

NEWS FROM YOUR CHURCH

Well, where has the time gone since our last Bethel Mag? I guess the quick answer is that COVID 19 happened and is still happening. Much of life has been either stopped altogether or changed or restricted. However, there was much that we could do and did. Here are some thoughts from a 2020 review:

Sunday 1st March, we held our Pathfinders and IceBreakers Prizegiving Service, where the guest of honour to give out the prizes to the children was a very familiar looking friendly red dragon! We also had a fundraising day for children's activities throughout the year on the same day. Then Coronavirus struck, so there were no activities for the children!

Sunday 8th March, we held a Loved Ones Remembrance Service and on Friday 13th March, Lynda organised a Quiz Night with a team of helpers making the food and Andy Nicholls being quizmaster.

Then reality hit in on Mother's Day, 22nd March - no services but lots of pots of flowers to get out to everyone! Our first national lockdown started and everything was different. The roads were so quiet, easy to get to places, no holdups, but for me the most noticeable difference was the air! It really did feel and taste (!) cleaner, more pure, and the birdsong seemed so loud and joyous and beautiful, We heard, maybe for the first time in a long time, what Nature was designed to be - a choir of intense beauty and harmony.

Easter 2020 was devoid of services at Bethel, and it felt just so wrong. No Good Friday Choral Society singing through the story in Crucifixion or Olivet to Calvary, no Easter morning service with an Easter breakfast, and no celebration Easter Sunday evening time together. I really don't want another Easter like 2020.

Summer fundraising events had to use thinking outside the box, so we had a Gift Day on the 5th July, then San came up with the brilliant idea of individual homes doing Garden

Sales. She prayed for a total of 10 people to do this including herself, and she got 12. The money raised was superb, but the even better part was the fun, fellowship and outreach to neighbours that took place. Di Woodward had the novel idea of providing Afternoon Tea in boxes! It worked a treat and carried on



way after the Summer. Jacqui Davies made millions of cakes and other people found other ways of managing the COVID risks yet still offering events that could help Bethel and sow seeds of Kingdom life.

The next problem was the situation that by now had become obvious - we weren't going to be able to hold actual services at Bethel in the same way that they had been for

over 100 years. I guess it's true that you can teach an old dinosaur new tricks as we began Zoom meetings for Sunday morning and evening. Zoom to me just meant someone rushing around at enormous speed. Now I know differently, and there's an article later in this Mag about the "behind the scenes" of our Zooms.

Sadly, things seemed to go from bad to worse, and all the outreach groups at Bethel had to be suspended. You'll see that Little Lambs carried on and again, there's an article in this Mag with more details.

COVID has claimed the lives of over 115,000 people in the UK, and we have not been untouched here at Bethel and in the wider extended Bethel Family and Friends. We have lost some really special people - not all from COVID, but since the last Mag, Heaven has gained San, Kate, Margaret B, Margaret R, Jean, Cyril , Lillian, Tony Many of us have contracted the virus and thankfully been able to fight and beat it, but some of us are still struggling with this "long COVID" effect.



We've had to find new, COVID-safe, socially-distanced funeral services. I can't visit people's homes any more so all visits have to be done, rather impersonally, over the phone. At the services, we can't sing out loud - I've resorted to humming loudly! We've had to use

furlough and working from home and the wearing of masks (I can't breathe with mine on!!!) and the offices now have transparent screens in place. Horrid. Can't wait for this to be over.

However, vaccines have been discovered and millions of us have had the jab that will prayerfully see us through this pandemic and through to better times. I wonder what the world has learned during these times? Nature is beautiful and we can help to restore it; being with people is really important, and human touch is irreplaceable. What I wouldn't give

for some massive hugs from our children. The world is closer to the God-created place it was when we are less like ourselves and more like Jesus - kinder, more courteous, showing more gratitude and knowing that we are all in this together and that serving others is good. Strangely enough, some people have been such inspirations to us - Captain Tom was one obvious example, but there have been hundreds of inspiring, encouraging stories from across the country (and world) where people have lifted our spirits and pointed us to the God of Hope. San was one of those people - she was first out, last in to "Clap for the NHS", banging a saucepan with a wooden spoon or dinging that bell for greater effect. 2020 - what a year, but with our eyes fixed on Jesus, the best is yet to come. Faith, not fear.



With love, Jill x

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A Silver Lining?

Jonathan Wilding

A year ago this month, Sue and I were lucky enough to go to the Golden Temple in Amritsar. It stands out amongst all of the places we've been lucky enough to go to in India as it's a place of worship first and a tourist attraction a distant second. It may be the central religious place of worship for all Sikhs, but they pride themselves on it also being a symbol of human brotherhood and equality. It's a place where everyone,



regardless of their religious beliefs, class or race can seek spiritual solace and religious fulfilment. I can testify to this as while we did do all of the things that tourists do I also found that it provided the time and space to focus on my God and my relationship with him. We visited the Temple three times while we were there and on each occasion we found time to think and pray. It focussed me on being positive and looking for the good in people and situations.

Covid 19 had only just started to be an issue when we left for India and while we were there they only had 6 confirmed cases in the whole country. On our return it was clear that it was going to become a major problem for the world and would have a negative impact on all of our lives.

All of us could write a book about how horrible 2020 was—and how that's already spilling over into 2021. I'm going to focus instead on all of those things I'd like to keep from the last 12 months!

When we could no longer attend services at Bethel I was very low - I find religion easier to access when I'm part of a social group and I love to worship by singing. Add to this the fact that I don't particularly like meetings over the computer and it wasn't a promising combination. I tried the first couple of Sundays and to my surprise found that they focussed me on what I did want out of a service. I treasured the things I enjoyed and deliberately went looking for them in the Zoom meetings. I now sing even louder (there's no-one to put off), I listen more closely to the message, trying to find something to take away with me and when we chat at the beginning I can talk to everyone at the same time.

I'm looking forward to being back at Bethel, but when we can I'll make sure that I don't take things for granted and instead will make the most of them.

At a time when there are lots of things you can't do, it's made us concentrate on what we can. Sue and I spent a lot of time in the garden and down the allotment (great places to socially isolate) and we've never had such a healthy diet of home grown veg. We'll certainly find the time to carry this on. The daily walk together as your permitted exercise is now simply part of what



we do. The great thing about this is the number of families and couples who are doing exactly the same thing (socially distanced of course). If we owned a dog it would be as fit as if it belonged to a butcher!

One of the real pluses during these difficult times has been the fact that people seem to have become more aware of the misfortunes of others. I have been involved with a local food bank for a number of years and while the need has undoubtedly grown to worrying proportions, the desire to support, from others more fortunate has also grown - in January last year they were able to supply about 100 families, this January they have helped over 600! This takes me right back to the Golden Temple, as a key part of the work they do there is providing everyone with the opportunity of having a free meal and anyone who has no roof over their head a place to sleep.

