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Silent Visitor



Love. Grow. Serve.

March 2021

Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue

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Treasurer: Mr Alan Beckley

Serving Elders: Mr Ben Marshall; Mr. Alf Pryer;
Mr George Semain; Mrs Janet Semain;
Co-opted: Mrs Denise Beckley

Organist: Mr Richard Wade

Facilities Manager: Mrs Charlotte Webb
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Leaders of the Uniformed Organisations:

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Lent – a time to give things up!

Lent was strange last year, and in a way, it will be even stranger this year. This time last year we knew something was wrong and in a matter of weeks we entered the first lockdown. This year, with the vaccination program in full flow, we feel it's starting to go right and ...

It is very hard not to get over-excited and join in the rush to book summer holidays, family get-togethers and days out. But an obvious lesson from the last twelve months is that caution has proved the better path. The rise and fall in the 'R' number, infections, hospitalisations and deaths, when tracked against the increasing and decreasing of restrictions, makes heart-breaking reading.

When it comes to our life together as Church we are now in a period of role-reversal. Those who were a bit freer to do things than others over the last year, are now the ones waiting for a call whilst others are the ones that have already been vaccinated.

Technically, during the last lockdown, it was permissible for us to open for worship, but the guidance from the URC, the local directors of Public Health, and common sense, led the elders to decide to remain closed. As we did previously we will wait on the detail of the government announcements and the guidance from the URC before the elders consider what steps to take.

We all want to get back to 'normal' or possibly, more accurately, we just want to be liberated from the restrictions we've been under. The loosening of restrictions can also be an opportunity to reflect upon 'normal' and consider the restrictions that hide beneath its surface. Just because we have always done something doesn't mean it is the most effective, wholesome, or economical thing to do.

So maybe, this Lent, in preparation for re-opening our building for worship, you could reflect on what you feel are the essentials of our life together? Then consider how 'what we used to do' helped or hindered those essentials. And finally, how could we do things differently to better focus and develop those essentials.

Then when we come together, we can talk through the variety of essentials that each other hold dear – and find the common themes.

With every blessing, Rev'd David R. Coaker

Re-opening Update

Just to confirm the elders' decision that while we are under Lockdown or Tier 4 restrictions, in-person worship is cancelled.

If there is a loosening of restrictions in Thurrock, to Tier 3 or lower, dates pencilled in for services are:

- Sunday 7th March between 9.30 – 10.15 am Young families
 - Sunday 21st March between 10.15 – 11.15 am
 - Easter Sunday 4th April (timing(s) to be confirmed)
 - Sunday 18th April between 10.15 – 11.15 am
 - Sunday 2nd May between 9.30 – 10.15 am Young families
 - Sunday 16th May between 10.15 – 11.15 am
- (Elders meet on Sun 14 March to review the latest announcements.)**

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) Site

Shortly before this was due to commence Thurrock Council informed us that as Thurrock is receiving PCR tests and have several sites open, the Public Health Director wants to hold off doing LFT. If the PCR test is pulled by Public Health England, then they will use LFT and will need to move quickly to get up and running. If this does happen then they will contact us to see if the hall is still available. **(Possibly this may start on Monday 29th February.)**

Dementia Friends Training

A Dementia Friend is somebody that learns about dementia so they can help their community. Too many people affected by dementia feel that society fails to understand the condition they live with. Dementia Friends help by raising awareness and understanding, so that people living with dementia can continue to live in the way they want. Attend this friendly and interactive Zoom session from the comfort of your own home. **1.00 – 2.30 pm on Thursday, 18 March** (see email or contact David Coaker for more details.)

Financial Update February 2021

At the moment we are just 'keeping our heads above water', and have not had to draw on any investments so far this year. However, the insurance premium will soon be due; new fire doors will need to be paid for along with essential works on the annexe. This means I will have to draw on investments yet again in the near future.

I have been very busy over the past few weeks, firstly with the transferring and additions to the mandates for both banks and the CCLA accounts, as Colin is no longer available for signatures. Thanks again to Alf and Bob for your help. Despite many and sometimes lengthy phone calls, various emails and visits to the bank branches the changes are still not complete. It has proved to be a very time consuming and frustrating process.

