reading this on-line, try this link (be sure to turn the sound on):

<https://www.facebook.com/MHAMorelCourt/videos/566580150935341/>

He is 98, with his birthday on 10 June (exactly the same age as Prince Philip!).

Cecil would like to send his best wishes to all his old friends. He said he and Heather found it a very friendly place and enjoyed their time there.

News of kids@cornerstone

from Clare Sales

In the last couple of months, kids@cornerstone has had to face the challenge of how to run a toddler group during lockdown. Previously The Cornerstone was a noisy hub of activity each Tuesday morning with 15-20 families playing singing and laughing together. As we have always been a 'drop in' group we didn't automatically have a list of registered contacts to keep in touch with, and some of the children and carers we only know by their first names. But on the first morning we had to close (17 March) word got around quickly and only one of our granny helpers turned up. The unofficial Ashbourne mum's network and Facebook worked well for us in spreading the word!

So, the next week Stuart had a brainwave, and he and Share Bear (Jane's bear who usually lives at The Cornerstone) began their weekly Storytime broadcasts on the Church Facebook page. Usually at kids@cornerstone we stop for stories at 10am – a Bible story followed by a picture book – and at the end of the session we sing together.

So at 10am Stuart and Share Bear have a chat and tell us about their week – Share Bear has been trampolining and we have met the Greens guinea pigs – we look at pictures some of the kids have sent in and we have our two stories as usual (one of them sometimes read by Sandra, me or Jane). Then Stuart and Share Bear sing some of our favourite Tuesday morning songs and we end with our kids@cornerstone prayer.

Stuart's broadcasts have grown in professionalism over the weeks (does a new career in children's TV beckon?) and we are extremely grateful to him for doing this each week. The viewing figures show that 25 plus people watch the video regularly. Some watch live, and others at a time to suit themselves. Please tune in on the Church Facebook page if you would like to join us, and perhaps you could pray for the young families in Ashbourne as you do so.

We keep in touch with our kids@cornerstone families in other ways too. We have traced as many as we can and invited them to join a WhatsApp group where we share what we have been doing and offer what support we can. Also for the last few weeks we have started a brief Zoom gathering on a Tuesday at 10.30am. As you can imagine, it is noisy and chaotic but it's lovely to see each other.

This is all great, but in many ways it is just the tip of the iceberg. As with the sessions in The Cornerstone, there are always more families we could be supporting in the town. But as always, we do what we can! If you have a friend, neighbour or family member with pre-school children maybe you could tell them about the online Storytime and encourage them to watch. And as I said before, please pray for our 'kids@cornerstone family' and the other young families in the town as they try to work out how to make sense of the way the world is changing.

Clare Sales

When it's over

A poem by Derek Marshall

When it's all over, when this virus has expired,
a wonderful pandemic will take its place,
as an outpouring of love will sweep the human race.
We have bottled it so long, it has been so hard to bear,
not being able to get close to all the people that we care.

The tactile will be in heaven, the reserved will play their part,
and all will witness an out-pouring of the nation's heart.
The pain has been has so cutting, the cure not any drug,
the remedy, so simply, is bound up in a simple hug.

So much love we have bottled,
its release will have an energy of its own.
And the world will see a mighty love,
the like of which it has never shown.
Let it bring us all together, let it unite the human race,
and help to make this world of ours a better place.

(contributed by Cliff Lewer)

“Just walk with me”

-the story of the e:merge project, by Jude Simpson

Book review and reflection by Ruth Mallard

This is a book that has sat on my bookshelf unread for a long time and I am so pleased that I decided to read it recently. It is actually a true story of inner city youth work in Bradford. It is interesting in its autobiographical aspect; its youth work detail and the education it provides the reader about inner city life realities. It is an easy to read part diary and part description by two main characters at the e:merge project. It has an engaging and sometimes humorous style, so it isn't heavy going even if some of the subject matter is harsh.

Most of all, I found it challenging. It will challenge many to reconsider poverty, deprivation and the consequences, and how God works in people's lives. The conversational style clearly expresses challenges, difficulties and joys in honest and enlightening ways. In many ways this project is pioneer mission work in what is a less than appealing area to relocate to. Those working on the project have sacrificially committed to this area long term to show the Christian life in a daily reality. Building trust and relationships is time consuming. It is long haul discipleship, not very romantic but worthwhile in its impact.

