



**New Malden
Methodist Church**
At the heart of the High Street

Lockdown Life

Issue 3: June 2020

Welcome to the third issue of Lockdown Life. This issue has several articles focusing on education, including the challenges of home working and those of returning to school, from the viewpoint of pupils and teachers.

There are more stories of how people have been spending their lockdown and a baby photo competition which I hope you will enjoy – answers in the next issue. There is no prize, other than personal satisfaction of course!

Karl is having a well-earned week's leave but he will be back next week and resuming his Windows on Worship which has been a hugely valuable resource for worship while we are unable to meet.

You may have seen government announcements stating that places of worship will reopen for private prayer from Monday 15th June.

However, the guidance from the Methodist Church nationally remains unchanged, and as such our building will remain closed for the foreseeable future.

When we are both issued with national guidance enabling us to reopen, and we can be confident that we can do so safely given the measures that will need to be in place and the volunteer base we have, then we will update you accordingly. Thank you for your understanding.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy Issue 3 and please send any contributions for the next issue to me at nmmc@hotmail.co.uk.

Keep safe, God bless, Sarah Moore

Fun all age general knowledge quiz

Isabel has created a quiz which she would like to share with the church community. You are all invited to join us on Zoom on Sunday 21st June at 2.45pm for a 3pm start. She has written all the questions and will be the quiz master. She has road tested this on grandparents and it lasts about an hour. Look forward to seeing you then if you wish to join.

Here are the details for joining us on the day:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82294869636?pwd=Wnp6SzdjcDZjWkhPMWpreUJwMUFDdz09>

Meeting ID: 822 9486 9636

Password: 0skQaX

Robert Elves

A Message from Julia

Thank you for my beautiful flowers which were delivered on Sunday for my retirement.

It has been very strange ending my working life in these times, I was hoping to have gone with more of a bang!

Over the 15 years I have been in the post there are some wonderful memories I will cherish shared with very special people.

Some of the highlights were abseiling at Fort Rocky, ice creams at Messy Church, hot cross bun making at the Maundy Thursday stop up, doughnuts at Dads and Doughnuts, walking over the O2, pack holidays with the Brownies, litter pick-ups, Malden Fortnight parades and exhibitions, pantos, parties, Christingle and other special services, the mosaic and lots of tea and cake with toddlers, WAGS and any other group I could drop into to partake of refreshments!

All of these events were shared with an army of volunteers each of whom are very precious and I would like to thank each of you for your care and support to make the events possible. From those who made camping bearable to those who cheered from the sidelines, it is that interaction with you that made this job so special. There was a great deal of laughter along the way, some regrets when things didn't work out but lots of fun.

Most of all it was the contrast from previous employment experiences because people were always ready to say thank you when things were organised rather than be keen to criticise, this created an atmosphere where it was worth giving something a go. I'm sure you will support my successor in the same encouraging way.

It has been an honour to serve my church in this post, it really was a case of God not just opening a window after a door had closed but banging a bass drum to get my attention and go for it. I'm so glad I listened! May God bless you all.



A group at Fort Rocky in 2007, and proof that Julia abseiled!!

Views of Lockdown and the return to school from our younger members

From Grace Mensah

Lockdown has been a struggle. Had it not been for COVID-19 it would have been the year that I took my SATS, acted out the end of year play and went to PGL. Instead I am locked up in my house with my family. I have missed my friends dearly and hope to see them soon. I feel my life will not be the same again. At the end of March, I thought I would never see my friends again, so I was upset. On the last week of school, we were given lots of work and pass papers to do at home. However, as I started to get through them all, it did not seem like much at all.

The government announced primary school children (reception, year 1 and year 6) should return to school from 1st June 2020. Year 6 returned to school on the 2nd June and seeing most of my friends again was so lovely. Each year is split into four groups and each group has their own area of the playground to play and eat. However, not every student came back. When entering the school, markings on the floor show two metre distance from each other. Once inside the school grounds we stand outside and wait for others to come, then we follow our teacher to our classrooms. When arriving in school we wash our hands, each table is a good distance from the other. Everyone must use their stationery and is not allowed to borrow or lend to each other. For our class timetable, we do one hour of maths then we go out to break and do PE on the grass. We then go inside and wash our hands again and do one hour of English. After this we go to lunch, the canteen is no longer opened so we must bring our own lunch. We can sit with our friends but have to social distance. If it rains, we eat lunch at our desks in our classrooms. After lunch we continue to finish our English or maths that we were working on earlier. If we have completed it then we move onto a new subject example History, Art etc. Playtime has been quite boring because we are not allowed to use the equipment.

