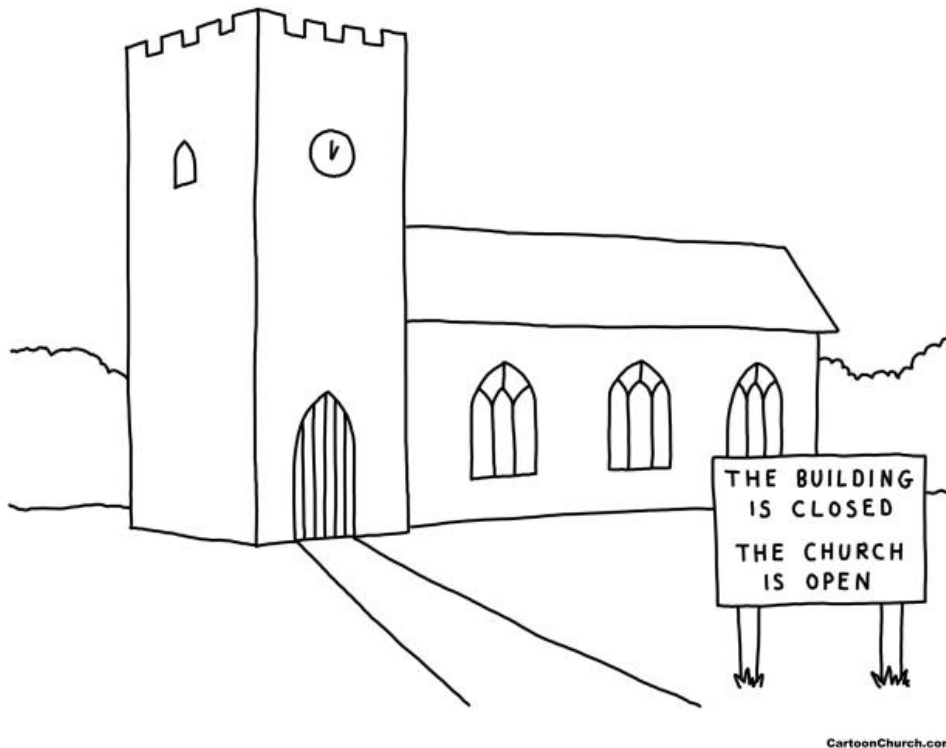




# *The* **HIGHLANDER**

## **May 2020**

**The monthly newsletter of Highlands Methodist  
Church, Leigh on Sea**



CartoonChurch.com

Find more information at: [www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk](http://www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk)



Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church



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# **Highlands Methodist Church**

## **Hospitality in the Midst of our Community**

All telephone numbers are '01702' unless stated

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Church Treasurer	David Watson	555702
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Pastoral Co-ordinator	[Vacant]	
Church Flowers	Jean Edmonds	525250
Lettings/Use of Premises	Les Davis	558381
Older Persons' Worker	Julie Peek	479804

## **From your Minister**

'Lockdown', because of the Coronavirus, is pretty rubbish! So much we are not able or allowed to do, so much fear and anxiety for ourselves, friends and loved ones and the uncertainty of the future - how long will it last? But the worst of all is news of people we know who have contracted 'the virus' and even died.



However, it's also true to say that many of us have found ourselves finding ways to connect and do things we never thought possible! Over 40 people each day receive and read an email from Kathy. About the same number join us for worship, online, using Zoom<sup>1</sup>- I am certain many of us never dreamed that we would be doing that. How many are shopping online for the first time in their lives?

I also suggest that in some ways we're more in touch with each other now than we have been in the past. Of course, there are family and friends we're not able to see; but then I'm sure some of our folks get far more phone calls than they ever got before. Some of us have even discovered Skype or Facetime<sup>2</sup>.

