

Just to keep in...

Contact

October 2020



Now thank we all our God



The Borough, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1NL

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Minister

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Worship in October

4 th Oct 10.45	Rev Andrew Mudharara (<i>Harvest</i>) *
11 th Oct	Mrs Rae Morrall (<i>Daventry</i>)
18 th Oct	Rev Andrew Mudharara (<i>including Holy Communion</i>)
25 th Oct	Mr Steve Ward

* The service on the 4th October will be in the church building and also available on-line. It is hoped that future services where Andrew is leading worship will also be in church but this is subject to further confirmation. See page 8 for more information.

Services are being recorded each week and will be available on the church website every Sunday by 10.45 am and on YouTube (just search for Hinckley URC). Special thanks to Tony Thomas, Rob Cobb and Heather for their IT skills enabling the services to be available online.

IMPORTANT – PLEASE TAKE NOTE

Anyone entering the church premises must sign their names in the register and sanitise their hands with the sanitiser provided.

If you have downloaded the NHS Covid-19 App you can scan the QR code on the poster at the church entrances.

While work is being carried out on the stone frontage of the church there will be no access to the church via the front entrance on weekdays. If you have to access the church on a week day please use the rear entrance.

Printed copies of this magazine will not be available in church this month. However, if you know someone who needs to have a printed copy, please either print one off for them, or let David Crick know.

Minister's letter

Greetings to you sisters and brothers in Christ from Evelyne Tavonga, Candid and myself. Candid and I have been blessed with a baby girl, Evelyne Tavonga on the 7th of September weighing 7 pounds 8 ounces and very healthy. Both mother and baby are doing well. We are very thankful for this addition to our family. We want to thank you all for your prayers, thoughts, cards and presents and above all Praise the Lord for Evelyne Tavonga.

I am looking forward to lead the service on the 4th of October with a live congregation. I should acknowledge that I miss gathering together with the people of God and sharing worship together. I also miss preaching face to face to the congregation as compared to preaching to my camera in my office or an empty church building. I am however grateful for technology and the people who make it possible for many of us to access the Sunday service through television, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, audio CDs and paper forms. It has been a learning curve for many of us, with God always walking alongside us encouraging us in happy and difficult times during this pandemic.

I want to thank a group of people who have taken the task to put the risk assessment in place for some of us to be able to meet in the church building after a long time. A lot of people have been active in the life of the church in many ways such as telephoning people, praying for each other, making sure we have services on line just to mention a few. May the Lord continue to bless each and everyone of us as we respond to the voice of the Spirit of God by doing whatever the Spirits directs us to do for the good of the Kingdom of our God.

Let us continue to share the Gospel message of our Kingdom with all peoples we interact with wherever possible. We are here to further the interests of the Kingdom of God. Let us keep loving one another, as a family of God and our neighbour far and near.

There is great progress on the stonework repairs on the church building and all going well, the work will be complete before end of October 2020. The lord Bless us all as we work alongside the Spirit of God in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Andrew

News of the family

By the time you read this Mary Scott, her daughter Fiona and grandson Kieran will have left Hinckley and moved back to Ireland. They are hoping to settle in the south east of the country. Please hold them in your prayers at this exciting but unknown step into a new chapter of their lives. We thank Mary for all she did in the church and will miss her constant smile and friendship.

We give thanks that some of our prayers have been answered and 3 people have felt a call to Eldership. We pray for a positive outcome and continue to pray for someone being called to be our treasurer.

We give thanks that Brian and his son have been able to visit Jan even at a social distance and that Jan is more settled.

Please remember Tony W in your prayers who is now taking daily medication and regular visits to hospital for intravenous medication.

Maurice H has had a spell in hospital but is now home.

We continue to pray for Janet A, Cynthia, Norrie, Jan D, Sue D, Ethel, Betty H, Wendy, Jackie H, Joyce, Joan, Brenda, Lily, Denis and all of our church family who struggle with daily life, those who are house bound and those we have not been able to support in our usual way.

If anyone else is in need of prayer or you would like us to pray for you, please contact *Sue Saunders* (01455 446509).

Commitment for Life

Some of you may have realised that this is the month when Commitment for Life contributions are collected. The logistics of getting envelopes to everyone plus collecting them in, not to mention Covid-19 risks, are too difficult. Commitment for Life won't be forgotten. The envelopes are sitting in our house so as soon as it is practical and safe to do so there will be a collection.