This virus will go down in history, let's pray it does not come again next year



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Isabel's return to school

On the 1st June years 6, 1 and reception were given the opportunity to go back to school. Being year 6 I was one of those that decided to go back. How would school be different? Firstly coming into school we had staggered start times and a one way system. Teachers were on hand to give directions and

parents were not allowed inside the school buildings. Inside the classroom there were only 5 children and only 4 next door from a class of 30! Our desks were 2 metres apart and we had to bring our own stationery. Anything I used in class had to be only used by me. For lunch we ate packed lunch in the classroom and then were allowed out in our bubble. At breaks our play areas were segmented into parts for each bubble and we have a bag of games stuff (balls etc) that's just for us to play with. We have a rule that if someone touches someone from another bubble their parents get a phone call. We have all had to sign a new home school agreement.

I have enjoyed my first week back and especially liked the Thursday afternoon treat of watching a film and having separate snacks. I am lucky that many of my friends are in my bubble and we have our usual teacher in our regular classroom. On Fridays we have the day off so that the school is deep cleaned. We have homework set but not too much and we don't have to hand it in.

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A parent's view

Caroline Auty's thoughts on school.

When the idea of opening up schools was first suggested we weren't really sure what we would do. We were having a nice time at home just the three of us and finding it ok mixing work and play. Also we were aware that schools in other countries were only just going back. However, Isabel really wanted to go back to school and the school did a lot to reassure parents that PHE guidance had been implemented and that school would be as safe as it could be. There was even a video tour of the school set up for lockdown teaching.

It was a strange experience dropping her off on Tuesday as teachers were everywhere directing a small number of parents and a designated route to classrooms was marked out with cones etc. Apparently inside the building there's another one way system and 2 metre markings and arrows. Pickup is similarly demarcated. The school is clearly a different place with so few kids, hardly any noise, and lots of extra signage but Isabel has really enjoyed her first week and is clearly getting lots of individual attention in such a small group. Next week she could walk to and from school on her own but as she can't walk with friends we'll still take her in. Like many things in lockdown, schooling is different but to coin a phrase "it is what it is" and we are all making the best of it.

School Life During Lockdown and Beyond

The announcement on Wednesday 18th March that schools were to close gave me and my staff just two days and the weekend to make arrangements for home learning and for childcare provision for children of Key Workers. Like the rest of the country we had no idea how long the situation would last. Although much has happened since then we are still jumping through hoops following government briefings.

The school has been open every week day since the lockdown started and now all reception children have been invited back to be in a Bubble. Just over half are in school with staggered starts and their own table!

There is a great deal of uncertainty. It is still the government's ambition to open to all primary children before the end of term and quite what will happen in September is a worry. All over the country there are children who will be due to start school in the Autumn but no clear message can be given.

It is busy and targets set at the beginning of the year are irrelevant which can be unsettling. During this time it has been good to hold onto what I believe to be the same tomorrow as is today and was yesterday and so I would like to thank Karl for Windows on Worship and everyone responsible for Lockdown Life.

Liz Edwards, Head of an infant school with 270 pupils.

Distanced Learning

What a strange new world we are living in! We are all having to get used to new ways of doing things, especially in the field of education. From maths to dressmaking to piano lessons, everything has to happen online, remotely, or at least at a safe distance. I'm guessing that very few of us were familiar with Zoom meetings three months ago. We had maybe heard of Skype and Facetime, but the idea of virtual meetings for social or study purposes seemed a bit futuristic. How quickly things had to change! Suddenly we're all Zooming, for family catchups, Church coffee mornings, book clubs, exercise classes or one-to-one tuition.

Julie Haines is a teacher at the Wemms Educational Centre, which helps pupils who for one reason or another are not in mainstream education. Often they are very able students with special needs who just need a different approach to their learning; one that is more suited to their individual circumstances. They may have a troubled home background or a health problem or a learning disability such as anxiety issues or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder.) Julie is one of a dedicated team of skilled and experienced teachers who help these youngsters deal with their difficulties, working with them one-to-one and helping them achieve their potential and hopefully a qualification along the way. Now she has to do this online, at the mercy of the technology, and find new schemes of work and new ways to mark and feed back. It is differently challenging, although there are fewer hours and no travelling!

