



**BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH**  
High Road South Benfleet SS7 5LH

# Monthly Newsletter

**FREE**

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Visit the Church Website at [www.benfleethmethodist.org.uk](http://www.benfleethmethodist.org.uk)

**MAY 2020**

Dear Friends

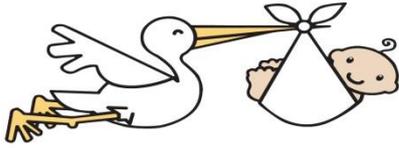
In the last few weeks due to Covid-19, we have been in self-isolation or shielding and will probably need to continue to do so in the weeks to come. Our church continues to be closed for all services, coffee mornings, lunches and group meetings for the foreseeable future but rest assured you will be notified as soon as we are able to return to something like 'normal'.

At this time as a church family we need to look after one another; and in order to be able to do this in the current situation, it is hoped that any of us needing help while in self-isolation will contact any one of the Stewards to let them know they are doing this and for what reason. The Stewards will liaise with other members of our church family in order to ensure that anyone in self-isolation is given the appropriate and necessary support they need during this time in order to sustain themselves throughout their isolation.

If any of our church family become aware of friends or neighbours in the local community that might similarly need help or assistance during this time please also let the Stewards have their details and we will endeavour to offer them help either directly or through others that we are aware of who have volunteered to provide help when and where necessary.

It is likely that the general life of our church will continue to be disrupted to some degree in the coming weeks and in this we will be guided not only by governmental advice or instruction but also by local considerations.

In the meantime keep safe and well and may God bless us all.



**IT'S A BOY!**

Sophie and Tom Neale are very pleased to announce the arrival of *George Thomas James* born on 28 March weighing in at a healthy 6lb 6oz! We would like to thank everyone for all their cards, gifts and kind wishes received over the last few weeks. Hopefully it won't be too long before everyone can meet *George* at a coffee morning and/or after Church on a Sunday morning.



During this difficult time when the vast majority of us are cooped up in our own homes unable to physically meet up with family and friends there are, of course, ways which allow us to do so virtually! In order that we, as a church, can remain active throughout the period that the church is physically required to be closed we have signed up to Zoom which enables us to have as many meetings as we like for up to 100 participants at any one time and with no time limit for the duration of any such meetings. At the time of writing we are holding the following regular meetings -

#### Church services

- every Sunday at 11am. Participants are able to join these services from 10.30am to allow time for a chat with other participants. The services themselves are expected to run for about 40 minutes after which there is a further opportunity for a chat before logging out.

#### Coffee mornings

- every Monday, Thursday and Saturday we are holding 'coffee mornings' from 10am until 12 noon and participants can 'pop' in and out at any time during these 2 hour sessions to sit and chat with others.

Our Minister, Rev Chris Sandy, is the designated subscription holder for the Zoom account and as such he obtains a link and password for each of these meetings and the links are/can be emailed to anyone that might be interested and they can then join in any of the meetings that they might wish to. To be able to join in any of these Zoom meetings you need to have a computer, a laptop, an iPad or iPhone/Smartphone, and the fact that you are receiving this Newsletter by email means you are likely to have the required equipment. To log into a meeting itself is a relatively simple matter. You just need to click on the link sent to you (but write down the password before you do this unless you have a good memory!) This will take you to the Zoom page for the meeting. Click on 'join with video' and then just wait a few seconds until you are admitted. Once admitted you will need to find and click on the microphone icon in order to be heard. The position of this icon on your screen depends on what equipment you have. That's it. Enjoy!

#### YouTube

Most of us are able to access YouTube (and on Freesat it can be viewed on the TV from the 'on demand' screen) and just in case you may be unaware, there are some very good shows and programmes available. With theatres being closed, some previously filmed shows are being screened free on YouTube. Every Thursday a different Andrew Lloyd Webber musical

is being screened and is then available for 2 or 3 days and The National Theatre are also screening productions - but there's a lot more.

### Benfleet Community Helpers

This group has been set up to help anyone needing assistance in the Benfleet/Thundersley area with deliveries of food and other necessities. They have a 24/7 helpline - 07487 769404. If there is no reply leave a message and someone will return the call. If you have Facebook you will find them under the above name. The drop off point for any donations, and the hub from which deliveries are made, is Penn UK 15-17 Kents Hill Road and this part of the operation is co-ordinated by Mark Penn (also to be found on Facebook). If you know of anyone that needs help and you are unable to provide it yourself please make BCH aware and they will help.

