

Littlehampton United Church

Mini Newsletter 24



Keeping
our church
together

At Last, we have reached February!

There appears to be a general consensus that the current lockdown is proving harder than our previous experiences. Consequently, January felt that it was never ending. Estimates by various commentators and comedians have suggested it lasted over 300 days at least. February, on the other hand, is known to be a beastly month and, therefore, someone, no doubt the Astronomer Royal (According to W.S.Gilbert), declared that it should only have 28 days. So we hope and pray that as the days get longer we will all feel encouraged and cheered by the first signs of spring.



Services on Zoom

The code you need is 254 574 5519 password; 349515

Or you can join in by phone 0203 481 5240

Sunday services are at 10.30 am and Tuesday Bible Studies at 7.30pm

News of the Family

Many of you knew Rev'd Peter McIntosh, and I am sorry to have to report his death last Monday.

Peter was widely known throughout the URC although he spent much of his ministry in Southern Synod. His ministry began in Dartford; then he moved to minister in the Elephant Group in London SE1, before moving to Dulwich. He was the Southern Province Training Officer before moving to Hove. In 1994 he became Director of the Windermere Centre. He was Moderator of General Assembly 1999-2000. After Windermere, he became Director of Lomas House, a retreat centre in Southern Synod until retirement. He lived in retirement in Haywards Heath.

Please uphold Peter's wife, Kay, and his children, Louise and Paul, in your prayers.

Thank you for your concern and prayers for my daughter and her family. The good news is that Maddy and Rebecca are now clear and Richard is recovering.

Please continue to pray for Doreen and Alison. Ina Cross also needs your prayers during this time of lock-down as she (and I'm sure there are others too) struggles to cope without company.

After a long wait, John Stevens now has a date for a surgical procedure. Please pray that this will not be postponed and a speedy recovery will follow.

Robert Taunton has been fitted with a pacemaker after a couple of "Dramatic Incidents". He is well.

I never thought I would be interested in a Presidential Inauguration.

Many years ago, in my youth, I recall seeing on television the very first pictures transmitted from the United States. They were grey and blurred with lines and dots that appeared and disappeared. It was a special broadcast showing pictures arriving at Goonilly Down in Cornwall. I recall an excited commentator saying how we would now be able to watch live events such as the American Presidential elections. I did not find that very exciting. Other transmissions such as American football, the Muhammad Ali fights or Olympic Games had far more appeal.

Last week, however, I did watch a live broadcast of a presidential inauguration ceremony. Something in my mind struck a chord and I remembered those fuzzy pictures of 59 years ago, but the highlight, for me, was a young lady reading a poem. I am, of course, referring to Amanda Gorman. Although intended for an American audience against the background of recent events in the United States, nevertheless, many of her phrases resonated with my own feelings during the present restrictions and effects of the pandemic:

Mr President, Dr Biden, Madam Vice President, Mr Emhoff, Americans and the world, when day comes we ask ourselves where can we find light in this never-ending shade? The loss we carry a sea we must wade. We've braved the belly of the beast. We've learned that quiet isn't always peace. In the norms and notions of what just is, isn't always justice. And yet, the dawn is ours before we knew it. Somehow we do it. Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished. We, the successors of a country and a time where a skinny black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president only to find herself reciting for one.

And yes, we are far from polished, far from pristine, but that doesn't mean we are striving to form a union that is perfect. We are striving to forge our union with purpose. To compose a country committed to all cultures, colours, characters, and conditions of man. And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us, but what stands before us. We close the divide because we know to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside. We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another. We seek harm to none and harmony for all. Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true. That even as we grieved, we grew. That even as we hurt, we hoped. That even as we tired, we tried that we will forever be tied together victorious. Not because we will never again know defeat, but because we will never again sow division.

"The Hill We Climb" by American youth poet laureate, Amanda Gorman

A letter to absent friends - 1 Thessalonians

Many of us who are missing our friends and relatives at this time might find encouragement in Paul's letter to the church that he founded at Thessalonica. Paul says how he longs to visit them and is anxious for them. No Facebook or WhatsApp on his cell phone, so he sends Timothy as a messenger. Timothy returns with good news about the fledgeling church. 1 Thessalonians is the follow-up letter that Paul writes. Grateful for all that God is doing, he ends what now call chapter 3 with these words of encouragement:

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

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Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome