

Littlehampton United Church

Mini
Newsletter 8



Keeping
our church
together

Children of God

Last Sunday I listened to a short sermon which began with a description of what it is like to have small children. As a parent, they have unlimited access to you 24/7. Anything from repairing a bicycle to giving comfort in the night after awakening from a bad dream. It could have been a prelude to a Father's Day service—a week early!

But the speaker was reminding us of what it means to be children of God. We have unlimited access whenever, wherever and whatever our need.

In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul writes about how God has brought about this wonderful relationship:

Romans 5 verses 1—5:

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, **Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.**

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us to develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

Wishing you peace, joy and hope

Chris

From the Leadership Team

We held a virtual meeting on Saturday morning to discuss our response to the Government's relaxation of the lock-down rules that allows churches to open their doors for private prayer. We had, to assist our deliberations, advice published by the Leadership of both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

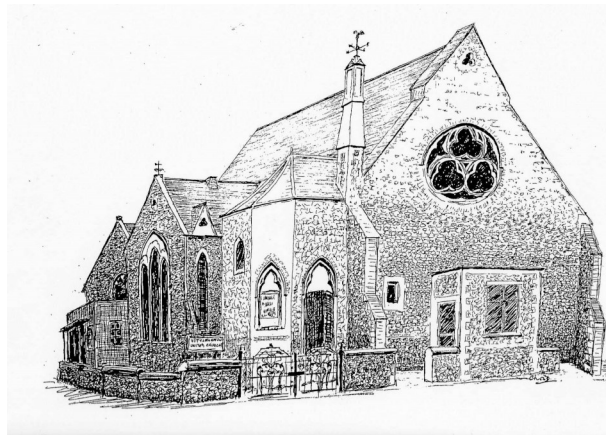
The outcome of our discussion is a decision that it is too soon to be opening our building for private prayer.

We recognise that many of our members are looking forward to a time when we can meet again for worship together. Indeed, one of the reasons we come to church is to worship God in fellowship with others. Under the conditions that churches may open for private prayer, any form of corporate worship is not going to happen. Unlike shops and restaurants who are eager to get back to business as normal as soon as possible, a church is a meeting place and, at present, meeting together is not an option.

Another major factor in our decision that we took into account is our ages. Most of us are in that category that the government have called "Vulnerable". As such we should not be attempting to undertake any activity that puts us at risk of contracting Covid-19. Door stewarding, for example, while the church is open to the public, is not something any of us should be doing.

Finally, there are the physical difficulties of putting social distancing measures in place and the associated risk assessments. There are places of worship in Littlehampton better suited to opening for private prayer and we commend them to you if you wish to pray in the atmosphere of a religious sanctuary. (We understand that St Mary's and St Catherine's will be opening at some time)

We can assure you that we are keeping the situation under review. We pray that the rate of infection from Covid-19 will continue to fall and it will become safe to meet again.



Prayers in difficult times

A prayer reflection

It's difficult to live with uncertainty.

However bad a situation,

knowing what you have to face

means that you can start coming to terms with it,

facing your fears,

planning your strategy.

When the 'big picture' is too big or too blurred

and indistinct,

it's easier to focus on small details,

to try to control what you can.

The world has changed,

how does that affect our living in the meantime?

How do I need to change?

How do I want to change?

Is it possible to live each day as a new opportunity,

while knowing that it feels the same as yesterday?

I need your help, God,

to listen for you in the clamour of voices calling for my attention,

to focus on you in the midst of competing priorities,

to trust you in this time of uncertainty.

Amen.

God of hope

God of hope, where things seem to be one big tangle of pain and unhappiness,

intervene with your saving love;

where people are in conflict or locked in a stalemate, release them from the cycle of war;

where your name is outlawed and your children are forced to hide,

break through their darkness and be God-revealed to them;

where despair takes centre stage and depression and anxiety sharpen their claws,

fill those situations with unexpected peace and joy.

God of hope,

God-with-us,

God of all time and of every place:

may the earth be filled with the knowledge of you,

and may your light flow over the world like a covering,

bringing protection from the darkness and from the evil that often frightens and wounds us.

Amen.

News of the Family

Please continue to remember in your prayers Pauline's daughter, Michelle, very slowly recovering from Coronavirus, as well as Jackie Turvey and her family.

While typing this newsletter I received the following from Jill Belchamber:

*When you do the next newsletter, please would you ask the church members to pray for my twin sister Coral who is in Chichester Hospital - very, very ill.
Not with the virus.*

It is heart breaking to know she is so poorly and neither her husband, family or myself can be with her at her time of need. Sitting at home in isolation just waiting for a phone call is so awful. Coral and I came into this world together and if it is her time to go it will break my heart if I can't be with her.

God bless you all. Jill B

Shortly before Jill's email arrived I was reading the following prayer:

Jesus, when we receive you and believe in your name

Jesus, when we receive you and believe in your name,
You give us power to become children of God.

When we are lonely,
help us to remember
We are the children of God.

When we are scared,
help us to remember
We are the children of God.

When we are hurting,
help us to remember
We are the children of God.

When we are sad,
help us to remember
We are the children of God.

Fill us with the power of your love,
Now and always.
Amen.

This newsletter was written and edited by Chris Azzaro, who can be contacted on 01903 718070 or by email: christopher.azzaro@sky.com

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome

There is also information about our church on the website:

Littlehamptonunitedchurch.org.uk