### CAVS (Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services)

CAVS are also there to provide similar help and assistance and their hotline phone number is 01268 214000 - email [wellness@cavsorg.uk](mailto:wellness@cavsorg.uk), however, they operate only 9am-5pm Monday-Friday.



LOOKING AFTER  
ONE ANOTHER

During this difficult time it is planned that all Class Leaders will endeavour to contact those members in their classes by telephone or e-mail once or twice weekly in order to ensure that those who are self-isolating have everything they need. If anyone at any time needs help in any way, whether self-isolating or not, please do not hesitate to contact the Minister, Rev Chris Sandy, on telephone number 01268 793313, e-mail [christopher.sandy@methodist.org.uk](mailto:christopher.sandy@methodist.org.uk) or one of the Stewards whose names, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses you will find on page 7 of this newsletter, so that appropriate help can be arranged.

Our Church also has a Facebook page where the Newsletters could be posted. We will look into this. If you do not have Facebook it is worth considering signing up to it. Used in the right way it can be an excellent tool for communication between those of us already on it and for local information on its various local community sites. There are also local sites that have very recently been set up specifically to offer help and assistance to anyone needing it during this crisis.



Birthday wishes this month go to:  
Stella Holden (11<sup>th</sup>); Rosalind Klass (14<sup>th</sup>); Rona Spain (16<sup>th</sup>);  
Rosemarie Francis (29<sup>th</sup>); Lin Wicken (30<sup>th</sup>); Hugh Tucker (30<sup>th</sup>)  
A very happy birthday to you all

## **SUNDAY OFFERINGS**

During the time of lock-down when our “actual” church services have not been taking place we have obviously suffered from a fall in income from those who normally put their Sunday Offerings through the envelope scheme or ‘cash in the plate’. Hopefully when we get back up and running again those envelopes will all be handed in. We are fortunate insofar as over 70% of our Sunday offerings are paid by standing orders, so that has continued.

With the closure of bank branches – we just have half a TSB in South Benfleet now – cash is becoming a problem to bank. Whether we like it or not, we are in an electronic banking age and it would be very good if more of our members and friends who contribute to the Church funds would do so using standing orders. If you are able to do this, please have a word with either Val Ryall or Richard Reeves who have the relevant forms.

Which leads into Gift Aid: If you are supporting the church and you are a taxpayer then by Gift Aiding your donations the Church collects an extra 25p for every £1 given, and it doesn’t cost you anything. The 2019/20 Gift Aid Claim has just gone in and we will be getting back just under £10,000 – a significant part of our Church income.

Thank you to everyone who supports us financially, not just through the Sunday offerings but through the many fund raising events and the other good causes that we as a Church support.

**Richard Reeves**  
**Finance Committee Chairman**

## **HALLELUJAH CHORUS IN ISOLATION**

You will probably/possibly know that I sing with the Royal Choral Society and have done for nearly 40 years. For the past 144 years the Royal Choral Society has performed The Messiah at the Royal Albert Hall on Good Friday afternoon, apart from two years during the war.

So, we decided to form a virtual choir and some 80 singers, plus our accompanist and music director all videoed themselves in their own homes singing their own line from the Hallelujah Chorus and then working with the Royal Albert Hall we launched a video at the exact time we would have been singing it in a live performance.

Go on line to **Royal Choral Society Hallelujah Chorus in Isolation** and watch it – it is glorious and will cheer your spirits hugely. Please feel free to send this on to anyone else. As I write this on Easter Bank Holiday Monday we have already had over **200,000** people go on to the website and watch the video, and the number will carry on rising. Our traditional Hallelujah Chorus on YouTube has received 7.5 million hits so far over several years, and there is also a new one from The Messiah – Worthy is the Lamb and the Amen Chorus. If you feel you need some reassurance and the arms of comfort and support, go on to YouTube and watch all of these.

**Richard Reeves**



DESERT ISLAND DISCS  
By Peter Wicken

DESERT ISLAND DISCS COMES TO BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH!

*Our thanks go to Peter Wicken for his Interesting Desert Island Discs that he has shared with us this month. Now, more than ever, we can only dream about visiting other countries and islands, so it seemed to be the right thing to do to keep including this item in our Newsletter! I will be asking a few more people to contribute, if you wouldn't mind, to keep this article going. Obviously it is not as easy as actually asking and persuading someone face to face. I am hoping that people will be willing to help out. My thanks in anticipation. Ruth x*

**1. Crown Imperial by William Walton**

He composed it for the Coronation of Edward VII but didn't use it until the Coronation of George VI. A rousing piece.

**2. 'There's no business like show business' Sung by Ethel Merman and written by Irving Berlin**

This was a popular musical for stage and later film in the 50's. Ethel Merman gave it her all, it was made for her.

