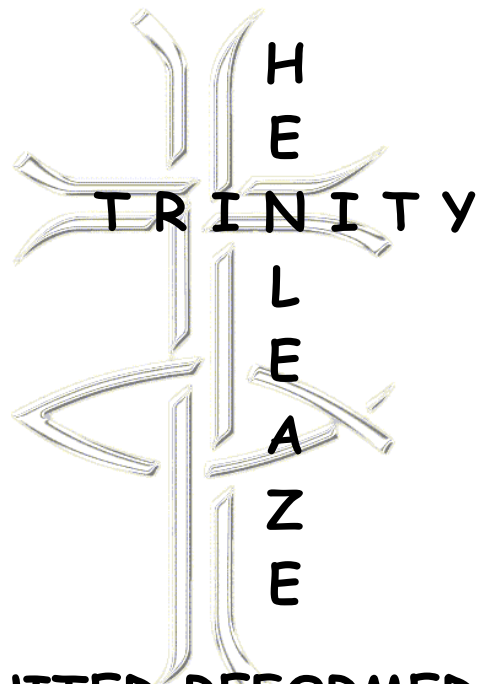


Newsletter



UNITED REFORMED
CHURCH



September 2020

Dear Friends,

My first letter for the monthly magazine!

Wow! How wonderful it is to be writing to you all like this after the many months of waiting. Thank you for your patience.

Thank you to all who have done so much over these months to sustain, encourage, develop and enhance the life of the congregation. It has been a profoundly testing time in so many ways. It has been a time of great loss and suffering and has brought much heartache. I have experienced aspects of that as Westminster College fell silent and almost everything we had planned and ready evaporated before our stunned sight in a matter of days.

You will have had overlapping experiences as things changed, ended, were postponed and cancelled across church and community, in schools and at work, for family and for friends. You will have shared in the suffering of others and will have many griefs to bear.

I simply offer my thoughts and prayers into all that you have in your hearts, and assure you of my sense of tremendous privilege in being able to come to walk alongside you in it all now. I know that we are going to travel through continuing evolution and experiment as we discover what aspects of congregational life can rapidly return to something that feels more “normal”.

Equally, there will be some things that take time to get right and some things that we have to keep avoiding until the pandemic has moved on and we are safer. All of this is demanding and, for many of us, gruelling and frustrating. Now, as much as ever, we need to be kind and gentle with each other and very aware of the needs of others so that we continue to bring the light of God’s love into the darkest corners of this context.

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I'm conscious that this marks the start of a new ministry in this joint pastorate. Even without the pandemic that would demand much trial and error, exploration and experiment, trust and patience. Please bear with me as I discover what ministry can be amongst you all and within the two congregations.

Please uphold everyone in your prayers as we enjoy this new chapter. I think, for all its challenges, that it offers the most wonderful and exciting prospects for worship, service, love and life. I am thrilled to be given this opportunity to discover, hand in hand with all of you, what God intends in these settings.

Jenny and I, along with Samuel and Thomas, are feeling very at home already and look forward to the times when, in all the proper ways, we can begin to welcome you into the home you have created for us here. And I look forward to meeting you all as is best for each of you.

There will be disappointment, of course, that the virus has curtailed much that we might have done to mark this new chapter of ministry and mission. But please know that the depth of your love and care is clear even if we cannot do some of the gatherings we would have hoped to do.

Yours in Christ,

Neil

Lectionary Readings for September

The readings for Sunday services are printed here to give you the opportunity to read and think about them in preparation for worship

Sun 6 th Sept	Exodus 12 vs. 1-14 Romans 13 vs. 8-14	Psalms 149 Matthew 18 vs. 15-20
Sun 13 th Sept	Exodus 14 vs. 19-31 Romans 14 vs. 1-12	Psalms 114 Matthew 18 vs. 21-35
Sun 20 th Sept	Exodus 16 vs. 2-15 Philippians 1 vs. 21-30	Psalms 145 vs. 1-8 Matthew 20 vs. 1-6
Sun 27 th Sept	Exodus 17 vs. 1-7 Philippians vs. 1-13	Psalms 78 vs. 1-4 & 12-16 Matthew 21 vs. 23-32



Neil, Jenny, Samuel and Thomas moved into the manse as planned on the 22nd July.

