



CONNECT

**NAILSEA UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH
MAGAZINE**

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Thanks be to God for his
Indescribable gift!
2 Corinthians 9:15

Minister Revd John Gray details on Contact Page

Church Secretary Mrs Sally Edmondson

Dear Friends,

On the day I was writing this letter to you came out the new Tier System for the next few weeks (months?) in the UK. Bristol and North Somerset are put in the highest risk Tier 3, which means most of the restrictions remain in place for us. Of course, it is different from a lock down – please check on the government and the URC’s websites what is allowed and what is not and update your knowledge -, yet from the aspect of health and safety one might feel tempted to say we might as well cancel Christmas this year. That is also the title of a nice poem I recently found in the drawer of my desk:

No Christmas This Year

*We won't have a Christmas this year, you say
For now the children have all gone away
And the house is so lonely, so quiet so bare
We couldn't have a Christmas that they didn't share.*

*We won't have a Christmas this year, you sigh,
For Christmas means things that money must buy.
Misfortunes and illness have robbed us we fear
Of the things that we'd need to make Christmas this year.*

*We won't have a Christmas this year you weep
For a loved one is gone, and our grief is too deep.
It will be a long time before our hearts heal,
And the spirit of Christmas again we can feel.*

*But if you lose Christmas when troubles befall,
You never have really had Christmas at all.
For once you have had it, it cannot depart
When you learn that true Christmas is Christ in your heart.*

While this poem was written to help the Reader to get their priorities right: Christ should be in the centre of our festivities, not shopping and partying, there is at least one thing in each verse we could identify with during this pandemic: “the house is so lonely, so quiet so bare”, “misfortunes and illness have robbed us”, “a loved one is gone, and our grief is too deep” - particularly if they died of Covid or in an illness that could not be treated because of Covid preference in hospitals.

Then the poem continues this way, “But if you lose Christmas when troubles befall, You never have really had Christmas at all”. Yes, troubles did befall this year. Coronavirus spread might be the greatest disruption to work, education, socialising, church life in a generation’s time, but can we actually cancel Christmas this year? No we can’t.

Not because the government decided to “save Christmas” for us, but because Christ has saved it for us all. Whether households can mix or not, church services can be held in our buildings or not, Christmas shopping can happen on the high street or just on-line, Christmas cannot be cancelled. I am sure Christmas will be different this year, as it will be without the month-long Christmas Carol singing, Christmas fairs and dinners at church, travel restrictions might apply, we might have a five-day Christmas Covid bubble in terms of who can visit us. There might be other factors as well, which may make Christmas unusual this year, but it should not be sad at all.

Let us not lose our joy, for Christ remains in the centre of our celebration. What’s more, let us rejoice that Coronavirus, paradoxically, showed us that we can have a meaningful Christmas without the “commercial extravaganza”. We may re-learn to appreciate the company of those few around the Christmas table whom we might have taken for granted over the years. We might appreciate the support of our church fellowship this time of the year more than in previous years, as it is a tremendous support we receive from each other. We are not alone. We have our church fellowship, loved ones, and most importantly God with us in Jesus. **Immanuel**. Isaiah 7:14.

*But if you lose Christmas when troubles befall,
You never have really had Christmas at all.
For once you have had it, it cannot depart
When you learn that true Christmas is Christ in your heart.*

Happy Christmas! God bless and stay safe.

Yours in Christ, John

A Word from your Treasurer

I find it very difficult to believe that this is the last issue of Connect for 2020. What a strange year we have had especially with our church building being closed temporarily until it is safe to reopen our doors and welcome you all back.

Again, I can't thank those concerned enough for sending me their accumulated offerings or making bank transfers. This has enabled us to keep afloat without having to dip into our savings account. If anyone needs bank details please do not hesitate to contact me. Please be assured that all money received is recorded against your envelope number.

Usually by this time in the year we have chosen our charities for the following year but since we have only contributed partially to our six charities so far this year the elders have agreed that these charities remain the same for 2021 and all monies already received for this year be carried forward to next year.

Just as a reminder, the six charities are as follows:

Children's Hospice South West	Commitment for Life
Samaritan's Purse	Nailsea Memory Cafe
Nailsea Cancer Cafe	Wellspring

We received some good news recently from Synod that our monthly M & M is being reduced next year from £1314 per month to £1190 - a saving of £1448 per year!!!! This is very welcome indeed in view of our lost income over the past months from our hall lets. Please do remember that even though we are not worshipping in our building the work of our church continues.

I wish you all happiness and most of all good health for 2021.

With God's blessing

Isabel

The URC daily devotions

The URC daily devotions can be accessed via devotions.urc.org.uk
These are approx 5 minutes long. The Sunday service can be accessed from the same site.

Hi folks

Just a note to say how much I have appreciated the various efforts that have been made to stay "connected" during the season of lockdown / self-isolation / social distancing. It's been so good to share news via email, phone calls, letters, cards and even a quick wave across the supermarket car park or a chat over the garden wall.

