

ASPIRE



July 2020

Christ Church Haydock URC

www.christchurchhaydock.co.uk

A word from the Editors

As the lock-down restrictions are being eased by the Government, we have some difficult decisions to make. Obviously, we would like to get the church open as soon as possible and get services up and running again. However, need to ensure that we consider the health and well-being of our congregation and adhere to the guidelines put in place by the Government in relation to the re-opening of places of worship.

Therefore, we ask for your prayers of wisdom and guidance as the Eldership Team begin to discuss how and when we can open the doors of Christ Church Haydock again.

Malcolm has written a very interesting article this month around the ethos of the bible becoming a distant memory but concluding with the words that, despite what happens, nothing can change the fact that Jesus became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Following on from this, there is an inspiring article on Jesus being the light of the world.

A weekly church service, including a message from Malcolm, is still available each week on the Christ Church Facebook page and website. For those of you without internet access, Neil and Brian will continue to deliver DVDs or hard copies of Malcolm's message each week.

If any of you need anything at all, please do not hesitate to contact us. Becky Taylor continues to lead our COVID-19 support team and she can be contacted for help on the number below:

BECKY TAYLOR – MOBILE: 07788 279286

We pray that you will cast your eyes on Jesus and continue to trust in Him as we patiently wait for some form of normality to return to our lives.

God bless, take care and stay safe

Brian, Mike and Jo

THOUGHTS ABOUT PRIVATE PRAYER

We could open our church building for private prayer, but we won't.

Why not? Because if you came to Christ Church to pray, we would have to:

Make you wash or sanitise your hands at the door.

Instruct you to wear a mask.

Ask you if you have had any COVID-19 symptoms, underlying health problems or recently had a flu jab (and turn you away if you answered yes to any of these).

Tell you which seat to sit in.

Warn you not to sing.

Make sure you left by a different door.

Then clean and sanitise every surface you touched.

Alternatively, you could:

Sit in an armchair at home with a cup of tea...

Sit in the Garden watching the birds...

Walk in the park...

...and talk to God just as easily.

You do not need special words, a special place, special objects or special people around you to talk to God.

He loves you and He is listening, so JUST DO IT.

Our church building is still shut but the ears of Heaven are not!

NOTICES

FLOWER MINISTRY

These were the people who received flowers from the church over the last few months.

April: Mavis Haselden and Bernard Bold

May: Betty Stockley and Sandra Dixon

June: Edna and Roy Dunn, Eileen Fisher, Joyce Molyneux, Lily Arstal, Alun and Lydia Conboy.

NEW ELDER

A postal vote was taken amongst members in relation the appointment of Becky Taylor as a church elder. We are pleased to announce that Becky gained the majority vote and has now been appointed as an elder of Christ Church URC. We look forward to her joining the Eldership team.

CLOTHING COLLECTION

Thank you to everyone who has donated and contributed clothes for the clothes bank. In return we have made an impressive £206.00 which will go toward church funds. If you have any more old or unwanted clothes that you no longer want, please pass them on, we are already collecting for the next swap.

God bless,

Sandra Fairhurst

PLANT SALE and CHEESY BREAD SALE

Thank you to all those who bought flowers and plants and cheesy bread. A total of £237 was raised (£170 from plants and £67 from cheesy bread). All funds will go toward the church funds.

God bless,

Neil and Sandra Fairhurst

THANK YOU

Lily, Andrew and Debbie would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and flowers following the passing of Bernard. They have been very much valued and appreciated.

PRAYER SHAWLS

These were the people who received prayer shawls from the church over the last few months.

May: Betty Jones, Jim and Betty

June: Betty Gregg, Alan Sterricker, Lily Bold, Jade Wilson, Lydia Conboy

GIRL'S BRIGADE FOOD PARCELS

The Girls Brigade would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the food parcel service, we have been truly overwhelmed by your generosity. Over the last 9 weeks we have given out over 200 food parcels to over 37 different people across Haydock. It has been an absolute pleasure for us to serve our community in this way, meeting new faces and connecting with familiar ones while in isolation. The food parcels not only served as practical help for people but also an emotional support, letting people know that they were not alone and were being thought of through a very difficult time. We are bringing this service to a close this weekend while restrictions are relaxing and people are finding ways to support themselves but wow what a difference this has made to everyone involved. It would not have been possible without your support which us at Girls Brigade and the recipients of the food parcels are so grateful for. Also, a big thank you to our girls in Girls Brigade who thought of this idea themselves and have helped to deliver the parcels themselves every week! We are so proud of you!!

