

REJOICE – August 2021

Minister absences/whereabouts

In a spirit of openness my absences from Circuit for August are on the following dates: Thursday 29th July to Wednesday 11th August inclusive (holiday – messages will not be checked over this period so in an emergency please contact a Circuit Steward), Saturdays 14th, 21st and 28th August (days off). In addition I will be absent on Wednesday 18th August (a moved quarter day from July).

Stuart

Pastoral Letter from Stuart

As I write this on, what has been termed as, 'Freedom Day' I am wondering where things will be with COVID restrictions in August. My fear is that things will be in a complete mess! That the virus will be rampant and that we will be heading towards another lockdown. But I am a pessimist according to one test that I took! I guess that the scenes at nightclubs shown on the TV won't have built up our confidence.

The problem is that there is an underlying attitude which seems to prevail in this country where self is the only important thing in life. It is demonstrated by those in power – where Government ministers, MPs and their advisors don't seem to understand that the rules that they impose on us should also be followed by those who set them; or where the wealthy can jet off into space with our climate in crisis; or even where people, as individuals, choose to ignore the rules that are there to make themselves and others safe – whether that is by dangerous driving, opening a business when the staff should be isolating, or failing to wear a face-covering when it is needed. The list of such examples could be almost endless.

The virus exists and we are stuck with it but with sensible precautions we should be able to go about our daily lives and have a great deal of freedom. The sad thing is that when the PM says that he is relying on the 'common sense' of the British people what I have seen makes me very worried. Common sense seems to be lacking in many quarters!

As Churches and as individual Christians we need to be seen using common sense, understanding and love. Common sense in the use of our buildings and in how we act in response to what is happening around us. Understanding in the way we look at others who may be doing things that we don't think are right because there may be sound reasons behind their actions related to their own physical or mental health or that of someone close to them. And love because that is the one thing that can put this world back on track. If all could just show love towards their neighbours what a difference this would make. The example of Jesus is a good one to follow, his teachings make great sense and I would say both should be considered even for non-Christians. Jesus offers us a way, his words remain true and in following we can experience life with the real freedoms that we need.

I hope and pray that the pessimist within me is proved wrong over the coming weeks and that we will be able to say that we are through the pandemic and back to some form of normality. I also hope that some will see the way of Jesus as the path to follow in life through the example set by his modern day disciples.

Circuit Choir.

The choir is now taking the annual Summer break until September. We have enjoyed the regular zoom choir sessions which enabled us to continue singing our favourite pieces and keep in contact with each other. We hope when we return in September we may be able to resume normal rehearsals and would welcome new members who wish to join us.

Zoom Coffee Mornings

With most coffee mornings back in place in local churches I have not arranged any for August – if anyone wants them continued please let Stuart know.

South Molton

It was with great sadness that we heard George Jones passed away on Sunday 4th July. He was a faithful member and Church Steward at Duke Street and has been a Circuit Steward. Our thoughts are with Joyce, William, Fred, Tom and their families at this difficult time and we remember them in our prayers.

The music group is now permitted to sing the hymns during Sunday services, although limited in number and socially distanced. This has meant we are able to enjoy live music again although sadly the congregation may not join in at the present time. (update – with restrictions lifted congregational singing returns from 25th July)

We are now able to enjoy tea or coffee after the morning service, which gives us the opportunity to socialise once more, and we are grateful to Gwen and her helpers for organising this.

Jean Blake

Rejoice Magazine – September 2021 to November 2022 edition

You are already aware that the three-month style edition of Rejoice is to be restarted in September. I have agreed to take on the organising and leading of the team who will pick this up and we hope we make a good job of it as did Denise and Pip for so many editions.

This whole process is new to me and, with the invaluable help and advice from Martin Hickman, I shall do my best to maintain the standards and I am sure I can rely upon the help of all of you to do this. Thank you!

The deadline for this edition is very soon as being the holiday period we need to dovetail it with Anita's and other helpers' availability. Please get in as many dates as possible of things you have planned for the Autumn.

The deadline for date for copy of this edition is: 10th August 2021.

Please send items to me by email – email details are on a separate notice that has gone out to each church. If you do not use email please ring me and we will see if we can find a solution.

Please note that this is the absolute deadline and copy cannot be accepted after this date as there is then a very tight schedule to get the final copy produced followed by the printing, collating, stapling and distribution. It would also help me greatly if copy could come in as early as possible and not wait until the last minute as I suspect I shall hit a few snags the first time through the procedure and I may need that extra bit of time to complete it.

Thank you all.

Jean Blake

Note from Stuart

I am so thankful to Jean and Martin for dealing with this. Please note the deadline for items to be received by Jean – if it arrives late it won't go in the magazine (this applies to me as well!)