

CONNEXIONS

The magazine of

Lavington

United Reformed Church

Bideford

www.lavingtonurc.org



MAY 2021

40p

MAY 2021

By the time you receive this copy of Connexions, preparations will be well on the way for our re-opening on **Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd**. Between now and then, let us hope that the Government will not change any details.

From that date (23rd) we will of course continue to meet every week. The Minister and Elders are looking forward to welcoming you all.

Editor

Sun.	9 th		Revd John Robinson – sent out by post
Sun.	23 rd	11.00am	Pentecost Worship – Revd Rob Weston
Sun.	30 th	11.00am	Family Worship – Mrs Alison Biggs

FLOWER ROTA

Sun.	23 rd	Pentecost
Sun.	30 th	Mrs J P

Mission Statement

Lavington's mission is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness encompassing the love of Christ and to share this through worship and service.



We are a Fairtrade Church



Dear Friends

This month we look forward to celebrating Pentecost together as we are opening the church for worship from Sunday 23rd May - Pentecost Sunday or Whit Sunday as it is also known. Thankfully the indications are that the lockdown restrictions are being reduced as the number of Covid cases in our area have continued to drop. In fact, Torridge District was the first district to record a week of no cases in England in April, which is very encouraging.

We recognise that some people will still be cautious about mixing with large numbers of people; please be reassured that the social distancing arrangements that we had in place in 2020 will still be used when we reopen on May 23rd to ensure the safest environment for worship. We will also be taking measures to ensure that when we share in Holy Communion on June 6th, this will also be as safe as is possible.

On the first Sunday in June we should be able to ordain and induct Jill Davis to the role of Elder at Lavington. We are grateful to Jill for her willingness to serve as an Elder and she has been actively serving since her appointment at our AGM in October 2020. We are also grateful for the service of the other serving Elders: AB, J C, J P and C T. Many of you will be aware that the Elders have been meeting very regularly on Zoom throughout the lockdown periods to ensure that the church has continued in its mission even when we've not been able to meet together.

From April 12th the church halls have been available for certain groups to meet (such as children's / under 18s activities) but from May 17th all other groups will be allowed to meet. However, it will be up to the leaders of each group to decide when they would like to resume their activities; some will want to wait until the next stage in the reduction of restrictions on June 21st. As always, we will be guided by the advice from Government and from the United Reformed Church Synod Moderators.

Pentecost is all about the power of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that when the disciples were meeting together they heard a strange noise like a violent wind, something like flames rested on them and they received the Holy Spirit. The crowds that gathered asked Peter what they should do and he replied *'Repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ and you will receive the Holy Spirit'*. This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off...' This same promise is for us today and for all the generations to follow. Even in these strange times of pandemic, the promise of God remains. As we celebrate this Pentecost, may God fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we may know where God is leading us in the days to come.

Every blessing,
Rob

Interim Ministry: Proposal for extension of time

The original plan was that Rob Weston should be appointed as the Interim Minister at Lavington for a fixed period of two years, but that was before the pandemic disrupted church life. Given the impact of Covid, the Elders encouraged Rob to request an extension of his placement by the Synod Pastoral Committee.

We are delighted to report that the Synod Pastoral Committee has agreed to extend the placement for another 12 months, i.e. until September 2022. This proposal will be brought to our next Church Meeting, which will take place on Saturday June 26th at 11.00am.

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HEAVEN

Little children will be very important in heaven because they will be the ones asking those extraordinary questions which are so profound – *'but God, who made you?'* (Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

RETURNING TO CHURCH SERVICES / ORDERS OF SERVICE

As you are all aware, we are planning to return to Church services on Sunday 23rd May at 11am – Pentecost – when we celebrate how the Holy Spirit brought new life to the Church. Attendance will of course be subject to the current Government guidelines – face masks being worn, social distancing etc.

We look forward to welcoming back those of you who are happy to return but are equally conscious of those who may still feel they are not quite ready to be out and about and we appreciate that you may not want to attend straight away.

During the period of lockdown, we have been fortunate to have had our Preachers - who would normally have been with us in person – prepare and submit their services in order that they can be posted or emailed out to our congregation. This process, we know, has been appreciated by many.

After the 23rd May, we will continue to send these services out to the housebound etc. who are unable to attend Church at all. Additionally, for those of you who would normally come in person but perhaps would prefer not to attend again just yet, the services can still be sent to you.

