

Roundabout



The Cotteridge Church

Witnessing at the Heart of the Community

January 2021

Roger's message ...

Traditional nativity stories tend to concentrate on the positive: the birth; the visit of the shepherds; or the magi bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, and following a star. But there is the darker side of Christmas: Herod who hears about the new born king and orders all babies to be massacred so Mary, Joseph and Jesus become refugees fleeing his wrath. It is unfortunate that the sanitised version keeps reality well away from the story.



But that darker side is also our story. There are some of us not doing too well, our lives are also fragmented and broken, so perhaps we need to look up and see the star that shines for the magi shines for us if only we are prepared to see it. So if the star shines for us, then what is the star saying?

Something to do

Switch off
all your tech
2 hours before
bedtime

Connect
with someone
near you -share
a smile or chat

Be gentle with
yourself
when you make
mistakes

We must be always engaged, doing good for others and loving the men and women we encounter in daily life, for they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we are not sure what to do then I recommend www.actionforhappiness.org - for each day there is a positive response.

Take a
different route
today and see
what you notice

Eat healthy
food which
really nourishes
you today

Get outside
and notice five
things that are
beautiful

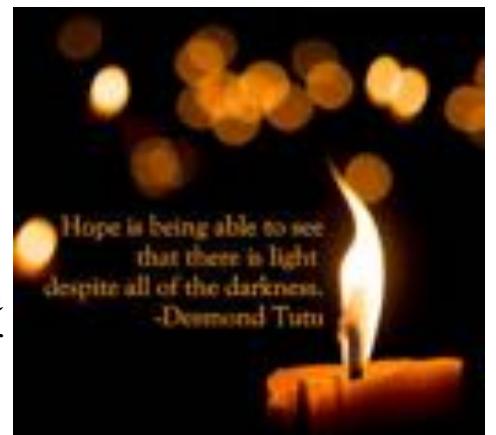
Contribute
positively to a
good cause or
your community

Something to love

"No matter how big they get,
they'll always be
a baby at heart ❤"



This becomes easier when we make God the centre of our life and realise his presence in people all around us.



Something to hope

I have a dream says Martin Luther King and what a dream! We need to remember the proverb - cherish your yesterdays, dream your tomorrows - but live for today.

And if we are able to do, to love and to hope then we can reach happiness.



Or even in the words of Ken Dodd

Happiness, happiness, the greatest gift that I possess
I thank the Lord that I've been blessed
With more than my share of happiness!

Roger

Friends and family

We are sad to tell you that Brian Vine died on 29th November. We remember his family and friends in our prayers.

We send our congratulations to Revd Paul Whittle on his appointment as the URC Moderator for Scotland. He and Mary will be moving to Scotland around Easter time. I am now beginning my fifth year as your editor for Roundabout, and would like to thank all those who have faithfully contributed articles reflecting the many facets of life at the Cotteridge church, together with many of the activities of its members during this time - and hopefully in the future also! If you would like to send me an article, please do, using the email address given on the back page.

Keeping in Touch

Communication is vital for most of us to feel part of our communities. Today there are many ways of communicating but everyone is different in which forms they can or are comfortable using. Within the church we have tried to keep in touch with all our members regularly, but we haven't always succeeded.

Since March there have been different forms of worship available, to start off with there were extra weekly services on the television as well as the usual radio ones, and some dial up prayers, but the television services dwindled over the summer. In September face to face services resumed in Cotteridge (although rather different from "normal") and although suspended in November they have again resumed. Because the Methodist Church owns the land the church is on we have to follow their guidelines which is why our services were later restarting than most other local churches.

In November I took on the role of co-ordinating the Worship and Pastoral groups of the church. Unfortunately as you will understand we cannot meet in person at the moment but several of us will be looking, in January, at how we keep in touch with members, how we can improve it and whether some members would be willing to commit to regularly phoning (or seeing at a distance) a few others, or regularly delivering Roundabouts and other communications to other members. If you have any thoughts, ideas or could volunteer I'd be delighted to hear from you. You can write to me at 9 Birch Court, 126 Middleton Hall Road, B30 1DH, phone me on 0121 458 7552 or email me jane.stephens@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk Jane Stephens

Eulogy for Brian Vine

Dad was a truly lovely man. As so many of our family and our friends have shared with us, Dad, Brian was a gentleman. A kind, funny, humble man who has made all our lives the richer in the ways that matter.

He was the best Dad to Pete and I as we grew up. Always loved and always safe, Peter and I grew up with a Dad who served as a role model to be admired. A man who cooked and cleaned as well as working hard to provide for his family. A man who put the happiness and wellbeing of his wife and children before his own. He taught us the importance of respect which he showed to everyone he met.

And he showed us what love really meant in the way he nurtured us and the tender way he loved, honoured and supported Joan, his wife and our mom.

He was a loving, devoted and dedicated husband. Lots of people have commented how they loved to see mom and Dad holding hands, throughout their lives, as they walked together.

He was a grandad and great grandad who took delight in being part of his grandchildren's lives, especially watching the little ones play.

It is a tribute to Dad that our children loved his company. Our daughters enjoyed having him over to dinner or taking the dog for a walk with him.

Isaac and Jacob looked with excitement for Dad's face as he would pick them up from school every Thursday.