Best wishes to you all, *Carole and Tony*

Thank You

Grateful thanks to our friends @ Hinckley URC for the gift of a beautiful Orchid delivered to us by Kathy and Ian on the occasion of our Wedding Anniversary. It was greatly appreciated!

Hope we can soon resume our normal Church activities and enjoy your company once again.

Joan and Trevor Loydall

Thank you very much to Kathy and Ian for the beautiful bunch of roses and the lemon drizzle cake delivered recently. It was lovely to have a socially distanced chat in the garden. *Christine and Tony*

It was lovely to see Kathy and Ian on my birthday. We had a good chat while socially distancing on the driveway. I was delighted to receive a beautiful bunch of roses and a delicious cake. Many thanks to Kathy and Ian.

Best wishes, *Marilyn*

Birthdays and Anniversaries

We congratulate John Payne and Jacqui's Dad, Bob, who both celebrate special birthdays this month: John on the 10th and Bob on the 13th. We won't tell you how old they are, but combined they are 140 (and they're the same age)!!! We also celebrate with Philip and Jacqui who both have birthdays on the 4th, John M on the 6th, Mike (13th), Anne S (14th), David G (18th), Tony W (21st) and Sue Doherty on the 27th.

David & Heather have a wedding anniversary on the 14th.

Apologies to anyone we may have missed. Thanks to Kathy for keeping these records, if we haven't got your information please have a word with her.

Giving thanks is one course from which we never graduate.

Valerie Anders

Eldership and Church AGM

The November Church Meeting is, in normal circumstances, the meeting at which we hold our AGM. It is at this meeting that Health and Safety policies are reviewed, when church officers are voted in for the next 12 months and also when Elders are elected to serve for a three-year period. These are not normal times - however we will attempt to hold an AGM at the normal time by one means or other. The meeting will probably take the form of an on-line Zoom meeting but a number of members do not use this facility so we (the Elders) want to make sure that all who wish to vote on important matters have a chance to do so. Information on how this will happen will be communicated to all members by the end of October.

As you will know, Richard Benham is stepping down from his role as Church Treasurer at the end of 2020. Richard has served us faithfully for many years in this role. He is ably supported by Phillip Lindley as Assistant Treasurer. We are now reaching a critical point as no one has offered to take on this important role. Consequently, now is the time for all of us to seek God prayerfully as to whom we might invite and encourage to fill this vital post. Would you be willing to take up this position? It is essential that we find someone to fill this role.

As announced in the September Contact, Tony Wallis has decided to step down from his role as Church Secretary due to health reasons but Tony will continue as an Elder for the time being. We pray for Tony and for Carole and the family as Tony commences his treatment for cancer. Christine Thomas has been asked to take on this role by the Minister and she is now acting church secretary. Her position needs to be approved by the AGM in November.

We also need more Elders. The serving elders are at present Jan Beagley, Richard Benham, Jacqueline Brown, Robert Cobb, Sue Saunders, Sue Doherty, Christine Thomas and Tony Wallis. The following have served their 3 year term Jacqueline, Sue D and Christine - and are happy to stand for re-election. Jan Beagley has also served 3 years but will not be seeking re-election. If you would like to consider eldership but need more information please talk to Andrew or one of the elders. If you would like to nominate someone please ask their permission before putting their name forward and also find a seconder for your proposal.

Nominations are now open. The closing date will be Sunday 15th November. Please send your nomination by email or letter to Christine Thomas

Please pray about these issues.

Andrew and the Elders

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.' *Matthew 9:37,38*

A Harvest Hymn

Now the year is crowned with blessing
 As we gather in the grain;
And, our grateful thanks expressing,
 Loud we raise a joyous strain.
Bygone days of toil and sadness
 Cannot now our peace destroy;
For the hills are clothed with gladness,
 And the valleys shout for joy.

*To the Lord their first-fruits bringing,
 All His thankful people come,
To the Father praises singing
 For the joy of harvest-home.*

In the spring the smiling meadows
 Donned their robes of living green,
As the sunshine chased the shadows
 Swiftly o'er the changing scene;
 In the summer-time the story
 Of a riper hope was told;
 Then the rich autumnal glory
Decked the fields in cloth of gold. *[Refrain]*

Shall not we, whose hearts are swelling
 With the thought of former days,
 Sing a joyous song foretelling
 Future gladness, fuller praise?
For the cloud the bow retaineth
 With its covenant of peace,
That, as long as earth remaineth,
Harvest-time shall never cease. *[Refrain]*

Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler

Worship at Hinckley URC

It has been a long time since we last met for worship in March, and we have missed seeing each other and missed worshipping together. We are planning to re-open the church for Sunday services from **Sunday October 4th at 10.45**. We don't know how often these services will happen and we will keep you informed. Weekly services will continue online as before.

