

INFORM



**URC
VAN ROAD
CAERPHILLY
SEPTEMBER 2020**

CHURCH OFFICERS

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An Elder writes

Whilst I have been in lockdown, I have spent many hours watching the birds in my garden. The colourful goldfinches, robins and bullfinches, the boisterous starlings and the cheeky sparrows. Their constant chirps and tweets have been a source of great pleasure and comfort to me.

There are nearly 300 verses in the Bible that mention birds. However more than one hundred of these merely use the word "fowl" or "bird," leaving us to guess at the species. It is interesting to note that the Old Testament writers knew more about birds, and apparently were more interested in birds than were the New Testament writers. Paul, for instance, refers to birds only twice in all of his epistles.

The favourite bird of ancient Israel seems to have been the dove. The dove was released by Noah to determine how much the flood waters had abated. It was used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism. Those who were impoverished might use a dove in place of a lamb for a sacrificial offering. The eagle with its powerful wings, its fierce talons, its sharp curved beak, and its predatory habits is the opposite of a dove!

“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31).

Sometimes God gave in to the rebellious pleadings of His people. So it was when He gave Israel quails to eat in the wilderness. Even though God apparently planned a

vegetarian diet for Israel, they had lived so long among "eating meat in Egypt" that they were not satisfied with the food provided, even though some of it was heavenly manna especially and miraculously given.

It was the raven that God used to bring food to Elijah. These are voracious, un-clean birds that seem always to be hungry; and yet they kept the prophet alive during a famine while he was hiding from the wrath of Ahab. Unlovely or not, the ravens are under God's care. He provides for them and their young (Job 38:41), and used them miraculously to provide for one of His servants.

Jesus used the sparrow to emphasize one of His most precious lessons—that of His care for each individual. Here the word "sparrow" must surely have meant one of the smaller, colorless birds similar to our race of sparrows, because it apparently had little commercial or sentimental value. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" (Matt. 10:29). Jesus says ...

"Fear not them which kill the body. . . . The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:28-31).

Therefore, in these difficult times it is reassuring to know that the God who notes even a falling sparrow has an even stronger love for each of us. God cares for you and me. So let us put our trust and faith in God, knowing that we are all sheltered under His wings.

Lynda



Planning for Future Worship

We are all longing to return to normality, to socialise freely, have a wander around the shops, perhaps visit a theatre or cinema.

Returning to regular worship and Bible study is a wish we have had during lockdown. As restrictions ease, we know that we must still abide by certain rules which keep us safe. Social distancing and hand washing are now a way of life.

Hopefully, from **20th September**, we can return to worship, but not worship as we knew it. In church there will be sanitizing stations, signing in, keeping a social distance by sitting apart, and if possible, wearing a mask.

We can have music but no singing, gathering together for coffee may not happen for some time. Fellowship has always been important to us. This aspect of worship will be much missed.

These are measures put in place to keep us as safe as possible from the dreaded virus. Not only must we keep each other safe, but individually we must keep ourselves safe. This may mean delaying attending worship or taking part in the activities we enjoy.

Members that I have spoken with are keen to return to church soon, only one thought a delay would be a safer course.

Please be assured that The Elders are working on the logistics and measures needed for the reopening of the church as soon as it is feasibly possible. A company has carried out a deep clean of the premises and a risk assessment has been undertaken.

We have been well served with Daily Devotions, the Sunday service, Songs of Praise and Malcolm's, 'Spare a Prayer,' and other sources of worship. However it will be a wonderful day when we can witness and worship without restriction. I am sure that Malcolm would say 'Spare a Prayer' for those who are always restricted in their worship.

Meanwhile let us be thankful that we have a loving God and Saviour to guide us through life with both its' trials and pleasures.

Margaret C

THANKYOU, MALCOLM!

Sadly, Malcolm has decided that he is unable to continue as Interim Moderator of The Valleys Pastorate.