Of course, learning cannot even begin unless the technology works properly, and we have all experienced the frustration of not being able to 'get in' to an online meeting although you know you've got the right password and the right time and the right equipment and the right sort of WIFI. This can be extremely frustrating. But even once you are up and running, one has to develop new ways of communicating with one's pupils, and different ways to monitor what they are doing.

So first of all, teacher and pupil have to position their two cameras carefully, which usually means in one fixed place so you can see either the pupil or his work. Not necessarily ideal when as a teacher you are used to looking all round the class, all the time!

You have to remember the slight delay in hearing and responding, a bit like the TV correspondents reporting out on location. Sometimes the screen 'freezes', and you realise that little Johnny is not still thinking about the question, or gone off into a trance. He could be halfway across the room by now and it's up to you to jiggle some buttons and try and re-engage him. Of course in this respect they are the experts and we are the floundering amateurs. Often my pupils have to tell me what to do to restore the picture or reduce the echo, or unmute those things which ought not to be muted or enable those things which ought to be enabled. It has indeed been a sharp and, for me at least, a not particularly comfortable learning curve.

In teaching the piano there are even more dimensions that I have to cope with. As I said above, the camera is in a fixed position, generally showing the pupil's hands on the keyboard. An ironing board or music stand is a good height for this. Sometimes I can see the pupils' faces as well, other times not. It depends on the angle and nearness of the camera in their particular domestic setting. What I can never see in sufficient detail is the music, so I either have to have scanned copies if it is something unusual, or I rely on my memory if it is a Standard, or I have to ask them to hold the music up to the camera and then shout 'Up! Down! A bit more! To your right!' if I want to check on something that sounds dubious when they play it.

Dubious sound quality can only sometimes be blamed on Zoom. People tell me this is because it was designed to cope with speech rhythms and not the more percussive Stop/Go performances of my beginners. Every time they stop, the sound cuts out, and when they re- start, the sound does so a second and a half later, with or without my helpful comment overlaying it. So mostly I tend to say 'Keep going! Keep Going!' and then we try and go back over it and sort it out verbally when they have ground to a complete halt.

The other sound quality issue is due to the often dodgy instruments which some of the children are playing on. This has been something of a revelation to me, as of course when pupils came to my house I had no idea what they were practising on at home. This has helped me understand a little more why they have no incentive to practise... It just sounds *awful*, whether they are playing the right notes or not! Some pupils have good keyboards, and whereas once I might have been a bit purist and sniffy about this, I completely see that it is the only sensible solution for the majority of households, so I have no issues with these. Nowadays they are very sophisticated machines and they are at least in tune and At Pitch. With some of the old pianos I'm now hearing, the pitch can be so flat that the pupil is effectively playing in a different key, so when I correct them or demonstrate, I have to transpose it so that it at least relates to their version. This all makes it much more demanding and stressful, and I have reduced all my online lessons to 30 mins whereas before, several older pupils would have had 45 mins or even an hour. Some pupils have stopped completely, saying they have quite enough school activities online at the moment, thank you. I do not blame them at all for this approach. It really is *Not* the same experience as before, but I do not know whether they will ever come back to resume learning with me. In view of these changed circumstances, I have been grateful for the small Government grant which has acknowledged and slightly cushioned the blow of a significant drop in my Self-Employed income.

If this is the future of learning, I am not a fan, and I eagerly await the return of the New Normal, when pupils can return to my house. I may have to tidy up the house beforehand, wear a mask, and wipe down the keys between lessons, but the present arrangement is no substitute for live music-making and real interaction with my students.

Alison Bullett

Home Schooling, Glammy Style

During lockdown and beyond, Ethan now aged 9 (where did that time go?) and I have been doing activities together.

Maths has been a bit of a sticking point so I offered to help recently to ease the situation.

The school had produced a booklet that looked formidable! There were new strategies and so we were going to learn together! So far we have done ok, he has completed 4 and 5 pages at a time with encouragement and a timer! He has admitted that he would not have achieved as much in the classroom mainly because I was watching over him and there were less distractions! After about 45 minutes we move on.

We are working on an Egyptian project which I found online entitled Year 4 Egyptian Project! So we've worked on maps, timelines and mummified a figure, this week we are making the sarcophagus to entomb it!