Much thought and planning has gone into making the church building and our Sunday morning arrangements safe for us all.

The overriding principles that are being adopted to make sure that we are as COVID-safe as possible are:

- **Reducing risk of spreading the coronavirus by airborne transmission**
- **Reducing risk of spreading the coronavirus by physical contact on surfaces**

Please feel free to contact your elder if you wish to discuss further the plans that have been put in place. These pages give the arrangements in more detail.

It will be a joy to worship together again, even though we can't sing, to praise God and to listen to His word as a church fellowship. If you feel able to attend, we would love to see you, but we fully understand if you don't wish to return just yet.

With every blessing, *Andrew and the Elders*

Following these instructions, will help keep you and other worshippers safe.

1. **A face mask is essential to attend church worship.** (Face masks are available in church if you forget yours). Only the preacher may wear a visor.
2. **Please do not come to church if you have any symptoms of coronavirus or other cold or flu symptoms.** Do not come to church

if you have come into contact with anyone who has or is suspected to have the coronavirus (Please allow 14 symptom-free days before returning to church).

3. **Maintain social distancing of 2m at all times** inside and outside the building, and when entering and leaving the building.
4. **Obey all signage and listen to instructions given by the stewards.**
5. **Use the hand sanitiser** which is available as part of the new cleaning strategy that has been put in place to specifically kill the coronavirus on all surfaces. Touch as few surfaces as possible whilst moving around the building.
6. **If you need to use the toilet, please use the toilet for the disabled in the front foyer** and follow the cleaning instructions before and after use.
7. **By remaining in your seat, you can chat quietly to the people nearest you before and after the service.** Please avoid socialising in the foyer etc. or using a loud voice as this increases risk of infection spread.

What to expect on arrival at church? Doors will open at 10.30

- Only enter or leave church via the front doors. The foyer steward will open the door to you when your mask is in place. The rear entrance is only to be used for mobility scooters.
- You will be asked to sanitise your hands when entering the building.
- The church steward will conduct you to a seat, which will be socially distanced. Please remain in your seat at all times (unless you need the toilet). The gallery seating will be used if necessary.
- Only sit with members of your household. Children can stay with their family as there will be no children's activities at present.
- The church steward will record your attendance for our track and trace system.

How will the worship be different?

- The person leading worship will use a visor.
- We may use music in worship but unfortunately we will not be able to sing.
- The pew Bibles will not be in use; you may bring your own Bible.
- For communion services, you will be asked bring your own bread and wine/juice if you wish, and only move your mask momentarily for taking each of the bread and then taking the wine/juice.
- There will be no offertory collected.

What happens at the end of the church service?

- Sadly, there will be no refreshments
- You may remain in your seat to chat quietly to those nearby
- When you are ready to leave, ensure there is a 2m gap between you and others from different households. Leave by the front door, touching as few surfaces as possible.

Access to and Use of the Church Premises

In general, at present you should not need to go into any of the church buildings during the week. If you think you need to access the building, please telephone Christine or Tony Thomas (tel 01455 448288) who will advise how and when it is safe to do so.

The church sanctuary will only be used Sunday mornings and possibly on Wednesdays. This means that a 72-hour period will have elapsed between uses, and any virus on surfaces would then be inactive. The church is being cleaned regularly in accordance with COVID safety guidelines.

The Vine, the Brownies and Guides and the Dance School are resuming activities. As the rear entrances, rear staircases, upper and lower halls and toilets may be in use by these groups during the week, for your safety we ask that you do not use these facilities at any time during the week or weekend periods.

Commitment for Life Prayer for October 2020

Jesus:

for the dry and thirsty you give living water,
to those drained and empty you come with your fullness,
among people discouraged and despairing, you offer gentle love,
in places of defeat and distress, you speak of hope.

So we pray for our world:

where the ground is dry, we ask for clouds and rain,
in lives that are drained, will you refresh and restore,
for desperate hearts, we seek the gift of new belief,
in distress, come, Lord Jesus, to sow seeds of promise.

