



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# CHURCH NEWS

## June/July 2020

Kingston United Reformed Church

[www.kingstonurc.org](http://www.kingstonurc.org)



## Morning Worship (live) Sunday 10 May 2020

For further online activities, please see page 2

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Registered charity no 1131880

*Edited this month by Vaughan James*

## Church worship diary: June/July 2020

As with the May edition, when this *Church News* went to press government movement restrictions still mean that the KURC church building is currently closed. BUT as a church and a community KURC is still very much open. Details of current online activities are listed below.

Sunday	10.30	<b>Worship:</b> During this time while our church building is closed, a live service, with hymns, prayers, readings and sermon, is broadcast online via Zoom. If you would like to receive joining details, please <i>contact Catherine Treweek</i> .
Sunday	Any time	<b>Worship activities for children:</b> If you would like to receive a weekly email with links, please <i>contact Bron Robinson</i> ,
Sunday	Shortly after end of 10.30 service	<b>Virtual coffee time:</b> You are welcome to join in the coffee morning via Skype ( <i>see below</i> ), or you could take time to call someone from the KURC family, send a text or an email.
Daily	11.00	<b>Coffee morning</b> via Skype: <i>contact Rhiannon Bone</i> for more details. Feel free to bring a prayer to share / something to pray for.
Daily	Via email	<b>Daily prayers</b> are circulated. If you would like to be included in these emails, <i>contact Teresa James</i>
Regularly	Via email or WhatsApp	<b>Messages and requests for prayer from Lesley.</b> If you would like to be included in these regular communications, please <i>contact Lesley Charlton</i> .
Wednesday	19.30	<b>Bible study groups</b> via Skype or Zoom: <i>contact Stuart Chandler</i> for more details.
Thursday	20.05-20.45	<b>Thursday soirée.</b> Relaxed evening Zoom chat. <i>Contact Janine Goddard</i>

Details correct as of Friday 15 May 2020. As the two-month lifespan of this edition of *Church News* coincides with a period of frequent change which could well impact on the activities listed above, please do check KURC's website at [www.kingstonurc.org](http://www.kingstonurc.org) for possible amendments.



**Look out for details in a few weeks of a Zoom-facilitated Christian Aid Quiz, planned for 26 June.**

## Letter from Lesley

Dear All,



This is middle of May 2020 and we might be beginning to start to move out.

Might be.

It depends on the numbers and we will need to keep up our changed behaviour for quite a time. Plus it might be OK for some people to move out but not all.

Things are beginning to change. Not as quickly as when we moved in. Gradually.

Maybe.

Lots of uncertainty and lots of clips of Boris Johnson as Vicky Pollard – no but yeah but. That feels harsh to me and making a thin political point. It is complex. Moving forward knowing that if the numbers of deaths change drastically, as they have in other countries, we will have to change back.

Living with the insecurity is harder than living with the clarity of ‘stay at home’.

What will Church look like in this new future? We do not know. In the short term the building stays shut. We do not gather. We will keep ourselves informed.

It feels like so much is topsy-turvy and we human beings are on shaky ground.

The certainty though is of the presence of God. Rock solid God.

I have some tough news for you. This insecurity is how life actually is. This insecurity is how it was before the corona virus. While we are drinking in lovely coffee shops and pottering round stately homes. Eating with our friends and having diaries full of fun things and work events actually.....things could be about to change. Always.

We love to think we are in control, but that is nonsense. We think everything is going to happen in the way we had planned, but that could well not be true. And one day it will definitely not be true.

Everything explodes as your Granny has a stroke or your partner loses their job or your child comes home badly beaten.

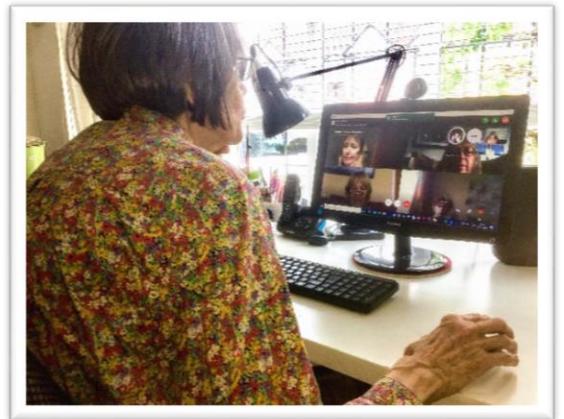
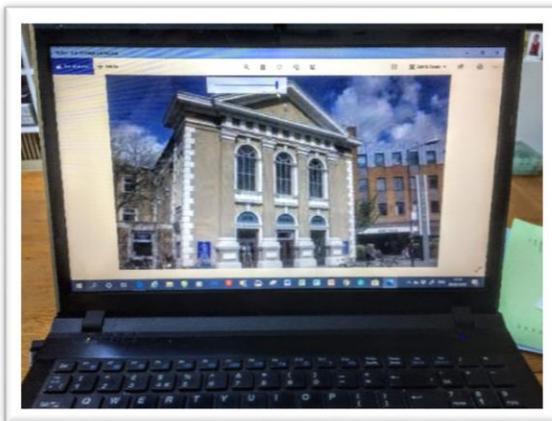
We might like to pretend that we always know how things are going to work out day by day. We do not.

Our job is to have the internal resources to live with that. To be people brave enough to acknowledge this truth and life affirming enough to dance in the face of it.

This season is a gift to reinforce in us this truth and give us a great big huge reminder that we need to build up our resources.

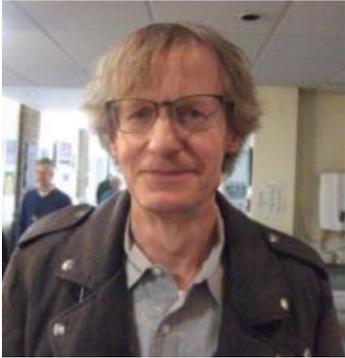
Your cheery pal,  
**Lesley**

### **Morning worship, Sunday 3 May 2020....**



....in the days when only the post-service coffee gathering  
(bottom right) was live.

## Memo from Martyn



How were the first, not quite 100 days as the new Church Secretary?

Well, what an introduction! Cathy Seymour, our previous Church Secretary, had prepared me well as far as the key documents and procedures went but I don't think anyone could have envisaged the tremendous changes a small virus would bring.

I'd agreed with Lesley that we would meet every Friday after the prayer meeting. This worked once before Coronavirus took hold! We managed one further face-to-face meeting before lockdown was imposed and from then everything has been done on the phone or through the internet.

The need to set up a whole new way of operating the church meant that there were many phone calls and email conversations involving a great number of people happening each day. There were staff to be managed, closure and ongoing care of the building to be organised. Almost immediately all the building users cancelled their bookings and revenue dropped significantly. Church members and friends could no longer meet in person so new ways of keeping in touch had to be set up. Sue Shaw has done a great job in ensuring that everyone is on someone's list and gets contacted regularly.