He has also been growing things like tomatoes, sweet corn and herbs. Learning some life skills like scooting, cooking and baking, how to change a loo roll! I'm hoping some of the memories he has of this time will be good ones. A time when he could play in our road with Grandad, discover new things for himself and share a joy for learning.

Julia Morton

Life in Lockdown

From Sue Knowles

How my daily work routine has changed, from driving around the Borough visiting families with hearing impaired babies and toddlers, and doing Audiology clinics at the hospital, to sitting at my desk at home using technology to keep in touch and support my caseload.



This last Monday was so different – a one parent family with a lively toddler, a deaf baby waiting for a cochlear implant when St George's resumes its paediatric C. I. programme, a Spanish family anxious to attend Great Ormond Street Hospital to see the Consultant Plastic Surgeon and a Sri Lankan family with three boisterous boys, two of whom are deaf, living on the top floor of a block of flats, with no outdoor space.



Thank goodness for Zoom, FaceTime, phones and post. After our weekly sessions online, a packet of appropriate information and follow-up ideas is assembled along with activities for the children and this I send by snail mail.



This picture shows the topic today for S – wild animals. I took a photo when Mum held up her son's scrap book. I sent the book, pictures and glue in the post. We do a different topic each week.

Texts and calls keep us in touch throughout the week and my colleague at Queen Mary's Hospital, dressed in PPE, continues to make earmoulds for the children as they often need re-making every two weeks. My peripatetic toy library lending service has been suspended as has the weekly Sensory Play Group.



Over 75% of my caseload are disadvantaged and finding life a struggle, so I am so thankful that many of them are being supported by our Church's food bag delivery team. They are very grateful for the caring and love shown by our community outreach programme.

Alison, Judith and Julia co-ordinating food donated from local supermarkets and the Dons Local Action Group based at Kingsmeadow, which is then distributed to 12 local families who have come to our attention through the Make Lunch programme.

Sue Knowles, Paediatric Educational Audiologist, ToD

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From Pam Wardley

Lockdown has, so far, been very busy for me. I started with various household jobs – tidying cupboards and spring cleaning. My house was sparkling and no-one else could see it. I spent quite a while in the garden and it was looking lovely until the drought set in.

I decided I would make some hospital scrubs but, with shops closed, it proved to be impossible to get fabric. I discovered a website sewing4thenhs.co.uk which supplied the correct fabric. Having ordered enough for 10 sets there was a delay of three weeks in its arrival so I made two sets for a local care home while I was waiting. The fabric needed to be washed on a hot wash first and then ironed and cut out so I seemed to be waiting a while before it was ready for sewing. Each set takes about 6 hours so it has taken up quite a lot of time. I was lucky in that family and friends wanted to pay for the fabric as they could not sew and saw this a small contribution to support the NHS.

I have now been asked to make 50 face masks for the staff at Kingston Adult Education to wear while they pack up the King Charles Centre which is being returned to school use. I am halfway through and hope to have a little rest from sewing for a while. Much as I enjoy it, it has been somewhat boring work.

Part of my normal life has returned as I have started teaching online today. It is not an easy subject (clothes making) to teach online but the college emailed my students from last term and gave them the opportunity to take part in a question and answer session. It was good to see them and hear what they had been making since we last met although several were keen to come back to the classes and hope they are going to re-commence in September. Me too.

I have managed my own shopping during lockdown and have taken my dog Daisy to the park each day. Of course the park visitors are not the usual doggie crowd but without cars or cycles there is plenty of room to distance.

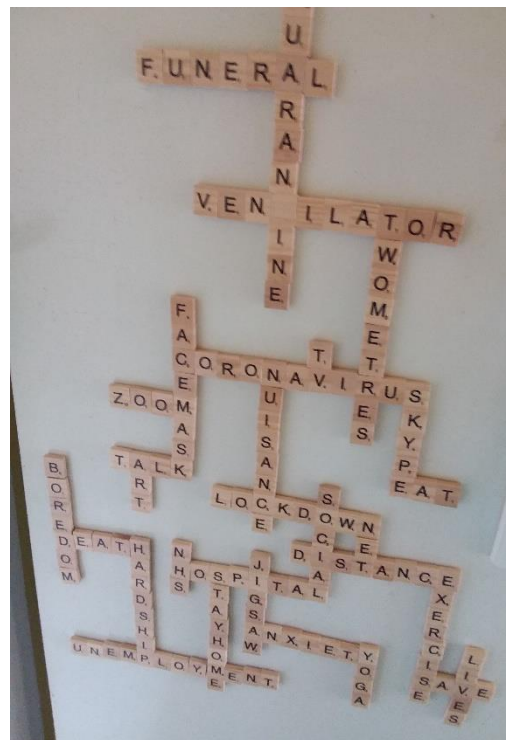
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From Doreen Downey

Caroline BEWARE. I remember as a teenager our ginger beer exploding from the floor of the larder – yes, that's all we had then to keep the food fresh – it seemed to work!

