

Dear friends,

Reading an article on the BBC website recently about the experiences of various chaplains through the pandemic, I discovered that in Chinese, the word 'crisis' is written in two parts. The first part means danger and the second part means possibility. The Chinese chaplain goes on to say, 'When there's a crisis, there's also hope'.

While we have journeyed through a crisis that none of us were fully prepared for, we have journeyed knowing the hope of God with us, and we've been led through a season of new possibilities. We've worshipped for a season in our homes via zoom, YouTube, phone and print as well as in-building. We've shared fellowship by phone or physically distanced on park benches. We have humbly enabled our building to declare hope to our community through making our hall available to Bognor Foodbank – a season that will soon come to an end as they transition back to running from their hub in Argyle road in early June. Many of these possibilities may only have been for a season, but they have been a season filled with hope, possibility, and the presence of God.

As we worship in the Easter season and journey towards celebrating Pentecost, when God's Spirit is outpoured on the early church, we are reminded of another crisis that was also filled with hope. Jesus had been crucified, his friends lost, uncertain and broken.

Yet Jesus unexpectedly arose, emerging from death's dark tomb to new life and to offer us a new, brighter, better way of living, where we are forgiven, made whole and invited to journey with him all the days of our lives.

I wonder, as we journey through this next season emerging from lockdown, what unexpected, new, brighter way of living and serving as BRMC Christ is revealing to us. How is Christ giving you hope today?

In Peace and Hope for the weeks ahead,

Dan

God always
has something
for you:
A **key** for every
problem,
a **light** for every
shadow,
a **relief** for every
sorrow
and a **great plan**
for every tomorrow.

MIRACLES DO HAPPEN!

Early in Lent, my daughter was asked by the minister of St. James C of E Church in Emsworth, if she with a small team, would produce a flowered cross; preferably double sided as it would be displayed in the centre of Emsworth Square, where it would hopefully catch people's attention from all angles.

Joanna has learned how to make door wreaths etc. and readily accepted the rather larger challenge. Three weeks into Lent and all the necessary materials had been purchased or promised, except the wood for the cross.

On a solo 3 mile run locally, Joanna began to worry about where the wood might come from. With many suppliers in lockdown, it was beginning to be a real worry. Imagine her amazement when she approached her home to find a builder's skip completely blocking her driveway but filled with lengths of wood!

There was a building project nearby and 2 of the joiners soon apologised and explained that there had been a congestion of vehicles and the safest way to solve it was to park the skip – very temporarily – on Joanna's drive. To their relief, Joanna raised no objection but begged some of the pieces of wood, explaining why she wanted them. Three suitable lengths were selected and a fourth was cut to size and delivered within the hour.

Those workmen showed great interest and said they would go with their families at Easter, especially to see the completed cross. Who knows what that brief contact with the cross might awaken?

Following this event of Joanna arriving home to see the skip at exactly the right time, she emailed her minister saying she felt certain the plan had God's blessing, and He had supplied their needs for Easter weekend in Emsworth. Cynics may feel it was just a lucky coincidence, but we consider it a miracle.

I think it is very likely that little miracles happen around us every day but we just don't notice them, but we should still be grateful to be alive and well (as far we can expect to be at some of our advanced ages!) and comparatively safe, thanks be to God. Let us always remember those not so fortunate as ourselves in our giving , our prayers and our actions.

To close, may we all be more aware of God's care for us. Even when life deals us difficulties, He is there with us – we only have to accept His love so freely given.

I hope you all had a blessed Easter.

JANET TAPPING

MIRACLES

It's not always the big miracles,
the thunderous, pulsating, ground-shaking ones –
but those that are small, delicate, unheralded:
like when the sobs finally stop,
or when the anxiety begins to fade,
or when the blackbird decides that there is enough light
to begin praising the new day!

It's when your broken heart eventually accepts
that it can begin to heal.
Or when the delicate stem pushes through the dirt
to discover that air and light are real.

It may just be to open your eyes
after a night at the end of your rope,
to find that your lungs are way ahead of you
and never stopped breathing in hope.

It's not the big miracles, not the ones that shout and shine,
it's the small miracles that are sent to show us
The loving hand of the Divine.

Gideon Heugh

Planning for a General Church Meeting (hopefully!)

Every connexional year (Sept-Aug) we should hold at least 1 General Church Meeting (GCM). Due to the pandemic we postponed last year's meeting, and have yet to hold one this year. These meetings deal with some appointments within the life of the Church, along with time and space to discuss the work of God among us. These meetings are open to all people connected to the Church community, and all Church members can vote.

