



Update on the opening of Church Buildings for Worship, Occasional Offices – Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, as well as Personal Individual Private Prayer:

You may have heard in the Government Briefing on Tuesday that 'Places of Worship' are amongst those parts of the community that can open as from the 4th July.

The Wardens and the Standing Committee of both Churches met on Tuesday evening using technology and we decided that, although we were very supportive and greatly encouraged by this news, we wanted to do so in a way that was 'safe' for everyone concerned.

We will be guided in this by both the national church and the local Diocese in this, and the Diocese will be meeting on Wednesday to produce Guidelines that will then be published towards the back end of the week. Will then have to work through these, including doing various Risk Assessments etc, so it is likely to be a few weeks yet before we will be able actually to meet physically in the Church Buildings for worship.

We will try and keep everyone posted through New Creation Pew News and in other ways as plans develop, and I would like to thank the Wardens, the Standing Committee and our PCCs for all the work they have already and, no doubt, will be putting in on all our behalfs.

Please continue to pray for the whole Church community as we begin to make these arrangements and the necessary changes that will likely to be forthcoming as we emerge from this most unprecedented of times.

Thank you.

Matt Thomson



Thought for the Week : The Importance of ordinary people taking an active stand.

This week has seen us able to open the two Church Buildings for individual Private Prayer. And I am very grateful to Wardens and others in both church communities for making this possible.

On Friday evening, in Congresbury, we suffered the second break-in and burglary of the Lock-down, whereby two young people somehow managed to prise open the outside door enough to lift the latch break in and take the two Henry hoovers in the cleaning cupboard. They were caught on a neighbour's CCTV camera and Sonya, as one of the Churchwardens is in contact with the Police about the matter.

But what to do? Do we batten down the hatches, close the doors and retreat to safety? Or, do we quietly but resolutely refuse to be intimidated by the poor choices of simply a few, stand, and stay open holding to a bigger vision and a greater call?

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul, in ch 6, talks about the Christian community needing to put on the 'whole armour of God.' He says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." (Ephesians 6:10-13)

This is a 'Thought for the Week' and is not enough time to go too deep into the whole area of 'Spiritual Warfare,' however, as C.S. Lewis, comments in his Introduction to his "Screwtape Letters" (all about the character and nature of Evil – "Screwtape," as he calls him), "too many people are either oblivious to the darker forces and powers of this world, or are fixated by them." Interestingly, Paul likewise, is not so much concerned with "flesh and blood," in simply finding and holding to account the young men who have carried out the burglary and caused the damage, he is concerned also with what reaction it causes within us, and or the ability to combat, and even overcome the spiritual forces that took over the minds and hearts of the young men that justified to them that breaking in and stealing was simply something that they felt would be ok for them to do.

Of these forces, "victim pain" is perhaps the Prince of Demons. "I'm the hurt one round here. I'm the victim." And, even as the innocent, but hurt, 'other party' we can self-justify all manner of evils in self-righteous retribution that we would never consider under any other circumstance. We can see it between two mild mannered neighbours when one accidentally or inadvertently crosses a divide and chews up the grass of the other. Incensed, the fellow neighbour can plot and scheme all manner of imaginary or actual acts of revenge. We can see it between nations, and on the international stage, I will never forget George Bush Jr's speech after 9/11, when he vowed "to go on a crusade, and get those who had done such a hideous act to his nation on his watch." The second Iraq war followed and the rest, in terms of Middle Eastern politics, is in some sense a working out of that perpetuation of all this pain.

So, if kowtowing, and fear is not the way forward, but neither is simply retribution because it continues, if not perpetuates the pain and violence, what is meant to be the Christian response? Paul is quite clear, to focus on the person and character of Jesus, and when all else is done still to be willing to 'stand' – stand in this sense meaning, not to be willing to compromise the nature and character of the Gospel that can change even the hardest or most hurt of hearts either in the other person or in ourselves: honesty,

Sue Hoskins has sent us this message for her licensing this weekend.

This weekend, instead of becoming a deacon, as planned before Covid restrictions came into place, 18 people will be licensed as Lay Workers by Bishop Peter in a service over Zoom in the hope that they can be deaconed later this year.

Family and friends will be able to watch the service, which takes place at 10am on Sunday, live via the diocesan [Facebook](#) page or the home page of the diocesan website

not giving up on the relationship between us and the other (we can see this as an extension to the interpretation of the word righteousness), even when it would be so much easier to do so creating 'them' and 'us,' and the gospel of forgiveness and seeking peace (forgiveness, the one thing the evil powers of anger and revenge finds undermines themselves the most).

