

## **Interim Newsletter June 2020**

### **Dean Row Chapel, Wilmslow SK9 2BX**

Dean Row Chapel website: [www.deanrowchapel.co.uk](http://www.deanrowchapel.co.uk)



**Sadly both Chapels are closed because of the Covid19 virus. We hope that we shall be able to open our doors again soon**

### **Hale Chapel, Hale Barns, WA15 0AQ**

Hale Chapel website: [www.halechapel.co.uk](http://www.halechapel.co.uk)



**Minister Rev Jeff Gould      Tel. 01625 402952**  
**Mob 07989858963**  
**[jeffreylanegould1959@talktalk.net](mailto:jeffreylanegould1959@talktalk.net)**

## LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

### A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Having spent much of the season of Lent in lockdown, and having celebrated Easter in a very private and subdued fashion, we now find ourselves in the long period of Pentecost, which began on 31 May with Whit Sunday. There were no Whit Walks this year, no village fêtes and no opportunities for congregations to sing those classic Whitsun hymns, such as ‘Come Down, O Love Divine’ and ‘Breathe on Me, Breath of God’. Instead, we have marked our days in very personal and private devotions, each according to our beliefs and needs.

This season is characterised by a focus on God’s Holy Spirit working around us and within us. The Hebrew word for this spirit is ***ruach***, which can be translated also as ‘wind’ or ‘breath’. The irony of celebrating God’s ‘breath’ whilst we are asked to maintain a distance of at least two metres from others so that we cannot be infected by their breathing is not lost on people of faith. The Unitarian and Free Christian tradition has classically chosen to emphasise the freedoms and blessings that God’s spirit/breath brings to humanity, rather than identify it as the third person of the Trinity. This understanding shifts the nature of God from one of ‘being’ to one of ‘doing’. From this perspective, the gift of Pentecost is the tangible experience of God’s spirit at work in the world. Each of us has been impressed by those members of our community who have given their time and talents, both professionally and voluntarily, to helping people in need throughout this global crisis. Workers who had previously been undervalued for their contributions now enjoy a much higher profile (e.g. care home workers and those collecting rubbish). God’s spirit can be discerned in such efforts.

As the ‘lockdown’ we have known is lifted incrementally, we find ourselves grateful for freedoms re-gained and opportunities to meet with others not taken for granted. The greatest sign of our

collective life in the spirit of God will be our eventual return to congregational worship, whenever and however that might be achieved. In the manner of that first Pentecost in Jerusalem, may God's spirit rest on each of us, as we speak and are understood by everyone in the upper room.

**JEFF**

### ***PRAYER FOR PENTECOST***

***O God of Pentecost, Life-giver to the Church, we offer thanks for the constancy and creativity of your love. We feel gratitude for the activity of your Spirit in our midst as it opens us to the wondrous realities of forgiveness and reconciliation, joy and hope.***

***We confess that we are sometimes dis-Spirited. We succumb to the world's wearying ways. We trust in powers other than yours. We live as though we were uninspired.***

***Hear our desire to move with Spirited grace. Renew and energise us. Grant that we might be people of Pentecost who bear into the world great gifts of understanding and good news.***  
***AMEN.***



## **Dean Row Chairman's Chat**

My dear friends, I hope that you are all keeping safe and well. Coping with the restrictions we have now in our daily life.

**"The Prime Minister has announced that it is his hope that houses of worship will re-open for public services on Sunday, 5 July. This lifting of restrictions depends on the rate of infections continuing to go down. If and when the Government guidelines indicate that it is safe and legal to do so, every effort will be made to inform chapel members that normal services will resume. Jeff has gained some helpful experience in conducting funerals at local crematoria during the lockdown period, which he and the Committees hope will be of some help in equipping both Hale and Dean Row Chapels in the hosting of public acts of worship. Some possible means of achieving this are as follows:**

- 1. Roping off every other pew, to ensure that adequate distance is maintained between persons in front and in back of one another;**
- 2. Asking only members of the same household to sit in the same pew;**
- 3. Requesting more agile members to sit in the Dean Row gallery, thereby expanding the amount of space available on the ground floor;**
- 4. Offering entrance to and exit from the chapel through both the main door and the vestry entrance in both chapels;**
- 5. Making sanitising gel and face masks available on arrival for worship;**
- 6. Producing 'one off' hymn sheets for each service'**

## **Other precautions are being considered by Jeff and the Chapel Committee to ensure everyone's safety and comfort.**

I woke up the other night at about 5 am. Of course, as most of us elders do, I had to check that the bathroom facilities were still working. But I was stopped in my tracks. The sound of birdsong was so loud, it must have been coming from downstairs. Poor bird must have flown in whilst we had the door open that day. So I carefully trundled downstairs, so that I would not frighten it, and I could let it out. I only got as far as the half landing when I realised that the landing window was open and this glorious sound was coming from outside. I had to stand and listen to it for a few moments and marvel at how wonderful the sound was without the early morning traffic which we normally hear.

They say that God moves in mysterious ways and I hear many people condemning the Divine for inflicting this plague on us. I find that hard to believe and feel more inclined to think that mankind has a way of corrupting the good things we have on this earth for our own use and profit and aggrandisement. It put me in mind of Job and how he suffered Satan's tests of his faith. At this dreadful time perhaps we should practice Job's patience and protect our world by following the Government guidelines on keeping safe and virus free.

Well enough of that rant. You will be pleased to know that the bathroom facilities were still working.

