



BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH
High Road South Benfleet SS7 5LH

Monthly Newsletter

FREE

Minister: Rev Chris Sandy e-mail: christopher.sandy@methodist.org.uk
633 High Road, Benfleet, SS7 5SF. 01268 793313

Editor: Daisy Humphreys. 66 Appleton Road, Benfleet, SS75DE. (01268) 565452 e-mail daisy.osborne66@fiscalii.co.uk

Visit the Church Website at www.benfleetmethodist.org.uk

SEPTEMBER 2020

We give a warm welcome to visitors to our Church and we invite everyone to our Services of Worship. We ask visitors to introduce themselves to the Church Stewards. Unfortunately at this time we cannot allow social gatherings following the services for tea or coffee but hope that we will be able to reintroduce these before too long. Thank you for your understanding.

Worship: From the beginning of September please note that, in addition to the Sunday morning services that we have been holding since July, we will also be resuming the monthly Sunday early morning Communion service and the monthly Tuesday Light Worship service. Church Council decided at their last meeting that the monthly Sunday evening Communion service would be suspended over the winter months and consequently this service will not resume until next spring.

SEPTEMBER SERVICES

Sunday 6 th :	10.30am	-	Morning Service led by Mr Andy Thomas
Sunday 13 th :	8.30am	-	Holy Communion led by Rev Chris Sandy
	10.30am	-	Morning Service led by Worship Leaders
Tuesday 15 th :	12noon	-	Light Worship led by Worship Leaders
Sunday 20 th :	10.30am	-	Holy Communion led by Rev Chris Sandy
Sunday 27 th :	10.30am	-	Morning Service led by Rev Clifford Newman

Your Stewards for these services are:

6 th : John and Vernon	15 th : (Tuesday) 12noon – Daisy
13 th : 8.30am – Diane	20 th : Vernon and John
10.30am – Daisy and Kiki	27 th : Kiki and Daisy

A POLITE BUT IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE STEWARDS / CHURCH SERVICES

At the end of all church services please remember that you are required to leave the church and the building immediately. While we all want to say hello to everyone please do so outside in the fresh air. An obvious added benefit of doing so is that you can remove your facemasks but remember to maintain social distancing. Please give the Coronavirus the respect that it requires!

From our Minister...



September 2020

Grace and Peace to you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ

'A time of Waiting, Repentance and Restoration'

Christian friends, our communities, places of worship and the nation are struggling coming to terms with our new realities and contexts. Businesses have collapsed, families torn apart, mass unemployment, economy of our nation plunged into recession and much more are part of our new being.

As we prepare to open most of our churches for public worship, let us use this time of preparation as a period of waiting on God in prayers until we can see what will become of our world and identity. Jonah made for himself a shelter and sat under its shade and waited until he could see what would happen to the city (*Jonah 4:5*).

May we use the shelter of our homes to wait and repent for our world, our nation and ourselves seeking God's mercies and restoration; ***'But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me (Micah 7:7).'*** Paul the Apostle also reminded us in 1 Corinthians 15:51 that ***'we shall not all sleep, but we will all be changed.'*** Our tomorrow will be better than our yesterday because God is going to restore a new you; a new you with much hope and anticipation. Our fears and tears will be wiped away and the power of the Holy Spirit will renew our minds in the love of God and our neighbour, and there will be peace on earth.

Meet the Minister will take place on Wednesday 23rd September 2020 at 7.30pm on Zoom. Details will follow shortly.

Stay well and stay safe

Every blessing

Rev. Chris Sandy

Minister with Pastoral oversight for Benfleet, Thundersley and Trinity

Sylvia Elliott

Some friends at the Church may not have heard that Sylvia passed away on August 3rd. When this September Newsletter is published the funeral service for Sylvia will have already taken place. We remember her with love.

A fitting tribute to Sylvia will appear in the next Newsletter and we hope to have a Thanksgiving Service for her life when it is possible later in the year.

We remember Russ and the family at this sad and difficult time.

