OVERVIEW

Depicting the life and witness of the church.
October & November 2020

We are here to worship God as disciples of Jesus; to welcome, love and serve the community, and to share our faith in *God*

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The Fruits of the Spirit
(Artwork created by Sally)

Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility, and Self-control.

FROM THE SECRETARY

After almost six months of listening and watching services in other churches on the radio, television or computer it was good to meet together again on Sunday 30th August for a short but meaningful service in our own church. We are now holding our Sunday morning worship in line with government and URC guidance, somewhat different to our usual service: shorter, with no singing or communion but still worthwhile. Thank you to everyone who has kept us informed especially Stephanie for compiling Sunday Link each week and to everyone else who has kept in touch with our regular congregation and friends.

Now that we are worshipping together it seemed appropriate to ask Sally if she would compile Overview and once again she has kindly agreed. Thank you Sally for your hard work and commitment. Since we are not organising social activities, Overview will probably appear as a bi-monthly magazine for the next few months. However if you have contributions please send them to Sally.

Our last service before lockdown was on Sunday 15th March and for some time we kept in touch with each other by telephone, with visits to deliver shopping and run errands for people but overall life was very quiet. Slowly we have picked up the reins. The Elders started to meet fortnightly from 22nd May. During this time Ruth Hatton and Ian Mason had arranged a monthly mailing to people and Simone had also delivered quizzes and activities to homes which would have been joining our Tea & Chat meetings. Or first Zoom coffee morning was held on Friday 29th May to help people familiarise themselves with this new way of meeting and we started our first monthly Café Service on Zoom in June. The Café Service has continued on Zoom. The Elders have worked their way through the government and URC guidance

and we have produced a Coronavirus Risk Assessment. Guidance notes for the congregation and for Door Stewards have been produced based on these documents and other advice about being "church" during the pandemic. The Test and Trace system requires us to record the names and a contact detail for everyone attending services and we have been doing this since we opened for worship in August.

A number of other things have been happening during this time, probably the most significant being the provision of a new boiler and repairs to the church heating system. There are still one or two teething problems but thanks to Brian and Maurice for all the time they have spent sorting out this.

We should have held our AGM & Church Meeting in April and had another Church Meeting in July. However with the pandemic none of these meetings occurred. In mid-September we held a joint AGM & Church Meeting via Zoom. The AGM confirmed the election of Philip & Simone Burrows and Chris McKie to serve as Elders for a further three year period and re-elected myself and Maurice Boughey to serve as Secretary and Treasurer respectively also for three years.

Early in 2020 the URC published Good Practice 5. This is the church's Safeguarding document which includes all the information you need to know to implement safeguarding in churches. A few years ago we approved our own church safeguarding policy, based on a model URC policy.
The appendices to Good Practice 5 include another updated policy as a model for a local church Safeguarding policy. The Elders had cont....

…cont. considered this and copies were made available electronically for everyone to read. The Elders recommended it for approval and the policy was agreed as a new Safeguarding policy for church use at the AGM.

The Church Meeting which followed the AGM included updates on a number of items from the previous meeting in January most of which were recorded as no further information/ on hold. However, arrangements for a much-reduced harvest service and an explanation about the importance of social distancing were given.

Working out how to worship in a coronavirus world is new to us all. There are a number of measures in place to minimise the spread of the virus and reduce close contact between people. As part of this we now have a one-way system through the sanctuary. Please remember we come to church to worship and the guidance is quite specific we must not socialise and chat to each other inside the building especially after the service. If people stop in the aisles to talk to each other it prevents those people who want to leave straight after the service, using the one-way system, from doing so. Please do not chat in church. We are all learning as we get used to the "new normal", and if you have a suggestion to improve the mitigation, we have introduced please speak to myself or an Elder. We are happy to consider further improvements which will help us to meet in a safe environment.
Ros Ellison

THINKING ABOUT IT….

