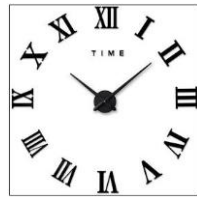


St Peter & St Paul West Mersea Newsletter – November 2020



Time, Time, Time!



Some thoughts by Brian Snelling

An African bishop asked why is it that we in the West have so many clocks while those in Africa have so much time...

In this strange time of Covid 19, whilst some, such as those in the medical profession, are rushed off their feet, many of us have more time than we know what to do with. Gardens have looked immaculate, at least until the rigours of Autumn hit them. New hobbies are being developed, or in my case resurrected – a new, smaller version of a model railway layout. Some are simply lonely with too much time on their hands and seemingly nothing to do with it. Ecclesiastes famously tells us that “There is a time for everything...” (Ecc 3:1).

Time is surely one of God’s greatest gifts, to be used for His glory. Time for the Bible (October 25 in the Church calendar is Bible Sunday). Perhaps read through an entire book of the Bible in one sitting – on Zoom we have read Ruth, next we will be looking at Jonah. Or you may choose a Gospel – Mark is the shortest and probably the most ‘readable’. We have more time for prayer. More time to ring those who perhaps are struggling with loneliness. More time to do something that I find especially challenging, looking more deeply into my own heart and life and my relationship with God.

Jesus told the story of a nobleman who entrusted his servants with various amounts of money and went away. On his return he asked the servants how well they had invested his money. Profits ranged from good to nothing! You can read the parable starting at Luke 19:12. We may have been entrusted with much or little money, but we all have the same amount of time.

Perhaps prophetically, JR Tolkein’s hobbit Frodo said to the wizard Gandalf: “I wish it need not have happened in my time.” “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.”



Something New.....

Try something new when you can't get out and about. Pat Kirby is learning to play the ukulele....

Music in a Garden

It all began last January when I joined a group of beginners learning to play the ukulele with Marica Frost. Someone loaned me an instrument, & I went along to Marica's house with about half a dozen others. First we learned a few basic chords, and were soon playing these to accompany some familiar songs.

It is amazing how many songs can be sung with just 3 chords. The easiest one we learned was the tune to Frere Jacques which used one chord. We quickly learned an English set of words - easier to remember.-

Gin & Tonic (x2) Ice cubes too (x2) Add a slice of lemon (x2) Here's to you (x2)
Now **you** can remember them as well.

Over the following weeks we learned different ways of *strumming* to produce various rhythms, and also *picking*, which uses each of the 4 strings individually. More chords were introduced and our fingers began to pick up the ways of changing from one to another. Our folder of new songs began to grow; some are folk songs, others are from the 60s & 70s, so we felt we knew the tunes even if the words sometimes confused us. **THEN came Lockdown.**

We could no longer meet; - then we discovered Zoom! Well, it was better than nothing, but we all experienced some difficulties. We could hear Marica, but she could not hear us. She sent us more sheets of words and we managed to learn a few more chords, but having a discussion about individual difficulties was not possible.

Then there was a relaxation in the rules and we were able to meet in gardens. So Marica's front garden became the new teaching area, and we were all socially distanced, with never more than six of us meeting at any one time.



That was fine during the summer months, and the sunshades were very helpful. Then came the great innovation of 2 fine strong gazebos with vented roofs and strengthened roof struts. The two gazebos are tied together, and have sandbags at the foot of each leg. They are erected in the back garden close to a thick hedge and we can all meet there and continue our playing. As long as we have warm clothing and have extra layers, we will be OK for a long time. I have visions of us moving towards fingerless gloves next.

Each session starts with us practicing certain chord changes, slowly at first then speeding up a bit. Then those chords are used in the next sequence of songs. At any time, if anyone needs help, that it dealt with, and we all have experienced the encouragement of Marica's personal approach.

A big THANK YOU from all of us

We thoroughly enjoy our sessions in the garden, and I understand that the neighbours do too.

We also enjoy the delights of the garden, but have not yet enjoyed Gin & Tonic, with or without ice cubes.

Pat Kirby

Ann Colemans garden

Ann has worked hard during the summer to make her garden more nature friendly and although gardens take years to develop and grow she hopes to see more wildlife and maybe a squirrel!



Sandra Game is busy knitting and has also learnt to crochet



Pete Rudlin - Congratulations

Peter Rudlin has been awarded the coveted Gold Award for his services to Neighbourhood Watch in Mersea Island and Colchester for more than 20 years. Peter takes his work very seriously and cares passionately about Mersea which has always been his home. Peter says that Mersea is not immune to crime and it's all about keeping our eyes and ears open and supporting each other.

