

Thought for the week: “We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” — Maya Angelou

Family news: The service of Thanksgiving for the life of David Barnes will take place at the chapel of Kingsdown Crem on **Monday 22nd 1.30. Apologies for the mistake of date and time in last week’s Newsletter.** As the number of people who can attend the service in the Chapel has been reached and no more people are allowed, if you would like to follow the service, you can do so. The details are below:

<https://www.obitus.com/>

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Last week we shared the news of the death of **Roger Charlton**, who passed away in hospital in Saarbrucken as a result of Covid. He was already in hospital for chemotherapy and unfortunately picked up the virus and, with weakened immune system he fell prey to the infection. Roger was the eldest son of the Revd Norman Charlton and Vera. Norman was minister at Immanuel on two occasions. Roger was born in Coventry on 20/6/46, which was Norman’s place of Ministry before moving to Immanuel in 1949 (when Neil was born!).

Our prayers for Anne -Roger’s wife- and all the family.

Guidelines for re-opening for worship: The Synod Moderators of the URC has issued guidelines for all churches on the steps to be taken for opening for worship. We would be most grateful to you if you read them and prayerfully considered them, as we feel it is important everybody understands the steps that follow. Please bear in mind that in all this process, the Elders of the church have placed “**our duty of care**” to all the people who come to church as absolute central in our decision. And will continue to be led by this.

The following link will let you find these guidelines:

<https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3750-synod-moderators-issue-new-guidance-on-reopening-of-churches>

Mothering Sunday: In our part of the world this is celebrated the fourth Sunday of Lent, so that is this Sunday. I particularly prefer the reference to “mothering” rather than Mother’s Day, because it is rather narrow and biological, while Mothering is certainly wide scope, honouring all people who have played a mothering role in our lives, which certainly includes Mothers but also those who love us as mothers do, or have been as mothers to us if and when there has been no Mother to be that figure. So, let us then remember all those people who have nurtured and loved us, be they our mother or any other figure, and give thanks to God for people with such love for us. And on this day, I often think of Jesus in Matthew 23; 37 when he says “How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” – such a loving image. Love to all of you who are celebrated today.

CHURCH FINANCES

The elders have now reviewed and agreed the church accounts for 2020, which show that the General Fund suffered a loss of £5,719 over this most unusual year. This is better than anticipated, basically because the loss of income from room bookings has been offset by lower spending on maintaining and running the premises and by continued generous giving from members and associates. The elders want to thank everyone for this continued giving, which has made a big difference.

We cannot foresee any early improvement in our finances, while we remain unable to offer a return to "normal" services of worship or room bookings. On current assumptions our budget for 2021 ends up with a worse result than we achieved in 2020. So over the next few months we will continue to rely very much on congregational giving to keep our heads above water. So, if you are able, we would like you please to continue to make regular donations to Immanuel, either through payments into the Immanuel URC Standing Order Account at sort code 30-98-41 account number 04662955 or by letting Sue Goodall have your normal filled envelopes. If you need more information about your options or about how to ensure that we can claim gift aid on your donations please contact Sue Goodall or Don Macarthur.

Please Include in your prayers:

- Mothering Sunday
- Fairtrade
- Highworth URC
- For all those we know who are facing exceptionally difficult circumstances.
- For the vaccination in our country and the world.
- The Old Town Partnership of Churches
- Jonathan Edwards – who is to be the transitional minister for Central Church.
- 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.

Hymn for today

1 O lift us up, strong Son of God; Restore our fallen race, We who have marred your image shall Regain it through your grace.	3 And you, who came into the world To take our human frame, Did not condemn our fallen state, But took away our shame.
2 The subtle serpent of our sin Ensnares our helpless feet; The lifted serpent of your health Can make our souls complete.	4 Your law is holy, just and good; But still we fail to do All that your gracious words require To keep us close to you.

Rejoice and Sing 337. Cyril G Hambly

Question: how can you relate this hymn to the Reflection for today?

Traidcraft: Together with this week's mailing you will receive an invitation from Traidcraft to contribute to a project in Africa. Please consider this carefully, as in many parts of the world, people are really struggling given that they don't have the same access we do to health and vaccines. And as the church is not open for worship yet, we thought it would be better for all

of you to open the link at the foot of the letter and make your personal donation directly to this Project. Thank you!

NOTE CHANGE OF TIME:

Discussion Group: Our next Zoom Discussion Group – “Reflecting on the Reflection”, will be next **Tuesday, 16th at 4pm** for about 45 minutes. The link for the meeting can be found at the foot of the Reflection each week. Looking forward to seeing you and sharing thoughts, as we Reflect on the Reflection.

Illustration for this Sunday readings:

