

# The Messenger

Autumn 2021

Christ Church, Longridge “Living for  
Christ at the heart of the community”

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



# Where Is Your Hope?

Over the last few months, I have had the privilege of listening to and hearing about people's hopes and dreams for the future, particularly for the church here in Longridge. A recurring theme has been the 'missing generations.' I wonder if we have asked ourselves: *'Why are they missing? Where are they?'* For years now, I have heard warnings that the Church (generally) is in decline and attendee numbers are falling. These generations have been 'lost' to us, but have we been out searching for them? Another common comment has been *'they don't come'*; yet Jesus sent his disciples OUT. His followers today have the same great commission in Matthew 28:19 *'... GO and make disciples...'*. I wonder if we had heeded the warnings and went to find out why people are not coming to church, a common response may have been: *it's not relevant anymore*, among other reasons. The context people are living in has changed over time, and for many churches, they have not.

I wonder how many of you remember having to change from analogue to digital for our televisions because analogue signals were being digitised. There were adverts in the newspapers, government announcements on the TV and radio, and a countdown as to when the changeover was going to happen. Everyone had been told and warned that TVs would no longer work after a certain date... and yet... some people still did not listen, sticking their head in the sand like an ostrich. Consequently, when they turned on their TVs is all they found was 'snow' (as I called it) with the accompanying 'white noise' – that awful crackling sound. The context had changed, but they had not. Others who had listened, had been prepared, had planned for it, and taken action, so they were ready for the change. They changed because they had really no choice.

COVID-19 hit the world without warning. Everything changed and had to, there was no choice. We have been forced to adapt to new ways of living and working and although Government restrictions have generally been lifted, the virus has not gone away, so we must learn to live in this new context. The impact on the Church worldwide has been huge. Whilst the world has changed our God has not, and the Church has found different ways of being Church and worshipping God in this changing context.

Change has happened, so what do we do? Are we willing to place our trust totally in our faithful unchanging God, who is full of grace and mercy? We are all part of the Church, the living body of whom Christ is the head. As such, we can know and experience God's love for us which is beyond all measure. It is knowing this steadfast love that enables us to venture out into the unknown, trusting in God's plans, so that we can love and serve those around us, putting their needs first.

We do have a choice about the future of our church, the question is *Are we going to embrace the change and build new relationships with those beyond our church walls? or Are we going to remain doing what we've always done (watching analogue TV with snow and white noise, continuing to die slowly wondering where it all went wrong)?*

There are many words of encouragement from scripture as we face the future:

**Ephesians 1<sup>18</sup>** I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people

**Hebrews 10<sup>23</sup>** Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

**Isaiah 40<sup>31</sup>** but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

**Jeremiah 29<sup>11</sup>** 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

**Romans 8<sup>28</sup>** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

**Romans 15<sup>13</sup>** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May God continue to bless you mightily as you step out in faith and trust, ready to go, to love God and love your neighbour as yourself.

Karen le Mouton

# The Covid19 Gap

When Covid19 struck, we had to stop having regular Sunday services in church. We have made an effort to try and keep in touch with everyone who received The Messenger locally but felt unable to produce a magazine to send further afield, so if you have not had any news from Longridge for a while, we'll try to bring you up to date.

When we were finally able to meet again in church, we were of course under strict lockdown rules – masks; social distancing; hand sanitising; no congregational singing; no after service cuppa and much more. The biggest change however was the move to a single service at 3.00pm instead of morning and evening services. Although things are beginning to ease up a little, we are intending to move slowly. Last week, we had a little bit of congregational singing but wearing masks. The stewards and council are continuing to keep all the arrangements under consideration and hope to be able to have an after-church cuppa or perhaps open the church on Fridays for a 'brew' very soon.

We were privileged to have one wedding in Church under lockdown rules and our heartfelt congratulations go to David and Sarah Rose on their marriage (and of course to Carol and Henry on this very special occasion). We wish them every happiness in the future and a wonderful 'wedding breakfast' when they are finally able to celebrate with all their family and friends.

Just as Covid struck, we were sad to lose Geoff Balson, who went home to his maker after a number of illnesses and failing health. He is very much missed here at Christ Church and, of course, by Emma, Martin, Olivia, Alice and Adam; Matt and Alison. We continue to remember them and pray for them. When conditions allow, we hope to have a celebratory concert in memory of Geoff.