Sue and John Downer

OUR CHURCH IS OPEN FOR SERVICES

The months of July and August, with our church re-opened, were a great success and, if we may say so, well managed and we had a congregation of 30+ each week. Everybody felt confident and safe within the building and we have had very positive feedback. We are continuing to hold services throughout the month of September and ongoing as the situation will allow. **In line with current requirements the following guidelines must continue to be observed:**

- entry to and exit from the building will be via the front and rear automatic doors
- all internal doors will be open and remain open
- a one way system will operate for entry to and exit from the church itself
- entry will be via the Welcome Area
- exit will be via the single door to the corridor
- please aim to arrive 5/10 minutes before the commencement of the service ensuring that social distancing is maintained at all times
- seats in the church should be taken immediately on arrival
- the seating in the church has been set out to ensure social distancing
- provision has been made for couples/families to sit together
- seats should be occupied from the front first working back and a steward will direct you to your seat
- once the service is over please exit promptly starting with the front row with each successive row following at a safe distance

KINDLY NOTE

- for the safety of all, everyone is asked to wear a face mask/covering. Spare face masks will be available in case of need
- hand sanitizer will be available and should be used on entry to and exit from the church
- singing is not permitted during the service
- if available our organist will play music of their choice for a few minutes before and at the end of the service
- all music/videos will be provided through the overhead projection system
- no water or other refreshments will be available but anyone who wishes can bring their own bottled water but must take it away with them afterwards
- access will be restricted to the church and the disabled toilets at the front and rear
- it is important that you try not to be late. Anyone arriving late might have to sit in the Welcome Area to avoid compromising social distancing.

These services will be live streamed through the church's Facebook page for those unable, or would prefer not, to attend in person for the time being. This will require you to open a Facebook account of your own if you don't already have one. You are merely required to have this facility; there is no need for you to build up a profile or be otherwise active on Facebook if you prefer not to be; then all you need to do is click on the following link <https://www.facebook.com/715363898657469/posts> which will connect you.

We are aware that there is a sound issue on our live streamed services for those of you watching from home. However, this problem is solved by using the earphones that would have come with your Computer, iPad or iPhone (they are just like the earphones handed out on flights that offer in-flight entertainment). Plug them in and you will be able to both hear and watch our services.



Tuesday Private Prayer And Coffee Morning

We have now had a few weeks of Private Prayer on Tuesday mornings and recently started up having the Welcome Area open for tea and coffee. Although there have not been that many people coming to pray, for those who have it has been very worthwhile. By extending it to restarting our regular tea and coffee we have seen a good number of people coming along and this is proving to be a very worthwhile activity. It's all done within the rules of social distancing, but it's good to be sociable even if a bit distant.

Every week from 10am to 12 noon – just drop in!



Coffee Morning Saturday 12th September 10.00am – 12.00noon

This month's coffee morning will be in aid of **Macmillan Nurses** and will be hosted by Doreen Bartlett and Sarah Norton. The ladies will be serving filled rolls and home-made cake/s.

In order to raise funds for the Macmillan Nurses we would normally have a raffle. However, we can't do that now so it is hoped that those attending will make a separate donation to this very worthy charity.

If we are lucky with the weather the coffee morning will be held on the Church forecourt otherwise it will be in Wesley hall.



ZOOM COFFEE MORNINGS

Now that most people are out and about once more the demand for these virtual coffee mornings has dropped off and the sessions on Mondays and Saturdays are rarely attended by more than two or three people. Consequently, with effect from the beginning of September, it is our intention to close the Monday and Saturday sessions.

However, the coffee morning on Thursdays is better attended - probably down to Derek and Julie Turner's fun quiz so there are no plans to stop this session.

If you would like the Monday and Saturday sessions to continue please drop the Editor a line (daisy.osborne66@tiscali.co.uk) and if we feel there is sufficient demand, consideration will be given to resuming them.

WIVES' CLUB

Wives' Club will be returning on **Tuesday 8th September at 2pm** and there will be new measures in place. Face masks must be worn. Hand sanitisers must be used on entry and exit. There will be no refreshments yet and safe distancing must be observed. No hymns to be sung or hymn books used. We will not be able to pay subs on entry as usual, but we can discuss this. Tables and chairs must be cleaned after use. Look forward to seeing you all. ***Diane and Hazel 01268751216***

Tuesday 15th September – Light Worship at 12 noon



As a first small step to re-introducing lunches at the Church, from this month there will be a light lunch at 12.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month following the Light Worship. **However, for obvious reasons this cannot be on the scale that it was pre-virus and will therefore be limited to those attending the Light Worship.**

WESLEY PRE-SCHOOL

We are open Monday and Tuesday from 9am to 1pm and Wednesday to Friday from 9am to 3pm. The entrance is via the rear Car Park in Hall Farm Road. We are inspected and approved by Ofsted. More details and information can be obtained by telephoning 07592 841634 during opening hours.



Our friends at
LEIGH WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH
celebrated their 120th Anniversary in 2018
(mere children compared to Benfleet's 140+!)

A book has been prepared with the stories and recollections of many of the current and former members at Wesley and there are a couple of copies down at the Church which anyone can borrow and browse through.

