

# Magazine

August/September 2020

Looking back to wartime

George Fox: everyone matters

Inspirational memories



Zion  
United  
Reformed  
Church

~ Northallerton ~

# Zion and Community

These are the weekly activities that would normally take place.  
They will be reinstated as soon as possible

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <del>Sunday</del><br>10.00 a.m.                                 | <del>Morning worship</del><br><del>Communion every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday</del><br><del>Bright and early and a warm welcome every week</del> |
| <del>Monday</del><br>9.30 a.m. to<br>11.00 a.m.<br>In term time | <del>Tiny time</del><br><del>Mums, come and join us in the Church Hall for a chat and a cuppa while the children play</del>                 |
| <del>Wednesday</del><br>10.00 a.m. to<br>12 noon                | <del>'Way In'</del><br><del>A chance to get a coffee or tea and a chat</del>  |
| <del>12 noon to<br/>12.30 p.m.</del>                            | <del>A chance to sit and eat your packed lunch warm and dry</del>   |
| <del>1.00 p.m. to<br/>1.30 p.m.</del>                           | <del>Market Day service</del><br><del>A time for quiet reflection in the midst of a busy day</del>  |
| <del>Saturday</del><br>10.00 a.m. to<br>12 noon                 | <del>'Way In'</del><br><del>More coffee and chat</del>  |

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## Pastoral letter

Dear Friends,

Every time I turn on my computer I have (usually) a lovely image of spectacular scenery from somewhere in the world. I began to stop and linger over these images during lockdown and they are still important as I have had limited opportunity to go very far over these last weeks since lockdown was eased.

These have also been a prompt to prayer on occasions when less time pressured, not only offering prayers of adoration for the beauty of creation but sometimes discovering in the area of the world displayed a time of intercession for those many miles away who are also coming to terms with our Covid world and often without the resources we are fortunate to have.

One image from the Philippines reminded me of the family who lived in one of our former manses (the church bought the house as their new manse). The family still lived in the area and our next-door neighbour still kept in touch. The wife was from the Philippines and was a nurse at the local hospital. So many thoughts and prayers came from that one random image appearing on the screen in front of me. Adoration yes but prayers for the NHS, former churches and people in the congregations, the peoples of the Philippines... One day I had to remind myself that I couldn't spend so much time as I had deadlines looming. However, these images have become a real source of spiritual nourishment for me.

There have been too the documentaries, some oft repeated, of parts of this country or other parts of the world which we have visited and know. Instead of regretting not being able to go it has been a source of remembering walks and holidays and experiences.

Perhaps, like Beatrice Potter once said she 'was blessed by an inner eye'. In her older years she was able to imagine her walks and rambles in her beloved Lakeland countryside. I know there are some people who find such imagining very difficult if not impossible and for some it is not a visual cue at all but the strains of familiar music or the fragrance of a flower, or even something as mundane as toast.



Reading literature on Dementia and knowing, from my previous existence as a Speech Therapist, with head injuries, these triggers to memory unlock so much for people. They are a way of reconnecting with the past and bringing that into the present. I have become aware more than ever that this 'trigger to memory' is a God-given gift. It is something perhaps we have underestimated in the past but something deep rooted in our faith.

'Do this in remembrance of me' are the familiar words of our Communion service. It is a Divine command to call to mind the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and we do so in visual symbols, symbolic actions, taste and smell and in doing so we are called on to give thanks. In this way we move into a most profound experience and the past becomes one with the present as we remember.

So, when we find ourselves 'down memory-lane' take time to linger there awhile and give thanks not just for the memory but thanks to God for giving us that gift.

Yours in service

*Hilary*

## Conversations in lockdown

*“Grandma, I would like to come and stay on my own please in the summer. Not as a guest, just as a person.”*

*“How do you mean, Harry?”*

*“Well, I want to see what you and Grandad do when we are not here, and you are having to look after us. What is it that you do all day when you don’t go to work? Have you never been out to work?”*

Good question!

One of many insightful and interesting conversations I have had during lockdown which I would never have had the opportunity to experience except for the exceptional circumstances of the last few months. As we met across the generations in the woods with family, there were no distractions of TV, jobs to be done, cooking to create, friends to rush off and see, work calls to take. Electronic devices could not be viewed even, in the outdoor brilliant sunshine! Yes, the dogs had to be walked, but they involved further socially distanced companionship-chats.

