

CONTACT

The monthly magazine of

Groby

United Reformed Church

To Pray

is to let go

and let *God*

take over.



October 2020

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

We live in different and fast changing circumstances.
Therefore I decided to send each Sunday a Prayer for the
Week which will hopefully touch that need for the week.

Ruth Ivens

**Join us in prayer on
Tuesday 20th at 20:20
hours at home with family
or via telephone/facetime
with friends / family for
just 20 minutes**

Pray That God will give
many opportunities to
speak about Christ

Colossians 4:3



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Alex Down & Keziah Euden

 *Happy Birthday to You*
May the Good Lord Bless You

Sue Lawrence

WELCOME FROM MARK, CHURCH ELDER



Hello and Welcome.

In a recent message to the church, Mike Playdon reminded us not to be complacent about telling other people about the love of God.

But how do we live out our faith? How can we connect with each other while socially distancing?

Many of the normal things about our church life have gone away. That leaves us with faith and our imagination. I believe that the future of our church will be more about finding and making connections both inside and outside the church and less about organised activities. How has God changed? The answer is found in Hebrews 13:8:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

So even if everything around seems to have changed, we have a God who is the same, in an environment that changes constantly.

Above all this is an opportunity for asking God to reveal his plans for us, and listening to and trusting each other as we discern the way forward.

God Bless,
Mark Hiscocks



SUNDAY MORNING TEACHING AND READINGS IN OCTOBER

Apart from the first Sunday when Dave Lomas will take a look at 'Being Ready', our preaching throughout October continues to study the book of Acts.

Inspired by God's Spirit, how did they spread the good news of Jesus's saving grace? How did they walk with Christ in a world that didn't understand? How can we use the teaching from this book to broaden our outlook and open our eyes to a new post Covid reality?

4th: Dave Lomas. Mark 13:32-37. Being Ready

11th: Kev / Wendy. Acts 9:1-31 Conversion of Saul

18th: Ben Wright. Acts 9: 32—11:18 Conversion of Cornelius

25th: Kev / Wendy. Acts 11:19—12:24 Growing pains
(Holy communion as announced)

God's word for us to have in mind as we read and reflect:

**For the word of God is living and powerful,
and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing
even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints
and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and
intents of the heart.**

Hebrews 4:12

- P** The Zoom prayer meetings are happening every two weeks following the Pause, Reflect, Ask, Yield model for praying.
- R** October dates are 7th and 21st October @ 7.30pm
- A** Phil will send an email nearer to each date which will contain a link so you can access these meetings via zoom.
- Y** Please contact an elder if you would like to give zoom a go and haven't tried it before, or you have but have struggled.

TWEET



Nicky Gumbel @nickygumbel

“Be the most enthusiastic you know. Enthusiasm sustains you when times are touch, encourages those around you and is totally infectious”.

Bear Grylls

21/09/2020, 08:00

Rachel Hiscocks

A CHURCH THAT PRAYS TOGETHER, STAYS TOGETHER



We invite you to come along to a newly formed **Prayer Hub** to pray for our church, for the fellowship, for your own spiritual growth, and for the future direction of our church during and after Covid 19

**COMMENCING THURSDAY OCTOBER
1ST 2020 IN THE CHURCH.
THERE WILL BE PRAYER STATIONS
WITH CORONA VIRUS RESTRICTIONS
IN PLACE. COME ANYTIME, COME
ALONE OR WITH A FRIEND, USE THE
SANCTUARY AS A SPECIAL PLACE TO
TALK TO AND LISTEN TO WHAT GOD
IS SAYING TO US.**

There will be printed prayer topics to guide and focus us on God and His leading. There are no opening times, use your church key, follow the safety instructions and take some time to relax and open up to God. The church will be heated & lit when necessary.

If you have questions or need a front door key?
Contact: Ruth: 2910397 or Joy 2996164

You may find it helpful to bring your Bible, a notebook and pen.

