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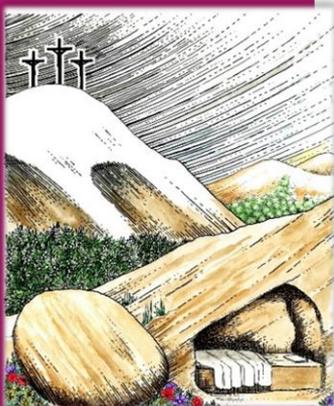
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THE LORD IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED

For me, one of the many great privileges of ministry has been on an Easter Sunday morning, to proclaim aloud that great exclamation of our faith that was first uttered by angels, that **"HE IS RISEN"**, with the congregation then sharing in the joyous response **"HE IS RISEN INDEED"**.

As we approach our second possible lockdown Easter, perhaps you like me, are remembering the frustration of last year, and perhaps there was even a degree of emptiness. Something akin to knowing that a celebration is taking place, but that you are somehow excluded from it. On the outside looking in? And, because of not being able to meet with brothers and sisters on such a monumental day in our year, being unable to shout in jubilant celebration **HE IS RISEN!**

As I write this article at the beginning of February, none of us knows what we will or will not be allowed to do by the beginning of April this year, or indeed what we will want and feel comfortable doing.

But even if we cannot meet together again yet to celebrate



Easter, it does not mean that there is no Easter to celebrate.

Nothing can change the truth that the first Easter did take place; that Jesus did bear the penalty of our sins at Calvary, in our place and that He was raised from the dead, opening the way to heaven for each one of us, when we acknowledge His sacrifice; acknowledge our need of that sacrifice and surrender ourselves into His loving keeping.

And if we have to live for a little while longer with the frustration of shouting aloud in silence, and singing our hearts out without making a sound, may our frustrations not overshadow the joy that the Easter message continues to offer to each one of us. THE LORD IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED.

May you know His peace, blessing and comfort at this Easter season.

Rev Michael Alderson



WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Hazel Thompson

Where do you live now?

After 17 years in Bridgwater, I moved to Harborne, Birmingham to live near my son Jeremy, his wife Jo and my two grandchildren Isabelle and Samuel, 17 months ago.

Are you still involved in the Union?

No

If not, for how many years were you involved in the Union?

More than 40 years

Where do you currently worship?

St John's Harborne, which is the Church that Jeremy, Jo, Isabelle and Samuel belong to, and also Harborne Baptist Church.

Interestingly, Jill Oldfield who grew up in Slackside Church and was a teenager at the same time as our 2 boys is a long-term member of the Baptist Church, so I am in touch with her again!

Describe your current church.

St John's is a very big fellowship with 2 Vicars and several other members of staff. The building has been closed for a major rebuild/extension since I came here – it is now on the point of completion, so there is much anticipation of making good use of the new resources once this pandemic is over. Prior to lockdown services were being held in a school and a weekly Thursday morning service for older people in a community centre, but since March (2020) everything has been online. One member of staff has the role of Pastor for Older People. She is an Anna Chaplain and has visited the complex I where I now live, with a small team, for several years to give an Easter and Christmas Reflection. A number of our residents have also enjoyed Prime Time and other events she organised in past years in the Church – so I came into 'prepared ground' and am able to deliver a written weekly reflection she organises while there is no Thursday service, to a good number here. I was invited on to the writing team and take my turn in the rota.

The Baptist Church is smaller than St John's but has 100 or more as Sunday morning congregation. The Minister and family were with the Baptist Missionary

Society for 10 years in North Thailand, and there is a strong emphasis on welcoming people of all nationalities and including them in leadership roles. Like St John's they are very outward looking and keen to minister to the local community and also be involved in worldwide mission. Both Churches have a good children's and youth work

Which of the following do you prefer and why?

Organ, piano or music group?

All

Pews or chairs

Either

Lectern or pulpit?

Both

Refreshments before, during or after the service?

After

Other than the Bible, which book has influenced you the most?

I can't pinpoint one. There have been so many and I am reading more now that my time is freer. As a student (long ago) I enjoyed Hudson Taylor, and the books of an American lady, Catherine Marshall, impacted me very strongly, and though tattered from use, are still with me. I believe reading Christian books is an important growth tool!

