

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

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FROM THE C.O'S DESK

We were very fortunate just a few weeks ago to be able to spend a week camping (yes camping), down in Cornwall. It was wonderful to spend time in the company of our son, daughter in law and two grandchildren. They had moved house the previous week and we were treated to the guided tour of their very own house (after previously being in Naval owned houses) and we were impressed. They had worked extremely hard, with the assistance from the other parents the week before and they had made it. It was lovely to be able to share in their joy, to be shown new bedrooms by our very excited grandchildren and generally to share in the joy and relief of their new acquisition.

We knew this would come and we were prepared for it, when after a day or so, we were put to work. The kitchen in the old house needed cleaning (I actually felt that we were preparing to move ourselves while tackling that task) A wall that had been papered in a bedroom had to be put back to how it was prior to the decorating, things had to be loaded into a car and transported to the new house. And on the very last day of our "holiday", an old worktop needed to be put on the wall of the garage, to create a shelf and storage underneath. Our son on many occasions was heard to say, "I don't like to ask you to do too much, as I am mindful that this is your holiday".

It sounds like it was a tough week of work. But it actually wasn't. The joy of being close enough to our family to be able to help out, was adequate compensation for the jobs that we helped with.

Isn't that part of what being a parent entails? Being there when you are needed. Helping out when you are asked to. I know full well that my husband would do absolutely anything he could to help our two sons out,



and has done on many occasions and they know it and have been heard to express it.

Family – you can't choose them, you are given them and the ideal is that a family is there for each other. I know we don't live in an ideal world, and I am fully aware that sadly everyone's family is not like that. But I am grateful that our family has at its head, an earthly father who will help out on any occasion but far more than that, I am grateful that our family has a Heavenly Father who only wants the best for His children. A Father who shows love and care. A Father who provides assistance when it is asked for (and even when it isn't). A Father who will listen when we speak and will give of His time. A Father who will love unconditionally and will watch over us as we serve Him.

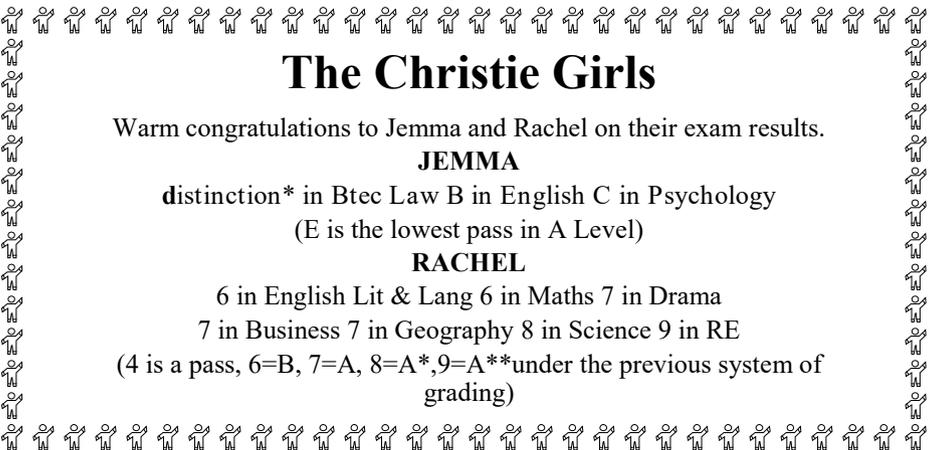
Philippians in chapter 4:

“My dear friends! I love you so much. I do want the very best for you. You make me feel such joy, fill me with such pride. Don't waver. Stay on track, steady in God”.

Sometimes I guess, it's hard to stay on track, steady in God, but with the love of our Heavenly Father, we can do it. We have got through these last few months, when maybe we wondered if we ever would and we will get through whatever comes our way during the next few months – and we know this to be true, because we have a Heavenly Father who cares, loves, protects and offers His help. May God bless you all.

Margaret

I love these words from the Message Paraphrase that Paul wrote to the



The Christie Girls

Warm congratulations to Jemma and Rachel on their exam results.

JEMMA
distinction* in Btec Law B in English C in Psychology
(E is the lowest pass in A Level)

RACHEL
6 in English Lit & Lang 6 in Maths 7 in Drama
7 in Business 7 in Geography 8 in Science 9 in RE
(4 is a pass, 6=B, 7=A, 8=A*, 9=A**under the previous system of grading)

Gill's Lockdown Jottings!!