Dominique has fond memories of meals with grandad at his favourite restaurant, of going to visit National Trust properties together and accompanying him to church after mom had died.

Claire and Arlo enjoyed playing Lego with him and always looked forward to the Kit Kat bar Dad would have ready as soon as he opened the door.

Dad was a loyal friend and a colleague to many. As a manager in the civil service, Dad had a warm and approachable manner, with a joke or quip ready to put people at their ease. Christine Adams said in a letter to us that as a young physiotherapist, Dad was her manager and although she was in awe of him, she found him to be down to earth and supportive and said that he and mom were some of the nicest, kindest people she has ever met.

When mom died in 2016, Dad was bereft and missed her terribly. However, he made a life for himself, clearly feeling he still had much to live for. His health began to slowly get worse and he came to rely more and more on his family for support but without ever feeling sorry for himself. This year, when covid and lockdown struck, Dad suffered loneliness and isolation; it was a hard time for him. We broke the rules, feeling that Dad's emotional wellbeing was the most important thing. Since then, Dad was in and out of hospital and also went into a care home for the last three months of his life. The staff at the care home loved Dad too, and we are indebted to them for the warmth and care and company they gave him.



I want to share three last memories of Dad:

I will never forget the night he and mom went to a Bavarian evening with friends. They put the effort in with their costumes for this fancy dress dinner dance. Dad's lederhosen, hat and false moustache were convincing and to be frank, daring. On arrival, the fancy dress part turned out to be fake news. The only couple in costume, looking like extras from the sound of music, mom and Dad gamely danced on regardless and we had such a laugh when they got home and told us what happened. A few Christmases ago, Dad asked Annie was there anything he could bring over for Christmas dinner. Annie said "bring some crackers". Dad began to salivate at the prospect of choosing and consequently eating some crackers with a selection of cheeses. Annie was imagining the slightly disappointing pop as a cracker revealed its festive joke and rubbish toy. On the day, as Annie awaited Dad's arrival to complete the table with crackers to pull, Dad, pleased with himself for remembering, handed Annie a pack of Jacobs cheese crackers.

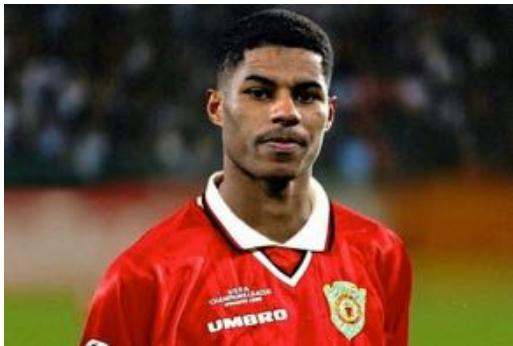
Lastly, it wouldn't be fair to leave you thinking Dad was without fault. Dad was of the opinion that good money should not be wasted on taking his sons to the barber. Especially when you have a pair of scissors at home, surely it can't be that difficult. Dad discovered that it wasn't difficult, in fact he clearly enjoyed it judging by how many years he subjected us to this torture. At first, he was perplexed when people laughed and pointed at Pete and me but as time went on he became oblivious to it. Meanwhile, my brother and I became more and more embarrassed by Dad's DIY barbery. The scars are beginning to heal but the expensive therapy continues.

Andrew Vine

A **Poem** sent by Revd Ros Murphy, for the forthcoming lockdown. We have been unable to find out who wrote it, but hope you enjoy it.

I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
I'll sanitise the doorknob and make a cup of tea.
I won't go down to the sea again; I won't go out at all,
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.
There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the north of Katmandu
But I shan't be seeing him just yet and nor, I think, will you.
While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.
I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye
Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.
About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go
To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow,
And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold,
Or get me to Milford Haven. All that's been put on hold.
Give me your hands, I shan't request, albeit we are friends
Nor come within a mile of you, until this trial ends.

HAND OUT AND HAND UP

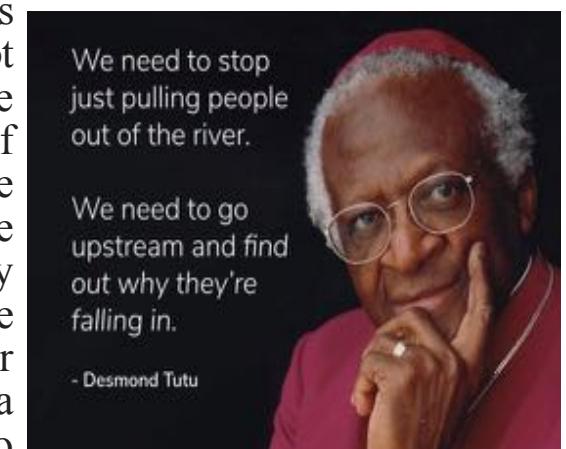


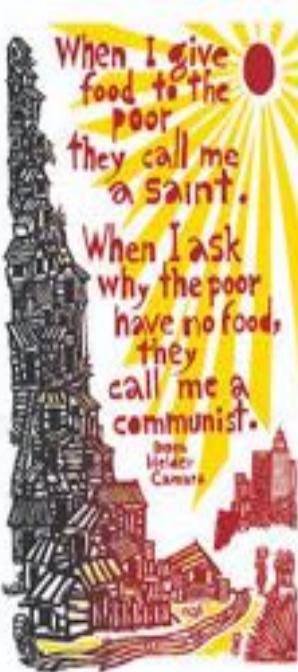
One of the political conversations which made the headlines for all the wrong reasons was the one about not providing free school meals as it might create dependency. It got us talking as we sorted food donations and packed parcels - something on the lines of “are we just fishing people out of the river, or are we also finding out why they are falling in in the first place?” (And as the current government is not exactly brand new, perhaps they had best look at some of the ways in which their policies have increased need rather than decreased it and deal with the root causes themselves).

