



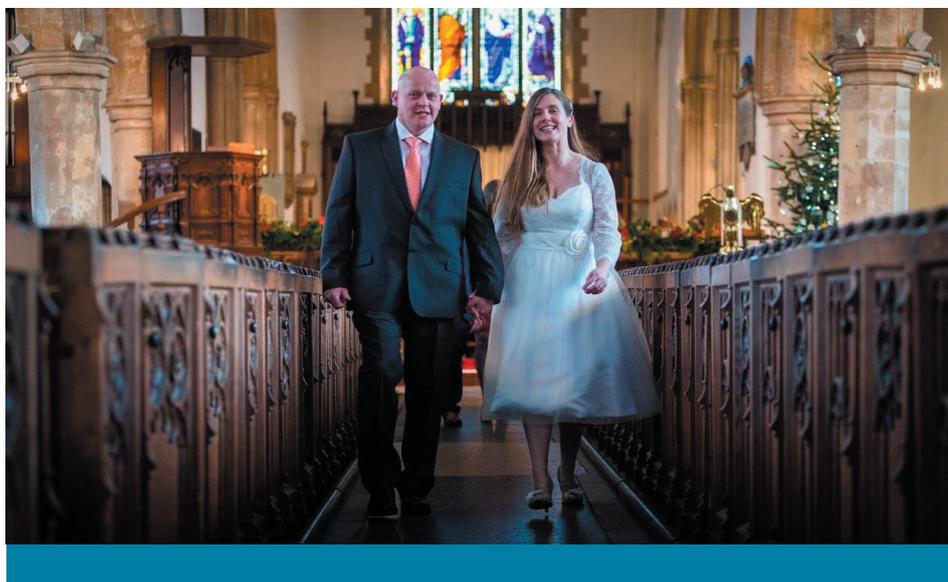
highworth community church | 01 may 2020

# CONTACT

registered charity no. 1080002

## HELLO!

So much may feel uncertain at the moment, but you can always rely on a delivery of *Contact!* Hopefully, you'll experience a little more connection to your church family as we navigate this time together. Bless you, dear Family.



## IT BEGAN ON A COBBLED STREET

by Rachael Laing Smith

It was December 29, 2015, just after lunchtime, when we walked down the aisle for the second time. I guess this was technically our third time since we'd each done it many years before with someone else, but we found ourselves together at an altar about to be married. Despite the fact that this was a wedding, which makes it a good story in itself, there are a few things to note.

One is that this was the 29 December. See the date? Whilst most people were luxuriating in a festive season well spent, we were in a church surrounded by decorated trees. Christmas was only four days before. The day before that had been Toby's birthday, and we'd

spent the entire week at opposite sides of the country visiting our families. Even for us this seemed like bonkers planning! But there were reasons for the seeming madness, mainly focused around the need for Toby to start his new school in Highworth at the beginning of January.

In some ways, the huge significance of this marriage got a little lost in all the pieces that had to be positioned correctly to make it happen. Rather like a gigantic game of chess, nothing was left to chance. And yet there we were, me in a fancy frock and (astonishing) shoes, and Phil feeling awkward in a suit and orange tie. Despite all the planning and

strategising, this was only the prologue to the rest of our story.

Our beginnings were rooted in the same place, on cobbled streets where grandparents were childhood friends, later neighbours, and ultimately best friends. Families already intertwined before the world was forever changed by 1966's arrival of Philip Mark Smith, and connections most definitely unshakeable by the time I entered the world in '73. God had been authoring this tale for a long time. And like all good stories, there has been plenty of laughter, as well as seasons of heartache and tragedy. We have carried pain, shame and disappointment. We have each loved and lost, and yet dared to love again.

The Author takes up His pen and writes another chapter.

He planned our three children, aged twenty-four down to thirteen years of age, not one of them an accident, each arrival perfectly timed according to His design. As we have prayerfully striven to weave the fabric of family in all its worn and ragged beauty, these children have given us perspective, clarity and determination. You see, just as divorce tears at more hearts than the two who become separated, marriage is so much more than the joining of two people 'til death us do part'.

Between us, Phil and I have fifty years of marriage experience, but we are by no means experts in love and relationships. Whilst we've suffered the consequences of ill-fated decisions, both of us can humbly testify that marriage has taught

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## HOPE IS STILL AVAILABLE AT THE BRIDGE CENTRE

By Alfie Howe

*Alfie shares an update about our work at The Bridge Centre during this time, particularly in distributing Food Collective parcels.*

Myself, Ken Ludlow, and Anita Cairns are running a tight ship, blessing people and dealing with any questions people ring up with at The Bridge Centre.