I have also been working on an insurance claim form for 'loss of hirer's income' due to the Covid pandemic. This is a ten-page document requiring detailed financial information going back three years. With Denise's invaluable assistance I have completed a good deal of the document, and hope to submit to the insurance company in due course. I will keep you all informed of any progress – but don't hold your breath! Thanks also for Charlotte's help in completing the form.

I have also made a start on preparing relevant financial information, so that Tammy (from Brookes accountants) and I can start work on preparing the 2020 year end accounts.

In addition to the normal day to day treasurer's tasks, and managing cash flow with vastly reduced income, it has been, as I said earlier, a very busy few weeks. On a more positive note, it is wonderful to see Little Roos regularly making good use of our annexe, not just from the financial aspect, but that they offer such a professional, well run and friendly preschool to the local community.

Also, I understand from Charlotte, the Blood Transfusion Service has booked some dates for using the Church Hall later in the year.

Again, many, many thanks to all of you who continue to make regular monetary contributions, you are helping to keep the Church finances afloat.

Thanks also to Elaine for all the invoicing work you do.

If anyone has a question or query regarding finances please let me know and I will do my best to answer.

Since I wrote this update I have heard the sad news of the death of Colin Baker. Colin was treasurer and loyal servant of our Church for 25 years. It is due to his prudence and forethought that the Church still has funds available to help us through financial difficulties, including those caused by the Covid pandemic. I got to know Colin quite well over the years, and would like to think that together we made a pretty good team. I shall miss him greatly.

Alan Beckley, Treasurer



Colin Baker

It was with sadness we heard that Colin Baker had died following a stay in hospital and some respite care. As Alan has said above, Colin will be greatly missed - he was an important part of church life and a character.

Colin served the church as the Treasurer for many years after he retired from work and in latter years continued to assist Alan with the finances. His service was invaluable.

Our love and blessings go to his family – his daughter, Ruth, and son, Gavin, and the extended family. Once details of the funeral arrangements are known they will be circulated.

Dear Lord, we pray for all those who grieve for their loved ones - especially during these pandemic days.

May we feel the love and support you offer and gift to us.

We ask that the souls of the departed rest in peace with you in heaven.

In Jesus' name - Amen

From Peter Newall, Operations Manager - Thank you to all, for your continued interest and support of our work. It is an encouragement to us all.

With volunteers shielding and social distancing, the food bank has faced extra challenges, and the team has been exploring ways to improve its storage space.

As Lent started on Wednesday, 17th February, we are offering you to take up the challenge to take part in the #40 for 40 Challenge. This means giving up 40p for 40 days.

You can help support Thurrock Food bank to be there for all who need the services during this time. For all the ways to donate please use this link :-

<https://thurrock.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money>

#40for40

#thurrockfoodbank

#hungerfreefuture

Whilst we have a good stock of most items, we would be grateful for : custard, tinned potatoes, cleaning products and men's toiletries.

Please pray for the volunteers, many of whom are starting to receive their vaccinations and for team members still isolating. May they still feel valued and part of the team, despite not being able to come to our centres.

"Groundhog Day"

In last month's edition, Dave referred to the superstition in America about "groundhog day" (2nd February). It was reported in the newspaper on the 3rd February, that the US will face six more weeks of winter, when the groundhog's shadow was seen on emerging from his burrow.

This all happened as a record breaking storm continued to coat the north-eastern US in snow. Since then there have been snowstorms and very low temperatures reported in Texas!

(Do we blame it on the groundhog?)

Ed.

Pulpit Falls, a lasting legacy



The 13th century church of St Peter and St Paul in Horndon-on-the-Hill, a Grade 1 listed building extensively restored in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, has a number of beautiful pulpit falls, created by our own Anne French. She is mentioned in the booklet about the church.

Rachel King had hoped to photograph these creations at different seasons, but in our current climate has been able to share just two with the *Silent Visitor*. Thank you, Rachel.



Elaine Barcz

"Family" - a poem by Mark Coaker

Family is good,
And cool with lots of delight to come,
My Mother and Dad too,
Inside my heart I have a bit of all of them, ❤️
Learning from my Mother and Father and Grandparents too.
Yes family is cool and I am in it too.

