



**Rainbows
OF Hope**
FREE!
A gift from
Capel Methodist Church
Please take one home with you to encourage
you at this time.

Christian Witness in Lockdown

East Anglia District of the Methodist Church

Lockdown Freedom

Enforced confinement clips my wings
And keeps me within these walls –
Yet still my soul upsoars and sings
For my mind and spirit are free as a bird –
I can fly as the eagle into the skies
And heaven turn my thoughts and gaze;
I can sing as the lark and upward rise
And join in praise and worship to God.
I can settle quietly as the gentle dove
And know God's Presence and Peace.
Yes – I have a freedom given from above
By earth and sky unbound
And wide and limitless as the sea
For God's freedom is vaster than any found –
And He has given it to me.

© Helen M Seeley July 2020

Photo by Michael Hatherly, freeimages.com

Welcome to *grapevine*

Welcome to the September 2020 edition of *grapevine* which has the theme 'Christian Witness in Lockdown'.

Once again, there has been a wonderful response to our request for articles and it has been astonishing to see how circuits, churches and individuals have kept the Church open whilst the buildings themselves have been closed.

Many challenges have been overcome during lockdown. Corinne Houlden, a Family Worker, found new ways of helping those in need and Graham Gibbs tells us how he looked after adults with learning difficulties during lockdown. Revd Nick Witham helped out a local pharmacy and George Frost describes challenges faced by the farming community.

People have been creative in various ways. Hospital scrubs have been fashioned in Sawston and split screen music videos produced in Swaffham. Two new booklets were produced in the North Norfolk Circuit and the St Neots and Huntingdon Circuit created a photographic project 'Signs of Hope' which is displayed on their website.

Much has been done by circuits to engage with members of their Churches. The Central Norfolk Circuit was encouraged to make visual displays during Holy Week and Neil Hephlethwaite explains various ways the Ipswich Circuit connected with their community.

Virtual communications have been used extensively. Pat Dorrington certainly sees them as a blessing whilst George Ginn ponders on whether Lockdown itself has been a blessing or a curse.

Please remember this is your magazine. If there is something you would like included, we would love to hear from you.

The next issue is due in April 2021. You will find contact details on page 28.

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The Editorial Team:

Revd Julian Pursehouse, Susan Eldridge,
Alison Travis and Aileen Fox

Front cover image: Rainbow gift bags
left on the railings outside Capel St Mary
Methodist Church (See pages 10-11)

Introduction

Revd Julian M Pursehouse



'We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the world of life – this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it.....'

(1 John 1:1-2)

Dear Friends,

You will recall that at the Autumn Synod of 2019 we launched a new District theme '**A Community of Witness**' and that we have begun to understand ourselves as a community whose *raison d'être* is to witness to the love of God in Christ through word and deed. In all of this we seek to be a sign of the presence of God's kingdom in the world by responding to the Gospel through worship, mission, service and learning. Ironically in this same year, roughly six months later, the country went into wholesale '*lockdown*' and we were prohibited from gathering for public worship! How on earth could we continue to be '**A Community of Witness**'?

In order to answer that question, I commend to you the numerous stories in this new edition of Grapevine – at a

time when the Church as a building was physically closed our Christian witness has flourished in myriad creative ways. We have discovered virtual platforms in which to worship and gather in fellowship from WhatsApp to YouTube and telephone worship to Zoom! We have responded to human need in our wider communities - from the delivery of prescriptions to the sewing of medical scrubs! We have discovered new and innovative ways to engage with a wider public – from bedtime stories to online music and contemplation! Christian mission and ministry has taken place in new ways for a new context.

In all of this we have sought to be the faithful, pilgrim people of God giving voice and content to our experience of God's grace in Christ crucified and risen.

Enjoy this issue and be inspired in your Christian witness,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian". The script is cursive and elegant.

Revd Julian M Pursehouse
Chair of the District

A New Way of Working

Corinne Houlden



If anyone had told me back in January or February of this year that my working pattern would change overnight I would not have believed them but, like everyone else, this global pandemic has indeed altered the way I work.

I am based at Aylsham in the North Norfolk Circuit in my role as the 'Family Worker'. I run two toddler groups - one here in Aylsham and one in Marsham, which often leads to pastoral work with families. I take assemblies and run an after school club in the local schools and have taken a key role in the work of Messy Church that the church has been engaged in over the years.

Suddenly, all face to face contact stopped overnight and in turn this brought about a fear and uncertainty for what the future might hold both for me and those I support and help. It also brought about a huge challenge - how was I to offer the support and help if I couldn't meet with them in person? So began a new way of working.

I began by putting together Easter-based activity packs, around 50 in total, and sending them out to families. I have since done three more packs. I have delivered food parcels, organised

bus passes and, when I received a phone call from 'Aylsham Care Trust', delivered surplus bread to over twenty families on four occasions that the Trust had been given and could not use.

Sorting through my resources made me realise that I had more than enough to share, so a number of families received paper/pens/paint, etc. I also began a

weekly 'story time' video session on the toddler group Facebook pages and have presented two assemblies through the church Facebook page and sent them as a link to the schools to use.



Aylsham Methodist Church

Now that restrictions are easing a little, I have been able to meet up with individuals in my garden or a public space and, having had completed and signed off by the circuit my relevant Risk Assessment, I'm about to begin 'picnic in the park' days with small groups of families for social interaction and support.

That initial fear of the unknown when the church closed its building due to Covid 19 has passed for now and I thank God for giving me new confidence and new ways of being his servant to those in need.

