



# **Circuit Link**



News for Taunton Deane + South Sedgemoor Circuit

**JULY 2020**

I wonder if you have ever watched the programme 'The Repair Shop'? It's a favourite in our house. There is a little workshop called 'The Weald and Downland Living Museum' in West Sussex, where the programme is filmed.



The people who work there are skilled in their particular craft: carpentry, metalwork, making soft toys and dolls, painting, horology, and a multitude of other skill-sets which can only be imagined.

Members of the public bring their damaged heirlooms or battered-but-beloved treasures to The Repair Shop to be fixed. And the craftsmen and women work their magic. Sometimes there are three or four different people involved in the restoration, each delighted to offer their own particular skill to bring a wonderful collaborative transformation to the precious item.

The care the team invest in each item has nothing to do with how much the items are worth financially, but about how much they are worth to their owners, and the preciousness of the memories attached to them. The Repair Shop team will sometimes restore the item to its original pristine condition – brasswork gleaming, woodwork unblemished, paintwork shining, as fine and flawless as the day it came off the original craftworker's bench.

But sometimes the item is restored in such a way that it carries visual evidence of some of its history, little indications of its earlier use, and even of its previous damage, into its newly restored life.

I always find it interesting when the craftsman or woman working on a piece decides to do this. The perfectionist in me might have been inclined to have gone further – had I been the restorer. But I would be mistaken. For the owner is almost universally appreciative that these marks of history have been left. Because the marks bring back memories – perhaps of youthful enthusiasm and delight, or perhaps the poignancy of a loved one departed. The marks and flaws are part of the history of the piece, part of its story with the owners who have valued it, part of its authenticity, what it intrinsically represents.

Restoration is holy work. It's also slow work, requiring patience, persistence and imagination. Jesus was all about making the broken whole, lifting those precious ones discarded by society, naming their unique value, making beauty from the most unlikely things, reimagining a more whole way of being in the world. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that we are God's 'workmanship'. Can we imagine God leaning over his workbench carefully repairing a broken part of our lives here, carefully polishing a tarnished attitude there, sitting back from his work to take an overall view, before leaning in with a smile to add that special touch that makes his treasured possession unique.

OK, maybe that's a bit sentimental – I let my imagination go for a minute! But I think that imagining is what we are being called to do just now as people of Christ's Church; about how we can renew those things which are precious to us and part of who we are – our worshipping life, and how we express it; how we can connect with our communities in a new context; our service towards those in need; our welcome for any and everyone.

Can we imagine how to refashion and repair these treasures that we value so much, so that they can do their job for another context and another generation.

*Deborah*

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## **Circuit Streamed Services**

While we cannot worship together in one building, we can worship together each Sunday online.

At **9.30 am**, Rev Deborah Kirk and Rev Tony Cox upload a service to YouTube with a link from [www.rowbartonmethodist.org.uk](http://www.rowbartonmethodist.org.uk).

For the duration of the service only, there is a 'chat' area which viewers can if they wish, register to use with one click, and then you are able to make short written comments (200 characters) to greet others you know, respond to the service, etc. Some choose not to do this, but simply share in the service without comment, and that is completely your choice. This chat opportunity finishes 10 minutes after the service, and although you can revisit the service at a later time for a few days, the chat area will not be visible or an option.

At **10.30 am**, Rev Chris Brown and Rev Peter Thomas host a short service on Zoom, with an opportunity to chat afterwards.

Please contact Rev Chris Brown, [chris@revbrown.co.uk](mailto:chris@revbrown.co.uk) to be sent the new passcode each week to join the meeting.

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# 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.



## An Update on Opening Churches from Rev Chris Brown

On Weds of last week, the Government made a surprise announcement about places of worship being allowed to open for private prayer from the 15<sup>th</sup> June. This took everyone by surprise but it is something that might have an effect on us. The Methodist position is that as it is not our tradition to open our churches for private prayer we will remain closed. However, in places where opening for prayer might be considered an essential part of that churches ministry then we are allowed to open from the 15<sup>th</sup> June.

The bottom line is that the advice from the Methodist Church is that our churches remain closed at this time.

