

CONCORD



Happy Easter

**The Monthly Magazine of
Tolworth United Reformed Church
April 2021**

From our Minister

Dear friends,

April 2021

The vicar of Dibley was asked to (lip sync) sing her favorite song of 2020 during Comic relief.

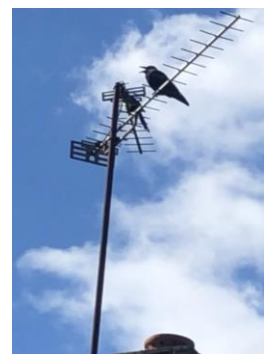
Somewhere, reflecting and thinking through these weeks of Lent, approaching Easter with the help of our weekly studies, Sunday worship, private prayer at church and on walks in Nonsuch Park or along Hogsmill, I heard the sad news story of the Australian Regent Honeyeaters. This now endangered species of songbird are failing to learn the tunes they need for courtship. Lip, or beak syncing will not do!

At a karaoke evening we may attempt "Ooo we, chirpy chirpy cheap cheap", by Middle of the Road a song from 1971. But there are no ready lines or tunes prepared for the Regent Honeyeater. Apparently, some young birds can no longer find the older ones to teach them to sing. So, they try mimicking songs from other types of birds. We may be happy to forget the Chirpy chirpy cheap cheap song. But for this songbird losing their song is a big problem.

Bird song can and does change. Many bird species are known to change their songs over time within local populations. In Canada scientists noticed that young sparrows' traditional three noted descending whistle has become a unique two note ending and has spread two thousand miles across from Western Canada to Central Ontario. How did that happen?

I am not sure why these bird stories caught my imagination during the season of lent and approaching Easter. Somewhere I guess it must be resonating with my inner story of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Somewhere it is touching my inner sense of the meaning at Easter.

For me it is the blackbird that comes to mind when I think about the avian world and birdsong. Partly perhaps because of their song. I have often heard the blackbird from my homes, mostly in suburban or build up areas. From here in the early evening or bright mornings, from trees, aerials or on telephone wires the blackbird sings.



R Jones

And, of course then there is the Beatles. Paul McCartney's Blackbird. Who says Paul McCartney was not the lyric writer? "*Blackbird singing in the dead of night,*

take these broken wings and learn to fly”, or “take these sunken eyes and learn to see”. Written about the 1960s racial struggles in USA.

I found another story about the blackbird. St Kevin a first century Bishop and saint from Kilnarmarnach, Ireland became a hermit and it is said *“the branches and the leaves of the trees sang him sweet songs”*. Like many hermits he loved animals and birds. His legends include one about a blackbird laying an egg in Kevin’s hand when his arms were outstretched in prayer. The saint remained in that position until the baby bird hatched.

Seamus Heaney wrote a poem about this event. “To labour and not seek reward he prays”. This is his sacrifice, his link to eternity and his salvation.

Somewhere, reflecting and thinking through these weeks of Lent, approaching Easter with the help of our weekly studies, Sunday worship, private prayer at church and on walks in Nonsuch Park or along Hogsmill I heard the sad news of a man who seeks to change the song to a song that sings that death is not an end. A justice song for the poor and downtrodden. A song that sings out how we are all reunited with creation and our creator. A song of life. The sad news about the man is that, for us to sing these songs he was to die that we might have life.

*“but in the mud and scum of things,
There always, always somethings sings” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)*

These bird song and stories touched me and reminded of the Easter message. What is bringing the message of Easter closer to you?

As for the Australian Regent Honeyeaters, some of us may be resigned to the inevitable. Others will seek change, perhaps agitate for their future, work or to find a solution or simply offer prayer. Perhaps there can be a new song for them...and us...a resurrection after all.

God bless,

Roger

Gift Day

The final total for Gift Day 2020 is £4,367, Thank you to everyone who contributed to this amount. It is much appreciated.