I greatly admired Patricia St John's best-known children's books, 'Tanglewood Secrets' and 'Treasures of the Snow' and remember having to relate one in serial form in a Scripture Union Mission once at Bierley, Bradford. Later I discovered she was a missionary (a nurse) in North Africa and some of her other books reflect that. Now I have her autobiography 'In Her Words'. A very good, easy-read. I always like Christian biography old and new. Amy Carmichael and Helen Roseveare have been a great inspiration to me and I could add many more – many men as well as the women mentioned.

Since moving here I've bought some BRF books and found Tony Horsfall and Mags Duggan both very worthwhile reading. Currently I'm using Mags Duggan's 'God in the Ruins' on the book of Habakkuk. She wrote it in the context of grappling with her 23-year-old niece having terminal cancer and her death so it would be very relevant to anyone going through those experiences of pain and bereavement.

What is your favourite Bible verse?

When Ralph placed my engagement ring on my finger he quoted Romans 8:31 *If God be for us, who can be against us?* It was our

key verse of Scripture from that time onwards. Not surprisingly that and the verses following it to the end of the chapter were and are still a major source of comfort and strength since I've been widowed.

When I was selling and buying property to move here Ephesians 3:20, 21 became my watchword as I saw it fulfilled over and over again in God's provision for me in specific needs – especially those things that looked impossible until He provided the solution.

What is your favourite hymn or song?

Again, not one but many! *I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus* is very precious as it was the closing hymn in the service when I made my commitment to Christ at 17 years old.

Many years later I can echo the words of *Lord for the years* by Timothy Dudley-Smith from the bottom of my heart. I love his hymns and quite a number are included in Mission Praise. Stuart Townend is another contemporary writer whose hymns are full of gospel truth. Having grown up with Charles Wesley how can we be satisfied with hymns and songs that lack this powerful content?

What is your favourite memory of your time in the Union?

Seeing people converted and growing in the Lord to spiritual maturity will always be the greatest thrill. I treasure the many lasting friendships which continue with people in Churches where we served, right back to our starting point in Bedworth.

Even the Covid pandemic has brought me increased fellowship with some of them through a Thought for the Week I write and send out by email to anyone who requests it and gives me their email address. (I'm still adding to my distribution list if anyone reading this would like to receive them).



1 SAMUEL 1:13

'Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.'

The books of **1 and 2 Samuel** give the historical background to the establishment of the monarchy. Samuel was the link between the period of the judges and the early days of the monarchy.

I want to consider the importance of prayer through his mother Hannah, and relate these thoughts to the situation we find ourselves facing today. Her prayer covers vv.9-18.

There are five things for us to notice:

1. It was sincere.

In v 10 we read, 'she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish.' Hannah was afflicted and she prayed (James 5:13). **In her sad condition she poured out her heart to the Lord.** As the prayer came from her heart, the tears came from her eyes.

How important it is for **our hearts and our lips to be united as we seek God's face** in prayer during these very challenging times in which we live.

2. It was specific (v 11).

Hannah, unlike Rachel (Genesis 30:1) only asked for one child. Her desire was that he should serve the Lord. He was not to be kept, but given for the Lord to use.

It is important that our prayers are clear and specific, both for people who are known to us, and also for the situation in which we find ourselves.

3. It was quietly spoken (vv.12-13).

There is no need to raise the roof in our prayers, unless we are doing so in public. God is not deaf! Though her voice never penetrated the ears of the old priest Eli, **the Lord could, and did hear her prayer.**

As I intimated earlier, it is what is in the heart, not what is on our lips that is really important (Isaiah 29:13). **We**

must not try and impress those around us. We are appealing to the only One who can respond to our prayers.

4. She was falsely accused (v 14).

Eli thought in his heart that she was drunk. The same accusation was made with regard to the apostles (Acts 2:13).

We should not be judgemental if someone's prayers are not up to our expectation. God knows the heart of everyone who prays. Let us make sure that our heart is always in tune with our lips.

Eli should have been a more understanding high priest. We should be thankful that we have One who is (Hebrews 4:15).

5. She was content (vv. 17-18).

When Eli's doubts had been removed, Hannah received his blessing with a guarantee that God had heard her prayer.

