



December 20 - March 21

outlook

Newsletter of **Pond Square Chapel** – Highgate United Reformed Church



Website: www.admin@pondsquarechapel.org.uk

Minister: Rev'd David Currie Tel: 020 8444 9594 Email: davidepcurrie@gmail.com

Associate Minister: Rev'd Roger Orme: Tel: 020 8458 2144 Email: rogerorme12@gmail.com

Administrator: Patricia Judd Tel: 020 8341 5463 Email: admin@pondsquarechapel.org.uk

Treasurer: Robert Gorrie: 10 Wood Lane, Highgate N6 5UB

Joint editors: Dietrich Hauptmeier Email: dietrichh@gmail.com &

Michelle Swer Email: michelleswer@aol.com

Not So Much a Lockdown, More a Breaking In!

There's never been anything quite like it in recent times! In the past, the plague of Justinian struck in the 6th Century and killed as many as 50 million people, perhaps half the global population at the time. Then the Black Death of the 14th Century may have killed up to 200 million people. And 50 to 100 million people died in the 1918 influenza pandemic – numbers that surpassed the death toll of World War One, which was being fought at the same time. But it still comes as a shock to us, with all our expectations of infallibility as the result of modern scientific advancement, that an invisible virus can spread through most countries in the world and have such a dramatic impact on the way we relate to one another, the way we communicate, and the way we go about our education, business, and global trade.

Word of the Year

What a year then 2020 has been!!! It will certainly go down in history. In an effort to stem the spread of Covid-19 in those early months the Government decided the best course of action was to go into a period of 'Lockdown' - from 23rd March to June/July. We cautiously continued with 'virtual church' through August, but were back worshipping in our building again from 6th September to 1st November. Then into a 'Second Lockdown' all through November (at least that's the case as I write, hoping to be back in our building for December services, but who knows?). So, surprise, surprise - "lockdown" has been declared the word of the year for 2020 by Collins Dictionary.

It's the fact and the mystery of our world and of our human condition, isn't it? There are indeed dangers and threats which force us into lockdown -

physical conditions - potentially deadly diseases like coronavirus, or fear of attack during times of war ... and emotional conditions - health issues (physical and mental health), fear, trauma after the loss of a loved one, addictions, feeling of being trapped, stuck in a rut

And some would even suggest - "It's fine your God getting the whole enterprise of creation going, and then disappearing off to some remote corner of the universe to let us get on with it. It's as if he's away in lockdown!"

But not our God.

Good News

First, there is of course the good news that an effective vaccine has been found to combat the coronavirus. I write this article just days after Prof Sir John Bell, regius professor of medicine at Oxford University predicts "with some confidence" (9th Nov.) that things could return to normal by Spring. Of course the cynics will say we can't rejoice too quickly, but this is good news indeed!

So if I can now return to the crucial 'good news' we always celebrate at this time of year, and to that flawed picture of 'God in lockdown' we referred to earlier -

Not So Much a Lockdown, More a Breaking In!

Christmas is a very special time for this reason - the pictures we have of God around the narrative of the birth of Jesus are not that God is in lockdown, hiding away and letting us get on with it, but that God is 'breaking in' to our situation, to our dilemma, to our experiences of life, in the person of Jesus. Here's the way the scriptures put it -

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given ... and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' ..." (Isaiah 9:6)

"... 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel' (which means, God with us). ..." (Matthew 1:23)

"The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, ... yet the world knew him not to all who received

him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God ...” (John 1:9 - 12)

This is our ‘good news’, God is not in lockdown - at Christ’s birth, when God ‘breaks in’ to our world (it’s why we refer to this event as the incarnation - our loving God takes the form of a body); and Jesus will not be kept in lockdown at his death, when the tomb was empty!

My prayer for you this Christmas is that you will not keep God in lockdown, but that you will allow God to break into your life bringing peace and healing, and filling you with the deepest joy.
Best wishes for Christmas, and wishing you God’s blessing in the New Year.

David E.P. Currie

Minister

HOME GROUP - RESURGAM

After a suspension of eight months, the Home Group is resuming its meetings via Zoom during Advent.

Beginning on Wednesday 25 November at 7.30pm, we shall meet for the next three Wednesdays at 7.30 pm culminating on Wednesday 16 December at 7.30 pm - the last meeting before Christmas. As customary, we shall follow the Lectionary Readings for the following Sunday. There will be the opportunity for Bible Study, Reflection, Fellowship and Prayer as we share together our understanding of these passages and their relevance to our lives today.