If this is the case, would you kindly let Jenny know and she will make sure you will continue to receive a copy. Thank you.

J

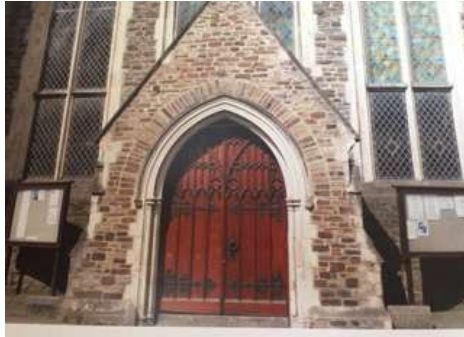
XX

A woman went to the Post Office to buy some stamps for her Easter cards.

"What denomination would you like?" asked the clerk.

" Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?" she replied.

"Well, give me 10 Catholic ones and 10 URC ones, please!"



O God,
As we re-open this place of worship,
may the doorway of this church be
wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship;
narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife.
Make its threshold smooth enough to be
no stumbling block to children or barrier to the elderly or
disabled.

Let its doors be open and inviting to all who enter here,
and its walls resound with the praise and worship of your people.

AMEN

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THANK YOU

HM would like to thank all her friends at Lavington for the many cards, telephone calls and condolences received on the sad passing of J. He will be missed so much by family and friends, especially by me after sixty-two years of marriage.

Thank you too to everyone who donated to the Children's Hospice South West and the North Devon Hospice at present amounting to £580, but with donations still being presented. Thank you to you all so very much.

I hope to see you all in May when we return to church.

God bless.

H

AN EASTER CROSS

When it was realised that for a second year, it would not be possible for the churches in Bideford to celebrate in the well-loved united Walk of Witness on Good Friday, one suggestion that resulted from the church leaders was that each church should have some simple public display to mark some aspects of Holy Week and Easter. The Elders



took this on board and it was decided to make use of our very good public noticeboard area in Bridgeland St. so J and R erected a cross that bore a crown of thorns and a purple robe. A panoramic view of Jerusalem and the surrounding hills - as it would have been at the time of Christ – was the backdrop.

J



What a difference a week makes!

On Easter Day, the crown of thorns and robe had been removed from the cross and it was transformed by Jill into one of hope and beauty with flowers telling all who pass by that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and is alive in the world! Jill says that while she was working

in that area it was

surprising how many folk stopped, looked and spoke about what she was doing.

Ed.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND

When the sky is grey and heavy
without a trace of blue,
and storm clouds seem to gather round
then I'll be there for you.

When problems rear there ugly heads
and troubles fill your life,
the gift of friendship lights the way
to ease the stress and strife.

We'll share the happy, joyful days
the good times and the glad,
and memories will warm the heart
to sweep away the sad.

So as the years go swiftly by
no matter what you do,
remember friendship never dies
and I'll be there for you.

Sent in by CW

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May is a very lean month for birthdays and wedding anniversaries for the Lavington family. This month we only have one birthday to celebrate and that is R H. Yes, my crystal ball flagged it up again! On 28th Richard will be ???

R all your friends will be thinking of you on 28th and sending you love and best wishes on your own special day.

Ed.



w/c 2nd

Traditionally this is the time of year when we celebrate the oncoming of Spring. Let us pray that as the cold winter weather disappears and we spend more time outdoors, so Covid too will disappear, at least temporarily and that the vast majority of the country's most vulnerable people will have had their second vaccination. Let us thank God, too, for the brilliance of our scientists in producing the vaccine and everyone involved in its quick distribution.

w/c 10th

This week is Christian Aid Week. Let us pray that the lack of door-to-door collections will not have too adverse an effect on money received and that people will support the other initiatives organised locally. (See Christian Aid News).

w/c 17th

Although Covid may be disappearing rapidly from our midst in this country, it is spreading rapidly throughout the world. Let us pray that those countries that are swamped with it and are really struggling at this time through a lack of medical resources to cope with it, be helped by the richer nations; that those countries, such as India, Brazil, and Mexico can fast track treatment and their vaccination programme.

w/c 23rd

Today is Pentecost. It is also the day when the Minister and Elders have chosen to re-open the church after being closed for a long time. May we be gathered together as the apostles were in biblical times and be fired up again with the enthusiasm that the Holy Spirit gives us, ready to do God's work in the world with renewed vigour.

w/c 30th

Today is Trinity Sunday, when we contemplate the mystery of the Three-in-One God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how each relates to the others and to us, like three intertwining circles.