If any of our churches want to consider opening for prayer it is still the case that the procedures for opening remains the same. Churches must produce a risk assessment and display a poster when this is done (as I understand it this is a Government requirement). Where a building has been closed it should be well ventilated and taps (and showers etc) must be run for at least 5 minutes (this is to do with Legionnaires Disease). There is a check list to go through produced by the Methodist Church available on the official web site. Then all surfaces likely to be touched must be cleaned after the church has been used (light switches, handles, backs of pews, etc). Hand sanitation facilities need to be provided (washing preferred but can be gel) at every entrance/exit. Hymn books, Bibles, etc cleared away and made inaccessible. Posters encouraging people to do the right things (hand washing, social distancing, etc) should also be displayed. Distances in any queues or Pews or Chairs arranged and marked so that social distancing can be maintained.

There is probably more to do that I haven't listed but each individual church will need to consider them - all the advice is on the Methodist Church web site. I wanted you to understand that opening is not an easy thing to do and will carry a number of things that we need to take care of. All this will also be true when we can open for worship of course.

*Chris*

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# **News from Around the Circuit**

## **Temple News**

### **Pastoral Update**

Thirteen weeks for those people recommended to "keep safe" is a long time not to meet up with friends and family. It has been like a long holiday for some while others struggle with the loss of personal contacts. Even as lock down is eased those friendly handshakes and hugs are still out of order but at least we will be able to smile and laugh together.

We had given Stella a farewell lunch back in March, which was fortunate. Although Stella stayed in Taunton until mid-June no one was able to really help in the final move to Thame. We hope that Stella will be able to visit when life has regained a new form of normality.

Maureen Searle is recovering well at home after surgery. She would like to thank everyone for their good wishes, phone calls, cards and prayers following her operation. Your kindness meant so much to her.

It is with sadness that we also say goodbye to Pearl Heard who died in the Hospice on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June having battled with ill health for several months.

Please keep in your thoughts those members still isolated in homes. Valerie, Violet, Jenny, Les, Ernest and Thea, and those at home Marion and Eric, Kath, Sheila, David and Josie, Yvonne, Ruth, Jean and also members with underlying health conditions that still make going out a very risky exercise.

## News from North Curry and Curland

“Do all the good you can  
By all the means you can  
In all the ways you can  
In all the places you can  
At all the times you can  
To all the people you can  
As long as ever you can”

This is a famous quotation said to have come from the lips of Rev John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. (Incidentally, he remained a Church of England vicar all his life).

In these frustrating days of lock in, it seems rather fruitless to encourage people to follow this instruction, being isolated and confined to our homes for what seems like for ever.

However, in spite of all the restrictions imposed on us at the moment, there are so many cases of goodness and kindness around us for which we must be eternally grateful.

Many stuck at home are receiving offers of help; shopping is done, errands are run, loneliness is counteracted by telephone calls and letters. There is a feeling of solidarity in towns and villages throughout this country unknown since WW2.

How sad that it takes a pandemic to bring about these tokens of love for our fellow human beings but therein lies a hope that they will continue when the present situation is over.

As of now, our little chapel lies silent; no singing or sermons are heard. Modern technology is employed in order that services can be held online so we are not despondent.

Work is beginning on the wall outside the property and the question of moving the pews is being progressed.

Thanks go to Christine for making a display of bunting and information in May re ways to support Christian Aid week which this year was in virtual form.

North Curry/Curland Methodist Chapel continues to exist!

Watch out for the Church Anniversary scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> June to appear in a different form!

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## **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)

# News from Rowbarton

## Pastoral Report

Here we are again still in virtual lockdown. For many, the sheer joy of being able to see family again must be wonderful. For those of us still in isolation, hopefully it won't be too long before we too can meet family and friends again.

We remember May Lawley who has had a few stays in hospital but is back home at the time of writing. Thoughts are also with John & Sylvia Cleverdon, John had a brief stay in hospital but hopefully now recovering at home.

We are aware too of others of our congregation who are not so well and many who are feeling the effect of loneliness. We are doing our best to keep in touch with you all, as we are those in Care Homes where we are unable to visit at the moment. Our prayers are with you all.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with those who've been bereaved during this time of lockdown.