The work that Sue does with Project Gambia has seen a constant stream of blankets, baby grows and stationery being brought to our door (before going up in to the loft) and the usual container load went off without any hitch.

One thing that has become very apparent is just how important interacting with other people is. When we are out walking it is now a rarity if people don't make eye contact and exchange a simple hello or good morning. Most weeks we do a circular walk that allows us to call on several friends to check they are ok, ask if they want anything, drop off pieces of cake etc. A few weeks ago, during the first lot of snow our neighbour Dean popped around to see if we needed anything from the shops and we realised that we're now of an age when people feel that we might need a little help as well!

The pandemic has made me realise just how important friends and family are. There are those that we've not been able to see because of various lockdowns and those who we've been able to help, or been helped by on a daily or weekly basis.

Over the last year we've been blessed by having another two additions to the extended family when the twins, a boy Elis and a girl Mali arrived. When this is all over I'm going to start by giving all of my grandchildren a massive hug and then I'm going to celebrate with all of my nearest and dearest.



Then of course there are all

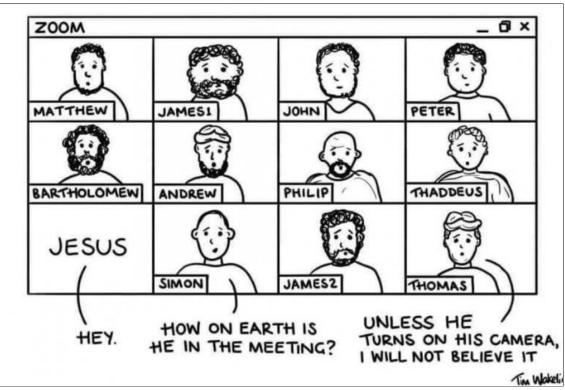
the things that we've taken up to help pass the time during the various lockdowns. On our last trip to India I wrote letters to everyone in my address book and I have carried this on over the year—I now average over 30 letters a week and have rediscovered the joy of using a fountain pen! Having described myself as a Zoom refuser at the start of all of this I now thoroughly enjoy our weekly family quiz. Seven households regularly turn up, each preparing a round, and we have a lot of catching up and some questions.

Sue has attempted to go through her stocks of material and wool by completing many craft projects (the grandchildren have been the recipients of many of them). She has also carried on with something that she started to do in India - having retaken her A level Maths in 2018 she's now attempting the Further Maths course for the first time.

We've also had a reassessment of who are the important people in our society. We all clapped NHS workers, Captain Sir Tom Moore captured our hearts and the main sports star in the news was there because he cared about Free School Meals. We've all seen that the people who care for us and tend us when we are ill; those who help us get food on our plates and those who look after our children are the real superstars.

There are lots of things I'm looking forward to being able to do again whenever we are able to. At the same time I'm going to hang on to those things I've come to realise are even more important.









All Creatures Great and Small



Rosie & Buddy

All my life I've had cats, they are very special to me. I am a quiet person who doesn't always share everything that's going on but I've always been able to hold my cat, give them a hug and things always seem better.



I have been working from home since March last year and haven't been out of the house very often,

beside our holiday last year, and it can get quite lonely. I have preferred working from home if I'm honest, no one to answer to but the cats! As I'm



typing this, I got one on my keyboard and one pawing

at me to touch her - so VERY demanding!!!

They mean the world to me and I thank God for my fur babies.

Jacq Shilton



Wally



One year ago we adopted this beautiful boy from Many Tears Animal Rescue in Wales. He has filled our hearts with joy and eased the pain of being in lockdown and unable to have our kids round to visit. He is an absolute dream in the home and loves nothing more than snuggling up to us and having belly rubs. He has made amazing progress out walking, as he doesn't get on with every dog he meets. He has fantastic recall and has just made a new friend - Honey, a big, beautiful St Bernard cross, who he has spent time exploring the countryside with.



Thank you for being a faithful and beautiful soul Wally, we love you very much!



Maureen & Gary Leonard



Wildlife

During lockdown, it has been an opportunity for lots of people to take more notice of the outside environment - getting closer to God's wonderful creation.



The reduction in traffic and people in general, especially in the first lockdown, created the ideal environment for wildlife to thrive. Although I have worked throughout and not had chance to spend much time outdoors, I have noticed more birds visiting the feeding stations in my back garden (as well as the odd squirrel!) We don't have lots of plants and trees, so its not the ideal environment for birds, as they like somewhere to be able to retreat to, but as well as the usual pigeons and

magpies, we have a regular robin visiting, quite a few great tits and coal tits, blackbirds and the occasional sparrow. We did notice a sparrowhawk hovering above a few times in the summer, but as far as I know he hasn't visited the garden. It's a good job my cats are house cats! I keep a pair of binoculars next to my chair so when I get visitors to the feeding stations I can get a better look at them - the pictures here are taken with my phone through the binoculars! My latest plan is to introduce a bird bath, with a few rocks in there so the smaller birds can use it too - I'm so looking forward to seeing who will be visiting to have a bath!

Jane Hodges

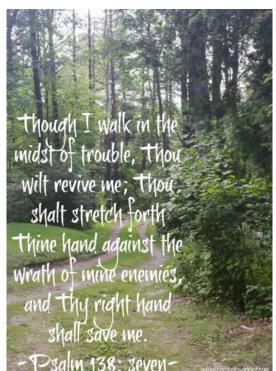
Our Daily Exercise

Nigel and I are both fit and well. We do not take this for granted, we are truly blessed in many ways, but we have really found this lockdown so much harder than previous times.

So we made the decision to go outside and get some fresh air every day even if only for 20 minutes, although most often it is for 1 hour.

We find this is helping our mental health. As well as keeping moving and getting us out of the house while keeping a safe distance from people, it is also a great time for prayer and reflection.





I know it is often advised to do this simple thing to help with our mental health but I could not have imagined just how much we have and continue to benefit from this new found appreciation for the great outdoors. We have managed to get out almost everyday since Jan 1st, even in the snow, only missed 2 days so far this year.

We wanted to share with you in the hope that our

simple act might inspire or help someone to get outside. If you can't walk, just try and sit outside in the fresh

air and give thanks, maybe just pray The Lord's

Prayer. I am sure you will find some benefit.

Irene Dunn





PRAYER WALK DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Here are some suggestions, compiled by Nicky Fenton from Derbyshire, of prayer activities that might help you connect with God as you enjoy your permitted daily walk/run/bicycle ride. As you prepare to leave your home, pray that you will be open to encountering God in different ways and ask him to accompany you on your journey today. Look out for some of the things below and choose which ones you want to focus on today.