At the start of the current situation, we had twenty-four different people and families needing help from Food Collective. However, it has now eased off a little since the school voucher scheme has come into play.

We have also helped people that are in isolation with getting the help they need or signposting them to the Facebook

group that has been set up to help the local people. We have a small team that are on call to help deliver or shop for vulnerable people if needed, and we would just like to say thank you to them.

A table for food donations has been set up to make it easier for people to donate, and it saves them queuing up outside The Bridge Centre to make their donation. It has been a big success and we may think about keep something similar going after the lockdown is over.

I feel blessed that I am still able to be carrying on doing God's work in Highworth, and am able to stay safe but get out to The Bridge Centre most days.

### It Began on a Cobbled Street (continued from previous page)

us more about the Fatherheart of God and His unconditional love for us than we would have ever thought possible. What the devil meant for ill, God has victoriously restored. There is always a way back, always redemption.

And so, that sunny, crisp December day in 2015 was more than simply one man and one woman. It was the birth of hope. Take it from me, there isn't anything that God can't redeem.

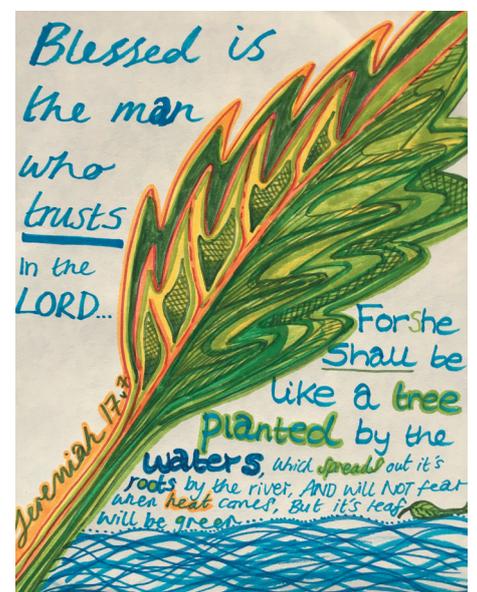
Whether you're in a season where you think your spouse is amazing, or where

you'll scream if they spend one more day during lockdown in their pyjamas, we want to invite those of you who are married to consider being a part of The Marriage Sessions online course. In less than two weeks, *Care for the Family* will be streaming the first episode of The Marriage Sessions. Over 3,000 couples are already taking part—so join in and sign up for a free date night (or four)!

The sessions explore how couples can build a fun, strong and lasting relationship. Many marriages will be feeling the strain right now, but we're hoping this resource will help you not only endure this season together, but enjoy it.

Every Monday, from 11 May for four weeks, a new session will be released, which you can watch at home at a time that best suits you and your spouse. Each episode includes a mix of real life stories, insight from leading relationship specialists, and trusted wisdom from Rob Parsons.

When you sign up, you'll also receive some midweek bonus content to help you unpack the session even further (make sure you confirm to receive emails from *Care for the Family* when you sign up). For more information, go to <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses/marriage-courses-the-marriage-sessions> or, contact us (laing.rachael@gmail.com/pms147@gmail.com). Or you can just sign up today and enjoy four free date nights! And of course, we're willing to virtually hold your hand through it all if you need us. Just drop us a line—we'd love to support you.



# AS SEEN ON FACEBOOK

Charlie Murdoch

01 May

If you'd be willing then prayers would be welcome for *Willows* counselling service where I'm on my student placement. *Willows* does an incredible job in the Swindon area.

Ruth Coughlin

01 May

Anyone fancy supporting my girl in her new venture to get us all exercising tomorrow? I'm sure I'll be sweating in no time at all lol. My mat is ready but not sure I am but here goes!! Roll on tomorrow!!



SATURDAY 11AM WITH ABI SHORT

MY FIRST FITNESS CLASS!! - FULL BODY SWEAT. £FREE!

I am currently studying for my Level 2 Fitness Instructor.