It is such a joy for me as your minister to see the emails of comfort and encouragement we're all sending, and when I ask about someone there are always people who have been in touch

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<sup>1</sup> An online conferencing tool, designed for business use but also great for worship, as it shares speech and instantaneous video with up to 100 computer users

<sup>2</sup> Skype provides video calls between mobile telephones. FaceTime is the iPhone version. You may also have heard of another similar product call WhatsApp.

with them, either by phone, or by have 'bumping into' them on their daily walk. (Not literally 'bumping' - social distancing wouldn't allow that!).

As many of you will know we've extended our Zoom activity to Tuesday morning's prayer meeting, and even managed a Stewards' meeting. One of the things we had to consider as Stewards was how things were going financially in the church. We've obviously lost all our rental income, and without coming together for worship we don't even have our regular offerings. Having spoken with David our treasurer, he tells me that some people have set up a Standing Order to the church, and others have made generous gifts. As well as this we obviously have less outgoings and David is doing all he can to limit these as much as possible, but there are still things to be paid.

Elsewhere in the Highlander David is sharing his thoughts with us on this, but my main concern is the fact that, as Jesus said,

*"...it is more blessed to give than to receive!"* (Acts 20:35)

The very heart of our Christian walk is the desire God puts within us to give, serve and share and so I want to encourage us all to be as creative in this area of our 'lockdown' lives as we have been with other things. They always say, "...where there's a will there's a way..." so let's find a way to be blessed in our giving financially as we have been blessed by finding ways to love and support each other.

Love and appreciate you all,

God bless, Norman.

<p><i>Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.</i> John 16:24</p>
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## **Lockdown Update\***

*How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?*  
Psalm 137 (NIV)

It does indeed seem that we are in a foreign land, but we are managing to reinvent church online using 'Zoom', both for Sunday services and for Tuesday morning prayer meetings. Check your emails or the Facebook page for details, which may vary.

And if you think that your particular group would benefit from an online meeting (with audio, real-time video, still images and music all available) please contact me or Norman and we'll set it up.

Andrew

\*or should that be 'Lockup Downdate'?

## **From the Editor**

*Touch comes before sight,  
before speech. It is the first  
language, and the last, and it  
always tells the truth.*

Margaret Atwood  
*The Blind Assassin*



Watch a politician, especially but not necessarily a male, working a crowd. He liberally shares handshakes – firm, but not uncomfortably so and, importantly, never limp. Sometimes he'll deploy the double grab, and if he really wants to make you a friend, he might put his left hand behind your right elbow and pull you gently in. Further escalations of the greeting are achieved by means of the shoulder

squeeze, or the full hug.

I've had the privilege of being present at births and at deaths of other human beings. There was little or nothing I could do to affect the outcomes of these events. But I could and did hold the hand of a dying person, and I touched the exquisitely soft smooth skin of a new-born baby. These were, for me, profound moments, which in some way made a difference to the humans I touched.

It is very clear that touch is an important part of how humans communicate, not just at the beginning and end of life, but all the way through it. We have words and gestures, of course, but touch is vital to us. Humans can and do manage without sight and hearing, but our haptic sense is the first one to develop as we grow as a foetus. It is common to every human, and no human can live without it. Physical touch (I read) actually does make you healthier. Apparently, hugs, massages and holding hands all reduce levels of stress and boost the immune system.

(Before anyone else points it out, there are right and wrong ways to touch other people. We need not dwell on this, except to say that everyone must learn the difference between 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate'. In the past we may have shrugged off bad behaviour or brushed it under the carpet. We are more likely to confront it nowadays, and our society is better for it.)

An obvious consequence of coronavirus is that we are no longer free to make physical contact with each other however we want. For many, being touched is something they quite keenly miss. An older person living alone might long to once again cuddle a grandchild. We can only long for and pray for the crisis to ease.

But what of the meantime? We must rely on sight and sound to give and receive messages of love and friendship. Telephone, email, social media, video links and clapping on our doorsteps on a Thursday evening are all available. But there is no substitute for the warmth and meaning of human touch.