God bless you all,

The GB leaders

Watch our Church Services

For those of you who may not know, although our church building is not open, church still is! Malcolm and other members of the church have been working hard on putting together digital services each week. These include God's Word, worship songs, sermons, kids slots etc. Each of these are filmed separately and put together into a mini movie which can be viewed on either our Facebook page or our church website.

Facebook: Christ Church Haydock URC

or

www.christchurchhaydock.co.uk

For those of you who don't use the internet, the service is also available on dvd which will be delivered to your own front door. If you would like one of these dvds, please contact Brian on 01744 608826 or 07840 173990.

From the Minister's Vestry

During the lockdown TV has become a lot different. New productions are few and far between and so it has become prevalent for older productions to be repeated. I have enjoyed some but not others I have to say. I am not a fan of old football matches being replayed for instance.

One thing that I found on one of the streaming services was the play 'Pennies from Heaven' by the brilliant playwright Dennis Potter.

Dennis Potter has written a number of brilliant TV screen plays. The "Singing Detective" and "Pennies from Heaven" are just two of his pieces. He died of cancer some years ago after completing his final screen plays.

The thing that attracts me to his work is his capacity to touch the human psyche. His work just doesn't touch the sensual self, but goes to the independent sovereign self. He touches us at the ground of our being. He is not alone in doing this, all great artists do it, but he does it in a medium not noted for depth. Television usually panders to our need for entertainment, for escape. Potter entertains, but also touches the self.

There is one element common to writers like Dennis Potter, and it is, what I would call, a Biblical ethos. I am not saying that he was a believer, a follower of Jesus; he might have been, I don't know. What is evident in his language, and the ideas which empower his words, is a Biblical framework of reference. It's a kind of common source of imagery, of ideas and ideals that we can empathize with. When he speaks of the Job-like experience of his heroine in the "Singing Detective", the Biblical literary illusion carries us with him.

I make this point because I wonder where we citizens of the great Western democracies will find our source of folk idealism in this century. Where today lays the power for language and ideas? Political correctness demands that the Bible is expunged from our memory. Even Christmas is called Yuletide and Winterval today.

The political agenda in Western democracies is bereft of ideas. It is focused on capital creation through increased production - produce and consume, buy and sell, manage and market. So much for the good life. So much for relationships, ideas, ideals..... As for the social agenda, it is often captive of discredited egalitarianism. So much for personal integrity, freedom of expression, exploration of ideas....

So, a lifeless grey cloud begins to cover us, and more particularly, covers our children and grandchildren. The ethos of the Bible is becoming a distant memory. Yet, what we have become does not change the fact that *"the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" and that "in him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. Yet to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."*

Even in this time of difficulty we need to remember Jesus and all that we have because of him!

In Christ

What Did Jesus Mean When He Said "I Am the Light of the World" (John 8:12)?



“I am the light of the world” is rooted in Jesus’ relationship with His Father. Jesus speaks from God and for God and as God. Apart from Jesus, we live in darkness. We have limited capacity to understand who we are or what we see in the world.

The light of Christ is the brightness of God shining on the retina of the human soul. Life can be wonderful on earth, but not fully complete without Jesus. We are all created to crave the Creator, our Father, and only through a relationship with our Saviour Jesus can the dark parts of our hearts brighten. When we admit we are not enough, we are freed to run and cling to the God who is.

The Light of the world paid for our freedom on the cross.

Just as ships follow lights to ensure safe passage, so we rely on the Light. Jesus’s death broke through the darkness, lighting the way for us. God’s Word, through the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, helps us understand and remember when we need His wisdom to steer us.

Prayer, which serves dually as life boat and lighthouse throughout our everyday lives is an open line of communication. We learn from the beginning of the book of Genesis and John’s Gospel that Jesus was present, and that He is the Word. Everything the light touches, He is a part of.

“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” -John 9:5

Are Christians Also Called to Be the Light of World?

Jesus brings light to the far corners of our communities and our world. Matthew 5:14 says, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." When we live our lives reflecting the Light, it allows others to see His love. We are called to share the gospel, but more importantly than what we say is how we live.

It is not merely what the shining people do, but why they do it and how they do it. We've found ourselves both drawn to and unnerved by them, because the light of their humble, word-and-deed love has both warmed our hearts and exposed our selfishness and pride."



Light affects everything. It permeates truth into every situation. It is true Love, on earth. "Praise God! The Light of the World is the Light of Heaven!" Only He can empower us to love the people He purposefully places in our lives well. His love lights up the world.

"You are a light in the darkness - a servant of God who is being watched, who gives off light ...a very distinct message with hardly a word being said"

In Loving Memory

When putting together this month's magazine, I wanted to include some words about Wendy Conboy, who went to be with her Heavenly Father in June. But who would have thought it would turn into a double-page spread. ...