- Neighbouring homes pray for God's blessing upon your neighbours and those living in your street.
- Flowers / trees thank God for all the good things in your life as you pause to enjoy their beauty.
- Crossroads/road junction reflect upon any choices or decisions you are facing at the moment and ask God to guide you and show you the path you should take.



- **Bins** take a moment to think about anything you have said or done recently which you regret. Imagine throwing those things into the bin. As you confess them, let go of them and receive God's free gift of forgiveness and reassurance.
- **Shops / businesses** pray for all those working to feed and support the nation, especially key workers. Think about those facing economic hardship and pray for God's provision for them.
- Sun as you feel the warmth of the sun shining enjoy the warmth of God's love for you
 and rest in his embrace as a child in a loving parent's arms.
- Postbox / telegraph poles remember all those you will contact today through email, social media, on the telephone etc... and pray that those conversations will be mutual blessings.
- **Bird song** as you listen to the birdsong, pray that God will open your ears to enable you to hear what he wants to say to you today.
- **Drains** reflect upon those things you find tiring and draining that seem to sap your energy. Ask for God's help to faithfully attend to those things you need to and the wisdom to know what you can discard and let go of at this time.
- Street names / road signs think about how you are acting as a sign of God's love and pray for opportunities to point others to Jesus and ways to model and demonstrate his love.
- Wind as you feel, see and hear the wind blowing, pray that God will send his Holy
 Spirit upon you and fill you to overflowing with his life, love, energy and gifts.
- **People** as you see and pass others, offer them a smile (if safe not to be wearing a mask!) or a few words of greeting. When you have walked on, pray for God's blessing upon them and that they might know God's love for them.

Getting Through

My one thing that has got me this far through the lockdown was then and still is my being able to talk to the Lord and pray now and know I will still be able to carry on as long as it takes in the knowledge that Bethel and God will be waiting for me when its all over. Amen

I have faith it will be sooner than we think.

Lynda Kirton



I complete a personal picture board of people, places, things that have inspired me through the year.



I use it as a reminder of the gratitude I owe Bethel and the family who have supported me.

I call it a gratitude board.

I have one displayed in my kitchen and this is one from a previous year Di Powell





What a difference a year makes!

This time last year I was looking forward to celebrating a big birthday with my family.

We had a holiday to Cyprus to look forward to, on the whole life was pretty good. Then we are hit with COVID-19 and life changed far more than any of us could of imagined.

No hugging, no meals out, no Chapel and seeing my other important family. Lots of us struggled with life and lockdown in different ways.

A year on and we seem to be no further forward really.

BUT..... Sarah Westwood had the brilliant idea and started Bethel Family WhatsApp Group. How little did I know how very important this group would be to me.

We have shared sadness, prayers, songs, silly stuff, serious stuff. We have virtually hugged each other and held each other's hands through some very tough times.

The only certain thing we can hold onto while we wait for better times, is that we have each other and God has all of us under his wings. We have to trust him and stay strong and faithful.

One day we will worship together at Chapel, we will hug each other and I'm sure there will be many tears of joy.

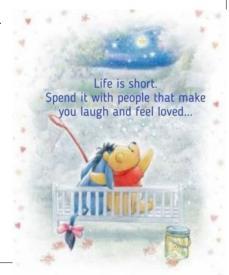
Until then stay strong, keep your faith and continue to support each other.

I love you all so much xx Jane Hart

The Bethel Family WhatsApp group is a contact group that was started by Sarah Westwood at the very beginning of the first lockdown back at the end of March 2020. It started off small with just a few of the ladies from Bethel participating and now it numbers just under 60 ladies. Some participate regularly and others just read what they can of the messages and only post occasionally, but it has proved to be a vital support network for many during this time when we cannot meet together and has helped to draw everyone closer

together and deepened our friendships and faith. Some days there are hundreds of messages, other days just a few, but it is a positive safe space in which to pray and to be with each other and with God. If you would like to join, please let us know and we can ask a Group Admin to add you.

We also have other WhatsApp groups going which are specific to particular groups in church, such as our young people, Pathfinders, Shop, Team and Pastoral Carers, which keep everyone from those areas in contact and supporting each other.



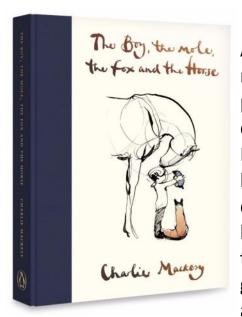
Praising our way through

Singing is banned! At least in public it is, which sadly includes singing in church.

However, within our own homes, singing is certainly something we're free to do and there have been a wide range of songs that have been popular with us this year, either on Zoom or in the WhatsApp groups. One of the most consistently shared songs is 'Waymaker', written by Nigerian singer songwriter Sinach in 2015, but covered by many others in the last couple of years - including here at Bethel. Waymaker, miracle worker,



promise keeper, light in the darkness - plenty of references there to Jesus - "that is who you are." This song looks to have become a favourite at bethel, and once we are all back at Chapel, in the same place atg the same time, I can imagine this song taking off. In times of difficulty, praising our God is the best way forward as we wait for Him to reveal His plans.



Reading our way through

Another way we've spent our time over these long months has been reading - and being inspired. One particular book that has helped many through, and is quoted often, is The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse by Charlie Mackesy. On the surface a very simple book, sparce words accompanied by mainly line drawings. But the depth of meaning behind them is

breath-taking - pointing toward something even greater - a radical, loving, all-encompassing

acceptance, love, and celebration of the human person.

Charlie is a former atheist who has found a deep faith and sees his work as a way to "introduce God to the people he loves." Some of his talks at Holy Trinity Brompton (HBT) are available on YouTube.





Captain Sir Tom Moore (30th April 1929 - 2nd February 2021)

By Emma Woodhouse

Captain Sir Tom Moore was a hero forged in the furnace of past crises, his life a noble one of service and sacrifice. His inspirational strength, positive spirit and determination to help his nation was a light in the darkness to us. Captain Tom's efforts to support and protect British citizens at their

most weak and vulnerable is truly valiant. To do this once in a lifetime is remarkable but to do it twice is awe-inspiring.

The motivation to do his bit for his neighbour and nation during this crisis started off by doing the one thing he could do, given his physical limitations, simply putting one foot in front of the other. With courage and resolve to make a difference, no matter how small, or so he thought, not only did he raise £32.7 million, but also touched the heart of many millions more, strengthening us with hope and joy and inspiring us to follow his lead.

