

SUNDAY 25TH OCTOBER LAST AFTER TRINITY

Thought for the week:

"Caring for others"

What do they say, "never mix Religion and Politics?" But sometimes these two worlds do overlap. Indeed, the more I discover about the historical Jesus and the wider context in which He lived and shared His message the more convinced I am that He knew and cared passionately about the life and times of the ordinary people of Northern Galilee amongst whom He lived, and laughed, and loved.



Marcus Rashford's Campaign for Free School Meals

People may vary in their reaction to Marcus Rashford's "Campaign for Free School Meals" for children during the holiday periods both over this half-term and initially up to Easter next year, but few can fail to appreciate his compassion and his commitment to those who are struggling, knowing as he does, what it is like to be in that same situation himself during his childhood. Some may say we have one of the best welfare systems in the world, others that their own experience in the past was far tougher than that of many today, others blame the parents' chaotic lifestyle. Whatever the causes, there are a significant number of children who are going hungry and who are struggling.

The Bible has a stark and pretty uncompromising message to those who claim to be part of God's people about caring for those who find themselves in difficult circumstances, whatever the reason. Here is just a sample:

In the Old Testament:

Leviticus 25:35 says, "If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you."

Proverbs 22:22-23 "Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the LORD will take up their case and will exact life for life."

Proverbs 31:8-9 "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Psalms 12:5 "Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them."

And perhaps the best known from Isaiah 58:6-7 “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Jesus, in the New Testament, takes up these very words as part of His great opening speech to the world in the synagogue in Nazareth, in Luke 4:18-19 (part of the wider story of Luke 4:14-30) “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

There is pretty much no getting away from it, God throughout the Bible cares deeply about our physical and economic world, just as much as He does for our spiritual wellbeing and personal salvation. And He has a particular compassion for those who, for whatever reason, find themselves destitute. But more than this He seems to argue that sharing in such a compassion serves not only those in difficulty but also Himself and by doing so aligns our hearts with His - Matthew 25, Jesus’ speech about “the Sheep and the Goats” makes this very point.

Marcus Rashford in his Campaign may, or may not be aware that he is, in some way, perhaps helping, in part at least, to fulfil these words. Foodbank the same. Some may say, “well that’s ok for the children and their parents, what about the elderly, or those in other desperate situations in life?” Of course, we need to see their situations through Jesus’ eyes too. And we may feel there is simply not enough to do everything. But if we, as Christians, know these things, I for one can only say I choose to try and support it, not just from afar and in word but practically and closer to home.

Living by compassion and care in these days is hard, and people are already trying to be so generous. Thinking about and seeming to promote asking for something more opens us up even more to so much need in the world which can feel almost overwhelming especially if we are struggling ourselves as well. But if we can each just try and do a bit, for some it maybe to support Marcus Rashford, for others Foodbank, another campaign or charity, or whatever. But may we all unite around each Act of Kindness, each Act of Love, whether in terms of financial giving, or also in terms of compassion, time, or care, each makes our world a little bit more of a caring place, and I would suggest opens us too to being a little kinder as we seek to follow a kind, compassionate and generous God.

(If you would like to find out more about how you can join in with the early stages of a local initiative through Love Banwell and Love Congresbury please see below).

Thank you to everyone for all that everyone is already doing.

Matt Thomson.

Giving to the LOCAL Marcus Rashford Initiative:

In various parts of the country local Cafes, Pubs, Shops and other Food Outlets are offering children who would otherwise rely on Free School Meals the opportunity to get a simple free meal through their establishment.

After being approached by some local business owners, Love Banwell and Love Congresbury would like to offer their support towards this initiative. As Half-term is upon us this coming week we will be working hard with those who have already approached us to make this possible and also try to liaise with key people at our local Primary schools especially to try and get the word out to those families they know are particularly vulnerable and would benefit most.

Initially, Beth Ashton-Hilton (New Creation Treasurer along with Bob Mitchell) is happy to manage small financial gifts towards supporting this project which we are calling the “Local Marcus Rashford Initiative.” If you wish to give a small donation to this fund such as £2, £3 or £5 then details of how to do this are given below. Being part of Love Banwell and Love Congresbury and therefore an existing Charity behind it means we can also claim the Gift Aid on donations if you are a taxpayer.

Once we have got through Half-term, we hope to then develop more established links between local businesses, the schools and others in order to prepare with a little more time for Christmas unless wider circumstances change.

Further details will be posted on the website www.newcreationchurches.org.uk, along with the New Creation, Love Banwell and Love Congresbury Facebook pages as we develop the scheme and co-operations with other local organisations so please look out for updates.

www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches

www.facebook.com/lovebanwell

www.facebook.com/LoveCongresbury

In the meantime, donations can be made by bank transfer or cheque to the appropriate church which is then designated to Love Banwell or Love Congresbury.

Love Congresbury

Cheques made payable to **St. Andrew’s Congresbury Parochial Church Council**

Electronic Bank Transfer: Bank: **NatWest** Sort Code: **60-23-32** Account No: **72280484**

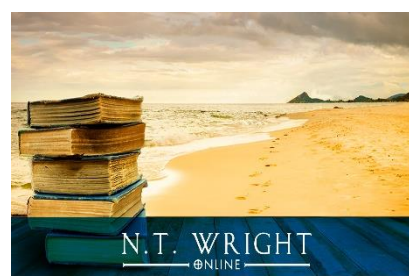
Love Banwell

Cheques can be made payable to **Parochial Church Council of Banwell**

Electronic bank transfers: Bank: **NatWest** Sort Code: **60-23-32** Account No: **41720210**

Live Stream Church for Sunday: “NEW Church for a NEW Society – Two Churches as ONE” - 10.30am:

Next Sunday (Sunday 1st Nov) we will be in **Congresbury** for a two part look at our next in the “Themes of John’s Gospel” – that of **Beauty**.



