

## Immanuel Newsletter

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021

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

**Thought for the week:** *“Truth is above harmony. Those who fear disorder more than injustice produce more of both” (William Sloane Coffin)*

**The Honesty Box** – This is a new section of the Newsletter, open to all of you. You are invited to share your thoughts, your expectations, your hopes, even your frustrations (if you have any) as Immanuel prepares to re-open for worship. We would welcome something once a week for all to read and reflect upon, so feel challenged and send in your contribution, either to Ceri ([immanuelweeklynews@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:immanuelweeklynews@yahoo.co.uk)) or Robert ([robert.jordani@btconnect.com](mailto:robert.jordani@btconnect.com)). If in one week we have a large amount, we will spread them over different weeks. Today we share the first one with you.

I remember being in shock back in March 2020. How can the church close down? Surely the church should be available during times of difficulty? But I knew that we could not continue as we had done over the many, many years...things had to change.

I made my first tentative steps back to communal worship after the first lock-down by attending Christ Church. I found this an emotional experience; in about four months my life had been turned upside down. Next, I attended Immanuel, which was a different experience again: I felt sad looking at all those masked faces but also happy to see friendly or even nervous eyes peering over the top of the obligatory face-coverings. It is amazing how you can communicate even when your smile is hidden!

So, now we are contemplating our future return to Immanuel. Things will be easier: most of us have had at least one vaccine, the lifting of lock-down is far more measured, our understanding is better and infection rates are dropping here in the UK. What are we expecting on May 16<sup>th</sup>? Be honest, how do we feel about meeting up again? What is ahead of us and how are we going to manage? This pandemic has certainly shown us many things and one of them is that change needs to happen in multiple areas. Where do we want our journeys to go in the church, in our faith? What would we like to see happen here at Immanuel...what things do we want to keep and what things should we let go? We have learned so many new behaviours over this last year, (some of which I will be happy to un-learn) but can we take this golden opportunity to really look at ourselves?  
Liz Gibney

### **Election of Elders**

Elders have agreed a plan for election of Elders, taking into account that last year this did not happen, and Elders who had completed their term were asked to stay on, never imagining this would be for a whole year. The plan is as follows:

As from **April 1<sup>st</sup>**, list of eligible members list and nominations forms has been distributed by Elders to their pastoral list, in doing this they will arrange ways to pick up/forward the forms to the Church Secretary. Nominations will close on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, and the Church Secretary will produce a list of nominees, after which the Church Secretary and/or Minister will approach these Nominees to seek agreement on nomination. These names will be published in the Weekly Newsletter on two Sundays, and then on **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May**, after the Service, we will hold a short church meeting where voting will take place, Only Church Members can vote, and votes will be those present and those who cannot come to church who have sent in their voting paper.

**Please Include in your prayers:**

- That HOPE and LOVE may be the signs of our life...
- Violence in Yemen, Syria, Tigray, Myanmar
- Highworth URC
- Those who are recovering from health treatments.
- Those who are mourning the death of family or friends.
- 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
- 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
- For courage of faith to confront injustice, discrimination, hatred, racism.

**The United Reformed Church has expressed its sadness at the passing of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, who died on April 9 aged 99.**

**Prayer**

**O God**, our rock and our redeemer, we come to worship you and to give thanks for your servant Philip. We thank you for his long life, for his dedicated support of his wife in her vocation as Queen, and for his service to commonwealth and nation.

**We thank you** for the Duke of Edinburgh award, for the work of the World Wide Fund for Nature and for so many causes he inspired and supported. We thank you for what he has meant to each one of us...We treasure memories of meeting him ....

**We rejoice** that he lived and shared the faith we hold, and that, by your grace, he survived danger and threat.

**We pray** for those who will miss him most deeply, that they may find comfort and hope. We celebrate and affirm our faith that death is defeated, that new life awaits your children, and that creation is renewed in Christ.

And, in this day and time, we pray, as we are always glad to pray, may your Kingdom come. Amen.

(<https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3787-the-death-of-hrh-prince-philip-the-duke-of-edinburgh.html>)

**Book Launch:** sharing with you the invitation received from URC Church House. The launch of a book about Constance Colman...

It is with great pleasure that I warmly invite you to attend the launch of Constance: Pioneer, Pastor, Preacher. If you are interested in attending, please email: [mission@urc.org.uk](mailto:mission@urc.org.uk) with your name, email address and which church you belong to.

**Resuming worship at Immanuel:** after consulting with the members on their lists, Elders met through Zoom to consider the way forward. There were a few different responses on the matter, and the decision is to return to worship on **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May at 10.30**. This is the Sunday before Pentecost, allowing us all to prepare for the celebration of Pentecost. We will also celebrate Communion.

Of course, this decision is subject to no further changes on the “roadmap” set out by the Government and guidelines from the URC. It is also subject to having enough people to staff the services as needed. The use of masks and distancing is still to be complied with.