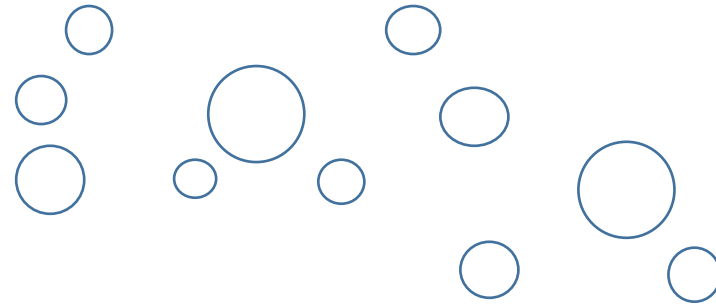


# INSIGHT



## LAUNDRY PRAYER

Lord, you have washed me clean and dried me;  
Now turn me upside down and shake me.  
Discharge the static when I cling to things,  
Smooth out the creases, brush away the fluff.  
Pull me, reshape me, turn me right side out.  
Iron and air me ready to be used.  
Let me not be afraid of dirt and sweat.  
Mend me if I split, patch up my wear,  
But please don't ever leave me on the shelf,  
outdated, out of fashion, beyond repair.  
Amen



Copyright Diane Coleman  
Found in the Spring 2011 'Magnet' magazine..



**HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH  
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE**

**October - November 2021**

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

If I asked you to finish the sentence 'you know it's autumn when...'  
I wonder what you would write.



For me it might have included damp morning grass and misty mornings; conkers - and apples - falling from the trees; or even that you have to put the lights on earlier as the days get shorter. I wonder what your own reply would be.

Of course there is one definite sign of autumn for me and that is that it is harvest festival season in church and schools. It is the time when I have to rack my brain and trawl books and the internet for new and different ways to share the importance of harvest for all sorts of ages from infant schools to adult congregations. Like many things we 'recognise' annually or regularly there is the danger that we become a little numbed to the importance of what we are remembering or celebrating.

In church we love to decorate our churches with flowers and foliage, with fruits and vegetables and, in thoroughly modern ways of celebrating, with tins and packets of all sorts produce. In doing so the most important part is to remember why we do this (the church looked beautifully decorated, thank you to all of you).

We do so to thank God for his provision for us, to pray for his continuing provision, and also to remind and challenge us that part of those prayers are answered by the way we share what we have with those, locally and globally, who don't have enough. Our clearest offer of thanksgiving to God is how we show that in action.

Throughout the last 18 months or so we have become even more aware of the needs of the poor in our society, and around the world, as the effect of the pandemic took hold. God continues to call us to care, and provide, for the poor, the needy and the foreigners in our midst. Harvest brings this call into stark focus. And if you wonder how your small offering can possibly make any difference at all to the global need let us remember some of Jesus' teaching when he told his listeners that they were to be yeast, salt and light to the world. He was challenging us to be completely in and amongst the world we inhabit in such a way as to make an

incredible change and difference to the world, and helping us see that what seems so small and insignificant *can* become the 'catalyst' for amazing change and transformation.

*'Come, you thankful people, come.  
Raise the song of Harvest home!'*



**Debbie**

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## ACTION FOR CHILDREN - formerly National Children's Home (NCH)

In 1869, the Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson saw some children living rough under the arches of Waterloo Station. Instead of walking by, he stopped to listen to their stories. Then he worked out the most practical way to help.

Stephenson was a Methodist minister from the North East of England. He was also passionate about social justice. So when he moved to London, he challenged the Methodist Church to take action to help children living on the streets. Stephenson's work led to the creation of the National Children's Home (NCH). In 1994 we became NCH Action for Children. We've been Action for Children since 2008.

Our church has been a regular supporter of the charity, with proceeds from our springtime plant sale and collection boxes available for anyone who would like one. Our current Action for Children representative is Susan Dear, but she would now like to step down and is hopeful that there is someone willing to take over.

So what's involved? There are around nine boxes in circulation and these are brought to church and handed over when full. They are then taken home and emptied, the money counted and paid into the HSBC bank in Hertford. The total collected is recorded and returned to the collector, together with their now empty box. Sue points out that it's sensible to have someone with you when counting the money. Action for Children provide a new pack of forms and stationery to someone starting out, and a telephone number to ring for advice. When Sue has contacted them they have been very helpful, and she adds "This is not too overwhelming." So is this something you could do?



