

Littlehampton United Church

Mini
Newsletter 13



Keeping
our church
together

News of the Family

Church Members will be sorry to learn that Revd. Eric Rogers passed away late in the afternoon of Tuesday 4th August.

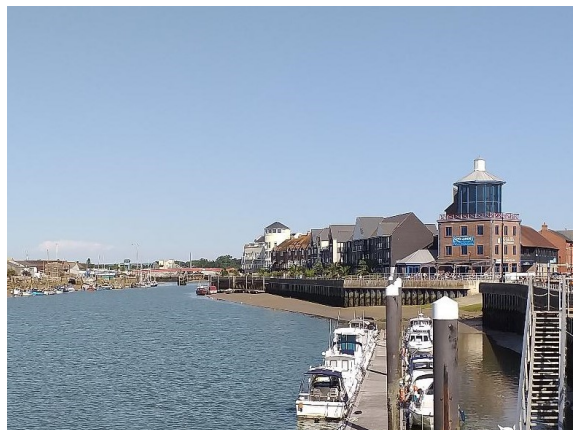
Eric had recently suffered from Shingles but over the weekend he became much weaker. Naison visited him on Saturday and reported that Eric had maintained a good conversation—at a social distance, of course, but when Naison called again on Tuesday morning, Eric had deteriorated considerably. His family were with him.

There will be a memorial service but in the present circumstances only invited friends and members of the family will be able to attend.

I am pleased to say that Jill Belchamber's sister is now out of hospital and, for the time being, is in a residential care home. Jill is unable to visit as the home, which, (like so many others) is in Lockdown. Jill herself has had an operation on her foot which rendered her unable to walk for several weeks. She is now able to drive again but says that "hopping about on one leg has been very tiring!"

Doren Redington is still in pain having broken her arm. I understand that the bone will have to be re-set as things did not go right first time.

John Stevens is still troubled by kidney stones and is expecting a short stay in hospital.



Take your litter home with you: Matthew 14 verse 20

When reading the Bible, it is easy to gloss over passages or stories which we think we know well. In fact there is often more than one message, sometimes through the context in which the story is set, or in the times in which we live. Having fed the 5000 men plus unnumbered women and children, Jesus instructs his disciples to collect up the leftovers—12 baskets full! When looking at the litter left lying around beaches and our countryside after hot summer days, it is easy to ask; is Matthew making a point about picking up the litter or emphasizing the wonderful miracle Jesus had just performed?

In the narrative, we learn more about Jesus. The disciples wanted to help the people. They told Jesus of the need for everyone to buy food, before it is too late. “Send the crowds away so they might buy food”. Verse 15 Jesus has a different solution - “You give them something to eat” verse 16.

Matthew, unlike Luke, mentions no names. Andrew is not credited with bringing the boy with 5 loaves and two fish to Jesus. Matthew is more interested in explaining how Jesus had compassion on the people and of a lavish God who loves and provides for all.

There are two other echoes in this story. It takes place in a wilderness. Matthew slips this in, almost un-noticed. Perhaps his readers would have made the link with God providing manna in the wilderness when the people were hungry? For us who live post-resurrection, the gesture in verse 19, is similar to Jesus’ action at the Last Supper, when he raised the bread and wine to give thanks. This has now become the central part of the celebratory meal of Christian worship.

Finally, there is the political significance of the story. This meal of bread and fish immediately follows another meal—provided by Herod for his cronies. The banquet that ended with the beheading of John the Baptist. That banquet was presided over by the self aggrandising despot and empire builder, King Herod. Here we have the opposite: another king, generously providing for all come to him for guidance and leadership in a kingdom of grace and welcome.

By the end of the day the crowds must have been exhausted.

They left with full stomachs and full hearts.

They had met with Jesus.

Lord, you still feed us.

And you sustain us to live the lives you call us to live.

May we be conscious of your perfect timing in our lives,

As we reach out to those both inside and outside our church.

Bless us, Lord.

Amen



Re-opening the church



By the time you read this newsletter, the scaffolding should have been removed as the re-painting is now complete. A huge vote of thanks to Malcolm and his team who have worked hard during the lockdown not only to maintain but to improve the building for when we return for worship.

The building work in the Knight Hall and Coffee Lounge is nearing completion—then the decorating in these areas can commence. Some work will not be finished until first week of September, but we expect the Sanctuary to be clear for 6th September.

It is intended to hold a “Service” on Sunday 6th August at 10.30am.

This will not be a return to “normal worship”. First, to keep ourselves safe, there are restrictions in place. For example no singing or responses. If you are wishing to attend the church, please read carefully, the notes on the last page of this newsletter. The Stewards will guide you when you arrive. Secondly, we are hoping to make our worship relevant to the times in which we find ourselves. There will be time for contemplation and opportunity for prayer. We intend our worship to reflect our mission to our community.

“When we meet it must be to meet each other and in doing so we meet God”

We are confident that God still talks to us and shows us how to live.

Because of the limitations on numbers in the building, please notify Chris by phone or email if you would like to come. In the event of being over-subscribed, priority will be given to unsuccessful members the following week.

Worship will be led by Nigel Stapley (6th Sept.), Chris Azzaro (13th) and Naison Hove (20th, possibly with Holy Communion)

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

Littlehampton United Church

Precautions to prevent the spread of Coronavirus

The church will be open for worship on Sundays at 10.30am

Commencing from Sunday 6th September

Worshippers will need to adhere to the following:

Please do not come to church if you are feeling unwell or have been advised to shield.

In order to maintain social distancing, the number of persons in the church is limited to 20.

You are advised to let the Church Secretary know if you intend to come to church in order to avoid disappointment when you arrive.

Entry will be by the "Old Door" to the left of the main entrance in the High Street.

Please wait by to be admitted. In the event of a queue forming, please maintain a social distance of 2m and wait in the church garden.

Please use the hand sanitiser at the door and wear your face mask all the time you are in the church.

Unless you are a church member and we already have your contact details, you will be asked to fill in a short form recording your contact details.

You will be directed via a one-way system to a seat. Only those from the same household may sit together. Maintain a minimum social distance of 1.5m.

If you require a bible or other book, you must bring your own as nothing may be shared.

For this reason, there will be no refreshments served after the service. We may experiment with Communion service later in September.

Please remain in your seat during the service. The service will last about 30 minutes. The toilet in the foyer will be available but please follow the one-way system and use the sanitiser provided. We expect to arrange the seats in a "horse-shoe" so we may see each other.

At the end of the service, the steward will invite you to leave by the one-way system, all the while maintaining a social distance with other worshippers. If you wish to make a financial contribution (or weekly offering) to the church funds, please use the offertory plates placed near the exit.