Corinne Houlden
Family Worker, North Norfolk Circuit

Christian Witness in Lockdown at St Ives

Revd Nick Witham



I was standing in the local pharmacy in the middle of March, hoping to get some paracetamol (remember when you could not get any anywhere?). I overheard the pharmacist say that they could not deliver any more prescriptions, the demand was just too great. I spoke up and gave him one of my cards and said that we could help with that – it just seemed like a God given moment!

That afternoon the first people rang, and we have been delivering ever since....so far we have delivered over 300 prescriptions to people who were alone and in need. We have met some amazing people and shared in their stories, some of which have been sad and at times desperate. Just with conversations on the doorstep we have comforted people recently bereaved but alone, shared in people's journey into cancer diagnosis, as well as providing a chat to relieve loneliness, boredom and anxiety.

Like many churches we were forced to increase our on-line presence and ministry. We took the decision to be very outward facing and so used our Facebook page and YouTube channel to bring the gospel to anyone who wanted to take a look. On a Sunday morning there is always a live message (there is something about being "live"

that is attractive) followed by a ZOOM after service coffee event and then Facebook prayers in the evening. I also now read a bedtime story



Outside the Pharmacy with Simon the Pharmacist in the middle.

and short reflection each weekday (one week on one week off) that is e-mailed out and available on our dedicated phone in line to any who want to receive it.

We also decided to not only maintain our children's ministry but to actively seek ways to reach families who were at home because of lockdown. Elaine (my wife) who is our Children's and Families' Worker and myself record an action song and children's story every

week (which involves dressing up and special effects!!) which are then posted on our main Facebook pages and YouTube channel. These have received an amazing response with some getting

between 6000-9000 views with comments from people all over the world. We also delivered craft packs to all our families and through the stories and songs have attracted five new families who want to be part of the church when we come back...praise God. Across these four outward facing Facebook posts per week, we now receive approximately 1200 - 1500 views per week with a reach of about 3000.....how amazing is that?

This period has really shown us that God is at work, as we turn outward in mission with him. We now seek to build on the opportunities that God has opened for us and to continue building relationships with our community, not being afraid to share the Gospel at every point both on-line and in person.

Let us all be encouraged by what God is doing and going to do as restrictions are being lifted and as we seek new ways and new opportunities to be a church in mission.

Revd Nick Witham
St Neots and Huntingdon Circuit



One of Nick and Elaine's Action Songs they post on Facebook each week

Spirituality at Home

Revd Jacqui Horton



One of the unexpected consequences of the lockdown has been the way in which we have been thrown back upon our own devices – for spirituality, prayer and worship as well as for more practical things.

In the Central Norfolk Circuit, several people engaged in an exercise to build up a visual display in their homes firstly, through Holy Week and, secondly, through the period Easter to Pentecost. Leading up to Easter, we followed the biblical record, and the activities of



Visual displays for Easter Day

Jesus on each day of Holy Week, and added an item to our display that was suggested to us on a 'DIY Holy Week' handout. Doing this weekly, rather than daily, for the 7 weeks after Easter, we followed the resurrection appearances of Jesus, and the events of the Ascension and Pentecost, in a similar way.

The benefits of this 'spirituality at home' far outweighed the effort involved. It meant that those who participated entered into the Christian story in a way that they would never normally do, it meant that the households concerned had a thought-provoking religious focus in their living space throughout the Holy Week and post-Easter season, it meant that there was a profound sense of Christian

community (albeit distanced) as people followed the suggestions together in their own homes.

This is something I personally will do again, it brought the events of Easter through to Pentecost home – both literally and metaphorically – and brought them to life in a different, and transformative, way.

Revd Jacqui Horton
Superintendent, Central Norfolk Circuit



A visual display by Kay Kennedy

PS On a different note, one of the other things the Central Norfolk Circuit did was hold a 'virtual open gardens' event with over 130 photos of 37 different gardens across the circuit. The gardens have been viewed over 200 times and they can still be visited at www.centralnorfolkmethodistcircuit.org.uk/photos



District Agricultural Chaplain's Report

George Frost



After one of the wettest Autumn / Springs on record, when farmers were searching for seed corn because they were unable to drill during the Autumn window, there was the period of 'lockdown' from the second week in March. This has been a very difficult time, especially for me as I have C O P D. I have never had so much correspondence from the government health department, advising how to live my life.

At times like this, which we have not experienced before, I thank God for my faith and His support and am reminded that Jesus had times in isolation, in fact six times which you can check by looking at:

- Luke 4 v 1-2, 14-15;
- Mark 6 v 30-32;
- Matthew 14 v 1-13;
- Luke 6 v 12-13;
- Luke 22 v 39-45; and
- Luke v 5.

Just a little study time!!

During all this difficult period farming has gone on, albeit with additional worries during May when it was exceptionally dry, and then a wet June which helped to compensate, but now harvest is virtually over there has been

a very mixed return on investment. Light land appears to have suffered most, which is natural because it cannot retain the moisture. I was at a 'Zoom' meeting the other day when a heavy land farmer reported good returns.

Looking forward, and the unknown outcome of the Covid-19 epidemic, I wonder how the country will be able to sustain the amount of debt the government has, unless industry can get back to some sort of normality.

As usual I will comment on the price of commodities - feed wheat about £160 p tonne, bread wheat has a £30 premium, barley about £130- 140 p tonne. Potatoes could be a problem as root crops prefer constant wet/dry.