Take care, keep safe and enjoy the summer

*Pat Gale*



Those involved with **Taunton's Street Pastors** received the go-ahead to recommence patrols in the Halcon and Priorswood areas from June.

They will observe strict social distancing rules but will seek to engage and encourage local residents as things very slowly return to normal

After much consideration, we have been exploring we may continue 'The Mix' in the current situation.



As such, I would like to introduce .....

### **"The Mix at a Distance"!**

a video call based version of the Mix.

You can participate in this remotely through free video call software in your modern internet browser with nothing to install. We have a number of games and quizzes available, including a remote open-handed version of the always popular Rummikub!

The first of these will be run on **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 3:00pm - 5:00pm**. If you are interested please register at [tiny.cc/mixatd](https://tiny.cc/mixatd) we will use the email addresses collected to send you the meeting link on the day.

Even if you are not interested in playing any of the games, you can still join us for a chat, however refreshments and cake you will have to provide yourself!

Looking forward to seeing you all soon,  
*The Wright family*

## **Coffee and Chat**

We have been continuing to keep contact with each other through phone, emails and doing quizzes etc. , keeping each other up to date with our own news and activities.

It has been good to see some people from our church and throughout the circuit on the 'zoom' meetings, and for the zoom service on a Sunday morning at 10.30 am and the Bible study that Rev'd Chris Brown has instigated on a Tuesday evening. This often ends in a giggle and a good catch up with many others and news of both those in our groups and around the area within other groups too.

I know that we are all thankful for the amazing services that Deborah, Tony and Stephen are putting together each week which helps us get thorough the Sundays and we all look forward to those days.

I wish you all well and safe and look forward to when we shall be able to meet again.

*Trish Dobson*

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# News from Bridgwater

## Family News

Congratulations and best wishes to Ken Bird, who celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on the 21<sup>st</sup> June.

## Fund Raising Effort – David Dickinson



We are pleased to report that David has now completed his marathon run and actually ran many miles over the marathon distance. He raised the sum of **£160** for funds supported by our Church locally and nationally. Monies raised will be applied locally to our food bank and some will go to All We Can (Methodist Relief and Development) Emergency Coronavirus Appeal, which is helping vulnerable people across the globe, affected by the pandemic.

## What we have been doing during lock-down

**Brenda** has returned home after many weeks with her daughter. We wish her well.

**David and Gill** have been making elderflower cordial. David is producing a regular newsletter for his grandchildren.

**Jane I** has returned to full time work as a teaching assistant in South Molton.

**Emmaline** is undertaking some on-line training with Citizens Somerset and has been cooking for her neighbours.



**Carol** is leading weekly on-line Boys Brigade and Girls' Association Meeting and has done some gardening.

**Bonny** has visited four schools as part of her job and has taken part in a digital band practice playing her drums. She had a day off and spent it doing a lot of decorating.

**Sue** has been helping her granddaughter with school work and has been baking quite a lot for friends and family and has found a lovely new recipe for coconut, lime and white chocolate cookies. They are very moreish! She has also made 2 lots of elderflower cordial from flowers picked in the fields near her house.



What a wonderful head of hair. **John** is growing his hair for a fundraising effort later in the year.

Many of us have been attending Zoom meetings.

**Kate** is revising her German which she hasn't spoken for fifty years, is still wading through the minor prophets having got as far as Zechariah, but re-reading favourite Regency romances is still a favourite, though. She has also been able to visit her son and his family in North Curry

Several people are delighted they are able to watch live football again - others will be less keen! Some of us are lamenting the loss of the Wimbledon tennis.

**Jenny** continues to produce her lovely paintings



Many of us are continuing to work, some at home and some in the front line.

### **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 are keeping in contact with all our members and friends while Church services are suspended. If you need help please let me know. Jane Allin – [allinjeremy@msn.com](mailto:allinjeremy@msn.com) or 07920837124 or 01278 458371.