For those who have been members at Benfleet for a long time there are quite a number of 'names from the past' and they will no doubt revive happy memories. Names like Wallace Mason, David Reed, Rev Maddox, the Gage family and, of course the Osborne and the Cotgrove families - all with links to us.

It's an interesting read and not too taxing but it shows just how much the "church" has meant to so many people over the years - and it still does!



DESERT ISLAND DISCS
By Val Ryall

DESERT ISLAND DISCS COMES TO BENFLEET METHODIST CHURCH!

'Not sure what people are going to make of my rather eclectic mix' – were Val's words to me. I replied that it really doesn't matter what anyone else thinks – it's your personal journey and that's all that matters! I'm sure you will agree with me. Thank you, Val. Enjoy! Ruth.

- 1. The Laughing Policeman - Charles Penrose**
Reminds me of Children's Favourites, and still makes me chuckle.
- 2. I Remember You - Frank Ifield**
First record I ever bought.
- 3. And I Love Her -The Beatles**
This is one of their most beautiful ballads
- 4. Rustle of Spring – Christian Sinding**
Reminds me of Mum, who used to play a version of this by 'ear'.
- 5. Life on Mars - Rick Wakeman**
A lovely piano rendition of the David Bowie hit.
- 6. The Leaves that are Green (turn to brown) - Simon and Garfunkel**
Takes me back to when I played and sang in a folk group.
- 7. More than Words - Extreme**
A wonderful acoustic love song from this heavy metal band. Lovely harmonies.
- 8. Widor's organ voluntary - Symphony no.5**
I do love a good organ piece, and this is the best!

Favourite Book - Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Favourite Bible passage/verse - Psalm 121

Luxury item - A clockwork radio.

At the very least I could keep up with the Archers!

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, April – Rosemarie Francis, May – Peter Wicken, June – Rob Gray, July – Stella Holden, August – Jackie Newman.

I DO NOT DO SICK!

By Covid-19 Survivor, Ian Parkyn

The last time that I had to take time off for illness was the beginning of the year 2000. Over the years I have been on time managing the jobs at hand. Yes my time travelling from Essex to West London was a bit of a trek, but I always managed even in snow to get to work. Colleagues would say why are you at work with a cold my answer would be “I do not do sick” Even with high blood pressure, a little over weight and developing diabetes type 2, I carried on.

2020 would be the year where I would eat those words. Corona virus was spreading across the world. My Company gave the instruction to work from home, so I gathered paperwork and my laptop in preparation for the weeks ahead. My first week was productive but I was starting to feel tired and wanting to sleep, by the Sunday I was spending more time asleep than awake, but self-denial “I do not do sick” I was sure I did not have Corona it was hay fever.

In my confusion I asked for a doctor’s appointment, which was conducted on the Tuesday 8/04/20 in the afternoon by phone. Without hesitation I was told by the doctor to hang up all dial 999. After hanging up my first aid training was put into action, I was now running on fear, bag packed, front door opened, sit down before you fall down.

A lovely lady paramedic came to the door in full PPE. My poor old dog was ejected into the back garden - alas that was the last time I would see her.

I was monitored, my temperature, blood pressure and oxygen levels and a quick conclusion. An ambulance was called with the warning of a suspected corona patient to be picked up. I had time to text my boys. I was being taken to Southend hospital with suspected corona. The ambulance duly arrived but the crew were not prepared with PPE, so the gentleman in me said that I would walk out to the ambulance. I could feel the eyes of the neighbours on me, the curtains were twitching. Nothing unusual there!

I have never been in the back of an ambulance before and travelling backwards is not my favourite way to travel. The sirens started to wail and the seriousness began to hit me. My thoughts were all over the place but I kept saying to myself keep calm all will be ok.

They wheeled me into the Covid admittance ward and I was transferred over to a bed. I thanked the paramedic and was now being looked after by a very young nurse and a doctor of Spanish origin. I was checked over and they confirmed that I had Covid and pneumonia and that they were going to prepare me to be put into a coma. I was at ease with this and said ok. Thank you.

I was asked for the next of kin contact details, I gave both my boys details and the nurse came back and told me that they had been informed of my predicament. My Spanish doctor and nurse stayed with me until the team of doctors, in what could only be describe as space suits, arrived. They checked that I understood what was going to happen to me. And I said “yes” and with a pause I said “thank you” and within a minute my world turned black.

The next few weeks were a mass of hallucinations. I was, from what I understand, in the coma for 15 days and in that time it was touch and go whether I would survive or not. The boys were told to prepare for the worst. I came to in this large long ward, I was in a daze and confused. I was now in Broomfield. My body felt like lead, barely able to move my legs and my left arm I could not move. I opened my mouth to speak, my mouth was moving but with very little audible sound, I had had a tracheotomy.