So until this crisis ends, try to 'stay in touch' even though physical touch is not possible or advisable. For now, the best we can do is give a friendly greeting by word of mouth, by telephone, email, 'Zoom' or over the back fence. And if you happen to meet someone (at least 2 metres distant) who seems to have run out of smiles...

...give 'em one of yours! You're sure to get it back.



### **Puzzle of the Month<sup>3</sup>**

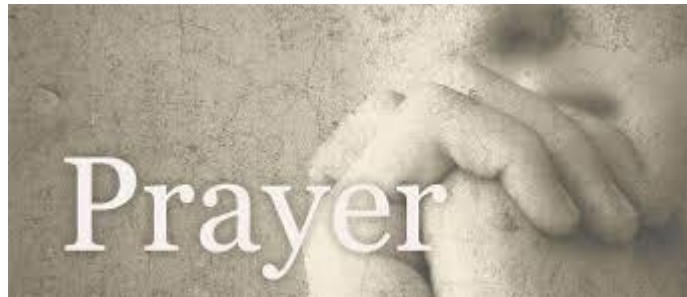
We all love a good howler. So here are three priceless examples of mistakes that I have seen and enjoyed. All you have to do is say in each case what the mistake is.

1. From a newspaper report: 'The average UK temperature for the month of February just ended was nearly 9°C (48°F). This exceeded the average for February by 5°C (41°F)'
2. On a pub doorway: 'The management apologises for any inconvenience during work on our refurbishment and hopes you will bare with us until it is completed.'
3. Local newspaper headline, again concerning a pub:  
'LANDLADY THAT RED LION CUSTOMERS DON'T WANT TO RETIRE'

<p><i>Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.</i> Psalm 100:2</p>
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<sup>3</sup> Answer on p22



**We pray for** our friends who are ill, housebound or bereaved and for those in residential care: Jean Burgess in *St Martins Care Home*, Doll Edwards in *The Cedars* and Marie Moore at *Rosedale Court, Rayleigh*. Marie would welcome visitors. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families.

Maureen writes: Let's pray for both residents and staff in the care homes, naming particularly the people we know, like Steve's wife Doris, and residents Jean Burgess and Marie Moore. And let's remember Sandra Harrison in Southend Hospital with a heart condition. She has been in for a few days and is hoping to be home by the time you read this.

Trevor Metcalfe is also very ill in hospital as I write this.

### **We remember**

- Marcin Kowalski. A Polish homeless guy who was always ready with a smile and a hug. Sometimes in trouble, but he always thanked anyone who showed him friendship.
- Pat Gare whose family and friends we remember in our prayers
- Betty Hall's brother John Slade

<p><i>Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'</i> John 21:16</p>
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## **Congratulations**

David and Eira Sperring on the arrival of Iolo Dewi<sup>4</sup> on 14 April 7lb 9oz and thriving. Diolch i Dduw.

Keith Carter who achieved the distinction of a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 5 April.

## **Thanks**

To everyone in the NHS who has the task of caring for people struck down by the Coronavirus, and their support staff.

To everyone working in care homes. Well done to Sam Monaghan who has been a clear and sensible spokesman on radio and TV for Methodist Homes for the Aged and for the whole sector.

They have to carry out their duties regardless of risk; if this is a war then they are at the front line.

## **From Our Mission Enabler for Older People**

Four weeks ago, I started an email with the line 'it's been a funny ol' week'. As I sit and reflect on that, it's made me realise that funny ol' week has turned into an even funnier ol' month.

When I first became Older People's Worker for Wesley and Highlands four years ago, I could never have anticipated the situation we all find ourselves in today. The ways in which we share fellowship and worship have been overturned. Almost all the activities that I helped create or supported are not possible at the moment.

However, we are a resilient bunch, and like those little mustard

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<sup>4</sup> Lovely Welsh names in case you were wondering. Roughly equivalent to 'Edward David'.

seeds we are growing up and finding new ways to be Church.