In the early days of lockdown, we were very sad to hear that Irene Clegg had died after a period of accidents and illnesses. Irene was a person who was always cheerful and concerned for others. For many years she was a foster carer and worked in children's homes. She had been a member of Christ

Church Craft Club for many years, and we will miss her cheerful conversation, not to mention her baking. The Club won't be the same without her.

We were shocked to hear of the sudden death of Gwyneth Jones during lockdown. Having retired from her missionary work in Indonesia, Gwyneth threw herself into the Lord's work here in Longridge. She worshipped at the Church of England but felt at home at Christ Church having worked with the Methodist Church in Sumatra and occasionally led our evening services. She was active in all aspects of Churches Together and instrumental in starting World Day of Prayer services in Longridge rather than just sharing in those in Preston.

We also lost June Barton from the Alston Lane RC Church who was also a devoted and hard-working supporter of Churches Together in Longridge and District. Our sincere condolences go to both their families and friends.

In November 2020, the funeral of Glynis Grayston took place at Christ Church. We offer our condolences to her family and friends.

More recently, we were sad to have the funeral of Emma Walters. Despite her severe disabilities, Emma brought joy to her family, her carers and many who knew her. Our appreciation and sympathy go to Trudie and to Becky. It's lovely to see more of Trudie now her time is more flexible. Our best wishes go to all who loved and cared for Emma.

In June we received the news that Irene Catherall had died at the age of 98. Irene's husband, Noel, was formerly minister of Longridge Methodist Church and Superintendent Minister of the former Lune Street and Orchard Circuit. We are grateful to their daughter for letting us know and send the family our sympathy at their loss.

In July, we were saddened to hear of the sudden death of Christine Doolan. Our love and condolences go out to Pauline Hall; Susan and Ian Fitzpatrick and all of Christine's family.

## News from 'old' friends

Many people will remember the Rev Keith and the Rev Anna-Claar Thomasson who lived and served here in Longridge sharing time between Christ Church and the Church of England a few years ago. While they lived here, their first child Susannah was born. When they left here, they continued their work in Bristol and other parts of the South of England. There two more children, Reuben and Johan were born; Anna-Claar completed a PhD in theology focussing on the nature and work of the Holy Spirit and then was ordained as a minister in the Church of England.

Recently, we received a letter from them to say that in July, they moved to Scotland where Keith has become Rector of St Ninian's Scottish Episcopal Church in Troon. They have asked us to share their new contact details which are: -

70 Bentinck Drive, Troon, Ayrshire KA10 6HZ.

Phone 01292 313731

keiththomasson@myphone.coop and annaclaar@phoncoop.coop

If you want more information, please see Carol or John Spencer

# Annual Meeting

The church has continued to function by a range of socially-distanced meetings; emails; zoom meetings; phone calls and hand delivered post. Thanks to all who have contributed.

We were able to hold the Annual Church Meeting – socially distanced of course. H Rose; C Spencer; J Spencer and M Watson were re-elected to the church council for a further three years and Gillian Walker was elected to one of the vacancies. The list of church officers was amended and accepted. Chris Marsden has joined the Property Committee and Gillian Walker will assist with Room Bookings. We are grateful to them for being able to take on these responsibilities.

The meeting received a letter from Eddie Grange who resigned from leading the Rambling Group after many years because of health problems. The meeting expressed their deep appreciation of all that Eddie had done in leading the group and also writing engaging reports for The Messenger. It was agreed to send a letter to thank Eddie and suggestions were made as to what might replace this valuable activity. Linda said that Eddie might write occasional articles on rambling subjects and Carol Rose suggested that some kind of prayer walks might be arranged in the future.

Other matters: -

**Property:** The hall roof still needs attention but there are problems getting a company to do it.

(At other meetings the following have been highlighted – need to redecorate ‘ministers toilet’; possible blinds for hall and church; new sound and visual equipment; possible soundproofing in hall)

Finance Committee Report: I Lawson reported a balance of approximately £52,000 in Current account and £51,000 in CFB savings account. £20,000 offered for Circuit Assessment. There is currently difficulty in getting an auditor. Weekly offerings have to be handled differently under current restrictions.