And during my lovely walks in the lanes around our home, I have explored and met and chatted with such a variety of people, hitherto known and unknown alike. The bee-keeper who had lost a swarm, *‘Let me know if you see or hear it, but don’t hang around.’* The fisherman who had travelled a distance to fish in the fast running, sparkling Swale *“at my usual peg”*. (I knew about these matters from my parish fishing matches fund raising for the church in Myton on Swale.) The young woman in tears as they had just been told about her mother being very ill with Covid. *‘We can’t even see her.’*

We walked and walked that day. On the morrow, I discovered a bottle of wine hidden in my hedge as a 'thank you'. The fed-up farmer blocking my walk with a huge combine harvester, '*Ee, I were combinin' the barley today. Sun were shining when I set off, now it's b\*\*\*\*\* raining*', and he obligingly pulled over onto the abundantly wild-flowered verge to let me squeeze past, ducking under terrifying looking blades and machinery .

A lovely lady I have known for years, a midwife, (known to me as 'York Stork'), yet we have never before actually had a real conversation, now meet regularly...and the 'spiritual conversations' evolve as we share the glorious countryside, noting the transforming crops over the weeks evolving too. A giggling young couple with a picnic, which I subsequently discovered was their secret 'engagement feast'! And many more sharing their precious stories, including a young woman who has recently been bereaved both of a son and a mother. '*People seem too scared to talk to me.*' And finally, from another younger child, '*really nice sausage rolls Grandma. I have put some in my shorts for later*'!



Most significant of all of these, was the young woman who brought our food and medications to keep us safe. She came down our long mile-long drive to bring these life sustaining items several time a week, and collecting Paul's book parcels to post. But also...

...she stopped each time for a conversation. She was never too busy to do that. What a joy!

The diversity of life was here, in the midst of all the trauma of fear and death, but we had time to appreciate time and one another. We couldn't 'do', so we had to learn again to 'be'. What are we going to learn from this and one of my favourite film lines; 'there is no present like the time'?

*Ann Bowes*

Footnote: Miraculously I found the bees yesterday, hugging an enormous tree...however too late it seems! *A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay, a swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon, and a swarm of bees in July isn't worth a fly.*

## Women's rescue

In 1986 a remarkable, visionary woman called Pearl Stephen began a women's project in the garage at Scots Kirk in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Her husband, George, was the minister. Out of that garage an organisation grew to become the Women's Development Centre (WDC). Pearl set up the school for disabled children to provide special education and rehabilitation. Community development work included work with commercial sex workers who were vulnerable to HIV. But WDC is best known for its work with victims of sexual violence.

Pearl died in 2003 and her daughter-in-law, Sashi, has taken over the leadership. Like Pearl, Sashi combines total commitment to the girls in WDC's care with a love and compassion that does not judge.

WDC can accommodate 50 girls and young women under the age of 16 who have been raped or abused. Some of the girls have been abused for years before they became pregnant. They may have been abused by male relatives when their mother was working in the Gulf States. They may have suffered because of the breakdown in moral behaviour as a result of the brutalisation of society caused by three decades of war between the government and the Tamil Tigers.

When the Sri Lankan justice system gets involved the abuser is



charged with statutory rape and the girl can be referred to WDC. Girls come from all over Sri Lanka, they include Sinhalese and Tamils, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians. They can stay until the court case is resolved, which can take a few years in some cases. Sashi and her co-workers help the girls care for their babies, train them in crafts and weaving so that they can learn skills that will help when they leave. Parents of the girls come for counselling so that they can rebuild their relationship with their daughter. Other girls are admitted to local schools so that they can return to education.



In 2009 WDC started the social enterprise called 'Sthree', which means 'women' in both Sinhala and Tamil languages. This women's initiative provides a market for Sri Lankan women and differently-abled entrepreneurs to sell their handmade products.

The latest development is the Sthree café. A travel company has underwritten the costs for developing the back of the building and fitting out a kitchen. The tables and chairs were all made at the WDC vocational centre and the cooking and serving is all done by women from WDC's programmes. The food is grown locally, there is a minimal use of plastic and maximum use of recycling and composting.