What I found very meaningful is how Christian culture and what might be our expectation and norm is challenged through the everyday experiences in the project area. Sometimes we forget where and how God works in people's situations and lives that don't look at all like our own way of life or upbringing. It is refreshing, honest and challenging to have eyes opened to past church heritage and fresh ways of seeing what God looks like when we don't separate people's spiritual needs from their emotional, practical or economic needs.

It is very worthwhile to read. Maybe you will find new ways of understanding how God is working or learn new dimensions of appreciating people and what shapes them. (I am happy to loan my paperback).

*Ruth Mallard
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Worship

Because of the coronavirus, we cannot meet in our chapels at present, but we can still worship the Lord together. Every Sunday there are on-line services which many people find very helpful as a means of maintaining our worship and keeping in touch with one another. We are encouraged to take part at the usual worship times, but if for any reason you are unable to do so, the services are still available on-line at other times.

They can be accessed via:

-the Circuit website: www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk

-or www.facebook.com/ashbournemethodist

Worship at Home at 10.30am

This is usually led by the preacher and worship leader shown on the Plan for the morning service at Ashbourne, and will feature hymns recorded at previous services. We are grateful to Stuart Green for his work in putting these services together.

Virtual choir' at 6.30pm

For those who are missing the communal singing during worship, there is the opportunity to join a 'virtual choir' which will enable you to sing your heart out in the safety of your own home. The congregation have been sending in their favourite hymns and songs, with a short comment, and you are invited to do the same. We are grateful to Tim Dutton for organising this.

Looking ahead

Rev Tim has prepared a new Circuit Plan for the months of June to August, so that, if circumstances change, services can restart without delay. Copies have been sent to all preachers and worship leaders, so they are prepared.

“Doing” church

At Worship at Home on the morning of Sunday 17th May, Stuart asked the congregation to consider two questions:

1. What do you miss about going to Church in the church building with other people?
2. What do you like about the way we are “doing” church at the moment?

How would you answer these questions? Please send us your views. If you would prefer not to be identified, please let us know and we promise not to tell!

The editors

Rebecca Byass

Back in March, Joyce Odell gave advance notice of an Open Meeting she had been able to arrange on Tuesday 23rd June.

This would have commenced with a shared meal, followed with a talk by Rebecca Byass, the District Wellbeing Officer of the Nottingham & Derby Methodist District.

It would have been entitled: “The Ultimate Why - Exploring our hopes for pastoral care in church”, focussed on how we can better understand the needs of each other as we are all so different.

In addition to her District role, Rebecca is a Local Preacher, an MHA Chaplain, Mum to two girls (11 & 13) and wife to a Superintendent Minister.

Obviously, the June meeting has now been cancelled, so Joyce asked Rebecca if she had any notes she could send. In response she sent the piece on 5 Ways to Wellbeing which appears on the next page. It’s all about sunflowers...



5 Ways to Wellbeing by Rebecca Byass

Last summer a surprise giant sunflower grew in a rather neglected flower bed, adding a splash of colour in a weedy corner of the garden. This spring, one of its seeds has already sprouted big, fat, hope-filled leaves, promising another, more intentionally cared for, sunflower.

I've now been the wellbeing officer for the Nottingham and Derby District for a year and, even before the wild, sunny weed had sprung forth, I had been using the sunflower as a logo for my new job. It's on my shiny business cards with their snazzy metallic finish, and it washes the background of otherwise dry documents with hope-filled colour.

The choice of sunflowers is not just because their cheerful faces will make me smile on autumn days, when hibernation feels like a good idea. Sunflowers have become, for me, a symbol of wellbeing.

The simplest reason for this is that, as they grow and, in order to flourish, sunflowers turn to the light.

In recent years, there's been a lot of research into what people need to be whole and healthy, to flourish even in the event of life's knocks or unprecedented pandemics. Organisations, large and small, are revisiting patterns of work and structures that might otherwise prevent people from thriving. The evidence shows that less work, not more, results in better health and greater productivity of the workers; prioritising the wellbeing of employees results in less days off sick and greater creativity and innovation.

Out of some of this research has come the '5 ways to wellbeing' and, if you'll indulge me, I'd like to drag the humble sunflower in to illustrate them, and to draw attention to church practices that also help us find them.



Sunflowers, in the first stage of their growth, turn to the light. In doing so, they show an intentional awareness of the good things that make them flourish. Whenever we worship, pray, reach out in a positive way to another human being, we turn to the light. When we practice gratitude and notice the good in our life, when we give thanks, we are not naive to

the horribleness in the world, but we are doing something that positively impacts our wellbeing, helping us overcome or tackle the horribles in turn.

