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# M R B C

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CHURCH MAGAZINE—JULY 2020



**Mansfield Road Baptist Church**

## Message for July from our Church Secretary

Dear All,

As many of you know one of my main interests is photography, particularly sports photography. Recently, for obvious reasons, there has been no opportunity to photograph any sport. I have instead been photographing the birds in my garden.



*Robin in the rain*

We are reminded in the Bible of how deeply God knows us as individuals. We also see how Jesus transformed the lives of people, because he did not pre-judge them based on their background, their past or where they came from. He encouraged, challenged, motivated, and led people. He showed respect to everyone, regardless of how they treated him.

Each day we are challenged to give ourselves to others, to love those who are suffering or feel lost, or feel as though they are outsiders in our society. We seek justice and peace in our world. It is often said that we show our love for God by loving others.

This requires a great deal of patience and careful observation. Eventually I have begun to recognise individual birds with their own patterns of behaviour.



*Goldfinch*

*Dave Mangan*



## The Christian's Path

The Christian's Path is not an easy one.  
God did not always promise blue skies and sun.  
Darkening clouds are also part of the deal.  
Thorns ,thistles and craters often litter the way  
Often causing us some dismay.  
Satan, too, sets invisible traps to beguile us as we pass.  
Life at times can seem an impenetrable cage  
And we are sometimes tempted to rant and rage.  
But give up we must not do  
For God's promises always come true.  
A divine companion He promised will always be near  
To accompany us everywhere.  
Our feet may falter but he steadies us on  
Manoeuvring us around dangerous twists and bends.  
He keeps us focused on the ultimate goal  
And always reminds us that we are not alone.

Merlynn Francique



Sunset by Ellie

Beach Scene by Lucy





## Ivy shares her love of flowers

Summer is here at last, with blue skies and warm sometimes even hot weather. The hottest May since records began. However we all realise it won't be the sort of summer any of us had anticipated. But even if the furthest we can get this year is our own garden, balcony or outdoor space, thank the Lord that we are still here to enjoy it.

My love of flowers started some 12 years ago when I was going through a difficult patch in my life and at the time the only thing that gave me pleasure and made me smile was flowers or digging the earth in my garden. I was off work for some 7 months very ill with eczema. I was in hospital for over a week all bandaged up like a mummy. As I started getting better I got baptised, praise be to God. Something that I should have done a long, long time ago.



I also developed a true passion for flower arrangements. I made some enquiries and attended Clarendon College for Further Education. I gained the skills to do flower arrangements. I was then introduced by a friend to join Nottingham Flower Club of which I am now a Committee Member. I absolutely love to see people's faces when they are given flowers.

Flowers can be a symbol of love, sadness, joy, memorial, thank you, decorations. It gives me joy arranging flowers for church. Whilst listening to Andy's sermon we are looking at the flowers. I love all flowers, but one of my favourites is the Agapanthus the name is derived from the Greek and is commonly known as Lily of the Nile, or African Lily in the UK. They are mainly purple or white sometimes blue. I feel really gifted and blessed to do the arrangements for church. Sometimes for funerals and weddings also.





The coronavirus crisis has shone a light on lots of good things and bad things in this country. It is of course to be welcomed that key workers, including those for the NHS and social care, are being increasingly valued. I am proud to be a key worker. I work for the Royal Mail, although I am not out delivering letters, but our work is well appreciated by all, especially by those living in the rural areas who do not see many people except the postman. I hope that the reality is dawning that immigrants and BAME staff are vital to the NHS and we couldn't manage without them.

Ivy Anderson



*Towards the end of June, the Regional Ministers from the East Midland Baptist Association (EMBA) wrote a letter to the churches. The full version of this letter can be found on the church website, with an extract here:*

**Dear friends in the EMBA,  
New Normal Essentials**

We write to you at this significant time to share some perspectives that we hope will help guide the way ahead for our Baptist churches. The Covid pandemic has affected us all, some of us very closely. To those who have experienced acute personal loss – our hearts and our prayers go out to you.

Our normal patterns of church life have come to a standstill, and whilst this has been distressing for many we have seen churches adapt and find ways of functioning. The disruption to our normal life, whilst painful for many has, however, given us a unique opportunity to pause, reflect on what's happening around us and start to dream about a different future – a new normal.

As a Regional team we wish to highlight four things to help our churches grow back healthily.

- 1. A renewed vision of the church's place in society**
- 2. A recommitment to serving God's purposes in the world.**
- 3. A re-centring of our churches around discipleship.**
- 4. A harnessing of the power of digital technology.**

The full letter can be found on the Home page of the church website: [www.mrbc.org.uk](http://www.mrbc.org.uk)



## An Everyday Tale of Resurrection—from Clive Trusson

Did you have a poinsettia last Christmas? Thousands are sold in December and most of them probably journey to the compost heap soon into the New Year. We had one at Christmas. Just a small one from Lidl. After leaf after leaf fell off it was removed from the house but for some reason just left by the side of the garden fence, still in its pot. In normal busy times no doubt it would have just withered away there.

