

Dear Friends

We are now at the time of our annual Church Anniversary.

This year it will take on an unprecedented view due to the fact of our social distancing rules caused by the Covid-19 virus.

Life may be, and is, strange in the extreme leaving us wondering when we shall be able to live again as we used to do, wondering even if that time will come at all.

Until all people are able to move freely once more, we wait and trust that God has it in hand – after all, it is God's world and God cares for everything in it. God is ultimately in control and will bring us through, even as God is involved now with the frightened, the suffering and grieving people whom God loves.

Chalkwell Methodist Church has seen nothing like this but has indeed been through war as well as many great difficulties during its ninety years of witness, not forgetting events of real joy, laughter and celebration. It will continue to provide a focus for our fellowship, our leisure, our losses and, above all, our outreach to the neighbourhood which we try to serve. In our worship together, God's Spirit will never fail to sustain us, to move us, to encourage us to share the faith we are so fortunate to hold.

If you read the story of our building and the Christians who met before it came into being, you read of people like us who were determined to build not just a building but a worshipping people to praise God and serve God's kingdom here on earth.

Our dear John Low is mentioned way back as treasurer and then as a kingpin in the bringing of our magnificent organ from London piece by endless piece and working with Stan Davies to rebuild it here. What an achievement!

There were many young people then, women's meetings, a men's club, a Saturday club for disabled people, then the lunch club and so much more held in the church.

We may not have all that going on but there are still several groups for pleasure and for fellowship, along with the uniformed organisations and Caterpillars. Sunday School continues also.

People still find faith here as well as the warmth of friendship. Children are nurtured, adults shown care and love. In times of sorrow and of happiness, we care for each other as we strive to follow in the steps of our Master, our Lord Jesus.

Let no one tell you that the church is dying. It may be changing in ways we believe fit more this generation but our life's pilgrimage with Jesus is at the heart of all we do.

Please enjoy the memories and photos that members have shared.

Perhaps, you might ponder ways in which we can move on to make the future more purposeful, worship more varied and our life as God's family in Chalkwell even stronger.

Happy Anniversary to you all!

Our celebration will be on hold until we meet again.

Until then, God bless you with peace and tranquillity and keep you safe.

Margaret

## A Prayer

We thank you, Lord God, our heavenly Father  
for the years of faithful worship and church life  
of those who travelled this way before us.

Save us from growing complacent  
as a people without vision.

Save us from having minds closed  
to whatever is new and different.

Inspire us to dream dreams for your kingdom  
and our place in it.

Open our ears, our eyes and our hearts  
to grasp your vision for the future  
and to work to accomplish your will among us.

At this present and strange time, Lord,  
guard us and keep us;  
fill us with your peace and love.

May we be sure of the presence of your Spirit with us all.

In Jesus' name we bring our prayer. Amen.