We ask all this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

CT

PREMISES NEWS

Work is continuing as we make further improvements to our premises during the spring. The kitchen paintwork is being refreshed; we have started to paint round all of the windows and the walls and ceiling will have a fresh coat of emulsion. We have approached a plasterer to repair the section of ceiling that fell down many weeks ago.

Now that the guttering above the kitchen has been replaced, the rooms upstairs have been dried out with a dehumidifier. We believe that the rain water should no longer come in through the walls so we are in the process of preparing the affected areas before repainting. Once the walls and ceilings are painted, the plan is to have the corridor and the rooms carpeted.

Once the small meeting rooms are refurbished, they will be available for groups to hire. They will be ideal for small groups or committees looking for a suitable meeting space. They might also be of interest for people who have been working from home during lockdown, who are looking for a quiet office space which is not their kitchen table!

The wiring of the microphones in the church has now been repaired and everything is ready for our return to worship in May. The wooden doors to the church are to receive a fresh coat (or two) of Danish oil which will help to protect them from the weather. You may have spotted that the black hinges have received a fresh coat of paint in the past month.

We have already been receiving new bookings for the halls, but Janet is keeping in contact with all the regular hirers to ensure that they are offered their traditional slots in the weekly programme.

We are in the process of re-treating the main entrance doors of the church. It is several years since they were last treated and with the amount of sunshine on them they quickly become very dried out and tired. With the oil treatment, they will look really attractive again.

During May we have arranged for BT to connect the church telephone line which will enable us to offer free WiFi connection to all hall users. There will be an instruction poster in the hall to help people connect to the WiFi. What will be the benefit? I hear you ask! It simply means that anyone using the halls will be able to access the internet for free. For our Interim Minister, this will be very useful. For example, Rob will be able to access his emails whilst in the building; he will be able to join Zoom meetings from the building - indeed he will be able to use any of the rooms as an office space. But it is not just Rob who will benefit, anyone who has a smart phone will be able to connect to the WiFi and anyone with a laptop or iPad or similar device.

The telephone will be kept safely in the Minister's vestry to ensure that there is no misuse of this facility and the WiFi connection is on a standard monthly rate, which is not affected by the amount of usage.

Rob

NEWS FROM SOUTH WESTERN SYNOD PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Last month I reported that the South Western Synod currently has more Ministers than our 'fair share' in the URC, and so, area by area, the Pastoral Committee is looking at how changes can be made.

To help calculate how much ministry can be allocated to each church, the Pastoral Committee have based their calculations on 140 members being a 100% scoping. In other words a church with 70 members might expect a 50% scoping and a church with 35 members a scoping of 25%. These discussions have begun in the Bristol area where there were some significant changes to the scoping allocations.

I'm pleased to report that the Cornwall and West Devon/North Devon area, in which Lavington URC is placed, is facing less significant deployment issues. We will need to be flexible as there will be changes to the allocation of stipendiary Ministers in the future, but in the short term we are not expecting any significant change.

Rob

NEWS OF THE LAVINGTON FAMILY

We are delighted that the Synod have agreed to extend the time **Rob** will be our Interim Minister for another year, until September 2022 and look forward to sharing and considering with him the way forward for Lavington and the mission to the community in which it is set.

P C has had major eye surgery recently which has meant an unexpected stay in hospital. We hope she will soon be able to return home and continue her recovery. We were sorry to learn that **M M** had been the victim of an accident in her car but are pleased that she was unhurt although shaken by the incident. **M T** continues to make progress with her walking. However, she is still awaiting an operation on one of her feet which will help her walking. Gymnast **A T** is injured at the moment but hopes to be recovered to compete in competitions in Egypt and Bulgaria in the coming months. The Olympic team selection will not be announced until a few weeks before the Games start in July. Our sympathy goes to **M J** following the death of her father, **E**, and we include **P and the family** in our prayers at this sad time. We remember all those who are grieving the recent loss of family and friends, in particular **H M** and **R H** and assure them all of our love and support.