Prayer Box

The Prayer Box ministry was initiated by David Harrup approximately 8 years ago and since then the team has met together every week of the year to bring before God the prayer requests on the cards. (During the lockdown, we prayed separately in our own homes but at the same time whenever possible). All prayer requests in the box remain absolutely confidential. Some are folk we know personally while others we have never met, but we pray for them in the knowledge that God knows who they are and He will hear our prayers. Some have been in our prayers for several years, others just a few weeks, but however long it takes, we continue to pray until our prayers have been answered and we have seen some truly amazing answers!

Inevitably, the team will change over time and, recently, David and Lynda have both stepped down. We are delighted, however, to welcome Rachel Hiscocks to the team to join Roger & Ruth Ivens, Dave Smith and Sue Lawrence.

If you or anyone you know needs prayer, the box and the prayer cards are always available in church. (Please see on next page regarding church access).

Alternatively, please contact anyone in the team.

Sue Lawrence

Dave Smith: dave.watersmith@btinternet.com
Telephone: 2870079

Rachel Hiscocks: rachel.hiscocks@gmail.com
Telephone: 2876419

Roger and Ruth Ivens: ruthnroger@hotmail.co.uk
Telephone: 2910397

Sue Lawrence: susanbeverley46@yahoo.co.uk
Telephone: 2312866

Covid restrictions and church access and use:

Anyone entering church for any purpose must follow the Covid guidelines set out in the church entrance and listed below:

PLEASE KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM OTHERS

SIGN IN FOR NHS TRACK AND TRACE ON THE SHEET PROVIDED

WEAR A FACE COVERING AT ALL TIMES

USE HAND SANITIZER ON ENTRY & EXIT
(Hands free dispenser on wall in entrance and via hatch in hall)

ONE WAY SYSTEM IN PLACE IN BUILDING
(Entrance main door, exit fire escape)

VENTILATE ROOM BY OPENING DOORS AND WINDOWS WHERE YOU ARE ABLE

WIPE DOWN SURFACES, CHAIRS & WHAT YOU HAVE USED AFTER USE WITH ANTIBACTERIAL SPRAY (available in kitchen)

EXIT VIA REAR FIRE DOOR & RAMP
(Ensure front door locked last to leave)

Please help to maintain a safe church environment for us all

From Phil & Elders

Church Members and Attenders Survey

Another flavour of responses to the survey elders sent out

What have you missed about not worshipping together in the church building?

Warmth of people being together, the welcome, chatting with friends, being together with other Christians. Gathering as church. Church family encouragement, Holy Communion, praying together, a haven from the pace of life that coming to church offered, listening to the preacher in person (better focus) Hymn singing. I am always filled with such joy and feeling God's presence when singing. Saying grace together. Children being able to meet up. Meeting and developing together. Wider sense of Christian community and sense of common purpose and goals, Being able to worship God with a group of Christians all in one place. Praying together.

How important do you feel meeting together physically for prayer and worship

Very, when safe to do so. Imperative to grow our faith. Essential for our survival. Music, singing in worship is an important part of my faith and where I feel closest to God – doesn't work at home. No time/ space at home to hear God's word. Very important but not necessarily in large numbers. House group / buddy relationships much deeper spiritually and socially than Sunday services. To meet as a group of Christians I feel God's message comes alive. Important, but don't stop the online stuff, it's reaching out to people who wouldn't normally come. It is important, however I suspect it is not what God is using this time for. We need to think more creatively about how we do this.

Lockdown Musings By Sue Lawrence.

When I heard that Italy was in lockdown, back in March, and the people were confined to their homes except for essential journeys, I was shocked and found it hard to comprehend how they would manage to live under such restrictions.

Then, of course, it happened to us and we were very soon to find out!

I think that Sunday mornings, when the church doors suddenly closed, was one of the hardest changes to come to terms with.

How I missed the worship, the teaching, the fellowship, meeting up with the children in y.church, the church activities, including Tasters, and the hugs - and of course, I still do.

But sitting down at 10.00am each Sunday, with a cafetiere coffee and my iPad on my knee has become the new norm and I truly look forward to the powerful and moving services that we've been privileged to receive online.

