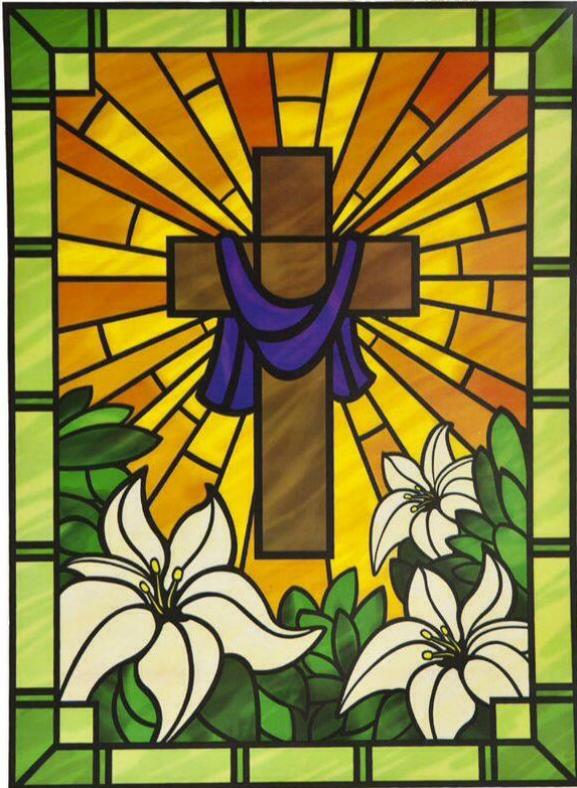




Circuit Link



News for Taunton Deane + South Sedgemoor Circuit

APRIL 2020

One of the great strengths of the early Methodist Church was its commitment to taking the Christian message out of the church and in to places that few, if any, church people ever normally went to. John Wesley hated street preaching (and for good reason because he had to put up with a great deal to do it) but he always said he was willing to go through the ordeal because he wanted to take the message of Jesus out to those who needed to hear it most and this seemed the best way in his time. He then organised those who were 'awakened' through his preaching into small groups (classes) where they would come to faith and grow in their discipleship (aim for holiness in everything). Perhaps we need to rediscover some of that purpose again. Not to preach in the streets necessarily (I fear it would go down even worse now than it did in John Wesley's time) but to find other ways that we can do the same thing. Find those who are willing to listen and share our faith with them (in a kind and loving way). One great evangelist of our time (Tuttle) says we just have to turn up and pay attention. Go to places where there are people and pay attention to the questions they are searching for answers to. Doesn't sound complicated does it? Easter is a great time to share faith because we have the whole gospel lived out in front of us as we contemplate the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Who would you like to share your faith with?

Chris



The Methodist Church

Worship Resources

While we are staying at home the Methodist Church website, <https://www.methodist.org.uk> has daily news and prayers and links to [worship and prayer resources](#) for home as well as live-streamed services: [Wesley's Chapel in London](#)

Wednesday 12.45, Thursday 12.45 and Sunday 9.45 and 11.00.

[Swan Bank Methodist Church in Burslem](#)

Sunday 10.30

[Methodist Central Hall, Westminster](#)

Sunday 11.00

BBC Local Radio, including Somerset, are broadcasting half hour virtual services on Sunday mornings at 8.00am on 95.5 AM / DAB and 1566MW.

Virtual Church Choir

The National Methodist Choir want to provide all singers from all denominations, and all corners of the globe, an opportunity to come together and worship God with our voices.

See www.nmcgb.org/ for details of how to get involved.

News from Around the Circuit

Temple News

Pastoral Update

Our heart goes out to all our friends in residential and care homes who find themselves isolated from family and friends. I doubt if they are aware how long this isolation could last and whereas, we are setting up a telephone network to keep in touch during these troubled times, we cannot keep in contact with these folk. So we pray for **Vi Clark, Valerie Couch, Iris Hosken, Ernest Hosken, Trina Humphries, Jenny Matthews** and **Les Sparks**. Also those people who are trapped at home - oh dear, we are all trapped at home. However there are those who find life doubly difficult at the moment.