As we look to return to public worship at Lavington we pray for all within our fellowship who are housebound, who do not feel able to return yet or those facing life changing decisions. May the God of hope, love and peace be with us all.

During the past month we will all have been saddened by the passing of Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh. Many tributes have been paid to his long life, sense of duty and devoted service to our country through his many roles with the military, conservation, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Commonwealth. However, his love and support for Her Majesty, the Queen stands as a partnership which we may never see again. She called him 'her strength and stay' so we share in her sadness as we mourn the passing of an inspirational figure and hope and pray that with the love of family, friends and her faith, she will be comforted to continue her duties in the future.

A

AN OLD FARMER'S PRAYER

At a church breakfast, a pastor asked an old farmer, decked out in bib overalls, to say Grace for the breakfast.

"Lord, I hate buttermilk" the farmer began. The pastor opened one eye to glance at the farmer and wondered where this was going. The farmer then loudly proclaimed *"Lord, I hate lard"*. Now the pastor was growing concerned. Without drawing breath, the farmer continued, *"and Lord, you know I don't much care for raw white flour"*. The pastor once again opened an eye to glance around the room and saw that he wasn't the only one to feel uncomfortable.

Then quickly, the farmer added, *"but Lord, when you mix them altogether and bake them, I do love warm fresh biscuits. So Lord, when things come up that we don't like, when life gets hard, when we don't understand what you're saying to us, help us to just relax and wait until you are done mixing. It will probably be even better than biscuits. Amen"*.

Within that prayer there is great wisdom for all when it comes to difficult and tragic situations like we have been experiencing in our world today.

Stay strong, my friends, because our Lord is mixing several things that we don't really care for, but something even better is going to come when HE is done with it.

From a church magazine

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A PRAYER FOR ASCENSION DAY – May 13th

Ascending Christ, returning to your beginning,
You take the joy and anguish of human struggle
Into the presence of God.

Intercede for us this day, the breath of God
may fill the emptiness you leave among us
and we may sense the glory which now is yours.

AMEN

PENTECOST – MAY 23rd

Pentecost came from an old Jewish harvest festival called Shavuot or First Fruits, which took place seven weeks (forty-nine days) after the first spring festival of Passover, the time of Jesus crucifixion.

Shavuot marks the time that the Jews received the Torah on Mount Sinai.

The apostles were celebrating this festival when it became one of the most important days in world history. For Pentecost was the day Jesus sent the Holy Spirit – the day the Church was born.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian church that morning; proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 49 days before, and 3000 people responded, were converted and were baptised.

How's that for fast church growth!

That morning the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the apostles and disciples of Jesus, the Church's mission to the world began. Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves.

The change in them was permanent.

Ed.

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GOOD HEAVENS

At a primary school a vicar was trying to explain the Trinity to a class of six year olds. *"Think of it as a Mars Bar – chocolate, caramel and nougat"* he said, before adding the rhetorical flourish: *"And what do you think would happen if you took away the caramel?"*

A small voice from the middle of the class, trying to be helpful, suggested; *"A Milky Way?"*



FAVOURITE HYMN:
Come down, O love divine

The poem upon which this hymn is based was written in Italian in medieval times by Bianco da Siena (1350-1399). He was born in Tuscany and spent his youth as an apprentice in the wool trade, but later, at age 17, he entered a monastery into an order of mystics, where he wrote more poems. We know little about the rest of his life, except that he spent his last years in Venice.

The poem remained in obscurity until 1851, when it was copied from an ancient manuscript by another Italian, then discovered by an Irish clergyman, Dr Richard Littledale (1833-90), who translated it into English for his 'People's Hymnal' of 1867. Dr Littledale became curate of two churches in England, but then fell ill and spent the rest of his life translating hymns from Latin, Greek and other languages.

It was little sung in England until it was included in the English Hymnal of 1906, which was a collection of largely English hymns. Its general editor was Percy Dearmer, who chose Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872-1958) as its musical editor, at that time a young, relatively unknown composer. He normally chose folk tunes to accompany new hymns, but, in this case, made an exception, writing a new tune which he called Down Ampney, after the village in Gloucestershire where he was born.

The hymn owes much of its popularity to its beautiful melody, but the words, too, are of fine literary quality.

The hymn is a favourite at weddings. When Vaughn Williams died, he was buried in Musicians' Corner in Westminster Abbey, where the hymn was played as he was interred.