And that's another thing! Who'd have thought, even just a year ago, that I would have regarded the internet as a blessing when for years I firmly believed that it was to be avoided whenever possible.

I believe that God has gently nudged me into an understanding that, not only can He work through people to shower His blessings on me, but also through technology and I am profoundly grateful for this revelation!

I can now participate in online worship, study the daily pages sent out by the Elders, be inspired by the vast

choice of worship songs available on YouTube, join Zoom meetings (bit of a lottery as to whether I press the right buttons, but I usually get there eventually) and communicate regularly with friends and family via this media.

The restrictions of lockdown for me personally, have been comparatively light, as I have no immediate dependants at home, good health, 4 wheels and, initially, more spare time than I would have liked.

However, it has been running parallel with this first year of trying to come to terms with the loss David, last October, and not every day has been easy.

Nevertheless, God has been with me unfailingly and each time the tears flow, He says to me:

"I am with you, I will never leave you, David is out of pain, at peace and in a much better place."

This is of great comfort to me.

God's timing is always perfect and I am so thankful.

He's also given me so many unexpected blessings during this time, (something that Wendy preached on not so many weeks ago) -- an Easter egg on my doorstep, a bunch of flowers on Mothers Day, an invitation to share a meal, a delivery of flowers on one particularly hard day for me, video clips of my Granddaughters popping up online, surprise phone calls and the list goes on and on. These are gifts from God and I know it's important to recognise them as such. I

was given a little book back in February called ' The Thankful Diary' - what an opportune gift! Each day, I am encouraged to write down 3 things for which I am thankful. Some days, that can be quite challenging but it's such a

good exercise in ' counting your blessings ' and not taking so many things for granted. One entry reads : ' a handful of rhubarb from a friend's garden!

A Christian friend of mine suggested that, as a way of keeping in touch, we could exchange a Bible verse each day by text - we've been doing it now since March. A double blessing - one, to receive a verse and another, to choose a verse to send. I can recommend it!

Like most folks, those first few weeks of warm sunshine at the beginning of lockdown led to a flurry of activity at home - discovering long overdue jobs, DIY challenges and long forgotten pastimes, all of which generated a huge sense of satisfaction.

But in addition to those things, came the opportunity to develop and establish strong relationships with other church folk in a way that would perhaps have not happened under normal circumstances.

It has been a privilege to have the time to pick up the phone and have meaningful conversations instead of just a few passing words at church. I've frequently been humbled by the cheerfulness and the positive attitude of people who are enduring very difficult times.

To be able to chat with them and support them in small, practical ways has been a blessing to me.

Because there have been less distractions and fewer deadlines to meet, I have been able to spend more time reflecting on and enjoying God's word and experiencing His love, presence and strength in my life. I believe that He has drawn me closer to Him and reminded me of the importance of committing each day to Him afresh and to

value the simple things in life - it is these that can bring the most pleasure and deepest contentment.

I once received a Birthday card in which were the words:

' There are always flowers for those who wish to see them'.

This is a true adage in itself, but substitute the meaning of 'flowers" for 'God' and I think that's quite powerful.

God bless you and keep you,

Sue



This month has seen the rambling ladies walk to Ratby along the new footpath off Sacheverell Way, complete a circuit of Martinshaw Woods, and a very wet walk along the donkey track. There have been approximately ten ladies taking part on different weeks, two of whom have not been from church. So far our maximum number has been six, but we can always walk in two groups should the number rise above what is allowed.

All ladies are welcome to join this sociable, socially distanced ramble, usually on a Thursday from 10 am, taking approximately 1 1/2 hours.

Further information from Kathy:
kathygrace127@gmail.com, tel. 224 5095 or message
07964 785294

Reflections on our Church Building— from Kay Blick

Kay felt the following really spoke to her as she read her bible notes one day, back in August. It is from Daily Readings in New Daylight on 25th August, and are reflections by Geoff Lawson, based on 1 Kings: 13, 27-29.

“For many readers your church will be very special. A place you love where you feel a closeness to God.”