Judging by some of the reporting I don't seem to have been very adventurous during Lockdown but as one on the upper end of the age range, the Lockdown has been somewhat limiting. However I have got to grips with Zoom enabling me, as Alison has reported, to continue my Moves Fitness exercise class on a Monday thereby helping to keep fit! Like most people gardening has been high on the agenda, although it is nowhere near immaculate and no sooner had we got to the end when the beginning needed attention again! There have been jobs in the house that one never gets round to doing, hobbies to keep me occupied, knitting, sudoku, jigsaws, craft, emailing and phone calls in line with many others.

However, being a fridge magnet collector my latest acquisition last Christmas was a fridge magnet Scrabble made up of three sets of Scrabble (although I can only accommodate two) to which have been attached magnets (all done by son Phil and his partner Mandy). This is constantly on the fridge and normally forms a general crossword or on a topic when I spend five minutes or so in the kitchen adding to it when the mood takes me. The current topic is, of course, 'Coronavirus', so I thought you might be interested to see the result and if anyone has any other ideas, I will see if they can be added!

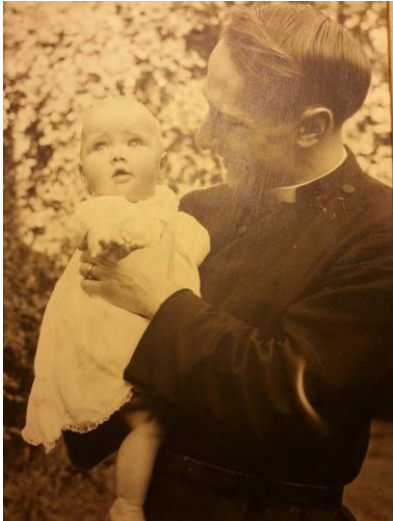


Here's looking at you kid! Can you match the photo to the name? Some are easier than others!
See the list of options after the photos

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Babies

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Sue Abell | Becky Harris (née Edwards) | Julia Morton |
| Alison Bullett | Judith Jewell | Jenny Reid |
| Peter Bullett | Gusandra Justin | Andy Roberts |
| Doreen Downey | Hannah Moore | Eleanor Roberts |
| Joanna Edwards | Ellie Moore | Ali Walsh |
| Stephen Edwards | Sarah Moore | Hannah Walsh |
| Becky Haines | Gareth Morton | Megan Walsh |
| Emma Haines | Jennifer Morton | Pam Wardley |
| Julie Haines | | Hilary Warner |

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Baby Birds – keeping with the baby theme

A few years ago, a baby blackbird appeared in our front garden and then took refuge at the side of our house, where it was fairly safe. It was very young and we feared it had fallen out of its nest in the chestnut tree; in fact, the next day we found a dead sibling on the pavement below the tree. We left it alone for the rest of the day hoping that one of the parents would come and feed it, but by late afternoon there had been no sign of the adult birds so we decided to look after it. We made a nest of straw in a cardboard box and gave it drops of water and a small earthworm. We continued to feed it with earthworms, dried mealworms and occasionally chopped up snails, and drops of water from a plastic syringe. The little bird seemed happy and grew stronger during the following couple of weeks. Eventually it had developed good wing feathers and was trying to fly, so we took the box into the garden and after a few attempts it flew off.

I was quite worried about how the bird would survive. Would it be able to feed itself, how would it know where to find food? Sadly, we do not know what happened to it.

During lockdown I have been watching the birds in the garden and recently observed parents teaching their young how to feed themselves. First it was a jay with a youngster in colourful adult plumage who was still begging to be fed, the parent was applying tough love. Each time the young bird came close with open beak the parent turned abruptly away and continued pecking in the grass, this happened several times until the young bird got the message and started pecking in the grass himself to find food.