From my understanding I was being looked after by a private medical company, who had employed a number of nurses from abroad and also brought back retired nurses. Each shift change these nurses would introduce themselves and ask how I was doing. I would try and talk, but the foreign nurses would politely smile and I could tell that they did not understand a word I said. This was worse at

night, whatever I was after usually resulted in a bed pan turning up. On occasions they understood a few choice words that I unusually slipped in.

The nurses had divided themselves into two teams, the bedside nurses and the runners. The 'runners' job was to provide medication, sheets, towels, gowns, water and soap etc. They were not allowed to step over the line. They did not wear the full PPE. As the days progressed these restrictions were lightened but language barriers were still there.

I have very rarely got drunk in my life and that was mainly in my younger years if I did. But I can definitely say that I have never done drugs, so hallucinations were something new to me. All I can say is that my work colleagues have got a lot to answer for. I am not going into that for now. But I had very disturbing dreams as well. I do not know if I was aware of what was going on around me or not. I recall that there were three of us in a blackened room, side by side in arm chairs with a desk and lamp in front of us. Behind was a doctor who asked each one of us if we still wanted to go through with our decisions and each one of us replied yes. We were each given a lethal injection and the gentleman either side of me passed away but I would pass out but gradually gain consciousness and I was injected again but still would not die.

At Broomfield I seemed to be held there as they did not know how or what to do with me. They seemed to be experimenting with me, or were not qualified especially with physiotherapy. They lifted me from the hospital bed straight to a chair, which they had nicknamed the dentist's chair. They were expecting me to sit there for 2 hours; my head and my body were not use to being in a vertical position. The head was spinning straight away and within minutes my body was screaming out in pain every back muscle was agony. I only lasted 30 mins. I was meant to go in the chair each morning but the nurses seemed to forget, which at the time I was grateful for.

A glimmer of happiness: a doctor asked if I realised I had a big envelope behind me, apparently it had been there since I arrived at Broomfield. The envelope contained cards and get well wishes from my Cubs and Scouts. They had spent time drawing their cards and writing their 'get well' messages. These helped bring back my positive attitude.

The doctors came up to me on Friday 8th May: they told me I was being transferred back to Southend so that it would be easier for my family to see me. This was another mental torture on me as I did not get moved until the Wednesday. I was moved by Thames Ambulance (Cor! a glimpse of Home) I was pushed through a guard of honour of applauding nurses and doctors. Were they applauding me because they wanted to see the back of me or were they wishing me well for the next part of my journey? My thoughts were that there were some good people at the hospital but some people should not be in those jobs. Freedom for now.

I arrived at Southend Hospital, Rochford ward - the ward where my dad was put when he had a heart attack. In some ways this was comforting, as I knew my dad was looked after well. It was back to full PPE nursing and more paperwork was filled in. Even though it had been a few weeks since the start of the illness I was still hallucinating. I woke up in the night thinking I was in New York, panic, how did I get here? The ward was hot and stuffy and I found it difficult to breath. I pinched myself to remind myself that I was in Southend, A little bit disappointed.

The Physio team introduced themselves and they would be my friendly demons for the next few weeks putting me through agony, making me smile and most of all getting me back on my feet. They started sitting me on the edge of the bed and yes my head was spinning, they did this morning and afternoon for a couple of days. The next step was for me to stand up with assistance and then sit in a chair. They said that I should sit there as long as I could; my body started hurting around 45 mins. I asked to be put back to bed but they had to deal with another patient. My legs were dead and I could not stand up, so they ended up hoisting me back into the bed. Embarrassing.

I was reunited with my phone and wallet, worries about where they were, were all over. Luckily they had a charger for my phone. Yes, contact to the outside world. Learning to text one handed was a challenge but helped me focus, I was just grateful that I am right handed. I made contact with the

family, my boys and my brother and sister. Emotional. Caught up on Facebook. I was touched by the amount of people who were thinking and praying for me, all over the borough of Castle Point, Michigan, Christchurch New Zealand. I put a message out to my friends and the Scouting community to say I am alive and started getting messages back to 'Lucy'. I was confused. My son had put a message out that I should be called Lucy as I was so high. (He is disinherited again). Eventually I would keep in touch with all my Facebook Friends by doing daily blogs.

One of the nurses asked if I would like some fresh air and I was put into a wheelchair and wheeled into the ward that my dad had his bed and I just had a smile and thought of him. I was wheeled to the door and they checked on me. Now, no visitors were allowed under Covid rules but the nurse suggested that the family could come up to the fence and could see me. So I made arrangements for my sons at 1 o'clock, and my mum and sister half an hour later. The nurse came to collect me and took me to the door and at the fence I could see my sons, my sister but where was mum? They all greeted me and then I heard mum. Now my mum is five foot nothing and could not see above the fence but she managed to find a crack that she could peer through. All of her Christmases had come at once. She was delighted to see me.

