

Immanuel Newsletter

Sunday 9th May 2021

Website: <http://www.immanuelurc.org/>
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Thought for the week: “What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of others. That is what love looks like”. (Augustine)

Back to worship at Immanuel Only one more Sunday to wait, and then: **16th May at 10.30**, we will gather for worship in person, for all those who feel they can come back. This is the Sunday before Pentecost, allowing us all to prepare for the celebration of Pentecost. We will also celebrate Communion.

The Honesty Box – this is gradually picking up, as we now have a stream of contributions which will be printed over the next few weeks. As you have been able to see, they cover all kinds of topics, so feel free to share your ideas. Thank you.

I go into Immanuel about once every 2 to 3 weeks so that I can make sure the organ remains in good order. 1400 or so pipes are still speaking to me (bless em). But as I enter, there is a real feeling of an empty building, a massive space that hasn't seen human beings treading its' corridors or gathering together for all sorts of friendly meetings and conversations. There is an emptiness which is sad, unreal and in some ways weird. The church seems to have lost its Soul if you know what I mean. It's a totally different feel than when I used to come and play the organ knowing that Worship was taking place on a regular basis. But then I sit at the organ and I play “Christ the Lord is risen again” very loudly I really feel that the building has once again come to life. Why? Because the church proclaims more than an empty building. It is the powerhouse where people gather to live and learn and love and let go of those feelings of emptiness. It's a place where we are equipped to face the world and go out through the doors as a lively thriving community which is steeped in faith showing the love of a risen Christ by what we say, what we do and who we are. But I also need to hold on to the belief that in truth -the building is NOT THE CHURCH at all. WE are the church in action. This amongst so many other ramblings is the way I've been thinking these past 14 months. Having said this, like you I can't wait for us to gather inside those walls to meet, to sing and listen, to feel the silence of togetherness and to be a powerhouse of prayer. God bless Geoff Gleed.

Election of Elders

Nominations have now closed, and both David and I will be going through the list and will approach people to seek agreement to put their names forward, and those names will be published in the Newsletter for two Sundays before election. So please read and consider the note below...

This weekend the process for electing new Elders begins a new stage. Nominations close on Sunday and then a list of nominees will be prepared, and we will be approaching those on the list to see if they would be willing to be nominated for election. It is for these steps that I call on each and all of you to reflect and pray. We do need to elect 10 people, some could be nominated for their second period, others will be proposed for their first time, or again after some years. This is where it becomes complicated. PLEASE consider, if you are approached, whether you could say “YES”. Eldership is one of the characteristics of our identity as Reformed Churches, and without the needed number of Elders it makes the running of the church exceedingly difficult. We really do need you to consider the possibility, without a “NO” being your first thought. There have been some Elders who last year agreed to stay on for a time, given COVID, probably never imagining that time would be a whole year. To you our deepest thanks and appreciation. It is important and we do need all human help we can get, convinced that God will walk with the team, but there must be a team. (Robert)

Christian Aid Week – this year it will be 10-16 May, and due to the restrictions over the last year, as all Charities, Christian Aid needs all the help we can give them. The Sunday we resume worship (16th May) is the last day of this Christian Aid week, so if you are coming to church, bring your donation, there will be envelopes

for you. You are more than welcome to return your envelope the following week or drop it off to Lyndsey at 11, Burford Avenue. If you don't receive an envelope you can simply make a contribution in a normal envelope and mark it 'Christian Aid'. If you are making a donation by cheque please make it payable to 'Swindon Christian Aid'.

We are also circulating envelopes, less than the usual in past years, so if you have one and won't be attending worship let us know, and we will make sure it is counted. Many thanks for your continued support. Lindsey Miller.

Old Town Partnership of Churches. The confirmation service this year, will also be the birthday celebration of the Partnership. We will celebrate at Christ Church on Sunday 30th May at 10.00. Bishop Viv will be with us. That Sunday this will be the only service in the Partnership Churches, due to current restriction on numbers, could you ***please let me know by May 16th*** if you are considering attending this service, as we must let Christ Church know in advance. Thank you! (Robert)

Zoom Coffee morning – Last week we met for a really good chat, so THANK YOU to those who turned up; the disappointment was the very low number of people who zoomed in, I was expecting at least double the number, given the matter of the conversation. We will keep the conversation going.... (Robert)

Please Include in your prayers:

- Let us learn to be “we” not “them/us”.
- The terrible train derailment in Mexico
- Christian Aid Week
- Election of Elders
- Partnership Confirmation Service and Birthday Celebration
- Highworth URC
- Those who are recovering from health treatments.
- Those who are mourning the death of family or friends.
- All those we know who are facing exceptionally difficult circumstances.
- The plight of the Palestinian people.
- Amnesty International and all victims of Human Rights violations
- 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.
- The homeless, and rough sleepers
- Courage of faith to confront injustice, discrimination, hatred, racism.
- All areas of the world living violence, hatred, war, famine...

Please remind me: Soon it will be Immanuel's turn to prepare the Daily Prayer Diary. Two people have responded to my plea from last week, so there is only one person missing. Any idea who that could be? Thanks – (Robert)

Hymn for this week

<p>Today I awake and God is before me. At night, as I dreamt, he summoned the day; For God never sleeps, but patterns the morning With slithers of gold or glory in grey.</p>	<p>Today I affirm the Spirit within me At worship and work, in struggle and rest. The Spirit inspires all life which is changing From fearing to faith, from broken to blessed.</p>
<p>Today I arise and Christ is beside me. He walked through the dark to scatter new light. Yes, Christ is alive, and beckons his people To hope and to heal, resist and invite.</p>	<p>Today I enjoy the Trinity round me, Above and beneath, before and behind; The Maker, the Son, the Spirit together – They called me to life and call me their friend.</p>

Sing Praise No. 2 / John Bell and Graham Maule