



Church Gazette

December 2020 - January 2021



Journeying with God

**Forming
Community**

**Celebrating
Faith**

**Deepening
Discipleship**

Dear Friends,

As I sit to write this letter in November, its lockdown 2.0, and I'm looking towards Advent and Christmas with anxiety and uncertainty. The pandemic has interrupted our usual patterns and practices and the season, I am sure, will be different for all of us. We are restricted and limited, and we will all be able to list ways in which the pandemic has interrupted us, our lives, and our Church community.

Last week I saw a video on Twitter called 'Christmas Interrupted'. It was a trailer for a set of videos to come during December – but without seeing what is to come, it got me thinking about the interruption Christ's birth brought.

Interruption for Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah as they all prepare for parenthood. The interruption to the manger as a baby was placed within. The interruption of the night as angels appeared, and shepherds responded to their invitation to see the newborn king.

But the interruption doesn't stop there. Jesus went on to be an incredible interruption. Interrupting the corruption of the temple courts and interrupting the hypocrisy of the religious elite.

Interrupting the lives of lowly fisherman and interrupting the marginalisation of the discriminated and excluded. The interruption both challenges the status quo for the powerful and dominant culture, while offering a vision and lived example of a new way of being community – filled with hope and overflowing with grace and love.

As we approach the celebration of Christ's birth, I wonder if this year, the interruption we are living through may be a new lens of experience through which we can understand in new ways the truth of the interruption of Jesus 'becoming flesh and living among us' (John 1:14).

Despite our Christmas interrupted, I pray each of you will be filled with the hope Christ offers to all who will receive it, and know in your daily lives the peace and compassion of His love.

Emmanuel. God is with us.

Rev Dan

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Christmas message from Tony Brazier.....

My prayers and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. In this strange time for all of us God is still around. May you know His presence and draw strength, hope and Peace for you and all your loved ones. **Tony B**

From the Acting Treasurer....

As you probably all know by now I have stepped down as Treasurer of Bognor Regis Methodist Church, but I have assured Dan that I will carry on until we find a new Treasurer. Looking back I realise that I have been in post for 14 years and I think it is time for a rest.

Thank you to all who have joined 'giving through the bank', it's been a great help. The envelope scheme will be changing. I will be providing white envelopes all numbered with your personal number but no dates. Please use the envelopes as and when you come to Church. The date that will be used for our records, will be the date of the service.

The pandemic allowing, these bundles of white envelopes will be at the back of the Church on Sunday 27th December, with your name on. If this is not allowed I would hope to put them through your letter boxes during the week.

Thank you for all your support during my tenure. I would like to give a special thank you to Bill Bowley who has been auditing our accounts while I have been Treasurer and making sure that I have been 'doing things right'.

TONY POLAND

On a lighter note.....

**Dear 2021,
we don't want any trouble from you.
Just come in, sit down,
don't touch anything
and keep quiet!**

As I prepare this item in October, the news is not good. Virus casualties have doubled in number, in a week! I hope and pray that by the time you read this, the situation will have improved. A friend of mine who I often feel 'talks a lot of sense', shared this opinion. She has come to the conclusion that the coronavirus will not be eradicated completely, but in time there will be a treatment/vaccine, which will control it. In the same way that there are still a small number of cases of leprosy and scarlet fever, so these will probably be instances of covid-19, but in the future, it will be known how to prevent it from spreading, as in other diseases.

I have already said 'hope and pray' and hard as it might be at times, and in all modesty, I feel that is what we must do. Shouldn't we as a Church family think of those two things as positive and possible, and not as a last resort? I could not say it more eloquently than a recent extract from the upper room daily readings booklet, from the letter from James : *"to all God's people scattered over the whole world"*

Ch1:12 "happy are those who remain faithful under trials, because when they succeed in passing such a test, they will receive, as their reward, the life which God has promised to those who love Him".

The people James was addressing had different trials to us, but a trial or trouble is an inevitable feature of life in all ages, we cannot go around them, we have to go through them! We have each other, social beings as God made us, and not least, His help.

ADVENT

(I do not know who wrote this)

“Life is a constant Advent Season. We are continually waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfil. Hope, struggle, fear, expectation and fulfilment are all part of our Advent experience.

The world is not as just, not as loving, not as whole as we know it can and should be. But the coming of Christ and His presence among us – gives us reason to live in hope. He is the light which will shatter the darkness, that we can be liberated from our fears and our prejudices, and that we are never alone or abandoned.

May this Advent Season be a time for bringing hope, transformation and fulfillment into the Advent of each of our lives. Positive, hopeful wishes for this Christmas and into the New Year.

JANET TAPPING

NOTE: on the middle pages (12-15), you'll see that instead of the Church Calendar, listing all BRMC's events, I have incorporated the prayer sheet that Hazel D very kindly produced for us over a long period of time (*many thanks Hazel for all your work*). I have taken on the prayer sheet & decided to print it in the Gazette, not necessarily permanently, but certainly whilst we don't have a calendar to print.

DEBBIE DEAN

A Message of thanks from Bognor Foodbank to BRMC

Dear BRMC Community,

We wanted to put into writing the profound impact that the help you have given us has had.

You may be aware that when the COVID situation became more serious in March we closed the foodbank for a few days to consider our options. The foodbank building is not suitable as a site for food distribution for a number of reasons:

1. There is one exit/entrance which potentially could put our staff at risk.
2. It is a small area that only allows a maximum of 2 people to be there and socially distance. Ideally, we need 4 to cover the processes and handing out of different food.
3. The outside does not lend itself to people queuing in a socially distanced way. There is a small kerb and busy roundabout that could put clients and families at risk.
4. The building has enormous glass windows which could be a risk if there were a confrontational situation.

We were overjoyed when you offered the hall, as the nature of the hall and outside space deals with all of these issues and allows us to carry on our role in a COVID secure way, protecting our clients, staff and volunteers.

We have served 100's of households with emergency food supplies since March, as well as offer pastoral care and signposting to other agencies for additional support and this is in no small way a result of your generosity.

We have been extremely grateful for your ongoing support and I struggle to see how we could continue to deliver this valuable service without your help.

Thank you for all your help and support - it means so much!

Mandy Riley, Co-ordinator, Bognor Regis Foodbank

A Christmas Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
Your birth at Bethlehem, draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth.....born in a stable but worshipped by angels! Please accept our heartfelt praise, as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. We pray for all who feel distant from celebrations this year. May your living hope lighten their hearts.

Amen.

May God bless you all and keep you safe. I pray you all have a peaceful Christmas, Love Debbie xx

Thoughts on death

After my subsiding quiet for the death of my dear husband, my thoughts and emotions have been very mixed. But underlying all of that was the comfort and blessing of the knowledge that this life is only a small part of our eternal life with Christ. Colin's article in the Oct/Nov Gazette expresses this beautifully.

I often turn to Singing The Faith when I want to pray and can't find words of my own to express how I feel. On this occasion, I have found that hymn **621 *When memory fades & recognition falters*** serves my great need. It is one we seldom sing but I invite you to read it, perhaps singing or humming to the tune Finlandia as you do.

I would like to thank you all for your prayers and support at this time. I have been very aware of your prayers surrounding and uplifting me, especially as we continue through the pandemic.

May God bless you.

CHRISTINE TAYLOR

Something to make you smile - LOVE IS.....

What does love mean to 4-8 year old kids? A team of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds. The answers they got were broader, deeper and more profound than anyone could have ever imagined!

'When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.' *Billy - age 4*

'When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.' (what an image!) *Karen - age 7*

'Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs.'

Chrissy - age 6

'Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.' *Terri – age 4*

'If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.'
Nikka - age 6

'Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.' *Tommy-age 6*

'Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.' *Mary Ann - age 4*

'Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and just listen.' *Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)*