Later - I am sitting here on the veranda reading my latest journey into literature – 'The Hidden Pleasures of Life' by Theodore Zeldin. A book of essays that cannot be hurried; a philosophical meander through 'A New Way of Remembering the Past and Imagining the Future'

But I digress. I have been very lazy and have not had the washing machine on for a while, so decided it was time today. Of

course I have done this on the first day in quite some time when the sun is not shining, and the lovely mellow breeze is no more. So I sit and contemplate the clothes giving the occasional twitch and wondering if I shall need to bring things in about 6.00 o'clock and put them in the drier. It is at this moment 11.00 am!

However, it is so pleasant to be able to sit out and look at the garden. The 'Japanese bed with acers, Japanese anemones, ferns and hostas is growing apace and all the other beds are filling in nicely. Amazing considering that we only started planting our new garden last October. My tomatoes have just started fruiting and in a few days we shall be eating our first picking of broad beans.

There is a little more traffic noise now, but of course few 'planes. It would be so nice to go out to the park, but I am still imprisoned. They say it is just until the end of June, but knowing my luck some goaler in the government will tell me to stay at home for another month or two, October has been mooted in some quarters.

I do hope that all my friends are able to cope with the lockdown and getting their supplies. My disabled friend who is isolating and lives alone tells me that her neighbours are wonderful and bring her the odd bits of shopping she forgets to order on her fortnightly supermarket delivery. However, she asks 'what do I do with 28 toilet rolls'? Each time someone shops for her, they insist on bring toilet rolls. As she puts it, she only has one bum.

**Thank you to everybody who has contributed to this bumper issue of the Newsletter.**

Love to you all, keep safe and hope that it is not too long before we are together again.

Chrissie

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## **Hale Chairman's Interim Newsletter June**

### Chairman's Newsletter

Chrissie has requested contributions for the June newsletter based on childhood memories. What a good idea! I've searched out my extensive collection of rose-tinted spectacles and here goes.....

I was born in 1951 so my childhood memories are of the late 1950's and of the 1960's. I think that was a good time to be a child and a young adult – but I suspect all generations probably think the same, whenever they were born.

My mother was Scottish and brought up as a Presbyterian so it was decided I would be confirmed in a Presbyterian church and the event duly took place in Leeds where we lived at the time. I can hardly claim to remember the event but it was nevertheless my first church experience.

From 1962 to 1969 I was sent to boarding school. My father worked for the old Westminster Bank and had predicted (rightly) that he would get a lot of promotions during the sixties so I was packed off at the age of eleven to Pocklington School set in the attractive Yorkshire Wolds area of East Yorkshire. If I had not gone to boarding school, I would have had to attend secondary schools in Wigan, Darlington, Manchester, Sheffield, and Newcastle so my father made the right decision.

I suppose it was a bit like being sent to the Army at a very early age. Our lives were highly regulated – there was a bell for everything. There was a bell to wake us up in the morning, a bell to summon us for breakfast, a bell for school assembly – and on it went. Real power lay in being the bell-boy for the week!

And what about Church? Pocklington School was basically C of E and I have no recollections of there being any boys there

following other religions, probably not unusual for the sixties. It was an all-boys school of course although I have seen it is now a school for both sexes. We had to go to church twice a week. There was a short service at the nearby parish church on Thursday mornings for which the entire school of about four hundred trooped over. Then on Sundays the boarders attended full matins at about 10.00 a.m. We had a full-time school chaplain who usually took the services although preachers came from far and wide and over time most Yorkshire bishops came to preach. I suspect it wasn't easy to hold the attention of a captive audience of schoolboys but some succeeded better than others. While I was at school, I was confirmed at York Minster by the Archbishop of York which meant I could then partake in Holy Communion on Sundays.

And after Church on Sundays.... Well Sunday was as regimented as any other day. On return from Church there was a compulsory walk somewhere of our choosing in the local and extremely attractive countryside – they do say Yorkshire is “God’s own Country”! After the walk came Sunday roast dinner which was probably the highlight of the week for most of us. The school Chaplain certainly enjoyed it and he was always up for extra roast potatoes! In the first couple of years at Pocklington, Sunday lunch was then followed by a compulsory lie down in our dormitories for an hour to recover from lunch. And did we get free time after our siesta? No – compulsory letter writing was next, our weekly attempt to update our parents on life at school. This of course was long before mobile phones, nor could we use ordinary phones, so letters were the only means of communication. It worked both ways of course and a letter from my mother (usually) or father (rarely) was eagerly awaited. I vividly remember receiving a letter from my great-aunt out of which tumbled a ten-shilling note – oh how rich that made me! Incidentally we were allowed to take our own jam to school to put on our bread at teatime. Most boys took strawberry or raspberry jam but my mother decided to make greengage jam, so I had to take that to school. Greengage! It was horrible and I have never



had it since...

Looking back after over five decades, the sun was always shining, we could and did play croquet on the school lawn, and for those of us with bikes it was cycling round the lanes to the sleepy Easy Yorkshire villages – idyllic? But that omits the compulsory cross country runs or cold swims in the open-air bath before breakfast. I suspect I wasn't that keen on much of school life at the time, but memory tends to filter out the bad memories leaving just the happy memories.

Yorkshire was very much my childhood – I was born in York itself (and not therefore in any of the then three Ridings of Yorkshire). My father came from North Yorkshire so the county was and is in the blood. I like to tell my daughters that when my paternal grandparents died in the early sixties, they did not own a car, a telephone, a fridge, a washing-machine or a tv.

Time to come out of the time capsule. My father's last promotion by the way was to Warrington in 1970 and here I have remained for fifty years. All down to the old Westminster Bank....

Love to all and stay safe

Alastair

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### **Haruki Murakami**

And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made  
it through,

how you managed to survive.

You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. ...

When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person  
who walked in.

That's what this storm's all about.