Zoom has been a bit of a revelation to me; didn't even know it existed a month ago, but I can honestly say the last 3 weeks of Zoom services have been some of the most spiritually uplifting church services I have ever attended. If you haven't yet dipped your toe in the Zoom world and would like to give it a go give Andrew a ring. You only need a telephone line to join.

The saddest part of the current lock down for me is not being able to lead prayers at Westerley Care Home or lead Memory Worship service for those with or without dementia at Wesley. Last week's challenge for me was to try to produce an online Memory Worship service for anyone feeling isolated to view in their own home.

My technical support came from Joe, my 17-year-old son; spiritual guidance was from Jill Campbell and between the three of us we published our first online Memory Worship service to YouTube. I would be so grateful if you could view this (you do can do it at any time that suits you) and send me your feedback. All you need to do is search 'Memory Worship' on YouTube; or if you are reading *Highlander* online, follow this link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6czC3IseMtA>

Keep safe, Keep caring, Keep praying

Julie

☎01702 479804

*I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*  
Philippians 4:11

## **Poem (1) for May**

### **Lockdown by Pam Ayres (1947 - )**

Pam Ayres was in the WRAF<sup>5</sup> before her life was changed by winning TV talent show *Opportunity Knocks* (remember that? Me neither) in 1975, by reading her own poems in her own distinctive North Berkshire accent. She lives now in the Cotswold with husband Dudley Russell, and they have two sons, William and James, several beehives, and a herd of rare-breed cattle.

This is her (not entirely serious) take on the present crisis. There is a serious poem for you later in this issue. Our lawyers ask us to say that this one is definitely not published here with anyone in mind.

I'm normally a social girl  
I love to meet my mates  
But lately with the virus here  
We can't go out the gates.

You see, we are the 'oldies'  
now  
We need to stay inside  
If they haven't seen us for a  
while  
They'll think we've upped and  
died.

They'll never know the things  
we did  
Before we got this old  
There wasn't any Facebook  
So not everything was told.

▶ We may seem sweet old ladies  
Who would never be uncouth  
But we grew up in the 60s -  
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and  
rock 'n roll  
The pill and miniskirts  
We smoked, we drank, we  
partied  
And were quite outrageous  
flirts.

Then we settled down, got  
married  
And turned into someone's  
mum,  
Somebody's wife, then nana,  
Who on earth did we become?

---

<sup>5</sup> The Women's Royal Air Force was a separate service until 1994

We didn't mind the change of  
pace

Because our lives were full  
But to bury us before we're  
dead  
Is like a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck  
inside  
For 4 weeks, maybe more  
I finally found myself again  
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me  
I'd while away the hour  
I'd bake for all the family  
But I've got no flaming flour! ---



→ Now Netflix is just wonderful  
I like a gutsy thriller  
I'm swooning over Idris  
Or some random sexy killer.

At least I've got a stash of  
booze  
For when I'm being idle  
There's wine and whisky, even  
gin  
If I'm feeling suicidal!

So let's all drink to lockdown  
To recovery and health  
And hope this awful virus  
Doesn't decimate our wealth.

We'll all get through the crisis  
And be back to join our mates  
Just hoping I'm not far too  
wide  
To fit through the flaming  
gates!

*The Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.*

Isaiah 49:13

## **A Treasurer writes:**

Overburdened by the lack of spending opportunities during the lockdown? The Church can help you with this, and you can help the Church.

Most of our funding comes from lettings. These of course have now dried up. Even if Churches are allowed to reopen in the near future, this is likely to be with strict social distancing rules, which would preclude most, if not all, of the Clubs etc. from restarting.



With the Church being closed the cost of utilities is substantially reduced and we are trying to minimise where we can, but we still have on going costs. Not least is the payment of the Assessment. This is a substantial amount which goes to the Circuit and is used largely to help meet ministers' salaries and housing costs.