I was eventually moved into that room and this is where my physical well-being and my voice coaching really started. I took my first steps, only five but it was a triumph as I thought I would never be walking again. Each day those steps would get further. The left arm was exercised and I gradually got movement in my lower left arm. I am still working on the upper part of the arm.

I was moved again to Shoplands ward which is on the seventh floor of the tower block (I do not think mum will be visiting me up here). I was put in a room all by myself to start off with. I asked if there was a radio that I could borrow. This kept my spirits up for the next few weeks and my update with the outside world. It also attracted the nurses as well they would come into the ward and write their notes. After a few days I was moved to the other side of the corridor where I would have company. The room overlooked the front of the hospital and every Thursday, you could hear the clapping, cheers and horns for the NHS Staff.

My walking progressed in Shoplands ward so much that I managed to escape out of the building and to the front of the hospital. OK, I had two of the Physio team with me but it was great to feel the sun on me and feel the breeze. They also got me climbing and descending the stairs. I was now independent with the removal of the catheter I was able to go to the toilet all by myself. Big boy now! Some nurses would still panic seeing me walk to the toilet.

Now, my problem throughout was feeding. It was food by tube. The food in the bag looked pretty much the same as how it came out. I was being fed via a tube that was shoved up my nose and I was attached to the bag from 12 to 16 hours a day. I was unattached for visits to the loo and for medication. The nurses to start off with would release me and reattach. Now on some occasions, one particular nurse (not naming them, but just to show you what a small world it is) is the daughter of one of my old school friends. She used to manage to tighten so tightly that they had to use mole grips to loosen. Now the tube had a habit of slipping out, it is not a pleasant experience having one of these inserted but let's say I became a bit of an expert with this. I had to have a peg inserted before they would release me from hospital. Yes it is a life saver but it is a pain feeding yourself overnight. With the tube removed my voice started to improve.

The day I left hospital was a tear jerker. I was determined that I would walk out of hospital. I had climbed a lot of mountains on my road to recovery with the help of Angels of the wards, Demons (sorry Therapists) and the doctors. I left the ward on my own two feet, with them applauding me. I was the first patient to leave fit enough to go home. Thank you Southend Hospital, Shoplands Ward.

Now a lot of people maybe thinking that I am over Covid 19. Far from it. I still have video support for physio therapy for my upper left arm and thankfully the pain has receded. I am still trying to sort out my voice. I am still talking in a strained husky voice. I walk to the shops roughly half a mile but have to sit down to get my breath back before shopping and my journey back home will result in a nap in the chair. Making the bed, tidying the house, washing up, cooking will all result in sleeping.

Nearly 4 months after I was first admitted into hospital, I am still not back to work, I have a tube in my stomach but I am beginning to eat; but there is the risk of me choking on the food still. I often get confused and have trouble thinking things through. I wake up in pain with my left shoulder, the arm feels like a lump of lead and unable to move a gear stick. So I'm unable to drive. I now have to rely on family and friends to get me to the hospital appointments and to pick up prescriptions. I am unable to work: thankfully I have a good understanding Management team.

I would not wish Covid on anybody. Protect yourself, wear a mask, keep your distance and wash your hands.

Thank you for your prayers
God Bless
Ian Parkyn

WHITECHAPEL MISSION

For many years now we have been collecting clothes for the Whitechapel Mission at the Church and they go into the blue wheelie-bin round the side of the church until that is full and then I drop them off at the Mission on one of my trips to or from London. This is normally every three weeks or so, but sometimes it can be almost every week. A lot of people know we do this and will drop stuff off during the coffee mornings (when we used to have them, and will again).

Most of what goes is anonymous insofar as I have no idea who the donor was but every so often it is from the family of someone who was connected with our Church and that is always a bit different. I did a "mission-run" very recently – the first since lockdown – and those items were from one of our ex-choristers whose partner had sadly died. It's a comfort to know that they are being used for a very good purpose and the people who get the clothing and use the towels, etc., are very grateful.

I saw some of the Mission staff – the usual crowd who recognise Benfleet Methodist and value greatly the link between us all. They were very cheerful as they always are and greet the teams who go up to do breakfasts as friends and fellow workers.