Peter and his wife Cindy are valued members of St Peter and St Paul's church in West Mersea where they do much to support church activities. Peter uses his skills to help look after the fabric of our church. Thank you Peter.



News



The Mission was instrumental in providing invaluable support to an Indian Chief Officer who, on March 2nd of this year, together with his wife and 2-year-old son, arrived at the Fylde Nautical College, Blackpool, to study for his Master Mariner's Certificate. At that point in time he anticipated he would complete his studies and obtain his Master's Certificate, with the exam set for 1st April. But, on March 18th the Indian Government shut down all airports

in India. On 23rd March the UK Government shut down all universities and exams cancelled. Their return flight home, booked for 9th April, was cancelled with the airline refusing to refund their ticket fare. Here was this Chief Officer with wife and young child, having to continue pay the landlord, buy food and other necessities, in a foreign country and with very little money remaining. It was then that Chief Officer Ashwatth was put in touch with the Mission to Seafarers. In his own words "The Mission to Seafarers came up like a flying angel for help. As soon as we registered with the Mission they helped us to pay our rent and grocery costs". Chief Officer Ashwatth also sought help from the Mission for return flights back to India, and through the Mission, together with the Indian Embassy, the family were repatriated on 23rd April 2020.

Revd. Canon Andrew Wright, Secretary General, The Mission to Seafarers, expresses his sincere heartfelt thanks for the gifts that help provide security, stability and hope for seafarers such as Chief Officer Ashwatth.

John Talbot September 2020

STOP PRESS!!

The centre at Felixstowe is open again so keep knitting those hats!
Jigsaws also welcome

Family News!

We have recently become proud Foster Grandparents! Some of you may remember our son, Mark who lives in Co. Durham. After nine months (comparable to Pregnancy!), he and his wife Emma are officially foster parents.

They have two children, Sadie aged 7 and Kenzie aged 10, who have settled well and enjoying pet chickens, Yaz and Alfie the dogs, and Rowena the horse!!

It was a massive adjustment for them all and we long to meet them which, of course, is impossible with current restrictions.

No photos are permitted as social services would be 'on our case'!

We would value your prayers for this new family unit.

Thank you Sue & Alan H



Thanks!

Brenda Diprose and her family would like to thank everyone who sent so many beautiful cards with such touching words in memory of her husband Ted. She would also like to thank those who left flowers on her doorstep. The service in church was very moving and it was so good to see people outside paying their respects. Thank you everyone who helped to make the day special.



4th August 1930 – 15th September 2020

MacMillan Haircut



Val would like to thank everyone who gave so generously when Ray cut off 50cm (20ins) of Val's plait to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support instead of having a coffee morning limited by covid regulations. She has been able because of the overwhelming response to bank £750 which is amazing. Thank you.

I went into the church this morning with Sarah & Richard Phillips-Pearce. They fitted two new chair pads to the Bishop's Chairs. The pads are made from multiple layers of hessian, wool, Dacron, fire resistant material and have a brown leather topping. I think that they look very good and Richard has done a very good job. I have attached a photograph
Barbara Peter



Make a joyful noise unto the Lord

I have a bittersweet story to share with you all. After well over three years of discussions and proposals with the church, I am delighted to announce that we have finally installed our new sound system in the church.

It was early 2017 when I first approached the church to consider updating the audio-visual equipment in the church to support worship, funerals, weddings and community projects. Out of the initiative was born the Community and Church Together Venture (CCTV), which launched into action to fundraise around £15K for the new equipment.

Everyone got involved with donations and practical support given by many including the Friends of the Church. We saw the delights of the 30-hour music marathon and many carefully crafted events put on by the CCTV team.

My inspiration for the project came from the simplest of Christian values, to love and support one another - to open up the church building to our wonderful community here on Mersea Island. And so, as the money started to rise, we were able to start specifying the kind of sound system that would cater all of the needs of the church and the wider community.

Peter Banks and Pete Easy headed up a team to find the right kind of supplier to work with and the right kind of kit. The job was not an easy one. We spoke to many different people and visited many sites to see what other churches have done. Spending such a vast amount of the community's money is a big responsibility and we wanted to make sure we got it right. The Lord answered our prayers when we came into contact with Ron Knight who is the director of MediaGrove Productions.

A good Christian and a great sound engineer, we realised that we had found the man who understood the vision.

After many meetings, proposals, budgets and revisions we were finally in a position to turn our dream into a formal Faculty Request. We met with the local Faculty Team, answered all their questions and with the support of the Arch Deacon Ruth, secured the request earlier this year to start work.

