



# Bank Topics

Issue 37

June—August

Dear friends,

As I write this letter, I await the sound of Dominic Cummings' career crashing through the roof of Number 10. Someone drew the analogy that that just as the last

Tsar fell under the spell of Grigori Rasputin, BoJo has his very own Svengali. For us all, I do hope it's true that "History repeats itself, the first as tragedy, then as farce."

I did say to someone that you couldn't write it – but we've got a boxset of "The Thick of It" to prove otherwise.

So, onto more gentle thoughts...

For Christmas I was bought the most beautiful book: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy.

As Covid lurks over us he produced some more pictures which seem appropriate to share in these strange times.

So I hope you enjoy them and find comfort and support from this message that we need more kindness.

Another source of inspiration that we can fall back on is the Bible. There are many passages from the New Testament that we'll know, the Sermon on the



"Nothing beats kindness," said the horse. "It sits quietly beyond all things."

Mount told in Matthew Chapters 5-7, and the stunning new Jerusalem in Revelation 21.

But the Old Testament has one of the greatest passages of writing and it is found in Isaiah 35: Joy of the redeemed...

*The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendour of our God.*

*Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.'*

*Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then*

*will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.*

*And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast: they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

This letter reaches out to you all, thanking you for your support and love but also offering you all the love of Bank Top Church and the offer of any support we can give.

So, be blessed and know that you are loved.

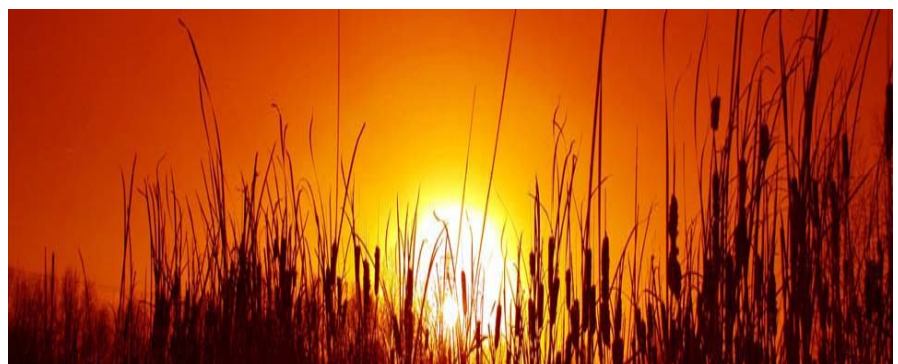
Andy and Heather



## A Summer Prayer

As the sun rises, Lord, Let your light shine on me. The warmth of your Presence, The brightness of your love, The radiance of your joy, The shining of your hope. Let your light shine on me. As the sun rises, Lord, Let your light shine on me.

Amen



## **BANK TOP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH - CONTACTS**

Church Telephone No		01204 593393
Minister	Vacant	
Church Leader	Mr A Guthrie - andyguts@gmail.com	01204 591185
Secretary/Treasurer	Mrs V Singleton - singletonv@hotmail.com	01204 305401
Organist	Mrs A Smith	01204 693740
Church Hall Hire	Mrs V Singleton - singletonv@hotmail.com	01204 305401
Pulpit Supply	Mrs J Skidmore	01204 307130
Flower Secretaries	Mrs M Flitcroft	01204 301328
	Mrs C Rideout	01204 596360
Choir Leader	Mrs A Smith	01204 693740
Newsletter Editor	Mrs C Counsell - bert.counsell@gmail.com	01204 591284
Serving Elders	Christine Counsell, Vicky Constantine, Andy Guthrie, David Canham, Graham Naylor, Linda Rainford, Carol Rideout, Lynn Ridyard, Maureen Roocroft, Val Singleton, Julie Skidmore	
Sunday Worship	10.30am Morning Service and Sunday School. Church Parade 4th Sunday of the month in Jan, Sept, Nov, and Sermons	
Bank Top Artists	Monday, 1-3pm contact Mrs V Singleton	01204 305401
Bank Top Brownies	Monday 5.45-7.00pm, contact Miss E Farrell	07770 450 229
Guides	Monday 7.30-9.15pm, contact Mrs V Constantine	01204 593034
Mums & Toddlers	Tuesday 9-11.15am , contact Mrs V Singleton	01204 305401
The Oaks Brownies	Tuesday, 6-7.30pm, contact Mrs C Greenen	01204 592594
Weightwatchers	Wednesday 10-11.15am, contact Val Singleton	01204 305401
Circuit Training	Wednesday 1.30-2.30pm, contact johnwolfe1984@gmail.com	
Theatre Works	Wednesday 4-5.00pm contact Lauren Bateman	07999 634 208
Adult Craft Class	Wednesday 7-9.00pm contact Jean Greer	01204 594127
Moo Music	Thursday 9.45-11.45am contact jane@moomusic.co.uk	07808 549 965
Sweaty Mama	Thursday 1.30-2.30pm contact riana@sweatymama.com	
Rainbows	Thursday 6-7.00pm contact Mrs E Robinson	01204 415113
Brunches	1st Saturday of the Month, excluding August from 12-1.00pm	01204 305401
For Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Sick Visiting or Home Communion please contact A Guthrie or V Singleton		
If you would like to join our Direct Offering scheme through the Envelope scheme please contact V Singleton		
We also have a Memorial Fund - contact V Singleton		

# WHAT'S ON AT BANK TOP?

At Bank Top you'll find something for everyone. So, don't be lonely and stay at home on your own, you are always welcome here! Have a look below; think about learning new skills or ask if you can help - we always need helpers! We are always pleased to see new faces.



Sunday	10.30am - 11.45am	Morning Worship incl. Sunday School
Monday	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Bank Top Artists (term time only)
Monday	5.45pm - 7.15pm	Bank Top Brownies (girls from 7-10)
Monday	7.30pm - 9.15pm	Bank Top Guides (girls from 10-15)
Tuesday	9.00am - 11.00am	Toddler Group (term time only)
Tuesday	6.00pm - 7.30pm	The Oaks Brownies (girls from 7-10)
Tuesday (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> )	8.00pm - 10.00pm	Bible Study Group at Val's House
Wednesday	10.00am - 11.15am	Weight Watchers with Lee
Wednesday	1.30pm - 2.30pm	Circuit training
Wednesday	4.00pm - 5.00pm	Theatre School for children up to 11
Wednesday	7.00pm - 9.00pm	Adult Craft Class
Thursday	9.45am 11.45am	Maxi Moo - (award winning music & movement) Mini Moo - (classes for babies & young children - birth to 5 years) (Ring to check availability)
Thursday	1.30pm - 2.30pm	Sweaty Mama (fun workouts with your child)
Thursday	6.00pm - 7.00pm	Bank Top Rainbows (girls from 5-7)
Thursday	7.30pm - 9.00pm	Eden Singers Choir
1 <sup>st</sup> Sat of each month	Bank Top Lunches	12.00noon - 1.00pm Main Course, Dessert and Drink £4.00/£1.50 (children)
Saturday	Certain dates	Embroiderers' Guild



## Family Bible Readings

7th June—Matthew 28:16-20  
14th June — Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)  
21st June — Matthew 10:24-39  
28th June — Matthew 10:40-42

5th July—Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30  
12th July—Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23  
19th July— Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43  
26th July— Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

2nd August — Matthew 14:13-21  
9th August — Matthew 14:22-33  
16th August — Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28  
23rd August — Matthew 16:13-20  
30th August — Matthew 16:21-28



## Flower List

June  
7th Chris Counsell  
14th Muriel Brown  
21st Sarah Astley  
28th Maureen Flitcroft

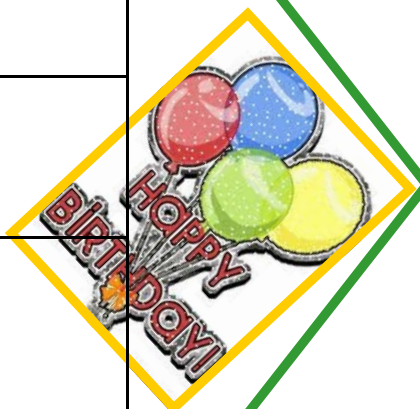
July  
5th Mr & Mrs Warburton  
12th Jill Partington  
19th In memory of Gladys Yates  
26th Kath Dean