Soft fruits and asparagus have managed to be harvested with the help of people who were furloughed. It's an ill wind!!

How did we manage before all the technology which is available now? A way of keeping in touch, and the services available online can be very inspiring and up-lifting. I cannot envisage returning to church and not being allowed to sing, we are Methodists!

Stay safe.

George W Frost
District Agricultural Chaplain

Ipswich Circuit During Lockdown

Neil Hepplethwaite

It was so fortunate for the Ipswich circuit to have decided to launch a new website (*methodistic.org.uk*) just prior to the start of lockdown, which has proven to be such a blessing to us all. It was also a fantastic decision by our Superintendent, Derek Grimshaw, not to furlough any lay employees and for them to continue working in new ways during this time. One of the most important developments on the website has been 'Thought for the Day' with people across the circuit sending in short pieces to encourage and inspire every day. This has been a great way to generate communication between the Circuit's churches.



Methodistic

19 Jul • 🌐

Today's thought of the day is brought to us by Rev. Derek Grimshaw

"Let them Both Grow Together" ... See more



A screenshot of part of a Thought for the Day post

There has been a huge variety of different ways to engage with communities.

These included a trail of knitted rainbow scarves in Elmsett, prayer stations and trees outside closed churches in



One of the scarves tied around a telegraph pole in Elmsett village

Felixstowe, rainbow gift bags left on the railings outside Capel St Mary Church (which went as quickly as they could be made) and, again in Elmsett, an Easter Cross, set up for people to leave flowers on. This then turned into a thank you tree after Easter, where notes and pictures were added to bring hope and encouragement.

Online we have adapted various groups that would have been meeting in person to create alternative online communities. We have Little Lambs Playgroup who are still holding weekly sessions, but now on Facebook live. These have been adapted to having



images from Puppy Footprint Messy Craft Video posted on Chantry Church and Library Facebook Pages which has received over 700 views.

firstly a 10 minute craft slot, followed by Story Time (Gainsborough Community Library lent us a selection of large format story books to use) and then a singing session, all using different members of the team. This is followed by a half hour Zoom Coffee Morning to meet and chat, and has enabled us to keep in contact with the mums and toddlers during this difficult time.

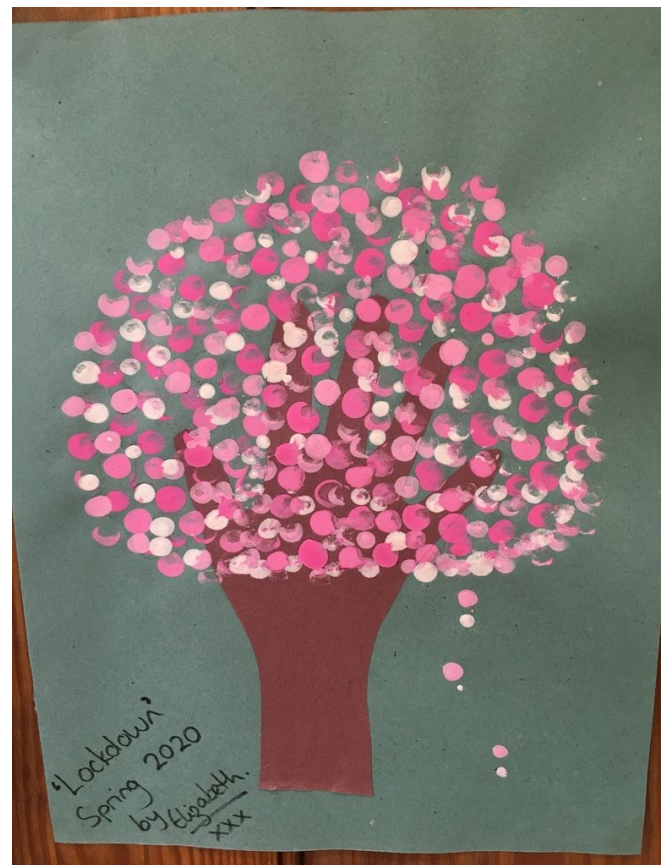
Community Choir was a challenge, especially using this new Zoom program that everyone was talking about! The first session was both chaotic and hilarious as we quickly learnt what was and was not possible. We adopted a model of completing warm ups live over Zoom, and singing to accompaniment tracks that had been pre-recorded with all vocals added. Some tracks were sent to the choir members to add vocals to, and we are now singing along with what sounds like everyone in the room! Coffee mornings, quiz sessions and the addition of four new songs has kept

everyone in the choir involved during lock-down.

In addition, we are also posting weekly craft videos for our Messy Craft and Chat groups, delivering weekly craft packs and flowers, and holding regular open online meet ups for members of our community groups.

This has proved to be a very challenging time, but also exciting and rewarding to see people adapt to new ways of working. We have many plans within the circuit to grow and develop these new ideas, and to continue bringing God's love to as many people in our communities as we can.

Neil Hepplethwaite
Media Development Worker
Ipswich Circuit



Handprint Blossom tree - Final print from Messy Craft Video posted on Gainsborough Messy Craft page

Sawston Scrubbers

Revd Dr Mike Wilson & Rosemary Heald

Mike Wilson:

It all began some time after lockdown when our irrepressible neighbour, Eleanor, tapped on the door just to make sure that we were all right. The word had gone round that Margaret and I were self-isolating because we were sure we both already had the virus.