If anyone has anything for Whitechapel please bring it down on a Tuesday morning when we are open for Coffee or put it in the blue bin round the side of the Church. **Richard Reeves**



Please continue to pray for families, friends and the church family. Those who have been bereaved, those recovering from illness and surgery. Remember also to pray for ourselves. May the Lord guide us all safely through our worries, fears and concerns. Amen.

THE UNINVITED STRANGER

BY SUE BRADSHAW

(Provided by Val Ryall)

It seemed to come from nowhere, just appearing at our door.

This uninvited stranger, what had it come here for?
To take our normal life away? To make us run and hide?
To make us question everything? Is this why people died?

It started off just one or two, but seemed to spread so fast.

Invisible and frightening, like nothing from the past.
It steals upon you by surprise and suddenly you're struck.
Now was it something that you did, or was it just your luck?

We've yet to really understand the way it moves around,
And everyone is longing that a cure will soon be found.
And if you've had it once before, then will it come again?
And does it have a preference, for women or for men?

So far the only thing we're told, of this we can be sure,
If you don't want to catch it, don't step outside your door.
If you don't want to pass it on, make sure you wear a mask.
Don't touch, don't talk, don't smile, don't walk, just get on with your task.

And if you find that you succumb, what will the symptoms be?
And how will you react to them? That really is the key.
Cos that makes all the difference – how quickly it will spread.
For each of us must do our part – that's what the wise men said.

Now I suspect you're thinking this is all about today.
You're right of course, but actually I've got something else to say

For I believe when Jesus died, he left us something new.
And that's the Holy Spirit, which he gave to me and you.
For how could I compare the two? It surely isn't right.
They couldn't be more different. One's darkness, one is light.

The one we want to kill it or contain it if we can.
The other is a saviour to be passed from man to man.

So now I find myself rewriting verses one to five,
The Holy Spirit leading me and bringing it alive.

It seemed to come from nowhere, just rushing at their door.

This uninvited stranger, what had it gone there for?
To take away their sinful lives and be their earthly guide.
To answer all their questions and explain why Jesus died.

It all began at Pentecost, with fire from the sky.
And then they start to speak in tongues. The people wondered why.
It seemed to take them by surprise, they didn't understand.
Why had they been selected? This was not what they had planned.

We still don't really comprehend the way the Spirit goes.
What makes it move around the place, no one really knows.
The only way to be quite sure that you're not next in line,
Self-isolate and don't go out, don't give the Church your time.

And once you have it in you, will it always be around?
Who'll be the next to catch it, and where can it be found?
But if you want to pass it on, make sure your voice is heard.
You'll touch and talk, you'll smile and walk, and always share the word.

If you succumb to symptoms of the Spirit in your heart,
Just how will you react to him, and will you do your part?
Cos that makes all the difference – how quickly it will spread.
Go forth and tell the world of God, for that's what Jesus said.

+++++

Anna's Adventures

Hi Everyone

23rd July



I hope you are all well. It feels like a lot has happened in this month here in Lebanon. The coronavirus restrictions have been largely lifted but the general situation has become less stable here. This has meant moments of really fun

outings and meet ups with people I haven't seen in a long time (like my friend "Kay" pictured above), mixed with moments of anxiety over the situation. In the midst of this, I made two collages (pictured below) to process through how I felt about being here.



The one on the left shows how I felt about the situation and the one on the right shows what I felt God spoke into this. In the midst of feeling trapped by the instability and difficulties I felt God remind me of the verses in Jeremiah 17: 7-8 "But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream." So as you read the following know that I am safe in God's hands and digging my roots deep into his love for me.

The Situation in Lebanon



Covid 19 cases are now on the rise here - we're now at about 3000 total, but for most people covid is not their most pressing concern. The photo above is from a news report recently and it shows people's bare fridges. The economic situation here has worsened since my last newsletter. Many food items are now very

expensive and the Lebanese pound has lost about 80% of its value over the last 10 months, so many people are struggling to buy essentials. The following report from the BBC is a good summary of what's happening and why:

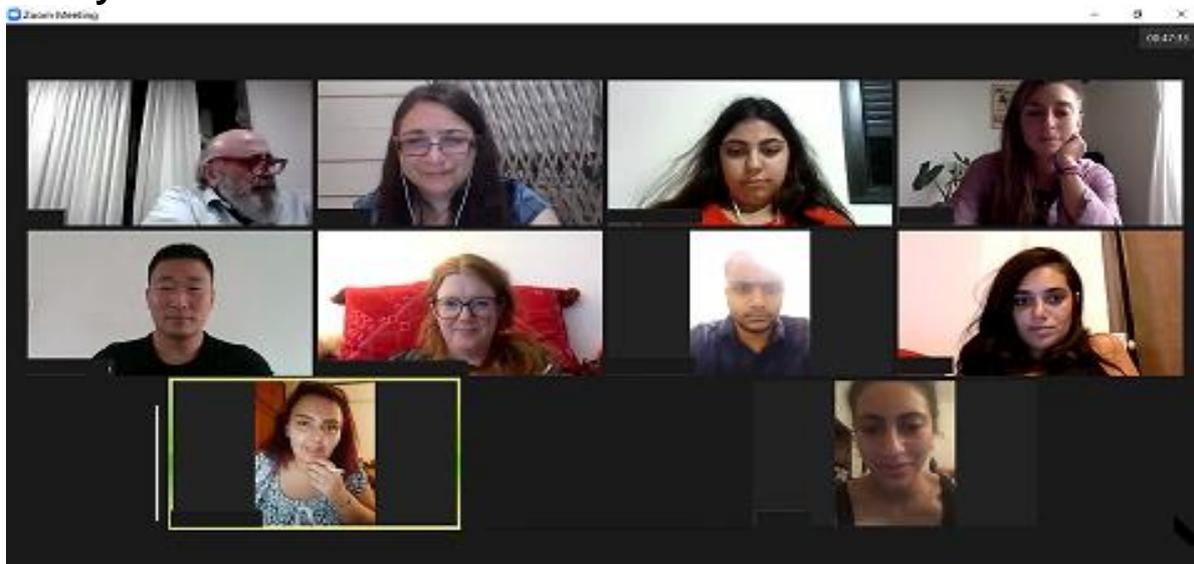
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53390108>

Electricity has also been severely rationed. We had a week or so where we were only getting about 2 hours of electricity from the government every day; which, even with our UPS battery system, often meant no electricity by the end of the day. This, however, is now improving.

Please pray for provision for those here who are most vulnerable, for wisdom for the leaders and for a good resolution to the crisis.

The exchange rate means that money wise for me things are OK, but I feel the weight of the situation and of people's troubles keenly. I would appreciate prayers for peace and for wisdom in navigating getting money into the country and in using it well.

Poetry News



Although lock-down restrictions have been mostly lifted, we're still not meeting for poetry-night in real life yet. I am continuing to enjoy sharing poetry with the group online and we are often joined by new people from different countries (the people in the photo joined us from 5 different countries). This is a poem that I shared a couple of weeks ago, that is a processing of how I feel about the situation and of the verses from Jeremiah that I mentioned above:

*We watched a storm surge in from the sea. It started with storm flies and the stillest possible air.
But before our eyes the tide grew high and the wind whipped the waves to a frenzy.
We counted seconds between the lightning and the thunder watching avidly as waves crashed down and the wind howled and the time between flash and boom grew shorter.*

*Until the rain hit and my Dad realised he was standing in the path of an ever approaching storm with his three small daughters.
And he bundled us into the car laughing and shrieking all safe feeling because he was there. And we were dry.
It hadn't occurred to us until the last second that the approaching storm could get us wet, not until it was so close the electricity crackled in the air.
And I'm back there watching the storm grow closer, the scent of sea in the salt filled air, filled with the sense that I'm right in the path of something wild advancing.
Something uncontrollable approaching only this time it feels like I am in the eye.
And the storm is encroaching from all sides and I feel the panic I felt in the split second between realising the storm could get us and being whisked into safety by my dad.
The panic in the face of a wild, untameable, unpredictable force, a sea that could surge or calm in due course. And as I cast around wildly for shelter, and see none, I begin to sink my roots down.
If I cannot flee I must stand. So I push roots down deep into love, deep into hope, deep into God.
Roots, wide as the breadth of my branches. Deep as their height.
For I've seen them. Those trees wind whipped and wild, battered and shaken, but still standing in the face of immovable, unstoppable forces.
Secured because they cling onto something more stable than they.
So I dig my roots in and get ready to sway. Sway but not topple. Sway but stay put.
Sway but ultimately survive by the skin of my roots.*

Seekers and Skeptics and John



Thanks so much for your prayers for John! There are people I know here who run a group called Seekers and Skeptics; they invite all kinds of people to study the word with them and to discuss philosophical questions. I've wanted John to come with me to this group for a while now; I thought the open, safe space to ask whatever questions he had would be really good for him. This month he finally started to come, and has now been three times (once without me!) We've had really good

chats about the topics we've discussed in the group, from forgiveness to the love of God. Please continue to pray for John.