It really has been a tremendous team effort to transform the way we do things to ensure we are still able to love each other as we always have done. Lesley has worked tirelessly, ably supported as ever by Catherine Treweek. The management group have been tackling some tough issues and other church groups have been continuing in different ways. The elders are meeting more frequently (twice a month instead of once) to try and ensure issues are managed promptly. People have been supporting each other doing shopping and other errands or just keeping in touch. Others have arranged events; Bethany organised a quiz, Rhiannon and others host the virtual coffee mornings, Janine has an evening soirée. There are several bible study groups (hosts, Stuart and Ken, Rachel & James and Julian) working from material produced by Ken Bartlett. All these happening over the internet of course. If you want to be part of any of these groups let us know.

Good communication is vital so alongside the groups, regular news updates are being shared, electronically wherever possible or posted. Teresa produces a daily prayer email. John & Sue continue to keep the

website up to date and Stuart ensures our Facebook page is kept current.

I'm sure there are others I could have mentioned. Thank you all. Let's continue to work together, supporting each other where we can, asking for help if we need it.

Most importantly we are still worshipping together and it was great to be part of the service last Sunday, run through Zoom. Seeing other people all gathering at the same time was great. Being able to share communion together was lovely.

Overall, it has not been quite what I'd expected when I took on the Church Secretary role. If anyone asks you to be church secretary in the future check that there aren't any unforeseen viruses or major disasters about to happen before you say yes! 😊

**Martyn Verge**

## **From the Pastoral Co-ordinator**

At the time of writing we are living with the uncertainty of how the country is going to move forward. Whatever our circumstances whether we live alone or with others, we are all challenged by the new development of coming out of lockdown.

However, God knows what the future holds and has promised to be with us in trouble. If you are struggling to pray during this time know you are not alone.

There are some twenty members of church who have accepted the role of keeping in touch with other church people. They are in regular contact with anywhere between two or twelve people. There is also an active informal network but if we have inadvertently left anyone out please let us know.

### **Let's Pray**

We especially remember the family and friends of Marguerite Scott, Margaret Smith, Tony Wenman and Cora Young who have died recently.

We also think of the relatives, friends and church family at St Peter's Church of England, Norbiton whose minister Rev. Peter Holmes died in hospital after contracting Covid 19.

*Father God, Please comfort and give peace to those who mourn. May they feel supported at this time and hold onto you as they face the future without their loved one.*

*Amen*

Out of care for people's privacy, names are not included in the Pastoral News section of the online *Church News*

### **A Prayer during Covid 19**

*Almighty Father*

*Thank you for your promises not to fail us or abandon us.*

*Thank you for your unfailing love and generosity.*

*Please guide us as we face an uncertain future.*

*Please bring good out of these troubled times, helping us to create a more caring and fairer society.*

*Help us to be a blessing to others and may we find creative ways of serving you even though our movements are restricted.*

*Amen*

### **The Serenity Prayer**

*May we have the courage to change that which should be changed,  
the serenity to accept that which cannot be changed  
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

### **Focus on India**

As India's lockdown was extended in May to stop the spread of the coronavirus, over 100 million people remain stranded and are unable to return home.



"Thousands of people are hungry without food. Some of them got stuck and are staying close to the railway station area without food and money...we are helping those people with food every day". Patsy, Uttar Pradesh

There are reports of Christians delivering aid to those in need, being falsely accused of conversion under anti-conversion legislation. In one case, a group of Christians was taunted, humiliated and detained by local police, who made false accusations against them under anti-conversion legislation.

At a time when tensions are high in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, marginalised Christian and Muslim communities could face greater discrimination and harassment.

**Give thanks** for the Christian groups who are providing aid to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic, often without protective equipment available. Pray for an end to the misuse of anti-conversion legislation to make false accusations against religious minorities.

Pray that all of India's citizens would be treated fairly and equally whatever their religious beliefs. *(Information from Christian Solidarity Worldwide)*

**Sue Shaw**  
*sue.shaw24@gmail.com*

## Tales from the lockdown

### **Ann M**



I am busy taking photographs, printing and making cards with them for various occasions. I'm working on a second 'impossible' jigsaw puzzle is living up to its name. The orchids are in their third to season of growth and are blooming and appear healthy. They all flowered in time for lockdown.



that  
fifth

☎ many church Members and Friends. Trying to learn Zoom   
BOOM BOOM

### **Bron R**

My lasting memory will be how imaginative people have been at this time. Finding new ways to keep in touch, to worship, to keep their bodies and minds active, to celebrate, to grieve.

To help keep ourselves entertained, Nick and I “go away” every Saturday night to our front drive. We sleep in the tiny little caravan that we acquired just before the lock down and look forward to the day that we are able to go to a proper camp site! At least this one has a private shower block very nearby!

### **Cathy S**

I love journeys. They always lead somewhere, even it is back home. I think that there are “journeyman” in my ancestry. During lockdown all of my journeying is local. I have spent time with skylarks in Bushy Park, heard more birdsong than usual, watched trees come into bud and then full of fresh leaves. I have discovered new ways to feel connected to people without physical contact. These ways keep my yearning to be with others at bay, but do not quite fill the bill. Online I see the top half of people. I look forward to seeing people's legs!

### **Christine T**

When this is over I would like to go and spend 4 weeks in a remote country place with a pile of books and never interact with social media again. And I would like people to read the article by Marcel Theroux in the Guardian Review 2/5/20 about how all plagues for millennia (without the advantages of modern medicine) have a consistent pattern of behaviour - hoarding, panicking, fear, blaming, superstition, selfishness, surprising heroism, fixation with the number of report death and boredom during quarantine. Defoe talked about unpreparedness and prevarication and the problems of asymptomatic carriers. And medics always die (in the past the clergy did as well). And no one is thinking or writing about what sort of communal life we should aim for when this is over.

**A CN reader**

Any death during the coronavirus epidemic is a tragedy but one of them ended up leading to something positive for me. I knew that a friend, who I'd lost touch with, and his family knew the person who'd died when they lived in the area. I sent a message asking if he'd heard about the death as I remembered they knew her and that his mother had been a great friend of hers. He replied, which led to me having a long conversation with my old friend with the promise of keeping in touch in the future and meeting up once restrictions allowed.

**Holly C**

The anticipation of lockdown had an air of excitement about it then reality hit. Empty supermarket shelves, feeling overwhelmed... how am I to feed my children if the shelves are bare? Why are Joe Wicks and a 100 year old man funding the NHS when it's the job of the politicians to ensure there are adequate provisions? Service workers, previously ignored are risking their lives to keep the country going. Rainbows and clapping everywhere. We're in this together or we can blame and be apart. People and businesses are lost, the world has changed forever. Yet there is hope. So much hope for our future.