## THE SUNFLOWER

Cloudy, rainy, chilly days in the middle of our British summer do not warm the heart. Recently, on such a gloomy day, we were given some sunflowers. We immediately smiled, our spirits lifted, and since then I've been thinking a lot about sunflowers. Now don't mock pondering plants! In 1 Kings 4:33 we read that King Solomon 'spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls' (NIV). (Incidentally, he couldn't have spoken about sunflowers because they originated in South America and were only brought to Europe in the sixteenth century.) Jesus himself took the garden mustard plant and created a parable (Matthew 13:31–32) and in Luke 12:27 Jesus said, 'Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these' (NIV). But sunflowers are especially appealing, and it didn't take me long to think of four aspects of them that spoke to me.



First, sunflowers are *cheerful*. There's something about that disc of brilliant primary colour yellow that lifts the spirits. Possibly it's because sunflowers look like the sun – or at least every child's drawing of the sun – and I suspect quite a few of us need sunlight to lift our spirits (certainly anybody with a Greek ancestry like me!). Indeed, I can quite understand why the depressive artist Vincent van Gogh was drawn to painting them. Of course, it's not always easy being cheerful but we can choose to be cheerful, happy and optimistic instead of grumpy, gloomy, miserable and pessimistic. And I know which people I would rather spend time with: those who lift me up not those who bring me down. Let us be sunflowers, not weeping willows!

Second, sunflowers are *conspicuous*. It's not just the colour of sunflowers that makes them so striking; it's the fact that they can easily be tall enough to tower over you. Most flowers you look down on; sunflowers you look up to. In fact if you grow sunflowers (as I am trying to do), you may end up not simply blessing your own garden but your neighbours' too. I think there's another lesson here: it's all too easy to stay concealed. We may not reach the height that some sunflowers do but, short or tall, it's important that we let our light shine. Remember: even short people can stand tall. Let's learn from the sunflower to stand up and let what we stand for be seen.

Third, sunflowers are *considerate*. You may think of sunflowers as an ornament for a garden but of course they are a major crop plant.

Sunflowers provide seeds for food and vitamins, oil for cooking, and I'm told you can even make insulation out of those enormous stalks. In thinking about the use of sunflowers, let's remember it's not only humans who benefit from them but birds and insects too. Sunflowers are not just bold and big; they are also a blessing. Let us be a blessing to others as well.

Finally, sunflowers *centre on the sun*. They have the remarkable ability – absent from most other plants – of being able to move. Their flowers and upper leaves track the sun, and when the sun sets in the evening they rotate their heads back to face the east to await the warmth of the morning sun's rays. It's clever stuff! Sunflowers soak up all of the sun's rays for warmth and light. They depend on the sun to make their food so they can keep growing. But what about those cloudy days? Get this: sunflowers will turn and face another sunflower! Looking to each other for support until they can once again see the sun.

There's a lesson here for us. We should be those who, at the start of the day, are found facing towards God the Son – Jesus – and who during the course of the day continue to keep our eyes fixed on him (Hebrews 12:2). And on those cloudy days look to each other for support and encouragement but remember, as St Francis of Assisi prayed, 'In giving we receive.'

Rain or shine, may you be inspired by sunflowers and may we all continue to look at the Son.

(Thanks to **Jen Doragh** for forwarding this)



You are warmly invited to join us at Roydon URC for our Autumn Fair on Saturday 30 October, between 10am and 2pm.

Come into the church, have a look at the stalls, grab a cuppa and have a chat!

All the funds raised will go to support the mission and ministry of the church.



## WHERE ARE YOU NOW? Revd. John Butt

*John was our Minister here from 1999 to 2008. He's looking forward to being with us in November for our Church Anniversary. It will be the first service he has taken since July 2019 so he's asked us to be kind to him!*



It has been two years since I retired, though the first year was spent looking after Hilary until her death. Of course, lockdown did not help the situation with churches and groups being closed but gradually things have started returning to 'normal'.

Living alone was a new experience, Zoom services became the norm. The phone and internet has been a lifeline.