For those of you that were not part of the 'ZOOM' Church Meeting and AGM, it is quite apparent that our church's financial resources have suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ordinarily, we would have had two Car Boot Sales by now, and probably some kind of Summer Fair and Coffee Mornings.
Not only would these events have brought in some much-needed funds, but it would have brought us all together in the organizing and enjoyment of these occasions. They would have been seen as 'Outreach' to our community and brought in those familiar faces that turn up at all Car Boot Sales!

While we have not been able to take part in our usual church activities, some of our congregation may have felt isolated and anxious about the pandemic; frightened to go out, and with what appears to be a 'second wave' coming, those fears are very real.

I know that some are staying in touch by telephone and those calls are very much appreciated by those who are in isolation. We all 'feel better' knowing that someone is thinking about us and we are able to stay in touch.

While we have not been able to take part in our usual fund-raising activities, please try and think of ways that we could perhaps 'side line' some of what we would have spent 'if' we had been able to hold those fund raising opportunities.

It may just be the cost of a cup of tea or coffee and a piece of cake, which you would have had in the Tea Room, but it will all help in the long run.
If anyone fancies making cakes, we can arrange delivery!

Many moon's ago during David Lawrence's ministry, I did a presentation in our church

that was referred to as 'TRIO' - THE RESPONSIBILITY IS OURS.
Its aim was to make people aware of the costs involved in running the church, and to encourage them to increase their weekly giving if they could.
I spoke of 'Nudge Giving' - people needing a nudge to give a bit more…
'Grudge Giving' – they didn't want to, but they did anyway and grumbled about it!
And 'Thanksgiving' – giving freely and in thankfulness of our Lord.

For all our sakes, let us think of whatever we can do, be it little or lots; not only to keep us all in touch with each other, but for our Church finances to benefit.

Let us all 'Give Thanks'!

Lesley

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

As a young man, new to the faith, I remember reading a book by a missionary couple. They were Christian pioneers who were reaching out to native tribes in one of the remotest parts of Africa. After all these years, I cannot remember their names or even the title of the book, but the story they told made a lasting impression upon me.

It was a real-life adventure story: travelling through uncharted territory, meeting previously unknown peoples, encountering strange customs. They did not always know what to expect or how the tribes would respond to them. Each day brought new situations, fresh challenges, and sometimes events took them completely by surprise.

One night, they were camped in a clearing in the jungle, huddled around their campfire. Suddenly, they became aware that they were being watched. Then in the light of the fire, they saw a dozen or more painted warriors armed with spears emerge from the jungle. The couple were terrified that they would attack any moment. Then, much to the astonishment of the two missionaries, the armed men fled into the jungle as though something or someone had frightened them away. The couple were convinced that the native warriors must have seen a band of guardian angels!

The one thing that amazed me most of all in reading the book was the sheer resilience of these courageous Christians. They endured hardship and suffering, they faced numerous dangers and encountered hostility from local tribesmen. There were many setbacks and frustrations and they were often disappointed by the lack of progress. Yet they never gave up but remained positive and hopeful. They just persevered, kept on going, until eventually their labours began to bear fruit.

Throughout their fascinating story they were inspired and encouraged again and again by a verse of scripture from the prophet Jeremiah. It is in a passage about those who trust in the Lord and place their confidence in God. The prophet describes them using a lovely picture of a tree. In chapter 17 verse 8 he says this:

They will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit."

This was the secret of their resilience. Because of their deep trust in the Lord they were able to come through the dry and dangerous periods of their lives with a living, vibrant faith that eventually bore fruit.

We as a church and as individual Christians are passing through a dry and dangerous period of our lives, in the form of the COVID-19. The pandemic has inflicted a dreadful blow on the life of our churches, to say nothing of our own personal and family struggles. It would be quite easy for our faith to dry up during these difficult days and our Christian commitment to shrivel through the heat of it all. But if our trust is rooted deeply in God and we continually draw strength and refreshment from him, our faith will remain vibrant and alive. We will be like a tree bursting with fresh, green leaves. More than that, through the nourishment God brings we can continue bearing fruit, the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

Yours in Christian love,

David

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Photo – David Spence preaching at the Harvest Festival. 27.9.2020

Thank you to Ian Mason and Lesley for the photo.