LET'S PRAY.....EVERY DAY

DECEMBER 2020

	A week of prayer for the Bognor Regis Community:
Tues 1 st	For the Foodbank & all the volunteers.
Wed 2 nd	Grandad's Front Room helping individuals, community groups & local charities.
Thurs 3 rd	My Sister's House supporting & helping women from all walks of life.
Fri 4 th	Stonepillow who help the homeless and vulnerable.
Sat 5 th	Radio Respect, dedicated to mental health wellbeing.
Sun 6 th	Laburnum Centre, providing many services for the over 50's
Mon 7 th	Bognorphenia, for all who love Bognor Regis, reaching people through music, & for their work with young people.
	A week of prayer for our world:
Tues 8 th	For the end of Covid-19. Those grieving loss of loved ones, & those living in fear of it. For those unemployed & in financial difficulty.
Wed 9 th	For refugees, and their future as they flee to safety.
Thurs 10 th	World leaders, Governments, for compassion and wisdom.
Fri 11 th	For those rebuilding their lives following flood, fire, hurricane.
Sat 12 th	For creatures affected by humans throwing plastics into the seas, & animals affected by wildfires.
Sun 13 th	2nd in Advent: For all who are seeking God.
Mon 14 th	For those who harm others with guns & knives.
	A week of prayer for our Churches:
Tues 15 th	The World Church: for growth, for light & love to shine from God's people.
Wed 16 th	For Churches Together, that all Christians can work together.
Thurs 17 th	For BRMC, as we continue to worship in our 'new normal', in Church/on the 'phone/together 'in Spirit'.

Fri 18 th	For Felpham MC & Westergate MC.
Sat 19 th	For our Minister, Dan & his family, for his Ministry in Bognor Regis & West Sussex.
Sun 20 th	For all Local Preachers & Worship Leaders.
Mon 21 st	For Ian Suttie & all in our Circuit who make it possible for us to worship in our local Churches.
	Our journey towards the birth of Christ:
Tues 22 nd	For all mothers who will give birth this week.
Wed 23 rd	For all who are separated from their loved ones, whether in the Services, homeless, separated by disagreement, etc.
Thurs 24 th	For those for whom tomorrow has no meaning, other than gifts & good food.
Fri 25 th	<i>Give thanks to God for the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Happy Christmas!</i>
Sat 26 th	For hope, that as we leave 2020, God has great plans for us, and His beautiful world.
Sun 27 th	For ourselves, as gatekeepers of this world, that we will all do our best to 'do what we can' to look after God's world.
Mon 28 th	For those without hope, dreading more of the same.
	And finally as we leave 2020 behind.....
Tues 29 th	For all who suffer in the winter months, worrying about the heating bill, or being alone & unwell.
Wed 30 th	For God's provision for the homeless & hungry.
Thurs 31 st	LOOKING BACK..... let's take a moment to thank God for the pleasures that came out of lockdown: hearing the birds sing, seeing rarer birds & butterflies, enjoying less traffic for a while, less pollution in our air and in the seas. Time to slow down, catch up on jobs, walk along the prom, work in our gardens, learn to cook, speak another language, sew, read..... Praise God.

JANUARY 2021

	A week of thanksgiving prayer: <i>Thank you for:</i>
Fri 1 st	New beginnings, Forgiveness, God's refreshing rain washing away our wrongdoings. Answered prayer. For hope and starting afresh.
Sat 2 nd	The weekend, to relax, to take a walk, to read, to 'notice' God's world around us.
Sun 3 rd	Our relationship with Jesus, for our Salvation.
Mon 4 th	TV's radios, music, hobbies, our homes, food in the fridge.
Tues 5 th	Love with friends, families & neighbours.
Wed 6 th	Laughter! Think about how you have shared laughter with a friend, or laughed out loud at a tv programme.
Thurs 7 th	The surrounding beauty of where we live: the beach, the park, the hills, our gardens.
	A week of prayer for those who serve us:
Fri 8 th	Our Town and District Councils. For wisdom in their decisions & spending.
Sat 9 th	Bognor Hospital & St Richards, our GP Surgeries, chemists, dentists, nurses, doctors & surgeons.
Sun 10 th	Shop assistants in supermarkets or corner shops, hairdressers, newsagents, milkmen, libraries, banks, post office, restaurants, coffee shops : <i>despite Covid-19.</i>
Mon 11 th	Delivery men & women, whether food or letters/ parcels.
Tues 12 th	Gardeners, decorators, electricians, plumbers, etc.
Wed 13 th	Care homes, wardened flats, assisted living, safe homes, refuges.
Thurs 14 th	Police, firemen, ambulance men, paramedics, home helps, carers in the community.
	A week of prayer for hope: <i>"For I know the plans I have for you" says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jer 29:11</i>
Fri 15 th	For Christians Against Poverty (CAP) who bring hope to those wanting to escape poverty.

