



Update on the opening of Church Buildings for Personal Individual Private Prayer:

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister that “Places of Worship” will be open for Private Prayer as from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June, we have received various

guidance and advice both from the national Church and the local Church in Bath and Wells.

We are happy to announce that after consultations with both PCCs and conducting the necessary risk assessments to ensure the safety of all people entering the churches, that we will be able to open the two Church buildings for personal individual Private Prayer as from Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June. For many, being able to drop into the Church Building and light a candle, have a moment of calm and prayer, and feel the comfort of old familiar surroundings will be important in our journey of realising hope during these times.

Our hope is that this brings tangible hope not only to the Christian community but also to the wider community as it has been so hard for the doors to be shut as they have been for so long.

Matt Thomson



Thought for the Week: What does it mean to 'bend the knee'?

One of the things that has been much in the media during these last few days and weeks is the image of people “bending the knee,” whether as a symbol of passive protest, or of solidarity, or both. It is a powerful, and some would say controversial image, to see a number of people all kneeling silently whether in a park in Glasgow as part of a rally, or on a football pitch either this side of the water or in America, and is clearly meant to symbolise something.

In the recent history of Black culture and protest some may remember the famous ‘kneeling’ of Dr Martin Luther King Jr and his fellow marchers in Selma, Alabama (1965) as he prayed and then walked quietly to the jail and jail sentence that awaited them. Their action maybe more than simply that of defiance, solidarity, or protest.

In our own Scriptures, Stephen, the first deacon of the Church, gives a monumental speech before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Acts ch7) showing, from first principles how the Jewish faith and history pointed towards and culminated in Jesus Christ, not just for Jews but for all humanity (and some would say for all creation.) Furious, the Jewish leaders took Stephen out of the city and committed him to be stoned to death. Those with a good knowledge of Scripture may remember a young man named Saul of Tarsus, later to become St Paul was there, willingly urging the crowd on while holding their cloaks.

As the crowd, in anger, began to throw the first stone, Stephen, following the model of Christ His Lord, cried out, “Lord, receive my spirit.” “Then,” says the text, “Stephen fell on his knees and prayed, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them’ again following the words of Jesus Himself towards those who inflicted such pain, such injustice upon Him on the Cross (see Acts ch7 vs59 and 60, and also Luke ch23 vs 34.)

It seems to me, it is one thing to kneel out of protest, or anger, or solidarity, but it is quite another if one also kneels in prayer and prays, “Father forgive, for they do not know what they are doing.”

But why still kneel? Because perhaps, it is ultimately, only by recognising that there is One and the same God of all of us, to whom all humanity are and will be held accountable (see Philippians Ch2 vs9-11), whatever the colour of our skin, our gender, our age, our sexuality, our social and financial status, that we can then see that everyone [and, if you are persuasive of being a Franciscan, all living Creation including the elements] are our brother, our sister, our friend that we then bend the knee in reverence and awe of His greatness as sole Creator and of His salvation and redemption and forgiveness in His Son, Jesus. And, in the Spirit of Jesus, we will plead, on the behalf of those who cannot see this reverence, this interconnectedness, this oneness, and that God will not count this against them, but indeed help them to be healed and one day have a bigger dream and ‘to see.’ Interestingly, such was the story of Saul of Tarsus, later to become Paul and apostle to the Gentile (non-Jewish) world.

One of the posters of the Abolitionist movement in the 1800's (the British movement against the slave trade) was of a 1780's cartoon of a Black slave in shackles and manacles kneeling with the caption, “Am I not a man and a brother!” Maybe those who are willing to bend the knee and to kneel are far more worthy of this title “man/ woman, daughter/son” from God than those of us who will not?

Matt Thomson.

“Weekly Interview – What does your week look like?”

As part of our outworking of the life of the Holy Spirit in and through people’s lives, we have added a NEW addition to our weekly posts on the “New Creation Facebook Page” and “website” – a weekly “5 minute interview” with someone from the life of the Church trying to live out daily life in and with God.

Matt and Kirsty



Living Faith Online.



**Do you have any faith questions that you'd like to explore as a group? What would help you grow in your faith?**

**We all learn when we share together. We are looking to explore a new online discipleship group based on the previous venture into Online**

**Church—register interest and thoughts on content by contacting Kirsty**

**kirsty.bowles@newcreationchurches.org.uk, through the Living Faith Facebook page**

**www.facebook.com/LivingFaithNC or via Church@Home.**

## CONGRESBURY 'VIRTUAL' VILLAGE FETE and GREAT GET TOGETHER



Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June saw the beginning of Congresbury's socially distanced community activities as residents began to hang messages of hope on 'Wishing Trees' on the Millennium Green. The idea, originated by The Millennium Green Committee and Parish Council, with a little help from the Scouts, Guides and Love Congresbury is part of the Great Get Together, an initiative from the Jo Cox Foundation.

Labels are available from Morgan's, The Coop or from Congar's Café (or you can download from the New Creation website or Love Congresbury Facebook page - or be creative and make your own!) Then just pop down to Millennium Green, as part of your daily exercise and hang your message on the tree. A lovely way to bring the community together and spread hope during these uncertain times.

The Church has hung four words on the tree, wishes for now and for the future, for the village and the community and for everyone. 'Love', 'Joy', 'Peace' and 'Hope'. Can I encourage you to write a prayer or message of hope to hang on the tree to be a blessing for our community.

Next Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, will see our first ever 'virtual' Village Fete. Village organisations have provided information about their groups along with a variety of activities to keep families busy over the Summer. There are some lovely walks around the village, colouring and photography competitions, make a scarecrow and even a virtual pet show! Star prize from Debbie Fortune's Estate Agent will be a Kindle Fire for her popular 'Guess the Balloon' competition - though this year just from a photo of a car instead of the real one on the paddock.



Full details can be found at [www.facebook.com/CongVirtualFete](http://www.facebook.com/CongVirtualFete) or [www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/community/love-congresbury/congresbury-village-fete/congresbury-virtual-village-fete](http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/community/love-congresbury/congresbury-village-fete/congresbury-virtual-village-fete)

## BANWELL SUMMER FUN



Banwell has a jam-packed Summer of fun too! Love Banwell kicks off the line-up with a scarecrow trail, follow the map around the village to find them all, just message your address to Love Banwell to be included. Of course, you can still join in and send us photos of your scarecrows even if you do not live in the village.

There will also be a pet photo competition, dressed in their holiday wear or dress up a flower-pot, make a potato person and make a beach holiday scene. Competitions start from 4<sup>th</sup> July.

Full details can be found at [www.facebook.com/lovebanwell](http://www.facebook.com/lovebanwell) or see Banwell Summer Fun posters.

Hopefully this activities will all be a bit of fun, something that families can do together and promote a bit of community spirit.

Kirsty x



Live Stream Church for Sunday: [“Continuing the story of being a new Church for a New Age – the story of the Tabernacle and of Jesus \(Exodus ch 40 and John’s Gospel\) – part of the journey of walking for 40 day with the Holy Spirit – 10.30am](#)

(Simply access the “New Creation Facebook Page” from Google: [65](#) or via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> (You do NOT need to have an account with Facebook to access any of this material.)

Last week, we looked at the story of Peter’s vision and of Cornelius’ dream and how they were both inspired by the Spirit to break new ground and form the message of a new community/humanity together in and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This week, we are going to be following up a post as one of the video blogs during the week about the relationship between the Tabernacle/the Tent of Meeting the Israelites were instructed to build by God in the Book of Exodus and the person of Jesus as described in the Gospel of John – looking at both the links and similarities, but also the fundamental re-interpretation and re-understanding of it, all in the power of the one and the same constant Holy Spirit, and how it relates to our life as Church today.



All you will need is a Bible and yourselves, and maybe a cup of coffee or tea.

Look forward to seeing everyone on Sunday.

[And afterwards, join us for our NEW ‘Virtual’ Coffee catch up.](#)

Afterwards, why not join us for the next of our ‘virtual’ Coffee and catch up? See the “New Creation Facebook Page” for details of how to join.

Matt



[Daily Blog](#)” – “40 Days with the Holy Spirit” – Sun 31<sup>st</sup> May till 16<sup>th</sup> July:

We are approaching about half way through our forty days with the Holy Spirit and it has already been so helpful in renewing and inspiring our relationship with the Holy Spirit. Thank you to everyone who has been part of the journey so far.

The next chapter is to look at how the Holy Spirit can shape and enable how we can be led by the Spirit, setting priorities, values and goals to aim for.

You can access the “Daily Blog” either by [looking up the “New Creation Facebook Page” from Google: https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/](#) or via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> (You do NOT need to have an account with Facebook to access any of this material.)

Or you can purchase Jack Levison’s book from Eden or Amazon, or via Amazon Kindle.