And we ask to be agents of your love,
sharing material help and personal care,
offering respect and understanding,
working in hope as partners and friends,
for the sake of your good news. **Amen**

*John Proctor, recently retired General Secretary
of the United Reformed Church*

Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust – Ride and Stride

The annual ride took place on Saturday 12th September but as reported in the September Contact our church did not take part due to the masonry work being in full swing. I have also to report the no one from the church took part in the event by visiting other churches. However, several people have made donations to the charity which I will pass on to LHCT. Thank you very much to those concerned. Please note that 50% of these donations will be returned for our own church use.

It is also worth mentioning at this point that the church has applied for a grant from LHCT to help us with the renovation work on the front of the building. LHCT awarded a grant to us when we renovated the organ back in 2006/2007.

Tony T

Harvest Bible Quiz (Answers on page 15)

1. Who said "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few"?
(a) Jesus (b) Paul (c) Peter (d) Boaz
2. Which major feast coincided with the wheat harvest?
(a) Firstfruits (b) Pentecost (c) Passover (d) Tabernacles
3. Why were the Israelites told not to gather the gleanings of the harvest?
(a) To feed the wild animals (b) To provide for the poor (c) They were unclean (d) To keep the land fertile
4. What was special about the harvest in the Sabbatical year?
(a) There wasn't one (b) It produced double (c) It was two months early (d) Only one type of crop was sown and harvested
5. In the parable of the tares in the field, the harvest is the end of the world, but who are the reapers? (a) God and Jesus
(b) The Levites (c) The angels (d) The Saints
6. Under the law, what was to be done with the firstfruits of the harvest?
(a) Put into barns (b) Given to the Lord (c) Given to the poor (d) Left in the field
7. What was Jesus talking about when he said, "they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns"? (a) Animals of the forest (b) Birds of the air
(c) Cattle of the field (d) Fish of the sea
8. For how many successive years did the crops fail during the time when Joseph reigned in Egypt? (a) Two (b) Seven (c) Ten (d) Twelve
9. Where was Jesus when he said "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest"?
(a) Decapolis (b) Jordan (c) Samaria (d) Galilee
10. At the beginning of which harvest did Naomi and Ruth go to Bethlehem? (a) Wheat (b) Grape (c) Barley (d) Rye

The thankful receiver bears a plentiful harvest.

William Blake

Spike Mays was an East Anglian author. Here, he reminisces about Harvest Festivals from his childhood in the 1920s, taken from his book Reuben's Corner.

At Harvest Festival our church looked more like God's garden than God's house. Flowers and fruit festooned the altar. On walls, pillars, pew-ends and window sills were spread the good things from the earth, from farms and cottage gardens. Small plaited corn-sheaves were interwoven into the brass chains supporting the oil lamps.

In the vestry, long before the due hour, men and boys would have already changed into black cassocks and newly-laundered snow-white surplices; all would have their books and anthem sheets; all would be humming snatches of hymns, psalms and anthem, tuning themselves up, bursting to sing to God.

Above us the great bells would be pealing welcomes to farmers and farmhands, their downy, multi-coloured rope-ends dancing to the weight of the cast metal, soaring so joyfully and strongly that they would sometimes take the lighter bell-ringers aloft with them.

Whole families would be flocking into our church – children first, then the parents. There would be a brief pause at the centre aisle, an almost imperceptible bow to the altar and then rustlings and gropings for hassocks. Knees and heads bent in prayer, hands sometimes clasped, sometimes just shielding eyes, they would wait humbly for the bells to stop. There would then be a single tolling for two minutes, after which the vestry door would open to admit the parson. There would be a quick glance from him and a nod from the churchwarden or leading chorister. Young Sid Williams, six feet tall and ruddy of face, would take the long cross and move to the door, whereupon Mabel Eason would play the opening bars of the processional hymn, while the parson offered up a short prayer.

In double file behind Sid Williams we would then process, boys first with the small ones in front, then the men and last the parson. When the organ gave the appropriate note we would move slowly up the aisle – Sid Williams trying not to hit the low lamps with his tall cross – and would sing the Processional.

*Come, ye thankful people, come,
Raise the song of Harvest-home...*

This was always a great day in our village lives, when in our church we gave thanks for what little we had. The men's voices seemed more powerful that day, the women's eyes were moist. Flowers and corn were taken to hospital wards soon after the last service; fruit and vegetables to our village old and poor.

Mark's Gospel Ch 8 v22-26

I heard of a young man whose family encouraged him to visit the opticians, he was obviously having difficulty seeing. Well he went through the eye test and eventually he was asked by the optician how long had his eyes been like they were. "All my life" he said, "I thought everyone saw like me". His vision was blurred, he could not make out letters and number very easily.