All foodbanks can regard themselves as aid-agencies in many ways: there to provide “first aid”. We are not there to solve all the problems which are causing the financial crisis which has led to the food poverty of the particular client - but we can at least provide the food. That provision of food may, in many cases, be all that is required to tide them across a particularly difficult financing time. They have the skills in place to stop themselves falling back in the proverbial river again. For others, it really is rather a case of a “sticking plaster”. But, if we can refer the client to other agencies, some of the root causes of the financial crisis can be sorted out; be that chasing delayed benefit payments or achieving allocation of eligible benefits which were not previously being claimed, or the sorting out of debts and arrears with rents and utility providers.

The people who *have* come to depend upon the foodbanks are not the clients, but rather the government itself. It is almost expected that the foodbank network will pick up the pieces when statutory provision runs out or is absent. And yet, when we went into Lockdown 1, there was little dialogue with the established network of independents and Trussell Foodbanks. This meant there was a great deal of wheel reinvention all over the country, and the response by so many was to set up small local foodbanks, without checking out what was already available. The biggest problem with so much extra provision, is that the statistics gathered by the established networks is now not telling the full story of food crisis and the lobbying power is thus diminished.

There is a single action which would remove much of the need for foodbanks: remove the 5 week wait for Universal Credit. When your pay stops with redundancy, you don't have five weeks worth of funds to tide you over, so you get into debt. The same is true for those furloughed on less than 100% of their salary.





One of our long-term volunteers made the comment that foodbanks seem to have become fashionable during 2020, which made us discuss why we thought that was. We felt it was two-part: a deep seated wish to help others, but also a wish to do something useful. All of us said that we went home at the end of a shift feeling as if we had spent a useful however many hours it was. In a time when much of our usual activity had vanished, it gave a purpose to our day and a structure to our week (even helping us remember what DAY of the week it was). I think none of us does it purely for that reason, but it made us realise that that was some of the driving force behind the approaches of so many extra foodbanks and hot meal kitchens.

So, will we stay “in fashion” do we think? Trussell is beginning to look at “what next?”, which is basically a plan to eventually put ourselves out of business - which has always been our long-term ambition. However, I don’t think we will be hanging up our sorting gloves yet awhile. There is quite a long journey left before we reach the destination of

“no longer needed”. - B30FOODBANK



Thank you!

To Sandra Walton for making the lovely Christmas flower arrangements to decorate the inside of the Church. You will see her pedestal arrangement of the cover of this edition of our magazine, and here beneath the altar.

Thank you also to John Cooper for the Christmas tree outside at the front of the church - a true sign that we are still proclaiming our faith.

To Peter Childs, for all his information bulletins, and Neil Walters for all his poems

And, of course we are grateful to all those who have been working unseen behind the scenes.

And to all those involved in research, and manufacturing and administering our long awaited vaccines and help us to return a more normal existence.



Meet Anjoli!



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Last year, she set up a tailoring business and paid off her debts. Coronavirus has taken all that and more. After years of unpaid slave labour, working in landlord's fields to pay off a debt, she trained as a tailor, and her life, in her own words, became a success story. Equipped with a new set of skills, and a sewing machine provided by Traidcraft Exchange, she paid off her debt and started to earn for herself and her family. But then the pandemic hit... "We had just finished repaying our entire previous loan through my tailoring work. After getting that sewing machine and training I thought that my life would change. I thought that I would not have to work anymore as a debt bonded labourer on other people's land. I had started dreaming... But the coronavirus didn't let my dream come true." It's not that her business is unviable – in ordinary times, tailoring provides a secure income. But when troubles come, the small luxuries are first to go. No one in her village can afford to buy



new clothes right now. With no other options to keep her family fed, Anjoli returned to the moneylender – borrowing money and rice, at extortionate interest rates. Coronavirus has forced the most vulnerable people backwards – back into slavery, debt and hopelessness. For Anjoli, the last few months have been humiliating. "Last month the moneylender came and forcibly removed the gold wedding ring from my husband's hand given to him by my father." We can't let coronavirus take any more from the world's most vulnerable communities. This Christmas, we need to take action. Anjoli has skills, determination and a future full of potential – she's paid off her debts once before and she can do it again. But she needs a little help this Christmas – the support to get through this year, and get back on her feet. Together, we can prevent coronavirus from forcing people like Anjoli back into slavery.

<https://action.traidcraft.org.uk/not-christmas-donate>

To read more about TRAIDCRAFT, why not purchase the book showing the work of traidcraft and traidcraft exchange - working with poor - available from the bookcentre £12.99
Roger Collins



**The Cotteridge Church
Joint Church Council
Summary of Proceedings 20th October 2020**

Introduction

The Meeting was held via Zoom. Some of the decisions made here were reconsidered at an Extraordinary JCC meeting held on 5th November 2020 due to the introduction of a national lockdown on the 6th November 2020.