While current uncertainty about future restrictions means we cannot yet plan when we will hold a face to face GCM, my hope is that we will be able to arrange one sometime between July and September.

In preparation for a GCM, we usually collate reports from groups and officers within the life of the Church into a booklet that forms a base from which to discuss the work of God among us. While I'm aware that there is likely to be less content for reports due to the pandemic, we invite group leaders or Church officers who have content to submit, to send their reports to Debbie Dean brmcgazette1@gmail.com **before/by the 23rd June**. These reports will then be included within the next Church Gazette (July-August) when we hope details about a future GCM can also be confirmed.

If you have any questions, please contact Rev Dan.

DAVE AND BEV CHITTENDEN – AN INTRODUCTION.....

Hello, we are Dave and Bev Chittenden and we arrived from Durban on 22nd November 2020 and will be pleased to meet you all! We only attended your lovely Church 3 times, before lockdown!

Dave was born in Chatham, Kent 74 years ago but moved to Salisbury in the old Rhodesia with his English Dad and Scottish Mom when he was 3 months old. I was born in Salisbury 69 years ago to an English Dad and a South African Mom. We met during the height of the Rhodesian bush war, when Dave was in the territorial forces of the army. We married in 1977. When we were expecting our first daughter Lia, Dave started talking about leaving Zimbabwe and moving to Australia or South Africa, but Australia was too far from my beloved family and in 1981 when Lia was about 7 months old, we left for Durban with the few possessions the Zimbabwe Government allowed us to take. We had only been in Durban about 6 weeks when our car was stolen, but Dave was offered a good job in Johannesburg and we moved there. After about 6 months Dave saw an advert for a country hotel in Aliwal North, in the Cape Province. He had got fed up with Johannesburg traffic and never being home when Lia was awake. So we went and looked at the hotel and thought it had merit. We moved there with no hotel experience. It was very hectic at first and in a very Afrikaans area. The Afrikaans people, largely farming community were very warm hearted and while we wanted to practice our Afrikaans, they wanted to practice their English.

We stayed for 5 years and our second daughter Amy was born there in 1985. In 1987, our 5 year lease on the business was up and we decided to move back to Durban. We bought a lovely old house overlooking the harbour where we lived for 25 years. Dave worked as Operations Manager for a friend, Peter, but after a while he left to set up his own company, which he ran for 16 years.

Dave was involved in the MOTHS for 33 years, was on the Housing Management committee of a large retirement village and helped raise funds for the care of the frail. He enjoyed running and going to the gym, but his ill health over the last 15 years has made him more sedentary. He enjoys doing crosswords, sudoku, reading and watching sport on tv.

When we moved back to Durban, I got a job as an administrator at an industrial air conditioning company. After 2 years the senior management decided to start their own company and invited me to go too, with a small shareholding as an incentive. We ran the business very successfully for 7 years and then sold out to an American company who had identified us as the best service company in Durban. That was where I stayed as the financial and administration manager until I retired in 2019. Our daughters grew up and they both went to University. Lia qualified as an attorney, notary public and conveyancer and Amy opted for humanities and qualified as a social worker.

Once they were independent, I reconnected with my life-long love of stamps and joined a Philatelic Society. I also got involved in collecting, sorting and packing stamps for Durban and surrounding areas for the old Flying Doctor charity.

I worked at a stamp fair once a month, which raised money to help disadvantaged students from the Zululand area to study medicine or fields related thereto, the understanding being they would return to their communities when they qualified and 'give something back'.

Eight years ago both our daughters had married, and we sold our old family home and bought a townhouse in a secure complex in the same area. Both girls were close by and we wanted to stay near my Mom who was in a retirement complex there too. Lia and Warren had delighted us with our first grandson. I was a very hands-on GoGo (Granny) and very involved with our grandson and the second one when he arrived 3 years later.

Our local Methodist Church, called Manning Road Methodist is 150 years old and was our spiritual home. We were involved in a number of Church activities, including fundraising, and serving as a communion steward and hospitality steward. Manning Road was involved in feeding the poor and we provided a hot meal every Sunday evening to between 120 and 140 people. They are involved in helping fund Makabongwe School in a very poor area of Durban, which started on the pavement and grew into a fully-fledged school.

We also worked with the Denis Hurley Centre assisting with a creche for children of homeless people and people seeking work, and we started a vegetable garden to enable the children to be able to get a decent meal. Through Denis Hurley we collected books which were sold for a small fee to booksellers who resold them on the street to make a living.