As she rushed off (Eleanor always rushes) she yelled that she had some material to collect to cut up into scrubs. After she'd gone I said to Margaret 'We could do that!' Prior to that, apart from feeling a little unwell, I had been grumbling that I felt like an old soldier not allowed to go into battle. Younger colleagues were working like mad discovering all sorts of new ministries, but I was just stuck at home, isolating, and not allowed to *do* anything.



Margaret on her knees

Eleanor turned up with material and patterns. We cut them out. She stitched them up.

In truth, as usual, Margaret did most of it. I found scrabbling on the floor difficult, so I only did a few pockets and collars, but Margaret eventually cut out for about 30 scrubs. Also as usual, I did the talking. I excitedly told others in the church what we were doing. Rosemary Heald, in particular thought, 'We could do that too!'



Mike and Margaret modelling their scrubs

Rosemary Heald:

Overnight I found myself coordinating a group of 16 “Sawston Free Church Scrubbers and Friends”, linked through Eleanor to the national effort to supplement essential clothing for local hospitals - including our very own Royal Papworth Hospital. I put a note round to my neighbours and, within an hour, donations of sewing cottons, sheets, duvet covers and pillowcases were piling up at my front door, along with several offers of practical help from stitchers and cutters -out. Old sewing machines were oiled, paper patterns copied, skills



Rosemary's delivery van on VE Friday

remembered, and Friday became my delivery day to Eleanor. We all enjoyed very brief chats as I delivered supplies and collected items. Whilst the glorious weather helped us to feel positive, we all enjoyed working with the lively fabric designs we encountered from people's bedding - much more fun than official, single colours.

After a busy six weeks, we were told “Our Trust will not now require scrubs

from our lovely Volunteer stitchers. Please thank everyone for their dedication and help in supporting Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust. You are all amazing people and I have been blown away by people's generosity and kindness. My front line colleagues say they have felt extremely well supported and valued by their local communities, and all of the donations they have received have and still will make a real difference to the care they provide for their Patients.”

We had made a grand total of 198 items - sets, tops, trousers and bags.

Like Mike and Margaret, we all felt pleased that we had contributed something positive while our children's generation battled the virus.

Thank you, Mike and Margaret, for sewing the seed

Mike: And thank you Rosemary for that final, dreadful pun.

**Revd Dr Mike Wilson
District Grants Officer &
Supernumerary Minister, Cambridge Circuit**

**Rosemary Heald
Member of Sawston Free Church**

You can see the full Papworth Hospital Trust 'thank you' clip at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-cambridgeshire-52763200/coronavirus-royal-papworth-hospital-thanks-people-for-scrubs-donations>



Thomas the Tank Engine scrubs made from donated bedding fabric.

Signs of Hope

Frank Cannon



Soon after the country went into lockdown a member of the Circuit Leadership Team of the St Neots and Huntingdon Methodist Circuit suggested that, to try to bring a ray of hope and light into our members' lives, it might be interesting and enjoyable to create a photographic project with four different themes over four consecutive weeks where people were asked to submit their photographs reflecting the particular theme.

The themes chosen were:

- Part 1 — Signs of Hope in Nature
- Part 2 — Signs of Hope in Personal Creativity at Home
- Part 3 — Signs of Hope in Devotional Material
- Part 4 — Signs of Hope in Combatting the Virus



Part 1 — Signs of Hope in Nature

I, in my role of circuit administrator, was asked if I would compile the photographs into a presentation which could be put on our website and Facebook page for people to view.



Part 2 — Signs of Hope in Personal Creativity at Home

A request for photographs was circulated around the Circuit and I was amazed at the quality and quantity of photographs which were sent to me each week on the stated theme. I then had great fun in putting them into a weekly PowerPoint presentation before adding some background music and converting it into a format which could be uploaded onto YouTube for inclusion on our website and on our Facebook page.



Dear God,
 Please bring hope to the
 people who are working
 hard.
 Please bring hope to the
 people who hold, and see
 this cross.
 Amen

Year 6 Pupil, Ermine Street Church Academy, Alconbury Weald

Part 3 — Signs of Hope in Devotional Material

The feedback after Week 1 was extremely positive with many people commenting on how, whilst watching the presentation, they felt the power of God and the feeling that, whatever kind of situation we are in, God is still with us. His wonderful creation goes on. There was a real sense of hope that things would improve.

The following weeks' feedback was also very positive, and the four presentations have been shared and viewed across the world bringing light and hope into people's lives.

None of this would have been possible, firstly without the idea and secondly without the marvellous contribution made by the members and friends of our Circuit.

It has also given me a great deal of pleasure in putting it together and I hope that we may be able to do a similar project again.

If you would like to view these presentations then please visit the Circuit's website at: www.snahmc.org.uk and follow the link to 'Signs of Hope' in the News section.

I hope you receive as much pleasure and feelings of God's wonderful creation and love as we have in putting this together.

Every blessing

Frank Cannon
 Circuit Administrator
 St Neots and Huntingdon Methodist Circuit



Nature...brimming with hope, sharing God's message, 'I am here...I am with you always.'

Rev'd James Bamber

Part 4 — Signs of Hope in Combatting the Virus

Lockdown not keeping North Norfolk Circuit down!