August  
2nd Andy & Heather Guthrie  
9th Ann, Alex, Carol & Jess  
16th Phil Seddon  
23rd Margaret Taylor & Ruth Butcher  
30th VACANT

## Birthday wishes go to:



<b>June</b> 3 13 22	Jessica Collier Matthew Taylor Alfie Owen
<b>July</b> 3 18	Freya Dean Sofia Coward
<b>Aug</b> 1 13 14 21 23	Liam Sutcliffe Katie Johns Jack Coward Jack Owen Megan Collier



## DATES

## Bank Top Cleaning Rota

<b>Jun</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> 12 <sup>th</sup> 19 <sup>th</sup> 26 <sup>th</sup>	Brunch? Val Pat & Christine C Graham & Linda
<b>Jul</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> 10 <sup>th</sup> 17 <sup>th</sup> 24 <sup>th</sup> 31 <sup>st</sup>	Brunch? / Village Fair? Heather Lyn & Glenis Vicky Carol & Ann
<b>Aug</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> 14 <sup>th</sup> 21 <sup>st</sup> 28 <sup>th</sup>	No brunch (August)? Val Pat & Christine C Graham & Linda
<b>Sept</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> 11 <sup>th</sup> 18 <sup>th</sup> 25 <sup>th</sup>	Brunch? Heather Lyn & Glenis Vicky



**We have amended the rota to exclude brunch days so PLEASE re-check your dates as some will have moved on.**

If for any reason your name is against a date that you can not make, please try to swap with someone else on the rota.

IF YOU ARE NOT ON THE CLEANING ROTA AND ARE ABLE TO HELP, PLEASE SEE CHRISTINE COUNSELL. REMEMBER THE MORE VOLUNTEERS WE HAVE, THE LESS TIMES WE ALL HAVE TO CLEAN  
THANK YOU



## Notices from our church

### Urban Outreach Grub Tub

More than ever there must be lots of people needing the services of Urban Outreach and their Grub Tub items that at this time we cannot provide.

Syd & I thought that if anyone still wanted to support this Charity by collecting items they could either bring them to our home 25 Whitegate Drive, or telephone us on BOLTON 302831 and we would collect them, from the vicinity. When we have a decent amount we will deliver them to

Urban Outreach

Unit 4

Trinity Retail Park

Monday to Friday

10am to 4am They also will accept donations of money via cheques.

Particular Items wanted tins of pulses, tuna, veg, meats, chopped tomatoes & jars of Pasta/ curry sauces.

Maureen R. thank you in anticipation.

*Maureen R X*

# Notices from our church



## FLOWERS

We have obviously not had flowers in church during lockdown, but our flower secretary, Carol, has still been visiting people each week to take flowers. She had a little reserve of cash, but this has now been used up, and so I wonder if those of you who are on the flower rota would consider giving Carol a small donation to buy flowers so that she can continue her brilliant and very rewarding work. Thank you.



## GRUB TUB

I know a lot of you bring in food for our church Grub Tub, which Maureen and Syd take regularly down to Urban Outreach. There are a lot of people who are facing financial hardship right now and Urban Outreach are also facing difficulties getting their usual supply of food with the closure of churches and schools etc. They have been appealing for donations so that they can continue to help people who are finding it difficult to feed their families. Their base is Trinity Retail Park in the old Staples building and you can take food down there any day during the week. Or, you can send a cheque to them and you will find their address on the Web Site. Alternatively, you can let Maureen and Syd have your items; they live at 25 Whitegate Drive, and they will be more than happy to take them down to Urban Outreach.

# Notices from our church

For those of you not able to pass by church on your daily walk, here are a few pictures to show that while our congregation meets elsewhere, thanks to the power of Zoom!, our lovely building and flower boxes continue to show that our faith and community remains strong.

*Thanks to Val, Christine and Bert for keeping us looking presentable!*



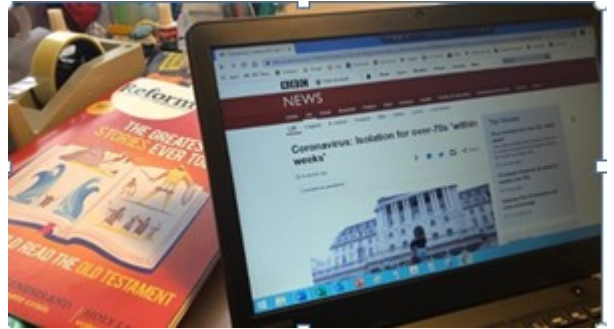
# From the URC

## A prayer for uncertain times

The Moderators of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church (URC), the Revd Nigel Uden and Derek Estill, have offered the following prayer as the UK and the rest of the world come to terms with the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

‘God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.’

Psalm 46:1, NRSV



As so much is re-shaped by Coronavirus Covid 19, let us pray with

people left unwell, beckoned by death or bereaved;

people providing professional health care and advice, looking after loved ones at home or working to create treatments and cures;

people shaping the response of nations and neighbourhoods, of commerce and industry, of service and voluntary organisations and of communities of faith;

people who are anxious or afraid, alone or isolated.

Living, loving God,

we praise you,

and through times of peril we lean into you,

for in Jesus Christ

you have trodden paths as difficult as ours,

revealing there a love that nothing defeats,

a love that bears us through.

Even as we strive to behave responsibly,

and to care reliably,

so we feel after you

that in these uncertain times we might trust you are with us,

our refuge and strength,

and our faith, hope and love might be renewed,

through Jesus Christ, Amen.



# Contributions from our church

Some things to make you smile ....



Church Bulletins:

- Wanted: Bath for baby with enamel bottom.
- Don't let worry kill you off ....Let the Church help.
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon will be 'What is Hell'. Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- Low Self Esteem support group will meet on Thursday at 7.00pm. Please use the back door.
- The local amateur dramatics group will be presenting Shakespeare's "Hamlet" in the church on Friday at 7.00pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- The service will close with 'Little Drops of Water.' One of the ladies will start quietly and the rest of the congregation will join in.
- The Minister will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, 'Break Forth into Joy.'

A Perfect Marriage

- Twice a week we go to a nice restaurant, have a few drinks, good food. She goes Tuesdays, I go Fridays.
- I take my wife everywhere ..... Sadly, she keeps finding her way back.
- We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.
- I married Miss Right. I just didn't know her first name was Always.
- I haven't spoken to my wife in 18 months. I don't like to interrupt her.
- The last fight was my fault. My wife asked, "What's on the telly?" I said "Dust."
- She has an electric blender, electric toaster and electric bread maker. She said, "There are too many gadgets and no place to sit down:" So I bought her an electric chair.
- I asked my wife where she wanted to go for our anniversary. "Somewhere I haven't been in a long time," she said. So I suggested the kitchen.
- She ran after the rubbish truck yelling, "Am I too late for the rubbish?" The driver said "No, jump in."

Thank-you Vall :-)



## LOCKDOWN !!

Hi all,

Well, I was just reflecting on how long this coronavirus has been keeping us locked away, and I decided to check my calendar. In 2020 from January to lockdown we were able to meet in church for only 11 weeks. So, that means we have been in lockdown longer! – 11 weeks from March up to the 24<sup>th</sup> May – and still counting!!

My husband, Graham has been shielding now for 10 weeks, and, although at the start he was quite happy; getting out into the garden in the nice weather, he's now desperate to go out and has even started wearing his Caribbean shirts this last week – should I be worried!!