## **What's Happening To Me During Lockdown – submitted by Anne Gemmell**

### **Women's League**

Hello all my lovely Women's Leaguers. I am forwarding a copy of the 'new' National Women's League's Presidents message which she has forwarded to me and asked that I distribute this to members of our League. As we are not sure when we will be meeting up again, I thought I would sent it via our Interim Newsletter. Unfortunately I have not been able to hand over the chain of office, or the Women's League Banner to Joyce, but hopefully once things get back to normal this is a duty that I am looking forward to performing.

Take care all my ladies. I have tried to speak to a good number of you over Lockdown, but if you need me for anything at all, I am only at the end of a telephone, and can be contacted by email.

Much Love  
Anne

### **NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO ALL WOMEN'S LEAGUE MEMBERS**

My very warmest greetings to all you wonderful ladies out there.

It has seemed so strange simply to assume the role of President instead of being formally installed, with the attendant handing over of the badge of office at the GA Meetings as intended. Unlike the GA Presidency, where a "fallow year" with a team presidency, was decided upon, it seemed only fair to release Anne from the office of Women's League President as she had already held the fort for a two-year stint. A big thank you to you Anne for your sterling work over that time!

As most of you will know, I was asked to take on the role last year but at the beginning of March 2019 I was engaged in the enormous upheaval of moving house. I am now very happily settled in a three-storey town house (determined to keep the legs moving!) – one of five such houses created within a former United Reformed church building which retains many of the original church features on the upper floors. I have very friendly and helpful neighbours and we are situated in the heart of a village approximately 2.5 miles from Rochdale town centre. The village retains much of an authentic village atmosphere, with a small co-op supermarket, a post-office within a newsagent's shop, a pharmacy, a bakery, a "proper" butcher's shop, a small café by day which becomes a bistro on certain evenings, a wine bar, two pubs, a parish church, bowling green and pleasant memorial gardens. What more could I ask for? I am very content, particularly as I am fortunate in having good walking country straight from the house.

Enough of me! How are you all coping with this bizarre new world of pandemic and obligatory lockdown which is measuring up to be the strangest Spring and Summer we ever remember? With planned holidays unlikely to go ahead, perhaps now is the time to discover and note well the magic right on our doorsteps. Maybe we will find we don't actually need a holiday to experience a change of scene and realise that it's all about finding simple pleasures where we live.

We are fortunate indeed that the days are lengthening and the sun is shining; both elements which give a fresh perspective on the everyday and bring with them a heightened sense of wellbeing. I have just been reading retired Unitarian Minister Rev Frank Walker's entry in the book of daily reflections *Fragments of Holiness* where he points out that "this is the time when the earth is renewing herself quietly, marvellously, victoriously. No power on earth can push back this triumphant tide of life ...."

It is true that nature recognises nothing of the worrying pandemic

presently scourging our communities and severely restricting our activities. Whilst we struggle with the effects of this virus, the natural world carries on uninterrupted so let us not miss the awesome seasonal wonders that Mother Nature delivers on a regular basis. I hope, like me, you have been able to take short walks for physical exercise, sit in your garden, stand on your balcony, at your door or at least view the world from your window.

I have personally noted pink dappled sunrises giving way to blue, blue skies, welcome birdsong, the riot of colour provided by spring flowering shrubs and trees – forsythia, camellia, cherry, magnolia, azalea and now rhododendron, lilac, wisteria and laburnum all beneath trees which have now donned their fresh green leaves. After the long dark and wet winter months simply to feel the warm sunshine kiss your face and caress your shoulders is heaven indeed.

Those of you fortunate enough to have a garden - your own private oasis – will, I'm sure, identify with Benjamin Disraeli's words: "How fair is a garden amid the toils and passions of existence." Yes, any green space can provide a personal sanctuary, succour for the soul and hope for the future.

We have undoubtedly been seriously challenged and had to adapt to a new way of life, but perhaps it has not all been bad. It has given us the opportunity to stand still and take stock. The isolation caused by Covid-19 has given us the gift of time. I hope you have been able to appreciate and embrace that gift - Ralph Waldo Emerson in his rather apt quote suggests that we "adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience."

So what can I report regarding League matters? The Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting, scheduled for 18 June has been cancelled. Safety of our members is a priority and the holding of future meetings will depend on Government advice.

Our Treasurer, Susan Holt, reports that the 2019/20 Project raised a total of £7,960 for Smile Train. As the normal

presentation was unable to go ahead this year, Susan has sent a cheque in the post as agreed by the Committee. At the time of writing, she has not yet received an acknowledgement, but I would like to extend a hearty thanks to all League members for their solid effort in raising this magnificent sum in support of such a worthwhile charity, which works to relieve much anxiety and distress for those afflicted with facial disfigurement.

In regard to presidential duties, on 12 March I did manage to visit Merseyside District Spring meeting held at Ullet Road Church in Liverpool, accompanied by Rochdale branch Secretary, Margaret Salt. This was a very convivial gathering – the short service was followed by a delicious lunch of hearty homemade vegetable soup served with crusty bread and followed by fruit pie and custard. There was time afterwards for general chat and exchange of news on past and future branch events and discussion about this year's Women's League Project, Emmaus, which works towards ending homelessness. With hindsight, it was quite a canny move to invite me as President elect rather than waiting until after the GA Meetings!

My next invitation was to have been conducting the Women's League Service at Upper Chapel in Sheffield on 7 June but disappointingly that has had to be cancelled and has now been rearranged for next year. I also have a forward engagement to attend the centenary celebrations of the Women's League Branch at Bank Street, Bolton in mid-September. It will be such a shame if this important anniversary is unable to be marked as planned, but there is little option at present but to await developments.

Looking ahead to the Triennial gathering planned for October at Whalley Abbey, it is presently a waiting game to see how easing of restrictions proceeds. It is currently difficult to imagine managing this event with the need to observe social distancing and the necessity for many attendees to travel by public transport.