1 Kings chapters 6 & 7 describe Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem in such loving detail that one can visualise it. Though no remains of it have been discovered, *“it must have been magnificent, a fit dwelling place for God”*.

“But the writer of Kings raises an issue that still challenges us today. It concerns that tension between on the one hand, loving our church buildings and encouraging people to come along and worship, and on the other hand, teaching that God is not contained within the walls. The temple was the religious focus for the people of Israel but importantly, it was of huge cultural significance. There is an interesting parallel here—any clergy person can tell tales of people in the community of referring to ‘my church’ who yet never cross the threshold. Because of our cultural inheritance, there is a residual ‘feeling’ for the building.

Our church may be an important focus for our faith, but it may have a deep significance too”.

Kay reflects that God has financially enabled a lot of maintenance work to be carried out on our church building recently and that it continues to have a role to play in our witness to our community.

‘This passage really spoke to me about needing all the prayers we can say during our situation these days in not being able to go there but still needing to feel it’s closeness’. Kay

The reading continues with encouragement to reflect on the hymn ‘We love the place, O God’ by William Bullock 1854. This is not a hymn we’re likely to sing these days as we are more likely to consider that church is ‘without walls’ and that we the people are ‘church’. However, the building is something of a visual witness after we have left and returned to our home, our own four walls. The fact that it is well kept and its future invested in with new roof which can be seen by those passing, the hedge and car park are well maintained, and the cross of lights in the window at night. This also can tell people of God’s love, His presence, His care and His sacrifice.

Thank God for all those who have enabled our building to shine a light in the community over the years.

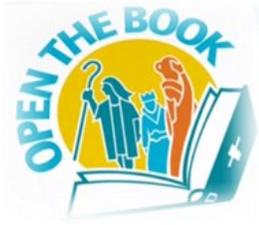
Lets pray for the effectiveness of this witness, even as the building is mostly empty of people at the moment. Lets pray for the effectiveness of our own witness wherever we are.

The current church noticeboard poster says:

Wherever you’ve been,
Wherever you’re going
You’re welcome here

Kathy.





For the foreseeable future we are still not able to go into schools to deliver the Open the Book presentations, so we have just recorded two more stories for the schools to use in November.

The stories are quite a contrast. The first being ‘the Greedy Farmer’ which covers Jesus’ story of the farmer who stored up his grain in bigger barns and wouldn’t share with anyone. The second one ‘Everyone Gets the Same’ covers Jesus’ story of the vineyard owner who pays all his workers the same, regardless of how long they have worked.

After each story there are some reflections for the children. For these stories they are –

‘And now let’s think about this – if being rich isn’t important, then what is?’

‘Think about all the people who take care of you and give you what you need because they love you, not because you deserve it.’

Please continue to pray for the school children of our villages, pray that God’s Word will reach them through the recorded assemblies we and Rev Ed provide.

Pray that God will give wisdom to those from the churches considering how the work with families and children can be taken forward.

The work of the Open the Book team is so important, particularly without the other church activities for children at present. Prayer support for this work is so important – thank you to those that do.

The team is every changing and over the coming months I need to handover my role as co-ordinator to others. Others within the team can takeover some of what I do, but the team needs someone to look after the sets & props which are stored in the loft at the URC, and who will be responsible for getting these down and to/from the schools for the presentations.

Please contact me to find out more about this.

David - local Open the Book co-ordinator



The coronavirus crisis has changed the way we see the world. It's reminded us of the fragility of life and exposed deep inequalities in society. As churches and communities adapt to find new ways to be a light in the darkness, many are reimagining what life could be like.

We don't have to go back to the old system that keeps people living in poverty and damages the environment. Together, we can protect those most vulnerable in this crisis, and reboot the economy in a fair, sustainable way. We're calling for a world that allows every person to flourish – along with all of creation.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a better reality together.

Ruth Valerio is an author and theologian. As Tearfund's Director of Global Advocacy and Influencing, she sets out why, as Christians, we should care about climate change.

She writes “ As Tearfund continues to campaign to tackle the climate crisis, here are my reflections on why this is a disaster that the church cannot ignore.