Sat	16 th	For the people in countries whose leaders are corrupt – for change and a better future.
Sun	17 th	That Covid-19 weakens & dies out as our amazing scientists develop a safe vaccine, and life can change once again.
Mon	18 th	That those suffering with long term illness or disability, find comfort in the love of God and those around them.
Tues	19 th	For children who are fostered or waiting to be placed for adoption.
Wed	20 th	For those awaiting medical results and those awaiting results of an interview.
Thurs	21 st	For refugees risking their lives in the hope of safety.
		A week of prayer for our world:
Fri	22 nd	For the victims of knife and gun crime.
Sat	23 rd	For justice and peace for all in this world & for those fighting to make this a reality.
Sun	24 th	For us to be serious about the effects of plastics in our seas and the effects of climate change.
Mon	25 th	For all leaders to serve the people of their countries with respect and fairness.
Tues	26 th	For all overseas volunteers & missionaries who bring people the Good news of Jesus Christ, & for those who bring medication and surgery to those in need.
Wed	27 th	For the most powerful countries/leaders to work together.
Thurs	28 th	For those worldwide who struggle with addiction.
		Prayers for our young people:
Fri	29 th	Children across the world who are sick and undergoing treatment - for healing & peace & for children who have emotional psychological problems and are waiting for help.
Sat	30 th	For Youth Workers in clubs and organisations helping young people find purpose and direction in life.
Sun	31 st	Young people worried about their futures, their families - for peaceful direction. For youngsters God has chosen as our future leaders.

MY STORY.....

Last year, Dan preached a sermon about sharing our stories, which led to one or two of us sharing our stories of our walk with God, our journeys through life, etc. I'm pleased to be able to print Anita's story.

Four summers that changed me

In 1956 when I was still a student a friend told me that the United Nations were asking for volunteers to spend a week or two working in refugee camps in Austria. We decided to offer and then do a bit of travelling from there, so in our vacation off we went. We were sent to a camp near Villach in the south. We found it consisted of huts with basic facilities and the people left in the camp since the war ended were elderly people from Yugoslavia (as it was called then). The younger, fitter people had all moved out by this time but those remaining had nowhere to go and were still living in basic huts which must have been very cold in winter. They were wanting to build themselves proper accommodation and we were there to be the labourers.

Most of our group were students but there were some building apprentices who had been given time off work to come and help. Some volunteers with experience were the house mother and father in the hut where we lived. The actual building was done by local people who knew what they were doing. They had already started and were high above us by the time we arrived so we did not get to know them very well. We spend a lot of time making bricks which then had to dry and harden in the sun.

This mostly involved feeding a cement mixer and wheeling a heavy wheelbarrow. It was hard work! Each day a few of us had to deal with the house keeping – keeping the hut clean, keeping the wood burning range going and making meals for everybody. In the day we were too busy to socialise but after the evening meal we had a little time before we flopped into bed exhausted. Volunteers had come from all over Europe and America so language was a bit of a problem, we had French, Danish, Italian, Dutch, German, Spanish, Serbo-Croat and more. I found myself translating from French to German and back – my teachers would have been amazed! Some evenings we walked into the village to go to the Gasthaus (the pub) and I remember the apprentices getting rather drunk and needing help to get back. I think we had Sunday free and the village band played in the market square and lots of people danced. It seemed to be mainly a very quick waltz and was great fun. The locals seemed quite happy to dance with us.

One of the volunteers came from Zagreb so when our time was completed my friend and I travelled with her and met her parents. The next day we continued our train journey to the coast. We mainly went through rural areas and we could see how they used horses and carts rather than cars. That was the only time I have slept in a luggage rack while my friend had the seat! At the coast at Rijeka we found a boat that was travelling down the beautiful coastline. We disembarked at Split and found a youth hostel there. We marvelled at the remains of the castle and the other old buildings.

After a couple of days we went on another boat which took us to Dubrovnik – another beautiful city with much history. Here we slept in the open on a hill – the only time I have done this! It was a good thing it was summer and warm and dry. We met some others who were equally roughing it but it felt quite safe. We resumed our travels by train and stopped off at Sarajevo, another old and interesting place. We visited a mosque here. Tourism had barely restarted after the war so we were a curiosity and on the next stage of our train journey, heading back to Zagreb, we met someone who could speak English and she asked if we would be willing to be interviewed for a radio programme with our views of the country. We agreed and that was another first for us.

A year later we returned and were sent to a different refugee camp but the work was much the same. Afterwards my friend and I wanted to explore more of Austria and so we tried to hitch a lift. We were very lucky because we were picked up by a postman who had a week's holiday and loved touring his country. He wanted to show us as much as possible and cooked us Wienerschnitzels in the evening so we could get a true taste of their food. He knew where to find hostels or suitable stopping places. We headed between mountains, stopped to climb one, went over the Grossglockner pass, visited Innsbruck and Salzburg and finally ended up in Wien (Vienna) where we met his wife, who cooked us a lovely meal.

The third time I found they wanted me to be House Mother. The work was not so heavy but I had to get up early to get the fire going. My Guide camping skills came in useful as I had to cook, clean and generally keep things in order.

Afterwards we decided to travel home through Germany and managed to find a boat that took us down the Rhine through some beautiful scenery. We stopped off at a few places which had youth hostels and spent a day in Cologne. It was a wonderful way to visit the castles and old towns near the river.

The fourth summer I went to a World Council of Churches work camp in Berlin. Once again volunteers came from around the world and once again my main memory of the work was of digging and wheeling heavy wheelbarrows. I think we were helping with the groundwork for an extension to their building. Again, volunteers came from around the world and my address book is filled with addresses of new friends, some of whom I was able to visit in later years. The difference this time was that they had arranged a programme of talks and visits and we were given time off to explore Berlin. Sadly for us the evening talks were in German and most of the British found it too hard to get much benefit but the visits were different. One day we were taken to a factory because they wanted us to see the church in the factory. I understand this was not unusual.

Another time they arranged for us to go on the underground train under the wall to meet some East German families. I remember having lunch with my hosts and then being taken to a wonderful museum and seeing the hanging gardens of Babylon. The Berlin wall was still a dominant feature in the city.

These voluntary efforts and travels gave me the chance to get to know and learn from people with different backgrounds and experiences. I began to live 'on a bigger map'. I was told that I got into Cambridge for my education year because of this work – that was an experience in itself. Whilst there, I was part of a student group that trained and then went out to take services in some of the villages. Where I lived, a group of us met to say Compline every night and I regularly played tiddly winks or sang Gilbert and Sullivan songs with a group of Roman Catholic priests who were also on the education course. (One became the Bishop of Liverpool Cathedral). Two came to my wedding. All these experiences gave me the confidence to continue travelling around Europe on my own each summer and helped my faith to develop. I visited many Catholic and Orthodox churches and cathedrals, mosques and synagogues and attended worship when I could. It also gave me the courage to answer God's call when He wanted me to go and teach in Africa – but that is another story!

ANITA HAYWARD

Please think about sharing your story, as a testament to God. Whether you're able to share how/where you first encountered God, or a particular time in your life that God led you through, or perhaps you'd like to use this space to share a favourite prayer or hymn and why it's special to you.

DEBBIE DEAN

A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS

Listening to a phone-in programme about the rule of 6 for Christmas and all the 'doom and gloom' comments, set me thinking.

In October 1939, my mother-in-law took 3 children under 7 years old to a school in Hanwell, West London. There, the children were put on a bus with other children, (which took them to Paddington station) and the Poland family was not together again for approximately 4 years.

At the same time, in Wales, my family was waiting in the Church hall for my 'big' sister from Shepherds Bush! What a sacrifice those Mums made in an effort to keep their children safe. I thank God that I was never put in a similar position, and, comparing those days with a 'rule of six', it seems a small price to pay to keep safe.

Another big difference between Christmas 1939 and Christmas 2020, as one of my friends has pointed out, is that Churches and Chapels (certainly in Wales) were packed with worshippers. Food for thought?

Happy Christmas!

VAL POLAND

From *Day by Day with Billy Graham*

The world's millions could come down to the beach and reach out their hands to be filled with sea water. They could each take as much as they wanted, as much as they needed – and still the ocean would remain unchanged. Its mightiness and power would be the same, the life in its unfathomable depths would continue unaltered, although it had supplied the needs of every single person standing with outstretched hands along its shores. So it is with God.

He can be everywhere at once, heeding the prayers of all who call out in the name of Christ; performing the mighty miracles that keep the stars in their places, and the plants bursting up through the earth, and the fish swimming in the sea.

There is no limit to God. There is no limit to His wisdom. There is no limit to His power, There is no limit to His love. There is no limit to His mercy.

COLIN J. W.