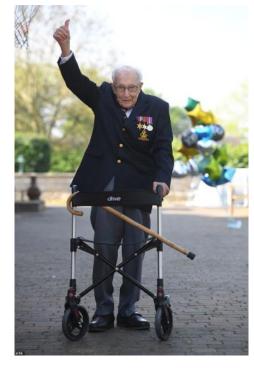
In his kind and generous manner, he quietly began a gallant act, never knowing that this small step would make such a profound and positive impact on the lives of so many.

In honour of Captain Tom, armed with courage and faith, we can all make a difference. In the words of Jesus

'Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.' (Matthew 17 v20).

Just by putting one step in front of the other and keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, we too can move mountains.

Thank you, Captain Tom, for being a beacon of hope and inspiration. And in the words of Victoria Coren Mitchell, thank you Captain Tom for reminding us 'that you can be ninety-nine and still have some of life's greatest adventures left to come.'



Lambs During Lockdown Jen Anslow, Manager of Little Lambs Pre-School Centre



On March 23rd 2020 Little Lambs, like all other schools and nurseries were told that we had to close our doors to all but the children of specific keyworkers. At that time, we had about 9 keyworker children, although all except 2 decided that they could care for their children at home. As you can imagine, opening nursery for 2 children wouldn't have been much fun for them when they were used to playing with 36 children in nursery.

Thankfully, through discussions with parents and other settings, we were given the opportunity to link up with Hob Green School and care for our

children on their premises alongside their keyworker HOBYGREEN children. This turned a difficult time into a fantastic chance to make ties with a school on our doorstep. Three of our

staff took it in turns to work alongside some of their staff to try our hardest to create some fun learning opportunities for our children. They had the opportunity to make new friends, and we had the opportunity to create very useful professional links. They have a fantastic forest school area that we will now have the chance to make the most of when life returns to normal again!

On June 1st guidelines once again changed (how many times has that

happened over the past few months — we just get up to speed with one set of guidelines and then another appears!) We were then able to encourage as many children back into our setting as we could accommodate in 'bubbles' of between 8 to 10 children. What a lot of new lingo we now have, to refer to



'bubbles' of children is now second nature to all in education! Initially, we thought parents would be very wary for them to return and, understandably, some were, but very quickly, so many wanted to return that we had to reduce the number of days that children attended to

accommodate all the bubbles! It was wonderful to have nursery filled with the sound of children playing again! The children have been so resilient throughout the last year — they have happily taken on board all the changes, washing their



hands at every given opportunity, leaving their parents at the door, playing in small bubbles rather than with their normal large group of friends, and not having the normal wealth of equipment around them. As you can imagine, we have had to change the Lambs environment a



little. Gone are the cushions, dressing up clothes and drapes! If it can't be cleaned with anti-bac cleaner between each group of children, then it can't be in nursery at the moment! The staff team have been fantastic — I'm sure they feel that they constantly have either a spray bottle of anti-bac in their hand or are squirting hand sanitiser! It's taken its toll on our hands, I can tell you. But, through all the difficulties and changing guidelines, we have managed to work together as a staff team, alongside

parents to continue to give the children all the learning opportunities that they have been used to at nursery. We have created a 'new normal' in our environment where the children still feel happy, valued, secure and stimulated. They have had to cope with so much in their little lives, that it is more important than ever that their time with us is a wonderful time that will set them up for the rest of their lives and give them the confidence and the skills to thrive during their school life.



During the current lockdown, we have followed the Government guidelines and have remained open to all. We have had some families who chose to keep children at home, but most returned to keep some normality in the children's lives. It's been a bit of a rollercoaster, despite putting in place everything we

Keep your hands clean!

possibly could, we have had to close for periods due to contact with positive cases, but we pray that we are through the worst now and that

Wash away the germs!

there is light at the end of the tunnel with more vaccinations being carried out.

We are now beginning to welcome new 2 year olds into nursery who will not recall life

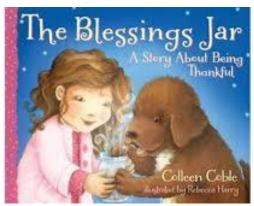


Lambs just have to make it our priority to ensure that in our little oasis here, they can at least have all the love, security and opportunities that they would have previously had. We realise it is those social interactions that they will have missed out on more than anything and it is wonderful that we can continue to offer them those at Little Lambs.



Count your Blessings

Clare Robson



Inspired by this book, create a blessings jar to help recognise that even on the most awful of days we can still find something we have been blessed with, something to be thankful for. When you look for one blessing you often find a lot more.

A lovely activity to do either just as a one off or as an ongoing activity throughout the year. It could be something to look back through once a week, once a month, once a year or just on those days where a little

reassurance is needed...... We all need that, especially in our current situation. You will need a jar or a container or a box, anything to hold small pieces of paper. You could decorate it however you like!

Write down things that happen to you that you feel you have been blessed with or go looking for them!



An activity that we

were given by

positivity jar.

school as part of

children's mental

health week was a

Positivity Jar

This jar can be filled with positive words, comments or affirmations. The purpose of the jar is to use it whenever you are feeling sad and need to remember all the positive things about yourself.

A number of example slips have already been made that you can put in your jar. However, please try and think of all the positives about yourself and complete some of the blank slips provided.

You can use a jam jar, a coffee jar or a large glass storage jar. Feel free to decorate the jar however you wish. You could wrap the jar in paper, use paints or add accessories to it, such as ribbon, stickers and pom-poms.

The jar needs to be personal to you and make you feel happy when you look at it. Take your time decorating your jar and then decide what slips you are going to put in it.

The adult you are with may have some positive slips that they want to complete about you as well. These can all be added to your jar.

Once you have completed your jar, try to look at it every day for a few minutes and remember how special and positive you are as a person.

You could even give a jar to a special person. The jar could contain all the positive, special qualities that you love about them. Just reading the positive comments will help them to feel more positive.





Bethel Memories

Val Woodhouse

Down the centuries God has guided His people through plagues, wars, famines and pandemics. Since 1888 when Bethel was formed, the chapel has served the people of Lye and Wollescote during four major international crises namely World War1, the Spanish flu, World War 2 and Covid-19. We have little documentation as to how church coped with WW1 and nothing as to how Bethelites managed during Spanish flu. We know that it did affect Lye and Wollescote from the 1919 report Dr Darby the officer of health presented to the eight councillors who made up the governing body of Lye and Wollescote UDC, Dr Darby stated that of the 166 people that had died locally 24 people had been lost due to Spanish flu. One of the councillors present at that meeting was Amos Perrins, a founder member and Trustee of Bethel Chapel, a man of humble origins who is listed in the trust deeds as a labourer. Hearing the call of God as a very young man, Amos felt compelled by his deep Christian faith to serve his fellow citizens and by self-education and hard work he rose to prominence locally. By the end of his life in 1928 he was loved and respected throughout the district. He is buried in Lye and Wollescote cemetery and the font in Bethel is dedicated to the memory of Amos.

So, to discover the Bethel spirit in a world devastating crisis we look to how they managed during WW2 and I have to say they responded as true Christian soldiers. One of their first acts was to establish a Comfort Fund so that the Bethel members could send parcels to troops on active service and one sure fire way to raise funds was via tickets for a Concert Party show. The Concert Party members were troupes of talented people who would get together to provide entertainment in order to fundraise for a cause or, by the start of WW2 to raise morale as well. In February 1940, the Committee minutes record that the *'Cosmopolitan Concert Party be granted a practice room,'* in return they would dedicate two fundraising concerts a year to Bethel, the show billed for 22nd August 1940 promised to be *'like nothing ever seen before'* sadly for us we have no follow up report as to what that unique experience was. Magazines from that war period show that much of the money raised went towards the Bethel Comfort Fund. This fund paid for parcels of cigarettes, chocolate, socks and other

'comforts' gathered primarily by church people to be sent to the troops in the 'front line.' In 1943 Miss Hilda Moore became the first woman added to the list of recipients, we know nothing else about her, but we do know that in order to qualify for a parcel personnel had to be on active service and have some connection to Bethel. I remember meeting by chance a man who had received Bethel parcels during the war, he told me that knowing he was being thought of with love and the solace the contents brought was beyond words. I was minded of St Francis who advised preaching the Gospel at all times and to only use words when absolutely necessary.

Despite the hardship the war was causing on the Home Front it was decided in Chapel that serving the Lord was



essential, evening services carried on as usual, morning Divine service was suspended for a short while because night time air raids had been so frequent that working men and women as well as the children were exhausted from lack of sleep. Knowing their freedom to express their faith was under threat, Bethelites did whatever they needed to do to ensure that God was served. During the winter people were asked to each donate a lump of coal which helped stave off the excess cold in chapel. Preachers walked many miles in the harshest of weathers to keep preaching engagements when buses were erratic due to wartime conditions and considered it a privilege to be able to preach God's word. In 1941, Sunday School teachers were inspired by modern psychology to adopt the most up to date teaching methods as well as introducing a new class for young adolescents which was deemed a real success. The Anniversary continued throughout the war years, enthusiasm to appear on the platform being as strong as ever. In 1940 it was noticed the girls were diligently attending many other local Anniversary services, the then editor of the magazine humorously suspected it was for comparative purposes over that of piety! After the Anniversary came the 'Treat,' the minutes of July 1940 record the resolve to continue to hold a treat despite war conditions. Because of food rationing it was not possible to place many bulk orders for refreshments, so an appeal was be made for members to each contribute a little from their rations: needless to say, the Bethel spirit prevailed and in an echo of the fives loaves and two fishes the sum total was greater than its parts for all were fed and watered adequately and judging from the Bethel magazines of that era this system of sharing continued until food became more plentiful again.

Mindful of the obligation of the Christian to share, Bethelites were generous with Chapel resources which they deemed as God's resources, giving the use of a room to the Firewatchers corps and the Committee minutes of June 1942 record the visit by Worcestershire County Council and their consequent request that Bethel allow the church 'hut' to be used for serving dinners to local school children (precursor of the school dinner). what is so lovely is that there are still some wonderful Bethelites who remember this.

As well as the joy of fellowship in the face of adversity there was grief, Bethelites mourned loved ones lost in the heroic struggle for freedom including young Barry Hill whose memorial plaque can be seen by the Bethel organ he played before going off to fight and subsequently lose his life whilst serving his country, leaving behind a young widow. Another was Sim Williams who obtained special permission to marry his sweetheart and fellow Bethelite Doreen Smith at chapel shortly before the D Day landings where he was badly injured, Sim never fully recovered mentally or physically from his injuries and died at the relatively young age of forty one. After the war times were still hard and in 1950 Bethel decided to make a grant of ten shillings to all members of Bethel who were widows,

The Anglican bishop and scholar N T Wright believes 'the most important response to evil and suffering isn't words so much as action, even action that may be costly. Jesus modelled this for us.' The value of action borne of faith is encapsulated in the response of Bethel to WW2. Like the Bethelites before us, in this time of crisis the Bethel family has continued to worship and pray together and fundraise for the church and it's outreach, I am sure in years to come someone will be reflecting on our own Bethel heroes, the key workers, and all of the Bethel family who have shown such strength and resilience in this time of hardship and suffering. Through faith, not fear, we have continued to serve God and support each other, following the tradition of those early Bethelites. In Jesus' name, long may we continue.

Sunday Zoom

Back on 19th April 2020 we started broadcasting our Sunday morning services via Zoom. We are now 42 services on with over 1700 attendances. There have been a few funny moments and many educational sessions on how to use Zoom itself (including our very own Pastor)..... it's never too late to learn!!

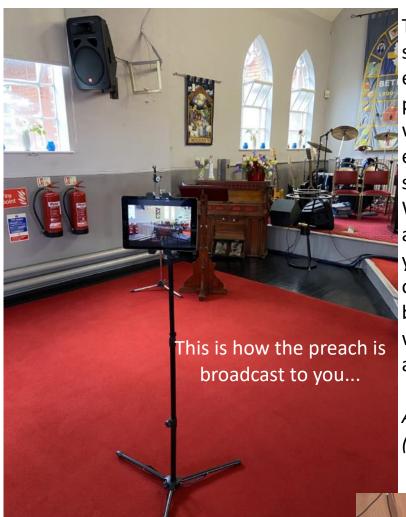


We embraced this new way of bringing church to everyone quite quickly but there had to be a steep learning curve to ensure Sunday morning (and now evening) services can take place from the comfort of your own home. The early days led to testing every single percussion instrument, for how it sounded over Zoom with the conclusion being 'absolutely all of them sounded terrible'. Some of the feedback given was 'Was someone breaking into church as you were singing' and 'we can't hear you over the banging'.



Here is our faithful socially distanced band.....
(when the heating timer goes off)

Whilst you can simply not replace the face to face interaction before and after our Sunday morning services, many enjoy the chance to catch up on zoom for 10mins prior and following the service on a Sunday. Some may enjoy the power of the 'mute all' button too!



The photo below is how the worship song words are broadcast to you for each and every song.... many hours preparation time for Andy N while we lock him away in the office to ensure we can use two iPads in the same location...

We hope you may join us one Sunday at 10.30am or 6pm - all the details you need to access the services are on the back page of this magazine, but the easiest way in is to go via our website - www.bethelchapel.net - and click on the link for the services.

Andy Parkes (Techy genius!)

DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan







Tribute to Kate Turner (née Winning)

Kate is the daughter of Judy & Ken Winning. We have been praying for Kate at Bethel since the time she was first diagnosed with Leukaemia over 25 years ago, and has become dear to the heart of all of us who have been praying for her over the years.

This is a tribute to her inspirational life from her family:

Our beautiful daughter, a wonderful sister, auntie, confidant and best friend.

We have no comprehension of how the world continues to turn right now, a world without you in it.

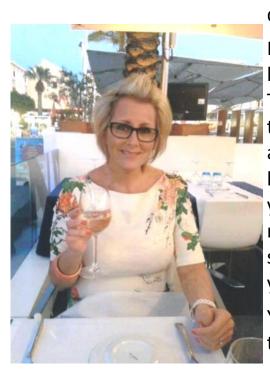
Thank you for teaching us what life is all about. For the love you gave to everyone in your life, for the laughter and fun you always created - especially for your nieces and nephews who adored you, and you loved them as if they were your own.

Thank you for fighting so hard for us, such courage, unimaginable bravery, selflessness. For the time twenty five years ago you battled and survived two episodes of leukaemia and two transplants, such strength and

determination.

Heartbreakingly, all these years later leukaemia returned again for a third time. The intense chemo and treatment proved too much for your weakened body to bear and we lost you. We know you tried so hard for your family and hope we can follow your lead and find some of your strength right now. If unconditional love could have saved you, it would have been plain sailing - you gave and received that in abundance.

You were at your happiest when we were all together. Thank you for being the





cornerstone of our family. For always being there to support everyone of us, for your amazing hostess and culinary skills, for your advice, your ideas, your organisation. We hope to learn from you and promise to try our best to make you proud and look after everyone as you did. Can't promise to match your roast beef dinner or brioche bread and butter pudding though! That was legendary.

You will be in our thoughts every single day and in our hearts for eternity. We will look for every sign of you being near and keep all those beautiful memories alive by talking about you and talking to you. We'll listen toall



your favourite songs and watch all the crazy videos you made with the kids - we will try and go on holidays together in your honour - I know you will be with us.

Thank you for being a truly beautiful soul and an inspiration to us all - we were so blessed to have you for 47 years, we had the best. Now Heaven has gained the most magnificent angel.

We love you

We would like to thank all those wonderful friends at Bethel who prayed constantly for healing for Kate - she was aware of all the prayer vigils for her and we are so very grateful. She is safe now with our Lord and at peace. God bless you all

Jude, Hollie and family



In loving memory of San

In October 2018, San was diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer, and by medical professionals, was not expected to live until Christmas. Little did those doctors know San or the lifesustaining power of the Lord she served. Not until 9th September 2020, did she take her last breath here on earth in Mary Stevens Hospice, (which is where she wanted to be) and begin her eternal life with Jesus and all those of faith who had gone before - a reward more than well-deserved. For San, dying held no fear for her at all - she was at peace knowing where she was headed and that her life was in God's control. She knew she was never at the mercy of cancer, but would



always be right where God knew she was and where He was allowing her to be.

San planned her funeral service long before she died. She chose her music, and San, being San, wrote her own little life story and selected who she wanted to speak at her funeral, and who she wanted to be there too. She knew all about COVID restrictions, and had we been COVID free, I do believe her funeral service at Bethel would have been enormous. She'd have liked that - San always enjoyed a get-together so that she could do what she did really well - talk!!

Here's the piece San wrote:

San's Life Story

"I was the 2nd child of Molly and Charles Henry Floyd – their first daughter was stillborn.

I was Christened at Christ Church Lye and went to Sunday School aged 4 but didn't like the vicar! I came to Bethel aged 6. I left as a teenager, but Glenda's Grandad was Sunday School Superintendent and came and did a visit. I went back and the rest is history.

I married in Bethel in April 1981 – and was married by Jim Dickens. Sarah was born in 1984.

My schools were Wollescote and Halesowen Grammar and then I went to work in Lloyds Bank New Street, Quinton, Lye, Halesowen and after Sarah, Corporation Street Birmingham and Edgbaston. I finally left to open Little Lambs Pre-School Centre with Mal Hawker in 1991.

I have been fund-raising ever since Sarah was a baby – my first Christmas Fayre was 1985.

I took the Youth to Greenbelt, started Toddlers, I've been a Sunday School teacher, been part of Committee, a Trustee and the new TEAM and of late – Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator.

Illness forced early retirement. Thanks to Jen Anslow for running with the baton.

We are here today – from here to eternity."

San then chose Gemma and Helen to talk about the famous IceBreaker days:

They spoke warmly of San being more than a youth leader, but being more like their spiritual Mom. She shared not only Sundays with them but her home, which felt like a second home to many of them, and her free time to take them on long walks, on 'sleep'-overs, ice-skating and Laserquest adventures and to Greenbelt to name but a few, and they always wanted to stay 'just a bit longer'. She also held their hands while they said their salvation prayers and led many of them to their baptism.

San talked a lot about heaven, 'emerald courts and sapphire skies'. She engrained into them how

fragile and precious life on earth is, but when we get to heaven there would be no crying and pain. Just paradise with our Father.

Their beautiful tribute ended with these words -"So, we give thanks and rejoice for San's life, for the work she did, the legacy it leaves behind, the seeds of faith she planted into each of us. To have known her has been one of the greatest privileges and her memory will live on in us all always. Goodnight San. See you in the morning."

It was Glenda's turn next to give the tribute on behalf of church: Here are some snippets:



Sandra's life at Bethel was just that – her life.

She devoted so much of her time and energy in the service of her Lord here at Bethel that the two go together like strawberries and cream – you can have both individually but together they are so much better.

Sandra brought out the best in everyone and swept everyone along with her enthusiasm for doing the best for her Lord, and it had to be the best, there were no cutting corners for San.

Her enthusiasm knew no bounds and her imagination would soar with possibilities for God – from the initial germ of an idea she would add on and expand until, with a gleam in her eye and a chuckle she would present an outrageous scenario.

The number of times she caught my arm at the end of one of her flights of fancy and would say "Oh, Glen. wouldn't that be marvellous!" Yet she was so practical with all her ideas.

Not for her an idea and pass it on to someone else to execute, she would work on it and discuss it and plan it until all the 'i's were dotted and all the 't's crossed.

Sandra was such a warm, loving and caring person. And that was San, welcoming new comers and striking up conversations to make everyone feel welcome and accepted yet never neglecting 'old' friends either.

So many years and so many memories of San here at Bethel, but I have two special memories that happened when we went to the EuroFire conference at the NEC in Birmingham.

Once, when we were returning to our cars the heavens opened with a summer rain storm that had you wet in moments. San began laughing, splashing in puddles and singing as loud as she could "reign on me, Sovereign Lord, reign on me"!!