Do join us if you can but please let me know beforehand so I can send you the Invitation Code.

Roger Orme

rogerorme12@gmail.com



Click here for our updates and to get help during the COVID-19 period



A very warm welcome

Behind the blue doors in Pond Square in Highgate, lies a small, friendly church with a big heart. We have long

This site uses cookies. If you continue to use the site you agree to this. For more details please see our [privacy policy](#).

Have You Tried Out Our New Website?

Have you visited our new website yet? You can find it at this internet address: <https://www.pondsquarechapel.org.uk>

Here are a few of the useful things you can find on there:

- In the menu bar on the top of the website, under “About Us” there is, among other items, a section about “Our History” which is worthwhile reading;
- Under “Church Life” you find information about our Sunday services, the children’s Sunday’s School activities, Home Group, and Meditation (the last two currently on hold due to the lock down);
- Under “What’s On” you will always find the latest calendar with all church services and events;
- The “Resources” section contains various helpful material to support our spiritual journey with Jesus Christ: “Try Praying” provides frequent short prayers; under “Meditation” there is an introduction to Christian Meditation; under “Sunday Sermons” you will find recordings of many of the sermons given by our Minister; and selecting “Outlook Magazine” allows you to download digital copies of Outlook.

Do let us know if you think anything is missing, or if you think we could improve an area in some ways. Contact either the Administrator or the Minister. We hope you find the website useful.

Ordination of New Elder

On Sunday, 11th October, Dietrich Hauptmeier was ordained as a new Elder of our congregation. Abiding by the Government guidelines during the coronavirus pandemic, the ordination took place socially distanced, and without the laying on of hands, but we were grateful that we were able to hold this special service in our church building in the presence of our congregation!

Coming from a Lutheran church and tradition in Germany, Pond Square Chapel have been delighted that Dietrich and Heini (his son) have been regular worshippers with us for some years now. As

well as having a prayerful and pastoral heart, he is a valued participant in any discussion group, both considerate of the opinions of others and yet capable of making constructive and insightful contributions. The Elders are sure he will be a great asset to our leadership team. Dietrich has already been making significant contributions to Elders meetings, Discussion Groups, etc., but I want to make reference here to the excellent partnership that has developed between Dietrich and Michelle as joint-editors of "Outlook" - producing (with Laura's help) a quality church magazine which we're rightly proud of.

Paul encourages in 1 Peter 5:1 and 2 - "I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ ... tend the flock of God that is your charge."



David E P Currie *Minister*



Sunday's Cool Update

Over the past couple of weeks the children have enjoyed looking at 'The Big Issues' theme. It was great to have some experiments to help us learn more about the Bible in our Science and Religion theme. In November we were back online, this means back to our Zoom sessions and Paul the Penguin videos. We started a channel called S.C.T.V, (Sunday's Cool TV), this has helped us during lockdown 2.

S.C.T.V.

Sunday's COOL
a not-for-profit charity

Coming Up...

Christmas is just around the corner so we have been busy planning a few things. It's going to be very different this year! We are organising a very different Nativity play and we will hopefully have another Christingle Event (online). This will be planned for the 6th of December around 4pm (this may change by the time Outlook goes out) and the Nativity will be on the 13th of December.



2021!!

I can't believe it will soon be 2021! Planning will take place soon but I think Paul the Penguin will still make an appearance and we may also look at 'Helping the Environment' which is one of the 'The Big Issues' subjects.

I hope you have a merry and safe Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Ste Michael-Rainford

Children's Worker

A poem by Naomi Young-Rodas

Naomi Young-Rodas was based at HURC and assisted David while she was training for ministry in the United Reformed Church. Now ordained, she wrote a small book of poems 'The Corona Poems' during the first lockdown and sold them in aid of Christ Church Rayleigh and Bridgwater Drive URC Church in Westcliff. Here is one of the poems:

A Poem from Book Titles, 17 April

In Extremis, Displaced at Home [I go to] My Dark Places,
[to] The Heart of the Matter,
[on a] Journey without Maps; Step by Step,
[I see through] Different Eyes
The Global Soul
[looking for] The Word in the
Wilderness, A Sense of
Reality.
[It's] A Sort of Life, A Quiet
Life,
[in the] Sound [of] Silence.
Big Brother [watching]
[it feels like] One Hundred
Years of Solitude [but] Acts
[of] Hopeful Imagination,
The Shattering of Loneliness
[show] The Human Face of
God
[in a] Sabbath World
[and] Night Prayers... In God's
Hands