As we discovered previously, John's Gospel is such an engaging account of Jesus' life. Known as the "spiritual" Gospel, John had more time than the others to sit back not only to remember the events of Jesus' life as best as he could, but also to think in greater depth about what they therefore could mean. The other themes we will be looking at over the coming weeks include:

- Freedom
- Truth
- and Power

So please join us for this two-part look at the fourth of our themes next week. The service will last approximately fifty minutes to an hour.

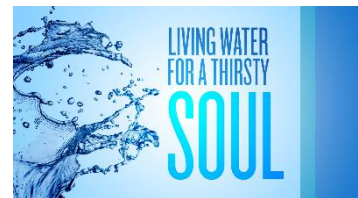
You can access the Service by joining us in church or **LIVE** via the "New Creation Facebook Page" : <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/> or catch up later via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> or New Creation YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>

Matt Thomson

Daily Blog – What's happening this week?

This week we return to our "Themes in John's Gospel" and to the theme of Spirituality. We have been looking at key expressions of God's love through the image of "Living water" and will be looking at how this image gives us an insight into how to meet with God today.

If you would like to follow the Daily Blog as part of your journey of faith, you can access via the "New Creation Facebook Page" : <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/>, via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> or New Creation YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>



Annual Church Meetings:

We have now held the two Annual Church Meetings for both Churches. Tom O'Dowd retired as Churchwarden for Congresbury and was greatly thanked. Ruth Wratten was elected to take over from Tom replacing him as Warden. David Ashton-Hilton was elected as PCC Secretary. In Banwell, Maggie McCarthy and Romany Poppitt-Price were elected to the PCC upon the retirement of Liz Cran and Graham Freeston. Thank you to everyone concerned.



The main item of discussion in both Annual Meetings was the question of whether to move forward at this time with seeking to register as an Inclusive Church, according to the national body's vision statement (2019). In both meetings the overwhelming expression of opinion was to support such a decision. This topic will now go before the two new Church Councils at their first meeting in November and we will keep you informed of how things develop.

If you would like to find out more about what being registered as part of the Inclusive Church community is about please see their website: www.inclusive-church.org

The six areas around inclusion involve: Disability (Additional needs), Ethnicity, Gender, Mental Health, Poverty, and Sexuality.

Thank you to all those who kindly joined the two Annual Meetings, both physically and those who joined online.

Matt Thomson

Annual All Souls' Day Service - a Time of Remembering:

Each year we remember those how have gone before us, and particularly this year, it has an added poignancy both for those who have sadly lost loved ones during this time of the pandemic and also for those who have felt the loss of loved ones during this time from years past more acutely because of the Lockdown and isolation.



We held the first of our two services in Banwell today (Sun 25th Oct) at 4.00pm and we are going to be holding the second service in Congresbury: Sunday 1st November also at 4.00pm.

Anyone is very welcome to join us online as Kirsty and the Technology Team will be Livestreaming both services. (As to how to do this Please see Kirsty's instructions below) PLEASE ALSO have a candle available to light at home as part of the service.

We also have space for a small number of people to attend physically, based on the usual Worship Guidelines for both Churches. But, PLEASE you will need to let us know, in advance that this is your wish. You can do so via email or phone.

If you would like your loved one's name read out as part of the service, please can you let us know again by email or phone. Due to the service being online as well this year, we can only read out those names we have been given permission to read so WE NEED YOU to get in touch and let us know – doing so complies then with GDPR rules.

To get in touch regarding names, and/or wishing to attend in person, please contact:

- for email – Lisa Stannard at lisa.stannard@newcreationchurches.org.uk
- for phone – Congresbury Church Office on 01934 833126. PLEASE leave a message including the names you wish to have remembered, and also PLEASE leave YOUR name and phone number, so we can get back to you.

To join us online:

You can access the Services by watching LIVE via the "New Creation Facebook Page" : <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/> at 4pm on Sunday 1st November or catch up later via Facebook, the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> or New Creation YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>

Please pass these details on to anyone you feel being part of such a service may be helpful.

Thank you.

Matt Thomson.

**Remembrance Sunday (8th Nov) and Armistice (Wed 11th Nov) in
Congresbury and Banwell:**

As you will appreciate things are going to need to be a little different this year.

There will be a Remembrance Sunday Service in both Villages on
Remembrance Sunday:



- **Congresbury at 10.30am**
- **Banwell at 3.00pm**

Unfortunately, we are not able to have the usual parade by members of the community and by the Uniformed Organisations, and the service will need to be limited to a very small number of invited participants. But we will be **Livestreaming** both services through the **New Creation Facebook Page** and also the **Love Banwell and Love Congresbury pages**.

You can access the Services by watching **LIVE** via the Facebook pages

Congresbury at 10.30am: -

www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches

www.facebook.com/LoveCongresbury

Banwell at 3pm:-

www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches

www.facebook.com/lovebanwell

or catch up later via Facebook, the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/>

or New Creation YouTube Channel :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>

Armistice Day – Wednesday 11th Nov at 11.00am:

- **Congresbury** – we will be livestreaming a short service from outside the War Memorial Hall. Unfortunately, we cannot invite people to join us as this is subject to ‘the rule of six’. We will be gathering at 10.45 and will be livestreaming to both the New Creation and Love Congresbury Facebook Pages.
- www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches
- www.facebook.com/LoveCongresbury
- **Banwell** – there will be a small service outside the Church in the Churchyard at 10.50am led by the British Legion.

Matt Thomson

Please continue to pray for Bishop Peter Hancock and for his family:

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Bishop Peter and his family as he continues his treatment for Leukaemia, and with Bishop Ruth, Howard and their family as she takes on the role in his stead.