Of course, the hymn asks God to send His Holy Spirit upon us so that 'holy charity/mine outward vesture be/and lowliness become mine inner clothing.' It is usually sung at Pentecost, but is suitable for singing any time of the year.

CT



Christian Aid Week will be with us again on 10th-16th May. Once again, because of Covid, there won't be any door-to-door collections this year.

As an alternative, a Christian Aid envelope has been placed in this magazine. Of course, Lavington won't be open for worship until Sunday 23rd May, so, if you wish to contribute in this way, please put the envelope in the collection bag with your normal collection, either on the 23rd or the following Sunday.

Four members of our local Christian Aid committee - Lindsey Brading, Carol and Tim Pegg from Northam Methodists and Di Yendall from Bideford Methodists are doing the 300,000 Steps Challenge, which I think, involves walking from Northam to Bideford and back every day for the month of May.

They are looking for sponsors, so if you are interested, the best thing to do is contact me, with a view to handing in the money in early June. If you pay by cheque, please make it out to Christian Aid with the Group Reference No. written on the back, which is OR 26267.

Jesus said' It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20.v35).

CT

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I came across these four curious lines by the poet George Ellis born in 1753. I wonder if you can guess what he is describing:

*Snowy, Flowy, Blowy,
Showery, Flowery, Bowery,
Hoppy, Croppy, Droppy.
Breezy, Speezy, Freezy.*

Yes, he was describing the twelve months of the year. They haven't changed much in 268 years, have they?

Ed.

EATING IN THE UK IN THE FIFTIES

Pasta had not been invented.

Curry was a surname.

A takeaway was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.

All crisps were plain: the only choice was whether to add salt or not.

A Chinese chippy was a foreign carpenter.

Rice was a milk pudding and never ever part of our dinner.

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubrication, fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tealeaves and never green.

Coffee was Camp and came in a bottle.

Cubed sugar was posh.

Only Heinz made beans.

Fish didn't have fingers in those days.

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.

None of us had ever heard of yogurt.

Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.

Indian restaurants were only found in India.

Cooking outside was called camping.

Seaweed was not a recognised food.

"Kebab" was not even a word never mind a food.

Sugar had a good Press then and was regarded as being white gold.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly, muesli was readily available - it was called cattle feed.

Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only ever seen a picture of a real one.

Water came out of the tap, if someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have been a laughing stock.

The one thing that we never ever had on our table in the fifties ...
was elbows!

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HELPING EACH OTHER

A few years ago, in a rural part of Devon, there were two horses that lived in a field together. From a distance, each looked quite normal. If you went a bit closer however, you would notice something was different.

One of the horses, a gelding, was blind but his owner, instead of choosing to have the horse put down, had hung a bell from the halter of the mare who was sighted. Wherever she went, her blind friend knew where she was and could follow her.

Like the owner of these two horses, God does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges. He watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us when we are in need.

Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by God and those whom he places in our lives.

At other times, we are the guide horse, helping others find their way to God.

From a magazine

FunPage

Link Words

The three words in each clue have a fourth word in common.
e.g. Axe, Pitched, Ship = Battle

1. Bone – Door – Pedal _____
2. Designer – Protective – Warm _____
3. Consenting – Education – Hood _____
4. Circle – City – Sanctum _____
5. Bitter – Curd – Drop _____
Fire – High – Moon _____
7. Carbon – Cat – Right _____
8. Deck – Reaches – School _____
9. Bracelet – Offensive – School _____
10. Every – Near – Some _____
11. Cake – Famine – Mashed _____
12. Breeze – Gull – Red _____
13. Coaching – Keeper – Sign _____
14. Bin – Disposal – Land _____
15. Dog – Stud – Wing _____
16. Bacon – Blue – Pastry _____
17. Artichoke – Theatre – Trotter _____
18. Bath – Stitch – Wet _____
19. Collector – Management – National _____
20. Arranging – Corn – Passion _____

Who's who at Lavington URC

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Enquiries for weddings and baptisms are welcomed.
Please contact Church & Hall Bookings Secretary above.

**The June issue of *Connexions* is due out on
Sunday May 30th**

Please give items for inclusion to Janet Palmer or send by email to

lavington.connexions@gmail.com

Before or at the latest -Sunday May 23rd

Connexions is edited by Janet Palmer
and printed by Jenny and Ricky Cawsey