During, what will no doubt, be many weeks/ months of enforces social distancing we must try to keep in contact by telephone and email, we can still have those friendly chats especially, as we will have more time on our hands, but it is important to try to keep safe and follow the guidelines laid down for the sake of the people we know and love and those who pass our way. Share your thoughts, prayers and concerns. Do not let isolation get you down.

A little while ago Rev Robin Hutt opened his service at Temple with these words

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and
the mountains tremble in the heart sea, and its waters roar and
foam. In all that tumult the Lord says:
"Be still, and know that I am God"

Then he finished with this Blessing

Lord, in the unknown and maybe difficult days ahead, may we sense your Spirit flowing beneath the surface of all we experience, and flow out through our words and actions that we may know your way of righting wrong, and turning sorrow into song, until you bring us home. So may the peace and blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us evermore. Amen

I thought this appropriate in these difficult days

Anne Jordan

Events Last Month...

The Film Evening at Temple on Friday 28th February was a great success. The Two Popes was screened in room 3 preceded by pizza and a soft drink. For those of you who have seen the film, we hope you see the significance. We hope that another film evening can be arranged at a later date.

Ash Wednesday at Temple was celebrated with a midday communion lead by Rev. Chris Brown followed by a lent lunch the proceeds of which were sent to Water aid. We are grateful for all the generous donations that allowed us to send **£85**.

Temple and the Community

I have recently been asked to fill in a questionnaire for the National Churches Trust to try to quantify the social and economic benefits that churches provide to local communities and the UK in general. Being a

generic list of questions and as many were about the hours involved, it was not easy to answer and many answers were estimates.

Intrigued by all of this I have borrowed last year's diary (September 2018 to August 2019) from Joanna and have done a breakdown on how the Temple Church serves the external community. There were Dance Classes on 47 occasions, Music Lessons on 131 and Choirs practised on a total of 155 occasions. 2BU and SLN met 58 and 11 times, respectively, and body health was satisfied 37 times with Tai Chi and 43 times with Pilates while the Age UK Indoor Kurling Group met, played and chatted 50 times throughout the year. 17 different U3A groups met on 311 occasions and there were a further 326 meetings of various kinds including a Multi-cultural Parents' Group, a Devon County Council South West Adoption Group, Unison, SCC Group Family conferences and much more besides. Of the 63 bookings which did not fit into these categories 14 were Concerts and then there are activities such as Taunton Festival of the Arts – Music and Drama, ABRSM Music Exams, Stage Coach, Bridgwater and Taunton college Awards, Mock Oxbridge Interviews for Huish's, various Brendon Books Talks and the like.

In the questionnaire there was a section on Food Collection and Distribution aiming, mainly, at the running of Food Banks and the like, and I found these questions quite challenging. But our kitchen and cooks did turn out in excess of 1150 two-course meals during the 12 months, with drop-in lunches available every Wednesday. In addition there were 190 Big Breakfasts cooked in aid of CRUK.

The Wednesday mid-week service, held in the small central chapel, is timed to give visiting users of the building the opportunity to join in worship with us and it is always a delight when they do.

Statistics are cold and unemotional things and do not convey the warmth of the welcome nor the gratitude of our users for the help and support they are given within the building, which is all done in Temple's name.

Although our Church and Community worker is the lynch-pin in all of this, none of it would have happened without the full support of all Temple members and adherents. Our financial backing, physical assistance and prayer are vital in sustaining this aspect of Temple Church's outreach and ministry. Long may it continue.

The questionnaire did not ask for the contribution church members make individually by their service to society – for which I was very grateful, as I would have been kept very busy attempting to do full justice to all that you do!

Tony Bell



News from North Curry and Curland

The World Day of Prayer was this year held at the Parish church on Friday 6th March when congregations from North Curry, and Stoke St Gregory Anglicans joined with Methodists from North Curry/Curland Church for worship.

The Annual Quiz in aid of Missions was held on Saturday 22nd February at Lisieux Way Methodist Church. The grand total of **£306.00** was raised; £246 from the entry charge and £55.00 from the raffle plus a £5.00 donation.

The overall winners were a team from Bridgwater Methodist Church led by Jane (Team 3). The booby prize went to team 10 from Lisieux Way which was made up of the ladies who did the food for us on the evening, so commiserations to them but thanks for the brilliant supper. Burgers, chips and beans went down well as did the delicious array of desserts available. Thanks also go to Roy who compiled the questions and delivered them on the night and to Jackie for keeping score. Another great evening! At least one quizzier was asking when the next one would be!

Re the comment in last month's magazine; permission to remove the two small back pews has been applied for and the response is waited with bated breath.

News from Lisieux Way

Pastoral News

Please remember in your prayers

Joan Rowland

Mary Clarke and her friend **Peter Harris**

Margaret Butler in in Sherford Manor Nursing Home (not Oak Meadows)

Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

In line with all other places of Worship, services and weekday activities at Lisieux Way are suspended until further notice. It is therefore with regret that the Service of Recognition for Virginia Pearson as a Local Preacher was not able to take place on 29th March.

It is also unfortunate that the 'Easter Cracked' event with Blackbrook School could not take place on 1st April. This is especially difficult because a day spent making props and rehearsals had already taken place. Many thanks to Elaine, Anne and all those assisting with the making of props, publicity, links to the school and those who had committed to acting etc.

As you imagine there has been much discussion about the 25th Anniversary service and celebrations at Lisieux Way Church on Sunday 26th April. We have all been looking forward to seeing so many familiar and friendly faces again. However, following discussions it was reluctantly felt that there was no option but to postpone the event.

Rev Chris Brown has put out the following statement:

It is with very deep regret that we feel that it is necessary to postpone our 25th Anniversary celebrations. I am sure you are aware of the situation we all face, and it seems highly unlikely that this will be over in time for the Anniversary. We hope that we will be able to celebrate our 25th next year. We are still grateful to God for his generous support over these years and remember you all with great fondness. It has been delightful to share stories together of those that have been remembered. We will let you know when we plan another date. For now, we wish you and your families good health and God's Peace. We hope to see you all before too long.

On behalf of the Church and Stewards, a sincere thank you to Marlene and all the others who have been involved in organising and preparing for the event especially making contact with people, preparation of notices, invitations, music, sharing photographs and preparation of Order

of Service. Also thank you to those who had offered to help on the day.
Francis Lewis.

Recent Events

The MwiB Coffee Morning and table-top sale on 8th February had a small attendance but, even so, a creditable **£176.50** was raised for the Dalit School fund. Thank you to Elaine Banks and her helpers at this event. Regular giving to the Dalit Fund recently has amounted to £217 and over £400 has been transferred to Rev Christopher Vijayan.

The Missions Quiz with North Curry and Curland Church on 22nd February was very successful and, as usual, hotly contested. Of the sum raised **£153** went towards the Lisieux Way Mission Fund Thank you to Roy Crouch and his helpers from North Curry in organising and running the event and to Brenda Lamberton and her helpers in the catering team from Lisieux Way. Thank you to everyone who attended and who provided the 'sweet' courses on the night. Thank you also to those who provided raffle prizes and for the attendance on the night. There was also an 'envelope' collection at our service on 16th February and we are grateful for the amount raised.

Earlier that day, the Christian Aid Book sale took place at Taunton Baptist Church. The total raised was **£867.35** (£731,22 books and £130.13 donations). Whilst the total was down on last year, it was still a very worth amount. Thank you to all who donated books and/or attended the event.

The Church welcomed Rev Graham Thompson, Chairman of District, as our preacher on 1st March. He was accompanied by his wife Alison. The

service was enjoyed by a good number of members and friends. Thank you to Peter and Anne Thomas for providing hospitality.

The 'Big Brew' event on 7th March raised **£140** in support of Traidcraft Exchange. A Traidcraft sales stall was also in attendance. Thank you to Peter and Anne Thomas for organising the event. Also, thanks to their helpers and those who supported the event.

Action for Children (Lisieux Way)

Thank you to those who submitted boxes for opening. These have been delivered to Jack Brunsdon. Anyone else who has a box should bring them when church is eventually re-opened.

Open Door

Thank you for recent gifts of gloves and ice cream tubs. The Manager at Open Door was pleased to receive the tubs as they were running out. The tubs are useful for take away meals for clients. Therefore, further such gifts will be most welcome, and can include Carte d'Or size.