Let us go forward today, thankful that we have a great High Priest who hears every cry from the hearts of His people (Hebrews 4:14). But let us be submissive to His answers. Remember, God sees the completed picture, whereas we can only see it in part. He sees the beginning and the end and will only answer in a way that is for the good of those He loves.

Let us also be grateful that we have a compassionate High Priest Hebrews 2:17).

With these thoughts in mind, 'Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

With kind permission of Day One Publications who in the Summer of 2021 hope to publish a book of 365 daily readings entitled 'Thoughts for the Day' by John Roberts

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY





OVERSEAS MISSIONS

GOOD NEWS



Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Wow! How wonderful to know we have an extended family all over the world, only through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are united in Him, Hallelujah Amen! **(1 Corinthians 6:17)**

Let us celebrate with some Good News!

I am very thankful for all your prayers and support for our WRU Overseas Missions personnel and our project this year 2020-2021 which is still the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara, Madagascar.

Yes! Good News, our very own missions personnel Doctor Lesley Notghi has just gone back to Mandritsara on the 31st January 2021.

Lesley left the UK on the 16th January 2021. She had an unexpected long stay in Tana due to airport chaos resulting from arrest of several officials in a gold smuggling scandal! I cannot imagine how she was feeling. I am sure she was very frustrated (but praying) as she was longing to get back and volunteer her skills at the Good News hospital.

Very Good news! She arrived safely, praise God.

I would like to share with you some first-hand experience as to what it is like working and living in Mandritsara, from **a Brother in Christ, Doctor Nathan Lawrence who is over there.** I have permission from Nathan to share this with you all. (WRU Griffydam Church pray for Nathan and have met him.)

This prayer letter was from November 2020 I am only taking small paragraphs from it...

“There are definitely upsides, particularly the long – awaited start of mango season (hooray!) and the appearance of lychees in the market at the same time (hooray hooray!), but this time of year is really hard one for people of Mandritsara because there are no longer any taps or pumps (except occasionally at 2am meaning they have to get up in the middle of the night and fill jerry-cans from a trickling pipe, which is quite an exhausting endeavour); so rely on trips to the dried-out river bed and digging down to reach the water table (or paying someone to do it this for you): **very grateful to God that I'm still in the hospital grid, which means we do get running water for an hour or two a couple of mornings a week which is at least enough to fill the barrels and buckets again!**

And then of course God continues to provide for us in a thousand other ways out here.”

Are you grateful for where you live? Running water in your home directly to your taps! Praise God for His provision let us praise His Holy name in every circumstance we find ourselves in. Please pray for Nathan and Lesley as they are working over in the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara.

We as a Union of Churches have brothers and sisters all over the world. Please support all their mission work both in prayer and financially.

What GOOD NEWS Jesus has given us; let us share what we have in Him!

A wonderful hope and an everlasting future in our wonderful Saviour. **Please let us unite and share who we are in Him.**

If you would like to find out anything more about our project please contact myself, or any of our WRU Overseas Missions team.

God Bless
Lindsey Hedley (WRU OM Secretary)

MY CUP RUNNETH OVER

When Sam and I received the poem below in a Christmas card. It reminded me of when we were young, when my sister and I used to visit our aunt Lil. At tea-time she always drank her tea from the saucer. When we went home and did it there, mum was quite shocked that we had picked up such a bad habit, and said we were not to do it, even though we protested that it was what aunt Lil did.

I pray that you will be blessed as you read the poem and that it will help you know that whatever the day brings, God is always there to supply all your needs.

Drinking from The Saucer

(The unknown Evangelist)

“My cup runneth over... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (Ps.23 v 6)

I have never made a fortune and I'll never make one now.
But it really doesn't matter because I'm happy anyhow.
As I go along my Journey reaping better than I sowed,
I am drinking from the saucer, because my cup has overflowed.

I don't have heaps of riches, and sometimes the goings tough
But with friends like you to love me, I know I'm rich enough.
So I thank God for the blessing that His mercy has bestowed
For I'm drinking from the saucer because my cup has overflowed.

As God gives me strength and courage when the way grows steep
and tough
I'll not ask for other blessings I am richly blessed enough.
May I never be too busy to help bear another's load
For I'm drinking from the saucer because my cup has overflowed!