New Heights



At New Heights this month we went back into the office for the first time since lockdown for a staff meeting. It was really encouraging. Ronnie our boss assured us that God is working even in these difficult times. He said that if you'd told him during the protests in Lebanon that things were about to get harder, he would have thought twice about managing New Heights through those events. However, as he has seen God's faithfulness in these difficult times, he says that now he feels; "if things are going to get harder, bring it on" because he has seen the faithfulness of God and knows that He will continue to be faithful. Please pray for Ronnie and all the New Heights leadership team.



We have had a few meetings in the office but are still largely working from home. Next week will be our last episode of the online Sunday School and so I have just finished my last day of filming clown videos with Fouad. Every week children from all over the Middle East sent us videos of themselves making crafts, singing songs and learning the bible verses from our episodes. This has really encouraged me.

Our focus for this month as New Heights is on running a virtual internship. This week, I have been running creativity and communication sessions on zoom for these interns, which has been great fun. Please pray for them as they work with us in our digital outreach programs.

Please also pray for New Heights as we put plans together for the future for both best case and worst case scenarios.

Arabic



This month I have been able to see some of my teachers in person again and we have even managed to hang out socially too. Nazira (pictured above) came to dinner with Mel and I at the weekend and a few weeks ago I went with one of my other teachers and some more of her students to the beach for her birthday. These women are my friends as well as my teachers. They are also some of the ones suffering most in this economic environment. Please pray for them (particularly Nazira who has had some health issues lately) and for me as I support them and learn from them.

My Arabic is coming along and I'm grateful to have been able to practice lots on all these social trips with my teachers and in the time spent filming at Fouad's house, chatting to his family in Arabic.

Thank-you

Thank-you for your continued support. It is just so reassuring in this time to know that I am not alone, that God is with me and that you are praying for me. Thank-you.

Love from Anna

+++++

Anna's Adventures Update

4th August

Hi Everyone

I thought I'd just send out an update after today's events in Beirut. The below is a link to a BBC article about the explosion that took place today:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-53656220>

Thank-you so much for all of your emails and messages. I am safe, praise God. The port where the explosion took place is about 6 miles from my house. I was at home and felt and heard the explosion - the ground shook, but my building was not damaged and I am fine.

Some people I know who live closer to the port had damage to their houses and minor injuries, but are fine. However the explosion was big and there were fatalities and casualties in Beirut. Please pray for all of the Lebanese who lost loved ones and for those who are injured and who lost their homes.

The explosion happened in a warehouse that contained confiscated explosives, but the cause of the fire which started the explosion is still unclear.

Lebanon was already in very difficult circumstances economically and politically and this is the last thing the country needed. Please pray that the God of hope would come and support and comfort people here and provide for those in need.

I would also appreciate prayers for wisdom and peace at this time.

Thanks so much for all of your support, I truly appreciate your thoughts and prayers.

Love Anna

CHURCH COUNCIL AND ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING UPDATE

We were unable to hold a Church Council meeting in March or the Annual Church Meeting in April. There would have been another Church Council in June and we would be planning to meet in September or October. We are looking into the latest guidance from the Methodist Church before deciding if we can meet at the Church or to hold a zoom meeting.

To keep everyone in touch with news and information from Benfleet Methodist Church we compiled a master list of email contacts including the Church Council, our Church Members, those on the Pastoral Role who are not Church Members and other contact lists. Daisy has emailed our Newsletter each month.

The Church Stewards and key people from the Management Committee and Property Committee arranged our closure and gradual re-opening in consultation with our Minister and in line with Government guidance. Zoom services were arranged. These continue for those who are unable to attend the Church services and now services are live streamed via Facebook.

There were no nominations for new appointments for Stewards or Church Council Members prior to the planned date for the ACM. As it stands the Stewards and Church Council appointments will continue. The only change which would have been put forward was that John Stokes took over as Coordinating Steward from Vernon Murray as at 1st June and I asked to stand down as Church Secretary. Although the ACM will not now take place we would like to publish the Annual Report. With all that has been going on since March, I'm sure that this was not a high priority and I received very few items. I am now contacting people with another chance to contribute.

In preparation for when the Church Council is able to meet again we would like to recruit a Church Secretary and to widen membership of the Church Council. Normally the Council meet three times a year and look at plans for future dates and events as well as hearing news from committees responsible for the Property, Finance and the Pastoral Care of the members and church groups. The Minister reports on his work in our church, in the Circuit and with other local churches.

Rob Gray



September Birthdays

Rosemarie Smith (12th); Rob Gray (26th); Doreen Sharman (26th);
Sue Downer (28th)

A very Happy Birthday to you all!

Our current Church Stewards are:

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

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.

The **October** edition of our Newsletter will be available by **Sunday 27th September**.

All material should be with the Editor by **Tuesday 15th September**, please.

Copy can be left in the letter rack or e-mailed to 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.

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.