Key Decisions

1. The JCC agreed that the Coffee Bar should extend its opening hours to 08.30 to 12.30 Monday to Friday and commence providing hot food.
2. The JCC agreed that the Kitchen Staff should return full time.
3. It was agreed that the Church should send flowers to members who were unable to get out.
4. The JCC agreed that the Church should give everyone living on their own a ‘phone call on Christmas Day.

Summary Proceedings

1. The meeting discussed the format and agenda for this year’s Annual General Meeting, which was to be held in the Covid safe Malvern Room. Neil Walters said he would be happy to stand for re-election as a Trustee to ensure the JCC had enough members but did not want to continue as Chair.
2. The meeting said farewell to two members, Susan Claridge and Carol Allan, as their term as Trustees comes to an end.
3. The meeting discussed the letter from the Foodbank saying they were moving to the Friends Meeting House on Watford Road as they were unable to operate at The Cotteridge Church due to the Covid restrictions we had adopted to try and keep building users safe, every one was sad to see them leave but were worried about the Church’s liabilities should something happen at the Friends. Neil Walters was instructed to write to the Foodbank asking what public liability cover they had.
4. Neil Walters presented the yearly property survey report and noted that there were several blown double glazing units which were not causing an increase in heat loss and said that Jane Stephens had suggested we do not remediate this problem until the Church finances were on a sounder footing. Neil also noted that there was a crack in the south wall near the fire doors which will need monitoring.
5. Stephen Audley presented a plan to extend coffee bar opening hours 08:30 to 12:30 Monday through Friday starting on 2nd November serving hot food, which would require bringing the kitchen staff full-time.
6. The meeting discussed Advent and Christmas arrangements and Mike Claridge said Jane Stephens had suggested sending those flowers to all members who could not get out at the moment and Carol Allen suggested that we should give everyone on there own a ‘phone call on Christmas day.
7. Mike Claridge started a discussion on Christmas Services and suggested a Christmas Eve Communion Service at 23:30 and a Family Service at 10:00 on Christmas Day.

The next meeting of the Joint Church Council will be on Thursday 19th November 2020 at 19:30.

This Summary is authorised by:Neil Walters (Chair of the Cotteridge Joint Church Council).



**The Cotteridge Church
Joint Church Council
Summary of Proceedings 5th November 2020**

Introduction

The Meeting was held via Zoom to ratify the decisions made during the proceeding week to prepare the Church for the impending National Lockdown.

Key Decisions

1. The JCC agreed that the Church should be closed for public worship until at least 2nd December in line with Government Regulations.
2. The JCC ratified the decision of Catering Services to close the Coffee Bar until further notice.
3. The meeting agreed to allow C2U to remain open.
4. It was agreed that the Kitchen and Cleaning staff should be furloughed full time and the Church would make up the government money to their normal wages.
5. It was agreed that the Day Centre staff should be furloughed full time and the Day Centre and Church would make up the government money to their normal wages.
6. The JCC ratified the decision to move the AGM from a physical meeting to a Zoom meeting.

Summary Proceedings

1. The meeting discussed the decisions that had been made since the announcement of a further National Lockdown in England to prepare the Church.
2. It was noted that C2U would continue meeting as they were exempt from the lockdown, being an educational group and the need for a cleaner, it was suggested that we ask C2U to clean themselves.
3. The meeting discussed the locking up of the Church each day as C2U were the only ones still using the building. Mike Claridge suggested re-instating the old rota and Stephen Audley volunteered to lock up on Mondays as a replacement for Laurie Brown.
4. “The meeting turned its attention to the furloughing of staff and thanks were expressed to David Pycock for his willingness to go on full furlough.
5. The Annual General Meeting was discussed and the decision to move it to a Zoom meeting was challenged as it excluded members who had not got the facilities to join.
6. Roger Collins said that the prayer list on the news sheet was out of date as Doreen Hancock used to collate it and could it be reinstated. Dorothy Audley said she would provide a prayer list to Mike, Roger and David on the last Thursday of every month.

The next meeting of the Joint Church Council will be on Thursday 19th November 2020 at 19:30.

This Summary is authorised by: Neil Walters (Chair of the Cotteridge Joint Church Council).
The Cotteridge Church



Joint Church Council

Summary of Proceedings 19th November 2020

Introduction

The Meeting was held via Zoom

Key Decisions

1. The JCC agreed that Mike Claridge will Chair the next three meetings.
2. It was agreed that the Church would distribute LED Tea Lights to each household for Advent.
3. The meeting co-opted Neil Walters to the JCC as Church Warden.
4. Debbie Jones and Jane Stephens were elected as Treasurers.

Summary Proceedings

1. Jane Stephens suggested that the Church distribute 1 Tea Light per Household with instructions to display it in their Front Window on the first day of Advent.
2. The meeting discussed how Christmas Cards would be distributed this year Trevor Jones suggested that the Church sets a date by which all Christmas card should be left at the Church and then they could be distributed at the same time as the Christmas flowers.
3. Mike Claridge reported that the Christmas Tree outside the Church would go ahead as the costs have been covered by donations.
4. Debbie Jones was welcomed as a new trustee.
5. Jane Stephens, Mike Claridge and Roger Collins were assigned to the Worship and Pastoral Committee with Jane continuing as Chair.
6. Stephen Audley, Debbie Jones, Dorothy Audley and Mike Claridge were assigned to the Finance, Property and Management Committee with Peter Childs continuing as Chair.
7. Neil Walters, Stephen Audley and Trevor Jones were assigned to Community Services Committee with Trevor as Acting Chair. It was also noted that Pam Waddell said she would volunteer to be a member.
8. Jane Stephens gave a breakdown of the Church's finances and said there was a form to be signed by the Treasurer, Church Warden and Incumbent for the Parish Giving Scheme.