Moir

Family Circle

Cynthia Stock is not very well at present. She spent a few days in hospital recently but is home again and trying to take things easy. As far as we know, Monica Lunn is still in hospital. I was told that she would be coming out soon but she doesn't appear to be back yet. Dave Bennett had a fall from a ladder in the garden and tore ligaments in his leg. He is improving slowly. Brenda Gill is about to start some new treatment. Carol Shepherd had a fall at home and broke her foot and Gary Smith is recovering from a cataract operation. We pray for all these friends and ask for God's love and care to surround them. Please also remember other friends who have ongoing health problems.

Moira

Roger Fenn's Easter Word Search – with many thanks to Roger

Please find twenty-one people or locations connected with the Easter story.

	E	N	E	L	A	D	G	A	M	Y	R	A	M
	M	I	P	R	L	T	Y	N	A	H	T	E	B
	M	C	A	I	A	P	H	A	S	W	C	G	P
	A	O	N	S	G	O	L	G	O	T	H	A	Y
G	U	D	W	R	J	E	S	U	S	S	E	R	S
E	S	E	U	K	N	C	J	C	B	A	A	D	I
T	V	M	A	R	K	L	U	E	C	M	F	E	M
H	O	U	M	C	R	E	D	N	O	O	U	S	O
S	A	S	S	A	T	O	A	T	L	H	R	L	N
E	E	T	A	L	I	P	S	U	I	T	N	O	P
M	R	S	N	V	D	A	C	R	V	H	L	G	E
A	L	G	N	A	R	S	Q	I	E	Z	P	W	T
N	P	O	A	R	T	O	M	O	T	N	G	T	E
E	N	E	R	Y	C	F	O	N	O	M	I	S	R

Returning to Worship in Church

At an Elders' Meeting this week it was agreed that, following the advice from the URC, we should leave opening the Church for regular worship until Pentecost, the "Church's Birthday" on 23rd May. We had considered opening on Easter Sunday but with so many uncertainties about rules changing and masks etc still required and no singing, it was thought best to wait till May. Most people seemed to prefer to wait.

Meantime, Roger will continue with Sunday morning services online and on telephone. During Lent Roger has been holding Lenten reflections each week, these will continue during Holy Week on Wednesday at 6,30pm and Thursday at 3pm. Roger also plans to hold an online/telephone service at 10.30am on Good Friday. Everyone is welcome to join in this act of worship. Instructions for joining are the same as for Sunday services.

The Easter Garden

How lovely is that garden now,
From death's cold hand set free;
The sunshine spreads its golden warmth,
On every rock and tree.

How sweet the air that fills the place.
That once was dank and drear;
A scent of spices on the breeze,
A heavenly perfume there.

How gentle our Lord Jesus' voice,
That casts out Mary's fear;
She scarce believes, but then she knows,
And greets her Master here.

And faithful souls can come with her,
And find that garden fair;
Where Jesus Christ will greet each one,
Who trusts and seeks him there.

And then like Mary run to tell,
And spread the news around;
That life and health and joy and peace,
Are in the garden found.

With thanks to Barbara Pearson

More Lockdown blues! - With thanks to Brenda Kelly

Now hopefully there is a little light at the end of the tunnel, I thought it would be good to meet up just for socialising and a chat. No structure, just a chance to meet friends that we have missed for so long. If you wish you can bring your knitting etc. I thought maybe once a fortnight, morning coffee or afternoon tea in the vestibule. Let me know what you think. Probably about June, plus at that time hopefully we can start having lunch at The Hogsmill again.

Keep smiling Spring is on its way.

Brenda

Because of Good Friday you can look back and not be afraid.
Because of Easter you can look ahead and not be afraid.
Because of Ascension Day you can look up and not be afraid
Because of Pentecost you can look in and not be afraid.

From "A Bundle of Laughs" J. John and Mark Stibbe, Monarch Books

What a Difference a Year Makes

Thinking back over the past year, who would have thought that we'd still be wearing face masks and keeping our distance a year later? It's been a strange year, we still cannot meet our families, shake hands or greet one another with a hug and strangest of all, we cannot sing (at least not in Church or public places).