They have been using the time since, settling in and getting to know the area. The Waterford room in church house has become Neil's office. It is looking quite cosy as he settles and sorts things there as well.

As I have mentioned before, Neil commences his ministry on the 1st September. He will be taking most services but for this month they will be via zoom. If anyone is still apprehensive or would like to use zoom please contact me. If you already have zoom and are not yet on the list for services, please contact me as well.

It is with great sadness that I have to announce the deaths of Ted Price on the 12th August and Joan Gunn on the 13th August. They were both stalwarts of the church. Both have given the church great service and both have been Church Secretaries. Joan was a serving elder. They will be greatly missed and our prayers and thoughts are with both of their families. We also have special prayers for Gill who is herself unwell.

By the time this newsletter is published, Ted's funeral will have taken place. Joan's is in September. Sadly due to the current restrictions, services are restricted to thirty people. While many of us would have liked to attend these services this is not possible. When we are able to, we will be having services of thanksgiving, where we will be able to remember and share memories of both Ted and Joan.

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On Saturday 19th September at 2:00 pm. the service of induction for Neil will take place. Again we have to adhere to the current restrictions. We are hoping to be able to use zoom, so more people are included.

For your diaries, The Harvest Festival has been changed. It will now take place on Sunday 4th October. This service will include communion.

The September Church meeting has also been moved to Sunday 25th October.

Chris Hyland

Diary dates for month of September 2020

Date	Time	Event
Sun 6 th Sept	10:30am	Morning Worship with communion led by Revd. Neil Thorogood, via zoom
Sun 13 th Sept	10.30am	Morning Worship via zoom
Sat. 19 th Sept	2:00pm	Induction Service. Further details to be announced
Sun 20 th Sept	10:30am	Morning Worship led by Revd. Neil Thorogood, via zoom
Sun 27 th Sept	10:30am	Morning Worship led by Revd. Neil Thorogood, via zoom

Following the sad passing of Ted Price and Joan Gunn, we received the following recollections from another of our former church secretaries, Alan Watt, and his wife Judy, who moved away from Bristol in 2002.

‘We have very fond memories of both Ted and Joan.

We got to know Ted and Gill when we joined what was then Henleaze URC in the late 1970’s, when we lived round the corner from them in Northover Road. I succeeded Ted as Church Secretary in 1994 and he assisted me to settle into the job. He was, of course, a stalwart member of the choir and was involved in many other church activities.

I remember Joan’s interest in flowers and how she held flower arranging classes; her house was full of cacti. She also took over running the Contact Centre. When I announced a year in advance, at the end of 1998, that I would be standing down as Secretary, Joan came forward as my replacement provided she could shadow me for the year before my retirement.

They will both be greatly missed for their commitment and service to the Trinity Henleaze church community.'

How Covid 19 brought a community together

Lockdown has its downside. But the upside has been the discovery that the community spirit of World War Two is still very much alive in our neighbourhoods.

This is the story of just one community – The Crescent in Henleaze and two adjoining cul-de-sacs, Montroy Close and Cyprus Grove. As lockdown loomed, Liz Newman, The Crescent's Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator proved the catalyst for pulling together existing volunteers - normally responsible for organising street parties, carol singing at Christmas and children's Playing Out sessions - and forming a new WhatsApp group, masterminded by Hannah Hedinger, aimed at offering support to those who might need it. Leaflets went out to all the households explaining what was planned.

The idea quickly took off. Within days the list of residents joining up had reached double figures. Offers came in to pick up shopping and pharmacy supplies for the self-isolating. Those joining the queue at the Post Office took requests from the self-isolating to buy stamps and post parcels. People posted that they were going shopping and asked if they could pick anything up for someone else. The results would be left in porches with a ring on the doorbell. Even a call for spring onions for someone's supper was quickly answered with a bunch on the doorstep.

Residents found they were getting to know their neighbours – not just the ones next door but all along the road. New friendships developed which will continue long after lockdown is finally over.

As the need for PPE accessories became apparent residents with sewing skills decided they would use the enforced time at home to help out. Jill Hazell, a former West End wardrobe mistress, offered to make laundry bags for NHS staff to take their dirty uniforms home in to wash. An NHS nurse, Vicky Ruzsala, working at Southmead Hospital and living in The Crescent was quick to respond and soon delivered the first orders to grateful colleagues. An appeal by Jill on the WhatsApp group for raw materials resulted in her front living room being quickly filled with duvet covers and pillowcases. Soon the production line was being augmented by two other neighbours, Sue Finney and Kate Wright. A request then came from Vicky for head bands with buttons for nurses to attach their face masks. Michele Barbour stepped in producing over 100 with the help of her mother – fitted in between home schooling and online lecturing at Bristol University. Calls to local care homes found they were in great need of washbags and headbands as well. Soon supplies were being dropped off to them too. In all 180 bags and 170 headbands were produced.

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At the same time, Kate Wright got her 15 strong cycling group to join the action. Between them they produced 160 wash bags using 500 donated Glastonbury Festival tea towels, resulting in a spectacular look, for other Bristol Hospitals.

When the wearing of face masks became more prevalent Jill put up a WhatsApp post offering to make them for local residents for a modest cost. The proceeds went to one of the many small charities hit by the lockdown, Avon Riding for the Disabled, where Jill is a volunteer. She raised £200. That mission completed she then began making masks for local refugees where there is considerable demand. A batch of 40 was quickly delivered and a regular supply soon followed. In a scenario no doubt repeated in communities throughout the country, one resident looked after elderly neighbours as well as two families who were vulnerable because of existing high risk medical conditions - braving the Waitrose queue and then delivering to them each week.

A make do and mend spirit emerged with exchanging and giving away plants, food, furniture, and keep fit equipment like weights and chest expanders – the latter two going to restless teenagers.

The regular eight o'clock clap for the NHS and other key workers on Thursday nights further strengthened the community spirit with neighbours offering greetings from a safe distance, sharing experiences and getting to know each other better. A chance, too, to applaud their NHS worker neighbours. Some musical stars have emerged. There was guitar music from Jon Aldous and his son George with requests at one end of The Crescent (Montroy Close) and at the other a family band led by John Barnett where instrument playing neighbours, encouraged by his wife Helen, also join in.

With supermarket donations for Foodbank, the charity helping feed the most vulnerable, inevitably dropping off during lockdown local resident Sally Falconer Smith, appealed for donations. Husband and wife team, Kate and Tony Wright, who volunteer for the charity, were on hand to help get the donations where they are needed. Bags of provisions now regularly appear on both doorsteps. Another resident has been organising food donations for Borderlands, the charity supporting refugees, which has also been hit by the effects of Covid 19.

The WhatsApp group has even proved useful for do-it-yourselfers. With lockdown providing opportunities to get those little jobs done there have been appeals for guttering and pieces of corrugated iron which have found people scouring sheds and garages to answer requests.

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So it seems that the lockdown has unlocked the community spirit which was already there but needed something to spur it into action. And it has shown the power and effectiveness of social media in a crisis.

There are now plans to put together a record of The Crescent community under lockdown as both an online resource and a booklet. Liz Newman is keen to hear from local residents who would like to share their stories. elizabethnewman@live.com.

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(This article was published in the Henleaze Voice)

My Hands were Busy

My hands were busy through the day
I didn't have much time to play
The little games you asked me to,
I didn't have much time for you.

I'd wash your clothes,
I'd sew and cook,
But when you'd bring your picture book
And asked me please to share your fun,
I'd say, "A little later son."

I'd tuck you in all safe at night
And hear your prayers, turn out the light,
Then tiptoe softly to the door...
I wish I'd stayed a minute more.

For life is short, the years rush past.
A little boy grows up so fast.
No longer is he at your side,
His precious secrets to confide.

The picture books are put away,
There are no longer games to play.
No good-night kisses, no prayers to hear;
That all belongs to yesteryear.

My hands, once busy, now are still
The days are long and hard to fill.
I wish I could go back to do
The little things you asked me to.



How can that be my baby?
How can that be my son?
Standing on a rigger field,
more than six feet one.
Steam is rising from him,
his legs are streaked with blood
And he wears a yellow mouthguard
in a face that's black with mud.

How can that be my baby?
How can he look like that?
I used to sit him on my knee
and read him Postman Pat.
Those little ears with cotton buds
I kept in perfect shape.
But now they're big and purple
and they're fastened back with
tape.