The next meeting of the Joint Church Council will be on Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 19:30.

This Summary is authorised by:

Mike Claridge (Chair of the Cotteridge Church Joint Church Council)



The Cotteridge Church
Joint Church Council
Summary of Proceedings 3rd December 2020

Introduction

The Meeting was held via Zoom to decide if The Cotteridge Church should open for public worship after lockdown ends but Birmingham enters Tier 3 restrictions.

Key Decisions

1. The JCC agreed that the Church should re-open for Public Worship on 6th December 2020.

Summary Proceedings

1. Mike Claridge asked Trustees to bear in mind at what point we might consider closing again should a future lockdown be implemented as it is considered highly unlikely that the government would legislate that places of worship should close.
2. Stephen Audley said that a change of Tier for Birmingham was unlikely. Debbie Jones noted that Covid rates for our area were currently reducing and Jane Stephens said the church had put all measures possible to ensure we are Covid Secure. It was acknowledged that going to Church was far safer than visiting the supermarket.
3. Trevor Jones said we needed to take into account the age demographic of the congregation and that by opening we are actively encouraging a vulnerable group to attend.
4. Concerns were raised about cleaning of the Church, but we were assured that F, P & M were addressing this and a lot of work on this front was being performed by C2U. The meeting expressed its thanks to C2U for their hard work.
5. Jane Stephens mentioned that many people were suffering from loneliness and isolation at this time.
6. Neil Walters expressed concerns that he was still looking for volunteers to steward the Christmas Services. Jane Stephens volunteered to steward on the Christmas Eve services.

The next meeting of the Joint Church Council will be on Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 19:30.

This Summary is authorised by:

Mike Claridge
Chair of the Cotteridge Church Joint Church Council

Christmas season brings Christmas songs.

The Cotteridge Book Club asked for suitable seasonal words for their December meeting, and while most people responded with poetry or book readings, I chose two songs. One as an example of a hymn we sing at Christmas. Do we think of it as a carol? The other one is an example of a popular secular Christmas song.

I like Christmas songs for a number of reasons. The same words come round every year, and the better ones ‘self select’ and stay popular. Others seem to go out of date. If the words are not updated we stop singing them. The tune clearly makes a difference and personally I can’t separate the words from the tune. Do I like a carol because I like the tune or like the words? I can’t tell. And a surprising number have more than one popular tune.

The first one I looked at was ‘It Came Upon the Midnight Clear’. I like both the words and the tune we use and found it was written by an American Unitarian minister, and surprisingly Americans sing it to a different tune! Even worse, when you look at it properly, there is no Christmas in it! Certainly no shepherds or wise men, no baby in a manger, no prophets. What you have are lots of angels bringing peace, ‘touching their harps of gold’. It was written in 1839 by Edward Sears at a time when America was at war with Mexico. He wrote a poem praying for the fighting to stop. Somehow this peace hymn became shifted into the Christmas season.

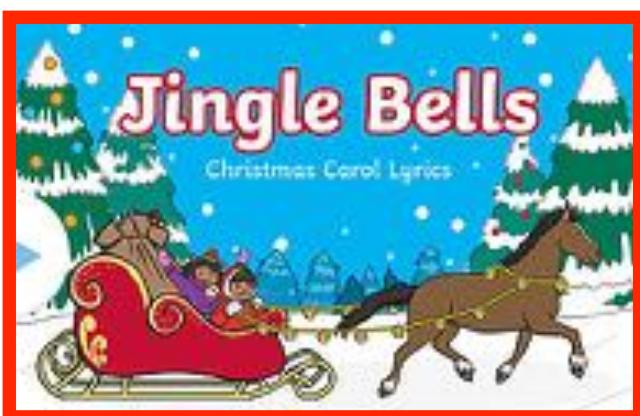
My second song is Jingle Bells. By chance this is another American song and tune penned in 1857 by James Pierpont and this time it has just the one tune. Because

Santa rides a sleigh we tend to assume the jingling bells are on Rudolph, but again it’s nothing to do with Christmas. It’s about young people having a sleigh ride on winter snow. Young men are horse racing their sleigh against other drivers while impressing Miss Fanny Bright. They crack their whip to make the horse go faster, to ‘take the lead’. It is closer to Chuck Berry’s ‘Riding Along in my Automobile’ (my Baby Beside me at the Wheel). A horse pulling a sleigh through

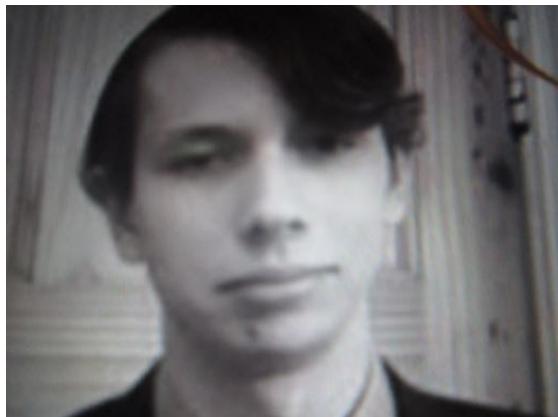
snow can be silent. The bells were attached to a horse bridle as a safety feature. ‘Jingle bells’ tell other drivers you are coming.

