

## BEXLEY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

### “CORONA CLARION” Issue 12: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020

It was good to see so many of our friends at Church on Sunday – there were about 25 of us in total. You can see us socially distanced & with face coverings below! (Guidelines say that the worship leader doesn't have to wear a face covering if they are 2m away, in case you were wondering!) We hope you enjoyed the service & will come again! If you couldn't attend due to the Covid-19 situation, be assured that we were thinking about you.



**Family news:** It is with great sadness that I have to report that our friend Geoff Birch passed away very suddenly following a heart attack in hospital on Wednesday September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our thoughts are with Sue Clark. There are no details about the funeral at the moment.

: Those of you who attended the Monday pm teas will also be saddened to hear of the death of Richard, who had fairly recently joined us & who used to sit on the 'men's table'. Richard passed away on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. His daughter thanks us for our welcome to him.

: Sandy Lewis is hoping to have a knee replacement op on Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>. We hope all goes well for her.

**Prayer calendar. Sept 13<sup>th</sup>:** Essie & Edward Boateng, Pam Collins, Christine Cornish; **Sept 20<sup>th</sup>:** Maureen Duncombe, Eileen Hayes. Please remember these friends in your prayers.

**Let me not be smug!** (From the URC Prayer Handbook 2020)

You know, Lord, sometimes there is a danger when I read your word; there is a danger that I might become a little bit smug; a bit self-righteous, knowing that the things I see written do not apply to me.

I have never engaged in debauchery or orgies or carousing – though I'm not sure what that means! I am not given to drunkenness, nor chasing after worldly pleasures. Reckless wild living? That doesn't describe the way I live my life, or ever have.

And yet, keep me from complacency; because I know I'm not perfect. I am only human – flesh & blood; the way you made me.

I have chosen paths I shouldn't have. Sometimes I still do. So open my ears to receive your message – even when the specific words do not seem to apply to me.

They *are* for me – because I am only human. And I am not perfect.

**The service used at church on Sept 20<sup>th</sup>** will be the same as the one you may be receiving from the URC, either by email or through the post. This way we hope that those of you who are unable to join us at Church will still feel part of the Church family.

**Church meeting** There will be a Church meeting following Sunday worship **on September 27<sup>th</sup>**.

**Elders' Election** Within the next few weeks you will be receiving your nomination forms for the Elders' Election, which will be held in November. Please take the time to consider, prayerfully, your nomination(s).

**Going forward** As you are aware, we have had no Sunday services or activities in the Church for the last 6 months, which we have never experienced before in the history of our Church since its opening in 1890. There is a need now for us to explore how we can go forward into the future to open up the Church & proclaim the Gospel message. We know that 'Church' will be different in the future because of the restrictions placed upon us by the Coronavirus. So a small group of our Church people plan to meet to look at our situation & present to the Elders some ideas of how we might go forward, particularly during this time when we are seeking a new Minister. This advisory group consists of: Tony Ball, Margaret Hunt (Salisbury Road), John Johnstone, Peter Roberts & Mavis Wilson. It would be much appreciated if you could let one of the group members know any of your ideas for the future so that together progress can be made. The group is relying on your prayers for wisdom & guidance to be given to them for the future of God's Church in Bexley. **Mavis Wilson**

### **Commitment for life-** Refugees Suffer under Lockdown

Nearly one million people live in the camps at Cox's Bazaar - one of the most densely populated places on earth - where social distancing very difficult. The Rohingya, who numbered about one million in Myanmar, are one of the many ethnic minorities in the country and have faced persecution for generations.

The latest exodus of Rohingya escaping to Bangladesh began in August 2017 after militants from a Rohingya insurgent group launched deadly attacks in Myanmar, it triggered one of the largest movements of people in recent history.

Life in Cox's Bazaar is tough. Authorities in Bangladesh cut mobile internet access to the sprawling, teeming camps in the country's southeast a year ago, citing security concerns, sparking international condemnation.

Foreign Secretary Masud bin Momen said recently that the spread of "baseless rumours and misinformation" could create panic and destabilise the camps. He has said that restrictions on 3G and 4G mobile networks, would be lifted very soon. The internet clampdown has disrupted communications between different camps, as well as with Rohingya still in Myanmar and elsewhere. It also complicated wire transfers of money from the Rohingya diaspora. Rights groups said the lack of internet access meant misinformation and rumours, particularly about the coronavirus, could spread unverified.

Some 750,000 Rohingya flooded across the border as they fled a military crackdown in Rakhine state in Myanmar in August 2017 that the UN has likened to ethnic cleansing, joining some 200,000 already in Bangladesh.

Your support for Commitment for Life may seem like a tiny droplet in a massive bucket of suffering, but for the refugees, your support is priceless. Our partner Christian Aid forms a vital part of the international support for Cox's Bazaar.

The URC's very own Diana Paulding is part of Christian Aid's Prophetic Activist Scheme. These young Christians are working for climate justice. The activists launched the Stop Fuelling the Fire Campaign, which is petitioning the UK government to end using UK Export Finance to fund fossil fuel projects overseas. Diana feels strongly about this issue, and with training from Christian Aid has, in collaboration with other activists, organised a petition to Boris Johnson. Please do sign their important petition at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/SFTF>

**In memory** – some time ago Geoff sent me the following aphorism – I thought now an apt time to print it, & I can imagine Geoff saying it! 'Better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt.'

### **Puns for Educated Minds**

When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.

A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.

**Answer** to common names for flowers in last issue's word search: convallaria is lily-of-the-valley & myosotis is forget-me-not.

**Blessing** Some months ago, earlier in the Covid-19 crisis, people from various Churches around the UK formed a virtual choir & sang a 'UK Blessing' over the nation. (You can see & hear it on Youtube) It's one that was spoken regularly at the Church I attended as a child & I'd like to end this issue of Corona Clarion with it:

God bless you & keep you. God make His face shine upon you & be gracious to you. God turn His face towards you & give you peace. **Amen**