How can that be my baby?
How did he reach that size?
What happened to his wellies
with the little froggy eyes?
His shirt is on one shoulder
but it's hanging off the other.
And the little baffled person at his
feet

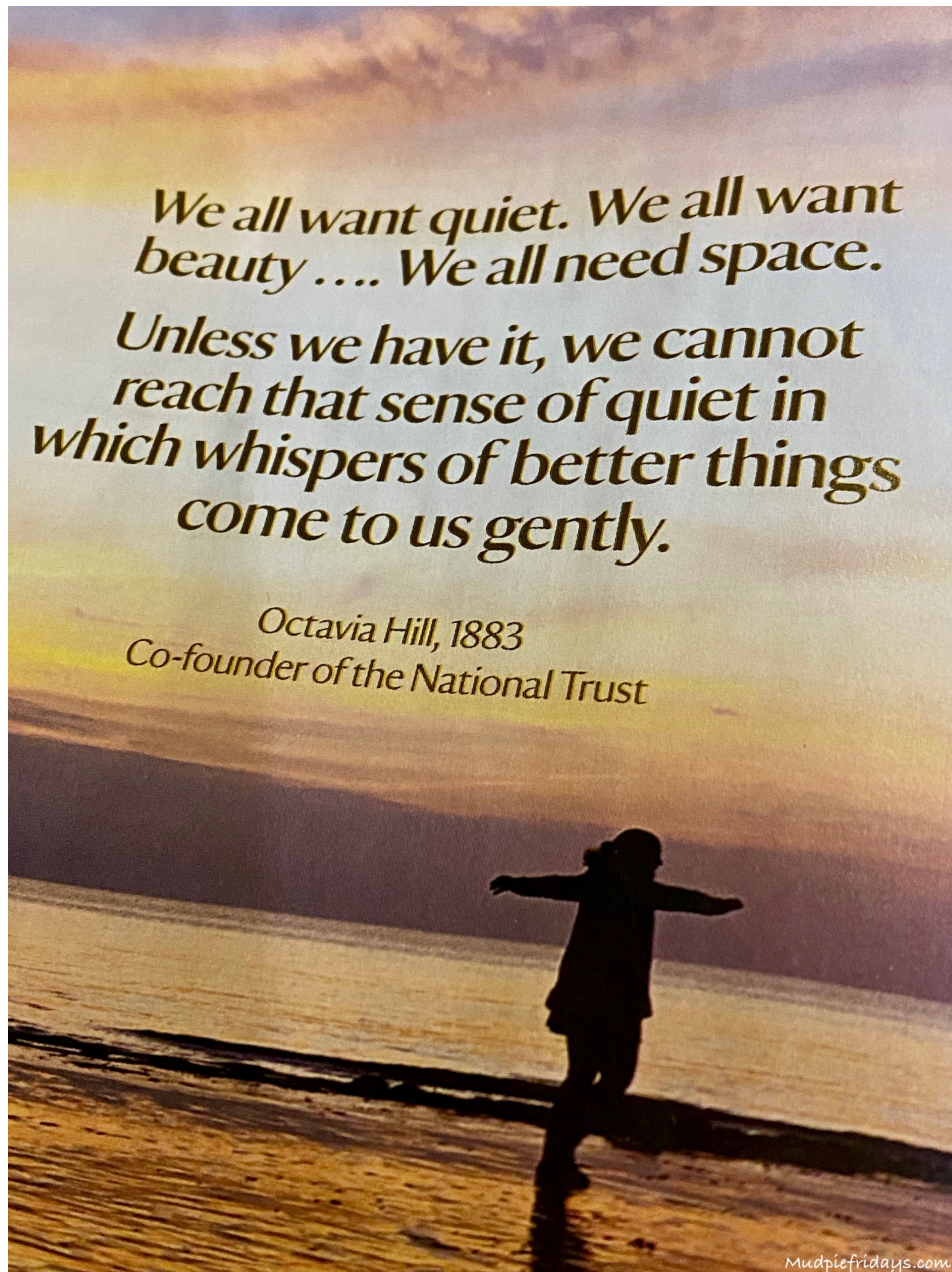
is me: his mother!



I hope that my child looking back on today, remembers a mum who had time to play.