Jean Parton



In line with many other Circuits, new ways of communicating God's Word have had to come to the fore. North Norfolk is having the benefit of a weekly printed service, an online service conducted by the Revd's Ann & Mike Bossingham, a Reflection video by Revd John Fenn, Worship by Telephone organised by Mrs Ros Peedle plus worship material supplied by others in the Circuit. See the North Norfolk website for details of all of these: www.northnorfolkmethodist.org.uk

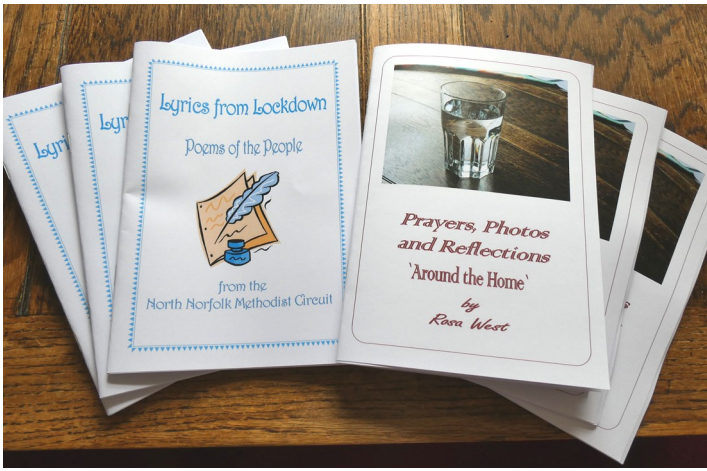
Writing skills have also been put to good use. Revd Pauline Barnett has put together a booklet of poems 'LYRICS FROM LOCKDOWN' comprising of poems from the people of the North Norfolk Circuit. (Pauline has written more about this on page 18)



St Andrew's Methodist Church, Sheringham

Over the last 6 years, St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Sheringham, member, Rosa West, has been producing an annual book of her 'PRAYERS, PHOTOS AND REFLECTIONS'. During lockdown, when Action for Children issued an appeal challenge for people to do 26 things (in place of the London Marathon), Rosa decided to take up the challenge and take photos of 26 things around her home for which to say 'Thank you' to God. (There is more from Rosa in her article on page 17)

“Heard of the Famous Five and the Secret Seven? Here come the Super Sixes! Following on from the Government's guidance to, among others, Churches, a team at St Andrew's Methodist Church, Sheringham, is surveying the premises to decide what needs to happen to make them safe and ready to receive the public, not just in the immediacy but for future needs. In conversation with many members and friends, it is found they may not be ready to come together in a building. The 'Garden Spaces' scheme has therefore been initiated whereby some members of St Andrew's offer their gardens and invite 5 other people to join them for a social gathering.



The booklets produced by Revd Pauline Barnett and Rosa West

It is hoped this will build up people's confidence in meeting with others and result in conversations regarding how, when and where we worship God.

In all of these initiatives, 'The best of all is, God is with us'

Jean Parton

**Member of St Andrew's Methodist Church
Sheringham**

Prayers, Photos and Reflections Around the Home

Rosa West



Many people are familiar with the books of 'Prayers, Photos and Reflections', which I have been producing annually during the last 7 years.

Unable to travel far during Lockdown to take photos of places and the natural world, I saw the challenge from Action for Children to do 26 things to fund raise for them as they were unable to run the London Marathon. I decided to try and take photos of 26 things within my home for which to say 'Thank You to God'.

In fact, as I looked around my home I

found far more than 26 items to photograph and thank God for! I selected 26 of them to compile into a book, wrote a prayer and reflection for each of them and my book "Prayers, Photos & Reflections Around the Home", was created.



'The Bed'

How lovely it is at the end of the day to have a comfortable bed to retire to. To curl up under the warm quilt and relax.

But sometimes even then sleep doesn't always come easily, we lay with events of the day going round in our minds, or we wake, tossing and turning with worries and problems on our minds.

Let us remember the words of Jesus - 'Come unto me, all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11: 28-29)

*Lord,
we thank you that we can come to you, bringing our anxieties and concerns and leave them in your hands. Trusting in your love to help us through each night and day.*

It is selling well at £3 (+ 75p P&P) with proceeds for AFC. It is being found helpful by those who receive it, with people asking for more to send on to their friends.

If anyone would like to purchase one/some, please contact me on 01263 823420 or email riwest19@msn.com

Rosa West
**Member of St Andrew's
Methodist Church, Sheringham**

Lyrics from Lockdown

Revd Pauline Barnett



A 'domestic goddess' I am not! Cooking and cleaning do not energise my endorphins! I come kicking and screaming to a bottle of bleach and a greasy sink. Flashing the floor is no fun filled fiesta, and when cooking turns to calamity, my culinary confidence takes a nose dive! Of course I do all these things, but oh, for something different! And so I have been following a daily course of live lectures (three a day) from The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge. The theme of this, their Summer School, is "Telling a different story - How Science and Faith belong together". All the lectures from a wide variety of academics remain on YouTube and I commend them to you, if I may.

One lecture addresses the complexities of the brain-mind issue and what constitutes human identity, another relating this to dementia and belief. Another fascinating lecture looked at Genesis 1 and 2, viewed not from our perspective but looking at the original text and seeing it through the eyes of

Ancient Near Eastern Culture. Day 7 is particularly relevant as is the high value put on 'order' and brings new insight to the story of Creation and the Fall.

I have always believed that human creativity brings us closer to the very essence of God who is constantly at work in the world and who calls us, made in his image, to be creative too. We have certainly seen a burgeoning of creative endeavours during this terrible pandemic - whether it be music, singing, dance, art, sewing - and yes poetry. Intrinsic to the meaning of the words 'poetry' and 'poem' is 'doing' or 'making'. It comes from the Greek 'poiema' which means just that. See Ephesians 2:10 in the Greek text.

