

The
United
Reformed
Church

MAY 2020

South Leicestershire Group URC



SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE GROUP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
Saffron Lane-Wigston Magna-South Wigston
Oadby-Whetstone

<http://southleicsgroupurc.org.uk>

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Living With A New Hope

The Psalmist writes 'For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I walk before the Lord in the land of the living'
Psalm 116:8-9

As I write to you in the fourth week of lock-down, the question was asked 'When will it end?' The answer of course is dependent on many factors, how the curve has flattened out or not; or if our NHS has overcome the virus with strict adherence to infection control measures; or if the NHS and Care Homes receives a sufficient amount of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to help them to protect their workforces and their clients; it might stop when people start to set aside individual freedoms and think of others rather than themselves.

We have seen two types of people emerge from this pandemic, the selfish and the selfless. Two ends of a spectrum. Many of the folk that you know will be in the latter category, where people will go the extra mile for others, perhaps a telephone call to someone who they might not have normally contacted, a reassuring word between friends, a mutual concern that others are coping under the circumstances. In short, it can be summed up as the second commandment that Jesus taught us 'Love your Neighbour'.

As we head towards Pentecost we journey with the disciples on a Faith Journey, a journey of discovery as Jesus appears to more and more people, consolidating all his teaching of the previous three years or so. We no longer concentrate on the prophetic writings but journey with the disciples to that wonderfully powerful moment in history when the Holy Spirit enables the disciples to explode into the community and tell people of Jesus and how he can change their lives.

I am hoping, that as we have so much time on our hands and we are not as governed by the pace and values of modern life, that we can spend more time in reading our Bibles and discovering the depth of God's love for us. Very often when we take time to read we discover so much more about our relationship with God and with others.

One of my greatest desires is that my church family take hold of the scriptures and truly develop as disciples and will lead others to God. Though Faith is a personal matter and central to each of us, it would be good to share it with others just as the disciples did at Pentecost.

Talking of the selfless, Captain Tom Moore is a prime example of selfless; he is an inspiration of good old Yorkshire common sense and grit. He is determined to fundraise as much as he can for the NHS, a care service that helped him when he needed them. He has reminded us that we owe so much to the system of health care that is the envy of the world, a care system where you are taken care of regardless of your status. Please pray for all who are in our health care system and give thanks to God for them.

Please stay safe and well,

Richard

Prayer Concerns

John and Betty of Oadby -going through a difficult time

Those showings signs of Dementia

Those who are anxious and concerned for the future

Psalm 103:1-14

Thanksgiving for God's Goodness Of David.

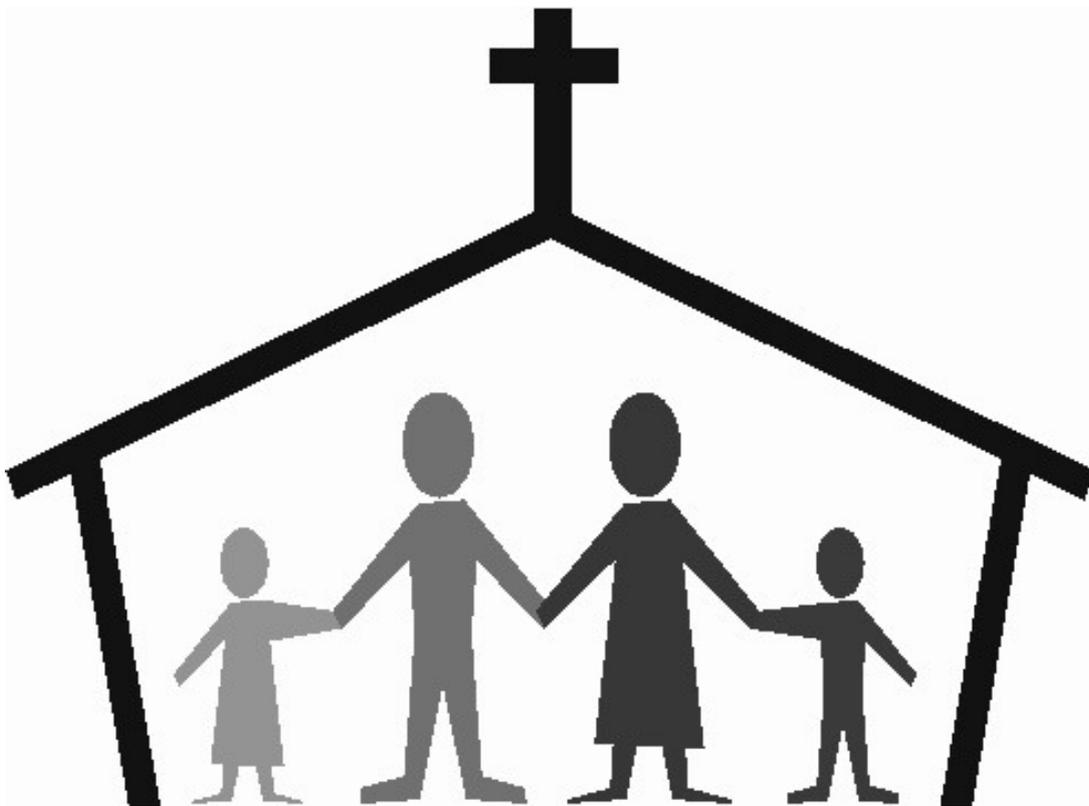
- ¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
- ² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—
- ³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
- ⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live^[a]
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ⁶ The LORD works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.
- ⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
- ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us
- ¹³ As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has
compassion for those who fear him.
- ¹⁴ For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we
are dust.

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL SERVICES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE CHURCH SECRETARY

Whetstone URC	10.00 am
Oadby URC	10.15 am
South Wigston URC	10.30 am
Wigston Magna	10.30 am
Saffron Lane	11.00 am



What are Ministers Doing during "Lockdown" ??

There is a school of thought that suggests that Ministers only work one day per week and over the past few weeks the virus has taken that away from me. As a result I have all the time in the world. So, what can I do with this time?

I have repaired the greenhouse after the winter storms; jet washed the patio and drive with my new Kärcher (bought for my birthday a couple of weeks ago); mowed the lawns; dusted my office; cleaned my shoes; caught-up on must-see programmes on television; made some soup; talked to my wife; had a daily walk; and thought a lot about nothing. So what shall I do next....

Well actually there are the virtual meetings to attend, if I can get the technology to work; prepare some service sheets and get them posted by snail mail and online; make a video and podcast; ring round my colleagues and all the families in the churches; keep up personal devotions; begin to plan for when all this is over; do the background reading for sermons and my sabbatical; talk with my wife in real time and children on Facetime. Oh and I have to fix the desktop, because it has been infected with a virus - not that one I don't think?

Time is a funny thing, when you have it in abundance it can seem never ending, but when you are under pressure to get something done it seems to run out too quickly. Why is that I wonder? Someone said last week that the past is historic and cannot be changed and the future is still to come so why try to foretell it. They concluded that we live in the present, so called because it is a gift and if all else fails I might even tackle cleaning the oven.

Revd Peter Stevenson

May Birthdays

- 3 Julie Slatford
- 5 Gill Standley
- 9 Rosie Randell (13)
- 14 Ray Green
- 23 Charles Williams
- 29 Isabel Hudson (13)

You think English is easy?

The bandage was wound around the wound

The farm was used to produce produce

The dump was so full that it had to refuse the refuse

We must polish the Polish furniture

He could lead if he would get the lead out

The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert

Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present

When shot at the dove dove into the bush

I did not object to the object

The insurance was invalid for the invalid

There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row

They were too close to the door to close it

The buck does funny things when the does are present

A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line

To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow

The wind was too strong to wind the sail

Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear

I had to subject the subject to a series of tests

How can I intimate this to my intimate friend?

Wigston Magna News

Cont.....

Let's face it - English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat. We take English for granted, but if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, 2 geese, so one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables what does a humanitarian eat? Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why, when the stars are out they are visible, but when the lights are out they are invisible.

PS - why doesn't 'Buick' rhyme with 'quick'?

South Wigston News

RECIPE - MAY: Bacon, Lentil & Pea Soup (Serves 5 - 6)

2 ozs smoked, rindless bacon
4 ozs onions
4 ozs carrots
3 ozs celery
5 ozs lentils, soaked & drained
Grated nutmeg
1 Bay leaf
Ground black pepper
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ pints chicken stock
2 ozs frozen peas

- 1) Chop & fry bacon, onions, carrots & celery for a few minutes.
- 2) Add lentils, nutmeg, bay leaf, pepper & chicken stock & simmer until tender.
- 3) Remove bay leaf, add frozen peas & simmer for a few more minutes.
- 4) Blend, and adjust seasoning to taste.



GARDENING NOTES - MAY

- 1) Dead head Spring flowering bulbs, but allow daffodils and other Spring bulbs to die down naturally.
- 2) Spray roses against pests and diseases and apply a general rose fertilizer.
- 3) Water newly planted beds.
- 4) Plant out half-hardy annuals after risk of frost has passed.
- 5) Remove suckers from lilacs and fruit trees.
- 6) Lightly top-dress heathers with peat.



MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 6 Revd Richard Eastman - Happy Birthday Richard!

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive;
and to do so with some passion, some compassion,
some humour, and some style.

Maya Angelou.