Already the café is drawing more customers into the original craft shop. If you are in Kandy, try to visit Sthree – we recommend the Hopper Combo breakfast!

Sashi and her team at WDC care for and heal girls who are vulnerable and often discarded by their families. It is impossible not to be moved by what they do.

*Keith Scott*

Secretary, Church of Scotland Appeal

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If you would like to support this project, then you will be pleased to know that it will be the recipient of this year's stamp and postcard appeal. So, collect as many used stamps and cards as you can and give them to me who will send them on to the Secretary in Motherwell.

*Malcolm Smith*

## Hereford Cathedral

During the early weeks of lockdown the BBC Sunday Morning Worship was broadcast several times from Hereford Cathedral. The programmes often ended with beautiful views of the outside of the cathedral building and the majestic River Wye.

As well as being a great source of comfort to me these service awoke in me many more memories of Hereford, a City I know very well having visited my Granny who lived there, it being the place where my late father grew up.

He was a day pupil at Hereford Cathedral School having won a scholarship there at age 9; and told us many tales of life at school, not all good but one always remained with me linking to the Cathedral during WW2. I will use his own words taken from his memoirs.

*In March 1941 some of us in the sixth form were asked if we would like to help with firewatching on Hereford Cathedral. After being given a conducted tour I started with a boy called Powell-Jones as members of a team on Saturday 15 March. We slept on camp beds among the funerary monuments in one of the transepts, from the corner of which a spiral stairway took us to a catwalk across the ceiling of the transept, then up the tower by another spiral staircase to the top. On the roof of the tower was*

*a small wooden hut, equipped with two chairs and a telephone.*

*We manned this observation point in shifts, the idea being that in the event of an air raid we would be well placed to report the outbreak of any fires. Down on the ground our base was located in one of the vestries, and this was where the telephone at the other end of the line was located, and where we could brew up if not up aloft.*

*In retrospect I suppose the access to and from the observation point was really somewhat hairy, but we were young and thought nothing of it. On a clear night the view from the top extended a fair way, and the effect of air raids in distant places could be judged well by the light in the sky.*



If you ever get a chance to visit Hereford, do visit the Cathedral; apart from it being a majestic building it houses a very rare 'chained library' and also the Mappa Mundi; one of the world's unique medieval treasures, made around 1300.

*Judith Puttock*

## All lives are equal

Certainly, the seventeenth century Church was continuing the tradition of awarding itself airs and graces - exemplified in titles like Your Holiness, Your Excellency, Your Grace. And that hasn't completely died out today. Surprisingly maybe, since Jesus so discouraged such self-importance among his disciples. But sadly, organised religion has often tended to follow the way of the world, rather than resolutely lead. The Reformation had held out the promise of challenging all this, and it was having some

effect. But even the Puritans were in a way carrying out a perverse form of superiority by claiming for themselves a special 'purity' as the true Christians.

George Fox, though, rejected all the social and spiritual pretentiousness of his day, as did his followers, the Society of Friends. In court for insolence, he once stated that only before God would he tremble. The judge sarcastically dismissed him as a 'quaker'.

Behind that belief, he saw no need for an 'official' priest to help him reach the presence of God. No need for church or 'steeplehouse', or the embellishments of coloured vestments or black gown. No creeds. Just a simple waiting in silence to hear the voice of God within.

And more still. All human beings are of equal worth - male or female, rich or poor, free or slave. Quaker William Penn was one of the European colonists giving new life to the New World. But it was a society being underpinned by a traffic in millions of slaves across from the West coast of Africa. By the eighteenth century the Christian slave-masters of England and Scotland were amassing vast fortunes thereby, though ironically and confusingly reinvesting much of it in philanthropic largesse in their home country.

Did they feel their religion justified them? Well, while it was not consistent with the message of Jesus, in the Bible they could find slavery being taken for granted. It was integral because it was a long-standing cultural norm. (So, it is neither 'recent' nor a specifically black issue.) The voice of God had said to Moses, 'When you buy a Hebrew slave, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out by himself, for nothing.' However, when Paul sent Onesimus back to his owner with a request for kindness, there was no additional demand for freedom. And in Ephesians Paul advised Christian slaves to be obedient to their earthly masters 'as if to Christ himself'.