I was pleased to send, on your behalf, a congratulatory card to Marion Davies of the SE Wales branch for her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at the end of March. I also wrote messages of condolence to the family of Rev Daphne Roberts, a past national Women's League President, and to the daughter of Mavis Duerden a member of our Nelum branch. Sadly, both of these members died of natural causes in April but they had each passed their 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays and had lived loyal, active and useful lives, contributing greatly to their local communities.

I realise that not all Women's Leaguers will have access to the internet, so do please raise awareness of the existence of this communication and share the essence of my message with as many of your members as possible until publication of our League Letter resumes.

I will close with the slightly adapted words written recently by Ministry student, Laura Dobson:

Even though we cannot touch hand to hand,  
May we keep touching heart to heart.  
May you know love, within and without,  
And may you flourish and flower like the incredible beings you  
are.

Go well, all of you, in the weeks ahead.

Joyce

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### **Memories of a Happy Holiday – submitted by Anne Gemmell**

Last week, Elizabeth Melbourne (Dorothy Salthouses daughter) sent me the photo printed here, which she had come across when she was having a tidy up.

The day before, we had been talking about hairstyles and how

we were all looking at the moment! In my case 'fifty shades of grey' I'm afraid! I haven't seen Dorothy of course, so I can't comment on her situation! Elizabeth's comment on the photo was along the lines of 'talking of hair, look at the perms'!

Seriously though, looking at the photo brought back many happy memories of a holiday Dorothy and I spent with our lovely husbands at Elizabeth's home in Herrenberg, Germany during 1991. We drove there, or more to the point, David and Ernest took turns in driving there, crossing from Dover to Calais and journeying through France and then into Germany. From what I recall, we did the outward journey in a day arriving late evening.

The photo was taken on our first Saturday morning there, which also happened to be an 'extended' Saturday in Herrenberg. At that time, most of Germany closed at noon sharp on a Saturday, other than once a month, when shops and cafes stayed open for the full day. I can remember us walking from Elizabeth's home into the very small town which had craft-type stalls in the square selling all sorts of goods. We are sitting with what looks like artwork behind us. We were having 'Kaffee and Kuchen' at a rather nice café. I do recall that!!

On receiving the photo, I was transported straight back there, sitting in the glorious sunshine enjoying a perfect day. Can hardly believe it was almost 30 years ago! Our memories never fade. Oh, and just for the record, Dorothy informs me that she didn't have a perm. Her hair was naturally curly! Me, on the other hand have *always* had straight hair, so mine *definitely* was a perm!



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Went to my first social  
distancing Christening  
last Sunday





**Dear friends,**

**I sincerely hope you and your loved ones are keeping safe and well during this difficult time. I am sure you have constant pressures on your finances as well. However, the Chapel still has most of its costs ongoing. We have to pay our salaries, insurances and utilities. We are saving as much as we can, but fully expect that our investment income will fall heavily during the year. There are no weddings nor baptisms and so no donations at those services. Our Sunday collections have ceased and envelope subscribers cannot leave their donations.**

**You will know that the shares we hold generate a large part of our income. Their value has fallen quite a bit since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and now would be the worst time to sell some of them to bolster our income. If any of you feel able to send some money to make up for our loss of collections it would be really helpful. You can send a cheque to me at home – 2 Chesham Road, Wilmslow, SK9 6HA, made out to Dean Row Chapel or, better still, pay directly into our bank account at Sort Code 20-53-77 Account 80326143.**

**I hate having to write to you such a begging letter, but our lovely chapel and chapel family will then be there for us as strong as ever once the virus has passed.**

**My love to you all,  
Peter**

## **EVEN HEATHENS HAVE THEIR USES Submitted by Larry Bode**

Maureen Bode has been spending much of her enforced confinement during the coronavirus pandemic at the sewing machine. She is one of hundreds throughout the UK to respond to the increased demand from NHS staff and Carers for scrubs.

To date Maureen has made about 15 sets of scrubs, 30 fabric face masks, and 50 drawbags to carry them in between the workplace and washing machine. The main problem has been getting adequate supplies of material.

The resourceful volunteers have resorted to using material from duvet covers and curtains for example. This has resulted in the appearance on wards and in care homes of some less than traditional outfits which apparently has cheered up staff and clients alike. (See handsome beast below modelling the latest scrubs top from the production line.) Staff plan to continue to wear the colourful scrubs after the current crisis has ended.

With more of her boundless energy Maureen has been involved in the local 'Helping Hands' group which provides a service to those unable to leave their homes. So far she has been called upon to do shopping, post letters and parcels and collect prescriptions.

Although the government has insisted that local authorities provide accommodation for the homeless during the pandemic there has been an increase in the number of homeless sleeping out in Stockport. This is often the result of people finding their home situation intolerable (abusive relationships for example).

Maureen has been helping the local charity for the homeless 'Hatters Outreach Providing Essentials' or 'HOPE' by cooking hot meals, by hunting for sleeping bags and fresh clothes and other chores such as persuading friends to contribute biscuits and soft drinks for distribution. She is working tirelessly and so it would seem that even heathens can help at this challenging time.



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## **Lockdown Lighter Moments – Anne Gemmell**

Please take your clothes out of the wardrobe regularly, air them out, and allow to stand in sunlight. Recent studies show that if clothes are kept in the wardrobe over lockdown, they shrink.

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It's the gardening season.....  
11 weeks ago, I planted myself on the sofa  
and have grown considerably.

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The Seven Dwarves have been told that they  
can now meet in groups of six.  
One of them isn't Happy.

## Submitted by Mike Heale



There are certain times in our lives when we see our experiences as being important and productive. My time in Zambia (September 1974 to September 1976) was such a time.