We give him our sincere thanks for all he has done for us and all that he will continue to do. We will still see him leading worship when possible and he will continue to be such a valued friend.

We give him our love.



WORSHIP
For September (all being well.)

20th Rev Malcolm Shapland (communion)

27th Mr Peter Speakman



Request

If you intend attending worship on 20th, it would be helpful if you could let Margaret C know as this will help when setting out chairs. However, this does not preclude some last minute decisions..

Remember, alternative church worship can be found at

daily devotions@urc.org.uk

From the editor

It is great news that we now have the opportunity to return to church, albeit not in the way we would hope. For some people it is still not a viable proposition and we can understand that and will continue to give love and support..

As restrictions have eased we have been blessed by having more contact with family and friends. We hope and pray as we go into autumn, that this easing will continue. Thank you all for your patience.

Diane

From: Ian Hardie, Treasurer of the United Reformed Church and
John Piper, Deputy Treasurer August 2020

To: The members and friends of all our 1,400 URC congregations

**'THANK YOU' for your unique and vital contribution to the life
the United Reformed Church, and for the work of the kingdom
which we are able to do together in God's name**

We are living through an extraordinary and challenging time – a very anxious time for everyone; a difficult time for many; and a time of suffering and loss for some. Yet, the main purpose of this letter is to say **'thank you'** to each of you for all that you have done for the Church in the past; for all that you continue to do even in these difficult times; and for what you will do in the future.

As we are treasurers, you will not be surprised that the focus of this letter is on finance. But we recognise that finance is only a means to the end which is our doing of God's work together.

'Thank you' for your giving to your local church. Financially, this giving is the lifeblood of your own church and of the whole United Reformed Church across England, Scotland and Wales. It is this personal giving that enables your local church treasurer to pay your church's bills. Typically, the largest of those 'bills' is the contribution your local church pays to the URC Ministry and Mission Fund. This Fund meets the central costs of the United Reformed Church. The total budget is around £20 million and is approved each year by Mission Council. Over 80% of this money is spent on ministers and church related community workers – their training, stipends and pensions. But the other 20% also achieves an enormous amount on behalf of us all. General Assembly 2020 was severely constrained because of the Covid-19 lockdown, but the reports written for General Assembly are

available on the URC website, and they paint pictures of all the work that has been done in our name over the last two years and much of that work is ongoing.

'Thank you' for your giving and the giving of your local church last year. In 2019, over **£19.4 million** was given by local churches and synods to the Ministry and Mission Fund. The total contributions from local churches reduced very slightly but the average giving per member has, once again and remarkably, gone up by more than inflation.

'Thank you' for your continued giving this year. We fully understand that circumstances this year are difficult. Most local churches have been unable to meet for over five months. We have not had the usual opportunities to make our offerings for the work of the Church. But most of the costs of the local church and of the denomination have not reduced and some have increased as a consequence of the pandemic. We are also aware that some have lost income or work this year and are therefore in great financial difficulty. But there are others on fixed incomes who are actually better off than they might otherwise have been. **So, please continue to give what you can in whatever way you can – or save it up until you can hand it over.**

Any giving of ours is a response to the amazing generosity and love of God which we see in Jesus. Nevertheless, **it is important for us to say 'thank you' to each and all of you.**

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter then please speak to your church treasurer, who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ, Ian and John

Lectionary Readings



September

6th Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149;
Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

13th Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114;
Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

20th Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45;
Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16

27th Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 78:1-4;
Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

WEEKLY OFFERING

Even though we have not been able to attend church services, please remember that the church still needs your usual donations. Perhaps each Sunday you could place your money in an envelope and say a quiet offertory prayer. Rob will happily receive a bundle of envelopes, or just one with a cheque in. Just let him know when it is convenient for him to collect or pop it in the post to him.

Thank you!

We hold in our prayers -

Jean Mutter Frank Frayling Roy Collins
Rev Malcolm Shapland Diana Hibbert
Vernon Holland Barbara Lloyd Carol Booth
Dorothy Woodward Judy and Rod Jarman



All affected in any way by Coronavirus in UK, Europe and particularly in developing nations.

All those working in the NHS and in Social Care.

Those who have died and their loved ones.

Shop workers, delivery people, post people, milk people, transport workers,

Neighbourhood volunteers, scientists, researchers and makers of testing kits and PPE.

The people of Lebanon.



Donations appreciated please.

The cost to deep clean the church prior to opening was £516. We are grateful to Van guard for contributing to the cost but would welcome other donations.

Thank you!

Thanks to A.A Milne

'The rain fell steadily, dripping through the damp leaves, as Pooh and Piglet walked their socially distanced walk through the Hundred Acre Wood.

"It's funny," said Pooh, looking over at Piglet. "All that time, when we couldn't be together, I kept thinking about how much I missed you. I kept thinking about all of the things that I wanted to say to you. All of the things that I couldn't wait to talk and chatter with you about, and how much I missed being able to do so, even though we could speak on the telephone, because it just wasn't the same."

"And now?" prompted Piglet.

"Well," said Pooh, a slight smile on his face. "I realised, while the talking and the catching up is always wonderful, it turns out that it wasn't actually that which I was missing so much."

"Then what was it?" asked Piglet, curiously.

"It was the Being, Piglet. Just Being, with you. That's what I missed, most of all."

"Oh me too," said Piglet, fervently. "Me too."

On the two friends walked; through the rain; just Being.'

Sent by Val Noble



Women of the Bible

A	M	V	H	M	H	A	L	I	L	E	D
A	B	I	G	A	I	L	L	J	Y	J	E
K	H	T	U	R	P	R	A	C	H	E	L
O	P	O	B	T	N	N	I	V	K	C	E
R	A	G	A	H	N	O	C	A	L	A	B
H	T	E	B	A	Z	I	L	E	M	D	E
A	A	I	D	Y	L	L	L	H	A	N	Z
N	N	G	I	E	I	E	Z	A	H	A	E
N	H	Z	A	C	M	R	V	K	A	C	J
A	M	H	S	R	O	T	Z	E	R	P	S
H	A	I	S	V	A	Z	T	B	A	B	O
C	R	Y	D	I	N	A	H	E	S	G	C
P	Y	J	E	S	T	H	E	R	R	S	A

PRISCILLA	ELIZABETH	NAOMI	HANNAH	
DINAH	MARY	LEAH	MIRIAM	MARTHA
REBEKAH	ABIGAIL	EVE	DELILAH	
LYDIA	RACHEL	ESTHER	HAGAR	
CANDACE	JEZEBEL	RUTH	SARAH	

Together In Prayer

Please pray for ...

September

- 6th Parkminster URC, Cardiff and Gilwern URC

- The Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Croatia, Slovenia, Former Yugoslav, Republic of
Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia

- 13th Canton Uniting Church, Cardiff. and
Maesyronnen with Glasbury URC

- Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania

- 20th Beulah URC, Rhiwbina and Pennorth with
Llanfilo URC

- Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

- 27th St. Andrews URC Cardiff and Libanus URC
Brecon

- Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia



FIRST COMING

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace,
he came when the heavens were unsteady
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time,
He came when the need was deep and great,
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine, He did not wait
till hearts were pure. In joy He came
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
He came, and his light would not go out.

He came to a world that did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Madeline L'Engle



A Friend in Need

A popular song has the words, "Thank you for being a friend". However, we may be more familiar with the lovely words, written by did Joseph Scriven, "What a friend we have in Jesus".

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for keeping Rod and myself in your thoughts and prayers and for the "Inform" magazine which is posted by Lynda each month.

These past months have made us value our friends richly. It has been said that King James would always call for his oldest shoes because they were the ones that fitted him best-just like our old friends. Our Scriptures tell us so much about friends. Exodus 33 says that "God spoke to Moses face to face, just as a friend." In the New Testament, Jesus addresses His disciples as friends.