Jon Weaver

30 April

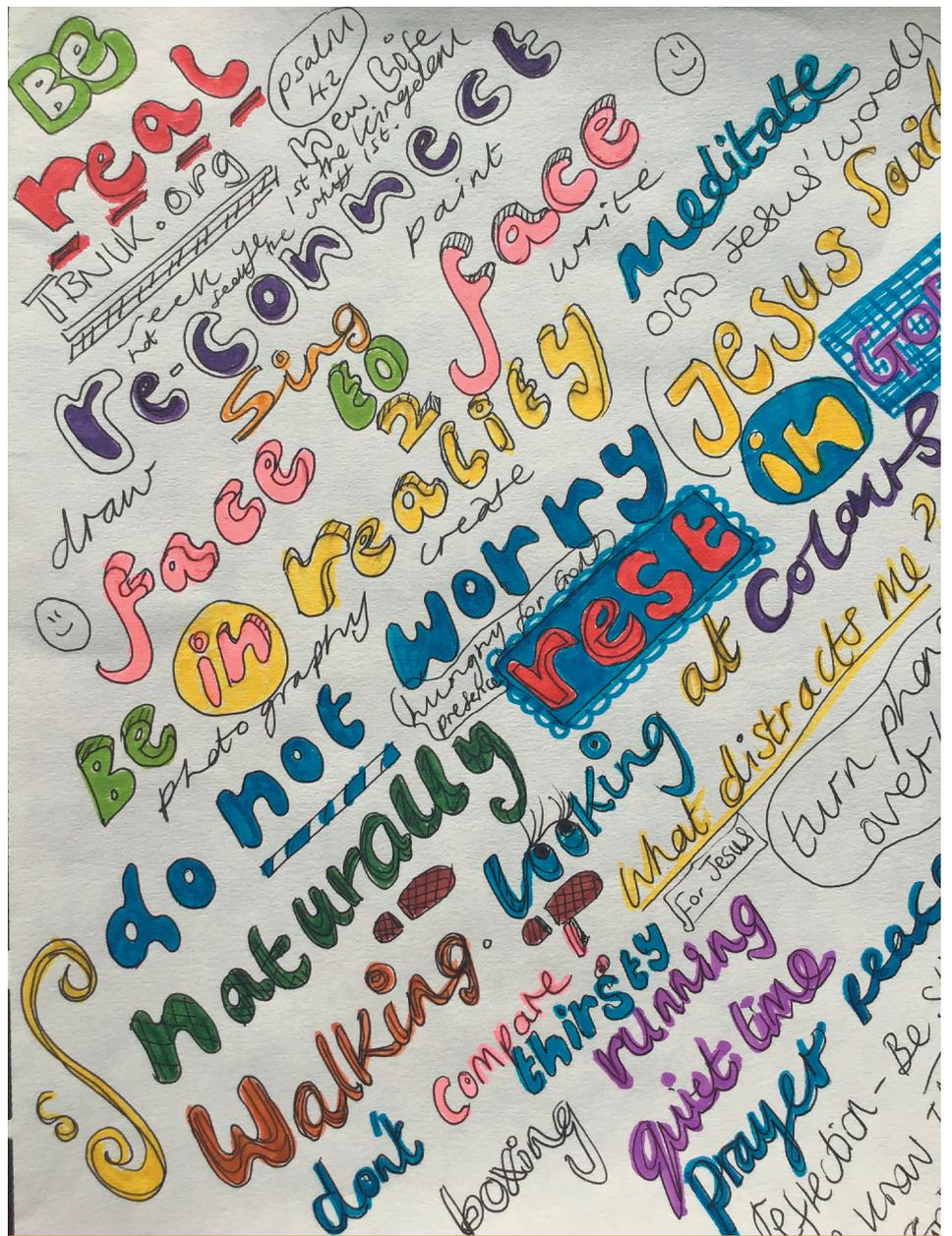
God is good. The power of praying to the Lord is strong. He listens and answers in time of need. He will give you hope, love, peace and comfort. Put your trust and worries in God. Don't carry them with you. This always puts my mind to rest.



Jo Pearse

01 May

Lockdown is one thing, imprisonment is another. This is the most amazing and uplifting testimony from Richard Wurmbrand about the beautiful and amazing potential of nothing. Have a listen. (And maybe have a tissue to hand ...) <https://youtu.be/V-dskOqVGu4>



This issue's beautiful doodles are by Jenny Fry

Lesley Lambert

01 May

If soon it comes to it that we are asked to wear face masks I am happy to make them initially for our church members and families.



If it works ok and I can keep up I will extend it.

They will be free.

Anita Cairns

29 April

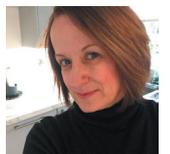
I am thankful for good health and a loving family.



Liz Thring

29 April

Thankful for God's grace on me. He IS good.



Also thankful for His body, y'all, who I miss so much xx

Sally Willson

29 April

I am so thankful for my amazing family— past and present, for living in a beautiful part of this country, and for my ever-faithful Lord.