### **For those with access to a computer and Facebook**

During the current crisis we have been emailing all those church members and friends for whom we have an email address with details from the Methodist Church nationally and details of all the Circuit initiatives for worship, as we receive them. As a result, an increasing number of our people have been enjoying the streamed services led by Rev. Deborah

Kirk and Rev. Tony Cox and joined in the Zoom Room Services led by Rev. Peter Thomas and Rev. Chris Brown. Many thanks to those who work so hard to provide those opportunities for us.

## **Orders of Service**

Written Orders of Service, to follow, produced by our Church nationally have been sent to all those without computers and we know that a group are using and enjoying them and have agreed to worship at the same time, using them, each week.

## **Chill and Chat**

Emmaline and Kate join with some people from the estate where Emmaline is based as our lay worker for a time of discussion on various subjects on Tuesdays at 10.30am. Usually they meet in a café but during Lockdown it had been by way of WhatsApp. This month they have discussed Privilege, Beauty and Leadership.

If you would like to join in, please contact me and it can easily be organised.

Kate Hewson (01278 421875).

## **Coffee and Chat**

We have now held five weekly Coffee and Chat sessions by way of Zoom room usually on a Thursday but at different times. An email goes out to all who have internet, to tell them the day and time each week. Everyone who has joined us, has enjoyed seeing and talking to friends. Please consider joining us in future.

## Junior Church

We have been keeping in regular touch with our Junior Church members by email and are making available resources for them to use. A quiz for our children is sent out regularly too.



One of our Pentecost colouring pictures



Poppy's 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday

## Messy Church

Our Messy Church Team have decided that our July Messy Church session will be by way of Zoom. Our Zoom Messy Church on the subject of 'Joseph' will take place at 3pm on **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**. Invitations will be sent out fairly soon and we hope that many of our Messy Church families will join us.

## Activities

We continue to send out pictures to colour and quizzes to do. Our recent quizzes have been close -up pictures of parts of our Church and cryptic cities and towns in the UK.

Thanks to all of you who took part in the Christian Aid paper quiz. The results were as follows:-

1<sup>st</sup> Brian Hewson and Connie and Rachel Holmes - 30 correct  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sue and Brian Parker and Keith Davis - 29 correct  
Angels Quiz sheets were received from Barb Poole (20 correct) and  
Connie and Rachel Holmes (19 correct).

## **Knitted Angels**



We would like to distribute small knitted angels at Christmas, as a gift from our Church. Please get out your wool and knitting needles and have a go. Patterns can be supplied - please contact Jane Allin.

## **Out of the mouths.....**

A little girl was diligently pounding away on her grandfather's word processor. She told him she was writing a story. "What's it about?" he asked. "I don't know," she replied. "I can't read."

I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colours yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what colour it was. She would tell me, and she was always correct. It was fun for me, so I continued. At last, she headed for the door, saying, "Grandma, I think you should try figuring out some of this stuff for yourself!"

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo and I said, "No, how are we alike?" "You're both really old," he replied.

## **News from Middlezoy**

The Middlezoy Coronavirus Helpers are continuing with their shopping service for those who are isolating or elderly, using the chapel and shop, as their base, and the prayer group has received a few requests and concerns.

We were able to see to the electrical work and give the church porch a deep clean and sort out in the process! There are a lot of evicted spiders looking for a new home.

Some of the work for the resiting of the oil tank is in process – thank you Dillon for arranging it for us. You may remember that we managed to secure a Viridor grant towards this work, and so it is good to be able to begin.

In spite of some sadnesses, there also seems to be a lot of fun in the village – judging from the Village Facebook page. Well done Middlezoy!



## **Greeting One Another And Sharing Peace**

When awareness of Coronavirus was just beginning in March, and we were being encouraged avoid unnecessary contact with each another, people employed all sorts of imaginative ways of greeting one another without physical contact.

Having recently returned from India, I thought there seemed to be a very obvious answer to the problem, and I was interested to find this in the

last couple of days on Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal's website  
<http://www.inderjitbhogal.com/> (which in itself is worth a look!)



'Most Indians use the traditional folded hands greeting. To greet anyone, if you are able to do this, fold your hands together at chest level, and bow gently.

This action says, 'I honour you, and that of God in you with deep respect'.