I was sent overseas to teach at the Zambia College of Agriculture, notably English and Extension Methods on VSO terms. This meant that I did not earn a large sum of money as a contract worker. The Zambian staff did not understand my motives! Technically I was training officer for the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Development, teaching students to become Agricultural Assistants, supporting farmers in the rural areas.

English was and is, the main form of communication in Zambia. There are 63 different local languages in Zambia, so English is very important – for law, education and government. While the written word was full of mistakes, the students could express

themselves verbally, albeit with a Zambian accent! We used to sit under a mango tree and hold debates on social studies topics – “Farmers should use ox rather than tractors”. I also used to teach English Form 1 and Form 3. Imagine having to teach forty little eleven year olds English under a gas lamp, evening classes, at the local primary school!

Religion was also important for me. This was my Anglican phase. We had a visit from Father Chilolombwe who would come from Mazabuka to Monze once a month to take Matins. On the other Sundays in the month we used to do our own thing. I used to do the odd service – of course from a Liberal Christian perspective! In 1976, I went at Easter time to the Synod of the Zambia Episcopal Church. I remember the eloquence of Chief Mpanza. We discussed the issue of women priests being admitted to the priesthood, (remember this was 1976) – passed unanimously!

During my time in Africa, I did manage to travel, notably to Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya. Malawi is often called ‘The Switzerland of Africa’ with green rolling hills and little villages of mud and straw huts. It was lucky that my girlfriend Glenda, a teacher at the local secondary School in Monze, had a Ford Escort. So we were able to travel to Malawi, camping by Lake Malawi in idyllic surroundings. Further in the summer of 1975, I travelled to East Africa – Tanzania and Kenya. I went up Kilimanjaro, three days up and two days down! Out of a party of six, only four of us got to the top, the other two having succumbed to height sickness. We left Kibo hut at 3 in the morning finally reaching the top at dawn. I remember ice and snow in the crater at the top and the clouds covering the plains below. What an experience!

These are all experiences you do not forget. Looking back, I was fortunate to do and see so much, that reflects the culture, the pictures and the colour of East and Central Africa.

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## The Jenny Williams' page

### VEX KING 6 DAILY REMINDERS:

1. Count your blessings
2. Keep love in your heart
3. Give up mindless drama
4. Invest your energy in growth
5. Be productive with your time
6. Don't give up on your dreams

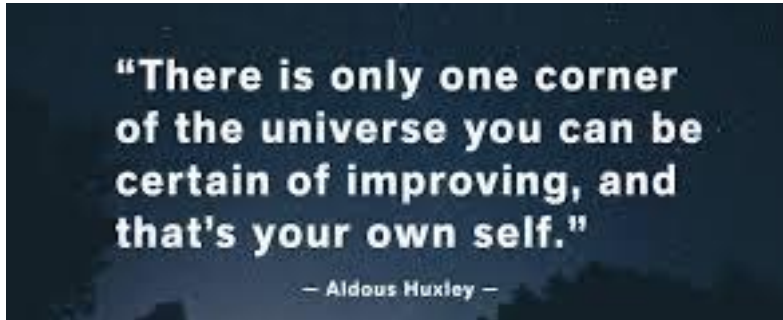
**THEY SAID A MASK  
AND GLOVES WERE  
ENOUGH TO GO TO  
THE GROCERY STORE**

**THEY LIED,  
EVERYBODY ELSE  
HAD CLOTHES ON**

### VEX KING 12 DAILY REMINDERS

1. The past cannot be changed
2. Opinions don't define your reality
3. Everyone's journey is different
4. Things always get better with time
5. Judgements are a confession of character
6. Overthinking will lead to sadness
7. Happiness is found within

8. Positive thoughts creatw positive things
9. Smiles are contagious
10. Kindness is free
11. You only fail if you quit
12. What goes around, comes around



**MEMO FROM GOD –**

TO: You – DATE Today

Subject – YOURSELF – Reference – LIFE

I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help.

If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box. All situations will be resolved, but in My time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now.

If you find yourself stuck in traffic, don't despair. There are people in this world for which driving is an unheard of privilege.

Should you have a bad day at work, think of the man who has been out of work for years.

Should you despair over a relationship gone bad, think of the person who has never known what it's like to love and be loved in return.

Should you grieve the passing of another weekend, think of the woman in dire straits, working twelve hours a day, seven days a week to feed her children.

Should your car break down, leaving you miles away from assistance, think of the paraplegic who would love the opportunity to take that walk.

Should you notice a new gray hair in the mirror, think of the cancer patient in chemo who wishes she had hair to examine.

Should you find yourself at a loss and pondering what is life all about, asking what is my purpose? Be thankful. There are those who didn't live long enough to get the opportunity.

Should you find yourself the victim of other people's bitterness, ignorance, smallness or insecurities, remember, things could be worse. You could be one of them!

Should you decide to send this to a friend, thank you, you may have touched their life in ways you will never know!

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### **From Elizabeth Earp**

On 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 a little five-year boy stood outside his grandma's house in his sailor suit with his sister and auntie ready for the special celebrations ending hostilities in Europe. As you can see from the photograph taken by his mother, hanging from the upper windows of that house in Tyndale Street, Leicester were three flags, a Union flag and two others, one was Indian as



his great-uncle was a Baptist Minister in Dichpalli, India and the other was Australian.

On 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 that little boy is now an 'old boy' standing in front of his Rover 16 in our drive with those same flags, one hanging from the front of our bungalow in Woodford and the other two tied to the gate posts along with some bunting celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day. During the Thursday clapping on behalf of the NHS the previous evening the neighbours said they were putting up bunting ... but nobody did, except us! However, it drew a lot of attention and Andy got to fly his flags again!

One good outcome from the clapping on the last ten Thursdays is that it has brought communities together. We have now seen our neighbours from across the road whose faces we had never seen before.