Lisieux Way Community Garden

A garden working party was held on 12th March and this consisted of the making of four rustic benches which are sited in the circular 'communal' area. The benches are well spread out and will be ideal for times of quiet prayer and contemplation and are still accessible.

Unfortunately, events planned since then have had to be curtailed because of Coronavirus.

A welcome sign is to be produced and will include the names of those, including the church, who supported the creation of the project.

News from Rowbarton

Pastoral Report

Spring really is on its way with such an abundance of daffodils this year and buds appearing on bushes and trees. Hopefully warmer weather is to follow. However, Coronavirus is certainly a concern for us all and the thought of spending the spring and summer months isolated, fills me with horror and no doubt many of you too. Therefore the need for us all to keep in touch either by phone or email is important and could become our only way of communication for a while. If you have an email address that you are prepared to let Richard Sillett have please send it to richardsillett@gmail.com he can then ensure you are kept up to date with any information.

Following an extraordinary church council on 18th March, Pastoral Visitors will keep in touch with all those on their lists by telephone and no face to face contact until the Coronavirus lock down ends. The message from Rev.Tony Cox is to be sensible, heed the warnings and wash your hands.

All that said, it was wonderful to see **Sylvia and John Cleverdon** in Church after so many months when Sylvia was suffering. At this time of writing I am not aware of anyone else unwell at home or in hospital.

We are sad to record the passing of **Terry Wight** on Monday 16th March. Terry was a regular and popular worshipper at Rowbarton until his health

failed and he was confined to Northway House. Many of us have different memories of him over the years, especially for some, myself included, his ability to dance despite his disabilities. To his family we assure you of our thoughts and prayers at this time.

To all in care homes or housebound, please be assured we do think and pray for you all, especially now when visiting is severely restricted.

Please remember we have a Prayer Chain at Rowbarton for anyone who would like to be prayed for, or you would like to have prayed for. This is a small chain where we each pray at home and is kept in strict confidence. Just let me know – Pat Gale, 01823 288113. Likewise, if you would like to know more about joining the prayer chain, please ask me.

Breakfast +

We didn't realise at the time that February's Breakfast + was to be the last one for quite a while. The theme was 'LOVE'. After our usual breakfast of bacon rolls and croissants Tony greeted everyone and spoke about turning Hate in to Love. With the help of four people turning one letter of the word 'HATE' at a time they produced the word 'LOVE'. The children, with the help of some of the Mums, decorated stones with hearts and love themed designs.

Teresa had produced a sheet entitled 'What is Love?' for everyone. In the centre of the page was a large empty heart and she asked people to write inside their heart their thoughts on love. Some answers were 'that you have feelings for people', 'having hugs' and 'my Dad helps my Mum'.



The adults read the newspapers and highlighted articles concerned with 'LOVE'. Trish found an article about a homeless man who had spent four years on the streets but recently returned to Taunton where his life had been turned around. Some really generous and kind people in the town gave him hope and the chance to rent a room for a few weeks. Our session concluded with prayer.

We are looking forward to the time when we can all get together once more for Breakfast+ on the fourth Sunday of the month. In the meantime we pray that all are kept safe and well.

News from Bridgwater

Family News

Brenda will be going to live with her daughter and son in law in Surrey from this weekend. This is a temporary solution for her until the current coronavirus crisis is over. We wish her well in her temporary home.

Coronavirus Crisis

Requests for help in the current crisis

We are aware that the current situation caused by the coronavirus epidemic will affect people in different ways and some people are bound to struggle. If there is any way the Bridgwater Church can help you at this time, please do not hesitate to let us know. We will be keeping in contact with all our members and friends while Church services are suspended. If you need help or can help us by keeping in regular contact by phone or email with any of our members and friends, please let me know. Jane Allin – allinjeremy@msn.com or 07920837124 or 01278 458371.

For those of you with access to a computer and Facebook

We shall be periodically emailing all those church members for whom we have an email address, details from the Methodist Church nationally, as we receive it. This will contain information about how you can access worship online. Details of streamed worship services will put in the weekly notice sheets which will come out in time for Sunday each week.

Orders of Service

A written Order of Service to follow can be downloaded each week and details will be put in the notices. Printed copies will be made available for all those without computers.