Still at Eurofire after a series of worship meetings and lectures San and I were walking outside – probably going to pick up Sarah, Sam and Gareth from the children's section – and we were revelling in the Christian atmosphere and the sense of peace and love when she turned to me, eyes shining and said "Oh Glen, this must be what heaven is like," then her eyes lit up and she gave her characteristic chuckle and said "except we've got to drive home!"

Well San, you haven't got to drive home any more so enjoy heaven and we'll see you when we get there.

Then of course, there was her story of Little Lambs. Jen spoke for that:

Anyone who knew San, knew that Little Lambs was a huge part of her life. Anyone who knows Little Lambs knows that San is a huge part of our lives – the staff's lives and every family's life who she came into contact with. She is dear to us all. I have been inundated with kind messages and cards from parents, both past and present, who wanted to share their memories and express their love and gratitude to San for everything that she did for their children and their families. Lambs was always an opportunity for San to use her faith to outreach to families, and she never missed a chance! Sometimes this was just kind words as she greeted each family and child by their name as they entered nursery each day. Sometimes it was noticing if someone appeared in need, upset or



concerned. She would always find time for that chat or support, always happy to listen. Her kindness and love for the families in nursery went deeper than just an ear when needed. On more than one occasion when visiting families for a home visit before their child came to nursery, San noticed that the family was in need. Perhaps no heating on a cold winter's day, or barely any toys or furniture. San would always organise what they needed as soon as she could, organise heaters, or furniture, or food. She would always do it in such a kind and genuinely caring way that the family were never offended. Just grateful for her kindness and they became yet another family who would always hold San dear in their hearts and be forever grateful to her.

She touched thousands of families lives in her time at Lambs, literally! Auntie San was loved by both children and parents. One parent told me: "She had an amazing sunshine that shined over everyone." I am so grateful that she shined over us.

Her sense of fun and enthusiasm was infectious in nursery. Auntie San's role play was inspiring – she would engage the children all morning playing shops or vets or firefighters. On many occasions she has persuaded a member of staff to hide a cuddly toy cat in the tree in the garden, then take the children out in firefighters hats and costumes, miraculously notice the cat stuck and spend all morning role playing the emergency with them! She mesmerised them!

Sports Day was another of San's fortes. She had such energy and enthusiasm that all the other younger and supposedly fitter staff were left in awe of her!

Her Nativities were famous. Parents were always left amazed at how she would organise sometimes 55 children in costumes to produce a performance that didn't leave a dry eye in the house! Parents were always astounded that San could encourage all those children to perform through a 45 minute production, when they sometimes couldn't even get them to sit down on a chair to eat dinner. Her super-powers for Nativities were her enthusiasm and sense of fun. She would practice with them again and again, but it would never be the same twice, she would sing silly words to the songs and have them all in hysterics. She was always quick to ad lib on the day when things didn't go quite as planned.

Her genuine love for the children shone through in any activity she was part of, along with her infectious sense of humour. I don't think there is a member of staff in nursery that hasn't been soaked by San either at Sports Day or during one of her infamous water fights — San with a water pistol, or worse still a hose pipe, was lethal. The children would all be laughing, but above them all would be San, chuckling the loudest of all!

When talking to staff, the over-riding comments that came through were about San's kindness, her

compassion, her energy, her love and guidance and her wonderful ability to see people's true potential and know just the best way to enable them to shine. She had a way as a manager, of taking a member of staff under her wing and bringing out the best in them, moulding them into what they never thought they could become. She would be incredibly persuasive when encouraging each one of us out of our comfort zone, getting us to face the tasks we shied away from – maybe talking in front of a group of people or using a microphone. She would persuade us to give it a go and would then stand in the side-lines with a big smile on her face as she watched us shine, proud of her prodigies!

We have had a huge amount of fun with San over the years, our staff Christmas gatherings were always an event. One that stands out was our meal at the Copthorne many years ago. Through Sarah's contacts, San seemed to get us a very good deal on the wine – in fact it seemed to be a bottomless wine bottle that San continually had in her hand topping up everyone's glass! San just loved everyone to have such fun. The event that we had booked onto was initially a bit reserved, but, during a trip to the toilet, San noticed a better event further down the corridor that had an Abba tribute band playing! She pulled strings and within a few minutes we were moved. No one has a clue how much we actually drank, but we do remember Jill having to come and retrieve us in the minibus at the end of the night as some staff members were all for booking rooms to continue the party!

Lambs has always been a family, with San as our matriarchal figure at the helm. Even throughout her illness, San has been a huge support and a tower of strength to me. As the children were leaving Lambs for school in July, San came to nursery to say 'bye' to each of them, giving them each a helium balloon to take home, so happy to see the joy in their faces as they walked down the drive holding them.

San was always so proud of nursery and her staff team. Many of the team began by having children who came to Lambs or even coming to Lambs themselves as children! We all thought it was such a warm, nurturing environment that we aspired to work there and genuinely feel blessed that San gave us the opportunity to fulfil our 'dream job'. It is thanks to San that Lambs is what it is, that the team is what it is and that our ethos is what it is. Our reputation is down to you San and the fact that so many families have been brought to Bethel by being touched by your love, compassion and faith is also down to you.

So, San, thank you from Team Lambs for the joy, the kindness, the hard work and the love that you poured into Little Lambs for all those years. It is appreciated by not just us, but all those lives that you touched as they walked through our doors. We are all so proud to continue your work at Little Lambs as your legacy. All our love San, always.

So, the full texts of all the tributes are available - either by email or as hard copies - just call the Bethel office and we can soon sort that out for you.

From the day San received her cancer diagnosis, her favourite phrase was, "It is well with my soul." We haven't been able to meet at Bethel for Sunday morning services for almost a year. When the day comes and we are COVID free and able to be back at Bethel again, our first service is going to be bitter-sweet. It will be so wonderful to see people again and to hug them and sing our praise and worship together to our God. But there will be no San I can't actually believe that will be the case. Maybe, if we listen carefully enough, we'll be able to hear San joining in from Heaven, because Bethel without San is just unthinkable.

Sing out San, we'll be listening. Until we meet again

BETHEL REASURES Heaven Scent



Nigel Cook

The Bethel shop was first mentioned in June last year. We are blessed to have the use of the shop, in Quarry Bank High Street, rent free.



I had been volunteering for the Salvation Army shop in Halesowen and Shirley for about 8 years, so when I showed interest in our shop I was asked to be volunteer manger.



The shop and garden at the back needed a lot of attention. The garden, for use of a better word was a

wilderness! Di Powell is a keen gardener and took on the project of the garden with the help of church people (you know who you are). Even her own friend's helped to lay the now lovely path free of charge. One day while helping Di in the garden I really felt God say to me ask her would she like to be Assistant manager.



She said yes. That was the start of a wonderful God filled relationship not just work but good friends too.

The work in Decorating inside the shop was taken on by Ken Winning with the help of John Weston and their friend, once again giving their time free.

The shop itself has the main area and a back room. Jill's vision was for the back room to be used as an outreach post. So that room is called the Sanctuary. We have a sign on the door which leads to it saying "We have a room at the back of the shop which we call the Sanctuary; it is a quiet room, so if you need a chat or a prayer please ask."





The shop name is in memory of San, it was her name for it, what a touching tribute to a true lady of God.

We opened the shop on Tuesday 27th October last year. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 situation in our area, we were only able to open for a week and two days before closing to keep both volunteers and visitors safe.

Our trading hours when open will be Tuesday to Saturday, 10am-4pm. While we were open we were not only generating income for Bethel but more importantly were able to spread His Word and sow seeds for His Kingdom. We are in the process of having some refurbishment done, so when lockdown allows and the repairs have been done we will reopen. We have a few volunteers that have helped so far, but we need more – please get in touch if this is something you feel you would like to do. Also we have been blessed with donations and fittings from Camilla and "The Second Time Around" shop in Halesowen which is sadly closing down.

Bethel Treasures is a team effort. There are too many people to mention individually. Di has a vision for the garden to be a community thing. I would very much like to start a community drop in group and a community prayer meeting, so watch this space!

There is a shop Facebook page if you would like to keep updated on the opening of the shop – search for <u>'Bethel Treasures Heaven Scent'</u> to find and like it.



Until we can open again, Covid secure, please keep the shop and all that goes with it in your prayers. As the song goes "Everything will be made beautiful in his time".

God bless you all from Nigel.

Covid-19 - Vaccination Experiences

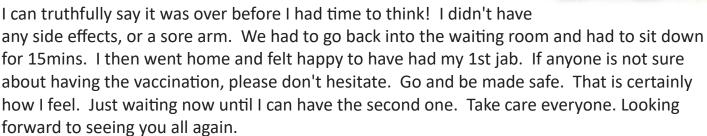


If you have to have a Covid vaccination and get the chance to go to the Spiritualist Church in Stourbridge, that's the place to go for cheerful staff. No waiting time. really lovely doctor. Told me what was going on. Asked me few questions. Then asked if I might be pregnant!! He then asked me if I wanted to ask him any questions, to which I answered "yes please ... would you like to

borrow my glasses if you think I might be pregnant at my age"! He and the nurse burst out laughing and asked if I wanted to stay! They really put me at ease. First class staff.

Lynda Kirton

I had a phone call from my surgery on Friday 8th January to say I could have my Covid vaccination on Sunday 10th January at 4 15pm. I had to go to the Northway Medical Centre in Sedgley. Susan (my daughter) came and took me there. It was very well organized, very little waiting, and lovely staff. After being taken into one of the surgery rooms, I answered the questions, and then a very nice lady doctor came in the room, and I had my jab.



God bless, love Beryl xxx



On Wednesday 3rd February 2021 I received an email from Dudley Fostering service (we're connected persons foster parents for our young granddaughter) with a link to book a COVID vaccination. It was easy to do although you do need to find your NHS number before you can book. There were plenty of available places and I booked us in for Saturday 6/2/21 at 18.25 at the Black Country Museum. When we arrived we were met by 2 marshals who checked our

appointment time and told us where to park then asked us to stay in the car until 10 minutes before our appointment time.

At 18.15 we went to the entrance indicated and I was asked to change my own mask for one of the blue disposable ones. We then entered the building and were greeted by a security guard who asked us to use the hand sanitizer and checked our temperature. We then joined the queue to proceed to the check in which took us about 30 minutes. At the check in our forms were checked and we were given our appointment for the 2nd vaccination. We were then taken to a table with a nurse who went through all the pre check questions. One of the



questions is about whether you're allergic to any of the ingredients in the vaccine or if you've had any serious allergic reaction. I said that I was allergic to penicillin and was told that it was ok for me to have the vaccination. They also tell you the possible side effects, aching arm, headaches, fever or just feeling unwell but they should only last a day or 2. We then went through to the next room to await our turn. There were lots of cubicles set up and I was called through to mine where there was a nurse and a lady inputting everything on a laptop. I had to give my name and date of birth again and was again told of the possible side effects. The nurse then drew the vaccination and it was checked by the pharmacist.

I didn't even feel the needle go in before she was telling me I was done! She then said that I would need to wait 15 minutes before I could drive but that I could wait in the car. The whole thing took about an hour from arrival to leaving it was all well organised, socially distanced and lovely friendly staff.

I have not had any side effects at all, in fact on Saturday night when I was going to bed I said to Ray "do you think she actually did it, there's no sign of any mark and I can't feel it". On Sunday If I touched my arm I could feel where it went in but I didn't have any aching or heaviness. Ray felt extremely tired and not feeling great on Sunday but was fine by Monday. We both feel like there's a light at the end of the tunnel now that we've had the first vaccination and are looking forward to getting the 2nd one on the 24th April.

Jo Rowan

What is a Prayer?

Submitted by Di Powell

Do you pray? I loved this interpretation of **Prayer**:

Prayer doesn't only happen when we kneel or put our hands together and focus and expect things from God.

Thinking positive and wishing good for others is a prayer.

When you hug a friend. That's a prayer.

When you cook something to nourish family and friends. That's a prayer.

When we send off our near and dear ones and say, 'drive safely' or 'be safe'. That's a prayer.

When you are helping someone in need by giving your time and energy. You are praying.

When you forgive someone by your heart. That is prayer.

Prayer is a vibration. A feeling. A thought. Prayer is the voice of love, friendship, genuine relationships. Prayer is an expression of your silent being.



Project Gambia update

Sue Wilding

I thought I would just update you on how Project

Gambia is going and how things have been for the folks in Gambia during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Much like here at home most things have been closed down in Gambia. The schools obviously closed and tourism, which is a large part of the economy ceased, throwing a lot of the people into very difficult circumstances.

The money that normally goes to school children in terms of sponsorship to pay fees was redirected to paying the salaries of the school teachers and money that was raised

through a "virtual" afternoon tea in the summer went to support a food programme giving rice and staples directly to families in need.



On December 5th last year the much delayed container left Stourbridge and it reached the west coast of Gambia in a surprisingly short space of time. The goods and equipment including over 200 baby packs and 67 school backpacks are now being distributed. One very cold Saturday in January when I was sorting through all of the things I have in our loft for the next container, I started to receive pictures of children receiving shoeboxes and backpacks. It certainly warmed my heart if not my feet!

Things we could do with if you have them – but no rush at all; pencils,