**Janine G**

My middle son has come to live with us temporarily. Social distancing has gone out the window and Jamie and I are living with a whirlwind. He was up at 7 am yesterday, made us breakfast and proceeded to clean and tidy my house. I even got Jamie involved in cleaning the bathroom. He then he started on the garden and got his children digging and weeding. He was still going at 9 pm, by which time I was exhausted. He was up at 7 this morning, made us breakfast, had a shower, did the washing up and then went to work at 10, leaving me a to-do list. Why on earth did I moan about being bored?!! Be careful what you wish for.

**Jean T**

Pruned 83 years of memorabilia - very satisfying with a few weeps along the way!

**John F**

- An elderly couple sitting on the promenade at Surbiton had placed their walking sticks flat on the ground pointing outwards into the path of pedestrians to ensure adequate social distancing.
- Three slices of Victoria sponge on a plate covered in clingfilm left in the window of a café in East Molesey. The sponge had curled up at the edges like a very stale sandwich and looked very sad indeed.
- Woodpeckers hammering away in Richmond and Bushy Parks – an unusual and fascinating sound which normally gets drowned out by passing aircraft.
- Wandering around Hampton Court Park golf course I spotted a person sunbathing on a beach towel in one of the sandy bunkers.

- A walk into Kingston from Surbiton takes longer than normal as one zigzags along the promenade avoiding other pedestrians by the widest possible margin. Brings to mind the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the walk along the road to Emmaus...

### ***Julian L***

I can feel I am suffering at this time, but as I think of the word “suffer” and take away my personal feelings and think about those who are truly suffering, risking their lives for us the NHS and all the front line workers.

In my prayers I invite God to hold “all” vulnerable and suffering.

Love means going beyond myself to others, and love overcomes fear.

What life will be like after this pandemic?

But I really don't want to get back to normal.

I hope that facing my fears there will arise in me a more willing spirit to embrace “us” rather than “me”.

### ***Martyn V***

In normal times we don't get much post; the odd bill and letters from charities. In lockdown it has been really nice to receive a couple of cards. The message inside was very simple, just that someone was thinking of us and sharing a simple message of encouragement. One of the cards was home made which added that extra something. They were very much appreciated.

### ***Natasha R***



I decided to take some photos of the spring flowers which are in our and the nearby houses. I admired them during one of my “mad dog” walks around the nearby streets. I thought that, well, I cannot go to Isabella Plantation, or Richmond, or Canbury Gardens or any parks at present, so let me admire those little beauties which are around us and which before I hardly could see, as I was always in such a hurry! Now I have more than plenty of free time on my hands! I must say that it was a little bit cumbersome to take photos with a mask on my face, but humans can adapt to almost anything!



***Nigel T***

For me, an abiding memory of the lockdown will be the weekly clapping for the NHS which I've done most weeks.

It's been a fascinating experience to hear the different sounds – not only the clapping, but the banging on saucepan lids, cheering and the honking of car horns. For a lot of people it has almost become the highlight of their week.

While I've been ringing people to check on how are the coping, it has been nice to receive a few unexpected phone calls.

***Rhiannon B and Carol C....***



...branching out and taking lockdown to a new level after a chance (but distant) meeting at Fishponds Park, Tolworth.



***Ruth A***

“Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass... It's about learning to dance in the rain” (Vivian Greene)

Walking, rather than dancing, has been my choice of exercise during lockdown. I've swapped the usual morning commute for a 45-minute brisk walk, while weekends and other non-working days provide opportunities for longer walks. I've discovered footpaths, streets, alleyways and buildings I didn't know existed; my interests in nature and local history have been re-awakened; my map reading skills have improved; and my compass is proving very useful for exploring the 938 acres of Epsom and Ashted Commons.

***Teresa J***

Lockdown - unprecedented (yes, that word again) circumstances. Other people are a potential mortal threat. Scary.

One day, an as yet undefined new normal - Possibly one we have never experienced, or imagined. One we have dreamt of?

Lockdown - more (too much?) time to catch up.

To-do list included a cleaner tidier home ... at least that was the plan. Initial enthusiasm has waned ...

There's no rush!  
Take your time...

Without an imposed fixed schedule  
establish self-regulated and flexible routine.

Lack of face-to-face contact with family and friends  
but longer down the line phone-calls or screen-time...

Lockdown: a work in progress.

### ***Vaughan J***

When walking in Richmond Park before the lockdown, you'd be lucky to get even a reluctant, self-conscious grunt out of anyone you happened to pass. But how things have changed over the last month or two! On our daily exercise hikes in the park, Teresa and I have been regaled with potted autobiographies, educational philosophy, neighbourhood gossip, botanical expertise, medical advice, you name it..... from complete strangers. And we've found ourselves responding enthusiastically in the same vein. (All this at a suitable distance of course!) Will this new spirit of openness outlive the constraints of the lockdown? I do hope so.

### **....some advice and encouragement from former *Church News* readers.....**

To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness.

***Bertrand Russell***

Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.

***Albert Schweizer***

You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you.

***Dale Carnegie***

The best way out is always through

***Robert Frost***

The best portion of a good man's life – his little, nameless unremembered acts of kindness

***William Wordsworth***

### **.....and a timely lesson in social distancing**

Teresa James and Liz Cook exchange chat,  
separated by a 2 metre vertical wall



## **Tony Wenman's *Church News* legacy** **Memories from his fellow editors**

### **Bron**

I am going to miss Tony greatly, especially as our senior *Church News* editor. Tony has been involved in *Church News* for as long as I can remember. He not only took on more than his share in producing editions, but you could always depend on Tony (and Fred Randall in his time) to come up with thought provoking-articles. Sometimes, if Tony's contributions were slightly on the wordy side, you had that conundrum – how to edit an editor!

He organised us in terms of compiling the rota, arranging the meetings, co-ordinating the printing of *Church News* and distributing the electronic copies. He was the one who ensured that many of the more distant friends of KURC were able to keep in touch with events and news from our church. I thank him for his leadership and friendship.

### **Jean**

I was just about to retire when Tony rang one day to ask if I would like to become a *Church News* editor. Rather hesitantly I agreed and still have my first attempt of August/September 1998. *Church News* has progressed technically since then, but Tony has always been there as the cornerstone for any problems, and a glimpse at my emails tells me how active and supportive Tony was in keeping in touch with all 'we' editors.

On a personal level, I will always be grateful to Tony & Steve; when my mother died, Tony and Steve were visiting Sarah in Cumbria and on the way home, the day of Mum's funeral, they stopped off in Liverpool to represent KURC and, indeed, Tony played the organ. Tony has been part of our lives in so many ways and now there is a big hole but also an enormous 'thank you' for every kindness shown.



