

South Wigston Methodist Church

The Oracle



May 2020

Cover photo: Stained glass window, commemorating evacuees, in the church at Sudbury Hall. See Brenda & Alan's article on page 10.

Our Mission Statement

The people of South Wigston Methodist Church are called to live the good news of God's love through open hearts, open minds and open doors.

We strive to be a place where understandings of Jesus Christ can flourish.

We're called to be good neighbours to people in need, to challenge injustice, and to meet regularly for prayers, singing and learning.

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One of the ways in which we seek to put this mission statement into practice is to ensure that our church is a safe place for all who use it by following the safeguarding policies and practices of the Methodist Church. Our church's safeguarding policy is on the noticeboard in the lounge. The Safeguarding contact is Helen 07500 180517.

**South Wigston Methodist Church**  
Blaby Road, South Wigston LE18 4PB  
[www.swmchurch.org.uk](http://www.swmchurch.org.uk)

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Contributions always welcome; deadline 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**You can see *The Oracle* in colour on our website.**

## **Our church is still closed for the foreseeable future**

### **Our preachers in May were to have been:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Rev'd Gordon Webb –

Wigston Magna would have been joining us.

10<sup>th</sup> Mr Howard Smith

17<sup>th</sup> Rev. Fran Rhys – and our General Church Meeting

24<sup>th</sup> Mrs Betty Brooks

31<sup>st</sup> Café-style worship.

Please keep the preachers in your prayers. Some have offered to produce “Worship at home” services which will be sent out with the weekly newsletter by post or e-mail.

### **Church finances**

On behalf of the Church I would like to thank most sincerely all those who have been able to continue their regular giving of Collection monies to the Church during this difficult time. Since the beginning of the “lockdown” nine people have begun donating their Offering by Standing Order, while others have been sending in cheques. This continued inflow of funds is of great importance to the Church in order to manage the ongoing practical matter of meeting expenses during the period of cancellation of Sunday services.

If anyone would like details of how to give their weekly collection by Standing Order, by cheque, or by one-off online payment to the Church, please contact me.

Thanks again for all your kindness and generosity.

*Trevor Mildred (Church Treasurer), 0116 288 3335*

## **Bible Month June 2020 – the Book of Ruth**

Bible Month is an opportunity for churches and circuits to spend 30 days focused on a single biblical book.

We haven't taken part in previous years but Fran and the stewards thought it would be a good idea to give it a go.

Those coming to preach through the month are asked to preach on the designated book.

Unfortunately it looks increasingly likely that we will not be meeting for worship in June.

However materials are available and these will be distributed.



Picture: Wikimedia Commons

Among the materials given to Mary B. as circuit archivist, were some very old sermons from an unknown, and untraced, preacher. One was on the “little known” Book of Ruth and opened with the following words:

*A fascinating story which most of us have known and loved from our Sunday School days. “Surely” you may say “Ruth isn’t little known. Everybody knows about Ruth! Nahum and Habakkuk, yes – these may be unknown country, even to many Christians, but not Ruth”.*

*You may know the story of Ruth but what about the Book?*

You may like to read Ruth during May and get a head-start.

## *Church family*

*We wish a Happy Birthday to everyone who celebrates in May*

2<sup>nd</sup> Harriet

9<sup>th</sup> Estelle

29<sup>th</sup> Ann

We remember Marion and Sam who celebrated their birthdays in May.

If you would like your birthday or anniversary to be included in the *Oracle* please let Mary know – we enjoy sharing your special days.

### *Thank you messages*

Beryl writes “I so appreciated all the visits to hospital and when I came home. The cards, flowers and gifts, and most of all the prayers. It has been very remiss of me not to say thank you earlier. I am much better but still not quite there.”

Janet and David send their thanks for all the prayers and good wishes received whilst Janet was in hospital. Janet says she is slowly getting back to normal.

**Although the Flower rota** has been discontinued for the moment, the following people would have donated flowers in May

3<sup>rd</sup> Janet & David      10<sup>th</sup> Trevor

17<sup>th</sup> Brenda & Alan      24<sup>th</sup> Pat for David

We are grateful for the two displays of silk flowers which we can put in the porch.





