

Letter to WSAM churches

25th June 2020

Dear Friends

Greetings from a very hot Manse. Hopefully by the time you read this the temperature will have fallen a bit, although I know some of you enjoy the heat more than I do. The greetings are warm, anyway!

The thing I want to say first, is that almost certainly
our three churches will not be open for worship on Sunday 5th July.
Possibly soon after, but not on the 5th.

Please be assured that I and all the Elders are very aware that there are varied feelings about re-opening. Some are keen to do so as soon as possible... others want to be sure that it is safe, and are not convinced that the time is yet right.

The Elders, as trustees, are responsible for taking the decision, and for its consequences. I have been an Elder (Ministers are Elders in each of their churches, automatically) for about thirty years, and I never remember previously having to take a decision which was literally a matter of life and death - but this is. Our top priority is the health of everyone - in our congregations and the wider community. So we really want to get it right; and we would really appreciate your support.

There is a great deal to be done in making it safe and legal, and we are currently working on that, while still waiting for guidance from both the denomination and the government (who seem to announce things first and fill in the detail later). We will keep you in the loop, please watch this space.

What we are doing now!

Petworth friends managed to organise a short time of fellowship and worship for just six people in Billy's garden last Sunday; weather permitting they hope to do something similar again in a different garden. I know some gatherings of small groups in gardens

have happened in Billingshurst too - when the weather is good this is one of the best options at the moment.

Both Pulborough and Billingshurst continue to have online Zoom meetings for 'after church coffee' on Sundays at 11.30. Much sharing of news and laughter takes place! If anyone would like to join in, and isn't currently doing so, have a word with Karen or Meredith.

Sunday Evening Zoom Worship

Following the success of our experimental 'Sunday at Six' Zoom worship a couple of weeks ago, we are intending to repeat the experience this coming Sunday, again at 6pm, and just for half an hour or so. If anyone who didn't attend last time would like an invitation, please have a word with Karen or me.

News

I'm sorry to have to bring you the news that Dorothy died very peacefully last weekend. She was at home, and her niece, Janet, was able to spend some time with her the day before. Dorothy had a strong faith to the end, and Janet was able to sing hymns to her.

The funeral plans are still being finalised, but the intention is to have a burial, to be followed eventually by a Service of Thanksgiving at some point in the future, when it's possible for all her friends and family to gather more freely.

Roots feedback

Over the weeks I have included various links to materials which I thought some people might find useful. Ages ago I included links to Roots material which is free to download, for adults and for children. What you may not know is that the URC is one of six founder organisations of Roots, and those involved are now trying to ascertain whether the material has been used, and whether it has been found helpful. If any of you have used this material, I'd appreciate it if you could let me know asap. Thanks!

Have a good weekend, and stay in touch - with each other and with me.

Anne Lewitt

These letters and Bulletins, with some details removed for confidentiality, are now being added to our church websites so that they are more easily and widely accessible.