### **Robin**

As the newest one on board, Tony was always a very hands-off type of Editor in Chief. Encouraging and supportive he always left each one of us to take *Church News* wherever the spirit took us and more importantly defended us behind the scenes. He was an intelligent and thoughtful man but he wore it lightly and was always the first to take the blame if things went awry. In a world full of people who say no, he was the type of person who said “give it a go” and “I rather quite liked it”. He was always open to new ideas and ways to make *Church News* relevant and to remain a vital part of the dialogue within our Church, even when others felt it had little to say or had much relevance in our digital world. He was a lively and amusing individual who had an ‘old-school charm’. We are all the poorer without his interesting and curious engagement with us all. He will be greatly missed by all those who knew him.

### **Vaughan**

Tony was always an enthusiastic contributor to *Church News*, leaving his mark particularly strongly on those editions that were edited by him. Like the man himself, his articles were consistently thoughtful and fluently expressed while often grappling with his particular deep and practical interest in the challenges of Christian education. “How do we talk about God to five-year-olds?” he asks on the cover of his March 2014 edition. His contributions eloquently displayed a passion for words, whether few, (as in his notorious puns) or - rather more often – many! He was a wise and generous leader of our little pack of editors, happy to leap in whenever we were short of editorial manpower while gently steering the magazine’s progress by enthusiasm and example. We will miss him dearly, as will *Church News*.

## **Five ways to wellbeing**

(from Mind, Kingston)

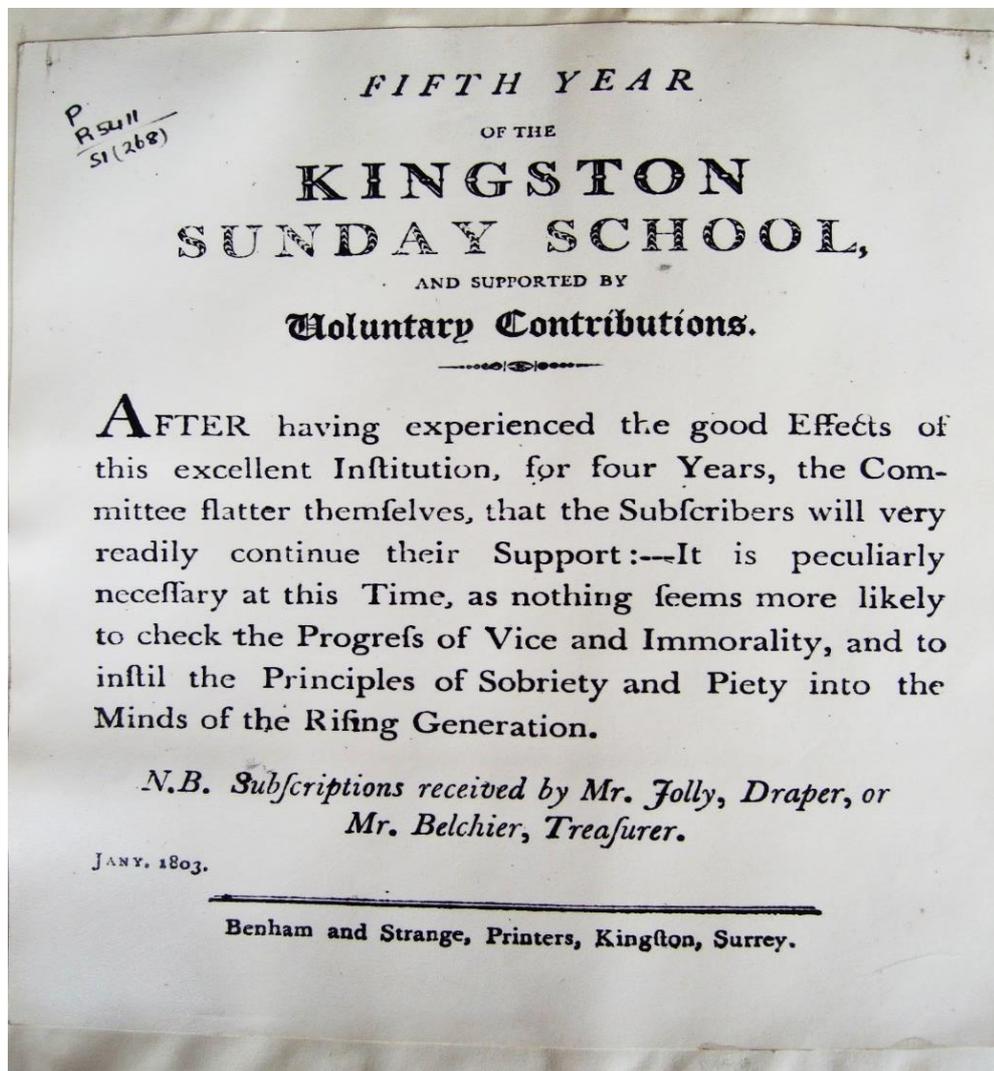


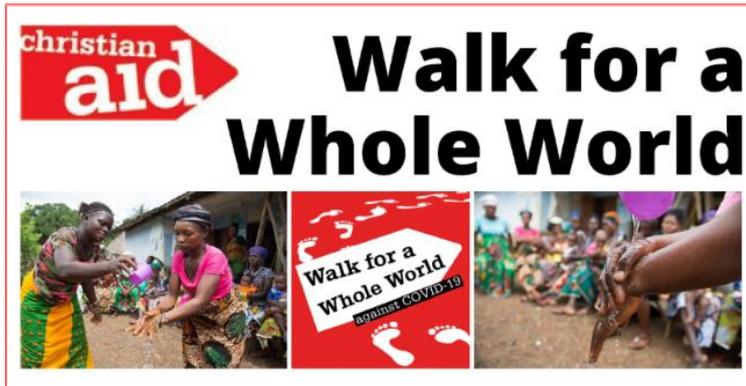
Get the full story at

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwHNDBkmSCxldjNcDsBGCthwBKn>

## Archive of the Month

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century our church was struggling. Membership could be counted almost on one hand. Worship took place in a disused Quaker meeting house and there was no regular minister. Then along came a man of immense resource, energy and business ability who was determined to breathe new life into the Christian witness of Kingston's 'Independent' church. His name was William Ranyard, a tallow chandler. In 1798 he founded a Sunday School, the first in Kingston, which met in the old Quaker building. It was clearly a success, as this appeal for contributions implies. Ranyard helped to draw up a new church covenant in 1799, and in 1803 he donated land at the corner of Eden Street and Union Street on which to build a brand new chapel, predecessor of our present building. He also lent the money for its construction.