Mustard seeds: Memories and Influence

It was wonderful to welcome our friend Mike Ridley to speak at our zoom cafe service but disappointing that so few of us managed to log on. There were eleven of us in total and we had three apologies – ranging from tree surgeon appointments to tumble-drier engineer appointments!

Mike talked about the mustard seed and memories: The little baby Jesus born so long ago has influenced millions including us. He asked:

Who has influenced us and who do we influence?

Mike said he has been influenced by people and by hymn writers.
We listened to Eternal Father Strong to Save, his grandfather's favourite hymn; Lead us Heavenly Father, a hymn played at his own wedding and also that of his parents; and There's a Friend for Little Children which was played at the funeral of his baby daughter; and Love Divine all Loves Excelling thinking about his love for his children.

His grandparents lived in a little house in Cumberland – the kind of house that had a front room that was never used. little Mikey was allowed to go in and tinkle the piano. Today one of Mike's great loves is to play the piano. His grandfather was a local Methodist preacher and a socialist. On Sundays he would cycle to three churches to preach, getting his lunch after the first service and a cuppa after his second. He would arrive home 12 hours after leaving it. Mike compared that to his 20 minutes comfortable drive when he does pulpit supply for local churches, including us at Over.

The influence of Jesus 2000 years ago continues today. It's our responsibility to continue this influence with all our relationships - our children; our relatives; people we meet at work or socially.

Mike's parents believed what many of our parents did - Church services were to be attended morning and evening with Sunday School in the afternoon. (Mike used the phrase "forced to attend"). They also believed in piano lessons for which Mike is thankful. His career was moulded by his parents. He started work in Carlisle when he was 15 and it was in that office that he met his wife. Mike read 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 at all his children's weddings and he spoke about the love a parent has for their child - all based on the love that is born in the Lord Jesus Christ. We listened to Love Divine, all Loves Excelling.
Mike ended by asking: What memories will we leave? In 70 years', time will anyone say about Mike "I remember my grandfather's influence"?

Simply Trusting

I am often asked, have you got a favourite Bible verse? I have several, each one applies to a different circumstance – but for these days and this time I draw upon: -

Psalm 8:3-4

When I consider your heavens, The work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, Which you have set into place, What is mankind that You are mindful of them, Human beings that You care for them.

My son and his wife emigrated to Australia and a few years ago I went over to visit them.

We went out into the desert near Ayres Rock, now reverted to its Aboriginal name Ularu. We enjoyed, together with others, a barbeque illuminated by oil lamps, far from any sign of civilisation.

When we had finished our meal, we were invited to lay down on the gravely sand, and then the lamps would be extinguished and were told to look up into the night sky and consider the immensity of the heavens.

We lay silently, and as I gazed upwards it was as though the stars gradually came closer to me - their twinkling became very bright, and then another layer of stars extended beyond them - and then and another and another- myriads of bright lights filled the velvet blackness of the night – then the Milky Way with its countless stars was right there – millions of lights filling the heavens – An experience I will never forget and the Glory of the heavens just filled my eyes – words failed me to express the beauty that was before me.

Then earlier this year in April, I was driving down the little road at the back of my home, to go to Sandbach from Crewe, when I noticed a delicate green haze on the branches of the trees – and just three days later when I took the same route fresh green leaves had burst out of these little buds – and the beauty that surrounded me was breath-taking.

I had experienced the Glory of the heavens and the Beauty of the earth on these two occasions.

But then, dark clouds formed later that week. The wind began to blow, the rain fell and instead of bright sunlight there was a dullness. All that beauty was shrouded in a heavy darkness.

Today I want to encourage us all, the storms of life will appear to overtake us – but they do pass. This pandemic storm that is affecting not only us in the UK but peoples throughout the whole world, will come to an end.