## Letter from our minister

Dear Everyone,

“I am the gate for the sheep” says Jesus in the Gospel of John (chapter 10, verse 7). This is one of the less well-known “I am” sayings by Jesus in John’s Gospel. Perhaps it’s less well known because it’s not so clear what it means. If you’d like to set yourself a challenge – how many of the other 6 “I am” sayings of Jesus can you remember? A clue is that one can be found later in chapter 10, and others in chapters 6, 8, 11, 14, and 15. This gate saying reminds me of one of the others which is better known: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” I think this gives more of a sense of what Jesus as the gate means – the way to follow for right decisions and for knowing deep down what God wants in my life (which is often the same as what I genuinely want). Perhaps Jesus as the gate is also about a God-given moment of Grace, when we make a choice or a leap of faith to enter into life with Christ. Do any such moments come into your mind? Maybe when singing a hymn at a big church service, or when somehow God gave you guidance at a particularly challenging time in your life? Along with many others as a young person I visited the ecumenical Taize community of religious sisters and brothers in France. A sister said to us: Just spend 3 minutes a day in prayer. She was right to recommend this - it was a seed that was sown and which has grown. I’ve acquired the taste for prayer and reflection on scripture. It’s good to pause and give thanks before eating, for example. (Although 3 minutes at that point may make the food get cold!)

On the Methodist Church website it describes some “fresh ways to read scripture”. You could start to read the Gospel of Mark, one paragraph at a time. Or the book of Ruth in preparation for June and “Bible Month”. Or, some of the psalms are especially helpful at a time like this. The fresh way described includes 3 symbols: a light bulb, a question mark, and an arrow. When reading the passage from the bible, does one word, phrase or idea seem to light up like a light bulb? May that be God trying to speak to you about something? Then we all have lots of questions about bible passages. What’s one question you have about this passage? Why not Google the question (being suitably wary of different kinds of answers), or email or call me or a friend. I’d love to hear your questions about scripture and how these relate to life’s meaning. Or suggest an answer, and I or Mary will include your question and answer in the weekly newsletter to allow others to respond. Thirdly, there’s the arrow. What application for my life emerges from this passage? What do I need to learn from this passage?

I pray that you may keep going through the Jesus gate every day of your life, and many times in each day. Rev’d Fran

**The General Church Meeting** was scheduled for Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May.

Unfortunately and for obvious reasons, this now needs to be postponed. The Church hopes to find another time to hold the meeting before the end of August, or alternatively to cover the necessary business at the June 17<sup>th</sup> Church Council, which it is hoped can be held in some form.

The church usually puts on a Ploughman's lunch during May to raise funds for Christian Aid. Sadly this can't happen this year.

If you would like to make a donation there are several ways of donating to enable their valuable work to continue:

[www.christianaid.org.uk/give-money/make-donation](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/give-money/make-donation)

Unfortunately under the current circumstances regarding Covid-19, there is a delay to processing donations by post. Please give via the website where possible or call 020 7523 2269 to donate by telephone.



There is more information on the website about the work in which they are currently involved including during the current pandemic:

*The coronavirus outbreak threatens the health of our neighbours near and far. Together we must respond quickly to help the most vulnerable.*

*Coronavirus has shown us that our futures are bound more tightly together than ever before.*

*And now it is spreading across the world's poorest countries, putting people living in poverty at great risk.*

*These people are already facing a lack of water, food and healthcare. Some are homeless. Some are living with underlying health issues such as HIV.*

*As coronavirus infection rates speed up, they will feel the impacts of the virus deeply. We must respond now.*

*Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all.*



We are continuing to support Mariam and her family who live in Burkina Faso.

In her latest letter Mariam writes:

It was a wonderful moment to read your recent letter. I thank the Lord who gives us good health everyday, who loves us and all your church members. My Christmas was good. I went to church. I liked the picture where the children made a creche out of biscuits – a thing I have never seen. The school books we put back after we've used them. But we go home with the Centre ones. My favourite

foods are spaghetti, rice and beans. Are you in the habit of having lunch together at church? Please pray for my studies.

The letters are written in French and translated into English for us. There is some delay but we are now getting them via e-mail which speeds up the process. This one was delivered last week and dated 20<sup>th</sup> February.

