

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING

An American folksong, attributed to Robert Wadsworth Lowry (1826 - 1899), a Baptist Minister.

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation,
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul,
How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?
I know my saviour liveth;
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night it giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes, the cloud grows thin,
I see the blue above it
And day by day this pathway smooths
Since first I learned to love it.

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart
A fountain ever singing
All things are mine for I am His -
How can I keep from singing?



Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy.
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy.
Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.

St. Augustine

changing installations to all who came our way.

We can only pray that we fulfilled the brief given in the Church Times, that we found opportunities to offer new, creative and imaginative ways to worship.

Thank you to everyone who took part for their generosity of time and talents. The results have been amazing, the positive responses beyond anything we could have imagined, the comments from all those inspired, enriched and comforted humbling. Church without Walls showed us that faith and worship do not need to be confined inside particular buildings. Our God is alive, He is all around us, His Love is out there to be offered, shared with and received by one and all.

A Sound Like a Violent Wind

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2 vv 1-4 (NIV)

***Wind, wind, blow on me,
Wind, wind, set me free,
Wind, wind,
The Father sent the blessed Holy Spirit.***

Jane Clowe, Betsy Clowe.

Scene which was placed front and centre beneath the tree as the other gifts were removed.

* Rainbow Tree - repurposing of the Christmas tree, asking for ribbons to be tied into place according to need, with red for strength, orange for joy, yellow for hope, green for new growth, blue for the NHS, purple for wisdom and white for simplicity and new beginnings.

* Launched our knitting appeal to help with the boredom of Lockdown 3 and the dark, dreariness of winter, inviting donations of small squares each knitted with a cross at the centre. Just like people, we received all colours, all abilities in an almost overwhelming number of squares. There were enough to create a vibrant, colourful, uplifting altar front, scarves for those in need of God's comfort and warmth and a wonderful HOPE banner. All of these were displayed at Easter, the work of more than 20 knitters creating over 900 squares!

* A 'Journey through Lent' using nature as a tool to explore prayer outside. It was a gentle 30 minutes stroll revealing the array of trees we have on our doorsteps in Haxby and Wigginton. In addition there was a Tree Trail as a result of the new church pathway and the gates being left closed.

* Easter Garden 2, April 2021: God's Love was demonstrated as a heart shaped garden with a specially made tomb, included flower donations from all churches, plants from a special well-wisher and incorporating lots of home-made hearts sharing the message of shared love.

Church without Walls started with 2 people and 4 hands. Over the last 12 months, many hands have been busy and many people have been involved, making, visiting and sharing with us the visible presence of faith in a new, safe and inspiring way. Lots of conversations, smiles and fellowship have been enjoyed, sharing of stories and fears, happy times and sad times. A tangible example of neighbourly caring, offering God's Hope in bright and

SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Spirit of truth,
We look to you to guide us
Through an uncertain world.

Holy Spirit,
Light up our lives with the truth of God.
Be the one who accompanies us
And guides us back to the way of truth
When our feet should stray from the path.

In a world which revels in uncertainty
Write the clarity of God's word
On hearts and minds;
Bring insight to the message
And conviction of faith.

Spirit of truth,
We look to you to guide us
Through an uncertain world.

Amen.

A prayer for Pentecost
From Praying in every Season
(Mothers' Union)

Church without Walls

We started Church Outside (really Church without Walls!) following the closure of all places of faith on 24th March 2020. Not since the 13th century had churches been closed, not even in times of war. Now our doors were closed, services stopped, congregations adrift at a time of crisis. How could we show we were still visible and present in the darkness - offering a place of hope during those difficult early days of fear and apprehension? Church Times reported at that time that churches would "need to find new, creative and imaginative ways of being available" to address the needs of their community. We reached out in faith and found a ready audience!

Chronologically this is what we have completed:

- * Candle Light vigil every Sunday evening at twilight from March until the re-opening of churches in late June/early July. Periods of silence and prayers in the still of the evening.
- * Rainbow artwork installation on the church walls showing our togetherness with the community, offering some brightness and unity with the hundreds of rainbows that began to appear in windows up and down the country.
- * First outside Easter Garden created centrally on the front lawn.
- * VE Day: National programme of events abandoned so we appealed to all churches to share in the 75th commemoration; flowers of red, white and blue in baskets and tea cups, 1940's flag, central artwork, poppies placed in and around the garden to remember those not returning.
- * Pentecost - June 2020. We celebrated the birthday of the Christian church with flames, tee-pee bonfire and dove of peace on the lawns and filled the bank wall with red, yellow and orange flames and prayers - contributions coming from children and adults.

* Plastic-free July 2020 - 'Letters in a Bottle' raising awareness of plastic in the seas and oceans on St Mary's Beach, sea creatures made from recycled plastic. From an initial 6 plastic bottles we received around 30 bottles with prayers, pictures and messages inside.

* VJ Day - "Peace Garden" dove of peace encased in sand and surrounded with peace pebbles from adults and children in the local area, white flowers and ribbons reflecting the message of peace from St Mary's team.

* Outside Harvest Altar - donated bales creating a focal point of a large cross on the lawn, decorated to highlight the delights of the season and offering prayers for those struggling with food provision.

* "Wall of Remembrance", a poppy extravaganza with a central, huge poppy on the grass surrounded with red flowers and the whole of the front wall covered in hand-made donated poppies of various colours and variety of materials, with prayers remembering the courage and sacrifice of so many.

* Advent Calendar along the main wall at the front, with simple Acts of Kindness and prayers in the season of hope.

* An Outside Carol Service took place on 19th December - all socially distanced, well attended and watched over by numbers of people at the front of church.

* Christmas Tree was a visible reminder that although some parts of Christmas would be different, we were still celebrating the birth of Our Lord. 'Star Appeal' with a request for tree decorations to be stars made from weatherproof and recycled materials, naming those who were the star in the lives of those attending. There were solar powered lights twinkling and seasonal greenery placed in and around the tree on the bales (those previously used at harvest), gifts were wrapped in readiness - then on Christmas Eve the greatest gift arrived in the shape of a specially made Nativity