## Musings on Christian Aid Week 10-16 May 2020 during lockdown...

To quote Robert Burns, 'The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men / Gang aft agley' and Woody Allen,

'If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans'. The back story is that the theme for Christian Aid Week this year was to have been about the climate crisis and how it affects the access of poor people to water. When the Kingston Christian Aid Committee held its planning meeting in January little did we think that nearly all our usual fundraising activities would have to be abandoned due to the COVID-19 epidemic and lockdown. There are no red envelopes this year, for instance... Three extra meetings brought a plan to raise vital funds for Christian Aid in such changed circumstances. No less than six of the Kingston clergy volunteered to '**Walk for a Whole World**' by walking 300,000 steps each in May, 1.8million steps in total

The emphasis has been on 10,000 steps, several miles, daily and I have been reflecting on the key behaviours in curbing the spread of COVID-19. Staying at home and maintaining social distancing are well-nigh impossible in many of the countries where Christian Aid partners work. The other effective measure is frequent hand-washing with soap but in many areas of the world, lack of water and collecting water is a daily burden. It may involve a walk of several miles over rough terrain and exposure to personal danger for women and children in particular. Hand-washing, especially with soap, is an unaffordable luxury for most, which has huge implications for health and well-being.

So, the money we are trying to raise is needed more than ever to help protect the poor and disadvantaged from coronavirus in other countries. The clergy are honouring their generous commitment. Ray Charlton has joined the walk too and has even shaved his head for the occasion but we still need more donations if we are to reach our target of £10,000. Please keep the money coming in, no matter how small the amount. Thank you for your support and generous giving.

**Sue Watts**



## Coronavirus Emergency Appeal

### Christian Aid Week - this year only - the Whole of May 2020

Over the last few months, you've shown love to your neighbours in so many ways. You've picked up the phone. You've brought them food. You've prayed for them. You've shown that you're by their side. And they're not alone.

And while this Christian Aid Week feels a little strange, we know you will do what you can in these unusual circumstances to reach out to your global neighbours too.

Just a reminder, as we cannot do our usual Christian Aid Week activities, 6 ministers have been challenged under our Christian Aid banner -to Walk for a Whole World to support the Christian Aid Coronavirus Emergency Appeal. Those doing the daily 10,000+ steps are:-

- Rev's Lesley Charlton and Suk In Lee from the URC.
- Rev Jonathan Wilkes, Rector of All Saints Church Kingston
- Rev Dr Karl Rutledge, Minister of the Kingston Methodists
- Rev Mark Stafford, Vicar of St John the Evangelist Grove Lane, Kingston
- Fr Martin Hislop, Vicar of St Luke's Church, Kingston
- and Ray Charlton, as Suk In would not let me off!

Many of you have already given or sent cheques to Sue Watts or myself. At the time of writing the total on the JustGiving page is over £4,000 made up from online donations and cheques etc, sent to the church CA contacts.

We hope with a few more donations via the 6 churches we can get to our target of £10,000.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kingston-caw2020>

With best wishes

**Ray**  
**Tel: 07785 220 369**

(I shaved my head to encourage friends and family to give to Christian Aid)



JustGiving Menu Start Fundraising Search Log in Sign up



41%  
£4,136  
raised of £10,000 target  
by 68 supporters

Donate

Facebook

Susan Barry

**Walk for a Whole World: Kingston Churches Christian Aid Week 2020**

Churches in Kingston are fundraising for Christian Aid because coronavirus impacts communities across the globe.

Christian Aid Week 2020  
run by Christian Aid  
Love never fails. Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all. Join us this Christian Aid Week (10-16 May) for a joyful celebration of our ...

Charity Registration No. 1105851

***Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.***

## The lockdown in one street

Near the start of the lockdown, when the future seemed to stretch endlessly, we had the blessing that it was Spring, and at least there was good weather and fresh growth to look forward to – nothing could take that away, not even coronavirus. One Saturday morning, as I was in the shower (eyes closed please) with the sun shining through the window, I suddenly felt like singing the hymn “Morning Has Broken...”

Our neighbours in Hatch Place had started up a WhatsApp group for us all, and I asked if anyone wanted to join me the next day, Sunday, out in the Close, so we could all sing! The neighbour across the way happens to be a Tour Manager for Bryan Ferry (!) and plays the piano – beside a window opening into the Close. So a few of us sang together!



And that really started something – every Saturday, we go out into our space in front of the house, carefully distanced of course, and sing together. Musical neighbour has rigged up a loudspeaker for the keyboard – and now plays outside. Maybe 25 of us sing – playlist of requests circulated beforehand, including children’s songs –

sometimes with a glass of something in hand. We celebrate birthdays in song, and we stand around and chat at a distance afterwards, rather like following up in the pub. Everyone has got to know people they didn’t really know before, and it is a real bonus, something to look forward to each week!

**Liz Cook**

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see inside back cover

## Watch your language!

Part-way through a Sunday evening service some long time ago, Lesley came across to me at the organ (it was so long ago that enough people attended on Sunday evenings to warrant using the organ to accompany the singing!), and said to me, holding my hand and looking me straight in the eye, "Receive the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ." Rarely have I been so lost for words. Ever helpful to those in need, she said, "Now say it back to me." Now I was doubly phased! Pilate's reported words came to mind, "Why, what evil has he done?" Who was I to offer forgiveness to Lesley on behalf of God, Jesus Christ, or anyone except myself?

Language is a very odd thing, and Biblical language is often more odd than most. We all assume that words have commonly understood meanings. Of course, at one level there are shared meanings - why else print dictionaries? However, words are not nearly as precise in meaning as we sometimes think - why else would people employ lawyers? Words, to some extent, mean what we want them to mean. There is also deeper meaning that we as individuals attach to them; that meaning comes from our unique experience of life. What is said to us carries the speaker's meaning. The essential skill of friendly conversation is the ability to guess correctly what the other person means by what they say, regardless of what the dictionary might say, and/or what the words mean to us. Lesley could not have known, until I sat there completely dumbfounded, that forgiveness is something that I do not seek or feel that I deserve, though Lesley may have a very different view of me; I readily admit that I am very far indeed from being good, let alone perfect! My attitude to being an attempted Christian is that I live my life the best way that I can in response to Jesus' call to "Love one another", and I take the consequences of my actions. I do not seek forgiveness, and I do not expect it. If it comes, it is a wonderful and surprising gift. For that reason, I would like to think that I express regret and forgiveness where appropriate, but as I said, I have many faults, - and writing too much is probably one of them!

I cannot see God as a being that can forgive, any more than I see a God as male or female, or a God who walks, talks, or even hears what we say. God quite simply is almighty, omnipresent and everlasting power. The human metaphor we use for God has, for me, outlived its usefulness. If God were as human as our language often implies, God could not be the creator of all that is. To receive the forgiveness of one that cannot forgive was meaningless to me. As I struggled to repeat back to Lesley the sentence she had said to me, I was embarrassed to be

speaking what I felt were empty words. But then, I can only assume that she has an impression of God that would make the words I muttered to her overflow with meaning!

The expression "the forgiveness of God", like lots of others, is embedded in our tradition and when we use it we assume that the meaning we attach to the words is held in common by all Christians. That is the blight of tradition. People have different meanings, or even no meaning, to attach to lots of things they traditionally say. That is why some people, particularly those outside "the tradition", find some of our statements perhaps shocking, irrelevant or just plain jargon. I think that we have to re-think much of what we say, as Christians. When we speak about our Christian faith, we should also imagine ourselves asking our listener, "... and by the way, what does what I have just said mean to you, and how does it make you feel?" Exchange of meaning is at the root of all our use of language, Christian and secular. It is important for anyone trying to live, communicate or share the Christian faith to think carefully about how they "language" the faith, and not to make too many assumptions about the meaning they think they are conveying. Watch your language!

***Tony Wenman***

*[This final contribution by Tony to Church News was received the day before he went into hospital.]*

## **Back to nature in Kingston during lockdown (1)**



***John Fisher***

**Reminder:** Copy for the next edition of *Church News* should reach Jean Thompson by Sunday 9 July

## In memoriam

Sadly, four KURC members have died since the last edition of *Church News*: Margueritte Scott, Margaret Smith, Cora Young and Tony Wenman. Under Covid 19 restrictions, full traditional funerals have not been allowed; instead Lesley led a series of four online memorial gatherings for us to remember and give thanks for respectively Margueritte's, Margaret's, Cora's and Tony's lives. The first three gatherings were held before this edition of *Church News* went to press, and a summary of Lesley's tributes and the memories shared appears below. Memories of Tony will appear in the next edition, but in the meantime his long and significant relationship with *Church News* is celebrated on pages 13 and 14.

### Margueritte Scott, 16 March 1938 – 1 April 2020



Margueritte was born and went to school in Edinburgh, leaving at the age of 16 to train and work as a secretary. She attended Sunday School in Edinburgh and was baptised in 1958. She visited Canada in the late 60s, subsequently working in Montreal for two years. She held a number of increasingly senior secretarial positions in Edinburgh and eventually moved to Kingston in 1983, when she joined KURC. She continued working until 1997 when she opted for early retirement. She remained active and busy, pursuing in particular her love of travel.

At KURC Margueritte was a dedicated Sunday School teacher and is remembered fondly for her faithful commitment, kindness and care to the 100+ children who passed through her hands over the years. KURC also benefitted greatly from the extensive secretarial skills which she applied to the minutes of meetings she wrote for a range of KURC and associated committees. Margueritte also volunteered at the coffee bar, where her feisty cheerfulness was much appreciated by all who came in contact with her.

### Margaret Smith, 27 November 1925 – 12 April 2010



Margaret was born at home in Leith, Edinburgh as second child to Barbara and John Barclay.

At the age of 18 she signed up to the ATS and got posted locally because of her youth. However, it was in Edinburgh that she met her future husband, Walter, who was a navy captain. After marrying in September 1953, they moved to London, where Walter got a job with Rolls Royce as an accountant, buying a house on Richmond Road in Kingston where they lived until Walter died in 1990.

They were members of the Kingston Presbyterian Church and subsequently KURC, where Margaret was active with Parents & Toddlers, YSPG, the Social Committee and the coffee bar for many years. Their daughter Barbara was born in 1959 and their son, Colin, in 1962. Sadly he died shortly afterwards.

Once Barbara was at secondary school Margaret went back to work as a secretary at the teacher training college - now Kingston University - until her retirement at 65.

Margaret and Walter were overjoyed at the birth of their grandson Andrew in 1983 and their granddaughter Joanna in 1986. Two further granddaughters, Katie and Beth, were born after Walter's death. Margaret helped again with babysitting, eventually moving to live with the family in 1995. Here she stayed until failing health necessitated a move to a care home in 2014. A long-time wish was fulfilled in November last year with the arrival of a great-grandson, Louie.

Margaret is fondly remembered as very warm and welcoming; a friend to many and a ready source of good advice and loving support to anyone needing them.

### **Cora Young, 10 July 1925 – 25 April 2020**



Cora came over from Northern Ireland about 15 years ago. Much of our knowledge of her is sketchy and from the last phase of her life.

She had a good marriage and was integrated into church and community life. She looked after her parents-in-law as they became increasingly frail. She came here to be nearer to her daughter Margaret who lives in Teddington. In Belfast the church was the centre of her life, and it was a big wrench to leave it and her wide network of friends, but with failing health she did not want to be a burden to her family

Cora was very keen on all sports particularly tennis. With her husband she was also a great fan of rugby and the Irish rugby team in particular. She was especially proud of the fact that she and Rory Best came from the same village. While living in Riverstone Court she took up Tai Chi, later arranging for the instructor to come to her flat and teach as many of the other flat-livers and friends as she could rake in. She was used to people being in and out of their homes and severely missed this when she moved later into sheltered accommodation.

She became a member of KURC by transfer and was soon involved with helping at the coffee bar and making new friends among the congregation.

As the years passed Cora became very frail and after surgery moved into residential care at Royal Star and Garter. She was there for approximately two years and well cared for by her family and staff. She celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday surrounded by her family from Switzerland, America and the UK. She was proud of her grandchildren and great grand children

Cora will be remembered as a doer, a woman with a gentle but generous spirit – gracious, genteel and hospitable.

## **Unusual Churches of the World**

### **(1) The Cathedral of the Pines**

Hidden away amongst the forests and lakes of New Hampshire in the north-east USA is the ‘Cathedral of the Pines’: a unique open-air ecumenical place of worship consisting of nothing more than a rectangular altar and several rows of pews. This ‘cathedral without walls’ was conceived and built in 1946 by Douglas and Sibyl Sloane as a memorial to their son Sandy, an airman who had been killed in World War II, and as a monument to international peace and understanding. It left an indelible impression on me when I visited it over 50 years ago!



What makes this ‘cathedral’ so special is its setting. First, there is a stunning unspoiled backdrop (the 3000 ft Mount Monadnock); then in high summer there is the scent of the pinewoods. In the ‘fall’ there is a carpet of red and gold leaves stretching as far as the eye can see, and in winter a blanket of pure

white snow. Another interesting feature is the ‘geological’ altar, which is constructed of stones taken from every state in the USA. Their various colours seem to blend perfectly with the surroundings.

The Cathedral of the Pines nowadays attracts people from all corners of the globe and claims to have hosted events for 75 different faiths! It is a place of worship where the architecture of nature surely surpasses the architecture of human invention.

***John Fisher***

### **(2) The Church of Holy Trinity in Simferopol, Crimea**

While talking about the churches all over the world, the first memory which came to my mind is that of the Church of Holy Trinity in Simferopol, Crimea. My husband and I visited it many times during 1990 – 2015 when we went to see my mother and sister each year when they were still alive.

