

Letter to WSAM churches

28th May 2020

Dear Friends

Hello - I hope you are all well and enjoying the sunshine when you get an opportunity. It was lovely last Sunday morning to be able to share in a Zoom meeting with lots of friends from the Billingshurst Trinity congregation, as well as (separately) the regular 'After Church Coffee' Zoom with Pulborough URC friends. Of course these are no substitute for meeting in person after worshipping together, but they can be very good. People pop in and out, especially children but sometimes adults like me with dogs that don't understand the rules. They share news of their health or their neighbours. Some bring things to show, that they have been making or doing, or photos of new babies; others compare records of birds and wild flowers seen on daily exercise walks. It all helps to keep us connected, as congregations needing to find alternative ways to 'congregate' for a while.

We all look forward to the day when we can see and chat with those who can't join in these online get-togethers, as well as worshipping all together. It looks as though the return to 'normal' will be gradual and slow, as we try to keep everybody safe. In the meantime we may find all sorts of things that will help us grow in faith and support each other, whether using modern technology or not. One of the differences I think we face in the next few months is that we can perhaps do things in small groups, but not in big ones. Another is that in the warm weather we may be able to meet (in small groups) outdoors. This isn't our old normal, but we can find ways to make it work! Another URC posted on their Facebook page, 'Church isn't closed when its doors are shut. Church is only closed when we fail to love'.

Please consider...

I think we may consider offering worship online at some point, although perhaps not for a main Sunday morning service. There is some expertise amongst our members, but I feel we could do with more people willing to learn, if we are to make the most of the possibilities. Andy (Training) is thinking of offering a morning of training seminars, presented by an expert in the field, exploring how to live stream a service - no details yet, but if anyone (of any age) is interested, please have a word with me and / or with Andy.

Pentecost

This coming Sunday is Pentecost (Whitsun) and I wondered whether any of you who enjoyed making prayer stations during the week leading up to Easter might like to do so

again as we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost? Collect together things associated with wind or fire - candles; twigs and flame-coloured scraps of material; fans of any sort; perhaps a paper windmill; or other ideas you may have. Consider how wind and fire can be unpredictable, uncontrollable, unsafe and apparently alive!

As well as the usual broadcast and online worship services, there will be special ones this week for Pentecost:

Families, and all who enjoy lively family worship, will find a service starting at 9am from the URC Children's and youthwork team on their YouTube channel at bit.ly/cyw-videos with a service sheet at bit.ly/cyw-events and it's suggested you have paper, tissue paper, pens and scissors available!

A rather different service taking place via Zoom on Saturday 30th at 5pm is a joint Communion service of the URC and the Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz, our partner church in Germany. Details at <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3464-urc-and-german-partner-church-to-hold-digital-pentecost-service.html> Service is in both English and German.

News

I have mostly heard good news this week, of people able to get out a bit more and doing wonders in their gardens; however I know that for some of you life is more difficult. You are in my prayers.

Pulborough folk are already aware, but I imagine others will also have known Rene, husband of Ann, who sadly died at the beginning of this week, peacefully and after a long illness. We think of Ann and the family.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.

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.