I think now we are all starting to feel isolated, not being able to meet with family and friends, and for all those living alone, it must be a lot worse. Hopefully in the coming weeks we will see things start to improve, but I think it will be a slow process and people are going to be very cautious when it comes to gatherings where there are lots of people. I really don't know at this current time when it will be possible to worship again in church – it could be late July/August, and even then we will need to plan carefully for the return so that people are not too near one another.

On a more optimistic note, there has been a good response to the Zoom service at 11.00am on Sunday mornings and we are very grateful to Andy and Heather for leading that worship. We do all have a good laugh when it comes to the hymn singing – with the slight delay it means we have a somewhat staggered ending to each verse! And just when we feel we are getting better it goes awry once more!! There must be about 23 members from Bank Top most weeks and a further 8 or 9 from Egerton. It's really good to see one another every Sunday. If you want to join in with the Zoom services please contact me or Andy for joining instructions. For those who are not very technical I am sending out hard copies of the Synod Sunday service which goes out each week, and which you can also access online. If you are not receiving this or want any more information on anything please give me or Andy a call.

Last Sunday it would have been our Annual Sermons (always on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of May) and Heather posted some photo's from past sermons on our Zoom service. Sermons used to be a rather grand affair, with three services; morning, afternoon and evening. In the afternoon we would all gather at church, and, led by a band, we would march around the local area; band, then guides, brownies and rainbows at the front, with the singers behind and the rest of the members at the back. It was a wonderful witness to the local community. Of course, there was nothing else to do in those days; before Sunday opening hours for shops and Sunday sport. Those were happy days, and then the local authority took over from the police, and introduced an £800 fee for our so called protection when we were on the roads! To be truthful, by this time we had reduced to just two services and even then we were struggling for numbers in the afternoon because of other distractions. So, we decided to change to just the one service held in the morning and afterwards a BBQ on the Community Garden. This has proved to be a very popular event I have included some pictures of the sermons from different years. I also found some of the Windermere Centre, which was a very popular attraction at one time.

Finally, I don't suppose many of us will be going on holiday this year, especially abroad. Maybe later on some of us may get away for a break in this country. Let's hope the weather continues to be this lovely for the rest of the summer, so that we can get out into our gardens, or walk in our lovely surrounding countryside. I expect most of us will be healthier than we were before at the end of all this. And let's hope the new us will stick around for a very long time, and maybe the world will be a better place.

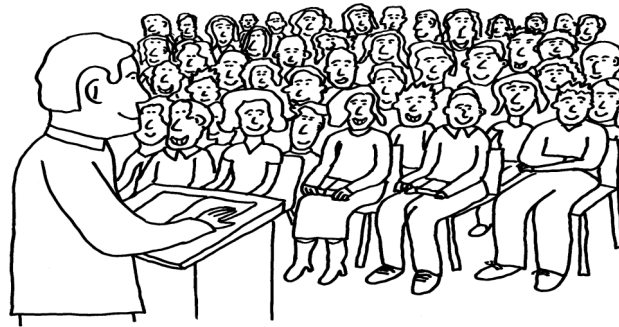
Please stay safe everyone and if there is anything I can do to help, please call me. Also, can I remind all members of our Carers team to check on their people, especially those living alone.

**Love and Blessings, Val**

# Elders & Church Meeting Dates for 2020

**Church Meetings:-** Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> January  
Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> April (A.G.M.)  
Sunday, Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> July  
Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October

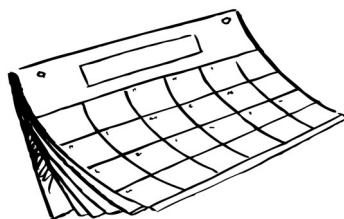
**Elders Meetings:-** Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February  
Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> March  
Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> May  
Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June  
Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September  
Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November



CHURCH MEETINGS ARE BRILLIANT

## Saturday Brunch Dates

Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> January  
Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> February  
Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> March  
Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Egg Tombola)  
Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May  
Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> June  
Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> July (Village Fair)  
Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> September  
Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October  
Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> November  
Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> December (Advent Brunch)



## Other dates for your diary

Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> April (Good Friday Service)  
Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Sunday Service)  
Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> May (Sermons)  
Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> November (Remembrance Service)  
Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> November (Shoe Box Service)  
Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> December (Nativity & Christingle)  
Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Eve Communion)  
Fri, 25<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Day Service)



