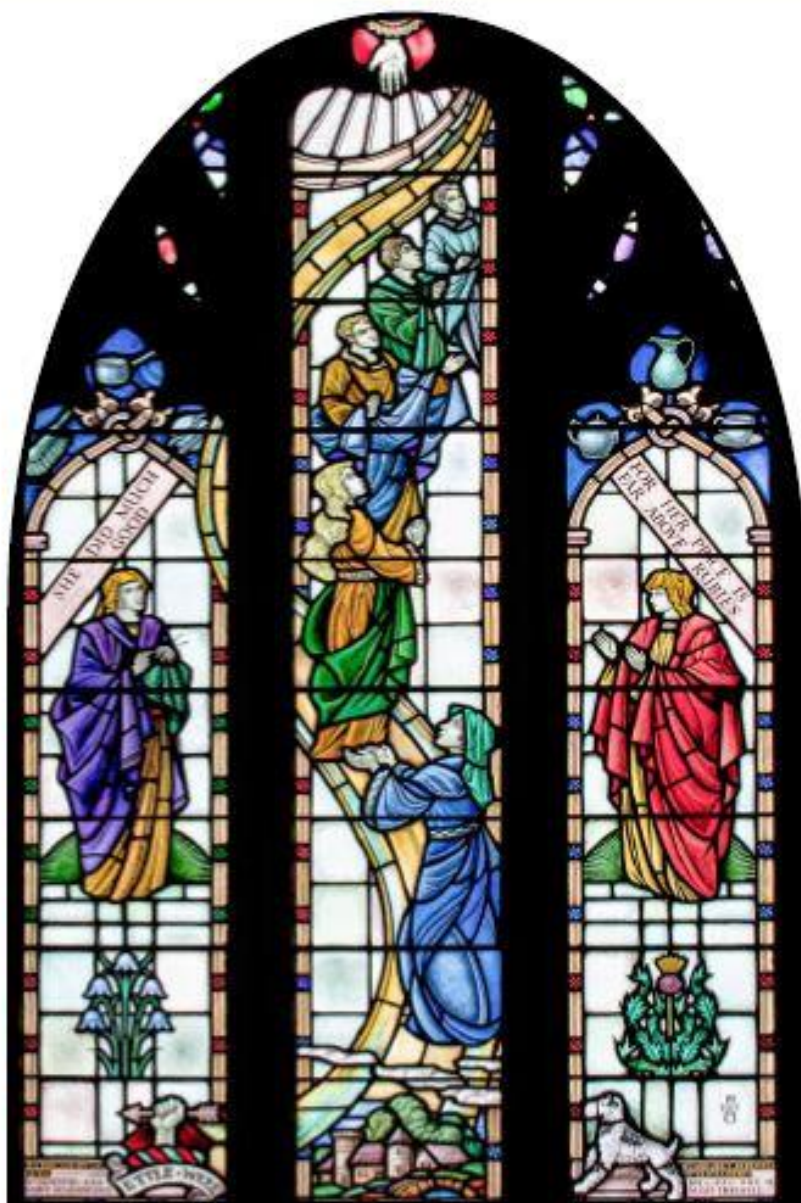


MRBC

CHURCH MAGAZINE—AUGUST 2020



Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Message for August from our Minister

Acts 2:42-47 (The Message)

⁴¹⁻⁴² *That day about three thousand took him at his word, were baptized and were signed up. They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers.*

⁴³⁻⁴⁵ *Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met.*

⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷ *They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved*

We are in recovery identifying how Mansfield Road Baptist Church is to be shaped into the future. Thank you for the responses to the survey, which will help to form this moulding. We are emerging into a new situation and all that has been in our life will inform the present but nothing will just be returning. A little bit like the opening of the Ark after the Great Flood that we read of in Genesis.

In this recovery and subsequent reconstruction, we have an opportunity to be the church, the body of Christ, that we are called to be. What will this look like? The best place to identify this is not to look at the model of church we have been, seeing what to add or take away. The ideal is to return to the first description of church we read in Acts and identify the hallmarks that need to be there in our own experience of being church. Sim Dendy, in his book *Simply Church*, identifies ten:

1. Love the Bible and teach it well
2. Make the most of opportunities to spend time with each other
3. Enjoy sharing Communion and eating together with a sense of fun
4. Understand the power of prayer and can't help but do it all the time
5. Work in partnership with the Holy Spirit as an everyday activity
6. Look for ways to get together in a large crowd to celebrate
7. Hold things lightly and share what they have
8. Give generously, being happy to be the first to offer
9. Love worshipping and praising their creator God
10. Open their homes up to each other, always having room for one more

How do you feel reading these? Are some easier to grasp than others? This is an opportunity to take each point and ensure it has the place it should as we break out into this new experience of being Mansfield Road Baptist Church. This is the invitation, challenge and adventure ahead.