This action can be used to share peace in the context of worship and prayer

also. You can greet male and female, young and old like this. This greeting also acknowledges different cultures. '

Far more dignified and meaningful than the elbow bump, or the foot knock!!

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## Book Review

### 'Short stories by Jesus' by Amy-Jill Levine

Reviewed by Rev Brian Stocks

Amy-Jill Levine is a Jewish lecturer in Old Testament and New Testament studies in the USA. Her book, the 'short stories by Jesus', is an

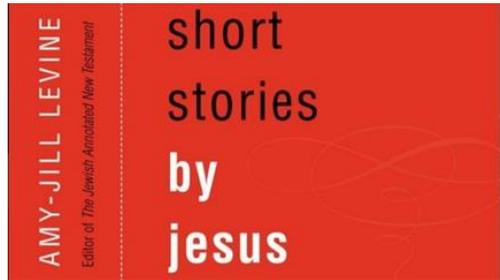
exploration of some of the parables of Jesus. Her conviction is a simple one, that to understand the stories that Jesus told, as far as is possible, you have to read them through the eyes of a first century Jew.

She is provocative in that she makes the reader question the commonly accepted meanings, bringing back the element of challenge in them that we might miss.

There are many illustrations I might use, but one will have to suffice. The widow and the Judge!

Sometimes we think of the widow as being downtrodden and neglected. But what if she is feisty and not prepared to take no for an answer? My mother was a widow for many years and I know what she did for us to survive as a family.

There is a suggestion in one passage that Jesus and Paul might be in disagreement, but that is for another time. Maybe!



# Online Church and Tearfund Survey

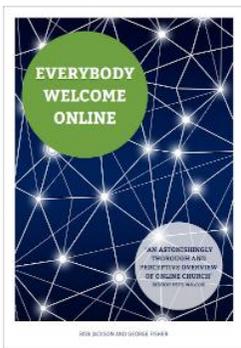
## Everybody Welcome Online

Bob Jackson and George Fisher are authors of a training course for CPAS called 'Everybody Welcome', geared towards helping churches to invite, welcome and integrate newcomers into church.

With the lockdown, they quickly switched tack to research what is happening with Online Church, and discovered that those churches who have moved online 'have stumbled into a vast new mission and ministry world'.

They have presented their findings in these three very interesting and accessible free documents to help us reflect on how to make the most of the current opportunities.

1. [Everybody Welcome Online](#) The original resource.
2. [Everybody Welcome Online Update](#) Includes further resources and ideas.
3. [Everybody Welcome to the Future](#) A new guide to help church leaders think through how church might look in the future.





## **REFUGEE AID FROM TAUNTON**

### **Update from RAfT**

As Deborah mentioned during her online Circuit service on 21<sup>st</sup> June, we are at the end of Refugee Week and though the

need is still desperate, RAfT remains closed for most donations. A request from Calais for 2/3 person tents, men's clothing and shoes size 8 - 9.5; sleeping bags, blankets and toiletries has been received and items assembled at the end of June. Palletted this can go by haulier without the need for drivers to be quarantined.

During lockdown RAfT has been able to support families locally through collecting Fareshare food from Tesco. Each Thursday it was sorted at the warehouse into 11 parcels for distribution in Taunton and Wellington by 2 Taunton Welcomes Refugee volunteers. We also supplied several rehomed families and the Canonsgrove housing project with bedding and crockery; books, DVDs, jigsaws and craft items also helped residents to pass the time.

Trustees realised that our major methods of fundraising – jumble and nearly new sales cannot be held as social distancing indoors at the warehouse is impossible, so together with South Somerset group's concert which often raises a 4 figure sum and other fundraising events, income has been minimal. No funding is available through the Government's charity scheme but the 20% rate bill still had to be paid.

Many of our families were doing well with their English lessons and the children's reading skills were developing well but with schooling stopped, most are back to the beginning again. One of our Syrian ladies is

desperate for RAfT to reopen, so that she can talk to us in English and continue to learn.

But some lovely news to finish. Two of the resettled families are expecting babies in the autumn and have been supplied with some of the items they will need. We look forward to sharing their joy when the little ones arrive.

*Elaine Dew*



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

**SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020**

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

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