I also look forward to receiving our minister, John's Sunday message each week.

A big THANK YOU to you all for continuing to be there for me and for each other.

Maybe the words of the following poem express what I am trying to say:

People Need People

From
Patricia x

People Need People

To walk to
To talk to
To cry and rely on,
People will always need people.
To love and to miss
To hug and to kiss,
It's useful to have other people.
To whom will you moan
If you're all alone,
It's so hard to share
When no one is there,
There's not much to do
When there's no one but you,
People will always need people.

To please
To tease
To put you at ease,
People will always need people.
To make life appealing
And give life some meaning,
It's useful to have other people.
If you need a change
To whom will you turn,
If you need a lesson
From whom will you learn,
If you need to play
You'll know why I say
People will always need people

As girlfriends
As boyfriends,
From Bombay
To Ostend,
People will always need people.

To have friendly fights with
And share tasty bites with,
It's useful to have other people.
People live in families
Gangs, posses and packs,
It seems we need company
Before we relax,
So stop making enemies
And let's face the facts,
People will always need people,
Yes
People will always need people.

(C) Benjamin Zephaniah 2000



Christmas Greetings from The Elders

As we all know, Christmas is coming and for many of us it won't be a celebration like anything we have previously experienced.

However, it is still possible to exchange greetings with everyone in our church family, so let's all wish each other a blessed and peaceful Christmas and affirm the hope that we WILL meet again in the New Year.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS



Tribute to Keith Lovell 9/11/31 - 2/11/20

(as given by Sally Edmondson on behalf of Nailsea United Reformed Church)

We have been very fortunate to have our friend Keith supporting our church life.

Keith worked relentlessly in the garden for many years alongside Eileen and supported the idea of having a Peace Garden at the top right hand corner where anyone was invited to partake of the serenity even with traffic going past. I have been told that when the mower needed parts for servicing Keith spent time finding the parts in Bristol and repaired the mower. He also looked after all the garden tools.

Plants, cuttings and foliage were grown in his garden and transplanted to our garden for all to view.

Mini market was a regular event once a month in the hall when Keith would go along and set up the tables and be there to clear away to assist Eileen and others.

He came along to church lunches with Eileen and again in the background helped to move tables and chairs.

We didn't need to ask him to help, he just arrived, gave his support and left, for which we at church wish to acknowledge and I am sure you as family realise how kind and thoughtful Keith was.

I, on behalf of the congregation wish, to pass on a very sincere thank you.

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Eileen and her family would like to say a very sincere thank you to everyone for their calls, flowers, cards and prayers
These expressions of friendship and support have meant a great deal to all the family.



Christmas Time

In 1984 Band Aid released a Christmas number one "Do they know it's Christmas".

This week a number of times on the news it has been said Covid-19 does not know it is Christmas.

Why am I mentioning these two things? Well, we were listening to a "thought for the Day" our son had given when he mentioned that a number of years ago in a census only 5% had recorded they had no religion but in the most recent census this number had gone up to over 50%. The church is dying – why? We have let Father Christmas or Santa take over and our young children are not being taught that Christmas is the time we should remember that Jesus our Lord and Saviour came as a baby to die for our sins. Have we failed?

If they only believe in Father Christmas then they are going to a lost eternity. I do not wish to spoil the little ones' Christmas but let's tell them the wonderful story of how our Lord was born in a stable, and about Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men and not about snowmen, elves or even the reindeer. Yes let's tell them about the donkey that carried Mary that Christmas Eve.

Jeffrey joins with me in wishing you all a Blessed Christmas and a safe and healthy 2021.

God Bless *Jeffrey & Mary*



Christmas Carol Advent Trail 1st to 24th December

Christians Together in Nailsea have organised the Advent trail and asked us to partake by displaying a carol.

We have chosen "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" so please look from the pavement at the display board. the windows either side of the hall door and the large hall front window

Other churches are partaking in and around Nailsea along with private homes.

We are not able to hold services or sing in church but can still enjoy looking at the carol displays and singing carols in our own homes!

So please find time for a stroll to view our display and others around the churches.

Sally and Eveline

Commitment for Life Prayer

Christmas Prayer

Come, Jesus, come.
You enter this world as a babe.
You bring light into darkness.
You offer hope in hopelessness.
You share peace in troubled times.
You challenge empires and kings.
You usher in the Fullness of Life.
Come, Jesus, come.
Amen

Some Christmas Reminders

- * May the Christmas GIFTS remind us of God's greatest gift, His only Son.
- * May the Christmas CANDLES remind us of Him who is the "Light of the world."
- * May the Christmas TREES remind us of another tree upon which he died.
- * May the Christmas CHEER remind us of Him who said, "Be of good cheer."
- * May the Christmas FEAST remind us of Him who is "the Bread of Life."
- * May the Christmas BELLS remind us of the glorious proclamation of His birth.
- * May the Christmas CAROLS remind us of the son the angels sang, "Glory to God in the Highest!"
- * May the Christmas SEASON remind us in every way of Jesus Christ our King!