Since moving back to Kent, I have been involved with BBC Radio Kent and Hospital Radio Tunbridge Wells. The latter changed its name to West Kent Radio in January in preparation for going on FM having been granted a licence by Ofcom. As I write this, our launch date is October 28<sup>th</sup>. I present the Monday Mid-morning show from 10am to 1pm, a request show on Thursday evenings and a Christian magazine programme on Sunday evenings. I am also the community contact for the station, and have just attended the opening of a dementia tearoom at our Cottage Hospital, where I interviewed several people and will be in a feature early in November.

I also volunteer once a month at a dementia café held at the local indoor bowls club and I also volunteer at a local college for 18 to 25 year olds with learning and physical disabilities. This is radio production with the aim of helping the students to become better communicators.

I was attending a Friends Together group, a local charity set up for those who are bereaved. This was set up by a member of Tonbridge Methodist Church and now has several groups in the area. My status there has changed to volunteer as they need a man to welcome other men who may come along.

I am currently attending two churches. St Stephens is at the end of my road and I attend one of the house groups there and am on the

intercessory prayer rota. The other church is St Peter's in Limpsfield, Surrey, and why I sometimes go there would take too long to explain here. Though, if asked, I can explain in person on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

**John**

*Miriam and family*



*Mark and family*

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## MY FAVOURITE HYMN – Ron Doragh

When Ron was asked to choose his favourite hymn for this magazine, he explained that he loves singing so much that he could only narrow the choice to four!

As a 7 year old boy in Liverpool, his mother encouraged him to audition to be a chorister in the Cathedral, the largest religious building in Britain. Of course he succeeded and he remained there for ten years, travelling the 7 miles by bus for services three times a week. He remembers the magnificent organ and the trumpeters who played at military services such as



Remembrance Day, accompanying 'All people that on earth do dwell' (StF 1, but probably in the glorious arrangement of the hymn by Ralph Vaughan Williams). That hymn and 'All hail the power of Jesu's name' (STF 342) with its descant are particular favourites from that period.

Ron's first job in 1965 was in The Liverpool Corn Exchange, which will surprise no one. He next worked for Glaxo and stayed with them for 32 years.

Ron and Jen moved to Hertford in 1990 from Ruislip in Middlesex with their two teenage boys and pre-teen daughter and became members of the Methodist church during Brian Gameson's ministry.

He was still working for Glaxo but took early retirement in 2000 and quickly became involved in many church activities and responsibilities, such as Tuesday Lunches and the installation of our PA system. He was busy during the planning, fundraising and building of the front extension and the Oasis Coffee Shop, and has spent four valuable stints as a Church Steward. More recently he has been a founder member of the Men's Breakfast team.

Ron's favourite hymns from this more recent period are 'Praise to the Lord' (STF 88) and the powerful 'Shine, Jesus, shine' (STF 59).

**Jackie Lawn**

Editor's note:

'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty' was written by Joachim Neander in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and translated from the German by Catherine Winkworth, an English protagonist for girls' education, two centuries later.

'Shine, Jesus, Shine' is probably Graham Kendrick's most popular contemporary worship song.

*Shine Jesus, shine ....*

*Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light!*

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Yesterday is history,

Tomorrow is a mystery,

Today is a gift, that's why it's called the Present. *M Oogway*

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There is only one way to avoid criticism:

do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing. *Aristotle*

## **GOODBYE – Jean Paxton**

Jean began life in Auchenback (*pronounced aww-kin-back*) in Barrhead. The youngest of four children, she had two older brothers, Duncan and Jim, and a sister Mattie. She was originally supposed to be named "Jane", however, owing to a mix up when her father registered her birth, she was recorded as "Jean" and it stuck.

She always spoke fondly of her years in Blackburn Square and recalled the sense of community. She spoke of going round to a friend's house to watch the queen's coronation as it was the only TV in the square and how everyone was piled in and up at the windows trying to see the screen. As a young girl she also helped to decorate the local community centre in the square with Disney murals which remained there for decades.

She was not a fan of school, leaving at a young age to make her own way in the world with the promise of a job painting pottery. Unfortunately, this turned out to be seasonal and so she began work in a local newsagents, "Willie Scott's". This had a post office, and eventually she began learning the ropes. She worked in a number of post offices before going on to own her own businesses, running two post offices concurrently.