We have recently received two generous donations, but at the moment our only consistent income is the monthly offerings paid by Standing Order (SO). Some have recently set up or increased their SOs and these currently amount to £515.00 per month.

So, to the crux of the matter. We need to raise more funds. If you would like to

- set up an SO<sup>6</sup>, or
- convert from envelope giving to a SO or
- make a donation direct to the Church

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<sup>6</sup> We claim Gift Aid on these, provided the donor qualifies. To qualify, you just need to be a basic rate Income Tax payer.

please use the following Bank details:

- Account name: Highlands Methodist Church.
- Sort Code: 30-94-26
- Account number: 00516684

Alternatively if you wish to donate by cheque make this out to Highlands Methodist Church and post or deliver to me at the following address:

David Watson 47 Berkeley Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2TD

You can also use the above method to post or deliver a cheque relating to envelope payments. Either send the envelopes themselves with the cheque or retain for recording purposes. Envelope system cash or indeed any cash is acceptable. This of course needs to be delivered.

We are also considering setting up a Just Giving page. Details to follow on the Highlands website, but please don't wait for this.

Thanks to you all. Stay Safe & Keep Washing Your Hands

## **Humour Corner**

A Fishy\* Story from Dorothy Allen

Some years ago I was standing in the Friday lunch queue at Southend Hospital. Next to me, waiting patiently, was the Senior Chaplain (a lovely man).

The queue moved slowly. Suddenly he turned to me and murmured quietly: 'Cod moves in a mysterious way.'

It still makes me laugh when I think of it.

\*but true

## **Dine with the homeless**

Although the council is now housing (most of\*) the rough sleepers in various hotels around town, they still need food which is delivered daily by heroic teams from Short Street and Love Southend.



We have been helping the Saturday evening team by providing desserts and then delivery. Last night, there were 181 meals to be prepared and delivered.

It's been a bit of a challenge to know what to cook, as the desserts have to be delivered in a paper/plastic bag. So obviously trifle is out! Over the weeks, we've provided apple pie, bread pudding, brownies, millionaire's shortbread and upside-down peach sponge. This last one was really delicious, nice and moist but still able to go into a bag. This recipe is below:

### **Ingredients**

#### **Sponge**

250g softened butter  
280g SR flour (or use plain with baking powder)  
250g caster sugar (or whatever sugar you have)  
½ tsp baking powder  
4 eggs  
150ml natural yogurt  
1tsp vanilla extract

#### **Topping**

2 tbsp caster sugar with 1 tbsp flour  
2 cans of 14 oz (400g) peach slices – or other fruit

Heat fan oven to 160° C (gas 4) and grease and then line a 20 x 30cm baking tin.

Sprinkle the flour/sugar mix onto the baking parchment that lines the tin and then arrange the peach slices on top.



Put all the sponge ingredients in a large bowl and beat until lump free. I did this in my food mixer, but you could do it by hand. It will be quite runny. Spoon into the tin, all over and around the fruit and bake in the oven for about an hour. Check with a skewer - it will come out clean when its cooked.

Cool in the tin for a while and then turn out onto a board or plate. Cut into squares and enjoy.

\*I say 'most of' because we met a former night shelter guest in Sainsburys carpark last night. Many of the rough sleepers are finding it difficult to follow the COVID-19 rules and L had been told to leave the B&B. He's finding it very difficult to get food at the moment as so many of the usual places are closed. Hopefully he will be rehoused in a different B&B next week.



## **Jobs for the Garden**

### **From our Special Gardening Correspondent**

With the recent good weather, there's been so much to keep me busy in the garden.

The potatoes that I started last month are now sprouting so I've



been earthing them up.

My tomatoes and seeds have all germinated and I have started to harden them off. The nights are still cold, so they need protection by either covering or moving back into the greenhouse. The seeds I planted directly into the ground need to be thinned out when they've grown their first true leaves.