With greetings, *Andy Wilson*

A Personal Reflection from Sadie Henry

STAY AT HOME / PROTECT THE NHS / SAVE LIVES !!

With those words came the lockdown which was to have a profound effect on millions of lives. For thousands who have lost loved ones, life will never be the same again. Truth be told, initially I actually welcomed lockdown—no diary commitments etc! My time's my own!

From the start we've been blessed with beautiful weather. I've spent hours in the garden. The family initially delivered groceries—speaking from a distance! Then I started going for walks (when we were allowed) and even took up skipping again!



Sadie's Garden

Fast forward four months on—the real meaning of family and friendships come to the fore. My great sense of loss not being able to physically touch or visit family members (though Zoom helped); no physical contact with friends. I felt disconnected to the world, but *Psalm 46 vv1-3* reminds me God is ready to help when we need him.

Throughout all this though, on my walks I have seen the beauty of our natural world, God's remarkable creation. *Psalm 46 v8*. Also during this time I continue to feel God's presence. *Psalm 23*—a great booster.

Our weekly audio service and daily readings keep me connected to MRBC. God will not allow Covid-19 to destroy us. In these challenging/uncertain times may we all see seeds and signs of hope. I hope and pray our 'new world' will see more seeds of hope even more than the 'old world'.

“The Sunshine Girls” - by Mags Isley

Many years ago, as a Nurse, I spotted an ad in the Nursing Times, entitled "24 Months in the Sun", to work in Zambia, on the Copperbelt. The Mining company provided two Hospitals, one for Expatriate staff and one for the Zambian workers. Fortunately, I was sent as a Theatre Sister to run the Operating Theatres in the workers' hospital. The wife of a mining engineer thought she was superior to the nurses and informed me that, as we had all answered the same ad, we were known as "the sunshine girls". That aside, it was an amazing experience. My flat was nice, with tennis courts and swimming pool. All meals were provided, so I didn't have to cook. I also had a dear cat, called Sammy. We stood each morning under a beautiful Jacaranda tree, to be collected by a minibus and taken to the hospital. The Zambian staff were very dedicated and caring and a pleasure to work with.

The Surgery was different to that in England. When a lady had a Caesarean Section, we had to give her the Placenta (After Birth), so a Witch Doctor couldn't put a curse on it. I was very interested in operations on Lepers. My mother's brother, had died from Leprosy, on Chacachacare Island Leper Colony, off Trinidad.

I only went into the copper mine once, but that was enough, although the associated green malachite jewellery and ornaments were lovely. Once, walking with some friends in the woods, the ground was completely covered in what looked like yellow petals, but as we approached, flew up. They were thousands of yellow butterflies. However, the green & the black mamba snakes



were a force to be reckoned with. My annual holiday was to the Seychelles Islands, where there was sunshine! Another time I went on a trip to the Victoria Falls. There is so much spray and noise, the locals call it, Mosi-oa-tuna, "the smoke that thunders". The flight over the falls was awesome as was the sunset cruise on the Zambesi river.

I also went on another flight to a Mission Station at the Johnson Falls, where the treatment centre was staffed by 4 missionary nurses. A ten year old girl needed transporting to a hospital for an operation. Our Orthopaedic Surgeon flew a light aircraft. He had left South Africa due to his treatment during

Apartheid. The Paediatrician was also going. He was Indian and had been forced out of Uganda by Idi Amin. Seemed everyone was fleeing or searching for something. I was asked to go as escort for the child. It was quite a long flight, over the jungle of the Congo. The landing area was hacked out of the trees, so we bumped along and were then collected by one of the nurses. We were shown around the facilities and met some of the patients. Then the seven of us, sat on the veranda, drinking tea and eating sandwiches and homemade sponge cake. The journey back was a bit of a nightmare. Over the jungle, lightning & thunder, I thought we would never make it, but we kept bobbing forward. I was terrified and so was the little girl. She was clinging to me (or was I clinging to her?). However, she was so scared, she wet the seat, but I managed not to!

