

ALMONDBURY METHODIST CHURCH

**THE LINK NEWSLETTER
MAY 2020**

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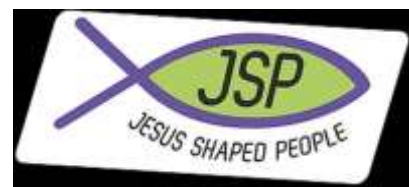


Looking to the future in faith



www.almondburymethodist.org.uk

HD5 8XJ



Dear Friends

I never thought I'd ever get addicted to Homes under the Hammer. I never thought I'd be so anxious to have the bleach bottle readily to hand as I obsessively and regularly bleach the doorknobs, bleach the house keys, bleach the banister, bleach the milk bottles and bleach the cat....if we had a cat! And I never thought that the government would ever make us all pass by on the other side whenever we venture out. But then these are unparalleled times (I've searched to find another word for unprecedented!)

So how are we getting on with this prolonged lockdown? How are we spending our time when we have had our fill of daytime TV and catch up? Many people are turning to poetry for solace and inspiration during this trying time, and I too have dusted down one or two volumes from my bookshelf and spent a few idle hours browsing them. I've been particularly touched by, "The Darkling Thrush", by Thomas Hardy, a poem hitherto unfamiliar to me. The poem describes the dreary, bleak winter landscape which is transformed by the bright, optimistic singing of an aged thrush whose song lifts the spirits and offers unexpected hope of better days to come. It's a poem which, of course, resonates with our time and brings to mind the Eastertide hope we have as Christians that in the Resurrection, nothing can separate us from God's love in Jesus.

We are all touched and moved by all the acts of heroism, courage, self-sacrifice and kindness that we are hearing about, and heartened by the knowledge that such a time as this brings out the best in people. Some of us may feel helpless that we can do so little to play our part, especially if we are of an age or have underlying health issues which means that we have to isolate ourselves. Some of us may have feelings of guilt that we have to rely so much on others to help us when our natural inclination is to help others. When such feelings arise in us we need a dollop of grace. "Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too," goes the line of a well-known hymn.

Of course, there are things that we can do in addition to standing on our doorstep each Thursday evening and joining in with the national Clap for Carers. We can resolve to make at least one phone call each day to someone who lives alone. Some of us may be in a position to draw up a list of what we are not spending money on during this time of lockdown and, as an act of gratitude and thanksgiving, send donations to charitable organisations, many of which are struggling for funding at this time. Our church is also a charity and currently missing valuable income from lettings. We can all pray.

Eventually life will return to what may be a new normal and the challenge will be to adapt to it. Hopefully the world will emerge a better place. In the meantime may we continue to pray, be patient, be thankful, love like Jesus and..... wash our hands like Pontius Pilate!

Yours in Christ
Reverend Richard Oldroyd

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mollicar Woods Sing: a message from John and Jo Shaw:- "the Sing has been a wonderful tradition that has taken place annually on Pentecost Sunday morning for over 100 years. It is with regret that, owing to the current Coronavirus restrictions, we have had to cancel this year's Sing which would have been on 31st May.

It is also with great sadness that we have decided not to continue with the Annual Sing. The number of people attending has significantly decreased over the years. It has been a difficult decision but we feel that now is the time to stop. A huge thank you to all who have supported the Sing over the years.

Fantastic memories of fellowship, song and wonderful scenery."

(We all appreciate very much the efforts that John, Jo and, indeed, others before them, have put in to keep the tradition of the Mollicar Woods Sing going for so long. Thank you.)

The virtual house group is now up and running, meeting on Sundays at 8 pm. If you're interested in joining, please send your email address to drkatherinebutler@gmail.com, who will add you to the meeting and send you your personal invite.

A BIG THANK YOU TO RICHARD AND SANDRA, WHO QUIETLY DECORATED THE CROSS IN THE PORCH FOR EASTER, WHERE IT COULD BE SEEN FROM THE ROAD, WHICH SHOWS THAT EVEN IF THE CHURCH BUILDING IS CLOSED, WE ARE STILL ACTIVE!

UPDATE on CHRISTIAN AID

A year ago some of our long-time House to House Collectors were considering whether this form of fundraising was still relevant ~ but we went ahead anyway, and collected over £1,150. And together with envelopes in Church, including All Hallows and Sts Michael and Helen, Almondbury sent off over £1,600 towards Christian Aid's many projects both in this country and overseas.