However, in lockdown I noticed the forlorn plant. I looked at it and it looked back at me with its three leaves clinging on to its one remaining stalk pointing to the sky but showing the scars of neglect. Without much thought I brought it back into the house and placed it on the windowsill in the downstairs privy! Over the next couple of weeks I watered it but as one of the remaining leaves fell off, and then another, presumed I was watching it die. Slowly the plant came to represent something to me. Nothing specific but something about fragility, about injury, about inner strength and about survival. The one remaining leaf seemed determined to hang on as though it had one important purpose, to serve and regenerate the plant. At its point of greatest weakness I re-potted it in new compost, I watered it and added plant food. And I waited, in hope more than in expectancy. And I checked on it – and possibly talked to it – on every visit to the privy! And then I noticed a tiny new shoot from the injured stalk. ‘Well done’ I told it aloud. ‘Hallelujah’ I said to myself.



As the days followed one after another, so shoots and leaves appeared. And still the one remaining leaf from Christmas hung on, drawing energy for the plant from the sunshine outside. The plant has been revived and I often pop into the privy just to see it and marvel at this little story of resurrection. The remaining leaf from the Christmas poinsettia relied on the stalk to sustain it, and that lonely and frail leaf was empowered in its weakness. The power of the stalk remained as strong as ever it

was, waiting for that strength to be noticed. Waiting for the magnitude of that almighty power to be accepted. Waiting. Waiting. Though injured and frail, still patiently waiting. Waiting to display its glory. Waiting to be praised.

Verse for your reflection: ‘I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing’ (John 5:15).



## Introducing our new link BMS World Mission Workers— Pippa and Toby Vokuhl

The Vokuhl family moved to Pokhara, central Nepal in early 2018. Toby has a role in the Disaster Response and Resilience Department of BMS partner INF, and Pippa works to train Nepali physiotherapists. The family are also involved in local church and community projects. Pippa and Toby have three children: Jakey, Ella and Millie. Here is an extract from their June prayer newsletter:



“I wonder how many of us feel slightly worried, unsettled, or undermined by the Covid-19 related challenges to everyday norms and standards we could rely on, the foundations to our everyday lives. In these unsettling times, we were recently reminded what and who ultimately provides a solid base for life: Ephesians 2:20-22 (NLT) *Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.*

Whilst considered necessary in a developing country with very limited ICU services, the long strict lockdown has been terrible news for daily wage earners. In light of these challenges do give thanks with us for the Christian witness within adversity. Our local church for example continues to support 90 families with food parcels, and small amounts of money for cooking gas, whereas some of the 'official' support for the poor has been found wanting. Pray that God's character will be discovered through these acts of love.

Pray that God will continue to give INF staff wisdom and discipline in the preparation of medical emergency facilities and response plans, particular geared towards catering for potential disabled Covid-19 patients. As a family we appreciate your prayers for continuous resilience, and for God's sustenance, especially with schooling children from home, and seeking to progress building designs via digital communication. Please pray that together with local believers, and expatriates in Pokhara, we can be that carefully joined temple of God, that the writer of Ephesians refers to. We look forward to continuous interaction with you, and are grateful that the internet is making all sorts of digital communication across the globe increasingly possible these days.”



## Gloria Fraser shares her reflection on the lockdown

When I first heard that we were going to be in lockdown, I must admit that I did wonder how I would cope with being indoors for such a long time. However, taking each day at a time, I have found that the experience has not been as daunting as I thought it would be, and I have, in fact, asked myself when reading Hebrews chapter 4, verses 9-11, could this time of lockdown be part of the Sabbath rest that God spoke about? It helped me to think of the most important things like family, friends, taking time to be in God's presence, by reading His words, and praying to be that listening ear to friends who need to talk.

Sabbath rest for Christians; it is peace on earth, and a new life later. We can enjoy God's peace and rest each day. I know there are times when I don't really feel God's presence, but I remember that we don't live by feelings, we live by faith. Our Sabbath rest in Christ begins when we trust Him to complete His good and perfect work in us.

## Some more pictures from our Junior Church children



Joicelyn



Jesse



Jonisa

A big "thank you" to all contributors this month. To continue monthly we need YOUR news, YOUR pictures, YOUR poem, YOUR testimony (from now or from the past), YOUR input (articles of interest to others). Please send by email to [susan@msbye.co.uk](mailto:susan@msbye.co.uk), or phone Rosemary or Susan and dictate, or by post, to arrive by **20th July** for the August edition.

Edited by: Susan Bye, Rosemary Mangan

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