In Memoriam: Ian McKinney

20th December 1930 – 13th September 2020

I heard from Joyce that her husband Ian had died after suffering from dementia. They have lived in a seaside town north of Edinburgh for many years and were very involved in their local church. Unfortunately, they had had no minister for the past few years which meant Joyce has not had pastoral care over these past difficult months. Only older church members will remember this tall Scot with the neat moustache who always carried books wherever he went. He spoke at least 9 languages and after retirement learnt Gaelic and gave classes in it. Most of their lives were spent abroad before returning to Scotland with 4 children to work as House Parents at a boarding school in Scotland. We became friends with them when we moved to Highgate thirty years ago. At that time, they were working at the Foreign Office and lived in Hornsey Lane.

Joyce and Ian were fully involved in church life here: she was an Elder and both played a major part in the Christmas Fair, Christian Aid and even took a Scottish Dancing class!

Following a visit from a Czech pastor Josef Bartosek, Ian taught a group of us some basic Czech words before spending a week in Prague which involved much lost luggage and meals of radishes! Later on, Czech students visited our church and Josef preached to us.

Pam Furse also remained close friends with the McKinneys and we all have stayed with them in Scotland. Peter Goldsmith knew them especially as they both men were keen golf players, Jean Duncan also saw them on her visits north.

Joyce and Ian came on holiday with us as well as staying in Highgate. On these occasions they always came to church with us and straightaway it was as though they had never left. They both were interested in people and were a wonderfully caring partnership. Although they were unable to attend, Ian wrote a moving tribute that was read by my son at Walford's funeral.

Two of their four children live abroad, and their first great granddaughter lives in Glasgow and brought Ian much pleasure on her visits. He was a great linguist and a great friend to many and will be very much missed.

Bridget Harrison

A Message from Aberdeenshire

Since April we feel we have been very fortunate indeed to have been able to join the Pond Square Chapel services on a Sunday morning via Zoom, and now, live streaming. We have consistently enjoyed the warmth, the fellowship, the meaningful message, and simply hearing the organ, Sunday by Sunday. Although we live in Aberdeenshire, 600 miles to the north of Highgate, we have felt very included. It has been more than lovely to share an hour with other Christians on a Sunday morning, and to get to 'know' them.

Our sincere thanks go to David, your minister, and those who make it all possible.

Blessings, Kathleen and Sandy Thom

Deer Parish Church, Aberdeenshire, Scotland



In Memoriam: Mary Green

11th August 1938 – 4th July 2020

Mary Green (Cozens-Walker), the artist who has died on 4th July, aged 82, will be well remembered by a few of our congregation as she and her better known artist husband, Anthony, were active members when it was previously the Congregational Church and then when it united with the Presbyterians. Anthony had come from a French Catholic family and Mary from a North London Congregational one.

She will be immortalised in Anthony's paintings - in his history of family life but in particular as his muse in loving and passionate pictures of them both together; Mary appears in various stages of dress or undress, in their flat in Lissenden Gardens, in their cottage in Little Eversden, in a tent, in the desert or in the sky. In real life she was tall, serene, and smiley but quite a private person. It must have been difficult to become the artist she was in her own right, creating her distinctive signature in embroidered sculptures of their cottage like a little dolls house, of people's heads or madly coloured wall hangings, quite as eccentric as Anthony's paintings.

Their connection with Pond Square Chapel is immortalised by Anthony's collage/sculpture "Resurrection", a history of his religious journey which featured outside the papiermache model of the Chapel various recognisable members of the congregation, the Greens themselves, Sue Chinn, Kate Weber, Robert Courtney, Christopher and me. We were lucky that it came in extensive size to be exhibited in the





Chapel after its tour of English cathedrals. Mary and Anthony were sorely missed when they moved to Little Eversden. We are sure that Anthony will have the support of his two daughters, Kate and Lucy. We send them our love.

Margaret Driver



The Urban Desert

Locked down in an isolated flat
sad and vulnerable but obeying the rules,
or homeless and cold in a deserted city
of silent shops and locked down hotels.