Alice Quinn, the Editor of "Together in a Sudden Strangeness", views the poet as 'taking on the role of the witness in culture', and in this pandemic Julia Alvarez asks the question "will poems be the only safe place where we can gather together?"

I have always loved poetry. I like writing it too - though I think I'm more Pam Ayres than anything else! And so

when lockdown arrived I thought maybe people across our North Norfolk Circuit might be encouraged to share their feelings in poetry. The result is a booklet entitled:

LYRICS FROM LOCKDOWN
POEMS OF THE PEOPLE FROM THE
NORTH NORFOLK METHODIST CIRCUIT

We hope we can encourage you to buy a copy.

All proceeds (£3 per copy) are going to ALL WE CAN.

Please contact me at:

modrev@sky.com or 07523857503

Thank you (in advance) and Blessings.



Revd Pauline Barnett
Supernumerary Minister
North Norfolk Circuit

*The world we thought we knew is changing fast,
And longingly we cling to what is past,
That settled life which made no great demand,
A foretaste of the hoped for Promised Land.*

*But as for you dynamic Pilgrim God,
You do not linger on the path well trod,
But ever lead your pilgrim people on
To risk an unknown future with your Son.*

*The challenge of catastrophe and change
Will take us well beyond our former range,
Exposing us to things we do not know,
Demanding all the love that we can show.*

*You take the stuff of chaos, fear and dread
And make a path that we must bravely tread
And follow where your gracious footsteps lead
To share the work to meet each other's need.*

© Revd Rosemary Wakelin
Supernumerary Minister, Central Norfolk Circuit

Tune: Woodlands

(The tune was composed by a one time music director at Gresham's, Walter Greatorex [1919], who lived in Holt!)

Google my God to me

Pat Dorrington



I had never thought of Google as an evangelist! What a powerful platform bringing so much diversity of worship from all around the globe. While watching one act of worship or spiritual message a number of others are lined up at the side of the screen waiting for YOUR CALL! What an opportunity to broaden our experience of worship and think globally. I have been watching Sunday Worship from Central Hall which has an international congregation just as we do at Thorpe Marriott. Members join their friends there when they are in London and send messages back, keeping in touch from their homes all around the world.

Locally too we are broadening our new lockdown worship experience, meeting virtually in North West Norwich Methodist Churches every Sunday morning together instead of in our separate buildings. I think it makes us feel much closer and our worship so

much more powerful.

It is so good to be able to worship with all our friends and as the weather improves to see Revd Mary Sachikonye preaching from her garden and others in their gardens contributing to the worship too. It is great to see friends from our churches who we had not seen

for so long but so powerful to feel that although we are all scattered around isolated in our homes we are worshipping together again.



Trinity Ecumenical Church, Thorpe Marriott

I must congratulate all those who set up worship every Sunday morning so soon after lockdown began – it is amazing to see what talent so many of our friends have including the younger members who are such good instrumentalists, singers and readers. Keith Lilley is doing a magnificent job as pianist ever since the first streamed Sunday worship. I am thoroughly enjoying Sunday mornings back with friends again. Thank you very much also



Trinity Ecumenical Church Picnic
at Heydon after lockdown

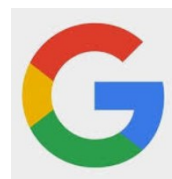
to all the people behind the scenes who work so hard to produce the Sunday worship every week and those who make possible the

daily prayers and Mary's weekly Words of Hope and to Revd Julian Purchase for his comforting pastoral letters each week and for his talk one Sunday. People often talk about churches without walls these days and with more of us worshipping together from more churches than usual forming a larger congregation, the worship feels that much more powerful and makes us all feel so much closer.

So much good has come out of people from this pandemic – two sets of neighbours volunteered to do my shopping from the start and other neighbours have asked if they can help in any way as well as a number of friends from church. My shipmates in the Royal Naval Association are very supportive and have set up regular Zoom evenings for an hour or more for a chat, quizzes and monthly meetings, which are most enjoyable and it is so good to see one another again after so many weeks, especially when you live

on your own . It's amazing how people I have never seen before on my walks around Thorpe Marriott speak to me instead of just walking past. Now when I move away from runners, walkers, dog walkers, cyclists, prams and kids on scooters they all say thank you. I often have to ask people the way when I am going for a walk locally. Although I have lived here for around 25 years I normally do all my walking on the golf course and have not discovered much of the locality until now!

It's amazing how friendly absolute strangers have become and there is a strong feeling that people seem to care more for each other and instead of staring into their phones they are happy to talk and have time to help if I ask them a question. Suddenly the world seems a nicer place.



Click on Google, YouTube and Facebook and answer the call.

Google really is a Godsend.

Pat Dorrington
Member of Trinity Ecumenical Church
Thorpe Marriott

Pioneering Pathways and Music

Geraldine Allen & Sarah Rodgers

Shortly before lockdown, Geraldine and Sarah applied to join the Methodist Pioneering Pathways and were welcomed into the programme at the end of April. “A pioneer is someone who is able to connect with those who are not currently relating to church and Christian faith. They are able to help people to encounter God and explore what it might mean for them to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in the context where they are. They are also able to re-imagine what Church could look like for such people.” (Connexional website)

Now they write about the music they have been creating from their home in Central Norfolk: Lockdown has turned the church upside down and created a

landscape where, in an incredibly short space of time, new ways of doing church have seeded, taken root and flourished. Using Zoom, conversations are taking place across the Connexion between Christians who share pioneering values. We talk to pioneers from Bristol to Birmingham and from the Scottish isles to the Welsh hills! We share ideas on language, location, barriers and battlegrounds, poetry and music.