Dave had been keen to come and live in England for some time as the writing was on the wall in SA and we saw things going the same way as Zimbabwe. We came on holiday in 2019 and made the decision to move. The final deciding factor came when I came home from shopping one afternoon and was attacked by armed men in our garage. They ripped my jewellery off and I screamed at them. Dave was so brave, he came out and threw a metal ironing board over the top of the car door at them and then when one of them started coming after him, he ran inside, slammed the security gate and came back with his gun. He shot at them, luckily not hitting them, but they ran away. They had a getaway car blocking our electronic gate and Dave shot a second time and hit the car as they sped off. Thank God we were not injured, apart from scrapes, and bruises, but we were both severely traumatised.

Last year with Covid and lockdown we couldn't leave until November. We came to Bognor as Dave's brother John and his wife Sheila live here and we stayed with them for our 14-day quarantine period. We have settled down very well in our rented flat in The Steyne and feel so safe and grateful to be here. God has blessed us richly.

Bev & Dave have now transferred their membership from South Africa to Bognor Regis Methodist Church. *We warmly welcome you both and look forward to getting to know you.*

LET'S PRAY.....EVERY DAY

MAY 2021

Psalm 100		A week of Prayer of Praise & Thanksgiving
Sat	1 st	Thank You for Easter; for the cross and Jesus' resurrection to life! Praise God for His amazing love.
Sun	2 nd	We praise you Father for the Spring, for all new life in our gardens and parks, on farms, in fields & in our seas.
Mon	3 rd	We thank you for the signs of healing in our world as we emerge from the grip of Covid-19.
Tues	4 th	We praise you over & over Lord, for your gifts to our scientists & medical people who are helping you to bring us out of this pandemic.
Wed	5 th	We thank you for <i>everyone</i> who has worked tirelessly throughout all the lockdowns, to bring us food, medicine, our post, tv & radio programmes, Church services, educators & those running our country.
Thurs	6 th	Praise you Father God , you are so good <i>all</i> the time.
Fri	7 th	Thank you for being the One we can always run to, with your arms wide open for us to run into.

Col 1:16		A week of prayer for our World
Sat	8 th	We pray for continued healing for our beautiful world, as we try to reduce plastic & waste. We pray for the desire to do our part.
Sun	9 th	For the world's Governments & leaders, for softer hearts to love their people and serve with compassion.
Mon	10 th	For people whose greed leads to destruction of forests, our seas, wildlife, the ozone layer.
Tues	11 th	For all who are grieving the loss of loved ones from Covid-19 & those living in fear of it. For those unemployed & in financial difficulty.
Wed	12 th	For those countries still in lockdown.
Thurs	13 th	For refugees seeking safety.
Fri	14 th	For Peace, and for doubters to find the love of God.

Eph 6:7		A week of prayer for our Churches
Sat	15 th	We give thanks as Churches begin to open their doors again, and the joy to be found inside.
Sun	16 th	For Dan & the 3 TOT groups as we emerge and try to find the right balance in our return to Church activities.
Mon	17 th	For all those in our Churches who have kept worship possible with their contributions.
Tues	18 th	For those who are having doubts about returning.
Wed	19 th	For those who have thought about God during lockdown & might walk through our doors.
Thurs	20 th	For those who might choose to continue to worship at home & how we accommodate them.
Fri	21 st	<i>For the persecuted Church from Afghanistan to Vietnam.</i> So many countries Father where your people are not free to worship you. We ask you to shield your people & pray that talks will lead to peace, in Jesus' Name, Amen. (see pages 16-17)

Gal 6:2		A week of prayer for our Communities
Sat	22 nd	Give thanks for our families & friends and that reuniting after so long apart feels so good.
Sun	23 rd	For all the agencies helping the homeless, those in financial difficulties, those with poor mental health.
Mon	24 th	For victims of violence & injustice in our communities.
Tues	25 th	For our shops struggling financially.
Wed	26 th	Our street, our flats, our town.
Thurs	27 th	For hairdressers & non- essential shops opening.
Fri	28 th	For all volunteers who may be considering not returning. That God will raise up new volunteers.
Sat - Mon	29 th - 31 st	For ourselves..... those in pain, unwell, grieving, afraid, in financial difficulty. Pray for the healing touch of Jesus to bring peace into bodies, hearts & minds. For those in our families/streets, friendship groups who haven't met Jesus yet. Pray for eyes, ears & hearts to be opened. Amen.

LET'S PRAY.....EVERY DAY
JUNE 2021

Eccl 11:9		A week of prayer for our young people
Tues	1 st	For young adults whose dream of University was so different. For their next step.
Wed	2 nd	For children who have fallen behind in their learning.
Thurs	3 rd	For all young people whose mental wellbeing has been so affected by the pandemic, for appropriate help.
Fri	4 th	For those whose families have suffered separation of parents, or seen domestic violence.
Sat	5 th	For those suffering abuse.
Sun	6 th	For all young people who have seen death up close during the past year.
Mon	7 th	For God to reveal His purpose in each & every child.

Col 3:23-24		A week of prayer for our groups/activities/ volunteers in our Churches
Tues	8 th	For all our groups & activities and those who volunteer to run them, & all the questions and new rules surrounding how/when we safely re-open.
Wed	9 th	For our homegroups, bible studies, prayer meetings, Messy Church, youth groups, etc.
Thurs	10 th	For our many social gatherings.....coffee mornings, lunch groups, knit & natters, etc., as and when we decide to open our doors.
Fri	11 th	For all the outside groups, Brownies, Guides, dancing groups, WI, counselling services, etc.
Sat	12 th	For those who open our buildings, run our groups and clean our premises.
Sun	13 th	For all our Services, whether worship, funeral, baptism, wedding.
Mon	14 th	Pray for new people to cross our thresholds.

Eph 4:11-12		A week of prayer for our Ministers & those who serve
Tues	15 th	For Dan, Louise, Rebekah & Lydia.
Wed	16 th	for all Ministers who preach in our Churches.
Thurs	17 th	For all local preachers in our circuit who bring us variety each week.
Fri	18 th	For all our worship leaders.
Sat	19 th	For all our Church Stewards, who perform so many roles.
Sun	20 th	For all who clean, make tea, bring flowers, make our Churches beautiful with banners/artwork.
Mon	21 st	For those who sit & listen to others.

Prov 22:6		A week of prayer for our Schools & educators
Tues	22 nd	For our local schools, in the last school term before children go up a year/secondary school/college.
Wed	23 rd	For our teachers assessing their pupils after so much 'missed' learning.
Thurs	24 th	For those teachers involved in difficult pupil/family situations.
Fri	25 th	For all outside agencies involved in school life, Educational Psychologists, Speech & Language therapists, School Nurses, etc.
Sat	26 th	For local Colleges & Universities.
Sun	27 th	For all headteachers, deputy heads & heads of year.

Rom 12:12		Prayer for Hope
28 th 29 th 30 th		Gracious God, we remember that you overcame death and left your Spirit with us to give us hope. As we begin to see some normality returning to our lives, we thank you that you hear our prayers & that you bring good out of every difficult and painful situation. Thank you <i>Amazing God</i> for the hope we have in you. Amen.

From Afghanistan to Vietnam....

Prayers for the Persecuted Church

I was recently given a prayer handbook produced by **Barnabusfund**, which is a Christian charity working to provide hope & aid to the persecuted Church. There are 39 countries included, each with a page of information about how God's people in that place are being affected. It horrified me that there are so many places where Christians are being persecuted. I had read about Iran & Iraq, Pakistan, China and maybe 1 or 2 other places, but hadn't realised it was so widespread. Maybe it's my ignorance or maybe I'm not alone. Whichever the case, I thought I'd bring this information to you and highlight just some of the difficulties our wider Christian family face.

These are the countries listed in the booklet:

Afghanistan	Algeria	Bangladesh	Burkina Faso	Cameroon
Chad	China	Congo	Egypt	Eritrea
Ethiopia	India	Indonesia	Iran	Iraq
Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Laos	Libya	Mali
Mozambique	Myanmar	Nepal	Niger	Nigeria
N Korea	Pakistan	Russia	S Arabia	Somalia
Sri Lanka	Sudan	Syria	Tajikistan	Tunisia
Turkey	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Vietnam	

A number of these countries enshrine Islam as the state religion and the authorities have no sympathy for any other religion or way of life. Other countries enshrine Hinduism or Buddhism.

The freedom to worship is exclusive to these religions and ways of life. Christianity faces punishments such as imprisonment, execution & amputation. Christians can be:

- Siezed as slaves
- Imprisoned, tortured, beheaded
- Murdered in their villages (whole villages)
- Have their crops and livestock destroyed
- Forced to flee to the hills
- Refused all basic needs
- Women & Girls raped

The Covid lockdown has seen an increase in targeted hate and violence in many places and the prayers of Christians around the world have never been more important.

