

Littlehampton United Church



Mini
Newsletter 16

Keeping
our church
together

Dear Friends,

As I write this newsletter, I'm listening to the news of further measures to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. At the moment it appears that we will still be able to open the church for worship on Sundays. The three services held so far, have been much appreciated. Looking ahead, worship leaders up to the end of the year have been agreed but whether we hold these services still remains to be seen. As well as any official government restrictions we will take note of any local increase of the virus and the need to protect ourselves.—most of us being in the vulnerable 70+ age group.

Harvest this year has taken second place behind the challenge of preparing and leading a different kind of worship, but I hope to rectify this on 11th October with a harvest themed service. Bringing goods into church that have been handled by several different people will not be possible so, instead, we will try to support the appeal being run by Turning Tides. Please turn to the back page to read their letter and what they are doing to support families in need.

Leaders of worship in October are planned as follows: 4th Wendy Corney, 11th Chris Azzaro, 18th Nigel Stapley (Communion), 25th Lynne James.

Reminders: Don't come to church if you are feeling unwell; When you arrive use the hand sanitiser; Wear your face mask throughout the service; Maintain a safe distance between other worshippers; At the end of the service, remain seated to talk to others or move out into the garden where there is room to keep the social distance.

News of the Family

Congratulations to Stella and Derek Lansdale who recently celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

Please remember Alison Spencer in your prayers as she prepares to go into hospital for surgery on her back.

John Stevens is also awaiting hospital treatment.

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

Eric Rogers – Obituary

Eric Rogers died on 4 August, peacefully at home

Eric was born in Corcreeny in Northern Ireland on the 8th January 1928. His father was a linen weaver and the family lived in a thatched cottage outside the town, growing most of their own food. There was an earth floor, a cooking pot over the fire, no electricity or indoor toilet, and the only running water was from the pump outside in the yard. These early years were a humble start, but they gave Eric a drive for self-improvement that shaped the rest of his life.

He did well at school but he had a naughty streak too. One of the best tales was how he and the other boys dragged a dead rat across the road tied to a piece of string and scared the local ladies witless on their way home from Church.



Eric went on to University in Belfast to study Inorganic Chemistry, ending up with a PhD from Imperial College in London. He dreamed of exploring a world much wider than the narrow horizons of his childhood. For his first job he went to Scotland to work for ICI in the Explosives Division. He moved to London, where he met Christine Hughes at All Souls Church on Regent Street. There they both enjoyed the teaching of leading preacher Rev John Stott, and the Billy Graham crusades of the 1950s. They got married and lived in Wembley. Two children followed, Anna in 1961 and Jonathan in 1963. Eric changed jobs to further his career, moving first to Dudley and then Wolverhampton in the Black Country, before becoming the Director of the Drop Forging Research Association in Sheffield.

It was his dream job – communicating technical material in terms that non-specialists could understand. It gave him the opportunity to meet lots of people of all walks of life, from the uneducated Sheffield steelmen to Government Ministers and Peers of the Realm. He and Christine enjoyed the dinner dances and the foreign travel to places like India, Japan and Russia. But Eric wasn't a businessman at heart, he was a teacher and a preacher, and he found a work/life balance that enabled him to do both and still have time for family life. He retired at the age of 59 on a full pension and was able to focus more on his Christian activities.

During 30 happy years in Sheffield, Eric had taken on increasing duties as a lay preacher, and was ultimately ordained as a Non-stipendiary Minister, with the imposing full title 'Reverend Dr Samuel Eric Rogers'. He and Christine were members of various Churches over the years, having moved away from their Anglican upbringing to join the Congregational Church, but also becoming involved in ecumenical projects and Charismatic house churches. They were fortunate to have a deep shared faith. He saw her as an equal partner in it, and he was happy when she occasionally outshone him in Pentecostal circles. In all the groups and fellowships they joined, whatever they were doing, they were in it together.

Eric was an enthusiastic supporter of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, an international Pentecostal outreach mission run by businesspeople. Hospital visiting and preaching in care homes were other regular activities. He specially enjoyed doing children's sermons and was quite willing to wear a Donald Duck hat if it helped him connect with them.