Wendy was a faithful, generous, trustworthy, selfless and loving servant of God and she will be truly missed by all of us here at Christ Church. Some people make such a difference to our lives and Wendy was one of those people and we were truly blessed to have known her and have her in our lives.

Wendy very often contributed to the church magazine and not long ago we were emailing each other about her new venture—Wendy's Cake Haven—and how this had been such a blessing during the lockdown situation. She was saying how it reminded her of how her dad (Arthur) used to always talk about 'God—incidences' (not co-incidences) at certain points in his life. Her email finished with this verse:

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God.' Isaiah 41:10.
Wow!

The last email I received from Wendy was a request for an article to go in the magazine, but for some reason, I just didn't see it. I asked Lydia if I could share this with you all as it is beautiful ...

So I don't know about anyone else but I'm really struggling sleeping at the moment. I'm not great at the best of times but somehow worse at the moment. Last night for example I got to 2:30 and gave up, made a brew and wrote a poem; as you do. My daughter has persuaded me to share it; it's written from the perspective of an older teenager who was a small child when this virus took hold, so she only has sketchy memories.

*What was it like mum, that time the world stood still?
Were you really scared mum? Did you think that you'd be ill?
I just remember school closing and 'lessons' being fun.
I got to stay at home all day and my teachers were dad and mum!*

*Did it spread really quickly? Did thousands really die?
Why could they not cure it? Was there a reason why?
Did it really come from China? How did it get here?
What was the worst part about it? Was it ignorance or fear?*

*I remember we couldn't visit Grandma. Did that make her feel sad?
And going out in groups was wrong and people got really mad.
I think we could take the dog out for a long walk everyday.
But didn't we need to be careful and stay out of each other's way?*

*I think I couldn't come with you when you went to buy the food.
And didn't you get really stressed and always come home in a mood?
Could it happen again mum? Would it be as bad?
Is this the worst catastrophe that our world has ever had?*

*I remember painting rainbows on the window of our home.
And doing lots of arts and crafts and playing with squirty foam.
Were our Nurses really brave mum? And all those Doctors too?
Was that what upset you the most? Seeing the wonderful work they do?*

*Did we learn anything from it?
Have we changed our ways?
And have we started appreciating,
every single one of our days?*

Wendy—Hope you like it xx



My Christian Life

Lockdown has made me think quite a lot about things and in particular my Christian Life. It all began at the age of five. I was taken to Sunday School by mum. I remember being told Bible Stories and when the lesson had ended all the children were given a Bible text to take home. There were the usual Christmas Parties and the annual Sunday School Trips just like today, so nothing I have mentioned so far has changed. How I used to enjoy all of these.

I remember as I got older I continued to go to church, but this time it was of my own doing. There was a youth club attached to the church I was presently attending as we had moved house by now and therefore I did need to move churches as the previous church was too far to travel to.

When I was old enough I became a member of this, and just like our own youth clubs there were a variety of activities and trips which we could join in. There was also a quiet time where we shared in prayers and again we had an epilogue where more stories about God and His son Jesus Christ were shared.

By this time I was ending my time in Senior school and began to go to work, which sadly was the time I actually stopped attending church and Youth Club. There just didn't seem to be enough hours in the day to fit this in.

The years in between were, if you like, a period of incompleteness. I only seemed to attend church if there was a Wedding or sadly a Funeral or even a Christening. However, I was still very much aware that something was missing from my life, but at this point in time I didn't know what it was.

In February of 1973 I was married in Church. Four years later I was blessed with a beautiful daughter and named her Lyndsey. When Lyndsey was three months old I had her Baptized, thus making a commitment for her and myself as a parent.

At the age of five I took Lyndsey along to the Girl's Brigade where she enjoyed many happy years and attended the Parade Services which were held once a month. It was at this point that I began to go back to church. It was only once a month but it was another beginning. Not long after Sunday School was moved to the mornings which made it easier for me to go each week, if I so wished. I did go along each week and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Wow ! how services had changed from when I used to go as a child. They were so much livelier and so much easier to understand. It was great and it felt like a whole new beginning to my life. As time pressed on I was much more aware that something was definitely missing from my life, and although God had Blessed me with a loving Husband, a beautiful Daughter, a roof over my head and plenty to eat I still couldn't put my finger on what was missing.

It was as though my life was like a jigsaw puzzle but with a MISSING PIECE
It was incomplete. Then one day I suddenly realised that the Missing piece was yes
you've guessed it JESUS CHRIST.

After having attended church for twelve months I realised I wanted more out of just
going week in and week out, I wanted to feel a sense of belonging.

