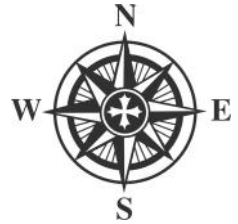


Bournville, Cotteridge, Kings Norton & Stirchley

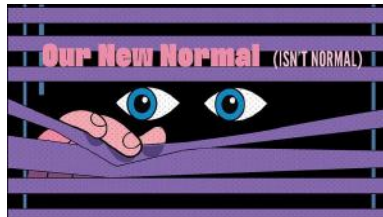


Point



The bi-monthly mini-magazine of Churches Together in Birmingham 30

The New Normal



How about a world where we really are all in it together?

Honestly? I have a sinking feeling that the new normal will be same old, same old... or possibly worse as the inequalities in our society which have been made brutally visible in the last few months are exacerbated as those in positions of advantage retire to fight from behind their castle walls in order to further entrench their privilege, while maintaining the fiction that it is necessary to have 'stability'.

In my optimistic moments there will be a brave new world where fuel emissions are reduced to zero, where we shop locally and only for what we need, where we recognise the importance of our interdependence with nature and where we care for our community – locally, nationally and internationally.

But, in my pessimistic moments I doubt it.

A old story asks us what we would feel if we were the brother or sister of Lazarus. When he was raised from the dead, we were so delighted that we promised we would never be nasty to him ever again until he forgot it was his turn to take out the rubbish or do the washing up. And before long we were back to 'normal'.

Personally, I don't know anyone who has died of the virus or been hospitalised. I have a house, garden and allotment, a regular income, my job is not at risk, my work environment does not put me on the front line, I am white, my family live nearby. That has been my immunity from this pandemic. 46,000+ of our country's population did not have that luxury.

My best hope is that as individuals we have learnt and internalised new ways of being. (Will future generations ask, "What did you do in the virus, mummy?") As my world has shrunk, which parts of my current 'normal' will I take forward? The more food I grow, the less likely I am to squish slugs or to disturb the mouse nest by my compost bin. The more I want to work with nature. The more I cultivate, the less I want mass produced food and the more difference I encourage. I grow old varieties of golden raspberries, red gooseberries, striped courgettes and purple beans. I love diversity.

Social media is showing a large number of people, including me, beset by confusion. A desire to change, but with no idea of how to do it. A desire to do more to bring about a more equitable society, but with a bewilderment about the way to move forward.

A few months ago, in the heady days of blue skies when we bravely smiled and clapped on our doorsteps with newly recognised neighbours, we prefaced remarks with, "When this is over " We are beginning to realise that it may never 'be over'. There will be no new miraculous normal out there. Perhaps the best we can hope for is that my new normal and your new normal will be better than they were.

Helen Gale

Lockdown but not Out

When Boris Johnson announced the new rules for the releasing of lockdown I think a lot of people thought they would only be in place for a little while. But as time is going on with no sign that the virus is going away I think it is beginning to dawn on people that we are in this situation for quite a while to come, at least until a vaccine is found.

So what is this new normal? In church when we get back we will be sitting at least 1 metre from our nearest neighbour we will be going straight to our allotted seat with no chatting on the way in. As the service progresses there will be no singing and we will all be wearing masks; and again no after service coffee and chat.

During the lockdown many churches have been having services on Zoom and I think this may be the future for many as it attracts many more people than the usual congregation. But I am not sure how we celebrate communion. Maybe one communion service per month in the church building? Weddings are being much curtailed with only 30 guests allowed, The bride must sanitise her hands on entering the church and her father has to follow her down the aisle rather than going side by side.

During lockdown lots of people have used online shopping with great success and I feel that this will continue with the loss of many big names on the High Street. This all sounds a bit gloomy and negative but I am sure we will get used to it very quickly. Hopefully people will continue to care for one another and keep in touch with the lonely and housebound, we will have more respect for NHS and key workers and nature and the environment will thrive.

Linda Mann

Psalm 91

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from
the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;

his faithfulness will be your shield and buckler.
You will not fear the terror of night,

nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

You will only look with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.

If you say, "The Lord is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your dwelling,

no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.

For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;

they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him;
will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with
them in trouble, I will rescue them and honour them.

With long life I will satisfy them
and show them my salvation."

In psalm 91, when Moses climbed into the clouds of Mount Sinai to encounter God he needed inner strength. He was aware that God dwelt on high and the higher he climbed the more he felt he needed protection from the angels of destruction. He asked for the protection from the very being he was about to encounter!

In the current climate we feel vulnerable. Just as vulnerable as they did in the fourteenth century when the black death wreaked havoc and wiped out towns and villages. And again in the seventeenth century.

We have a choice. We can be consumed by the negative aspects of the current pandemic and fear its effects. Or we can put ourselves in God's hands and trust in his protection; and pray for a positive outcome.

John Slevin

When I Was A Child

Like many of you I've been on lockdown for over four months. In fact, I'm in the highest risk category, and so I'm being extra careful. But I'm one of the lucky ones.

