



Staple Hill

Local ... Lively ... Loving

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A Smile from God

After days of beautiful spring sunshine, I write this whilst looking out through the patio doors at rain. Another 3 weeks of COVID-19 lockdown seems a very, very long time when the sun isn't shining! It makes me think of the story of Noah and the flood. Rain fell at that time constantly for 40 days (basically two 3-week lockdown periods) and Noah's household were in an enforced isolation within the ark. But at the end of it all, God gave the gift of his rainbow to show that even the darkest of times will not last forever, that God has not forgotten us, and He will let nothing come between Him and us again. It is like God smiling in the sky.

At the times when we can leave our homes to take a walk or do some food shopping, we can see pictures of rainbows in the windows of many houses. These rainbows are a symbol of a nation's hope during these difficult days and probably were never directly inspired by the biblical story in Genesis. - but for me, I can't help but think of God's covenant with man whenever I see them, and it makes me smile too!



Paul Heath

WEEKLY PROGRAMME:

All activities in our buildings are currently suspended in line with government advice in the fight against the corona virus.

LETTER TO OUR CHURCH (from our Youth):

To Our Church,

During these confusing times, it's amazing to see our community, our church and our families working as one to ensure we are all cared for and healthy. We praise God for the work that our church is doing, for what Colin and Nicola are doing as they ensure that we hear your teaching each week, and also that we continue to be local, Lively and loving through new strategies.

During these unprecedented times, we must stand strong for one another, and be prepared for change. Some of us will struggle to adapt and may feel anxious about our current situation, and that is ok! But you needn't go through this alone, with the luxury of technology we are able to connect and give support and encouragement to those who need it right now. We are privileged to belong to the church we do, knowing that we have our prayer network and groups making phone calls, writing emails and letters, or texting one another to keep our church family updated, to show them love and to let them know they are not alone.

There is no need to worry when we have the support of friends, family, loved ones and God by our side. Be that person who reaches out and check on those who you feel may be a little lost, or in need. Only together may we fight these unsettling times, for it is not just the individual salvation soldier, but the Salvation Army together.

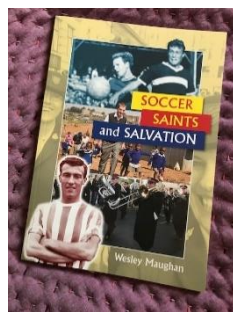
Joe Saint

FLOWERS:

Had we been able to meet in our hall today, we would have been blessed by flowers on our Altar table from Olive and Gary Matthews in memory of Den.

SOCCER, SAINTS AND SALVATION:

A few years ago, Wes Maughan came to talk to us about his experiences of being a Christian whilst also being a professional footballer. Wes played for Southampton amongst others and had a career in football lasting many years. He has now written a book, 'Soccer, Saints and Salvation', which is an excellent read. Priced at £7 a limited supply is available from Hilton Baker 07851 121571 and for each book sold £2 is donated to The Kenya Trust.



A WIDER CONGREGATION:

As was evident in last week's bulletin, we now have a significant on-line presence both in the UK and across the world. Our Tech team (with special thanks to Mark for the editing) have been working tirelessly over the past few weeks to ensure that we can all continue to tune in to our Sunday service each week from our own homes using facebook, Vimeo, and our own channel on YouTube. But you may be interested to know that the service last Sunday has been viewed over 2,200 times, and our peak audience over the last few weeks has reached 2,424!

And it isn't just the services that are on-line. Our Youth group led by Tash are also continuing to meet together on-line with an average of around 20 young people sharing together each week.

FELLOWSHIP BULLETIN: staplehillprayers@gmail.com

You will be sad to learn that Major Peggy Pearce was promoted to glory earlier in the week, as was David Jeffries. Both Peggy and David had in the past been valuable members of the corps. Our thoughts and prayers are with Peggy's husband, Les and their family, and David's wife, Iris and their family.

The 'Wish You Were Here' (WYWH) members are part of our Sunday worshipping community who are now unable on a more or less permanent basis to come (the name is currently something of a misnomer because of the lockdown situation!). We just want all our 'WYWH' members know that we are continuing to think of you all:

Rita Adams, Molly Angle, Ruth Barber, Wesley Challenger, Valerie Cuff, Brenda Driscoll, Brenda Hussey, Ruby James, David Jones, Gwen Lear, Joyce Lear, Hazel Leonard, Shirley Nokes, Catherine Read, Roy Rodman, Peter and Valerie Scott, Francis and Ruth Shepherd, John and Olive Sheppard, June Wallington.

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF SECRETARY:

We have been asked to cascade out to all our members and friends a letter from our Territorial Headquarters (THQ) regarding the impact that the Coronavirus is having on the Salvation Army's finances.

If you received this bulletin via an e-mail, then you will have also seen a link in that e-mail to this letter. However, if you experience any difficulties accessing that link or are viewing this bulletin directly from our website, please let me know by sending me an e-mail on staplehillbulletin@gmail.com and I can send you a separate copy.

For those receiving a paper copy of this bulletin, a copy of the letter will be attached.