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### **Submitted by Chrissie**

When I was a little girl, we lived in Burma for a few years. After



the war my Dad was stationed there in the RAF. I would have said that I was mischievous, but many would have preferred the term naughty. I believe that I must be the youngest child to have ever been expelled from a Convent School. Mum and Dad were asked to remove me because I was a bad influence on the other girls. I was three at the time. Apparently, I was trying to see if the nuns had legs by lifting their skirts. Was it my fault that the other girls copied me?

## **Submitted by Larry Bode THEN AND NOW**

The current coronavirus pandemic put me in mind of the UK polio epidemic in the 1950s.

Although I was only 5 yrs old when I contracted polio, I can still remember the time with some clarity.

Both Covid 19 and polio are caused by a virus. The source of my infection was probably a sewage outlet pipe on a Cornish beach. I can visualise it as I write.

Whereas Covid 19 predominately seriously affects older people, polio particularly affected youngsters and was often referred to as infantile paralysis. Most primary school classes had one or two people who had contracted the disease. There were three in my class.

Curiously in the UK, according to the medical literature there was a higher incidence of polio amongst those who rigorously paid attention to simple hygiene measures such as hand washing. It is suggested that a lack of good hygiene conferred some low level immunity to the virus. How different it is with the coronavirus. We are being constantly reminded of the importance of thorough hand washing.

I remember vividly being driven by my father behind an ambulance initially to Pendlebury Hospital (later called the Manchester Children's Hospital). I was told I was very brave for refusing to go in the ambulance. In reality I was probably just being a brat. I know that I wasn't particularly bothered about going to hospital. The medics at Pendlebury weren't very happy about admitting me, but as it was late they found a single room where I stayed overnight before being transferred to Monsall Isolation Hospital.

I was on a long Nightingale ward with patients of all ages and all

infectious diseases. There were no small child size beds. I remember getting into terrible trouble for not drinking my juice which was on top of the locker, but I couldn't reach it. I devised a trick using my soft toy, Penny. I used to dip Penny's arm into the jug of juice, then suck the arm. (See photo).



Penny still shares my bedroom (I know; it's sad). She is lucky to still be here as she was scheduled to go to the hospital incinerator on my discharge but mysteriously hid in my leaving case. My green knitted donkey, however was not as fortunate.

I had the bulbo-spinal variety of polio, and apart from left-sided paralysis my respiration was affected. I was too small to fit into the 50s version of a ventilator, the iron lung, so my breathing was taken over by medical staff at my bedside although I have no recollection of this.

I was shown the room I should been in. It had four iron lungs. These were unwieldy metal boxes ; the whole body was encased by the box apart from a head sticking out of one end and feet at the other end (see photo).



Doctors all wore white coats and ties, both excellent transmitters of infection. Since the banning of coats and ties in hospitals the transmission rate of infections from person to person has dramatically reduced.

The nurses of course had long skirts and aprons. The more important a nurse was, the sillier the hat. The matron's hat was particularly large and impressive requiring strong neck muscles to keep the head upright with the sheer weight.

No visitors were allowed on to the ward. My family members would tap on the window to let me know they were there and I had to try and lip read. This, I did find distressing. I remember being back at school. I could barely walk so my mother used to pick me up at school with a toddler's prom. Of course I was ridiculed by my 6 year old peers. Initially my 'no-nonsense' mother refused to go along with my plea for her to sneak me out of school a few minutes before the end of the day. The teachers were more sympathetic and eventually I got to leave school a little earlier.

I had years of physiotherapy which mainly involved a series of electric shocks to frighten my muscles into action. The success of the treatment was assessed by how well I could sing a ditty: 'I caught a big fish in the sea. I thought it was a whale. . . . .'  
'None of the treatment worked.

Just a few reminiscences then of my experience an earlier viral illness.

Larry Bode

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## Submitted by Mark Foulsham – Chrissie’s son

This purports to have been written by John Cleese of Monty Python fame. It certainly sounds like something he might have written, but with the way things zip around the Internet it is hard to be sure sometimes. With apologies to John Cleese or whoever wrote this, Terror has been replaced by Virus.

But be that as it may, this certainly made me smile, which has to be a good way to start a day:

### **ALERTS TO TERROR VIRUS THREATS IN 2011 EUROPE**

By John Cleese

The English are feeling the pinch in relation to recent ~~terrorist~~ virus threats and have therefore raised their ~~security~~ threat level from “*Miffed*” to “*Peeved*.” Soon, though, ~~security~~ threat levels may be raised yet again to “*Irritated*” or even “*A Bit Cross*.” The English have not been “*A Bit Cross*” since the blitz in 1940 when tea supplies nearly ran out. ~~Terrorists~~ Covid19 has been re-categorized from “*Tiresome*” to “*A Bloody Nuisance*.” The last time the British issued a “*Bloody Nuisance*” warning level was in 1588, when threatened by the Spanish Armada.

The Scots have raised their threat level from “*Pissed Off*” to “*Let’s Get the Bastards*.” They don’t have any other levels. This is the reason they have been used on the front line of the British army for the last 300 years.

The French government announced yesterday that it has raised its ~~terror~~ virus alert level from “*Run*” to “*Hide*.” The only two higher levels in France are “*Collaborate*” and “*Surrender*.” The rise was precipitated by a recent fire that destroyed France’s white flag factory, effectively paralyzing the country’s military capability.

Italy has increased the alert level from “*Shout Loudly and Excitedly*” to “*Elaborate Military Posturing*.” Two more levels

remain: *“Ineffective Combat Operations”* and *“Change Sides.”*

The Germans have increased their alert state from *“Disdainful Arrogance”* to *“Dress in Uniform and Sing Marching Songs.”* They also have two higher levels: *“Invade a Neighbour”* and *“Lose.”*

Belgians, on the other hand, are all on holiday as usual; the only threat they are worried about is NATO pulling out of Brussels.