Children grow up while you're not looking, there'll be years ahead for cleaning and cooking.

So quiet now cobwebs, dust go to sleep, I'm rocking my baby because babies don't keep.



Coronavirus (Covid 19)

The Lord is my strength and my shield, in him my heart trusts. Psalm 28 v 7

I was listening to “Thought for the Day” one morning in the last week and I was reminded by the speaker that it was five months ago when places of worship closed.

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Looking back, it seems a long time ago, March 22nd to be exact. For some I know it must seem even longer. What a lot we have experienced since then, panic buying, queuing to enter shops, masks, correct hand washing and online shopping and church services. For most I suspect that it is the isolation and not being able to see loved ones that have been the hardest to bear.

Even though I wasn't shielding, I know when we were able to see relatives and friends again, even from a distance, I suddenly realised how important that was to me and I suspect others have had the same experience. Since March the 22nd we have encountered two seasons and are about to enter the third autumn, with the beautiful colours that nature brings us.

The pastoral elders have done and are still doing an excellent job, keeping in touch with everyone in their group. Friends have been phoning each other and in some circumstances have been visiting one another. Coffee on the patio has become quite common. We must remember though for some it has not been so easy, especially if medical advice has had to be sought.

Every month when I write, I feel most members and friends are expecting me to say that Trinity-Henleaze will be opening for services on a certain date. I can understand the disappointment as another month goes by and do appreciate the reasons why it is important to have the church buildings reopen again. As we approach September, I am sure many of you will be thinking, oh good Neil is commencing his ministry and the church buildings will be open on the 6th September.

As I write, I can feel the disappointment that will inevitably be felt, when I say that although Neil will be leading most of the services in September, it will be via zoom. Under current restrictions we are not allowed to have more than thirty present at a service. Neil has some excellent ideas, to how we can accommodate this. Finer details have yet to be decided and how we can put these ideas into practice. I can't promise, but I am hopeful in October we will have services in church. We will need extra ushers to enable this. If you feel you are able to offer some help in this respect please contact me.

It is said that "Patience is a virtue". Every month I have asked you to be patient and you have, which I thank you for. Again, I am asking you for a little more patience. If you feel that you would like to talk the situation over with me, please don't hesitate to contact me. By the time of the next newsletter, I hope to have the news that you are all hoping to hear. This will be of course subject to Government and URC regulations.

Chris Hyland

**KEEP
IN TOUCH
AND
SEE YOU
SOON!**

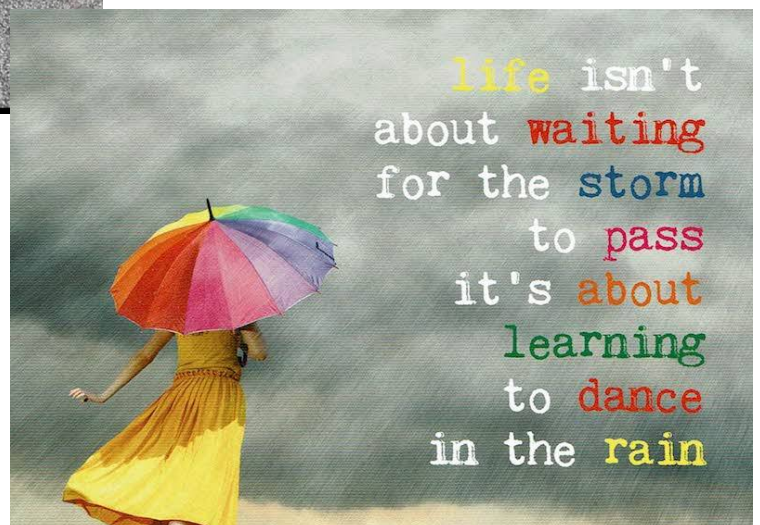
Dear All, I hope you are keeping well.

If you have any contributions for the next newsletter, please email or phone me (details on Contacts page)

*The deadline for the next newsletter is:
Friday 18th September*

I would be happy to print any messages or news you have for the Church Family, any recipe-ideas you have found and enjoyed, quizzes, puzzles or new hobbies, any funny stories or interesting facts you have picked up during these strange times etc. Please keep in touch.

*Kind Regards, **Kate Collett (Editor)***





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