DEBBIE DEAN

Perhaps you would like to add this prayer to your own every day. ✂ *I'm going to cut mine out and put it next to my kettle, so that I see it several times a day!* ✂ ***Prayer changes things***

Loving God, we come to you on behalf of our Christian brothers & sisters around the world. We pray for all who follow you despite persecution. We ask you to protect and strengthen every Christian affected by the terror that surrounds them. Gracious God, we pray for the Governments involved, that a time will come when change will be made to allow all faiths to worship and live alongside one another in peace. Until then Lord, we pray for your hand to be on all your people & that they will know you are with them. We ask these things in Jesus' powerful name, Amen.

EASTER 2021

After careful consideration, it was agreed that we would open our Church on Good Friday & Easter Day, for private prayer.

A team of 5 of us prepared the Church with:

- 4 prayer tables
- music
- pictures & scripture on the screen
- A tomb(!) and a display of purple fabric and a crown of thorns on a cross.
- Prayer candles to light

The prayer tables were designed to inspire quiet reflection on our Lord Jesus. There was a lot of material available to choose from, such as prayer cards, pictures, candles to light, books, prayer tree, posters and so much more. Those involved gave up a lot of time and worked hard. I have had some lovely 'thank you' phone calls, **so well done everyone involved!**

On Sunday morning I arrived at Church to find Hazel (Denman) outside dressing the large cross with dozens of flowers of every colour, which we left standing outside for all to see. It was absolutely breathtaking!

The tables and displays were used by about 20 people on Friday and 5 or 6 on Sunday. It was so good to have our Church open again, offering a quiet sanctuary to be with God.

DEBBIE DEAN

OUR GAZETTE

Big thanks to all who help with the printing and distribution of Our Gazette. **Tony & Val** save me hours because of their kindness in printing & collating the Gazette, which they have done throughout lockdown(s!). It really is a big task, especially as it can now be quite a few pages, since we went bi-monthly. So, many thanks to you both for your support.

Thank you too to our lovely **pastoral visitors**, who kindly come to me or to Church to pick up their pile of Gazettes and then go around delivering to their people. Again, this saves me the long job of putting dozens of Gazettes in envelopes, addressing & posting them.....and of course the cost would be a big consideration. So thank you all. You **all** make my life easier!

And finally, a big thank you to our **regular contributors**, without whom we would have a very thin Gazette! If anyone else has an interesting article, story about lockdown, or a story about yourself/your walk with God perhaps, please get in touch with me.

DEBBIE DEAN

6 LITTLE STORIES.....

1. Once, in a village, everyone decided to pray for rain. On the day of the prayers all the people gathered, but only one boy came to the service with an umbrella.

That is faith!

2. When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them.

That is trust!

3. Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but we set the alarm!

That is hope!

4. We plan big things for tomorrow despite zero knowledge of our future.

That is confidence!

5. We see the world suffering, but still we get married and have children.

That is love!

6. On an old man's shirt was written a sentence "I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years experience".

That is attitude!

Charlie Chaplin left us 4 statements:

1. Nothing is forever in this world, not even our problems.
2. I love walking in the rain, because no one can see my tears.
3. The most lost day in life is the day we don't laugh.
4. Six best doctors in the world are:
 - I. The sun
 - II. Rest
 - III. Exercise
 - IV. Diet
 - V. Self-respect
 - VI. Friends

Stick to them through all the stages of your life and enjoy a healthy life. If you see the moon, you will see ***the beauty of God***. If you see the sun, you will see ***the power of God***. If you see a mirror, you will see ***God's best creation***, so believe it.

We are all tourists. God is our travel agent who has already identified our routes, bookings & destinations. Trust Him and enjoy every day of your life.

Life is just a journey! Therefore live today, tomorrow is not promised.

Charles Chaplin
1889 – 1977

HOPE

Taken from *Day by Day with Billy Graham*

In Joseph's garden is history's only empty grave. Christianity has no shrines to visit, no dusty remains to venerate, no tombs at which to worship. Many good men have lived, and still live, in the memory of those who knew them, but there is only one Man who conquered death - Jesus Christ, and He will live for ever.

The resurrection of Christ brings hope.

As the human organism is dependent on a supply of oxygen, so humanity is dependent on its supply of hope. Yet today hopelessness and despair are everywhere. Peter, who himself was given to despair during the episode of Calvary, writes in a triumphant note:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

There is hope that mistakes and sins can be forgiven. There is hope that we can have joy, peace, assurance, and security in the midst of despair of this age. There is hope that Christ is coming soon - this is what is called in Scripture "the blessed hope". There is hope that there will come, some day, a new heaven and a new earth, and that the Kingdom of God will reign and triumph.

Our hope is not in our own ability, or in our goodness or in our physical strength.

Our hope is instilled in us by the resurrection of Christ.