**3. Polonaise in A Major - Chopin**

I must have the recording by Jose Iturbi as I met him with my parents when he was in concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

**4. 'Some Enchanted Evening' from the musical 'South Pacific' written by Rodgers and Hammerstein.**

This was one of the first films Lin and I saw together.

**5. Pomp and Circumstance March, No. 4 by Elgar**

Stirring stuff to remind me of home.

**6. Soundtrack from the film 'The Big Country' by Jerome Moross**

Starring Gregory Peck and Carroll Baker about family life in the American Mid-west.

**7. 'Comedy Tonight' from the musical 'A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum' by Stephen Sondheim and sung by Frankie Howard.**

A catchy song with really clever words.

**8. The English folk song Suite by Ralph Vaughan Williams**

To remind me of songs sung while at Junior School.

**Favourite Book**

Treasure Island – Robert Louis Stephenson. I remember reading this book in my teens and I was Jim Hawkins!

**Favourite film**

I haven't really got a favourite, as I have seen so many, but 'The Cat and the Canary' always sticks in my mind and Bob Hope made me laugh out loud.

**Favourite hymn**

'Lord the light of your love is shining' by Graham Kendrick. I first heard it twenty six years ago when my youngest daughter chose it for one of the hymns at her wedding.

**Favourite Bible Passage**

Matthew 18 v. 20

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst". These words are written under a lovely picture in the Bible my parents bought me when I was eight and now I understand them.

**Luxury Item**

Would have to be a 4x4 to enable me to drive around the ready-made tracks on the island and of course an unlimited supply of petrol!

**Past Desert Island Disc participants**

**2019** Feb – Ruth Dorrington, Mar – Shelagh Stokes, Apr– Doreen Bartlett, May – Vernon Murray, June – Diane Norton, July – John Stokes, Aug – Susan Downer, Sept – Richard Reeves, Oct – Christine Horton, Nov – Martine Stemerick and Dec – Julie Turner

**2020** Feb – Joan Simpson, Mar – Janice Gray, Apr – Rosemarie Francis

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**NEW CHURCH WEBSITE**

Our new website is now up and running so please go on to it and see what you think. Any comments or suggestions should be addressed to Vernon, Marilyn, Richard or Chris.

We also need a couple of volunteers:

1. We show the Church telephone number and ideally we would like someone who would agree to have any calls re-directed to their home phone line so that if there is anything urgent they can be referred to one of the stewards or the minister. It doesn't cost anything to the person who has the diverted call, but would provide a useful contact point for anyone who does call the Church. This "job" would suit someone who is largely home-based.
2. We have an email address for the Church [benfleetmethodistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:benfleetmethodistchurch@gmail.com) – and we need either one volunteer or a couple of people to be responsible for looking at this address on a regular basis and forwarding incoming emails to the relevant person within the Church. It is possible to have this address added to your own email system so you can do this from the comfort of your own home, or you can access the details through the Church laptop.

Volunteers for either role please contact Richard Reeves [reeves221@btinternet.com](mailto:reeves221@btinternet.com)



Meg and Linzi and all the family would like to thank everybody for their prayers and support. Meg's son Ian has been diagnosed with Covid-19 and is in intensive care in an induced coma and on a ventilator. Ian has recently been transferred from Southend Hospital to Broomfield Hospital and whilst he is still on a ventilator in intensive care he appears to be stabilising. We ask for your prayers for Ian, Meg and family at this uncertain and worrying time. Let us also remember our families, friends, church families and front-line services in our daily prayers. May God be with us all and guide us safely through this extremely difficult time. Amen.

### WHITECHAPEL MISSION UPDATE

We had been scheduled to send teams to the Mission for their Breakfast Challenge on 19<sup>th</sup> April but of course that turned out not to be possible. Some time ago before any official lockdown the Mission had taken the decision to postpone all volunteering activities and to run the Mission only with their permanent staff.

The Mission has been, and continues to be, open every day. With everything else being closed there is nowhere else for the guests to be able to get anything to eat so, in addition to providing breakfasts, the Mission is also providing a small packed lunch. As there is nowhere else the Mission is also seeing more guests than normal. The guests would usually pay a nominal charge for their breakfast (70p for a full English!) as it not only helps with the costs but gives the guests a sense of self-worth; but for the time being, with a limited staff of only 5, the meals are free. In normal times the guests are allowed in at 6am and are allowed to remain in the day centre until 11am with breakfast being served between 8 and 10am; but in order to keep everyone, guests and staff, as safe as possible, guests are now allowed in only to eat their breakfast and then to leave immediately along with their packed lunch. In this way the day centre is not getting full at any time and the guests are able to practice social distancing while eating breakfast.