I have a plaque in my kitchen which reads, "You will always be my friend, you know too much about me!" The trouble is I cannot remember who gave the plaque to me! Just before lockdown Age Concern introduced me to their "Befriending Service". I had to be assessed so that I could be matched with a suitable befriender. It's the nearest I have come to a blind date! What a wonderful pairing. Enter, less than 24 hours later, Noreen, a member of Caldicot Baptist Church, music group leader, qualified wedding cake maker, dog lover and so much more. We have the ability to laugh and cry in equal measures and always leave each other in God's hands in prayer. We believe God drew us together in an amazing way and look forward to seeing each other again.



Rod is frail and is cared for at the Lodge in Rogerstone. He has made me promise to send love to you all and especially to his old friend, Frank Frayling.

I begin by, thank you for “Inform” and for the many friends we have at Van Road, a friendship which began at Cathy’s mother’s funeral, when we were invited to come back and lead worship. How I treasure these visits “home”, making you sing in both English and Welsh and feeling enveloped in true Christian fellowship.

I recently read these words, “**Prayers go up and blessings come down**”. For all your prayers and blessings, thanks be to God. Diolch yn Fawr,

Rev Judy Jarman.



The VAN-guard Centre (Charity Registration number 1109193)

September 2020 report

There is little to report this month as there have been no activities or events since lockdown. The concert planned for 19th September has been cancelled, hopefully we will be able to rearrange it, and many others also cancelled, for sometime next year. We have been receiving enquiries from various quarters to see if we are open so hopefully those enquirers will come back to make bookings.

The September concert would have involved Lee David Bowen and his friends Richard Lee Thomas, Angharad Watkeys and Nicola Rose. There was an article in the current Caerphilly Observer about Lee. He had given an interview about his experience of having suffered with Covid 19 as early as February. He still is experiencing problems as a result. We have sent him our good wishes and hope he will continue to make good progress.

We also send our best wishes to all the performers that have entertained us at ‘VAN-guard’. We think about them as they cannot work because the theatres are closed.

Mair.



Inform for October

Please send contributions by 19th September

A hymn composed by the late Revd. David Fox in November 1993.

Eternal God, your Spirit makes us whole,

Newly creates your pilgrim people here:

Fully committed to each other's needs.

Yet we would make full unity our goal,

Serving in Covenant of faith and deeds.

Following Christ, who calls the church to die

that it might point the rainbow way to heaven

renew your spirit's healing of our deaf

self-shuttered ears, that we might now reply

"Your will be done, your glory we confess".

**The mention of "rainbow" is so appropriate at this time.
In Welsh ENFYD means rainbow!**

Mair

New Serving Elders

We welcome back Phyllis Frayling and Margaret Baldwin as serving Elders.

We give grateful thanks to Lewis and Diane for their loyal service.



Cringes

- What is so funny about forbidden fruits?
- They create many jams.
- What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?
- Absolutely ruthless!
- The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose.
- Mosquitos come close though.
- Which servant of God was the greatest lawbreaker in the Bible?
- Moses, he broke all 10 commandments.
- How does Paul make his tea?
- Hebrews it, obviously.

CHURCH ELDERS

Mrs Enfys Hawthorn 02920 866840
Mrs Emma Fitzgerald 02920 821525
Ms Lynda Jones 02920 884022
Mr Robert Moverley 02920 866336
Mrs Cathy Vernalls 02920 887112
Mrs Phyllis Frayling 02920 862285
Mrs Margaret Baldwin 02920 867027

Any items for the next edition should be
submitted by the 19th of the month

to

Mrs Diane Moverley

dianemoverley60@gmail.com

(or if not on e mail then items can be left
in the box at the back of the sanctuary)



Pause for thought.

I have a very old copy of THE SCRIPTURE BIRTHDAY BOOK which belonged to my great aunt. There is a biblical reference given for every day of the year. The verse for the first day of September is:

“The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I trust”.

Psalm 18 verse 2.

Mair