Seeking solace from a world of unease
I discovered peace in the secrets of a garden
the trees alive with nesting birds
in the warm sunshine of a Spring morning.

I breathed in the beauty of Spring's rebirth
to the songs of birds feeding their young,
wild flowers threading through the grass
earthing where they chose to bloom.

Each day in the promise of the morning
I claim my place in this living world
confirming my identity with nature's sequence
to restore the balance of a disordered world.

By Gwyneth Wilson

New Safeguarding Officer

Pond Square Chapel is looking for a new safeguarding officer! If you would like to find out more about the role, and whether this might be something you can help with, please talk to David or Patricia.

Stream on

Streaming *noun (internet): the act of listening or watching sound or video directly from the internet*

This article was originally aimed at describing our transition towards a version of normality with partial then full physical church attendance, then Lockdown2 happened and we all had to stay at home again!



We have all benefitted from the Zoom church services over the last 8 months during Lockdown1 and beyond. It has become clear that there is a practicality and convenience with remote worship for some members. This is built upon our existing relationships and it is no real substitute from being physically present with each other.

We have enjoyed David's new-found skill as a 'broadcaster', how he manages this new media and still makes it personal. Although the



occasional 'Zoomcasts' from Pond Square Chapel have been a meaningful connection back to our building, clearly the picture and sound quality could have been improved.

To this end, a new camera system has been installed which allows us to broadcast the services via Live Stream onto YouTube or other platforms.

It features a high definition controllable PTZ camera (Pan, Tilt, Zoom) providing up to 9 preset views of, for example, the lord's table, pulpit, organ, speakers, chapel etc. It integrates with our existing sound system and enables the services to be (what is called) Live Streamed onto YouTube or similar platforms. The system is expandable so up to 3 more (fairly ordinary) cameras can be added.

After a couple of frustrating weeks, with Dietrich's technical skill and a bit of detective work, we have managed to get it to work reliably for the last three weeks. Due to the lack of a Zoom alternative, the Remembrance Service was viewed live by 31 people and by a total of 61 people over the subsequent few days. I was at least four of those views, monitoring and checking the output on various devices!



YouTube Live Streaming, as the name suggests, allows us to view the output live but also remains on the Pond Square Chapel YouTube channel as a record and reference. You can also enjoy Ste's and Paul the Penguin's archive of Sunday's Cool videos which are fantastic.

Once we get the hang of it, the system can be offered to users of the building, especially under the present restrictions for weddings, funerals etc so they can be viewed by those unable to attend in person. They can use the main LiveStream camera or connect their own camera(s) into our mini mixing desk. Output can be uploaded onto their own YouTube channel or recorded directly onto memory sticks or SD cards.

To view the services live or browse the archive, go online onto www.youtube.com then search for 'Pond Square Chapel'. At present the system is operated by myself and Dietrich but we would love to welcome and train more volunteers. Please let me, David or Dietrich know if you would like to get involved.

For those of you who haven't made it to church to see the installation, I've included some photographs of the system in action

Martin Atkinson

Harvest Gifts

I delivered our harvest festival gifts to the Muswell Hill Food Bank on Wednesday, 14 October. It is part of the Trussel Trust group of food banks. There I met Victor who manages the food bank. He said they had good supplies at present but were seeing a steady demand for food parcels. At the beginning of the year they were concerned that they would be overwhelmed by demand for



extra food parcels, but during the lockdown a number of independent groups, as well as local councils, had set up food parcel deliveries to vulnerable people. At present demand was slightly higher than the same period last year, but they were managing well. They were grateful for our donations and best wishes.

Patricia Judd

Christmas Services

December

- Sun 6** 10.30 am Second Sunday in Advent, including Sacrament of Holy Communion.
- 4.30 pm Christingle event for all the family (Ste will finalise details)
- Sun 13** 10.30 am Sunday's Cool Nativity Service.
- Sun 20** 10.30 am Service of Carols and Lessons, incl. pieces by children.

Thursday 24th - Christmas Eve

- 4.30 pm** (depending on take-up, possible extra Candlelit Service, owing to social distancing regulations.)
- 6.30 pm** Candlelit Service for all the family.

Christmas Day Service

- Fri 25th** 10.30 am
- Sun 27** 10.30 am Service for Last Sunday of the Year

January 2021

- Sun 3** 10.30 am Epiphany Sunday: Service for first Sunday of the New Year.