### **Pastoral Care and Worship:**

There has been no official pastoral visiting during lockdown but a range of ways had been used to keep in touch including printed material; phone calls etc. Most groups have had to stop during lockdown and consideration will be given in time to what and when activities may restart. Thanks were expressed to Karen, Claire Tuffin, Anne Norcross and Howard Roscoe for keeping Round the Table going by phone, zoom and meeting outdoors. (Our thanks to Howard as well for maintaining our links with Barnacre Road School through all the Covid difficulties and the long-term illness of the head teacher.)

Carol Rose drew our attention to the difficulty of getting preachers especially URC preachers during lockdown. (we are especially grateful to Carol and a group of singers for providing music while the congregation have been barred from singing)

**Safeguarding:** Jane Turner will arrange update training to take place at Longridge to avoid having to travel.

Printed Worship leaflets will continue to be available; the Methodist Circuit will continue on-line morning services and midweek facebook reflections and the Lancashire Methodist District have a zoom service every Sunday evening at 7.00pm.



The Methodist Circuit is entering into a series of conversations about our 'Hopes and Dreams' as we take a serious look at how to rebuild the work of the church after Covid.

On Saturday August 28<sup>th</sup> there will be an evening service at Ashton Methodist Church to welcome the Rev. Mike Grimsley, his wife Gwen and their children to the Circuit. Mike will replace the Rev Ray Borg at the new West Preston Church (formerly Ashton, Ingol and Cottam churches – now functioning as one church on three sites.)

There was no news from the URC Synod but we have been blessed by the support of the Rev Daleen Ten Cate, our Missional Partnership Mentor, as the Missional Partnership system develops. A service to Commission our Partnership is in the process of being organised although no additional minister has yet been appointed. It is hoped that this will now take place on the afternoon of October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Details to follow in the church notices. Perhaps we will be able to explain more of what this means in the next Messenger.

As you will have noticed, house building has continued apace during the last two years. Welcome leaflets have been distributed to some of the new homes, but Dot Little has more if anyone would like to be involved in further deliveries in the future.

Chris Marsden and Gillian Walker have both been regular members of our congregation for quite some time, it was therefore a real joy to welcome them into formal church membership recently. Gillian's membership has been transferred from the Ribbleton Avenue Church which is now closed.

## **NEW IDEAS for Rambles**

Our neighbours at St Michael's Grimsargh have produced a very good booklet of walks round Grimsargh complete with useful maps. Copies cost £5 and can be bought at Christ Church. Any profits are for St. Michael's Church.

Copies of the excellent guide to the Churches in Longridge and District are still available in Church and are also a source for planning interesting walks.

Have you got a favourite walk that you have found helpful during lockdown? Why not write about it for the next Messenger (by November 1<sup>st</sup> please) or is there a walk that has meant something really special in your life? Could you share something of what it means to you in an article for the Messenger?

The new Methodist Prayer Handbook for 2021/2022 'A Place for All' will be available soon. Please see John Spencer if you would like to order one. The book contains prayers and prayer topics from all around Britain and around most of the world arranged over 31 days and a full set of daily Bible readings with linked hymns for the whole year.

### **A good walk?**

Although I very much enjoy walking in a group I have during lockdown come to appreciate more the pleasures and opportunities of walking on my own. It offers the chance to turn things over in my mind as I wander along. As an alternative to our walking group reports here is an outline of one of my favourite walks, and some of the thoughts that it brings to mind.

The walking directions are in italics. Boots or stout shoes are advised.

*Start on Higher Road at the former Quarryman's Arms.*

Before leaving I take a look at the building, remembering its former uses, Quarryman's Arms, Heathcote's, Thai Restaurant. Different styles for different times, and some crash damage too. Now renovated and ready to reopen again when the time is right. I note that the latest rebuild has exposed the masonry that underlay the old building façade, revealing its underlying quality. Could this be an analogy for our church? How can I reveal our underlying quality?

*Go down Tanyard Lane, to the right of the building as you look at it.*

As we near the bottom of the lane I see the new houses on my right. New people coming to our area, we don't know them. These are expensive houses, materially well-off people, but busy and pressurised I expect, like most folk at the moment. I am challenged to make contact, to start sowing the seeds of faith... but how to go about it?

*Turn Left along Blackburn Road, and bear left at the Corporation Arms along Knowle Green Road.*

As I pass the Corporation Arms I recall past pleasures and enjoyable meals. Sadly it is no more, it did not survive COVID. Rumour is that it will restart, but with new owners and a different style, it may be very different from the place I remember, and it will take a while and a lot of work to redevelop. Is any of this relevant to where we are as a church?