The optician said he needed glasses and she would get him a pair ready for the next day. I was told he was amazed at what he could now see. One wonders how he passed his driving test?

There are 2 stories in Mark's Gospel about Jesus healing a blind man. Here is the first...

The Healing of a Blind Man at Bethsaida. Mark ch8

²²They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.²³He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spat on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

²⁴He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

²⁵Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't go into the village."

Perhaps like me you ask why it took Jesus two goes to heal the man? Was it something to do with Jesus being tired, or He mis-calculated the power needed to heal the man? It's neither.

Remember Jesus had 12 Disciples that He was training and they often got things wrong, or they needed to ask Jesus what His teaching meant. Notice in v23 Jesus took the blind man out of the village and it is suggested the Disciples went with them. Jesus spat on the man's eyes.

"Do you see anything?" "Yes," said the man "I see people; they look like trees walking around!" He could see but not distinguish what he could see.

Next time you are in the bathroom and the mirror steams up, take a look at what you can see. That is an idea of what the blind man saw the first time Jesus had blessed him.

Only after the second blessing did the man "see everything clearly!"

So why did Jesus do what He did with the blind man?

The disciples were slow to see things that Jesus taught, slow to understand the meaning of the parables. We used to be asked “Do you get it?”

Often the disciples did “not get it”. They were like the blind man the first time Jesus blessed him. “I see people; they look like trees walking around”.

There were many people following Jesus who did not see what and who Jesus really was. He was good at miracles and telling stories (parables) but people did not see the meaning. What they saw “I see people; they look like trees walking around.” They were looking through a bathroom mirror that was steamed up.

There are times when I wonder if I see Jesus for who He really is. Or do “*I see people; they look like trees walking around!*”. Jesus is the Son of God, who came to show us a real true, clear picture of God.

Jesus wanted the Disciples to see Him for who He was, not just a miracle-worker and storyteller or a meal ticket. It is suggested the Disciples were not seeing a clear picture of Jesus and that is why He had to go at healing the man. It is almost a Parable! Do you get it?

So how do we see Jesus? Do we have a clear picture of Him or do we “I see people; they look like trees walking around!”

Just another point... What do people see in us? Are we a clear, true picture of Jesus in us or do they see a steamed-up mirror, with just a foggy picture of our Saviour?

May God bless you.

George

*Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap
but by the seeds that you plant.*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Harvest Quiz Answers

1 (a) Matt 9:37; 2 (b) Exodus 34:22; 3(b) Lev 23:22; 4 (a) Lev 25:1-7; 5 (c) Matt 13:39; 6 (b) Lev 23:10; 7 (b) Matt 6:26; 8 (b) Gen 41:27; Gen 45:6; 9 (c) John 4:35; 10 (c) Ruth 1:22

News from The Vine Christian Bookshop

From the beginning of October all things advent related will be in stock (advent calendars, candles and books) alongside Christmas cards in both packs and singles. Packs of cards are sold in support of the charities Compassion, Tearfund and Leprosy Mission. The week beginning 5th October is National Christian Bookshop Week and to encourage people to use a brick and mortar shop there will be 10% off all Bibles during the week plus a prize draw to win a "Mystery Box" of at least 10 books - you can be entered with every purchase of books, cards or Christian gifts. The Vine is also taking part in Hinckley's half term offers promotion with 3 for 2 on children's Christmas books and they will also be part of the treasure hunt around the town - so do drop in this month to take advantage of any of these offers.

God Bless *Jessica Harrison*, Manager

Regular Meetings

Every **Sunday** - Chat session on Zoom – log in after 11.45am. Session continues until approx. 12.30pm or as long as it takes!

Every **Monday** Chat and Prayer session on Zoom - log in after 6.45pm for a 7.00pm start and ending about 8.00pm

Every **Wednesday** 6.30pm – 7.30pm *Just for Fun* – fun and games on Zoom organised by Rachel and Rob.

Tuesday Weekly Bible Study Group – see Richard Benham for details

Wednesday Monthly Housegroup – meeting via Zoom.
Next meeting Wednesday 7th October 7.45pm.

Friday Prayer Group – see Hazel Coley for details

Please submit material for the next edition of Contact by **Sunday 25th October**. Articles can be emailed to dghc1@btinternet.com. The November edition of Contact will be available at the end of October.

Thank you to everybody who has submitted articles this month.