Ever since I was a little boy I've really enjoyed making things. It began when I was about four or five years old, when I got a real pair of metal scissors. I first used cardboard, then balsa wood (which is easy to cut), graduating to harder wood and then metal. And now, over seven decades later, I still like making things. I never get bored and I'm fortunate to have lots of tools and a nice workshop to 'play in'.



When I was about 10, I made model boats that I sailed on the duck pond in the local park, and model aeroplanes that I flew on the recreation ground nearby. Later, in my teens, I made radio

control boats. Transistors had only just arrived and we had to make our own transmitters and receivers.

20 years later I'm married, with a lovely wife and two lovely kids, and graduated from making models to extending the house.

Then I recalled Paul's letter to the Corinthians 13:11-13:

When I was child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I set aside childish ways.

Anyway, I gave away all my models. My days of making models were over – or so I thought.

My last model boat, begun in about 1970, remained unfinished and went to the Church jumble sale. That was about 30 years ago. Shortly after the jumble sale a good friend of mine rang and said: Was it my boat, cause he'd bought it and planned to finish it? I was delighted because he's a very skilled man and I knew he would do an excellent job.

Four months ago the same friend rang me and said: Would I like the boat back? He hadn't finished it, and thought I might like it as a nice 'lockdown' project. I was totally surprised and, after 30 years, had completely forgotten about it. Anyway, I gratefully accepted his kind offer. So, now I'm busy working on a radio-controlled model of the fabulous Fairey Marine Swordsman powerboat. The original full-size versions were designed and made in the 1960s. The E-Type Jaguar came out at about the same time. As a further incentive, I recently discovered that it's little sister, Fairey Marine Huntress, featured in the second James Bond film: From Russia With Love.

In the 50 years since I began making the boat there have been huge technological advances in: Batteries, electric motors, electronics, and materials. For me, it's a big learning curve. It is also quite delicate work - my fingers aren't quite as dextrous as they were 50 years ago.

So, how do I resolve Pauls words on 'childish ways' when I'm making a toy boat?
Mowgli

Next Year Will Bring ...

What will next year bring for us all? The people who I have spoken to hope we will be back to normal. Some say we will not be normal for a long time. I can see face masks on transport and in shops.

I hope and pray that I am wrong and life can be better. It would be great to go out and about without having to worry about masks etc.

Go into shops and browse around without having to worry about people being close to us. I hope there will still be shops left to browse around. Let us be positive and be full of hope. Gill Broadhead

The closure of our churches during Covid-19 has inspired a modern response. Click on the different links below to find out what's happening:

<https://www.facebook.com/rowheath.pavilion/>

<https://twitter.com/rpavilion?lang=en>

<https://www.pavilionchurch.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Joseph-and-St-Helens-112509660542574/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02f8HOF5EEQ>

<https://www.facebook.com/BournvilleParishChurchStFrancisOfAssisi/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AscensionStirchley/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Organization/Bournville-Quaker-Meeting-106121120834574/>

https://www.facebook.com/Cotteridge-Quaker-Garden-287433681316347/?ref=nf&hc_ref=NEWSFEED

<https://www.thecotteridgechurch.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheCotteridgeChurch/>

<https://twitter.com/cotteridgechurc?lang=en>

<https://cotteridgequakers.org.uk/>

<https://www.birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk/church-page/st-andrews-b30>

<https://www.weoleyhillchurch.org.uk/links.php>

<https://www.birminghamvineyard.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/vineyardbham/>

<https://twitter.com/vineyardbham?lang=en>

<https://b30.foodbank.org.uk/>

<https://www.birminghamchurches.org.uk/news/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BirmCTogether/>

CHURCH CONTACTS

For further details of worship and/or activities at any of the churches please contact the people below:

- St. Andrew's Methodist Church
Revd. Nick Jones - 453 9497
- Bournville United Reformed Church
Revd Leonora Jagessar - 472 0730
- Society of Friends, Bournville
Claire Bowman - 07753 635438
Room Hire, 471 2155
annegiles57@gmail.com
- St. Francis Church, Bournville
Interregnum - phone Church Office -
472 7215
- Rowheath Pavilion Church
Revd. Matt Wilson - 433 3912
Office - 458 1711.
- Society of Friends, Cotteridge
Chris Martin- 475 2088
- The Cotteridge Church
Revd. Mike Claridge - 433 5176
Revd. Roger Collins - 459 4009
or Church Office - 433 5518
- Church of the Ascension
Revd. Catherine Grylls - 443 1371
- Birmingham Vineyard
Jeff & Becky Stamps - 622 1230
- Catholic Church of Ss Joseph and
Helen
- Catholic Church of St Pauls
Father David Barry - 458 1236

“Points” is published by Churches Together in Birmingham 30 for the exchange of ideas and news. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the churches as a group or individually.

Contact **“Points”**: c/o Mr John Slevin (Editor) 54 Bunbury Road, Northfield Birmingham, B31 2DW. E-mail: johnslevin@blueyonder.co.uk Or ring the Editor, Mr John Slevin on 0121 476 1942.

Roger Bunce

Linda Mann

Editorial Committee:

Gill Broadhead

Margaret Scorey

Next Issue's Focus will be

Enabling Inclusion