Not long after a call was made from the Pulpit, for anyone who wished to become a
member to attend Membership classes. I put my name forward and I have never
looked back. It was then that I asked Jesus to come into my life and be my Lord and
Saviour. I felt like a whole new person. I'm not saying that everything has been like
a "bed of roses" since then because I can tell you it certainly hasn't and still isn't.
But you know what, God never ever said that Taking up Your Cross and following
Him would be easy.

Having become a member I then became a Youth Leader in the Junior Youth Club
where I stayed for 16 years and we enjoyed many youth weekends away.
We had great times.

I also joined the Girl's Brigade as a helper and then after twelve months became an
Officer. Vivienne Tickle who was then Captain was leaving and so they needed a new
Captain. I was asked to take over but you had to have been an Officer for twelve
months in Brigade before you could take on this role. After a while I was asked again
to be the Captain by which time I had served twelve months so after careful and
prayerful times I eventually was Promoted to Captain where I served for Twenty
Years.

None of this would have been possible without JESUS in my life.

It was when I became an Elder of the Church that I decided It was now the right time
to finish in Youth Club. As I mentioned before we had some great trips away and
lots of fun with the kids.

What I do know is that I am NOTHING without Jesus. I am not perfect and doubt that
I ever will be but having God walking beside me every day of my life
Is all the assurance I need.

I do believe however, that God isn't finished with me yet, but you know what, I may
not be where God wants me yet, but I am NOT where I used to be and I have GOD to
thank for that. God is My Refuge and Strength, an ever present help in times of
trouble. Psalm 46 verse 1.

I can do all things through HIM who gives me strength
Phillipians 4 verse 13.

God Bless
Lesley

Sunday 5th July 2020

Full of Jesus



Billions of dollars are spent every year on people trying to improve themselves.

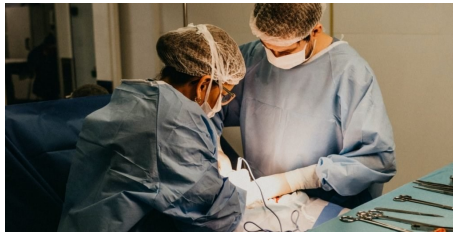
There is nothing wrong with improvement except when we do it out of vanity. Many people are in the pursuit of perfection in their looks and fitness because they feel incomplete. That is a void that will never be filled unless it is done by Jesus. You have been made full of Jesus.

Colossians 2:9-10

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rules and authority”

Sunday 12th July 2020

Revive a Hard Heart



Medical professionals amaze me. They can deal with trauma to the body in a calm manner while assessing our emergency. Doctors are able to take hearts that stopped beating and bring them back to life. Did you know that God can revive a hard heart? No medical professional can do anything for that hardness of our heart, but God can transform it from stone into flesh.

Ezekiel 11:19

“And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh”

Sunday 19th July 2020
Complete in Christ



Have you ever put a puzzle together, and it was missing a few pieces? How about ordering something at the drive-thru, and then you got home, and some of the food was missing? Something is unsettling when things aren't complete. The same can be said for Christians who are lacking in their faith. They aren't complete. The Apostle Paul wants you to be complete in Christ.

Colossians 1:28

“We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ”

Sunday 26th July 2020
A Beautiful Portrait



The other day my niece drew a picture of me preaching. It is the best portrait of me ever done because it's the only one. In an age where people endlessly take selfies, it is nice to see something different. Our verse today gives us a beautiful portrait of who Jesus is. Take some time to gaze upon it and let it move you.

Colossians 1:15-16

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

FINANCIAL REPORT— MAY 2020

BUILDING ACCOUNT

Income

| | |
|---|---------|
| Quiz sheets (David Faulkner) | £70.00 |
| Clothing Collection (Sandra Fairhurst) | £206.00 |

Expenditure

Nil

Balance as of 31/05/20 **£9267.88**

GENERAL ACCOUNT

Income

| | |
|--|----------|
| Offertories | £2362.00 |
| Donation to Church | £500.00 |
| Government Grant for caretaker work (May) | £321.89 |
| Government Grant for youth pastor work (May) | £782.46 |
| Youth Pastor Envelopes | £85.00 |
| Cross Lane contribution to Minister & Manse expenses | £913.42 |

Expenditure

Only Routine Items

Overall Income in May 2020 **£5326.66**

Overall Expenditure in May 2020 **£4133.99**

Balance as at 31/05/20 **£24218.53**

(Includes £3091.96 for Youth Pastor & Youth Mission Work)

NB. The balance may appear high, but in March £10,000 was transferred from the Building Fund account to the General account due to the virus and closure of the church. It is the intention to transfer it back ASAP.

Ray Clare