From whence this joy o'erflowing in sorrow and in strife?
I shout, 'Tis grace thru' precious blood that Christ is now my life!
So I joy in God with thankfulness, and walk by faith the daily road,
For I'm drinking from the saucer since my cup has overflowed.

Pauline Downing

The Easter Lamb

A joint of lamb is traditional for Easter Sunday lunch. Here's a very simple, tasty dish to use up the leftovers.



3. Smash leftover roasties (and parsnips if you have any) with a fork and spread over. You could even add other veg so it's more like bubble and squeak – my favourite.
4. Then scatter with a mix of grated cheese, breadcrumbs and a sprinkle of herbs and bake in the oven for 30 mins until golden on top and bubbling around the edge.

Serve with re-heated or fresh green vegetables and more gravy.

During lockdown some of my favourite TV programmes have been following farmers through their year. I love to watch lambing and see the new little ones frolicking in the fields.

But I struggle with then seeing them as chops and steaks at the Farmers' Market.



What a lesson this is for Eastertime though. The farmers only make a living by rearing and slaughtering their flock. The endearing lambs and other animals become our food - but they have to die first.

The analogy is obvious. However, we grieve on Good Friday over the cruel death of Jesus we can only rejoice on Easter Sunday for that ultimate sacrifice. And the wonderful, miraculous thing is that He rose again and through The Lord's Supper we are continuously reminded that He is our food, our sustenance.

Have a very blessed Easter.
Sue Over

Ingredients

Leftover lamb, gravy and potatoes.

Grated cheese, breadcrumbs and mixed herbs.

1. Heat oven to Gas 6/200C.
2. Take all leftover lamb off the bone, roughly chop and place in an ovenproof dish. Pour over some gravy to moisten.

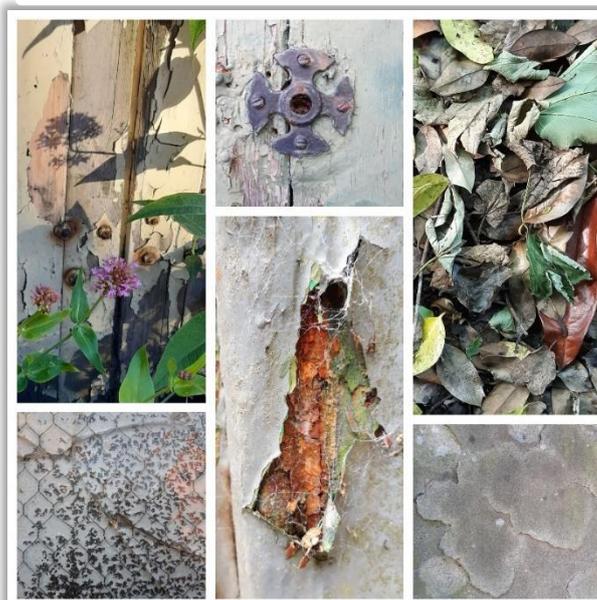
Having always preferred to walk with others, one of the things that I've learnt since the first lockdown has been **the art of walking by myself.**

Aware that some of my family and friends were unable to get out at all, I began looking around for things I could photo and share with them.

Without the 'distraction' of a walking companion I was surprised at what I saw when I really looked, making the most of that line from the poem by W.H. Davies in the title above.

I also did a couple of suggestions from a local art centre around 'Mindful Photography'. One was stopping at regular intervals (I stopped every 10 minutes) and taking a photo of something I noticed from that spot. The second was responding to the Japanese

TIME TO STAND AND STARE



concept of 'Wabi Sabi', approximately explained as the combined idea of the beauty in simplicity and in the passing of time with deterioration... **so I walked out looking for the beauty in the imperfect, in the impermanent, in decay.** Fallen leaves were an obvious thing that we often appreciate but I was struck at how even stone showed signs of its impermanence.

My solitary walks have often reminded me of the line in the prayer by St Teresa of Avila **'All things are passing. God alone never changes.'** This is both a comfort and a challenge to me...to know that these really difficult and sad times will pass **but also that I need to fully appreciate the moments of joy, hope and love when they arise.**

Yvonne Stonehewer

Police CHAPLAINCY

LOITERING WITH INTENT

As I was driven away in the back of a police car, I was embarrassed in case I was seen by friends or family!