It's been a technological learning curve for many of us and those without access to the internet have blessed their telephones as their main means of communication with family and friends. I am no technological expert, in fact I'm pretty hopeless but I am beginning to become a little bit more knowledgable and have learned a few more things about what one can do on a computer.

I recently attended a Synod Meeting on "Zoom" which was an interesting experience. These meetings usually begin with an act of Worship and this time it was led by Revd Alex Mabbs who used to lead evening services for us before moving to Brighton, Instead of everyone gathered singing a hymn together, we saw Alex on the screen singing a wonderful song about looking after God's world and accompanying himself on guitar' When it came to the part when we greet retired Ministers and those who have served as ministers for many years (some up to 60 years) all we saw was a photo of the person and their length of service. Normally they would come forward to applause and receive a handshake and a few words from the Moderator. We still had the business of the meeting and we were able to vote by clicking a "yes" or "No" symbol on our screens. We had a presentation by Tom Hackett , the Youth & Children's Work person from Synod, when he presented an award to a delightful little boy of 6 or7 who had been leading worship at his Church telling the stories of Noah and Jonah and others. He was given a certificate and then a special medal made of chocolate!

Synod was certainly different but some things never change, We broke off for a coffee break half way through when everyone went to make their own drinks!

Roger too has introduced technology to our Church by holding services each week online or telephone. This has helped to remind us that worship can be held anywhere, not just in Church. It has been good to hear friends voices and see them on screen.

Another of Roger's talents which he has put to good use during lockdown is that he has written a new musical. This is called "Daughters of Dissent" and is based on a story in the book of Numbers when the Children of Israel are travelling to the Promised Land. Roger has written and played the songs, then recorded them and sent this to those taking part who then practice them and record their voices singing and return them to Roger who links them all together and Hey Presto we have a chorus all singing together! It's amazing what can be done with technology! When it is all complete, Roger will show it on the screen in Church, Quite an achievement!

We have learned so much during this past year, not just about technology but about caring for each other and helping where we can. Our Elders have tried to keep in touch with those on their lists and although we cannot visit each other or share a cup of tea, we can all hope that now that most of us have been vaccinated, we shall be able to meet before long.

We give thanks to God for those who have worked so hard to create these vaccines and to all hospital staff from Doctors and Nurses to cleaners and caterers. To the scientists who have advised and all those in the emergency services who have served ceaselessly. We hope that the end is in sight but it will take a long time yet. However, we pray that it will not be too long before we can all worship together in God's house.

Moira

Answers to Roger Fenn's Easter Quiz

Annas	Bethany	Caiaphas
Calvary	Centurion	Cleopas
Emmaus	Gethsemane	Golgotha
Jesus	John	Judas
Mark	Mary	Mary Magdalene
Nicodemus	Olivet	Pontius Pilate
Simon of Cyrene	Simon Peter	Thomas

Thanks to those who have contributed to this edition - please keep them coming! We hope to be able to publish a magazine for May. Please let me have all your material by 26nd April. Ian

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Morning Worship at 10.30

(You can still join in with Roger at 10.30am on Sundays
'Phone: 03306 060403 with code 1529640# - remember the #)

Minister	Revd Roger Jones	0208 393 4270 rjones@urcsouthern.org.uk
Secretary	Mrs M Fleming	
Treasurer	Mr G Stock	
Serving Elders	Mr D Bennett, Mrs M Fleming, Mrs B Kelly, Mrs L Menneer, Mrs B Smith, Mr G Stock, Mrs K Woolard,	
Management Committee	Mr D Bennett, Mrs M Fleming, Mr S Heath, Mr B Keepence, Mr B Llewellyn, Mr G Stock	

Other Officers, Leaders and Representatives

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Christian Aid Secretary	Mr G Stock	
Circle	Mr R Fenn	
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Secretary		
Synod Area Rep	Mrs M Fleming	
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