## FINANCE REPORT



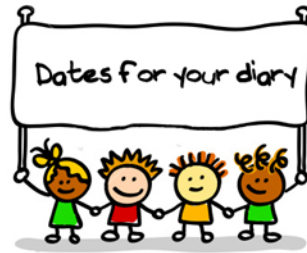
I am not including the usual finance report because since the last Newsletter our financial situation has been very different! Income has been somewhat different to normal, and I did mention Offertory in my recent letter which hopefully everyone received.

On a positive note, people are still continuing with Standing Orders which total almost £800 per month, and since lockdown, I have received envelopes from people totalling £250 and Cash of £250, plus one person has transferred £120 directly into the Bank. I would like to thank these people, and I would like to appeal to everyone by asking you to put money into your envelopes or cash on one side each week, or, if you wish, you can pay directly into our Bank. You can drop your envelopes off at my house anytime. I know some of you may be struggling financially at this time and the last thing I want to do is put pressure on to you; I just would like you to be mindful of our church situation – we have missed two Brunches, and will also miss June's; the Village Fair is looking very unlikely, and all our Lettings income has stopped. However, we still have to pay almost £1,500 to Synod each month plus our utility bills etc. It is a worrying time for all of us. But, we are possibly in a better financial situation than a lot of other churches, so let's simply carry on as best we can, and with everyone's help and lots of prayers we will be OK!

**Thank you, Val**



## FUTURE EVENTS: MARCH 20 — MAY 20



There is no possibility of Church re-opening before the end of June and therefore the following information re possible Sunday Worship only starts in July. It is too soon to say exactly what date we expect to get back and exactly how this will be introduced.

<u>July</u>			
Sun	5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Worship, John Platt Followed by Church Meeting with tea and toast
Sun	12 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Communion Service, Andy, followed by
Sun	19 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	David Canham
Sun	26 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Mark Bates
<u>Aug</u>			
Sun	2 <sup>nd</sup>	10.30am 11.30am	Morning Worship, Susan Holme followed by tea and toast
Sun	9 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Communion Service, the Worship Group
Sun	16 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Morning Worship, Patrick Murphy
Sun	23 <sup>rd</sup>	10.30am	Morning Worship, Betty Bamford

### Message from our Partnership Minister – Rev Ruth Watson

Each week Ruth circulates a reflection to all the 15 churches in our Partnership. The one from last Sunday you can read below.

### Reflection for Sunday 24 May 2020

"he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight" (Acts 1: 9)  
Ascension. Not something in the free churches we spend a lot of time debating. But what did happen to Jesus after his Resurrection and before Pentecost? We read of his appearances to the disciples and of the coming of the Spirit, but often miss out the bit where he goes back to his Father in heaven. Gone but not forgotten. While Jesus was no longer physically present following his ascension, he was no less present in the lives of the disciples. More so on the arrival of the Spirit, but they long remembered his words, his actions – why else would they have written them down for others to read?

In this time of lockdown, we can relate to not being able to physically see our friends and family. We may not be able to be with them, but they are no less a part of our lives. Communication with them is essential, but nothing beats a get together, or family hug, or meal with friends. While we understand the need for the separation, it does not make it any easier.

Often when we are in difficult circumstances it can feel as if a cloud separates us from God, and we cannot see him or feel his presence. We become angry because we feel he has abandoned us at the time of our greatest need. We may find difficulty in prayer because of this perceived separation. But God is very much still here.

When we face our fears, and feel isolated and alone, let us remember the words at the end of the Foot-prints poem – "it was then that I carried you".

May we feel safe in God's protective care as we continue to face the difficulties of the current crisis. As we start to think about moving forward, let us remember it is ok to not be ok about releasing restrictions and going out into the new "normal". This is going to take time and there is no right or wrong way to feel about that.

Know, as always, you are held in prayer and that God's love surrounds you always.

**Keep safe, Rev Ruth**