This church is unusual, firstly because it is dedicated to Valentin Felixovich Voyno-Yasenetsky whose ordained name was Luke the Surgeon of Simferopol. He was a Bishop for all Crimea and at the same

time a famous surgeon. His most important work in medicine is [\*Sketches of Purulent Surgery\*](#) (1934). This is still a reference book and a manual for surgeons. As a noticeable religious figure, he was subjected to political repressions during the Soviet era and spent 11 years in internal exile. Luke was born into a family of faithful Catholic parents. His relics are buried in this church and they continue to work countless miracles in Crimea and in many other Orthodox churches around the world. He is beloved and celebrated worldwide.



This church in Simferopol is very ornate. All the walls inside and outside are laid out with images taken from the Bible and are laid out in mosaic following the Byzantine style. We know from history that Russia was the last conquest of the Byzantine art. The initiation of the Russian people in the art and religion of Byzantium began before 1000, when the Prince of Kiev Vladimir “the Saint” became first Russian Christian in 989. To get rid of the Russian threat, the Byzantine emperors Basil and Constantine gave Vladimir their sister Anna in marriage and in turn Vladimir had to convert to Christianity. For this reason the Russian church is still Orthodox, and their customs, alphabet and art have a strong Byzantine influence. Therefore, many churches are laid out in the same mosaics, and John and I witnessed how this mosaic is laid out during one of our visits.

A young man was layering one of the outside walls in the church with the image of Prophet Elijah. Firstly, he applied a thin layer of coating of cement or stucco to the wall. Then, while the surface was still moist, he created the image (either from a professional drawing or a picture) by meticulously inserting small pieces of ceramics and glass, some as small as less than one centimetre. He had the pieces in sacks each containing a separate colour, and it was real artistry seeing him choose the size and colour of each piece and where he put it. At that time Crimea was still Ukrainian and he told me that they had difficulty in producing these mosaic pieces in the country, so they had to be imported from Turkey.

I managed to take a few photos which do not really show the beauty and vibrancy of the colours. I took a photo of the front of the church, of the man in the process of laying mosaics, and one of the insides which was a special room for christening with a large baptismal bowl. All the room was ornate by these mosaics.

I do not know when I will have a chance again to go to Crimea, as I have no relatives left there. But we still have our friends and the graves of my ancestors.

*Natasha Reid*

## **On Diversity and Eldership**

Every so often, when I listen to the radio, someone comes on to complain that there aren't enough people from X, Y or Z populations in The Law/The Theatre/The English Tiddleywinks team, or whatever. The questions I am always burning to ask, are, 'Well – how many are there? And how many *should* there be? And why?', but they never seem to get explored. I am sure that quite profound issues underlie these anomalies, but the discussion never seems to focus on how to get them fixed, but only on how to correct, quickly, the immediate visible consequences.

And in KURC we have been told that we have under-representations in the Eldership.

Now, we hear St Paul, in Galatians 3:28 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), declaring that:

***There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.***

We read it from the lectern, we declaim it from the pulpit. And I believe it. So why, having said this, are we apparently so exercised about having to appoint Elders on the basis of their being Jewish, or Greek, or slaves, or masters, or male, or female, or..., or...

This sounds uncomfortably like a call to act before we have understood the problem. It does not feel like the working out in everyday life of our core Christian beliefs about each other. We should be very cautious about how we pursue this.

I think we need to ask ourselves why so many good people from the congregation turn down invitations to serve, and, secondarily, why so few 'Greeks' are nominated by their fellows (who know them). I'm sure the congregation wouldn't turn them down.

When someone is elected to the Eldership it is vital that they can carry the conviction, in their minds and hearts, that they have a 'constituency' in the church. This constituency has observed them, and feels that their voice/views/ways of working deserve to have a place at that Elders' Meeting. It's not easy at times to keep one's head above water in these meetings, and, without this conviction, too easy to sink.

Feeling that you are just a 'diversity hire' will not help.

(And tell me, why are middle-aged white males so woefully under-represented in the Olympic men's 100 m final?)

**John Watts**

*[Some persuasive arguments from John, although his article does not deal with the question of perception. Would under-represented minorities in the congregation feel disadvantaged if the eldership's diversity failed to develop with that of the membership as a whole? However, it's clearly highly desirable to avoid tokenism, so that people joining the eldership can feel confident that they are there for what they can contribute as much as for who they are. Ed]*

## Be encouraged!

Churches Together Kingston have been providing boxes of food to vulnerable and housebound people and to homeless people currently housed in a hotel. Each weekday a team of six or seven volunteers led by Paul Pickhaver from Dox Deo Community Church, pack essential foods like rice, pasta, soup, cereal, milk, tea, coffee, canned meat and fish products which are then delivered by a team of twenty or so car drivers. Based at Tolworth United Reformed Church it's well organised and amazingly every day supermarkets and individuals leave enough stock to keep the flow moving. Some days there are additional treats of



fresh vegetables, bread and fruit. Very little food is wasted and special diets are catered for. A leaflet is enclosed in each box with a greeting and some comforting bible verses. In addition over 6000 freezer meals have been delivered and hundreds of items of baby foods and equipment.

**Sue Shaw**

## Ken Cannon

*Thank you to Lisa Thefaut, Ken's daughter, who shared with Church News the following memories of her father.*



It is with great sadness that the family of Edward (Ken) Cannon announce his death last month. Ken was an active member of the church from the 1940s when he joined the Boys Brigade where he made many lifelong friends. He later joined the Youth Fellowship, making many more friends and meeting his wife, Susan. They were married at the church in 1961. He became a keen member of the Tabard Players, of which he was chairman for 10 years in the 60s and 70s, and as their four children were born, they too attended Sunday School and many church events. Ken took part in several musicals which he very greatly enjoyed. He also established the badminton club in 1978 and ran it until 1987. He ran a building company, EH Cannon and sons, and over the years he completed building projects for many church members.

Ken was an incredibly positive presence. He has been remembered by all who knew him as a friendly, kind and helpful man who loved a joke. There will be many families in the URC who will have their own fond memories of him.

Ken and Sue moved to Harberton in Devon in 1987 but maintained many friendships from Kingston. In Devon they formed many new interests and friendships. He leaves his much loved wife, Sue and four children, Simon, Matthew, Lisa and Ben and their families including 11 grandchildren.