### **News from Compassion in Burkina Faso**

There have been eleven confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff and members of our partner churches. 13 towns & cities where C-19 cases have been confirmed are under full quarantine and in the rest of the country the government has put measures in place to control the spread of the virus. A curfew is in effect from 7pm to 5am, gatherings of more than 50 people are prohibited, schools have been closed and the use of face-masks is compulsory. Churches have suspended services. All large group activities at Compassion projects are on hold, but other activities, including limited individual home visits, child protection oversight, and health support are continuing. Staff & volunteers are distributing food, soap, face-masks and hand sanitisers. <https://www.compassionuk.org/>

## **What we're doing during the C-19 pandemic**

**Sue C.** writes: My allowed daily walk on Sunday is to The Embankment. I take a copy of that week's service and then read it to the accompaniment of bird song. Later at home I read the Bible passages again from my Gran's KJV Bible. The hymns I listen to on YouTube. And there are so many lovely versions. Even played with 'hand bells.'

On another occasion, having walked to The Embankment for my allowed daily walk, I was on my way back when I met 2 of 'The South Leicestershire Wombles'. A litter picking group that was set up 2 years ago. I've seen them in the area before on a Saturday. One of their members was on Radio Leicester yesterday talking about the group. One of the pickers I encountered was a founder member and they had just filled 2 black bin liners. I waved them good bye as they set off along the Canal with 2 more bags to fill.

### **Brenda & Alan are having virtual days out**

Easter is the time when venues reopen after the Winter. Unfortunately, we are not able to visit them in reality at the moment, but that doesn't stop us thinking about them.

We decided there was no reason why we couldn't have "virtual days out." Places we have enjoyed visiting. or places we would like to go to.

We started off by visiting one of our favourite places – Coton Manor Gardens in Northamptonshire.

We said "Hello" to Rodney the macaw and had a reply from him, we visualized having lunch in the stable yard café, before going across the lawn to the pond to see the flamingo with their two young ones. Through the gate into the bluebell wood, which is wonderful at this time of the year.

We had a walk round the gardens, then back for afternoon tea under the black walnut tree.

A wonderful day out and no travelling from our own garden. We have been to Bradgate Park, seen the deer and heard the raucous peacocks by the ruins, then walking along to the café for a cuppa.

We had a day at Skegness. We would have liked to paddle, but the tide was out, and you know how far the tide goes out at Skegness!

Several National Trust properties have been visited. Tomorrow we are off to The Museum of Childhood, at Sudbury Hall in Derbyshire. With lots of hands-on toys from yesteryear for us to play with, and a school room with double wooden desks and slates to write on.

We have been out for morning coffee and afternoon tea. Some days we decided to stay at home – it all depends on the weather.

We intend to have holidays, probably to the Isle of Wight and another to Nice on the French Riviera

All of these visits and it doesn't cost anything, all you need is an imagination.

Sundays of course we are at church, meeting and greeting our friends and worshipping God together. We hope and pray that it won't be too long before we can do this in reality.

*Brenda & Alan*

## **Open doors**

I have been giving some thought to what is happening around us, yes, it's confusing but the Christian message is "Hope."

As the oldest attending member of our church I thought I would like to share some thoughts with you.

South Wigston Methodist Church has been my spiritual home since my baptism in 1926. My memories of the past are

punctuated by the good and not so good times. There have been lighter and darker periods, from school days through the war years to the elation of coming home – coming home to our Church and being within the embrace of a Christian community.

My thoughts have ranged from Vera Lynn, the forces sweetheart, to those programmes making fun of ourselves, with the abiding message of not taking things too seriously.

In her televised message the Queen told the country in lockdown, separated from their family and friends: “We will meet again.”

Now, Dame Vera Lynn (at 103) and Kathryn Jenkins have recorded a duet of “We’ll Meet Again”, inspired by the Queen’s message. The words speak of the hope we should all have during these troubling times.

My love to you all, God Bless You.

*Alan*

Mary B. has been reading “*So what’s the story?*” by Barbara Glasson, and Clive Marsh - President and Vice-president of Conference. (Darton, Longman & Todd, 2019)

The following paragraph, written by Barbara, struck a chord:

“I have realised, far too late in my adult life, that when I am being creative I am closer to the Creator. That writing or painting or weaving a piece of cloth is not only prayerful but is prayer. .... I had always thought that my creative ventures were my leisure activities, to be undertaken when I had spare time. Now I see that they are essential to my identity and to my understanding of the work of God within me. They are not simply recreation but re-creation. To be made in God’s imagination is a call to imagine the world differently in the light of the stories around me, bringing my creativity alongside the on-going creation of the Earth.”