Junior Church

We are endeavouring to keep in touch with our Junior Church members by email and we are making available each week a link to the Roots all age and family resources which can be used at home. Roots are making this available without charge and the links are:

www.rootsontheweb.com/adultsathome22mar

www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome22mar

Messy Church

Emmaline Kay, our lay worker and other helpers, are putting together Messy Church packs for our Messy Church families, to be used at home. We could make these available on-line to others who would appreciate them.

To make you smile

When I was a kid, I used to pray every night for a new bike. Then I realised, the Lord doesn't work that way. So I just stole one and asked Him to forgive me ... and I got it!

Every ten years, the monks in the monastery are allowed to break their vow of silence to speak two words. Ten years go by and it's one monk's first chance. He thinks for a second before saying, "Food bad." Ten years later, he says, "Bed hard." It's the big day, a decade later. He gives the head monk a long stare and says, "I quit." "I'm not surprised," the head monk says. "You've been complaining ever since you got here."

Supplied by Kate Hewson

– *Thank you, Kate*

News from Pawlett

Pawlett Churches Together held a Lent Lunch on 14th March in the Village Hall. It was a very successful event with plenty of support from both church congregations and friends from the village. **£257.00** was raised for the Bridgwater Food Bank.

SABBATICAL REFLECTIONS - PART ONE TO BE-LONG, OR NOT TO BE-LONG

Dear friends

Around 11th January, having completed the numerous after-Christmas 'jobs' that I didn't quite get to before the season, I entered my sabbatical, with the words of well-wishers ringing in my ears: 'Enjoy yourself!' 'Have a rest!' 'We shall be quite all right without you!'

Although I felt very blessed to have been allowed this 3-month period away from the business and bustle of Circuit life, if I am honest, it also felt as if I was entering a period of exile!

I had some exciting plans: a two week trip to India - as part of the District partnership-building visit; a 5 day visit to the Holy Land - a wonderfully unexpected opportunity; and a quick trip to the Isle of Wight, where I grew up, to reminisce and reflect on my roots. I shall say a bit more about my various journeys in later editions of *The Link*, but for now, let me try to tell you a little about how it *felt* as I entered that period of 'time out'. How it felt to step away from the life of the churches and the people I have grown to love.

Firstly – Sunday worship. Instead of leading worship 2 or 3 times on a Sunday, preparation for services and sermons was no longer a part of my week. Instead, there was the Saturday evening decision about where to go to worship the next morning. I was only in Taunton for a few Sundays, so I decided I would use those times to experience worship in some of the other churches of the town. By and large these were good experiences, part of which was the strange freedom of entering a church as a stranger and leaving quietly unnoticed. I reflected on the welcome offered by the churches and chapels of the circuit, and thought how

difficult it would have been for a stranger to have left any of them unnoticed!

I found myself wondering what would make me return to this or that particular church – would it be the singing? Or the preaching? Or the worshipful atmosphere? Or would it be the fact that someone had spoken to me and helped me to feel at home?

I would really have liked to have sat among friends in one of our Circuit chapels and be led in worship by one of our Local Preachers – however, it seems you are supposed to distance yourself during sabbaticals, and I never quite plucked up the courage to rebel against this!

Secondly – not knowing how people were faring was difficult. I wanted to pick up a telephone and have a chat to those for whom the churches were particularly praying – and actually, I did once or twice. I found it hard not to drop in on folks for a chat or pop by the Wednesday service, or the Missions quiz, or the Jacket Potato lunch, etc. etc. After I was back from my travels, I stopped one day to give a lift to a lady from one of our churches as she struggled up the hill with her shopping. ‘What are you doing here?’ she asked. ‘You’re supposed to be on holiday’. ‘Well, I live here’, I replied.

What I’m trying to say is that I missed my communities. For a little while, I didn’t seem to belong. There was a strange feeling of loss, and of isolation from the people who are such a large part of my life.



I'm glad to be back from my sabbatical – a little early perhaps, and returning to something rather different to what I left. These are unusual days. Days when the normal routine is set aside for a different pace of life. When I suspect that some people may be beginning to miss *their* communities, and to feel that they are in a sort of an exile from the worship and groups they enjoy being part of. When they would love to be faced with a choice of which church to attend for Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday, or Easter Sunday.

Our churches and neighbourhood groups are doing all they can to ensure that we have access to worship and news, prayer support and practical help. Chris has set us up with a Circuit Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2625632127713305>

I do not really know much about Facebook communities – however, willing to learn, I tried to join tonight. My request is pending!

But one community we do all belong to and can always be part of, is the praying community. Wherever we are, however we're feeling, whether we meet or not, we are bound together in Christ through our love for him and for one another.

Tonight (22nd March) I lit a candle in my window as we had been requested to do by Churches Together in England. A candle to represent hope in Christ, and a prayer for all those who are fearful or suffering, not just here in Taunton, but across the world.

In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great family bound by love,
throughout the whole wide earth.

Please keep in touch with one another by phone, or email, or however you can. Please make sure you let us know if you need anything, and as you have been held in my prayers whilst I have been away over the last 3 months, so you will continue.

God be with you
Deborah

HOLDING CROSSES

Towards the end of last year, I asked, via church notices, if anyone would be willing to make me some 'holding crosses' to use on pastoral visits.



You were amazing in your response. The woodworkers among you produced about 30 beautifully finished crosses for me.

I have handed out several on pastoral visits, including one to a gentleman just a day or two before he died; the gift was a great comfort for him. I took a few to India with me in January, on the District visit to the Diocese of Cuttack. I packed them individually in little presentation bags with a prayer card, and passed them to some of the pastors we met from the tribal churches. In their challenging ministries, the crosses represented for them, the prayers and support of friends in England.

I have, in the last few days, received an email from the Lead Chaplain at Musgrove Park Hospital, asking if anyone could offer a few holding crosses to be given to patients on a single use basis. I wondered whether, during these quieter, more solitary days, some of you may be willing to

turn again to your woodworking tools, and produce a few more for me to pass on to the Hospital?

Please don't feel any pressure, but please also know the joy and comfort which they have been, and will continue to be to others.

Thank you!

Deborah



The **MWiB District group** is keeping in touch via a weekly email - if anyone would like to be added to the list, please let Elaine Banks know, daveelainebanks@googlemail.com

Ministry by Phone

It's an emergency.

You can't do things the way you want, the way you're used to.

You have to re-think.

Okay. I can do the thinking, the theological reflection, I've chance to ponder.

But I can't 'do' and 'doing' is all I've known.

How can you achieve if you can't 'do'?

How does this work?

Let people know by e-mail and telephone.

E-mail's good for getting information shared efficiently.

I can keep track of e-mails.

But telephone for checking all is well, perhaps.

For reassurances. For picking things up.

"You sound tired", "You sound upset", "You sound confused",

"It sounds like there's maybe something on your mind."

"You're sounding really good - is that right?"

How much can be communicated

in the tone, the speed, the hesitations,

the background sounds, the voice.

And how people open up when you notice:

"Well, not really, it's just that ..."

"Actually, yes, I'm ..."

"How did you work that out? I was keeping that to myself."

"Oh, now you mention it, I suppose ... I hadn't realised"

Things you'd never know from an e-mail.

Things kept hidden face to face by a smile,

a gesture, a distraction, a clever learned defence.

It's hard to disguise what's going on in your voice.

So, no time wasted in travelling to and fro.
Decisions made in conversations cascaded this way and that.
The old systems and responsibilities of a tried and tested Method
Brought to life, creaking and groaning after years of disuse.
This is what the old ways were made for.
This is where new technology can both help. . . . or hinder.

Now there's nothing in your diary
Now you've time to listen for God.
Listen as you sit with your coffee, looking out on the garden.
What is nudging at your heart?
Let the prayers come.
Let the people come to mind.
Let that inner life swell.

But be ready.
The inner life brings questions.
The inner life challenges

What is life with no appointments?
What can I do that I value?
I feel useless!
Such questions, and more, will come.
But the usefulness is in God's purposes
and not in what you value.
It's time to stop striving to prove your worth
and instead discover that God uses you most
when you stop proving your worth.
He uses your listening, which cannot be measured.
He uses your impotence, your vulnerability, your humanity.
God does not value what the world assesses.

Let God be God.