Don't worry if you haven't sown seeds yet, it's not too late. And as it's warmer, you can put the seeds directly into the ground. Try carrots, beetroot, lettuce etc.

This is the time that you can start to take cuttings from deciduous shrubs such as dahlias, hydrangeas and fuchsias. Find a non-flowering shoot and trim below a leaf to make a cutting about 3 in (75 mm) long. Pinch out the tip and push into compost.

The temperature in the greenhouse is really starting to rise and my tomatoes don't like big fluctuations. I'm going to apply shading (as soon as I can get some) and open the windows during the day to keep the heat down. And then try to remember to shut those windows at night.

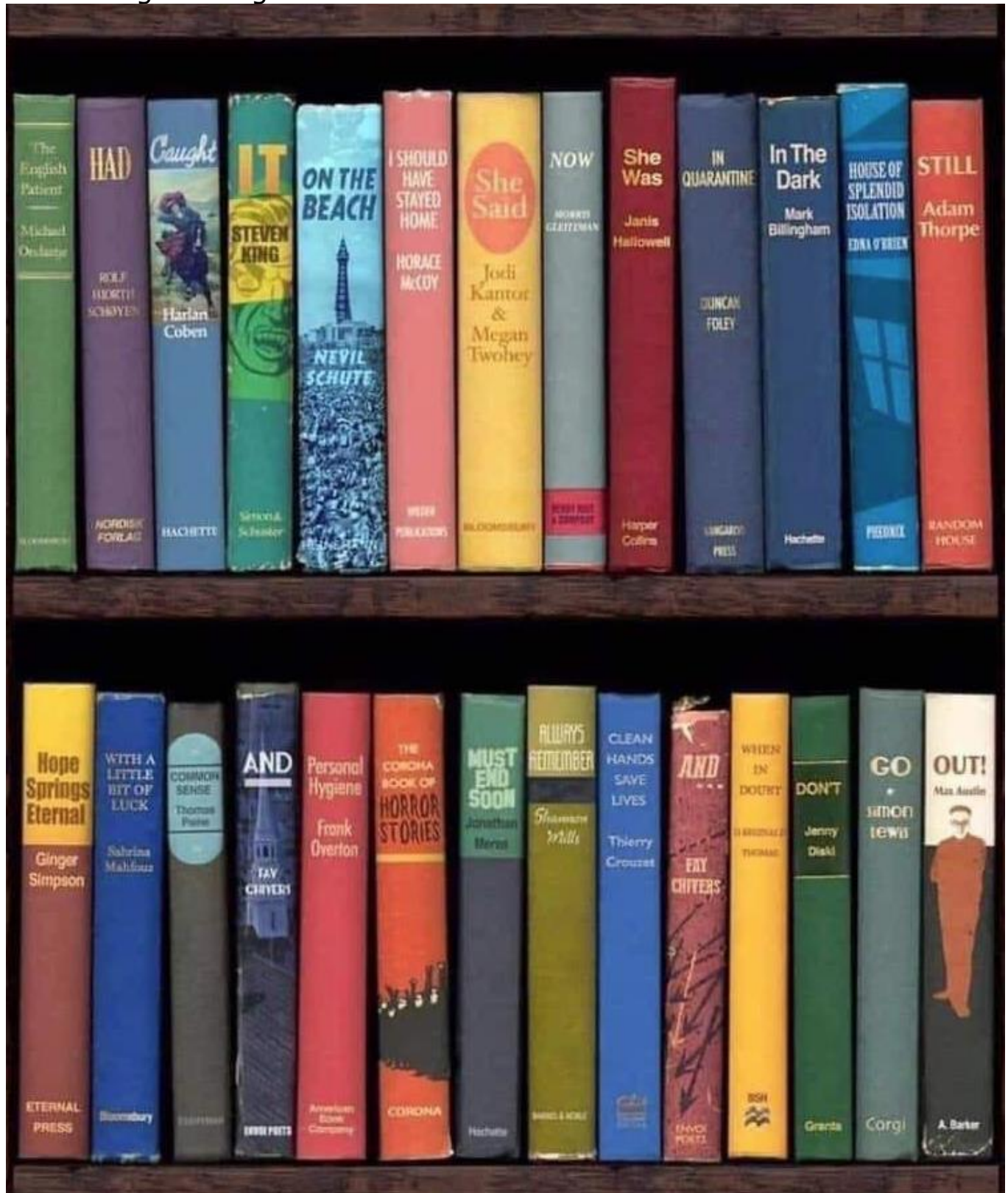
As well as keeping my pots and containers watered, I now need to give them a weak solution of feed every week.