In short, next time you are listening to background music in a supermarket you might like to follow up the source of the song. The result can be surprising!

Peter Childs



Hello all



Hope you are all well and keeping safe during these difficult times. I just want to give you a little insight about my journey through BB (Boys Brigade), which started when I was fifteen years old. One of my friends at Kings Norton Boys School informed me about a club where you could meet new people in a safe environment and take part in different sports such as football, tennis and table tennis. Taking their advice, I decided to go with my parents on



a Friday night, which was daunting at first. After interacting with the officers and children, I found myself enjoying classes and playing games. What made this experience unique was the officers making me feel welcome on the first night by being really supportive and caring.

After a few years at BB, I went on a number of camps to a wide range of places in England. One of my favourite camps was travelling to the Isle of Wight by ferry. The experience of being away from home and having to maintain the tent was amazing. Throughout these camping weeks I took part in some exciting actives such as archery and rock climbing. Also on the last night, the officers would make then special by arranging some kind of party, for example setting a theme for the night such as Mexican or James Bond.

Finally, as an officer I have had the opportunity to pass on my knowledge to future generations of children, by running various classes. Also, I assist in supporting other officers in games or activities on Friday nights. Furthermore, as an officer I have been able to take part in BB events on how to work with children, which I have enjoyed and have further extended my current knowledge. Even though the last couple of months have been difficult for us all, BB has constantly made every effort to ensure that when the time is right; they can restart in a safe COVID-19 environment. I am very much looking forward to this.

Best wishes: Christopher Butt

Carols by Headlight!

Olton Baptist Church broke with tradition, and had car headlights illuminating, the stable, rather than the Bethlehem Star, and car horns replaced applause. They organised a drive in carol service on an industrial car park in Solihull, were lent a huge DHL trailer as a stage, and got sponsorship for four huge TV screens, and amplification. They had musicians and readers, and we tuned the *fm* car radio to hear what was going on. Best of all, because we were isolated in our cars, we could SING - **LOUDLY!** They produced some excellent activity packs for children, and we sang all the best loved carols inside our cars. It really felt like Christmas.



Celia Lester

The Light in the Tower

For many years if you travelled through Cotteridge after dark you could see a light shining in the tower of the Cotteridge Church. A story exists that a long-dead Methodist left money to pay for the light, but I haven't been able to verify this story or confirm the identity of the person.

If it is possible to replace the light (preferably with an energy efficient modern version) I think it would be a powerful sign of hope shining out from the church which is much needed especially in current times.

Jane Stephens



BCF Updates and Events from Dr Peter Rookes January 2021

**The Birmingham Council of Faiths Trustees
and Management Committee wish our members and
supporters a happy, peaceful and safe New Year**

Bahu – Kindness Project

Through our community consultations we have established that there is a real need for bereavement support, with people often struggling to understand what the current COVID – 19 Government guidelines are on funerals, etc. This all adds to the frustration and pain of losing someone, often causing further anguish and grief for the deceased persons family. The Bahu Trust is looking for volunteers to join its “Kindness project”, aiming to support those people who are going through the difficult processes of losing a loved one. We need your help to identify individuals from all faiths and backgrounds to join our volunteer team, with successful candidates gaining life skills, having the tools to be able to meet the needs of individuals who are struggling to cope with bereavement.

Successful applicants will receive the following accredited training:

Online ACES training 2 hours Date 8/01/21

(Adverse Childhood Experiences)

Online Training on Trauma training 4 Hours Date 12/01/21

(How to support individuals suffering from trauma)

Online Bereavement Training 45 Minutes Date 18/01/21

(Supporting the Bereaved)

First Aid for Mental Health 1 Day, level 2 training Date 25/01/21

(Level 2 award for first aid training)

The “Kindness Project”, will cover the following neighbourhoods throughout the Hall Green Constituency, [please note that applicants do not need to be from these neighbourhoods]

Balsall Heath West, Brandwood and Kings Heath, Billesley, Hall Green North, Hall Green South, Moseley, Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East, Sparkhill, Tyseley & Hay Mills

Please click on the web link for more information about the project & volunteer opportunity <https://bahutrust.org/bereavement/>.

- Is this volunteer opportunity something that you might be interested in?
- Would you be able to identify someone from within your faith community that would be interested in being part of this exciting volunteering opportunity?