Then a day or so later, one of the blue tits which come to the fatblock feeder outside my window, arrived with a newly fledged offspring. This parent was much kinder than the jay, she pecked for a while, then gave the young bird a little bit, returned to feeding herself, then another little taste to the fledgling, who was obviously very hungry and not satisfied with these small offerings and so began to peck at the feeder itself. The following day the adult returned with two young birds, one went straight into the feeder while the other, presumably the next to fledge, stayed on the outer cage, and the lesson was repeated.

I hope our baby bird found some other blackbirds and learned from them how to find worms.

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap, or store away in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Matthew 6:26

Jenny Reid

Service of Farewell and Thanks for Rev. Andy and Liz Clark

Sunday 12th July 6.30pm

The service will be recorded with a number of contributions and then "broadcast" on the internet. We will send a very simple link/address to enable everyone who can to access the service. If you are not able to join us "live" at 6.30pm the service will be available later on demand on YouTube.

Pause and Pray

In the coming days, please do take a few moments to pause and pray for all those who have been bereaved at this time, and in particular please remember:

- The family and friends of **Elizabeth McFall** who died peacefully at home on 1st June.
- Sue and Andrew Bradley and family, as Andrew's mother **Hazel** died on 6th June. She will be much missed by the family but they are comforted to know that she will be reunited with her beloved Fred.

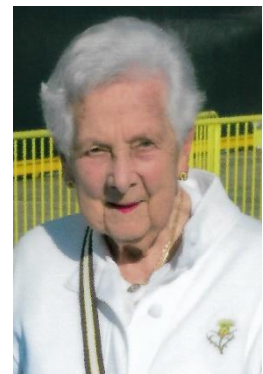


Audrey Bedford

We would like to thank you all for the kind messages we have received since our Mum's death.

We hope you will retain happy memories of her singing confidently in church, setting up the first £1 stall and participating whenever possible in Church life.

Anne and Paul Bedford



Next Issue

Please send all submissions for the next issue to Sarah on the church email nmmc@hotmail.co.uk.

Anything that you think people would be interested in would be welcome but we would especially like Memories of Childhood and of course more stories of the highs and lows of lockdown.

Please submit your contributions by no later than 1st July.

THE GUEST HOUSE by Rumi

This being human is a guest house.

Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honourably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

A couple of weeks ago a friend sent me this lovely poem by the 13th century Persian poet, Rumi. I had heard of him, but didn't know much about him, so I decided to do a little research. I hope you find it interesting.



Rumi was born in 1207, in what is now Afghanistan, but when he was 11 his family fled under the threat of a Mongol invasion, and finally settled in Konya, Turkey. His father was a renowned Sufi scholar – Sufism is a branch of Islam primarily concerned with developing the spirituality or, more precisely, the inner character, of a Muslim. Rumi spent his early years, like many Muslims of the time, learning and studying Arabic, law, ahadith (the body of sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), history, the Qur'an, theology, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy.

By the time of his father's death he had become an outstanding scholar in his own right, and took over his father's position as one of the highest scholars in the country at the young age of 24. He spent his time teaching and giving lectures to the public, and until the age of about 35, lived a fairly non-descript life.

Rumi was a firm believer in the revelations of the Qur'an, but criticised the mere outwardly legal and ritual practice that was being promoted at the time. In fact, much of his work is dedicated to waking

people up, and encouraging them to experience life themselves, rather blindly following the scholars of the day.

In 1244 he met the wandering dervish, Shams al Tabriz. "What I had thought of before as God, I met today in a person." This recognition strengthened and galvanized his belief and his poetry is filled with a longing to be the Friend, the close spiritual presence he first saw in Shams.

Rumi's masterwork is the Mathnawi which runs to six volumes, over 50,000 rhyming couplets in twelve-beat lines, in which the half-lines also rhyme. Rumi died in 1273, halfway through the sixth volume of the Mathnawi.

The imagery and language used in his poetry has transcended cultures. His poems have been widely translated into many of the world's languages and transposed into various formats. A recent reading of some of his poems has been compiled by the health writer Deepak Chopra. Rumi has been described as the "best selling poet" in the United States, although many references there don't mention the fact that Rumi is a Muslim poet.

Many translations of his work have become mere love poems, and Rumi himself has become known as a love poet. Love *is* an overwhelming part of Rumi's work, but for Rumi, this love was a higher love for God, and not for humans.

Judith Jewell

And finally, some pictures from Eleanor Roberts taken at the Black Lives Matter protest in New Malden last Sunday 7th June. You can see that there was a very good attendance which included several church members.