No, I'd not been arrested, this was an entirely legitimate exercise as part of my duties as a Police Chaplain.

I first got involved with police chaplaincy when I was minister at Alderman's Green and rekindled my interest when I retired. I am currently a Force Chaplain with South Yorkshire Police (SYP) in Barnsley.

One of the first questions I am always asked (either by officers or members of the public) is "What does a Police Chaplain do?" and my answer is usually "We loiter with intent". A visit to the police station will usually involve wandering around the various offices – sometimes just sticking my head round the door to say "hello" and, at other times, accepting their invitation to go in and have a cuppa with them. The other thing I like to do is to spend time with the officers on patrol. Spending a few hours in a police car with the same officer (or officers) can be an excellent "getting to know each other" exercise and often leads to some interesting (and, at times, challenging) conversations.

Every time I have been assigned to a new police station, there have been three stages that I have found it necessary to go through before my work can become effective. Firstly, I need to get myself known – frequent visits help with this. Secondly, I need to get myself accepted – again, frequent visits combined with as many conversations as possible help. Thirdly, and this is the most difficult one, is to get myself trusted – this will only come as relationships develop.

Increasingly, the police are recognising the importance of having a chaplain assigned to a police station. Although they

already have numerous and excellent support systems in place and a "wellbeing room" in most stations, a Chaplain can be a completely independent point of contact and no record of any kind will be kept.

The pressures on the police officers today are increasingly complex. Although a chaplain's responsibilities cover all employees – both police officers and civilian workers (known as police staff as opposed to police officers) the majority of my involvement is with the (generally young) officers who patrol our streets (albeit in cars rather than on foot these days) and respond to any emergency as it arises. The stress they face is huge as they often have to make instant life and death decisions, which, if they get them wrong, could have disastrous consequences – for them and for others.

No wonder, then that they need a "listening ear" – and that is where the Chaplain gets involved. He (or she) simply sits and listens to the officer, offers support and, if appropriate, commits to pray for that officer.

Shortly after I got involved with the police, I came across the policeman's (as it was in those days) prayer:

***Lord, if some dark and dreary night,
I must give my life,
Lord, with your everlasting love,
protect my children
and my wife.***

That prayer just emphasises some of the pressure these brave men and women face every day. I would encourage you to pray for them regularly – The Christian Police Association (cpauk.net) have some useful resources, including some "adopt-a-cop" material.

Rev Colin Braithwaite

OBITUARY



It is with sadness that we report the death of brother **John Bolton** from Cliffe Bridge. He passed away suddenly on 18th January in Barnsley Hospital, after being admitted earlier that day. He was due to celebrate his hundredth birthday this coming June and had lived all his life in the Barnsley area, serving as a Magistrate and Chairman of the Bench for 25 years.

From his early years, John became a Christian, attending Measbrough Dyke Church and holding office there until he went to Cliffe Bridge in the 1960s, where he became leader. Throughout his life there, he held various offices, including those of Sunday School teacher, President and Secretary. He was always involved in the Barnsley Circuit, being President more than once. He became a local preacher in 1953 and preached at many churches within the Union and elsewhere, being inducted as President of the Wesleyan Reform Union in 1983.

John was involved with many Christian organisations throughout his life, including being the President of Christian Endeavour and the President of the Barnsley and District Sunday School Union.

John was well known and respected by many in his town and they have commented about his Christian witness, which he upheld all his life, using every opportunity to preach the love of Christ. In his later years, he still went walking every day and would 'gossip the gospel' to those he met whilst out in his local area. He encouraged many in their walk with God.

He leaves his son and daughter, John and Janine, and his granddaughter Fionn (she recently made her grandfather very proud with the birth of her son, Vincent, in November) and, his many friends at Cliffe Bridge. We will all miss him very much.

Our loss is heaven's gain.

THE DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF *Dennis and Ann Batty*

On 4th February 1961, *Dennis and Ann Batty* were married at St Nicholas Parish Church in Nuneaton at 2.30pm. Sometime later they joined the fellowship at Heath End Wesleyan Reform Church. They have recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding and together, they thanked God for His goodness to them over those sixty years.