- Please click on the link for an online application form Bereavement-Volunteer-Application-Form.pdf (bahutrust.org) and please do forward on to your networks. If you require further information please do not hesitate to email friends@bahutrust.org [Dr Peter Rookes will also take this course to become a bereavement counsellor]

Unity FM Radio 93.5 - Our Connecting Communities programme on Unity FM Radio 93.5, co-hosted by Mahmooda Qureshi and Dr Peter Rookes is broadcast at 4.00pm on alternate Mondays. You can listen to our 2 last programmes on the following links:-



Mon 23rd Nov – Commonwealth Games
Cllr Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader, Birmingham City Council, Ian Reid, CEO, Birmingham 2022, Casey Bailey, Legacy & Benefits Committee

<https://www.mixcloud.com/.../connecting-communities-show.../>

Mon 7th Dec – Public Involvement in Health Research

Laura Chapman, NIHR Birmingham Biomedical Research Centre's Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement Manager Ian Soady, (volunteer) Chair of the Liver & GI PPI Reference Panel, Margaret O'Hara, Public and Patient Involvement in Research Lead for University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

<https://www.mixcloud.com/UnityFM/connecting-communities-07-december-2020/>

Our next 3 programmes will be broadcast at 4.00pm on:-

Mon 4th Jan – Volunteering Mon 18th Jan- Transport Mon 1st Feb – Diabetes

NHS111 First – use of NHS111 for patients to access urgent and emergency care in Birmingham and Solihull

The drive for people to call NHS111 before attending urgent treatment centres and emergency departments is a national programme that aims to ensure patients get the right urgent care in the most appropriate place - whilst simultaneously reducing the risk of them acquiring COVID-19 or a hospital infection.

Based on a ‘talk before you walk’ principle, the programme will use NHS111 to reduce unnecessary attendances at emergency departments. Instead of attending an emergency department unannounced, patients will use NHS111 online or by phone, to book an appointment with a service that best fits their need. That could be one of a variety of existing out-of-hospital services, an assessment service at an acute hospital, or an appointment with a GP or dentist.

In cases where it is appropriate, patients will be given a ‘time slot’ appointment at the emergency department itself. No-one that attends an emergency department without having contacted NHS 111 beforehand will be turned away, but may be triaged (assessed) and redirected to another healthcare service, or provided with self-care advice.

Please remember that for all life threatening emergencies people need to dial 999.

Integrated Care Systems

NHS England (NHSE) has launched a consultation on its plans to expand the implementation of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) across England. It has released a document detailing its plans for ICSs:-

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/261120-item-5-integrating-care-next-steps-for-integrated-care-systems.pdf>

These new plans aim to expand ICSs across England and are part of the NHS Long Term Plan. From April 2021, all parts of the health and care system will have to work together as ICSs. Each ICS will:

- use data and digital to improve outcomes and connect health and care providers
- support partnerships between the NHS, local governments and others within their locality
- move to ‘strategic commissioning’, with an approach focussing on population health outcomes

The document outlines further operational and practical changes. It also provides legislative options that will formalise the role of ICSs, which are likely to take effect from April 2022. The NHSE is asking patients, NHS staff, partner organisations and interested members of the public to give views on proposals set out in the document which details the vision for a more effective and responsive care system across England.

For further details visit the website above.

The consultation is open until 8 January 2021.

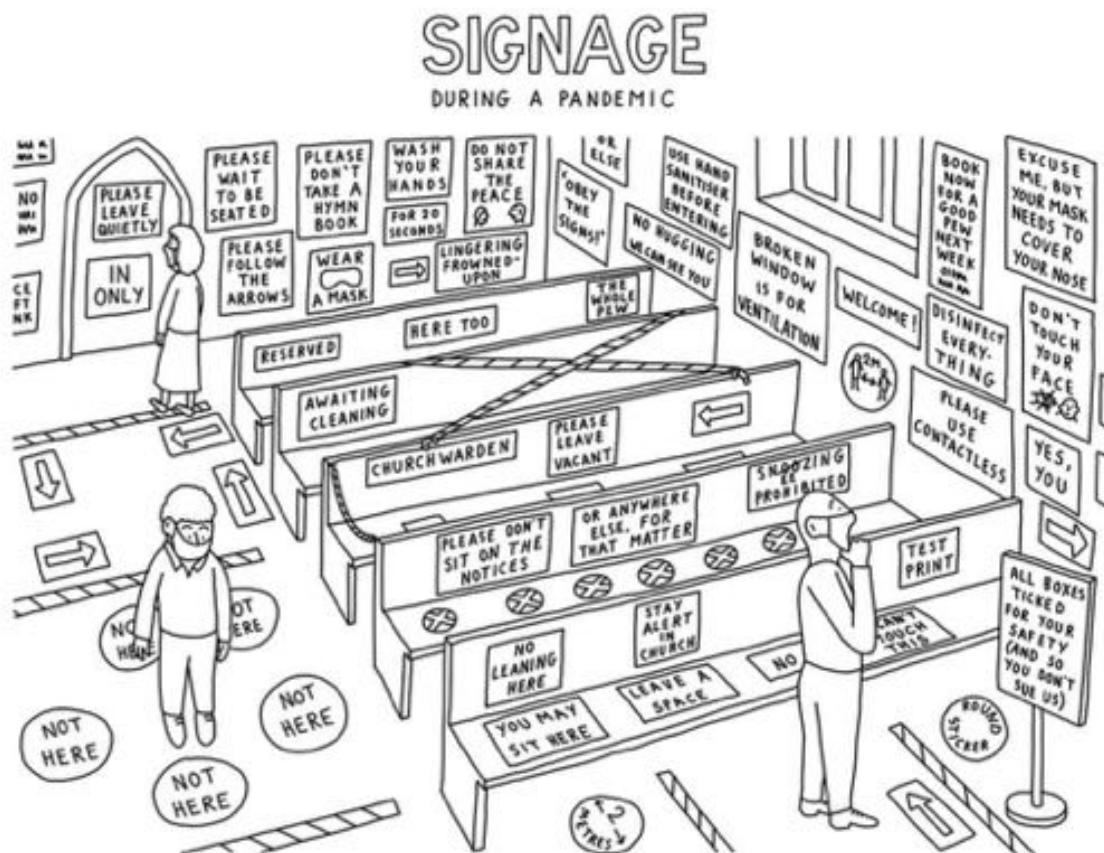
Conversations

Canon Andrew Smith is planning another on-line series of The Birmingham Conversations in January.