*Continue past the reservoir wall on your left and turn Left at the field entrance just after a few cottages. Cross the field, heading diagonally right to a stile in the far corner, then follow the field boundary on your left up to Written Stone Farm.*

*Go through the farmyard and passing the written stone itself follow the tamac track on to Carlton House Farm.*

I see the written stone half buried in the hedge and am thankful we are no longer troubled by myth and superstition as people once were, but what are the modern legends and urban myths that make us needlessly

anxious. Are we aware of the real threats we face? Can we tell fact from fiction?

*Turn left at the far end of the farmyard and follow the lane through two gates and right and left bends to a stream crossing. Turn left here and follow the track uphill with the stream on your left.*

A steady climb but one of my favourite parts of the walk. It's hard work, but in pleasant surroundings, with the wooded stream alongside for company. I am reminded of the joy and companionship of the world of work and the satisfaction of a job well done.

*Pass over a stile at the top of the track and head diagonally right across the field towards High House Farm.*

There is often a hare in this field. I delight to see them running so free and effortlessly, following their own paths and purpose. Seeing one reminds me a bit of The Holy Spirit, expected but still surprising; running free but bringing joy and a fuller appreciation of life to any who see her. I am invited to follow, but will I?

*Crossing Higher road by two stiles enter the field opposite, dip down and then up to another stile in the stone wall. Climb to 40 Acre Lane following the wall on your left.*

*Turn left along 40 Acre Lane (the gate is a bit dodgy) and continue past the golf club.*

Golf has been called 'a good walk ruined'! I am no killjoy and quite a sports fan really, but seeing the time and money we spend on competitive sports makes me wonder what makes us like that? And I think of some other uses for all that effort and investment, and how I might help bring that about.

*Continue down past Dilworth Reservoir and into Longridge.*

I enjoy the wider views of the Forest of Bowland, Beacon Fell and over Preston to the coast. There's a wider world out there, and greater needs than ours. But now Longridge is drawing near, and I ponder what we can bring to our own community and its needs. Follow the hare wherever she leads!

- Howard Roscoe

# Dates For the Diary

The Food Bank has reopened. It is not thought appropriate to hold the annual Harvest Meal this year.

## **Sunday September 19<sup>th</sup>**

*3.00pm* Harvest Festival. Preacher Rev. Karen Le Mouton

## **Thursday September 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*9.30am* Circuit Meeting and Consultation at Bamber Bridge MC

## **Thursday September 30<sup>th</sup>**

*7.30pm* Church Council

## **Saturday October 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*2.00pm* URC Missional Partnership Commissioning Service at Penwortham URC (booking required – contact [beverleystrange@hotmail.com](mailto:beverleystrange@hotmail.com) or [jennyoliver55@gmail.com](mailto:jennyoliver55@gmail.com)) Also on YouTube and Zoom (Meeting ID 825 765 2727 – Passcode 226888)

## **Sunday October 24<sup>th</sup>**

*6.30pm* Ecumenical service on Climate Change at Alston Lane Church

## **Sunday October 31<sup>st</sup>**

*3.00pm* Shoebox Service

## **Friday November 12<sup>th</sup>**

Climate Change Workshop (details to follow)

## **Sunday November 14<sup>th</sup>**

Remembrance Sunday

**Thursday March 24<sup>th</sup> 2022**      *7.30pm*      Church Council

**Sunday May 8<sup>th</sup> 2022**              *4.00pm*      Annual Church Meeting

**Thursday June 16<sup>th</sup> 2022**      *7.30pm*      Church Council



# Activities

## SUNDAY

**3.00pm** Afternoon Worship\*

\*only Sunday service until further notice

Please note that Sunday worship will continue at 3.00pm for the time being and any occasional changes will be printed on the church notices. As usual a copy of the notices will be displayed on the front doors.

## FRIDAY

**7.45am** CTL Morning Prayers\*

\*At St Wilfrid's in 2021

**MINISTER:** Rev Karen Le Mouton 01772 323818

(Church Secretary) Mrs Mel Watson 01772 783581 or

(Senior Steward) Mr John Spencer 01772 782829 or

(Pastoral Secretary) Dr Carol Spencer 01772 782829

**EDITOR:** Robin Spencer  
robspencer@gmx.co.uk