You may or may not have noticed any difference in the church when you walk in. The speakers have been colour matched to fade into the background of the building.

Just this morning, one of the church vergers asked me where the speaker was for the microphone. When I pointed them out she realised that she hadn't even noticed them. You might not see them but you will hear them. The sound is now rich and gentle and wafts around the entire building. No more loud at the front and can't hear at the back. The system links with the hearing loop so that those who switch their hearing aids to receive the signal can hear everything.



At a funeral this morning, I was able to provide a link to Australia so that the Grandson of the deceased could be part of service.

He and his partner had front row seats with the live link being streamed from my computer. It was very emotional to see him being able to be part of the service; listening to his Mum and Dad pay tribute to his Grandfather.

He recorded a poem that I was able to play through the new system and it sounded like he was in the church with us. At the end of the service you could clearly see the emotions taking over for both him and his family.

This could not have happened without the new technology in the church.

I must pay special thanks to Ron Knight for all his hard work in quietly and methodically installing all of the sound equipment on his own whilst the church was closed during the first lock down. His work has been exemplary. He has worked closely alongside Alan Brook who has ensured he got all the access he needed to install all the equipment without disruption to the working church.

I have had the delight of using the system for a few funerals and a couple of rehearsals for my choir, Amoroso.

The bitter side of my story is that, sadly, we cannot make good use of the system at this time. After writing a detailed risk assessment and method statement, I arranged rehearsals with Amoroso as a test run to bring more music back into our church. But, as we entered Tier 2 of the Covid Alert Level, I received notification from the Churchwardens that rehearsals had to stop.

Even though I had created a Covid-19 Secure environment, the decision made in consultation with Churchwardens and Standing Committee members, was that music rehearsals could no longer take place in church during this phase of the pandemic.

Personally, I think this is a disappointing decision to have made. The Government, Musicians Union and the Royal School of Church Music all recognise and support the continuation of music making at both amateur and professional levels; as long as a Covid-Secure environment is being provided. Alan Brook who attended the first Amoroso rehearsal was very happy with our procedures. I was hoping to build on that success to bring back Pianissimo, Vocalise and PP+, all who have supported the Church, both in worship and/or fundraising.

I very much wanted to be able to prepare and share some music as we head through these dark winter nights towards Christmas. But for now, this is not going to happen at the church.

I am delighted to share with you that the MICA has offered Amoroso a new home in which to rehearse; an offer that those who sing with me are truly grateful. Much as these times are hard I believe that we must find a way to live with Coronavirus, not hide in fear of it. The damage being done to people's well-being must be taken into consideration.

Music lifts the spirits, nourishes the soul and gives a moments respite from the gloom of Covid.

Our church has worked very hard over the last few years to bring the community closer to the church. I don't want to see this work undone through Covid and really hope that soon we will be able to open up our church to the community and run a second music marathon to say thank to you all those people who worked with us to make this amazing project come together.

Ian Jewitt Music Co-ordinator



Notices

Church of England's Children's Society

Despite the fact that due to COVID19, I was unable to collect the Children's Society boxes earlier in the year, I would like to collect as many as possible before the end of November. This will enable me to send the Society a donation from their supporters here in Mersea before Christmas. However, the PCC did very generously donate £500 earlier this year. If you are able to bring your collection box to church, that would be most helpful. If however, you are unable to do so, could you please contact me via Val Bocking to arrange collection. Unfortunately, we will be unable to have a Christingle Service this year.

The Children's Society is a national charity, working with young people to support them and transform their lives, even when they are living through the most serious of life's' challenges. The Society campaigns tirelessly for the big social changes that will improve the lives of those who need help the most. They have been doing this for 140 years and will not stop until a society has been built where hope is alive in every child and young person.

Georgie Hewes

Local Hon. Sec. The Children's Society

West Mersea

The Sunday Morning 10am Zoom Services of United Worship & Spiritual Communion will continue for the foreseeable future.

Sundays 8am Book of Common Prayer communion service. Only wafers will be offered to communicants, not wine

Wednesday 10am Holy Communion or Prayer service. The church is open for private prayer 09:30 until 12:00 Midday

East Mersea

We are opening on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

Sunday Morning: 09:30 service only at present.

Great Wigborough

St.Stephen's will remain closed due to ongoing refurbishments and concerns regarding safety for private prayer.

If you have any news and/or photos for our December Newsletter, please send them to Val Bocking on bocking@keme.co.uk or phone 01206 386750

Stay Safe, Keep Praying and thank God for all the positives

Val Bocking - Editor