Woodward Community Library

Do you or your friends/family enjoy reading? I know it's difficult at the moment as libraries and shops are shut, so you might appreciate some new books. My family have set up a small community library at the front of our house (1A Woodward Close – first house on the left). It's free of course and for everyone to use. Please help yourself. There are children and adult books. If you are unable to visit yourself we would be happy to deliver a few books to you. Also if you have any books you would like to donate to the library they would be greatly appreciated.



Thank you – *Claire Cornelius*

Money is the Root of all Evil (or is it?)

In Matthew (6:24) and Luke (16:13) we can read, "No one can serve two masters: you cannot serve God and wealth. (NRSV) Either one loves one and despises the other or vice versa. How can we interpret that for our everyday living? The problem becomes even more acute when we read in Matthew (19:23) Jesus' pronouncement, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Let's note Jesus' emphasis on 'hard' not 'impossible'. How can we, rich people compared with the destitute, strike a right balance?

Let's take an extreme example. Many people will have heard of (but not know very well) the name Andrew Carnegie, often thought of as an American philanthropist but who was actually a Scot. He was declared at one point to be the richest man in America, if not the world. He was born in 1835 to a humble Scottish weaver family, living in a typical weaver's cottage in Dunfermline, consisting of only one main room covering half the ground floor, the rest being occupied by another weaver's family. He was educated at a free school. When he was 12, his family fell on hard times and Scotland was in a state of starvation. The family decided to borrow enough money from a friend to enable them to move to Pennsylvania, USA. He and his father obtained jobs in a cotton mill where Carnegie became a 'bobbin boy', changing spools of thread for 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. He worked well and a Scottish manufacturer of bobbins gave him a job with increased wages.

In 1849 he became a telegraph messenger boy and within a year his abilities earned him a promotion to telegraph operator. During this time he was given access to a private library where he improved his education by private study. This caused him to resolve that if ever he were to have enough money he would see that other youngsters would have similar opportunities. Next he moved to the railroad as a telegraph operator. He was now 24 and his employer asked him if he could handle being a superintendent. He took the job, employing his younger brother as his secretary. His income was now increasing significantly. His boss advised him to invest some of his income. From this point he never looked back, becoming an investment entrepreneur in iron, bridges and railways. In 1861, during the civil war, he was made

superintendent of military railways and telegraphs. He went on to form his own companies and built his first steel plant.

The thought then came to him that his fortune should be used for others. He limited his personal income and spent the surplus each year for benevolent purposes. He maintained that man must have no idol and the single act of amassing wealth for the sake of it is one of the worst species of idolatry. No idol is more debasing, he said, than the worship of money. He then went on to amass a further fortune in the steel industry.

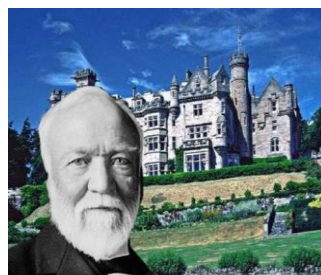
At about this time J. P. Morgan, a banker and financial dealer offered to buy him out. Carnegie accepted, having decided to retire. It was the biggest industrial takeover in U.S. history. Carnegie's steel was bought out for \$303,450,000. He now embarked in earnest on his charitable work.

His last years were devoted to being a philanthropist, having bought Skibo Castle, in Scotland, as his second home. He provided capital for various public advancements, largely social and educational. He established some 3,000 public libraries throughout the world, the first being in Dunfermline. He helped set up the University of Birmingham in 1899 and provided \$10,000,000 to establish a trust for universities in Scotland with a further \$10,000,000 to endow the Carnegie U.K. Trust. His interest in music led him to fund the construction of 7,000 church organs! One of his most well known projects was to build Carnegie Hall in New York. The list becomes almost endless.

Carnegie died in August 1919 in Massachusetts. He had already given away \$350,695,153. After his death, his last \$30,000,000 was given to foundations, charities and pensioners. How do we feel this squares with the quotations of Jesus in the opening paragraph?
George Semain



Carnegie Hall Interior



Andrew Carnegie



Carnegie Hall Exterior

The
Olive Tree
Project 



Planting Certificate

Thank you.

Your sponsored trees have been planted in Bethlehem,
Artas in the field of Mohammad Khadir Atallah.



Rooting out injustice. Planting for peace.