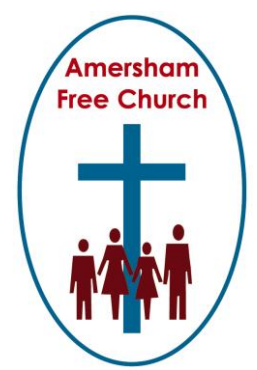


**AMERSHAM FREE CHURCH**  
(A Baptist Union and United Reformed Church)  
Woodside Road, AMERSHAM, Bucks, HP6 6AJ  
Minister: The Revd Ian Green BA MTh  
Associate Minister: The Revd Erna Stevenson BTh MSc  
Registered Charity Number 1137287



30<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Friends,

We are entering the month of May, which for Christians signifies the period between Easter and Pentecost. Approaching Easter we were walking with Jesus towards the Cross, now in the season of Easter, in a sense, we are walking away from the Cross and the empty tomb carrying with us the good news of the Resurrection. But as the first disciples of Jesus discovered, this was, and never is a simple switch of mood from one day to another. Yes, they had the good news, but what could they do with it in their closed-in, fearful, limited situation? Pentecost was yet to come.

As they kept on walking sometimes towards sometimes away from Jerusalem even after the Resurrection, we too find ourselves in the current international crisis being tossed about between hope and anxiety, between better days and not so good ones. Yet, because walking is the only serious exercise open to us at the moment, we too keep on walking. But, then, as Sue reminded us in her *Thought for the Week* there is walking and walking matched by different walking gear. There is a kind, which is fast and purposeful and promises quickly noticeable results in improved circulation, easier breathing, better muscle tone and so on.

Walking as a spiritual exercise is different. It is fashioned after the way Jesus walked, 'taking his sweet time over it' (to use Barbara Brown Taylor's expression in her book *An Altar in the World*). This allowed him more than just a blurred view of everything and everybody he passed by. It allowed him to focus on the sparrows by the roadside, the flowers in the fields, the blind beggars calling out to him, a little man hiding in the branches of a tree, infectious, diseased people behind him, around him or in the distance. This is the kind of walking we are learning more and more now during the days of our isolation and we are thankful for the opportunity of following in our Lord's footsteps this way. And not just in his footsteps, but gloriously, also in his company.

In our church life, we also keep walking both physically and spiritually, having our joyful days, when we worship and break bread together through the airwaves and sharing our sad times over the loss of much loved and respected church members. Yesterday the Officers' ZOOM meeting took place as usual. This time elders welcomed the opportunity to contribute to matters being discussed as the agenda for the meeting was sent to them in advance. We are all learning as we go along.

During the meeting appreciation was expressed over the publication and distribution of *Family News* this week. It was noted with gratitude that financial support keeps being offered by the congregation, which is much appreciated. Pastoral care continues to be extended by the ministers, elders, and indeed by the members towards each other. Ian's disrupted Sabbatical has been the concern of some members in the past weeks. In the meeting it was agreed that this is now put 'on hold' for the foreseeable future.

You might like to know about the two AFC funerals this Friday: At 9.15am at The Crematorium the service for Keith Pulford will be held, and at 1.30pm at Stanley Hill Cemetery the service for Catherine Dolman. Please keep Pam and John in your prayers.

Jim Collins' funeral has been arranged for next Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> May at the Crematorium at 4.00 pm. We are holding Jim's family in our prayers too. Brian Collins has asked us to make the webcast details of the funeral available. They are:  
<https://www.wesleymedia.co.uk/webcast-view>  
Login/Order ID: 26205  
Password: fpshdszk

Ian joins me in sending you our best wishes and warm thoughts. May God bless you all.

*The Reverend Erna Stevenson*  
Associate Minister