Is this "standing" easy? Of course not, hence the need to pray for the Holy Spirit in prayer to give us the courage and the will to do so. But, as we see so many protests, anger and even violence on our streets as we emerge from Lockdown, what, where and who are we going to put our trust in as we look to the future and the brave new world that we hope will be born from amongst such pain? And what sort Church community do we indeed want to be in order to play our part within it?

I was so humbly proud of our Wardens and Deputy Wardens in Congresbury as I spoke with them this morning. Not one of them said, "we need to shut the Church," or we must get "them," the culprits, responsible for this act, as if retribution masked as 'justice' was the only other option. Each in their own way said pretty much what Paul is saying, "we sort the damage. We gird our loins. We take a sharp intake of breath. Pray, and carry on – standing, with open hands, open hearts and open doors for one and all" in the belief Jesus offers the world and each of us a 'better' way.

Matt Thomson.



CONGRESBURY 'VIRTUAL' VILLAGE FETE and GREAT GET TOGETHER

Thank you to everyone who hung wishes or messages of hope on the 'Wishing Tree' as part of The Great Get Together. Such a wonderful display of community spirit.

The first ever 'virtual' fete took place today (Saturday 27th June) complete with a special live 'Do after the Show' performed by local youngster Ben Payne. Around 250 people tuned in throughout the day to catch details of activities and find out more about local organisations. The Scarecrow Trail has proven to be a real highlight with families all over Congresbury rising to the challenge of making a scarecrow to place in their front gardens. Keep an eye on the Facebook page for more fun activities throughout the Summer.

Full details can be found at www.facebook.com/CongVirtualFete or www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/community/love-congresbury/congresbury-village-fete/congresbury-virtual-village-fete



BANWELL SUMMER FUN

Next weekend sees the official launch of Banwell's Summer of fun! Love Banwell kicks off the line-up with a scarecrow trail, follow the map around the village to find them all. 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 4th July.

Full details can be found at www.facebook.com/lovebanwell or see Banwell Summer Fun posters.

A HUGE THANK YOU

Thank you all so much for your continued Foodbank donations. As we ease out of lockdown the Foodbanks will be extremely grateful for any help. Donations can be left in both churches, or at 17 Paul's Causeway.



[Live Stream Church for Sunday: "Continuing the story of being a new Church for a New Age – the story of the "Stump that will arise out of Jesse" \(Isaiah ch 11 and the beginning of Ch 12\) – part of the journey of walking for 40 day with the Holy Spirit: God's leading – 10.30am](#)

Last week, we looked at the story of the Tabernacle which God told Moses to build in the wilderness (Exodus ch 40) and how it related to the person of Jesus a thousand years later in the great "I AM" sayings we find in John's Gospel, showing how the whole of Scripture and indeed the whole of history point to Jesus: He is the meeting place between Creation and the Creator, all enabled by the constant overseeing and work of the Spirit. Amazing.

This week, we are going to be looking at another of the great images from Scripture, that of the "new life that will emerge from the Stump of Jesse," (Isaiah ch 11 and 12), a reading we often hear at Christmas time as part of the Carol Service in the context of looking to the birth of Jesus.

But what can this image teach us in our time, and how does it reveal the work and character of the Spirit? This, we will be looking at on Sunday morning, and with some interesting and inspiring discoveries.

As in previous weeks, 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



Providing Congresbury with a new way to shop, Re:Store Congresbury offers a sustainable shopping experience for the local community. Handpicked products include reusable face masks, flour, refillable cleaning products and hand soap as well as a range of eco-friendly toiletries and gifts. Orders placed online will be available for delivery within Congresbury or for collection from the Re:Store Congresbury base in Congars Café.

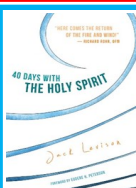
Website: www.restorecongresbury.co.uk – online store launches 15 June

Instagram: @restorecongresbury

Facebook: Re:Store Congresbury

Email: restorecongresbury@gmail.com

Jo and Claire



We are over half way through our forty days with the Holy Spirit and it has been so, 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 section is to look at how the Holy Spirit can 'lead' us as a Christian community – sharing with us the purposes and plans of the God both Creation and time.