They will take place on the 14th, 21st and 28th at 7:30pm and are using images as the starting point for our discussion of our faiths and beliefs.

To keep on the right side of GDPR if you'd like to be kept informed about the events and to get the log-in details etc. Please reply (Just a simple yes will do) and you'll be added to the list. andrews@cofebirmingham.com

For details about Alcohol Awareness Campaign and the The Ella Baker School of Organising provide free training to give people the skills to bring about change., please contact Dr Peter Rookes directly



Ruler of the Universe

On Sunday 23rd November 2020 Mike, in his weekly reflection, challenged us all consider what we thought a King was like. The 23rd of November was Christ the King Sunday. On Wednesday 26th November on his virtual service Mike laid down the challenge again, ‘What do you think a King is?’

I have been thinking this through ever since and, as I am sure Mike intended us to do, contrasting what I thought a King was from historic precedent with Christ as King. Historically Kings, at least in the British Isles, won their



kingship by right of succession, force of arms or in the case of Offa King of Mercia or Macbeth King of Scotland by assassination, although with reference to Macbeth that was part of a blood feud as he killed the man who had killed his father. So historically there was no social contract between the monarch and their subjects.



The ruled allowed themselves to be ruled not through agreement but through fear. In all cases up to Charles I, Kings ruled their subjects by wielding tremendous power; military, legal and religious. The Great Civil War changed all that, when a despotic ruler was overthrown by his subjects and it was determined that even Kings were subject to the same checks and balances as everyone else.

Curse General Monk for supporting the restoration of Charles II, but for ten short years England was a Republic. Things were to change again during the Glorious Revolution of 1688 the ‘Bill of Rights’ placed in law constraints on the monarch by confirming the primacy of Parliament.

So how does this model of Kingship: powerful, despotic, answerable to no one contrast with Jesus as King. Jesus is certainly powerful; Anselm used the greatness of God in his ontological argument for the existence of God. If God can be defined by being that which nothing greater exists, it also means that God must also be the most powerful entity in the universe. But God cannot be described as despotic as through the love that has given everyone on dead, free will to Jesus doesn’t force us our choice. An all-king wouldn’t just Christians, but would will in every decision moment of every day. love of God has given m a k e o u r o w n decisions.



flows from him, he earth, both living and believe in him or not. to be Christians, it's powerful, despotic force us to be force us to follow his we make, every Jesus, through the us the free will to decisions, even wrong

So, Jesus could be the greatest of Kings after the model of William I, but because he loves us so much, he is the exemplar of Kingship, the King who protects those he rules rather than exploiting them.

We should all fall to our knees and worship Jesus Christ Ruler of the Universe and continue to worship him now and throughout eternity.

Neil Walters

Good King Wenceslas



I am sure you have all heard of him via the Christmas carol that tells a story of a Bohemian king going on a journey and braving harsh winter weather to give alms to a poor peasant on the Feast of Stephen (December 26th, the Second Day of Christmas). During the journey, his page is about to give up the struggle against the cold weather, but is enabled to continue by following the king's footprints, step for step, through the deep snow. The legend is based on the life of the historical Saint Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia or *Svatý Václav* in Czech (907–935). He was murdered by his younger brother, Boleslaus the Cruel. His martyrdom and the popularity of several biographies gave rise to a reputation for heroic virtue that resulted in his elevation to sainthood. He was posthumously declared to be a king and came to be seen as the patron saint of the Czech state. His grandfather, Bořivoj I of Bohemia, was converted to Christianity by Cyril and Methodius. A preacher from the 12th century wrote of him:

"But his deeds I think you know better than I could tell you; for, as is read in his *Passion*, no one doubts that, rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty, so much so that he was considered, not a prince, but the father of all the wretched." Several centuries later the legend was claimed as fact by Pope Pius II, who himself also walked ten miles barefoot in the ice and snow as an act of pious thanksgiving.

Although Wenceslas was, during his lifetime, only a duke, Holy Roman Emperor Otto I (962–973) posthumously conferred on Wenceslas the regal dignity and title" and that is why, in the legend and song, he is referred to as a "king"

An equestrian statue of Saint Wenceslaus and other patrons of Bohemia is located on Wenceslaus Square in Prague. The statue is a popular meeting place in Prague. His helmet and armour are on display inside Prague Castle

I remember visiting Wenceslas Square about twenty years ago, and was surprised to find that it is really a long wide avenue, descending from the museum and palace at the top. Demonstrations against the Communist regime - known as the Velvet Revolution, were held there, notably when the square was packed with several hundred thousand people on 17th November 1989.

Celia Lester





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Your Editor from January 2017 is Celia Lester

Please send copy for the next edition by 21st February 2021.
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