Through you, unbeknown to you, secretly, like leaven, like a thief in the night,

God will move through, beneath, around, above you, unexpectedly, as you become available to him, accessible to the people he calls; as you relinquish your activity among the busy and prominent ones, as you become the person in the lay-by, the source, and not the driver.

Charity News



It was with great sadness that trustees of RAfT met on 21st March (some by video link) and decided that services would need to be suspended for the time being. The difficulties in

quarantining donations and not been able to send out shipments made this inevitable. The food collected for the Calais shipment on 28th March has been given to the foodbank, where the need is becoming greater than ever. In the meantime, monetary donations have been sent to Care4Calais and Lighthouse Relief in Greece, in the hope that they made be able to keep support going. A younger trustee is supporting local refugee families.

If you knit or crochet for RAfT we have requested that you make larger sizes of children's garments and hold onto them until the warehouse can open again.

Your prayers for refugees are more needed than ever. How is self-isolation and hygiene possible when your only home is a refugee camp of thousands?

Blessings and thanks to everyone for your prayers and support. Keep safe and healthy.

Elaine Dew

Action for Children Nationally

Front line staff are overwhelmed by the sheer desperation of families amid the Coronavirus crisis. This pandemic has exploded into the lives of vulnerable children and families at a time when millions were already struggling to keep their heads above water. Now with instructions from government to only leave the house for limited purposes, they are terrified of going under.

Action for Children was already running unofficial food banks before the outbreak to help those at risk of going hungry. Support workers will keep battling to help families come out the other side of this, but they need our help. Please donate to the emergency Coronavirus Appeal. Further details and a giving link are found on <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/>.

Care and Relief for the Young (C.R.Y.)

A virus pandemic, war-torn countries, a refugee crisis, no matter what the situation, CRY's support to children around the world never stops. We have a mighty God who cares.

'Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you as the COVID-19 virus spreads around the world. We pray for your protection and health during

this time. We also pray for our children and families who are already in vulnerable and difficult situations.'

CRY projects continue to run throughout the current situation and our support is essential at this time, especially to bring important respite to children and families, such as by purchasing food and necessities. At this time many of the charity shops will have to close and this will affect the income available to support projects. CRY is therefore appealing for donations to help make up the shortfall to help refugees, 'looked after' children, vulnerable families and food banks. The link can be found at <https://www.cry.org.uk/>

How you can support foodbanks during the Coronavirus pandemic

As a consequence of COVID-19, those who rely on extra support to receive essential food and resources may find the next few months particularly challenging. For those with unreliable work or increased childcare commitments, as well as those unable to work and at increased risk because of illness, food and resources will be more challenging to get hold of.

Foodbanks are already beginning to be stretched as a result of the strain on resources. As a result, many UK foodbanks are running low on essential supplies such as long-life milk, cereal and pasta and have seen a fall in donations.

As we seek to care for the vulnerable and at risk in our communities, supporting your local foodbank is a practical way to be of help.

Find your local foodbank

Foodbanks are run by a mixture of networks in the UK. You can search for your local foodbanks here:

Trussell Trust Foodbanks: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>

Independent food aid network:

<http://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/independent-food-banks-map>

These lists may not be comprehensive – if you can't find one locally through these sites, it may be independent. Local church networks will most likely be able to point you in the direction of your nearest group.

Find out what they need

Your local foodbank will usually share the key resources they need online, or will have contact details for you to enquire. Long-life products, which are usually most essential for foodbanks, are the products seeing increased demand at the current time. Consider whether you could share these if you have them, or buy and donate them when you see them become available. There may also be increased demand for toiletries – sanitary products, toothpaste etc – and cleaning products. These can also be bought and donated.

You can find a list of products that most foodbanks distribute here:

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/getinvolved/ways-to-give/donate-food/>.

Volunteer

Foodbanks rely on volunteers to distribute their resources. Many volunteers may be or feel unable to get involved at this time. If you are able, enquire at your local foodbank as to whether they need extra support to enable them to keep going.

Safe Families

At Safe Families we know that every child deserves to thrive, and we recognise that to do this, children need to be loved and secure in their own family. The problem is that when families are isolated and struggling their children can feel upset and afraid. Facing life alone is hard, and when families feel like there is no one there to help it's a scary place to be.

