

# Littlehampton United Church

Mini  
Newsletter 31



Keeping  
our church  
together

## **A good start as services recommence on Sunday Mornings**

At 10.30am on Sunday 23rd May services resumed at Littlehampton United Church for the first time since December 2020. Chris Azzaro led the Pentecost Sunday service. The following week Nigel Stapley led us on Trinity Sunday. Services are still held under Covid restrictions—we must keep all who come to worship as safe as possible, and are aimed at being less than 45 minutes duration. For the time being Chris and Nigel are sharing the leadership of worship with Naison joining in when he returns from Zimbabwe. Other preachers will be leading our worship as we move through June and July. After such a long break we are discovering some things that are not working as we would like. The Leadership Team is always pleased to hear your comments. It was good to note that numbers attending worship are higher than in the Autumn. This leads to the next request:

### **Can you help by joining the team of door stewards on Sunday mornings.**

In view of the uncertainty of how things would work when services restarted, the Leadership Team took on all the duties of welcoming. Now, to keep everything running smoothly we invite people to volunteer to join the welcoming team. If you can offer to help welcome people at the door, please let Chris know. Eventually, we may even be asking for volunteers to serve Tea or Coffee after the service—but we need to be patient and wait until we are informed that this is allowable.

## BIG Questions

In the Gospel reading for this coming Sunday, Jesus leaves the crowds after a full days teaching and crosses the Sea of Galilee. Unsurprisingly, while the boat, he sleeps. He is awakened by his disciples in full panic. A storm has arisen with such ferocity that they fear for their lives. They call on Jesus: “Don’t you care that we are perishing?” . Perhaps they were thinking that Jesus would be another pair of hands to bale out the water. They were in for a surprise. Jesus stood up, commanded the storm to be still and then he questioned their lack of trust in God. This led them to question “What manner of man is this?”

*Mark 4: 35-41*

The Old Testament reading for the week is from the Book of Job—where we find even more big questions. Questions like “why does God appear to allow suffering” are posed—but not answered. Towards the end of the book we are invited to ask ourselves what we understand by God. Throughout the book, Job is told by his “Comforters” that he must have done something wrong to be punished and made to suffer. After all, they say, God is righteous and predictable, Job must, therefore, be a sinner. This logical equation is rejected by Job. (As it was by Jesus) Job calls out to God again and again. Finally God speaks. God turns the tables on Job by asking him the questions. Job is given no pat answers to placate him, but, unlike his pious comforters, Job’s questions demonstrated his right attitude towards God.

The book of Job appears roughly in the middle of our bibles—but the books are not in chronological order. The story of Job probably originated about 2000BC (Perhaps about the time of Abraham) Similar stories are found in Egyptian and Babylonian texts. That suggests to me that asking the big questions and trying to understand God is nothing new. Human beings have been searching for God for as long as they could record their thoughts—and probably long before that too.

The big questions still remain. Mine might be different from yours. One day we will all know the answers—as Paul says in chapter 13 of his first letter to the church at Corinth, “Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity.... Three things will last forever—faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love.

*I hope to explore further the stories of Job and of Jesus calming the storm on Sunday 20th June.*

*Chris*

## Dates for your Diary

The Ordination Service for Rev Dan Balsdon will be held at **3pm on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June** at Wesley Methodist Church, Reading, within a small, socially distanced congregation alongside 4 other ordinands at the venue. Other services for other ordinands will be happening elsewhere across the connexion.

While the congregation is limited, the ordination service will be live Streamed on YouTube via this link <https://youtu.be/2tEBP9uypco> – so if you'd like to join live (or indeed catch up afterwards) please do save the link ready for 19<sup>th</sup> June or afterwards.

You may remember Ben Scrivens and John Colenutt (Now John Malnutt) as Local Preachers in this area. They, too, will be ordained on 19<sup>th</sup> of June—at Central Hall, Chesterfield. A link to follow this service can be found on the Methodist website.

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July** Church Anniversary and Church Meeting. More details later when we know what we can offer in the way of hospitality. This will depend on how stage 4 of the release from Lockdown progresses.

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September** 3.00pm A Thanksgiving service and celebration of lives lost during the Pandemic. An opportunity to meet together, circumstances permitting. Probably at Emmanuel Church

## NEWS OF THE BOREHOLE PROJECT

Naison left for Zimbabwe on 17<sup>th</sup> May to oversee the next stage of the project. This is to install solar rechargeable batteries to power the pump. I believe he will be away for 5 weeks and then he will need to quarantine for a further 2 weeks. We wish him well for his journey and send our good wishes to all those he will be visiting there.

### Leaders of Worship June and July:

**June 20<sup>th</sup> Chris Azzaro**

**June 27<sup>th</sup> Wendy Corney**

**July 4<sup>th</sup> Nigel Stapley**

**July 11<sup>th</sup> Chris Azzaro**

**July 18<sup>th</sup> Lynne James**

**July 25<sup>th</sup> Rev Naison Hove (Communion Service)**

### Friday Morning Services

Some of you have noticed that Age Concern have advertised our Friday Morning Services in their weekly programme. As yet we have no plans to re-start on Friday mornings. With the delay in moving to Stage 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown it looks like we are looking at August at the very earliest. Any comments that would enable us to gauge the level of support for Friday mornings would be welcome.

## **Returning to Church for Sunday Worship**

We look forward to welcoming you to the church for worship.

**But we do need to keep each other safe , so there are rules to follow:**

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. However, experience from the previous lockdown is such that there will be no need to book in advance.

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

If the entrance looks full, please wait 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, or scan the QR Code with your smart phone.

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. Please remain in your seat during the service and wear your mask all the time. Do not move around or call out to other worshippers. Government rules prohibit singing or corporate responses, so the service will be less than an hour.

If you wish to make a financial contribution (or weekly offering) to the church funds, please use the offertory plates placed near the exit. At a suitable point towards the end of the service, a thanksgiving prayer will be said for the offertory.

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

For the same reason, there will be no refreshments served after the service, although special arrangements will be made for communion services.

The toilet in the foyer will be available but please follow the one-way system and use the sanitiser provided.

At the end of the service, the steward will invite you to leave by one of the exits, all the while maintaining a social distance with other worshippers. Once outside, you are able to meet in the church garden, but please maintain a safe distance and refrain from hugging.

The rules will be amended when the Government release new guidelines but it looks like we have another 4 weeks to wait.

This newsletter was edited by Chris Azzaro, who can be contacted on 01903 718070 or by email:

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Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome

There is also information about our church on the website: [www.littlehamptonunitedchurch.org.uk](http://www.littlehamptonunitedchurch.org.uk)