

Letter to WSAM churches

18th June 2020

Dear Friends

I hope the rain has fallen on your gardens, but not on you(!) and that you are all well and able to look forwards to the future, even if it is difficult to imagine quite what that future will look and feel like.

When I was very young, there was an extremely narrow lane close to our house, which had a right-angle bend on it. I remember my mother explaining the importance of sounding the car horn or bicycle bell shortly before we got to the corner, in case someone was coming the other way. It occurred to me recently that nobody seems to do that any more - do we not have such narrow lanes, or such sharp corners, or do we have greater trust in modern brakes?

It feels to me at the moment as though we are going round a very sharp corner - as though this year the whole world has had to slam the brakes on and change direction... and we still can't really see round the bend. I don't think there will be anyone coming the other way, but there are bound to be a few pot-holes as well as new views and new opportunities. Sharp corners do force us to brake and slow down, in order to get round them safely. Both as individuals and as churches, over the last few months we have had to slow down... to stop doing many of the things we 'normally' do. As we round the corner and may soon start speeding up again, now is the time to reflect on what we have learnt; and to think and pray about our direction. What are we being called towards? And what have we left behind?

In each of our communities, the church congregation has been involved in different activities: Street Pastors, Dementia Cafe, Craft Club, Wednesday Club, Kids Club, PACT Coffee Mornings..... Each of these has its own community of people, who work together and support each other. Over the last three months, although we haven't been able to get together, folk from each group have continued to contact and support each other - and the wider community - through phone calls and through prayer. As we turn the corner and prepare to accelerate away, now is the time to think about how we will continue to support them. To think and pray about which direction we are being called in; what we are really being called to do. Since March, what have we felt we missed? And what have we felt relieved to stop doing? Are there any things we were doing before which we now feel shouldn't be restarted, or, are there new things that God is calling us to start? Please give all these questions some consideration over the next few days or weeks, while we have a little time and space to do so.

Street Pastors

For the last three months the Billingshurst Street Pastors haven't been able to operate patrols, but with schools and pubs re-opening, soon they hope to start going out again. They are also looking to recruit some more volunteers - Christians over the age of 18, with a heart for the local community. If you think you might be interested, or would like to know more, have a word with Don Newport.

The Billingshurst Street Pastors AGM will be held, via Zoom, on the evening of Thursday 2nd July at 8pm. Anybody interested in attending, particularly from Trinity, please contact Don.

Online Worship

A group of us from Pulborough and Petworth were able to worship together online last Sunday evening for the first time. It was great to be able to share together like this, even if not technically polished, and we hope to repeat it.

Can I just point out to everyone using Zoom for worship or social activities that while it is absolutely brilliant to see everyone, recording the meeting, or taking screen shots (which are increasingly appearing on social media) needs permission from every participant in writing if you are not to fall foul of the GDPR regulations. So please don't. Thanks.

News

I'm very pleased to be able to pass on the news that Iris is back home from hospital, and she would like to thank everyone for their prayers and kind messages.

John Bell has written a haunting new song, 'We will meet'. Listen to it here:

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/429204412>

Recommended by me and by Meredith; the score is available too, so we could learn it.

Joke: The Flat Earth Society are reporting that the two metre social distancing rules are pushing some of their members over the edge....

Have a good weekend, and stay in touch - with each other and with me.

Anne Lewitt

These letters and Bulletins, with some details removed for confidentiality, are now being added to our church websites so that they are more easily and widely accessible.