Which is why Safe Families Christian volunteers stand alongside thousands of families every year. We train and support volunteers and connect them with isolated families, so they can build relationships that bring hope. We need volunteers for an hour a week for 4-6 months in Bridgwater and surrounding areas – could you join us?

For more information or to meet for an informal chat please contact dawnholmes@safefamilies.uk 07384 218826.

WE'RE APPEALING FOR YOUR HELP...

- We have a long and successful record of supporting the resettlement of Syrian Refugee families in Taunton, Wellington and Bridgwater.
- Around 50 volunteers from **TWR** have helped the process of integration by introducing families to the area, organising trips and social events and teaching them English - or just by being friends.
- New families are still arriving and we need you to be the friendly support they need.
- You would be part of a small circle of volunteers and receive full training.
- If you feel visiting is not for you, we would still welcome help with administration, fund-raising and other activities.
- **TWR** is a fully independent registered charity, dependent on donations.



If you would like to help us or have any questions please contact our membership secretary at:
waddilovechris@gmail.com

**TAUNTON
WELCOMES
REFUGEES**

Shopping Scam

During this challenging period, it is heartening to hear lots of stories of kindness from friends and neighbours caring for one another. This is where many Neighbourhood Watches have excelled in looking after the elderly and vulnerable members of their community – or simply offer to help everyone. This includes phone calls to ensure people are ok, assistance with appointments and the collection of groceries and medications.

We must however remain vigilant and rely upon those we know and trust. I have learnt of a couple of incidents where callers have arrived on doorways offering to do shopping, claiming to be good Samaritans. They have taken money and a shopping list but never returned.

Unfortunately, there are some people who will always take advantage of any crisis to steal from those in need. Please do not fall foul to this and only rely upon people you know or trust to help you.



Last Friday a local school sent their children home with this letter.

As our time at school changes...

As you leave school today,
know that you go with our love and our blessing.

When you have the chance,
go outside and enjoy the rain or the sunshine.
Smile and wave, do a little jig or sing a song to those who can't
leave their homes.

When you share food, pause and remember those who may be
eating less, or having to eat things they don't really enjoy.

All those things we learn about and practice at school,
here's your chance to really do them.

Be forgiving - people are feeling a bit stressed

Be patient - sometimes you won't be able to do the things you
want to

Be generous - share something, even if it's just a smile.

Show respect - everyone is precious and valuable, even when they
are being difficult.

Encourage one another - we are all feeling a bit wobbly.

Work as a team - together we can do great things.

Try not to moan or fight or say things which might hurt

And then try some more.

Store up your stories and smiles until we are back together again.

Hug those people you can and above all
show love to one another, over and over again.

A Prayer by the President of the Conference:

Loving God

If we are ill, strengthen us

If we are tired, fortify our spirits

If we are anxious, help us to consider the lilies of the field and the
birds of the air.

Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns
of our larders!

Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more
vulnerable than ourselves

Fix our eyes on your story, and our hearts on your grace

Help us always to hold fast to the good, and to see the good in
others.

And help us to remember there is just one world, one hope,

One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

In Jesus we make our prayer,

The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,

In whom we trust, these days and all days. Amen

A Closing Prayer

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7.

God of all hope we call on you today.

We pray for those who are living in fear:

Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other’s reactions to them.

May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.

For those people who are worried about attending worship.

For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other

For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend.

Grant us your wisdom.

Holy God, we remember that you have promised that

Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.

Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.

Amen



The deadline for the **MAY 2020** edition
of Circuit Link is

SUNDAY 19th APRIL 2020

NOTE: All items should be sent to **Hazel Jordan** at 12
Semington Close, Taunton, TA1 2TF; email:
hazelj@templetaunton.uk or phone 07980 136358, 01823
3327998

Contact Details:

Superintendent Minister: Rev. Christopher Brown

5 Quantock Way, Quantock Road, Bridgwater TA6 7JZ

Home Tel: 01278 426616

Email: chris@revbrown.co.uk

Rev. Deborah Kirk (on Sabbatical until 29th March 2020)

36 Craig Lea, Taunton TA2 7SY

Home Tel: 01823 334854

Email: deborah.m.kirk@gmail.com

Taunton Deane + South Sedgemoor Circuit