Amazingly, at the time of this note, not one single guest (or staff member) of the Mission has developed Covid-19. Considering the lifestyle they lead this is perhaps a minor miracle!

John Stokes

## UPDATE ON NTUNUNGWE SCHOOL, ZIMBABWE

### Some Random pictures taken at Ntunungwe School in the past couple of weeks



1] The first picture shows some of the Mothers who come daily to cook lunch for all the Classes. Mr V. Moyo is helping them stamp the maize pips to make mealie meal.

2] The second picture shows the huge pot of beans simmering away. The parents are asked for money to buy the beans and oil and the maize is supplied by the government. In the background is the derelict kitchen which hopefully will be refurbished shortly.

3] The third picture shows the beautiful classroom built with the many donations from Rev. Martine Stemerick and her very generous hard working donors. This classroom, together with the office in the next picture, are potentials for additional solar power through kind funds from Gt. St. Mary's Church. These 2 rooms are already wired but the power from the national grid failed more than a year ago.

4] The lights went on one of 2 classrooms. Oh what excitement! This is a group of Grade 7 students. You can see the florescent light is on. Magic! There are 2 Grade 7 classes this year.

5] Our electrician, Derrick Abel, in the power house of the installed solar panels explaining to some of the staff how the system works and how to charge their cell phones and iPads. More magic!

### **DEAR FRIENDS OF NTUNUNGWE SCHOOL**

Schools throughout the country closed 2 weeks ago due to the Coronavirus pandemic. What an incredible time to be alive! We are at present in lockdown for the next 21 days as is much of the rest of the world. I wonder if things as we know them will ever be quite the same again. This has been a very bitter sweet term. We had the tragic untimely passing of Mr B. Moyo one of our senior teachers and an incredible member of the teaching staff at the School. He was in fact an Old Boy of Ntunungwe School.

The exciting part of the term came with the installation of a second 5000 litre water tank donated by the Benfleet Methodist Church congregation. The tank is now up and will hopefully fill before the rainy season ends. Our builder, Mr Malalazi was called in to erect the guttering off the roof to the tank for the rain water.

Mike Lander our Financial Director has done a sterling job of finding the right electrician to install the much anticipated solar panels in 2 of the classrooms with the money collected from Great Saint Mary's Harvest Festival collection. We thank the congregation for their very generous support and my dear daughter-in-law, Lenore, for her presentation on the School and Abigail Harris for delivering the money to us. Great Saint Mary's have since offered to pay to extend the solar lighting to the office and the new classroom built some years back with the generosity of Rev Martine Stemerick and her amazing congregations. The lights going on has been such an incredible boost to the teachers' morale and could not have happened at a better time. Thank you is just not enough to let you know what it means to all those people in the dark! Sadly the second phase of the solar installation will have to wait until schools reopen. The Chairman of the School Board, Mr Nkomo, is difficult to contact and he is going to need some manpower to dig a trench for an electrical cable for the second phase of the lighting.

On my last visit to school I was told by my friend the Deputy Head, Imbizo Ndlovu, that he has been transferred to some remote school on the Botswana border. Mr Ndlovu has recently graduated with his Bachelor of Education degree and it is probably time for him to proceed with his career but the timing is wrong and the school just too remote. He has been at Ntunungwe School for 23 years! He is an amazing man and I shall miss him as will the School and the Community!

Thanks to Rev Martine Stemerick and her congregation we have been able to feed our very hungry Pupils ePap on a daily basis. There are 65 children on the scheme who have been fed daily at 10 o'clock break time. Mrs Maposa, who is a magic lady and such an excellent pre-school teacher, is as always in charge of the scheme. With the protracted closure of the school I am hoping the late rains have produced a few meagre crops and that those children are not too hungry at the moment. Our border with South Africa is closed at present so the Families working there are unable to send any food home. Mealie meal is also difficult to buy and very expensive. The Ministry of Education did make some maize available and the parents have supplied the beans and cooking oil which has allowed for more children to get a daily lunch time meal. There is a picture at the beginning of the newsletter showing the beans bubbling away in the huge 3-legged pot next to a closed pot for the mealie meal porridge. The maize pips have to be pounded into a powder to make the mealie meal.

The kitchen is in a sorry state as the roof was blown off in a storm. The structure was poorly built in the first place. I have taken down some poles from the indigenous hard wood Mangwe trees so that the roof can be put back in place. We hope Mr Malalazi can right it all.