The Spanish are all excited to see their new submarines ready to deploy. These beautifully designed subs have glass bottoms so the new Spanish navy can get a really good look at the old Spanish navy.

Australia, meanwhile, has raised its security threat level from *“No worries”* to *“She’ll be alright, Mate.”* Two more escalation levels remain: *“Crikey! I think we’ll need to cancel the barbie this weekend!”* and *“The barbie is cancelled.”* So far, no situation has ever warranted use of the final escalation level.

John Cleese – British writer, actor and tall person



**Submitted by Margaret Taylor**

**17<sup>th</sup> Century Nun's Prayer.**

**Lord,**

*Thou knowest better than I know myself, that I am growing older and will some day be old, keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybodies affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.*

*Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pain, but help me to endure them with patience.*

*I dare not ask for improved memory but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memory of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.*

*Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint – some of them are so hard to live with – but a sour old person is the crowning works of the devil.*

*Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. And give me O Lord the grace to tell them so.*

**Amen**



## **Submitted by Betty Ellis**

### **RICH ALMOND CAKE**

#### **Ingredients:**

4oz of butter or margarine

5oz caster sugar

3oz ground almonds

3 medium eggs

1 ½ oz S.R. flour

Pinch of salt

Sprinkling of caster sugar

7 ½ cake tin lined with grease proof paper

#### **Method:**

Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.

Add ground almonds and continue to beat for 1 minute.

Beat in eggs,

sift flour and salt and fold into mixture.

Bake in a moderate oven,

Gas mark 4 or 180C for about 50 mins.

Should be golden brown and firm to touch.

Remove grease proof paper and dust with caster sugar.

This cake can be served in small wedges with a compote of stewed fruit and cream.

I baked mine in a loaf tin as it is only a small mixture.

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**Address - Patience obtains all things, Chorlton Unitarians**  
**24 May 2020, by Laura Dobson**

“Let nothing disturb you.  
Let nothing frighten you.  
All things will pass away.  
God never changes;  
Patience obtains all things,  
Whoever has God lacks nothing.  
God alone suffices.  
Amen.”  
St Teresa of Avila

This prayer has become something of a mantra for me during lockdown. Today I want to share something of how it has helped me, in the hope that it may be of help to you too.

Teresa knew all about fear, impermanence, patience and reliance on God alone. She was born in 1515 in Spain. She lost her mother at the age of 11 and had a spiritual crisis in her teenage years, before entering a Carmelite convent at the age of 20. She subsequently endured a long period of serious illness and suffered persecution from members of her own order for trying to reform it. Eventually her efforts succeeded. She was given papal permission to establish several new convents and her reforms were later taken up by the Carmelite Order. Through her main work, 'The Interior Castle' she became one of the most influential and best loved Catholic saints of all time. Her inspiring story is reflected in this, her best known prayer.

*Let nothing disturb you*  
*Let nothing frighten you*

Five hundred years later and we still live in a world that can be disturbing and frightening. There are many things about the current crisis that we may react to with fear. Over the last couple of months I have learned to allow myself to feel unsettled and afraid, but when I start to become overwhelmed by those feelings, to remember that all things are passing away, including my own fear.

*All things will pass away*

The impermanence of life can be one of its most difficult lessons. We often fear change and try to hold onto the way things are, but when I truly accept that all things pass away, I can start to let go of my attachment.

*God never changes*

And yet, underneath all the tumult and chaos, perhaps we may glimpse something constant. We may not all express it in the language of 'God never changes,' but nevertheless we may have a sense that there is something that roots and grounds and anchors us. Perhaps we might call this the Eternal Source, the Spirit of Life or simply Love. When I use the word 'God' to me it refers not to an old man in the sky, but to 'the ground of all being.'

### *Patience obtains all things*

This has perhaps been the most important lesson of the lockdown for me – patience is the key to everything.

When I was a child, 'patience is a virtue' was something my mother would say to chide me – for example, if I ran off with a fairy cake straight from the oven and burnt my mouth, she would say, 'patience is a virtue!' So I grew up feeling quite resentful towards patience – it was something I ought to have, but didn't. I would often find myself sneaking a peak at the last page of a book, because I was impatient to know how the story ended. And I have never been happy with queueing, although I am beginning to get used to it now!

But there is more to patience than just waiting. The Cambridge English Dictionary definition of patience is, "the ability to wait, or to continue doing something despite difficulties, or to suffer without complaining or becoming annoyed."

The Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle conceived the idea that a virtue is the golden mean or the middle ground between two extremes or vices. For the waiting aspect of patience, patience is the ability to wait until things are right, between the extremes of apathy and impetuosity. But there is a subtler aspect to patience, which relates to endurance and acceptance, hinted at in the dictionary definition, whose extremes are indifference and anger. Hildegard of Bingen, in her work *Liber Vitae Meritorium* (the Book of the Rewards of Life), contrasted the virtue of patience with the vice of anger.

Viewed in this light, patience becomes an acknowledgement that everything, both good fortune and misfortune, come from the same source. As such, both can be equally valuable learning experiences. Indeed, we often grow more through perseverance in times of discomfort and struggle than we do in times of ease.

Patience isn't something encouraged by consumer culture – we are encouraged to go after and get what we want now – buy now, pay later. We are encouraged to think that purchasing more and more things will solve all our problems. It is hard to stay with the discomfort and the difficulties, to be present to whatever is.

The coronavirus crisis is calling us all to patience – to be patient with ourselves and with others – to be kind, understanding, compassionate and forgiving to ourselves and others.

