

Wilson Memorial Church

At The HEART of the Community we serve

JUNE 2020: ISSUE 1

A TRULY 'HOME' COMMUNION AND A FIRST

The word 'unprecedented' is one that has been used a great deal during the COVID-19 coronavirus crisis. It means *never done or known before, without previous instance*. Last Sunday, as a Church family, we experienced our own *unprecedented* event. For the first time ever, we shared together in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, not in the same place, but in our own homes. When the Session made the decision to hold the Celebration of the Lord's Supper in this manner, they did so in faith because no-one had ever experienced such a thing before. But surely, isn't that what our *faith* calls us to do...to launch out into the unknown and to take bold steps. In fact, if you think about it, the birth of the Church, which we were celebrating last Sunday (Pentecost), was totally contingent on the disciples stepping out in *faith* and engaging in 'unprecedented' events. Everything we do as a Church began as an 'unprecedented' event or decision. The 'unprecedented', rather than something to be feared, can actually lead to new and fresh experiences, and to a revitalisation of those things that we may have previously began to take for granted.

Our Pentecost Celebration of the Lord's Supper certainly provided us with a new and fresh experience. We may have been *apart*, but we were certainly *together* in heart, mind and spirit. It was lovely to watch the faces of those who attended by ZOOM, and to hear the voices of those who participated by Telephone Conference. One person commented on how lovely it was to see the faces of the others, rather than the back of the head of the person sitting in front of you at Church. Others said: '*it was a lovely celebration of Christ*'; '*it was good to be together*'; '*enjoyed having communion with everyone...first time at home*'; '*did enjoy the Lord's Supper service on Sunday, and enjoyed seeing so many ZOOMing in, and; everything was quite clear and dignified.*'

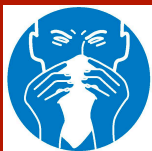
It is interesting, isn't it, that even though we were *apart* everyone felt the *togetherness*, which is exactly what the word *communion* means...the act of sharing thoughts and feelings. The English word *communion* is derived from the Latin word *communio*, meaning *sharing in common*. The New Testament word for this is *koinonia*, which has multiple meanings, including *communion*. It most usually refers to *fellowship, joint participation, the share which one has in anything, a gift jointly contributed*. It describes the state of fellowship and unity that should exist within the Christian community. This is most clearly seen in the description of the early Church in Acts 2: 42-47. If you want a definition of what *communion* and *koinonia* are, then you need look no further than Acts 2. Almost every verse speaks of *fellowship, joint participation, the share which one has in anything, and a gift jointly contributed*. But what is most striking about all of this is the fact that this true *communion/koinonia* took place in the homes of the first followers of Jesus Christ. For sure, they met in the Temple Courts, but only the folks living in Jerusalem were able to do that. As the Church grew and began to spread throughout the region, most of what it did happened in, and from, the homes of ordinary believers, and that included the Celebration of the Lord's Supper (*they broke bread together in their homes*).

One of the unexpected consequences of *lockdown* has meant that our experience of Church has had to happen in our own homes. We are watching/listening/reading the proclamation of God's Word in our own homes. We are caring for one another by telephone, video calls, and socially-distanced errands. We are witnessing to our faith every Sunday evening when we light our candles and place them in our front windows and read the National Call to Prayer. We are showing our love for the vulnerable and disadvantaged of our community in the continued opening of our Basics Bank. Our message of Christ's love is reaching out far beyond the four walls of our Church building. We are living our vision to be *at the heart of the community we serve*.

What we experienced on Pentecost Sunday may have been 'unprecedented' within the scope of our experience, but it certainly brought us closer to the experience of the first followers of Jesus Christ in Acts, and to one another in this unprecedented time of enforced isolation. Let us be thankful that we worship a God who is able to transcend time and distance, and who unites us in *communion* with Him and with one another, wherever we are, and in ways that we could never imagine.

CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry a tissue and use it to catch your cough or sneeze



BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues, so put it in the bin as soon as possible



KILL IT

Wash your hands properly for 20 seconds, and wash them often



SPEAKING OF 'BEING IN COMMUNION'

Don't forget that it is now also possible to *listen* to the weekly sermon through our **DIAL-A-SERMON** ministry. It is really easy, and you can access the sermon at anytime during the week (and as often as you want!). You simply dial 0131 297 6174, listen to the automated greeting '*Welcome to Wilson Memorial Church. The latest sermon will play shortly*', and then after a slight pause, the sermon will begin to play. The audio recording will be changed each week to align with what is available on YouTube and our Church website (www.wilsonmemorial.org.uk). The only cost involved is that of a local call, and many telephone plans include free evening and weekend calls (check with your telephone service provider).

Please **also remember** the new **TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL** ministry. This allows multiple callers to participate at the same time. We used it on Pentecost Sunday for those folks without an internet connection, and it worked really well for those who used it. As many of you know, we hold a weekly CUPPA AND CHAT via ZOOM on Wednesday afternoon at 3:00pm for those who have internet. Now that we have this new facility, we can also look at organising a *telephone* CUPPA AND CHAT. We will let you know when this has been arranged. It can also be used if a group of you wanted to 'meet' together on the telephone. Let us know and we will arrange that for you. To access the **TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL** you dial 0333 011 0616, and once you are connected you will be asked to enter this access code: 169 1827#. You will be asked to say your name, and then you will be entered into the Conference Call. As with **DIAL-A-SERMON** you will incur the cost of the call, but again you may have free evening and weekend calls included in your telephone plan.

We know that some of you are perhaps fearful of trying something new and different, but you do not need to be. If you need guidance and encouragement, George Smith will be more than happy to help. His number is at the foot of the page. So, don't be afraid and give it a go! You'll be amazed at who is at the end of the line!

FILL THIS SPACE

We want to hear from you and of your experiences of life in *lockdown*...your hopes and fears...your joys and celebrations...the new things you have learned and are doing...etc.

We also want to hear from you about your vision of how you think Church might be after *lockdown* and we are able to be together in worship again: What would you like to continue? What would you like to see added? What are you missing the most? What are you not missing? What has not being able to **be** at Church taught you about **being** the Church?

AND KEEP ON PRAYING...

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