Though they had put down roots in Sheffield and made many friends there, Eric and Christine didn't want to see their days out so far from the family, now living in the South. They settled on Rustington, where they found a spacious modern house which was very much to their liking. But disaster struck when, just before moving, Christine had a brain haemorrhage. They completed the move, but life became significantly more difficult for Eric and he had to take on the role of a full-time carer. As a couple they had had a traditional division of labour. She had looked after him at home and it came as a bit of a surprise to everyone, possibly not least Eric, how readily he stepped up to the challenge. They found a new Church, made new friends and got involved in the local community, which was no mean feat under these difficult circumstances.

Eric loved meeting people and he enjoyed the interaction with friends and colleagues from the Church and his other Christian groups.

Those who knew him well may have heard him talk about being a perfectionist, and a 'jack of all trades'. His attention to detail was legendary, as was his love of fonts, printing, and grammar. He enjoyed comedy and was a good storyteller. An 'early adopter', he loved technology, innovation and ingenious gadgets. He hankered for years for a fully electric Lexus car, one goal he never achieved. His house was full of scholarly books on Christian matters, many Bibles, dictionaries and thesauruses, and many books also on food, diet and health. As an Ulsterman, Eric was strongly British, but he also loved Irish folk music. One favourite was Mick McGilligan's Ball, where the room was so full they had to take the paper off the wall – obviously from before Social Distancing!

Eric knew what he wanted in life, which was: to progressively better himself; to live a long and healthy life; to be close to God; and to raise a good family. He was an optimist and an irrepressible positive thinker. He once said that his favourite subject to preach about was joy. He said the purpose of life is joy - that's what God wants for us. Not short term happiness or pleasure, but the deep fulfilment and reward that comes from a purpose-driven life.

The lockdown in March cut Eric off from his family and Church networks. Having been fortunate enough to live independently and fully mobile to the age of 92, without any health problems, in June he became rather confused and unsteady on his feet. A spell in hospital confirmed his sodium level was very low. That was successfully treated but, despite an initial recovery after coming out of hospital, in late July he started to decline rapidly with no diagnosed cause. He stopped eating, took to his bed on 30 July and died on 4 August. One blessing of the current 'work from home' situation is that Anna and Jonathan, both in full-time jobs, were able to take turns living with him during his last few weeks, and were both by his side when he passed away.

Although Eric was quite the theologian in many ways, he had a simple faith and he sincerely put his trust in God. He was quite happy to talk about death when it was approaching and was sure that God would keep His promise of joyous eternal life.

Eric's remains were cremated at Worthing Crematorium. Due to current circumstances it was a small family funeral. Revd. Hove has a copy of the Order of Service if anyone would like to see it. Eric's ashes will be interred with Christine's at her family grave in Staffordshire.

Plans for any Celebration of Life service in Littlehampton are on hold for now, but the family will keep it under review as and when social distancing rules allow some kind of return to normal.

We are grateful to Eric's daughter, Anna for submitting this obituary

From Turning Tides:

Together, let's celebrate the strength of our community this Harvest

Harvest festival is a special time in our calendars. Last year we gratefully received essential food items to the value of £25,000 from church, faith groups and schools which fed local homeless men and women through the winter months.

This year we have had to re-think our approach to Harvest to ensure we keep everyone safe, whilst continuing to feed our homeless community with what they need through the coming year. Transporting multiple items from homes, to churches, faith groups and schools and then on to our projects is no longer a sensible safe option and would inevitably increase the risk and spread of infection.

Our local councils report that the number of people becoming homeless has doubled and this will continue to increase. Financial hardship, job loss, mental health issues and domestic violence are all significantly rising and these feed into homelessness.

So instead, we are asking you and your community to donate money instead of food items this Harvest.

With rapidly increasing numbers of local people accessing our services, your support has never been more vital. We need to be flexible and responsive as more people lose their homes through this crisis.

Crucially, monetary donations will also enable us to purchase more fresh food, which is key to maintaining health. Even without the threat of Covid, homeless people die 30 years sooner than the general population.

We need to raise at least £25,000 which is equivalent to the generous food items that were donated last year.

PLEASE JOIN WITH US - MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS HARVEST!

For more information; prayer pointers and activities, you can [sign up](#) and access our free resources on [our website](#) : www.turning-tides.org.uk/what we do

- £3** – will buy one healthy wholesome evening meal
- £30** – will provide a basket of basics for a week
- £100** – will pack a trolley with a weekly shop