Though their roots are shallow, the sunflower digs it into the ground for nourishment, instinctively seeking out the foundation on which it stands and drawing from that sufficient support and nourishment to grow to its fullest potential. The Methodist Church is founded on the principle of discipleship, our constant openness to keep learning, to be transformed and to flourish through ongoing study and mutual support.



Sunflowers grow best when surrounded and supported by others. Standing together they are better able to weather the changing environment, like penguins in the Antarctic. We too seek to nurture healthy relationships – with ourselves, with each other, with the environment and with God. Even if, at the moment, we are figuring out how to do that in different ways.

The sunflower is grown for a reason, its final gift product is the seeds and oils that are given at the end of its life. It gives throughout its life to the countless insects that gather its pollen. It gives to future generations. For many of us, there is little need to encourage giving, generous and dedicated as you are. However, it is worth validating that it is not obligation or duty that is the motivation but a desire to connect and give, for the benefit of yourself and others.



As the sunflower turns its head towards the light, in the early days of its growth, drawing attention to its bright colour and warming the insect-luring pollen, it is also benefiting itself in another way. Chemicals in the neck draw away from the light and thicken the stem, preparing the sunflower to bear the weight of its final gift. Our faith can often be a head-heart exercise, but it is our body which supports and sustains them. We therefore have a responsibility to treat it as the temple that it is.

We are whole beings, made up of heart, body, mind and soul. To love God with all of them means to take care of them all and, for me, this starts with a turning to the light.

“Kisses from Katie” by Katie Davis

Book review and reflection by Anne Wills

My husband and I spent many years in Uganda in the 1960s and 1970s, working with the Church of Uganda and bringing up our family. Kampala was our home. So when a friend recommended I buy Katie's book, I jumped at the chance.

Katie Davis was brought up in a middle class area in Nashville, Tennessee. After high school, she disappointed her parents by forgoing college and taking time out, going to a small village in Uganda because she desperately wanted to fulfil God's will for her life.

She lived in a small room at an orphanage run by a Christian pastor and worked as a kindergarten teacher.

The people of the village and the orphanage children became her friends. Showering them with her love, she had never been so happy. She shared the love of Jesus with the children as she tended to their needs: washing them, feeding them and telling them stories.

She became aware this was not enough. These children could not afford to go to school. The discrepancies between rich and poor were enormous, between her life and those with nothing. She became appalled at the luxuries back home, when people on the same planet were living in such poverty. She writes, “I had to do something”.

“Wasn't anything better than nothing?”

But Katie wanted to do something with power to bring about a positive significant change to individuals, to families and the village where she lived.

She had experienced the generosity of the poor: a family sharing a meal with her as if it were a feast, when there would be none left for tomorrow. That night, as she prayed, Katie wondered what could happen if the rich of the world would share with the poor in the same way that that family had shared with her, without holding back, giving their all and believing that the Lord would provide more as needed.

Katie explored the reasons that the village children did not go to school, finding that even if parents could scrape enough together to pay school fees, there still wouldn't be enough for uniform, shoes, notebooks and pencils. And she worked out that the money needed for a child to go to school was what her parents spent on groceries each week.

Everywhere she looked in the Bible, from the beginning of Old Testament to the end of Revelation, people who believe in God are supposed to share with the poor. God doesn't ask us to do that - he instructs us to do it. She mentioned passages in the Bible: the story of Ruth caught my eye, probably because we are soon to be studying it in our home groups. Katie's right: we are told time and again to remember, and to share with, the poor.

So she wrote to her parents for advice. And so started the sponsorship scheme from a community in Nashville to a village in Uganda.

I haven't finished reading the book yet, but I felt I had to share her story now. Katie didn't go back home just then, she didn't go to college. I have to read on.

But in our current situation of lockdown we are spending less; yet there are so many people, in this country and overseas, who are really struggling, every day, just to put food on the table.

"I have to do something" Katie said - and I have to up my giving. I want to share as Katie did. And not just because of the crisis, but because the Lord would have me do that.

There is enough to go round.

Anne Wills

OLD DOG . NEW TRICKS

by Pearl Webster

I've uncovered my id
by lifting the lid
on last Christmas's gift from son Sid.
Yes, what I've got here is
an A30 Series
Portable Personal Computer:
a Toshiba P.C.
with Windows XP.
Now I've learned a new language that's due to
Sidney's largesse - you never would guess
how left and right clicks
taught this old dog new tricks;
but you just can't dispute a computer.