This year, thanks to this wretched virus, no House to House Collections. And no Collections in Church. But the need for the work undertaken by Christian Aid has not gone away - indeed it has increased. So, whither? Suggestions last year included a Big Breakfast or a Hunger Lunch – but again, the virus says 'No'.

Instead, Christian Aid Week is moving online! It plans to 'build a vibrant, virtual Christian Aid Week' so we can all take part with their online community. They say 'We would love you to join in to show love for our neighbours near and far, as a global family'.

It's more important than ever to come together as a community to worship and to share fun and fellowship. That's why during Christian Aid Week we will be live-streaming worship each day, and hosting a fun daily quiz to join and raise funds. Sign up using the links below to take part.

[Daily live-streamed worship](#)

[Daily fun quiz](#)

Christian Aids's global response

*Christian Aid and our partners already have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, and we will build on this experience to continue to stand together with communities living in poverty during this period. If infection rates start to develop as they are in Europe, then people in poorer countries will be hit even harder. Many are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps and in countries which do not have the healthcare infrastructures needed to combat widespread disease. We will be working on the ground to help prepare communities to limit the impact of Covid-19. **Please pray for us in this vital work, and support us where you can by making an online donation.***

Who actually are Christian Aid?

The Charity has more than 70 years' experience of working in partnership to support communities to thrive. It tackles the root causes of poverty so that women, men and children the world over are strengthened against future knocks. And if disasters happen, they get people the help they want straight away. Including the Virus Appeal and ongoing work in Syria and with the Rohingya children now in Bangladesh, CA presently has over ten current Appeals.

There are many ways to donate to Christian Aid and every penny will help to realise the vision – an end to poverty. You can donate online, over the phone or by making a postal donation.

[Online Direct Debits](#)

The most effective way to give to Christian Aid is by making a regular donation.

If they know how much money's coming in every month, then they know how much can go out. A regular income means they can not only distribute aid among those who need it now but also plan ahead for the future. Ways to set up your direct debit:

- Use the simple, [secure online form](#)
- Call **020 7523 2046** and speak directly to the regular giving team
- Download the [direct debit form \(PDF, 80.7kb\)](#) and post it

See our [address details for direct debit forms](#)

[Online cash donations](#)

You can safely and securely make a one-off donation using the online form.

[CAF card donations](#)

If you have a Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) card you can donate online through the CAF website.

Telephone and postal donations

*Unfortunately under the current circumstances regarding Covid-19, there is a delay to processing donations by post. Christian Aid's National Office address is P O Box 100, London SE1 7RT, but they request that, where possible, we give via the website or call **020 7523 2269** to donate by telephone.*

Paying directly into Christian Aid's Bank Account: please call 020 7523 2226.

For all your past support and encouragement of Christian Aid's work in the past – Thank You! And if you are able to again support – albeit in a rather different way – Renewed Thanks! (John Tame)

This is an item I found in an old edition of Grace magazine (now sadly defunct) for the first week in May which seems highly appropriate for these uncertain times:-

I refuse to let my heart be troubled: Neither shall I be afraid.

Germaine Copeland: 'Prayers that avail much'

'Hope and courage. Without these kindred virtues there can be no sustained endurance, and therefore no achievement. Hope is the inspiration of courage. Take away hope, and the efforts of the bravest would collapse. When they act together there is no difficulty which may not be overcome. In the young, courage can be cultivated as a protection to the other virtues, for where children have not learned to be brave, then truth and honour are liable to be surrendered at the first appearance of danger'.

Joseph Bibby

ZOOM LIVE SERVICES – soon we hope to be holding services live on Zoom so that even if we cannot meet up in person, we can continue our church fellowship on-line. Watch out for more details in the weekly notices. In the meantime, there are the Methodist Church's Sunday service and Sunday morning services to watch on BBC TV.

STOP PRESS! WEEKLY NEWS SHEET AND LINK COMBINE DURING LOCKDOWN

Revs Philip Barnett and Richard Oldroyd have suggested that during the Coronavirus lockdown the Weekly Notices and the Link could be combined into one publication as presently there are no diary dates and few announcements. It seems as if it may be a considerable time before lockdown will be fully lifted to allow mass gatherings of any kind. Elaine will be taking over on Weekly Notices as from May and items for the Weekly Notices or June Link should be sent to her at: pennyspringfold@btinternet.com or ring 01484 450321.