I am so grateful for the local hardware shop that sells fertilisers and insecticides and will also deliver. Also, the garden centres that still take orders over the phone and will deliver too. I am so used to sharing seedlings and cuttings that it's difficult to change habits of a lifetime; but hopefully, this lockdown will soon ease.

Take care, enjoy your garden and look out for that promised rain. It's hard to believe that after all that rain earlier in the year, we're wishing for it now.

SGC

A sobering message from someone's bookshelves



## **Biographical Notes**

### **Donald Soper**

Well, there's a challenge. The editor suggested that I should write about someone for whom I had a high regard. Well, there are a number of people who fit that description, but one whom many of you will know of is the Reverend Lord Soper, Baron Soper of Kingsway. So, I turned to the internet to do some research.

He was the last of those nonconformist 'princes of the pulpit' whose eminence derived not from any ecclesiastical position or title, but from his force of personality and prophetic authority. For decades, he was one of the best-known churchmen in the UK, firing off pithy comments on any topical issue that the press or public cared to raise with him. He was a broadcaster's dream long before the term "soundbite" was coined. Having said that, he preached pacifism throughout WW2. He was deemed so influential that he was banned from broadcasting on the BBC.

Donald Soper was born in Wandsworth in 1903. It was likely, as his mother was a school headmistress, that a good education was expected for him and his two siblings. He attended what is now the Haberdashers' Aske's school in south London and thereafter to St Catharine's College in Cambridge. However, even when he was at school he is reported as saying he wished to be a religious preacher, so upon graduation he moved to Wesley House in Cambridge and was ordained in 1926.

His abiding passion was to deal with inner city poverty which he had witnessed in his youth; so he moved back to London. For ten years he was attached to various churches in and around the East End and became immersed in working with marginalised groups such as the homeless, unmarried mothers and alcoholics. Then from 1936 until his retirement in 1978, he was appointed minister of Kingsway Hall WC2, the West London Methodist Mission.

Even from his early days in London he felt such a passion that he wanted to take his message and challenge ordinary members of

the public, people who would not normally pass through the doors of a church. He found it quite restricting to preach just twice a week on a Sunday, so he moved to the open air. Like John Wesley, he became one of the great Christian apologists of our time, a defender of argument. Just as Wesley had, two hundred years previously, he took to the market place or public park, and in Donald Soper's case, went to Tower Hill (from 1942) and Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, where the public and journalists gathered to argue and interrogate. He espoused what came to be called soapbox oratory.

He became an active member of the Labour Party and much of his preaching was concerned with the political implications of the Christian gospel. Later in his life, he offended many conservatives by arguing fiercely that the policies of Margaret Thatcher were inherently incompatible with Christianity.

Methodism, socialism and pacifism were the three pillars of Donald Soper's thought and life, and he lived to see each in danger of decline: Methodism was numerically diminishing; true socialism was not to be spoken of amongst New Labour members; and pacifism was still not wholly adopted by Christians. He died in the aftermath of the bombing of Iraq, his grief tinged with bitterness that it should be the Labour Party that was in government at the time.