At my command I've got Wireless Broadband
bringing emails from ends of the earth.
In my inbox I find news of all kind,
and this I assure you is worth
all the hours I have spent
over manuals bent
learning most baffling jargon -
CD Rom, Bit and Byte, Caps Lock - with a light -
USB's, DVD's, Floppy disks, HDD's.
Oh! There's a printer into the bargain.

My work it will keep
if I put it to sleep.
And oh what a hoot!
I can give it a 'boot'.
I can underscore dashes
and do forward slashes.
I can **maximize** and minimize
print **boldly** and *italicize*.
Tabulate. . .obliterate. . .
and though I *really* concentrate,
much time I have wasted
when 'cut' wasn't 'pasted';
how can stuff vanish never to return?
Work almost completed
I find I've deleted.
Oh yes, I know I've still a lot to learn.
It's meant to keep my brain cells churning
and the midnight oil I'm burning
as I try to store instructions in my pate.
But I'm giving it my best,
and I will not let it rest
till Sid can say, "Well done! That's just first rate."

Pearl Webster, January 2006

PS *You may wonder why my son Christopher Matthew Webster is referred to as Sid. My brother-in-law Sid was Chris's favourite uncle, and from two years old, Chris persisted in calling himself Sid, and would correct us if we forgot, and he still answers to Sid.*

THE TANDEM BIKE

At first, I saw God as my observer, my judge,
keeping track of the things I did wrong,
so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die.
He was out there sort of like a president.
I recognised his picture when I saw it, but I really didn't know him.

But later on, when I met Christ,
it seemed as though life was rather like a bike ride,
a tandem bike,
and I noticed that Christ was in the back helping me pedal.

I don't know when it was that he suggested we change places,
but life has not been the same since.
When I had control, I knew the way.
It was rather boring, but predictable,
the shortest distance between two points.
But when he took the lead, he knew delightful long cuts -
up mountains, and through rocky places at breakneck speeds.
It was all I could do to hang on!
Even though it looked like madness, he said "Pedal".
I worried and asked, "Where are you taking me?"
He laughed and didn't answer, and I started to learn to trust.
I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure.
And when I'd say, "I'm scared," he'd lean back and touch my hand.
He took me to people with gifts that I needed,
gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy.
They gave me gifts to take on my journey,
and we were off again.
He'd say, "Give the gifts away: they're extra baggage, too much weight."
So I did, to the people we met,
and I found that in giving I received - but still our burden was light.

I did not trust him, at first, in control of my life. I thought he'd wreck it.
But he knows biking secrets, knows how to take sharp corners,
knows how to jump to clear rocks,
even knows how to fly to shorten scary passages.
And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places.
And I'm beginning to enjoy the view - and the cool breeze on my face -
with my companion, Jesus Christ.
And when I'm sure I just can't do any more, he just smiles and says,
"Pedal".

Author unknown (contributed by Cliff Lewer)

MISSION MATTERS



Phakamisa is one of our mission partners, working in Pinetown, near Durban, South Africa. Our local contact person is Anne Wills, so do get in touch with her if you have any queries. For prayer please also refer to Phakamisa in Mission Matters for Prayer leaflet (yellow this quarter). Thokozani refers to COVID19 in S Africa; according to 19/5 stats. this is now reaching significant numbers: 16,433 cases, 286 deaths.

Richard Odell, World Mission Secretary richard@richarddodell.co.uk

Thokozani wrote this report for the UK Trust just before South Africa went into lockdown and Phakamisa had to close its doors for the duration. Thokozani does not have access to Wi-Fi at home, so we are using the report in place of a newsletter to let you know what has been happening at Phakamisa and the plans they have for the year ahead, when they are allowed to meet again. Please keep the staff, students, children and caregivers in your prayers as they are unable to access the usual support and training, they would receive from attending Phakamisa.

SPRING 2020

STAFFING: Thank God for protecting us during holidays, we all came back safe and ready to kick start the ball. We have 18 full staff members and one Social Worker volunteer as last year; we don't have any changes. A successful staff meeting has been held to polish up and getting ready for the year

CARE GIVERS: This year we have planned to have at least 50 per group and that will give us 350 care givers as we have seven groups. We are also taking new members this year.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: Child Minder and Edu-Care

115 crèche teachers have registered for both Child Minder and Edu-care course. Our target number is 175 but, due to all the sudden change that has happened re the coronavirus, I doubt if we can even get more than this number.