Online is the place to be but we are learning that there is a clear difference between church online - old ways transcribed to digital platforms; and online church – the placeholder for new approaches to community and mission: including, allowing, sharing, growing and celebrating.



A split screen image of Wild Geese to a poem by Mary Glover

As professional musicians, we have been attuned to the power of music at a time of crisis and as lockdown has progressed we have witnessed an outpouring of unstoppable creativity from individual musicians, ensembles, choirs and orchestras. Performances have been given in front gardens and from balconies – live and recorded – and relived on Facebook and YouTube. Split screen, multi-performer videos have hit our screens, as never before.

We were already beginning to think, as pioneers, about ‘new places for new people’ and how to do music differently. A real opportunity presented itself in the form of a collaboration with Charlie Houlder-Moat, Methodist Chaplaincy Families’ Worker for the air force base at Marham. She has a passion for ‘Wild Church’ connecting people to the created world, producing worship in nature settings. Charlie asked us to think about how music would help to reflect the character of both the natural setting and the reflective worship she was offering.



Out of that invitation, we have begun to create split screen videos which bring together combined instrumental parts, poetry, prayer and film – a multi-entry gateway which has touched a chord with a surprisingly diverse audience. Our first music video sets the poem, **Wild Geese* by Mary Oliver, using



A shot of the split screen video of the Prayer “People of Courage” by Revd Dr Barbara Glasson

original music by Sarah and a film of geese in flight, accompanied by an evocative clarinet. After that, a prayer by Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, **People of Courage*, became the inspiration for a more symphonic interpretation with Geraldine playing three instruments, elaborating on Sibelius’s *Finlandia* together with scenes over the Lake District. The third video, created for Wild Church, ‘With God by the Water’, returned to another Mary Oliver poem, **Breakage*, with a different composition by Sarah and shoreline scenes to jazz clarinet.

This, we feel, is just the beginning, and we want to follow where we are being led on this new musical journey, into ‘spirituality in the garden’, and towards writing and performing new music for new places, new spaces, new communities and new ways of being church.

Geraldine Allen and Sarah Rodgers
Members of Swaffham Methodist Church

**Wild Geese, People of Courage and Breakage can all be found in the Wild Church play list:*
 Swaffham Methodists YouTube – Play Lists – Wild Church – View full play list

Lockdown, Blessings or Curse

George Ginn



There are two sides of a coin - heads, we see the monarch, tails, we see its value. We have a well-known phrase, "Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done!" How can we possibly count our blessings in the face of this Pandemic? It has infected so many and taken so many lives. It has closed our places of worship and prevented us meeting together, causing us to become isolated from one another including members of our own family. This unseen virus has done what no human force could do. It has stopped the world in its tracks! This world divided between rich and poor, of injustice, oppression and inequality, of nations jostling for power and domination and with sabre rattling at every turn. This world has been brought to its knees in the struggle to fight this unseen enemy.



Photo by Daniel Leeves, freelyphotos.com

So what are the blessings? It has stopped for a time the world's frantic endeavour, not just to sustain all life but to produce so much more, which has built up an abundance of trapped greenhouse gases causing climate change that threatens all life on the planet. Since the pause we have reduced for a time our emissions and have seen blue skies with less harmful pollution. The position in which we found ourselves opened up to us the needs of others, and there has been a great coming together in support. Our focus has turned from ourselves to others. Volunteers delivered food and medicines. And everyone stood on doorsteps to clap for NHS and key workers. We who were deprived from corporate worship, had this brought to us in our homes with printed worship sheets which gave us real insight into the worship laid before us. We actively engaged by reading the word, singing

the hymns without music from memory, reading the reflection and sharing the prayers. Each of our people received a weekly message from our District Chair, many of whom had never had the privilege to have seen or heard him before. There was also the weekly reflection from our Superintendent who normally was only able to conduct two services a quarter.

There has been more time for us all to reflect on our own faith. Our Past President asked of us “What’s the story?” And maybe in our own reflection we have discovered the wonderful way God has cared and guided us along our life’s journey, both in bad times and good. Also the many loving people who have featured in our story and still do. Yes we do remember

those suffering as a result of this pause, especially the school children, and we pray they will be blessed as they try to catch up in their learning.

This time of reflection is a great opportunity to prepare ourselves and others as we move on from lockdown. It is time to repent of what collectively we have done to the environment. And by God’s Spirit change the way we are living now to that which sustains it. The choice may be the God of economy whose gospel is growth and profit and its sin is recession, or the God of creation whose provision is for all his creatures, including us humans he has appointed his stewards. The monarch of our coin is our God whose value is Life in all its fullness.

George Ginn
Ely and Newmarket circuit

grapevine

is available in large print and on CD (audio)

If you would like to request a copy,

please contact the District Office:

01603 625765

eadistrict14.office@btinternet.com

Please note these items will only be available once lockdown restriction rules have ended and normality returns.

Life During Lockdown

Graham Gibbs



look after six adults with learning disabilities, used to be seven. Officially we are an independent residential care home but in reality we are a large family who have grown up together. I took over from my parents way back in 1987, basically to look after my brothers and sisters, some legally adopted, others not, but it makes no difference. They have all been with us from early childhood or from a few weeks old.



All from the small holding... new potatoes too!