We are certain that Lord Soper came to Highlands, on one occasion at least, as Rosalie Bryant has a photograph of him with the stewards and Rev Harry Allen. On the back of the photograph, annotated by Rosalie's mother is the date: 1960ish.

Andrew Saville

<p><i>Let us not become weary in doing good.</i> Galatians 6:9 (Thanks to Kathy for sharing this and the other boxed verses)</p>
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## **Poem (2) for May**

### **Atlas by U A Fanthorpe (1929-2009)**

It seems to be a rule in successful human partnerships, probably but not necessarily romantic ones, the one partner is a dreamer, and the other is the sort of person who remembers where things are and when things need to be done. Being a contrite member of the first group, I offer this poem as a paean of praise to everyone who belongs to the second.

Ursula Fanthorpe was originally a teacher of English but had other roles as a secretary and hospital clerk before she took to writing poetry full-time. She lived in Gloucestershire with her partner Rosie Bailey, and her writings reflect aspects of her lifelong Quaker faith. This comes from a volume of her poetry called *Safe as Houses* (Peterloo Poets, 1995)



### **Atlas**

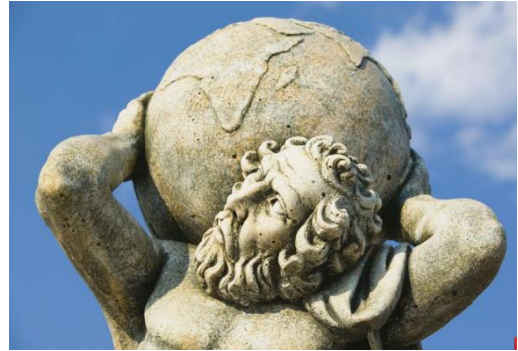
There is a kind of love called maintenance  
Which stores the WD40 and knows when to use it;

Which checks the insurance, and doesn't forget  
The milkman; which remembers to plant bulbs;

Which answers letters; which knows the way  
The money goes; which deals with dentists  
And Road Fund Tax and meeting trains,  
And postcards to the lonely; which upholds  
The permanently rickety elaborate  
Structures of living, which is Atlas.

And maintenance is the sensible side  
of love,  
Which knows what time and weather  
are doing  
To my brickwork; insulates my faulty  
wiring;

Laughs at my dryrotten jokes;  
remembers  
My need for gloss and grouting; which keeps  
My suspect edifice upright in air,  
As Atlas did the sky.



## **Puzzle of the Month**

1. Temperature is a relative measure (scale) that relies on an arbitrary starting point. The two commonest scales (called Centigrade and Fahrenheit) have different starting points. The *difference between* two temperatures is however an absolute measure. You can't use the same conversion method for both!
2. I think the management wants us to '*bear* with them', not '*bare* with them'. Not in a British climate anyway.
3. Sub-editors (who traditionally write newspaper headlines) seem to have their own language and grammar. In this case the headline has two possible meanings, which are completely opposed. What the article actually says is that the landlady's departure is lamented, not applauded.



# THE FOODBANK

WAYS YOU CAN HELP IN 2020



CartoonChurch.com

This cartoon is by Dave Walker, as is the one on the front cover. You can see more of his work at [www.cartoonchurch.com](http://www.cartoonchurch.com) and [www.davewalker.com](http://www.davewalker.com)

*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*

2 Corinthians 9:6

## **SERVING the COMMUNITY 7 Days a Week**

**Children and Young People**

**Fellowship Groups**

**Services to the Community**

**Social and Recreational**

These services are suspended at the moment. We hope of course that they can be restored soon.

For updated news keep following

[www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk](http://www.highlandsmethodist.org.uk)

or  Highlands (Leigh) Methodist Church

also [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) is an excellent source of information and inspiration.

Items for the June 2020 issue should be emailed to andrewghyde@aol.com before Sunday 24 April. No email? Don't despair; just telephone 473111 to arrange an alternative.

*Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?*

Matthew 6:26-27