However, deeply uncomfortable about such traditional religious attitudes and interventions, the Pennsylvanian Quakers couldn't but feel compelled to deny the Bible's infallibility - the start of a challenging trend, controversial to this day. Using the litmus test of their inner conscience, they said the Bible must be wrong on slavery and tried to overturn the practice. But, despite their lead, it took 150 years for the British Empire to outlaw it. In the USA it was even longer. And in the same critical vein, the Quakers did not accept the suggestions of a literal 6-day creation or a 6,000 year earthly time-span.

Jesus had commanded, '*Love your neighbour as yourself.*' At the time, it seemed to his followers that God's Kingdom was imminent via a Second Coming. Inequality would be swept away. But the Christian hierarchy eventually became inextricably linked to political and secular power. So, 2,000 years later those expectations are still unrealised. Human behaviour has more often prevailed. Much of society has persisted along 'master and slave' lines. Frustratingly, the tide of reform has ebbed and flowed. Nevertheless, the inextinguishable flame of Christian hope remains. On one final day 'all lives will matter - equally'.

*Paul Bowes*

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*In Christ there is no East or West  
In him no North or South...  
Join hands then, all the human race...  
All who my father's image bear are  
surely kin to me.*

*'John Oxenham' (1852-1941)*

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## Broken then healed

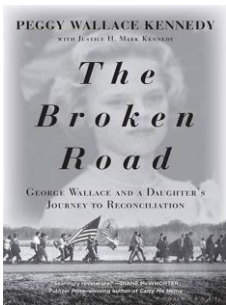
I was much taken recently with the book review reprinted below, relevant to one recurring contemporary issue. The book is

***“The Broken Road: George Wallace and a Daughter’s Journey to Reconciliation”*,**

by Peggy Wallace Kennedy, publisher Bloomsbury

It’s an unlikely memoir in which the daughter of the [American] segregationist politician George Wallace walks hand-in-hand with civil rights legend John Lewis down the streets of Selma, Alabama.

The ‘broken road’ of the title derives from a disused track that led little Peggy and her mother back to their maternal home when George Wallace made their lives intolerable. He had just lost his first [election] bid for the governor’s mansion, and he forsook his family for philandering and politicking. But Mama Lurleen Wallace was tough, too. She followed the broken road back to where Mr Henry still farmed with a mule and where Mamaw’s door and arms were open. The move was also tactical. Mrs Wallace knew that if family failed to draw her husband back, ambition would. In 1959, a divorce would spell the end of his hopes for the governorship.



Outdone by an overt racist in that first gubernatorial contest, Wallace came back next term, running on a platform of “segregation now, segregation tomorrow and segregation forever”! This time he won, and went on to play a notorious role as the nemesis of the civil rights movement.

Yet after an assassination attempt sidelined him in a wheelchair, Governor George Wallace turned not to bitterness but to remorse. In 1979 he was wheeled down the aisle of Martin Luther King Jnr's own Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery to ask for, and receive, forgiveness for his bigotry.

*Malcolm Smith*

*(The review is reprinted with permission from the magazine Plough Quarterly in which it first appeared in Spring 2020. More information at <https://plough.com> )*

## Church Diary

A glimmer on the horizon – plans are being made for an Awayday in May next year. The date is yet to be finalised but it's a positive move towards normality.

## You have been warned!

*"I should be OK if I catch this virus"* said the 86 year old.

*"Why?"* we asked.

*"Well,"* he said *"you are as old as you feel and I feel half my age; 43 year olds don't usually suffer badly if they get Covid 19, so I'm OK."*

A little voice interrupted, squeaking "Excuse me, but you are wrong".

"Who said that, and what do they know anyway ?"

The squeak replied "I am your immune system, and as far as your immunity goes, you are exactly the age your birth certificate recorded."

"Prove it" said the belligerent 86 year old, then wished he hadn't when the squeak replied - "You have a reduced production of B and T cells in bone marrow and thymus and diminished function of mature lymphocytes in secondary lymphoid tissues.

