

MISSION-NEWS-SOMERSET

March 2020

Understandably our monthly newsletter will take a different format than usual and, as you would expect, concentrates on the national emergency caused by Covid-19 and the churches response.

Here are update reports, news, prayers, inspirational thoughts and ...

Thousands light a #candleofhope in the darkness. More than 71,500 people viewed [the online call to prayer from CTE's Presidents](#), where church communities were called to pray and to "light a candle in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.". Christians across Britain united to on Sunday 22nd March 2020, responding to the call made by Presidents of [Churches Together in England](#) (CTE). Amid the coronavirus pandemic sweeping the globe, candles were lit in thousands of homes across Britain at 7pm on Mothering Sunday, symbolising the light of Christ shining into the darkness. Even those living in 'social isolation' were able to unite in this act of prayer, standing together in solidarity and faith at this time of global crisis. Social media was flooded with images as people shared their #candleofhope. So many photos were shared that [the hashtag #candleofhope](#) became Twitter's second most trending hashtag in the UK during the evening. Christians across the globe also took part, with photos shared from Malta, Canada and the USA.

Revd Dr Benjamin Aldous, Principal Officer for Mission and Evangelism, Churches Together in England makes the following request "We are looking for blogposts, podcasts on theological and missional responses to #COVID 19 so we can have a page on the CTE website. I have put out calls on social media and have about 10 so far but want to include a wide range of traditions. If you know of someone from your member church who blogs regularly or might have produced a short Podcast or Vlog in the past few days then please email me with a link. I'll be reading them before putting links from our site to elsewhere...so content is important. I'm looking for encouraging and challenging responses. Contact Lorraine Shannon on lorraine.shannon@cte.org.uk



Sharing #candleofhope photos. It would be wonderful if you could share your [#candleofhope](#) photos and stories from last Sunday. Please share photos on Twitter and Facebook using the [#candleofhope](#) hashtag, and also tag us in to posts [@ChurchesEngland](#) Alternatively people can email photos to website@cte.org.uk

"That we should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel us to act Separately"

- The Lund Principle

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Thoughts and Reflection

Spring is truly with us, and we praise God for the changing season, the awakening of nature and the longer days. All this contrasts with the ever changing reality and narrowing of our world. As we start a new week, let's pray that we can adapt to these changes in our lives with hope, for God is with us.

My thanks to the Revd Graham Thompson for the following "I learned a great quote from Lenin today: *There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen* "

Worried? Lets put our cares into God's hands!

"Into the mighty hands of God
We give our worries and our care,
Though desp'rate are the times we face
Let's be content to leave them there
For only then God's promised peace
Can strengthen us with holy balm,
And when life's oceans menace us,
Relieved of cares, we'll know God's calm.
When hope is fading from our sight,
To those who trust, God has a place,
His hands are open for our cares
There is no limit to his grace!
Though great the curse of what we face,
God's love is greater than its dread
For in his hands it loses power
As all our fears in him are shed".

(Major Malcolm Westwood—retired Salvation Army Officer)



A very helpful article I've received is about Anticipatory grief, the feeling we get about what the imagined future holds when we're uncertain. It can be confusing. It's a long article, so here is an extract. The whole article can be found on <https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-you-re-feeling-is-grief> "Understanding the stages of grief is a start. The stages aren't linear and may not happen in this order. It's not a map but it provides some scaffolding for this unknown world. There's denial, which we say a lot of early on: *This virus won't affect us. There's anger: You're making me stay home and taking away my activities. There's bargaining: Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right? There's sadness: I don't know when this will end. And finally there's acceptance. This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed. Acceptance, as you might imagine, is where the power lies. We find control in acceptance. I can wash my hands. I can keep a safe distance. I can learn how to work virtually.*"

Feeling confused?

It is becoming a cliché, but we are living through extraordinary times. Ministers and Church Leaders of different denominations, members, employees and members of the public are finding themselves stretched to breaking point. This blog post - aimed at Christian ministers - includes helpful reflections for all of us at this time.

<https://tragedyandcongregations.org.uk/2020/03/24/guidance-for-ministers-as-the-coronavirus-crisis-deepens/>

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" Phil 4:6.