WANDERING SCHOOLS: We targeted a maximum number of 50 per school. Thompson travellers who provided us with the porridge last year has promised to do so this year as well. We will then continue to provide the porridge again to our orphans and vulnerable children.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Planning for the training this year (2020) are as follows:

TRAINING	1st QUARTER	2nd QUARTER	3rd QUARTER	4th QUARTER
BEADWORK	Earrings Necklaces Bracelets	Ankle bracelet Pen Spoon Mug	Traditional hat (Inkehli) Tekkies Traditional skirt Traditional belts	Lace Alphabets
SEWING	Machine parts Threading Machine Specimen Making Front Apron	Boys shorts Girls skirt Cushions	Pegs bag Bags Pencil case Cushion covers	Cutting School shirts Making patterns
COOKING AND BAKING	Safety and hygiene Homemade stock Maize porridge Vegetable stew Chakalaka	Butternut and sweetcorn bake Savoury samp Dry beans soup Fish cakes	Vetkoekies Spinach Ginger Ale Spinach Muffins Beetroot salad Cabbage stew	Brown bread Pilchard stew Mealie bread Dessert Custard pudding

On behalf of the staff I would like to thank the Trust for making sure that Phakamisa keeps on going. Your support financially and spiritually means a lot to us. Through that, we are also able to support our families as well. Some of the staff members have managed to educate their children and now have graduates in their families. One staff member came to me recently excited and said, 'If it was not for Phakamisa I couldn't have managed to pay for the University for my daughter.' She's now a qualified teacher.

Please continue to pray for us regarding the coronavirus. The numbers are escalating each and every day now and it's getting scary. The worst part is that people are not taking this disease seriously. I tried to make our Gogos aware and am trusting God that they will be safe in their places.

Thokozani Khumalo Poswa

REFLECTIONS

by Tom Parkinson

It is seven weeks, Mothering Sunday in fact, since I last sat in this study to write a Reflection. Since then a lot has changed, we have undergone a change to a society never before known to us, what with words like "Lockdown" and "Social Distancing" added to our vocabulary and even more impact than just words, as they have been added to our comings and goings of our day to day schedule!

Added to that, recently we have reminisced on the past as many in their own way, despite the restrictions, have remembered the end of the war in Europe, 75 years ago.

Now, as then, and when we remember the fallen on the eleventh hour of the eleventh month, we will reflect on the sacrifice many paid, and those that are still paying, when they remember their comrades of long ago.

This was brought to mind in no uncertain terms, as my son and I watched a mini-series called "Pacific", following the exploits of a group of U.S. Marines as they fought toward Japan, island by island.

In the last episode, it opened with the scene in a hospital, where folk rushed in, screaming "The war is over, the war is over", at which, many rushed outside to celebrate! But the scene stayed in the hospital, and showed soldiers, some in shock, some shaking with pain from wounds, and some crying their eyes out on the shoulders of nurses. For them, the war was not over! The rest of that episode was of the stories of the surviving soldiers adjusting to peace.

At the time of writing, the P.M. is going to speak tonight on the way forward, we hope, out of this pandemic. As we move forward, let us remember those in this pandemic for whom this "war" is not over, as there are families of the 30,000 plus who have lost their lives who are still, and will always be, grieving for their lost loved ones.

Also, as well as "clapping " every Thursday for our NHS, let us, above all, in the weeks, months and years to come, value our NHS more than ever; and, as we do on the eleventh day of the eleventh month remember the fallen of two World Wars, let us also, every hour, every day and every month in the future remember the NHS, and those who lost someone because of this pandemic, in our prayers.

God bless.

Tom Parkinson

From the editors

Whether you read this issue of Connections on-line or on paper, we hope you have found it interesting. Thank you all for your varied contributions which have made this possible.

We welcome contributions from all our readers – please let us know about your experiences and the thoughts which come to you as you have more time to reflect than is usually the case!

If you have an idea but are not sure whether it is suitable, we will be happy to discuss it with you.

We also welcome photos suitable for the magazine.

Next edition

Please send us items for the next edition **July/August 2020**, including photos. We are unable to include items which are copyright unless permission is obtained from the copyright-holder.

Last date for contributions: **Wednesday 17th June**

Publication date: **Sunday 28th June**

If possible, please e-mail your items to us at dysters@tiscali.co.uk
If this is not convenient, please contact us on 01335 344086

Daphne and John Dyster

Keep in touch by visiting the website for up-to-date news:

www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk



Monet's Garden

A painting by Gareth Rutledge