Then there are the effects on neutrophils, NK and NKT cells, monocytes/macrophages, and dendritic cells in older people".

"Rubbish, I don't understand a word of that gibberish. Convince me this has any significance with respect to my immunity."

At this point another, really scary, horribly unpleasant, rasping, spine tingling voice came into the conversation "I am the spirit of Covid 19" it said, "I look at dates of birth before deciding how hard to strike. I am not interested in how old you feel, or how healthy you are, but if you are old I will attack viciously, the older you are the more viciously I attack."

At that the 86 year old was convinced.

Scared, he scurried home, put on his face mask, and decided to self isolate.

At which his 85 year old wife said "I told you so!" and looked up a variety of Sunday services on his computer for him to 'attend'.

*Anne Wilson*  
*With thanks to Kendal URC Newsletter*



## With a smile

Which only goes to prove that the recipe for a happy marriage is  
- that the wife should love her husband a little and understand him a lot.  
- and the husband should love his wife a lot, but never try to understand her at all.

*Anon*

## The problem of pain

God of creation,  
We are filled with awe when we see  
The immense power of earthquakes and volcanoes to shape  
and mould our world,  
And the recycling energies of wind, fire and water,  
  
We are amazed when we see  
The delicate intricacies of nature in the unfolding flower and  
the developing embryo  
And the mysterious ability of love to cause and sustain growth.  
God of creation, in awe, we give thanks.

But...

God of creation,  
Did you also intend  
The destructive forces of nature that kill, maim and render  
people homeless or orphaned?

Did you also intend  
The possibility of disease and congenital malformations?

Did you also intend  
The shadow-side of humankind, that wields unloving power  
that destroys and causes pain?

God of creation are they as much a part of you as they are of  
our world and us?

But...

Vulnerable, risk-taking God,  
In Christ we see a tender God,  
His own body pierced by the pains and injustices of this world,  
Who weeps with us in our sorrow and despair.

In Christ we see a faithful God,  
Who does not give up hope,  
But works to transform and redeem this sullied creation.  
Vulnerable, risk-taking God, we are surprised and give thanks.

Vulnerable, risk-taking God,  
This world is of your creation and our making,  
The joy, love and beauty are mixed inextricably with sadness,  
hate and ugliness.  
The latter perhaps makes more precious the former.  
Give us the courage to take the risk to be vulnerable too,  
And to transform and to redeem with you.

Amen

*Liz Styan*

# Elders' duty rota

If you have any problems and would like to speak with someone please contact the Ministers, Secretary, your designated Elder or the Duty Elder as given below

## Week beginning

### August

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jo Kennedy
- 9<sup>th</sup> Judith Puttock
- 16<sup>th</sup> Liz Styan
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Christine Roddam
- 30<sup>th</sup> Paul Bowes

### September

- 6<sup>th</sup> Sue Bush
- 13<sup>th</sup> Jane Haslam
- 20<sup>th</sup> Jo Kennedy
- 25<sup>th</sup> Judith Puttock



## Contact us



|                              |  |              |
|------------------------------|--|--------------|
| <b>Ministers:</b>            | Rev Hilary Collinson and<br>Rev Stephen Collinson  | 01748 821586 |
| <b>Secretary:</b>            | Susan Bush   | 01609 882468 |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>            | Judith Puttock   | 01609 771282 |
| <b>Organist:</b>             | Carol Hogg   | 01609 883319 |
| <b>Room<br/>booking:</b>     | Lesley Bustard   | 01609 776990 |
| <b>Magazine<br/>editors:</b> | Sue and Jo Kennedy<br><a href="mailto:joseph.kennedy123@btinternet.com">joseph.kennedy123@btinternet.com</a> | 01609 881408 |
| <b>Church:</b>               | Answerphone<br>N.B. No incoming message facility   | 01609 779610 |
| <b>Website:</b>              | <a href="http://www.tsurc.org/">www.tsurc.org/</a>   |              |



We hope you have enjoyed the magazine and when we are able to open again, we invite you to worship with us at High Street, Northallerton at our 10 a.m. Sunday service.

**Please note that the closing date  
for items for the  
October/November issue is 18<sup>th</sup>  
September**