May we as Christians never be tempted to become despondent but remember that our God who made the heavens in all their glory and the earth in all its beauty will sustain us – because He loves us. In Psalm 8:5; it says 'You have made them a little lower than angels (that's us) and crowned them with glory and honour.

During this dark period may we reflect His glory in our worship and personal relationship with Him and bring honour to His name by the way we continue to care for and love others to bring them hope for a bright and certain future – with Christ's help – we will! - Rev *Jennie Wakefield* 19 07 2020

...a delicate green haze...

THANK YOU

I would like to say a big thank you to those from the church who responded to my appeal on Sunday Link in the summer for treats for children of families that were receiving food parcels from Winsford Salvation Army; also a thank you to those who whilst we were not meeting together on a Sunday for worship donated food items for me to pass on. Some days I would open the door into my porch and it would look like a "mini harvest festival" with the various tins and packets that had been left there; these all went a long way to help the great demand they had for supplying food to needy families. This is an on-going situation and many requests are made each week for help. I hope we as a church congregation can still continue to remember those less fortunate than ourselves. As we sit and enjoy our meals please remember there are those in our town who have nothing but perhaps a tin of baked beans or soup to give the family. My treats bag for extras at Christmas for them is starting to fill up, can I ask that perhaps you would like to add to the collection or start your own, please.

Ruth Hatton

Joan and Ann would like your help

Remember that I promised the Salvation Army 50 "hats" for chocolate oranges that they would add to their Christmas dinners? We only have to provide the little hats - Father Christmas; plum pudding; snowman etc. as the S. A. are providing the oranges. Joan is finishing one that Betty W had started, and I have done over 30 so do we do not need many more for the S.A. However, please keep knitting for our own fundraising and also, for those with very nimble fingers, the even smaller ones for Ferrero Rocher chocolates. We will let you know later how we can change these into funds for church. Thanks.

Greeting cards

Does anyone want to browse through my hand-crafted cards? I have birthday; blank; Best Wishes plus, of course Christmas cards. I could leave them with you for a few days then collect them. It might help anyone who is not shopping as usual. All for church funds.

Ann

Thank you, Arthur for your pruning. From Ann.

Thank you very much to everyone who has sent in articles for the Overview you got the amount exactly right! Eight sides.

Harvest Festival Sunday 27th.9.2020.

Everyone waving. Thank you to Ian Mason and Lesley for the photo.

Duty Rota 2020

Date	Vestry elder	Door duty
27 September	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mr Chris McKie & Mr Ian Mason
4 October	Mrs Gwen Bushill	Mrs Lesley Clarke & Mrs Jean Challinor
11	Mr Chris McKie	Mr Len Moss & Mrs Barbara Moss
18	Mr Maurice Boughey	Mr Ian Tabernacle & Mr Ian Mason
25	Mr Philip Burrows	Simone Burrows & Mrs Pam Bird

November

	Vestry Elder	Door Duty
1 Nov	Mrs Simone Burrows	Mrs Lesley Clarke & Ms Moira McLachlan
8 Nov	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mr Len Moss & Mrs Barbara Moss
15 Nov	Mrs Gwen Bushill	Mr Ian Tabernacle & Mr Ian Mason
22 Nov	Mr Chris McKie	Mrs Jean Challinor & Mrs Pam Bird
29 Nov	Mr Maurice Boughey	Mrs Lesley Clarke & Ms Moira McLachlan

4 October		Rev Garry Wareham if available or Mrs Carol Booth if not.	??Communion – could be with RH following week?
11 October		Mrs Ruth Hatton	
18 October		Rev David Spence	Church Meeting
25 October		Mrs Olwen Ineson	
1 November	Communion	Rev David Skitt	
8 November	Remembrance Sunday	Rev Garry Wareham	
15 November		Rev David Spence	
22 November		Rev Michael Field	
29 November	1st Sunday in Advent	Mrs Joan Colwell	

Café Service on Zoom

October 8th 10.30am

Roberta will be leading this service.

Next Overview – December + January

Last day for articles will be November 24th

with the Overview being published online 1st December.