\*May we wish you all a very Blessed Easter. It's going to be different this year but it comes with the hope that our World is healing and that the scourge will pass and it will emerge a better place for us all.

Thank you is just not enough to thank you all for all the good that has happened at our little School this term. You may never know quite how grateful we are for the help you provide. With our love and hope for you all to keep safe and well.

**The Staff, Pupils, Parents, the Ntunungwe Community and Gill**

**From Mike Lander – Untunungwe School, Zimbabwe**

Dear all

Let us hope we can continue sooner than later. Gill always at the heart of things. A great job as usual and deserving thanks from all the school and everyone involved.

Financial Director?? Only a pleasure to help where I can.

\*A Blessed Easter with prayers and God’s blessing to all at this difficult time.

As ever as usual with grateful thanks. **Mike**

(\*This update was received after the publication of the April Newsletter. Ed)

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**.....and a little quiz to tease your brain. All the answers are London Underground Stations. Answers will be given in the June Newsletter.**

1. Sewed a face cover.....
2. Ranger’s home.....
3. Moose road.....
4. University big top.....
5. 007 road.....
6. Anyone for tennis? .....
7. Deepest, darkest Peruvian.....
8. Big gun road.....
9. Not amused monarch.....
10. Mallet-maker.....
11. Citrus cottage.....
12. Forest road.....
13. Able plastic doll.....
14. Nobleman’s captured.....
15. Bigger than big.....
16. Angry monarch.....
17. Red rose entrance.....
18. Heavenly host.....
19. Cricketer’s ellipsis.....
20. Pork applause.....
21. Nelly’s palace.....
22. I was defeated.....
23. Falling down.....
24. Simpsonville.....
25. Wealthy hill.....
26. Lining up for flowers.....

- 27. Rooster's beer.....
- 28. Make porky envious.....
- 29. Road where rabbits live.....
- 30. Patella's den.....

The **June** edition of our Newsletter will be available by **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May**.  
 All material should be with the Editor by **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May**, please.  
 Copy can be left in the letter rack or e-mailed to [daisy.osborne66@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:daisy.osborne66@tiscali.co.uk) .  
 Remember that the Newsletter can be e-mailed to you so that you have your copy earlier than its general availability. Please let the Editor have your e-mail address and leave the rest to us.

**Our current Church Stewards are:**

Vernon Murray	07850 673478	<a href="mailto:vernon.murray@charlesderby.com">vernon.murray@charlesderby.com</a>
John Stokes	01268 750532	<a href="mailto:johnstokes660@yahoo.com">johnstokes660@yahoo.com</a>
Daisy Humphreys	01268 565452	<a href="mailto:daisy.osborne66@tiscali.co.uk">daisy.osborne66@tiscali.co.uk</a>
Michael Otchere	07950 955790	<a href="mailto:michaelotchere22@outlook.com">michaelotchere22@outlook.com</a>
Peter Wicken	01268 964906	<a href="mailto:linwicken@gmail.com">linwicken@gmail.com</a>
Marie Howard	07753 609158	<a href="mailto:mariejessica@me.com">mariejessica@me.com</a>
Rosalind Klass	07748 323832	<a href="mailto:rosalindk@healthandsafetyclick.net">rosalindk@healthandsafetyclick.net</a>
Kike Fadiya	07545 268313	<a href="mailto:kikefadiya@yahoo.com">kikefadiya@yahoo.com</a>

and can be contacted in the absence of the Minister

There are three telephone lines at the Church and the numbers are –  
 The Church Office (although it is not always manned) (01268) 750571  
 Pre-School 07592 841634  
 First floor facilities (Counselling Suite) (01268) 792083

**Car Parking at  
Benfleet Methodist Church**

There are some spaces at the rear of the Church off Hall Farm Road, SS7 5JR.

There is also limited parking at the front of the Church primarily for 'blue badge' holders and those with mobility difficulties.

There is a large public car park off School Lane, SS7 1NS at the bottom of Essex Way. Parking is free in the evenings but daily charges apply from Monday to Sunday. Then it is a short walk along the High Road to the Church.

There are some parking bays in the High Road but watch the one hour restriction (except on Sundays). There is no street parking in the vicinity of the Church (Monday to Friday) between 11am and 12 noon.

**DATA PROTECTION**  
**TO COMPLY WITH CURRENT DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS WE WOULD ASK  
 THAT YOU PLEASE DISPOSE OF THIS NEWSLETTER RESPONSIBLY WHEN YOU  
 HAVE FINISHED WITH IT.**  
**THANK YOU.**