Lockdown, for us, began on March 20th - 17 weeks ago. My wife and I go food shopping and we have staff coming and going, but otherwise we have stayed put. We are very fortunate to live in a huge old vicarage sitting on six acres and we are almost self-sufficient in fruit and veg and sell excess to our

local community through our Carrot Sales Shed. In fact we also “grow” some of our own electricity via solar panels and a wind turbine.

At the beginning of lockdown, we discussed the whole situation about day services and work experience placements being closed, the fact that we couldn't go shopping or go to the cinema or days out. We talked about the other people who couldn't go out to the shops because they were self-isolating and the discussion somehow turned to the war when people started growing fruit and veg and the four who work outside on the small-holding were going to 'dig for Britain', or our village at any rate.

Our Sunday mornings were the biggest change. Instead of everyone getting



Plus the few extras we had to buy just to finish off the plate!

ready for Church we had to organise our own services in the lounge. The Ministers and Lay Preachers in the Partnership drew up a rota to prepare a home based service which was sent around in the middle of the week. This gave me time to go through it, tweak it a little bit to suit our circumstances, and make up service papers for the others with the hymns printed on. Justin lets me use his music stand as a lectern and we light a candle at the beginning of each service.

We started with 11 of us but our numbers grew when two more of our sisters started to join us by Skype every Sunday. We then started to incorporate a family spot because our sister's seven year old granddaughter joined in. In fact we found some Christian colouring books online and sent them to her to help in her new found Sunday morning experience. We even finish our service with coffee and biscuits because that's what we normally do and pretend to pass them over Skype.

After our ninth Sunday in lockdown, I spent some time in hospital with one of my disabled brothers; he didn't have Covid. My 23 year old daughter took on leading the Sunday services

and Colin and I were Skyping in along with my sisters. Rachel had never done anything like this before but she was amazing. She told me that her knees were knocking together but all I could see was Jesus holding her hand. Rachel led five Sunday services before I came home alone; Colin had gone to live with our Lord on the Saturday morning.

Rachel and I didn't feel that we could lead our Sunday service the next day so we made one phone call to one of our many friends at Church and she led our service for us via Skype. It was hard dealing with my own grief and supporting our special family but we made it through that morning.

Isolating but not alone, proven by the number of messages and cards that we as a family have received and all the offers of help if we need it.

It will be nice to get back to Church and worship with our friends again but our lockdown Sundays will always have a special place in our hearts.



Emmanuel Church, Bungay

Graham Gibbs
Member of
Emmanuel Church,
Bungay



How can we keep from

SINGING?

A vibrant workshop day on music for worship
Saturday 14 November 2020

it finds an echo in my soul

My life flows on in endless song

10am – 4pm

Stowmarket United Reformed Church
IP14 1AD

Admission: £15 (under 18s free)

To book a place, email william@glasse.org.uk

Further details at hymnsocietygbi.org.uk

How can we keep from SINGING?

God's people have always worshipped in music and song. Music has lifted our hearts, given space for lamentation, strengthened us in hardship, bound us together, and given us a voice to praise the living God.

This is a day for worshippers, writers, musicians and worship leaders to engage with three practical aspects of music in worship.

Come and learn from expert practitioners in their fields. Bring your own experience in worship and song.

Timetable

1000	Arrival, refreshments
1030	Welcome and Opening Worship
1100	Workshop 1
1200	Workshop 2
1300	Lunch (drinks provided, bring own food)
1345	Workshop 3
1445	Break
1500	Festival of Hymns
1600	End

Workshop 1

Psalms in Worship - Iron Age Relics or Timeless Humanity?

Adam Carlill - Vicar of St George's and St Mary Magdalen's, Tilehurst

The music of metrical psalmody may sound the same as hymnody but these timeless sacred poems cut to the very bone and soul of our humanity. Using examples from Psalms for the Common Era, we will touch the faith of our ancestors by singing psalms of different flavours to accessible tunes, old and new, sacred and secular.

Workshop 2

The Musician and the Worship Leader

Roger Green - Past President of the Suffolk Organists' Association

Why are relationships between clergy and musicians often so difficult? Was it always thus? Is it inevitable? Does it benefit anyone? Must it always be so?

"Come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove, with all thy quickening powers; kindle a flame of sacred love in these cold hearts of ours."
Isaac Watts

Workshop 3

Hymns: Prehistoric Pæans of the Past or Transformative Tools for Today?

Richard Hubbard - St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Music Development Director

Have hymns had their day, or are they the missing jewel in contemporary worship culture? How can hymns be successfully integrated with a wider range of worship genres? We will explore ways to ways to include a rich heritage of hymnody within a broader perspective of worship that will engage contemporary congregations.

Further details can be found at hymnsocietygbi.org.uk

Festival of Hymns

Rev. Dr Janet Wootton, Executive President of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland

An opportunity to sing hymns and songs, celebrate the Christian heritage of the region, and honour some of our greatest hymnwriters and composers, including items reflecting the themes of our workshop sessions.

Please note this event will be moved to Spring 2021 if Covid restrictions prevent it taking place in November

Contributions

We hope you have been inspired by the articles in this edition of *grapevine*. If you would like to make a contribution to the next edition, we would love to hear from you. Please send any news items, letters and photographs, which you would like to share with others in the district to:

eagrapevine@gmail.com

**or post to*

'grapevine', District Office,
Chapel Field Road Methodist Church
Norwich, NR2 1SD

** For further information, please contact
the District Office on 01603 625765*

Unfortunately we cannot guarantee inclusion of all contributions.

**These contact details will only apply once lockdown restriction rules have ended and normality returns.*