It was night when we dropped her at the hospital and then got back to Luanshya, where we were based. Still, I had time to get ready and go to the dance at the Rugby Club!

A highlight and reflection from Eunice Campbell-Clark

I went on holiday in August 2019 to Majorca and travelled by bus to this beautiful place Valldemossa. It was the first time I plucked up the courage to go on holiday by myself, because I needed the time out for reflection and rest. It was just two years since losing my beloved husband Alan. It is during these difficult times that God brings us closer to him, when we are alone.

As a Christian, I have to deal with very difficult decisions in my work as a local politician and sometimes have to make decisions which don't always sit well with my Christian principles; but I know that I signed up to the group standing order to say I would not go against the constitutional rules. On those occasions I know that those tough decisions are made for the good of the communities we served. I ask the Almighty to give me the courage and strength to do the right thing, but more importantly to always treat others the way I wish to be treated, with dignity and respect.



Photo of the monastery at Valldemossa taken 10 Aug 2019

New Life from Dead Ground—from Tony Peace

Approaching a significant personal anniversary, I was prompted by Clive's story of the Poinsettia to share something similar. The theme is again new life from what appears to be dead or lifeless.

In August it is 3 years since my younger sister died unexpectedly. The last time I saw her, shortly before her death, she gave me a few "sticks" from a fuschia bush in her garden. To me they looked dead with no chance of growing.

However, I thought perhaps I will put them in a jar of water and see what happens. After some time I noticed some small roots developing, which to say the least, surprised me. I put them in a pot with some compost and after some time new shoots appeared! They were transferred to a bigger pot and have flourished since. The photo shows them flowering for the third year – a wonderful legacy and memory of my sister.



I then remembered an image from my visit to Iceland which at the time I thought reflected a "garden of eden". This was what appeared to be a



wonderful colourful display of a garden. However, on closer inspection it was growing on a bed of rocks, stones and gravel (no soil), the debris from a nearby glacier. It just seemed amazing that something so beautiful could grow from lifeless ground.

It seems appropriate to reflect on some of the verses from *John 15* which Clive mentioned. There can be new life when all seems dead and lost, but there is only one source of that life.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. I am the vine; you are the branches. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

The Ice Flower

a reflection from Paul Heppleston of his visit to New Zealand

The New Zealand 4x4 bumped us for 30 minutes up the rough twisty track from the valley floor through several gates to the top of the mountain. Yellow lupin bushes (yes, bushes) were everywhere; sheep grazed in all possible patches of grass and as we moved higher the patches of late winter snow grew larger.

Occasionally we stopped and got out to savour the surroundings; it was a lovely sunny day, rare for Central Otago in November - and there was a wonderful transition of plant life from valley to summit - through the three different kinds of tussock grass and the tiny alpine plants in cushion form - and as we moved upwards towards the tundra fields the plants became more and more ground-hugging, till their flowers were almost invisible. *Hebe* plants, tiny cushion plants, the Snow Daisy and species of *Myosotis* (forget-me-nots).

But for me the most special flower of all on this sunny, windless early-spring morning at 5000' was the Snow Buttercup; it has a very short stem of about an inch and a flower the size of our own butter-cup, but (like so many flowers in NZ) with white petals. It was my first sight of it and will remain with me forever.



There they were, a dozen of them, only inches from the edge of the snow field ice; but more than that, they were actually flowering under the shallow, trickling melt-water from this patch of snow, offering their flowers to the sun, to the world, in gay abandon from their totally submerged position.

What a parable....

Mary Wilson suggests a craft activity—making dragonflies

For each dragon fly you will need

3 lolly sticks

Glue, Gems and Sequins

Small circles of paper for eyes

Cross two lolly sticks across the top part of another lolly stick to form a body with wings.

Decorate the body and wings with gems and sequins.

Glue the two eyes at the end of the head. Allow to dry. You can put a magnet on the back so the dragon fly can be displayed on a fridge or pop it in a pot plant if you like.



From our Junior Church children

The Baby Groot was made by Jordan with his hands and Archana grew some Fenugreek in it.

A drawing by Shonali



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, or phone Rosemary or Susan and dictate, or by post, to arrive by 20th August for the September edition.

Edited by: Susan Bye, Rosemary Mangan

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