Her niece and Goddaughter, Fiona, always remembers how Jean would take her to do fun things on a Saturday like ice skating and remembers how she was just full of fun and always there for everyone, you could talk to her about anything. She recalled a lovely story of the year she got roller skates for Christmas and no-one would take her out in them because it was snowing - Jean took her out in the snow regardless.

Jean was an incredibly intelligent and independent woman. When her mother died she was expected to move in with her sister but instead she bought her own flat and lived there herself. She also had to face banks when setting up her own businesses, who initially turned down a single woman looking for funding but she persevered and eventually achieved her goals.

She was also a brilliant and loving mum. In her late 30s, she gave birth to daughter Jennifer. Despite working really hard, she always had time for Jennifer and was always there for her whenever needed being her strongest supporter, inspiration and always wanting the best for her.

In 1998 she met and married Graeme. They honeymooned in the Scottish islands which included four boat trips - not ideal for a woman who hated sailing (and flying and tunnels for that matter!). They went on to travel many times after this but always on bus tours avoiding other forms of transport. One of her favourite trips was to Weston Super Mare where she and Graeme would sit on the pier watching the sunset, listening to Victor Silvester.

She loved knitting and would often make many items for premature babies and sell her work to raise funds for charity. She also knitted a number of trauma teddies, which are handed to children by the emergency services when they are involved in difficult situations. Her proudest pieces were large "Jean Greenhowe" figures, such as the full nativity scene and the McSporrán family. Her range of knitting abilities knew no bounds though - we will all be finding knitted bunnies and chicks everywhere for many years to come and there is a samba band in Glasgow who play with knitted wrist warmers made by Jean. She was always so generous with her time for everyone.



She also taught knitting to young people in schools but despite her best efforts and patience with Jennifer never quite managed to pass it down the family line. She was very creative in general and her family remember how she would add wee details to their pictures to make them funny and come alive. She also loved making greetings cards and had a collection of arts and craft supplies large enough to open a shop. She was well known for the family motto "We could make one of those!"

Jean loved the hills of Scotland and the sound of the waves. She would often drive to the beach on stormy days just to watch the waves roll in (as long as she was firmly on the shore and not on the waves!) She loved walking in the hills and once managed to end up in the hospital with a broken finger after falling whilst flapping her arms around "like a windmill" to shoo the midges away.

She was exceptionally proud to become "Gran" first to Daniel and then also to Ben. She lived for her grandkids and moved 400 miles "down south" to be close to them. She was always there to look after them whenever needed and loved the fact that she could watch all the Disney Pixar movies again with a legitimate excuse.

Her warmth and fun will be greatly missed.

**Graeme & family**

**WHAT'S ON?** Yes - things are now happening!

**Every Wednesday - SOUNDBITES** - Lunchtime Concerts in All Saints' Church. Soundbites, as its name suggests, combines a selection of soups, rolls, sandwiches, cakes and hot drinks available from 12:00 with a short (35-45 mins), unticketed, admission free concert at 1pm. Copies of the autumn programme are on the table in Oasis, and details will appear in the weekly Notice Sheet.



**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October Haydn – THE CREATION** - A choral celebration of the creation story, at 7.30pm in All Saints' Church. Hertford Choral Society and soloists, with Orpheus Sinfonia, all conducted by HCS's new musical director, Manvinder Rattan. Tickets: £16 reserved, £12 unreserved, £4 students under 25, from choir members, [tickets@hertfordchoral.org.uk](mailto:tickets@hertfordchoral.org.uk) or call 07936 719498



**BEREAVEMENT CAFÉ** An informal, monthly drop-in for adults who want to meet, share experiences and chat with people who have also been through bereavement. Hosted by friendly local people, set up by volunteers from Holy Trinity Church, Bengoe. Third Thursday of every month, 6.30 - 8.00pm at The Secret Garden Café, 89 The Avenue, Bengoe. For more information email [info@parishofbengeo.com](mailto:info@parishofbengeo.com) or ring 01992 413691



We know it's a little early to mention this but:

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES at Hertford Methodist Church**

**GIFT SERVICE** Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November at 10.30am

**CHRISTINGLE SERVICE** Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 3.30pm



**CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE** Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December at **6.00pm**

**BOXING DAY** 10.30am Joint Morning Worship by Zoom.