

Immanuel Newsletter

Sunday 7th February 2021

Website: <http://www.immanuelurc.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ImmanuelURC>

Thought for the week “A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be - and not building bridges - is not Christian”.
Pope Francis

Partnership Prayer Diary 2021: *September is the final month available.* If you would care to offer the task of compiling it, please get in touch with Robert. Thank you for your help.

Immanuel Social Media: A small group of members met up on zoom to explore how we might develop our skills and promote Immanuel a little more in social media. With Hannah Fleming-Hill to guide us we spent half the morning considering our Facebook page and then another 90 minutes looking at the church website.

Already minor changes have taken place and there are more in the offing. It was an especially useful morning of considering how we can truly share the Good News to the wider community and build up our own faith. The lock-down may well have had its problems but it has obliged us to start thinking ‘outside the box’so as they say: “Watch this space!”

Both links, to the webpage and the Facebook are above.

Illustration for this Sunday



The February letter from the South Western Synod Moderator, Rev. Ruth Whitehead

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, As the pandemic continues, I know that many of us feel we are living through times of great darkness, even despair. We see our hospitals and health workers stretched to the limits, we know personal grief and pain, we feel a sense of isolation and loneliness. In this darkness I have needed to see light, and I have appreciated those people who have kept their Christmas lights burning in the days of January.

Here at the Old Manse we have kept our Christmas crib scene up in the window for the days of Epiphany – and I hope our neighbours have enjoyed sharing it with us.

When light shines in our physical darkness it helps to lift our spirits, tells where we are, and shows us the way forward.

We know that Jesus, the light of the world, does these things for us too. The gift of Godself in Jesus gives us great hope. It means we are not alone, that we are loved, that our ordinary lives can be filled with the extraordinary grace of God.

Jesus Christ – fully God and fully human – tells us where we are. We are in God’s creation, in God’s hands, and filled with the potential to be the body of Christ in the world.

Jesus teaches us and shows us the direction our lives should take. The Message version of Matthew Chapter 5, verses 15 and 16 puts it this way:

‘You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket,

do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!

If you haven't seen Amanda Gorman's poem from Joe Biden's inauguration as President of the USA, then find a spare 5 minutes and 47 seconds to watch it:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-55739805> Sounding like a 21st century echo of Martin Luther King's speech "I have a dream", Amanda Gorman, America's 22-year-old Youth Poet Laureate, finishes with the words: 'When day comes, we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it.'

May Christ's light shine on you, in you and through you.

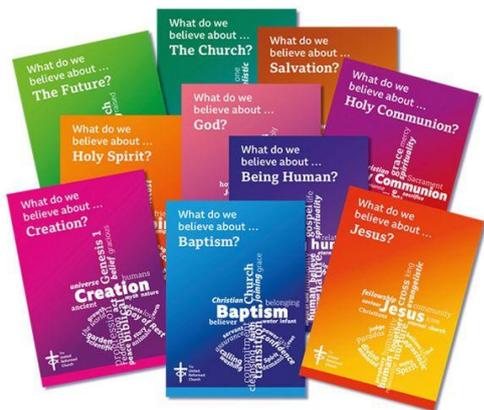
Yours in that light, Ruth.

You might be interested:

The URC has published a series of short booklets on different topics which you might like to explore. Here is the link –

<https://urc.org.uk/believe?fbclid=IwARiYx9l5Sd5YoAbaCpkrWlQ17lbrooQ6TvCD89rYFwGZbTQePBw6bl3M>

Take a look, explore, read. You can print the one/s you like.



Discussion Group: As a result of the training mentioned above, as from next week together with the Reflection, I will be sending out a sound file, with a "sermon" summary version of the Reflection, together with an invitation to a Zoom Discussion group, lasting no more than 45 minutes where you are invited to join in to chat about what you have read and/or listened to. Let's see how it goes.

Please Include in your prayers:

- Highworth URC
- The Harbour Project
- Those who are struggling with mental health difficulties,
- For the vaccination programme in our country and across the world.
- The Old Town Partnership of Churches
- The URC: nationally, the 13 Synods.
- The South Western Synod: Ruth the Moderator, Gwen the Synod Clerk, and all who work for the Synod Office, and the churches of the Synod.
- for the homeless, and rough sleepers
- our leaders in politics, economics, churches, culture, health, commerce, industry, trade unions, armed forces, and all walks of life: wisdom and call to serve.

100th Birthday: on 26th February it will be Iris Quinn's birthday and her sister-in-law is preparing a surprise for her (so please keep this to yourselves). We invite members of the congregation to record or film on your phone, a short greeting/message -remember there will be lots more of them, so yes, short is good, and send it to Margaret New. We are sure that birthday cards will also be appreciated on the day!