

# intouch

NEWSLETTER

Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon,  
Wallington, and Weston



## Lighting the night with hope!

We are still encouraging everyone to put a candle in their window at 7pm each Sunday night as a sign of hope, community and support for all those who are working for our health and safety.



## Welcome

Well, another week of sunshine and even I have taken to tackling some outdoor jobs and I am renovating two old garden chairs – a gloriously messy job that has, so far, kept my finger out of the cookie jar! I wonder what you are all doing to keep yourselves occupied? We had lovely pictures of people's gardens and flowers to cheer us are there any other projects (in or out of doors) that you could share with us – it would be wonderful to see what you have all been up to. In this issue of In Touch we have an article about the Wesley brothers, those great hymn writers. How many hymns can you remember? What is your favourite? Mind is 'O for a thousand tongues to sing my great redeemers praise'. Stay well all of you and stay safe. **With blessings. Fiona x**



## A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those who care for the sick,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate  
us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## Growing our spiritual gardens by Harriet Crosby

*'Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble' Psalm 119:165*

I am a very result orientated person. I like to be in control and make things happen – quickly! When I first planted my herb garden, I checked on its progress every day. I wanted immediate growth, immediate gratification. Of course, the more I demanded quick results from my garden, the less growth I saw. I could not see real growth when I obsessively measured each plant twice a day! It was very frustrating.

However, my now lovely herb garden taught me to take the long view of growth. It showed me that deep, lasting growth occurs slowly, over a long period of time. There is a difference between being obsessive and being faithful. Being obsessive is watching it every minute I can to see what had changed and demanding growth, being faithful to my garden means tending and caring for it, providing the conditions for growth. I have no control over the results, the actual growth of my herbs is not always in my control.

St Paul talked about this in the sense of spiritual growth he said, 'I plant, I water. But only God gives growth.' I learned the same lesson regarding my inner garden, my inner self. I must be faithful – providing the conditions for spiritual growth by practising the disciplines of prayer, bible study and worship and of trying to live God's way. And that takes a long time, often a lifetime, our journey of faith cannot be measured day by day but more often year by year but if we are faithful then we will grow.



bay leaves



thyme



oregano



basil



## St Sofa's

We worship at St Sofa's now  
Since Covid came to stay  
We don't dress up or do our hair  
But still we come to pray!  
Our Vicar is a clever girl  
A Zoom with her IT  
And so we sit down ev'ry week  
And meet up virtually!  
Our Parish Churches stand empty  
With praise they do not ring;  
But still their people gather round  
To pray, and praise, and sing!  
The virus is a nasty thing  
Yet it has helped us see  
The church is NOT a building  
But folk like you and me!  
**By Nigel and Carol Beeton**



## John & Charles Wesley, evangelists & hymn-writers

John and Charles Wesley were the founders of Methodism. Two of 19 children born to Samuel and Susannah Wesley of Epworth Rectory in Lincolnshire in 1703 and 1707, their father was the local rector, while their mother was a spiritual inspiration to her many children.

Both John and Charles went to Christ Church, Oxford (1720 and 1726). John was ordained, and Charles and some friends formed a 'Holy Club' while still at college. It consisted of men who dedicated themselves to Bible study, prayer, fasting and good works. Such regular disciplines soon earned Charles the nickname 'Methodist'. The name stuck.

Both Charles and John felt called to the mission field, and so in 1735 they sailed to Georgia. Their time among Indians in America was not a success – they struggled for any real spiritual authority in their ministries. Feeling failures, they returned to England in some depression. John summed it up: "I went to America to convert the Indians; but, oh, who shall convert me?"

Then the Wesleys made friends with some Moravians. They stressed that salvation cannot be earned, but must be received by grace through faith in Christ. Charles was the first to experience this 'true' conversion, when on Pentecost Sunday, 21st May 1738, he wrote that the Spirit of God 'chased away the darkness of my unbelief.' Only three days later, on 24th May, 1738, it was John's turn. As he wrote in his journal: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed."

John and Charles Wesley then devoted the rest of their lives to sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. In doing so, they turned England upside-down. When the established Church threw John out, he took to the fields, preaching to coal miners and commoners. His itinerant evangelism took him 250,000 miles on horseback and to preach over 40,000 sermons. His small 'societies' attracted some 120,000 followers by the time of his death. Charles became the most prolific and skilled hymn-writer in English history, writing hymns that are sung widely today, such as 'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.' In all, he wrote more than 6,000 hymns.



## Sweet dreams?

From large pink hamsters that smile and wave at you, to cars that can't get off roundabouts, a lot of us are reporting weird, vivid, and intense dreams just now.

Experts say that financial worries, cabin fever and boredom may all be factors. But – on the plus side, there is also the fact that many of us are finally catching up on our sleep. And by waking up without an alarm, we will have better recall of our dreams.

## Solitary, but not alone?

Dear people, please don't sigh, try not to moan,  
These troubled days must sometime have an end.  
Though solitary, you are not alone  
For you are close in thought to many friends.  
The wonders of the media fill the room  
With music, drama, silliness and fun -  
Diverting sorrow, dissipating gloom,  
And showing you're the same as everyone.  
The house is quiet and still but outside, see -  
You can't feel sad and lonely when all round  
The Earth is seething with new energy-  
To boost your spirits, lift you from the ground.  
So while the sun is shining and the air  
Is soft and warm, take comfort, don't despair !

Josephine Rogers April 2020