A beautiful yet broken world

Creation was made by Jesus, through Jesus and for Jesus (Colossians 1:16). That's a stunning declaration of our planet's worth. This is a world of awe-inspiring beauty, a world that God has created teeming with life – full of diversity and abundance and colour.

The Bible shows that God, people and the natural world are deeply interconnected. If one aspect of those relationships is broken then everything will be impacted (see, for example, Amos 8). We don't have to look very far to see evidence of this: racial injustice, gender inequality and environmental breakdown.

The climate crisis is wreaking havoc in our world, putting millions of lives at risk. It's intensifying global threats such as extreme weather events, sea-level rise and melting glaciers. The overwhelming scientific consensus is that this is a human-made problem, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, releasing heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide.

We are seeing the outworking of a global system built on greed and overconsumption – one that is fundamentally at odds with God's original intention for the world. We're reaping what we've sown.

Climate change is a justice issue

In my work with Tearfund I see all too clearly the impact of climate breakdown on people in poverty as it affects their health, access to food and their security. As global temperatures rise, rains are becoming less reliable and droughts, floods and storms are becoming more frequent and extreme. For those who are already vulnerable, this is a life-threatening emergency that is pushing them further into poverty. The climate crisis is a justice issue.

This is even more evident when we reflect on what it means that we're made 'in the image of God' (Genesis 1:26–28).

Firstly, it speaks of the absolute equality between people. Acting justly means not only responding to the needs of our immediate communities, but also looking to our global

neighbours living in countries that do not have the financial protection or healthcare that we do. Secondly, being made in the image of God defines our relationship with the whole of creation. We are God's representatives, created to serve and look after the rest of what he has made.

As Christians and churches we have a crucial role in calling for, and working towards, a world that allows everyone to flourish – one that enables us to live in harmony with the rest of creation. To turn this into reality, and to prevent further harm to our global neighbours, we must urgently tackle the climate crisis together.

Leading the way forward

As followers of Jesus, through whom all things were made, let's be at the forefront of protecting and restoring his creation. The climate crisis is a huge and urgent challenge that requires all of us to play our part. Iks in Proverbs 31:9 says: 'Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.' We are called as Christians to stand up for justice, calling on those in positions of power to make decisions that protect the most vulnerable people and the Earth we all rely on. Let's keep standing together in prayer and action to see a breakthrough in the climate crisis”.

Tearfund's campaign is ongoing with emails and letters to the Prime Minister, including a reusable, homemade face mask saying, 'Don't mask the climate emergency.' Please keep praying for impact, and for the safety of those living in poverty who are most vulnerable to both Covid-19 and the changing climate. Look out for more info. Look out for our Ruth's 'Global Justice Footprints'.





FORTHCOMING DATES

Church Prayer meetings via zoom are at 7.30 pm, October 7th and 21st. A link to access these events will be sent out via email near to the date

2020 prayer: Tuesday 20th October at 20 past 8. (20.20 h). For prayer at home.

Praise Juke box: Wednesday 14th October.

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November 2020 ISSUE

Deadline **SAT 24th October 2020**

Please submit articles to magazine@grobyurc.com by the above date, preferred via email.

This magazine is published in print and on the church website, grobyurc.com. If you would like to be added or removed from the paper copy distribution list or the monthly hyperlink email list, please let Mark or Kathy know.

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janesnips@hotmail.com

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Our regular Sunday morning worship in the building is at 10am and follows Government guidelines on social distancing. It is streamed live or recorded via Facebook and can be found on the Groby United Reformed Church page each Sunday at 10 am. Our worship normally includes monthly Holy Communion. The church building has a loop hearing system, wheelchair access, a toilet for the disabled & baby nappy changing facilities.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Our weekly activities are currently suspended at the present time, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, and normally include parent and toddler groups, children and youth activities, Fair Cuppa at the Groby Village Hall and Groby Tasters. Some of these activities run as part of 'Churches Together in Groby'.

Home groups offer support during the week—see an elder for details. All elder contact details are on page 4.