## Back to nature in Kingston during lockdown (2)



**John Fisher / Teresa James**



## readings for June/July 2020

### FIRE IN THE BIBLE

#### God and fire

Sunday 31 May (Pentecost) Acts 2:1–13  
 Monday 1 June Exodus 3:1–10  
 Tuesday 2 June Exodus 13:17–22  
 Wednesday 3 June 2 Chronicles 7:1–11  
 Thursday 4 June Luke 3:15–18  
 Friday 5 June Leviticus 6:14–17  
 Saturday 6 June Luke 16:19–31

#### The power of fire

Sunday 7 June Deuteronomy 4:9–14  
 Monday 8 June Daniel 3:19–30  
 Tuesday 9 June 1 Kings 18:30–39  
 Wednesday 10 June Mark 14:66–72  
 Thursday 11 June James 3:1–6  
 Friday 12 June Acts 28:1–10  
 Saturday 13 June Isaiah 48:9–11

### THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (2)

#### Ask, see, knock

Sunday 14 June Matthew 7:7–12  
 Monday 15 June Matthew 7:13–14  
 Tuesday 16 June Matthew 7:15–20  
 Wednesday 17 June Matthew 7:21–23  
 Thursday 18 June Matthew 7:24–29  
 Friday 19 June Matthew 8:1–17  
 Saturday 20 June Matthew 8:18–22

#### The storm and the sword

Sunday 21 June Matthew 8:23–9:1  
 Monday 22 June Matthew 9:2–13  
 Tuesday 23 June Matthew 9:14–26  
 Wednesday 24 June Matthew 10:1–15  
 Thursday 25 June Matthew 10:16–33  
 Friday 26 June Matthew 10:34–42  
 Saturday 27 June Matthew 11:1–19

### 20:20 VISION

Sunday 28 June Genesis 1:1–5  
 Monday 29 June Psalm 11  
 Tuesday 30 June Exodus 24:9–18  
 Wednesday 1 July Habakkuk 1:1–14  
 Thursday 2 July Acts 9:1–19  
 Friday 3 July 1 Corinthians 13  
 Saturday 4 July 1 Timothy 6:11–21

### READINGS IN NUMBERS

#### Travelling through the wilderness

Sunday 5 July Numbers 4:4–16  
 Monday 6 July Numbers 6:22–27  
 Tuesday 7 July Numbers 9:1–14  
 Wednesday 8 July Numbers 9:15–23  
 Thursday 9 July Numbers 10:1–10  
 Friday 10 July Numbers 11:4–9  
 Saturday 11 July Numbers 11:10–17, 24–30

#### Testing times

Sunday 12 July Numbers 11:18–23, 31–34  
 Monday 13 July Numbers 12:1–15  
 Tuesday 14 July Numbers 13:1–3, 17–29  
 Wednesday 15 July Numbers 13:30–14:10a  
 Thursday 16 July Numbers 14:10b–24  
 Friday 17 July Numbers 20:1–13  
 Saturday 18 July Numbers 21:4–9

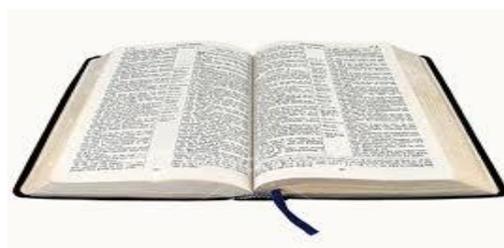
#### Balaam and his ass

Sunday 19 July Numbers 22:1–14  
 Monday 20 July Numbers 22:15–30  
 Tuesday 21 July Numbers 22:31–41  
 Wednesday 22 July Numbers 23:1–12  
 Thursday 23 July Numbers 23:13–30  
 Friday 24 July Numbers 24:1–14  
 Saturday 25 July Numbers 24:15–25

### RUNNING THE RACE: THE BIBLE AT THE OLYMPICS

#### Renewed in spirit

Sunday 26 July Exodus 19:1–9  
 Monday 27 July Deuteronomy 30:11–20  
 Tuesday 28 July Ezekiel 36:22–32  
 Wednesday 29 July Psalm 119:25–32  
 Thursday 30 July Mark 1:9–15  
 Friday 31 July 2 Timothy 4:1–8



## Regular activities (note that these are currently suspended)

**See page 2 for online events whilst the KURC building is temporarily closed.  
Check [kingstonurc.org](http://kingstonurc.org) regularly for updates.**

### Sunday:

15.30 Messy Church (monthly, but Sundays vary  
– for dates see Worship Diary on page 3)

### Monday:

10.00 Jolly Toddlers (during school terms)

### Tuesday:

19.30 Book Club: (third Tuesday monthly)  
Speak to Linda Austin or Katie Frost for location

### Wednesday:

10.00 Tots' Praise (during school terms)  
13.10 Lunchtime service  
14.00 & 19.30 Faith studies – check dates and frequency of short courses

### Thursday:

19.00 International Friendship Café  
19.30 Line Dancing

### Friday:

13.00 Friday prayers  
14.00 Ballroom and Latin American dancing with Lyn  
22.00 Street Pastors and all-night prayers (until 04.00)

### Saturday:

10.00 Stay & Play (third Saturday monthly)  
22.00 Street Pastors and all-night prayers (until 04.00)

### How to contribute to *Church News*:

Contributions on matters of reflection and opinion as well as reports of activities are welcome. Copy for **Church News** must reach the editor, *preferably by email*, no later than midday on the **second Sunday of the month**.

**The next copy deadline is 12 noon on Sunday 12 July; editor: Jean Thompson**

**FINANCIAL DONATIONS** may be made to the church in a number of ways, including via our *Virgin moneygiving* page, accessible via our website at [www.kingstonurc.org](http://www.kingstonurc.org). You can also pay directly into our bank account: sort code 20-46-76, account number 33 05 49 42. If you would like more information on giving to KURC, please ask any elder.

**Kingston United Reformed Church** is a member of the **Local Ecumenical Project** in Kingston Town Centre with its partner, **All Saints Parish Church** in the Market Place. The town centre ministers meet regularly.

We are a part of **Churches Together in Kingston**.

Kingston URC is also affiliated with the **Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)**  
And the **Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK)**

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**You can keep in touch with worship and activities at our church through our website: [www.kingstonurc.org](http://www.kingstonurc.org). You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.**

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see inside back cover

## Kingston United Reformed Church - information

A warm invitation is given to all who read this magazine  
to come and share in our services and activities

**++ (Note that the KURC building is temporarily closed. See page 2) ++**

**The Sanctuary** is also open for private prayer, with access via the Foyer.

**Our Foyer** is normally open every weekday and Saturday from 11.00 until 14.00 for coffee and tea.

**Need to talk to someone about a problem or concern?** There is sometimes a designated listener available in the Foyer; if not, please speak to the coffee server or contact Lesley Charlton.

### Our Sunday services

**10.00 – Traditional Worship**  
(with communion first Sunday monthly)

**11.30 – All Age Worship**  
(with communion on the last Sunday monthly)

**18.30 – Reflective Worship**  
(with communion on the third Sunday monthly)

On the **second Sunday** of each month  
a **combined service at 10.30**  
replaces the 10.00 and 11.30 services

**Tea and coffee** are served  
between the 10.00 and 11.30 services,  
before the 10.30 service on the second  
Sunday, and after the 18.30 service

During the 10.00, 10.30 and 11.30  
services there are **group activities for  
children** of all ages. Visiting children  
are welcome to join them

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**Facilities Assistant**  
Gaffar Zarei

**Operations Assistant:**  
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