I am very grateful for the patience of others – for example, for the kindness and understanding shown in our Unitarian community as we muddle our way through new technology and new ways to keep our connections going. I am very grateful that my family and I have been able to be patient with each other as we adjust to the new realities of lockdown at different paces. I am very grateful for the patience of my college tutors and fellow students as we work out how to adjust our ministry training programme to our altered circumstances. And I grateful that I am learning to be patient with myself – to accept that my moods and my energy levels fluctuate more than ever, and that some days are down days and some days are up days.

Our patience may be put to the test in the days to come. We don't know how long our lives are going to be disturbed and disrupted by coronavirus. Some organisations are already making plans to stay 'virtual' in the long term. For example, the University of Cambridge is planning for all its lectures to be delivered online for the whole of the 2020/21 academic year.

I read recently that the UUA (Unitarians Universalist Association, in the US) are advising their member congregations to prepare for another year of gathering online rather than face-to-face. Now our situation in the UK may not be exactly the same, but it is becoming clear that the virus isn't going to go away any time soon.

The following day I read that the UK government had announced a 'Places of Worship taskforce', including leading representatives of our major faiths, to develop guidelines for COVID-19 secure use of our buildings for worship. Places of worship will be part of the 'phase 3' reopening of public gathering places, which will not be before 4 July at the very earliest.

We do not know what will happen here between now and then, but it may well be much later than July before any place of worship is fully open again and before we feel it is safe to start gathering in person in our church building. A return to worship is likely to be phased, and subject to vigorous risk assessments, and social distancing and hygiene measures. Even social distanced singing spreads the virus so we won't be able to sing hymns in the way we were used to for some time.

And even when we are in a position to hold services in the building again, there will be some people who will not be able to join us as they need to keep

shielding until such time as a vaccine is available, and we will need to consider carefully how to include those people in the services we offer.

And so we will need to continue cultivating patience in all its forms in the days to come as we wait to see what shape our lives will take after lockdown. Luckily, like all virtues, patience can be cultivated with practice – all it takes is patience!

Even writing this has been an exercise in patience for me – it took a long time for it to reveal itself in its final form to me. Which brings me to the next aspects of patience – trust and faith.

Sometimes we may feel that God, or Fate or the Meaning of Life, is capricious and elusive. We don't often understand the lesson we are learning until it is over. But if we let dark be dark, then the light will be revealed to us in the fullness of time.

*Whoever has God lacks nothing.  
God alone suffices.*

We may translate 'God alone suffices' as 'Good' or 'Love' alone suffices. It is our faith in whatever we consider sacred, of ultimate concern, that sustains us. Our spiritual treasures are worth more than all the material things we may accumulate. A big lesson for me during this crisis has been how few of the material things I own I actually need. It is my faith in the ultimate goodness of God / Eternal Source / Ground of all Being, and the Love that holds us together, that sustains me.

St Hildegard of Bingen's character, Patience, from her musical play, Ordo Virtuum (Order of the Virtues) says,  
"I am the pillar that can never be made to yield, as my foundation is in God."

### *St Theresa's prayer*

*Let nothing disturb you,  
Let nothing frighten you,  
All things are passing away:  
God never changes.  
Patience obtains all things  
Whoever has God lacks nothing;  
God alone suffices.*

**If anyone ever asks you, "What Would Jesus Do?"**



**Remind them that flipping over tables and chasing people with a whip is within the realm of possibilities.**

**Dean Row Chapel Officers:**

**Chairman**

**Chrissie Wilkie Tel. 0161 439 8262;  
Email [chrissie@wilkies.me.uk](mailto:chrissie@wilkies.me.uk))**

**Treasurer:**

**Peter Shaw Tel. 01625 584881  
Email [pgshaw@aol.com](mailto:pgshaw@aol.com)**

**Secretary**

**Anne Gemmell Tel. 0161 637 5347  
[annegemmell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:annegemmell@yahoo.co.uk)**

**Warden: Ian Booth 01625262819**

**Women's League Secretary:**

**Anne Gemmell Tel. 0161 637 5347**

**Flower Secretary:**

**Bridget Wenham Tel 01625 820772**

**Honorary Life President**

**Tony Cupper**

**Minister Emeritus**

**Rev Penny Johnson**

**Items for Newsletter to Chrissie Wilkie**

## **Hale Chapel Executive Committee**

### **Chairman**

**Mr. Alastair Brown    Tel.01925 262332**  
email: [alastair6451@aol.com](mailto:alastair6451@aol.com)

### **Secretary**

**Ms. Averil Hart    Tel. 0161 980 2811**  
email: [dumboah@btinternet.com](mailto:dumboah@btinternet.com)

### **Treasurer**

**Mrs. Margaret Taylor    Tel. 0161 980 3813**  
email: [me.taylor@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:me.taylor@tiscali.co.uk)

### **Chapel Fabric**

**Dr. Jean Ormerod    Tel 0161 929 7945**  
[jeanormerod@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jeanormerod@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Junior Church**

**Mrs. Jo Turner    Tel 0161 928 0406**  
[theturnermob@gmail.com](mailto:theturnermob@gmail.com)

**Mrs. Jane MacDermott    0161 928 0201**  
email: [mac.jane@live.co.uk](mailto:mac.jane@live.co.uk)

**Miss Helen Wilson    0161 962 9661**  
email: [helenwilson249@gmail.co.uk](mailto:helenwilson249@gmail.co.uk)

**Mrs Elizabeth Wilson    0161 980 4629**  
email: [stuliz22@talktalk.net](mailto:stuliz22@talktalk.net)

### **Hall Bookings Co-Ordinator**

**Mrs Sharon Kupusarevic    07801 140809**  
email: [cksk@btinternet.com](mailto:cksk@btinternet.com)