**A more difficult Bible quiz from Trevor** – this came from his wife Tricia who received it from a minister friend.

Can you find thirty (30) books of the Bible in this paragraph? Actually, there are 31 if you can find the variant of one Old Testament prophet's name, a variant that's used in the text of the King James Version (not as the title of a book, but in the text itself).

There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is

that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus; there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God Bless.

*(I've only found 20 – so far – Mary B.)*

### **Brenda's last quiz**

I had 18 back which was very good in the circumstances. There were 3 all correct and the winner was Mrs G Austin of Oadby. I think it was one sold by Aigburth. The quiz raised £160 for the Aigburth Amenity fund.

Thank you for taking part. The next quiz is available very soon.

*Brenda*



From: *Instant art for the church magazine, 3*

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE BORED?"

## Answers to The places in Leicestershire quiz

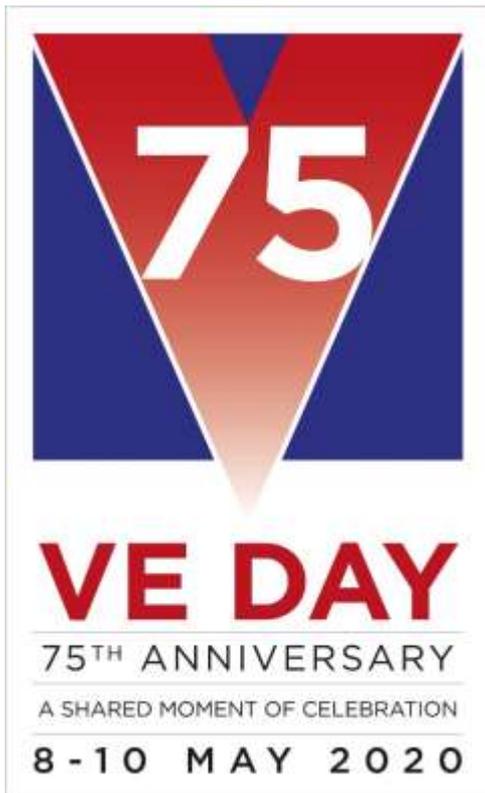
e g *PEBBY ENTRANCE* 10 *STONEYGATE*

- 1 CHILD'S TOY(6) FRISBY
- 2 ROMAN PLAYGROUND (5 4) FOSSE PARK
- 3 STOP MR CHAMBERLAIN (6 4) NEVILL HOLT
- 4 LARGE VALLEY ( 5 4) GREAT GLEN
- 5 CHEERFUL WITH DEPOSITS (5 4) MERRY LEES
- 6 VETERAN RETAINER (3 4) OLD JOHN
- 7 FOR WHAT REASON RELATIVE? (5) WYKIN
- 8 MURDER LETTER (5) KILBY
- 9 RIVER BOULDER (11) HUMBERSTONE
- 10 A BIRD AND EXCLAMATION (6) CRANOE
- 11 CASK VALUE (8) KEGWORTH
- 12 GARMENTS (5) COTES
- 13 FUEL PLACE (9) COALVILLE
- 14 HARASS AN INSECT (6) GOADBY
- 15 I AM A FAKE (7) MEASHAM
- 16 STOCKINGS (4) HOSE
- 17 FUNNY WEIGHT (8) ODESTONE
- 18 FRESH RECREATION GROUNDS (3 5) NEW PARKS
- 19 BASIC CROSSING (10) STAPLEFORD
- 20 HOMESTEAD (5) CROFT

### Thought

We have two lives, and the second one begins when we realise we have only one.

*Confucius*



The church was planning a street party – sadly this has been cancelled.

From the VE Day Celebration Organisation [www.veday75.org/](http://www.veday75.org/)

We are encouraging all those taking part to undertake the 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2' at 3pm on the 8th May, from the safety of their own home by standing up and raising a glass of refreshment of their choice and undertake the following 'Toast' – **"To those who gave so much, we thank you,"** using this unique

opportunity to pay tribute to the many millions at home and abroad that gave so much to ensure we all enjoy and share the freedom we have today.



Church street party 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015