South Wigston News

The Weekly Collection

Beyond the Gate with a hint of fear
Tonight the great excursion
Prepared to cross the great frontier
In an atmosphere quite Cistercian
Outdoor shoes bowtied in the dugout
For the wheelie bin's weekly walkabout

John Oldershaw



HOLY HUMOUR

There was a very gracious lady who was posting an old family bible to her brother in another part of the country.

"Is there anything breakable in here ?" asked the post office clerk

"Only the Ten Commandments" answered the lady.

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question " What do we know about God "

The hand of one young boy shot up in the air - "He's an artist"

"Really" asked the teacher "How do you know ?"

"You know - Our Father who does art in Heaven"

South Wigston News

PRAYER LIST: Please pray for:

- 1 All who are ill with coronavirus, especially those in hospital.
- 2 All those working long hours in our hospitals.
- 3 All who are missing going to their church today.
- 4 Those who have lost loved ones to the virus.
- 5 Those in power, trying to find a way through this difficult time.
- 6 Those living and working in our Care Homes.
- 7 Those in isolation who live alone.
- 8 Give thanks for our phones and all communication systems.
- 9 All whose businesses and jobs have suffered in the crisis.
- 10 Give thanks that we can still pray and read the Word of God.
- 11 All charities at the start of Christian Aid Week.
- 12 Children in Foster Care, and those who look after them.
- 13 Those volunteers who are helping to meet the needs of people they may not even know.
- 14 Give thanks for our families, wherever they may be.
- 15 All who are in prison, and their families.
- 16 Those who are lonely.
- 17 All who are suffering from a terminal illness.
- 18 Women who are expecting babies.
- 19 Servicemen and women, especially those serving overseas.
- 20 All those with physical and mental disabilities.
- 21 Those affected by a marriage breakdown.
- 22 Children everywhere, that they may find love and security in their homes.
- 23 The Royal Family, especially our Queen.
- 24 Those of our memberships suffering the problems of age.
- 25 That all may enjoy the Bank Holiday - even if at home.
- 26 Those living in hope of an organ transplant.
- 27 Parents, that they may have wisdom and patience.
- 28 All who are homeless, and those who help them.
- 29 The unemployed.
- 30 All those countries that are now crushed by debt.
- 31 Give thanks for the astounding beauty of May

South Wigston News

Cheerfulness is difficult
When the rocky road we tread
But smile and think of heavenly days
That wait for us ahead.

For God is our creator
He made us, everyone
Jesus Christ, our Saviour
Our every sin is gone.

He left his Holy Spirit
To strengthen us, for sure
So look to him in everything
And he'll help us to endure.

"My hand will sustain my anointed one, and My arm will
Strengthen him" (Psalm 89)

Lauren Fretter



South Wigston News

GENUINE QUESTIONS OVERHEARD BEING ASKED AT THE THEATRE BOX OFFICE

- What time does the 8 o'clock show start?
- Can I have seats facing the stage please?
- Sorry we only have singles left madam.
OK - do you have two of them together?
- What time is the matinee
2.30
Is that 2.30pm?
- I'm sorry but we only have restricted view tickets left.
What does that mean?
It means that you won't be able to see everything.
Oh, at what point will we have to leave?
- I had a tall person in front of me - I couldn't see a thing.
You should arrange your audience in height order...
- *To the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park;*
Is the theatre air-conditioned?

Customer: Do you have any tickets for *The Lion King*?

Box Office: No madam, this theatre is showing *Les Misérables*?

Customer: Oh - don't all the theatres show all the shows?

Church bulletin board

The following appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off – let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The Rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing 'Break Forth Into Joy'.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5pm – prayer and medication to follow.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7pm there will be hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7pm. Please use the back door.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: 'I Upped My Pledge – Up Yours.'

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

Compiled by Max Bowen

Saffron Lane News

Staying At Home

Reading a Bible verse a day in these challenging times helps to start the day. A quiet walk in the woods near me where hardly a person goes is a balm. Have to say I do not go every day, I have become a little lazy, but try to be positive the day after.

I followed Richard's link for the Good Friday service online and it was uplifting.

On Easter Sunday Andrea Bocelli performed in Milan Cathedral on YouTube. Andrea's performance represented a message of love, healing and hope to the world. Personally I am so grateful that all of my Italian family based near Padua are all safe and am so grateful that my family in the U.K. so far is well. That aside I am so sad that families all over the world are facing such tragedy. Not being able to see loved ones at such a time of need is so distressing. My faith is the only thing that keeps me strong.

Elizabeth

A family's
Love™
is forever

Saffron Lane News

When I went to Swanwick with Sandra in February, seems a lifetime away now, I joined a creative writing session with Eileen Donaldson. We all co-operated on a piece which we adapted called Planting Life and I want to share this with you which may give some hope for our future.

Planting life

Plant three rows of peas -

Peace of mind

Peace of heart

Peace of soul.

Plant three rows of squash -

Squash despair

Squash anger

Squash prejudice.

Plant four rows of lettuce -

Let us be kind

Let us be patient

Let us be friends

Let us be welcoming.

Plant three rows of turnips -

Turn up for church

Turn up to help

Turn up for each other.

Water freely with patience

And cultivate with love.

Remember - we reap what we sow.

And in our garden we must have thyme

Time for each other

Time for rest

And 'me' time too.

Amended by our group from a piece of writing called 'God's garden.
Author unknown.

Elizabeth-Saffron Lane URC

Saffron Lane News

If it was in my power,
I'd send an angel to watch over you.
To be there to guide and protect you,
in everything that you do.

If you don't already have an angel,
then my angel would be on guard,
To comfort and to soothe you,
and hold your hand when times are hard.

My angel would be there to calm you,
to help you deal with any fears.
Ready with a blessed hug,
and a hanky to wipe away any tears.

When happiness and celebrations come,
and joy replaces sorrow,
that angel will be dancing too,
yesterday, today and tomorrow!

But...as I can't send you an angel,
it's not something that I can do,
remember that I'm thinking of you,
and saying a prayer for you.

If I was there with you,
you know that I'd be the very best friend.
Until we meet again,
my prayers, and this poem, I send.

Joy Rice

Whetstone News

Some Thoughts from Kevin West

Do you remember the 80's television show, "Bullseye"? At the end of the show, unlucky contestants were given the chance to: "Let's see what you could have won!" Isn't that how our lives feel at the moment?

Deprived of attending Church - even for Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday; prevented from visiting or being visited by friends and loved ones; required to stay at home and restrict our movements. Doesn't our "normal" life now seem very much like that prize we could have won?

And yet, have you also noticed that the current situation has also brought about positive changes? Families are able to spend time together without the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Road users suddenly seem more courteous towards each other. People taking daily exercise are speaking to each other and have become much more aware of their neighbours. Key workers such as those in the NHS, teachers, Royal Mail workers and retail assistants are suddenly being appreciated for all their hard work which normally goes unnoticed or taken for granted. A sense of togetherness exists in the calm of the crisis. Let us hope that this continues beyond the current situation!

It is interesting, looking at the internet and social media, how many Bible passages have been uploaded and "liked" - especially the first one and a half verses of Psalm 46: "God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid." At a time when our Church congregations are in decline, people still find comfort in the Word of God. Will the aftermath of these difficult times lead to a resurgence of Faith and bring about increasing numbers of people finding Jesus and joining us to worship Him? One can only hope.

Whetstone News

Cont.....

Nevertheless, scripture tells us that throughout all our trials and tribulations, God is with us. We are shown continuously how, in the face of adversity, God always triumphs. We read about and believe in the miracles performed by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. And we know the power of prayer.

May we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, pray for our Church, its members, the wider Church, our families, our friends, our communities, our nation and people the whole world over: May God's blessing be upon them! May they seek solace and guidance in the love of God; May they take their troubles to the Lord in prayer; May they stay safe and well in these difficult times and in the fullness of time, may they come to know the Good News of Jesus Christ and come to know the love and salvation He offers.

May God bless us all.

Amen



Recipe for a "Perfect Marriage"

How many of the comments below would lead to or reflect a "Perfect Marriage"

1. Twice a week we go to a nice restaurant, have a small drink, some good food and companionship. She goes on Tuesday and I go on Friday.
2. We sleep in separate beds. Hers is in Liverpool and mine is in Southampton.
3. I take my wife everywhere, but she keeps finding her way back home.
4. We always hold hands. If I let go she starts shopping.
5. She has an electric mixer, an electric toaster and an electric bread maker. She said "there are too many gadgets here and no place to sit down," So I bought her an electric chair.
6. My wife told me the car was not running very well because there was water in the carburettor. I asked her where the car was. She told me "in the lake"
7. She ran after the dustbin lorry yelling "Am I too late for the rubbish ?" The driver said "No, Jump in !"
8. I married "Miss Right". I just did not know that her first name was "Always"
9. I haven't spoken to my wife in 18 months. I didn't like to interrupt her

Lectionary Readings

May 3rd

Psalm 23

Acts 2:42-47.

1 Peter 2:19-25.

John 10:1-10.

May 10th

Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16

Acts 7:55-60

1 Peter 2: 2-10.

John 14: 1-14

May 17th

Acts 17: 22-31.

Psalm 66: 8-20.

1 Peter 3: 13-22.

John 14: 15-21.

May 24th

Psalm 68: 1-10, 32-35.

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5: 6-11.

Acts 1:6-14

John 17: 1-11.

May 31st

Numbers 11:24-30.

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b.

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13. or Acts 2: 1-21

John 20:19-23.