Gill Gregory



March 2020 will always be remembered in countries all over the world and Britain in

particular that the corona virus (COVID-19) was spreading fast in our direction! Every time we turned our TV on we heard worrying news and frightening statistics, which were difficult to ignore. Yes, the word pandemic was mentioned more than once!

How did I react personally to this frightening situation? I was so grateful that I have a strong faith in God, I believe that He is in control of our world, He does indeed hold the whole world in His hands!

I decided perhaps the thing for me to do, maybe for future days, was to record some details, instructions we were given etc. by the Government which may be forgotten in future days! Most days in our update from Downing St. we learned new words and expressions which now have become familiar to us, among them LOCKDOWN which seemed strange to begin with! Some people certainly didn't understand.

For me this was not as drastic as for some as I have lived alone for five

years and am quite used to my own company and talking to myself! However I am so grateful for a family who care about me and keep in contact daily by video or telephone call.

Over these months we have been blessed with so much good weather, this has made such a difference to me as I enjoy gardening and most days I have been able to work outside with plenty of rests in between!

I have found it helpful for me to have structure in my day, making phone calls to friends and those that come to mind, also making meals to put in my freezer for someone who may like them.

I have a very good friend Jane who helps me with collecting my prescriptions and keeps an eye on me, I am not able to walk far these days, another blessing to have her close by!

I was concerned that we had not been able to meet up for our small Bible study group, however we managed to continue by email for a while which seemed acceptable to all. I have been enjoying our weekly Bible study on Zoom which has been going for quite a few weeks now and is, as far as I am concerned, a great success!

I have also recorded in my journal that in the early days of the lock-

down the plea was made that anyone who had worked in the NHS. who would like to volunteer to help out in the crisis should apply. I would have loved to volunteer myself but I don't think they would have had me!

In the early days I recorded that the food shops were really short of some goods, toilet rolls come to mind! Why?

Social distancing came into our everyday language, which we still need to be reminded about and hand washing properly was highlighted, no face touching!

It has been very encouraging to hear many reports of kindness, good neighbours, random acts of going the extra mile, those who are willing to raise money to help others when they need it most.

It has been a real privilege for us to be aware of those who desperately need our prayers, particularly those

we heard of with the virus who were in ICU. and to have progress reports as well.

Sunday's for me have been different but enjoyable, I start the day with a service on local radio, then at 10am it is Woking S.A. Worship time, 11am I am ready for live worship with Basingstoke corps along with many others around the country, then to finish off it is Songs of Praise! A busy but enjoyable day!

And there's more - but that's for another issue of Tidings.

God bless.



Congratulations to
Lee & Caz Searle
on the safe arrival of
Evan George Searle
3 August 2020
Weighing in at **9lbs 10oz**
A brother for **Thea**
and a fourth grandchild for
Ken & Sue

Be encouraged, the Lord has great plans!

Lock down stories – Colonel Mary Elvin

Colonel Mary Elvin has an amazing number of stories from occasions when the Army has been in lockdown or our work has been suspended. The articles will be featured in future issues.

Mary is married to Derek and are officers in retirement and have supplied us with a short profile of their service

Mary and Derek Elvin

Mary and Derek met at the Training College where they were Cadets and Sergeants together. They were privileged to serve for 45 years as Salvation Army Officers.

Their first twenty years of Officership were spent as Corps Officers in some of the smallest and largest Corps of the Territory. They then

college and then six years as Divisional Leaders in Scotland.

A period on THQ preceded an exciting appointment to the Caribbean Territory. Upon return to London, Mary was appointed to create a new Department for International Development, creating and implementing Projects and Development programmes for overseas Territories.

In retirement both have done some writing and have sought to be good soldiers at Bromley Temple Corps.



spent 6 years on the Training

Be encouraged, the Lord has great plans!
Lockdown Stories
Colonel Mary Elvin
CUBA

In 1959 Fidel Castro came into power in Cuba. Many organisations were officially closed down including the Salvation Army. Contact with the remaining officers and Corps ceased. No clear picture could be assessed-

In 1973 a large inter-Church gathering of all the Caribbean Churches was held in Jamaica.



Junior Soldiers taking part in the meeting



*Singing
the
doxology*

Commissioner John Needham was the then Territorial Commander for the Caribbean Territory. Whilst at this gathering he saw a man dressed in a make piece uniform and cap which read in Spanish The Salvation Army. Not knowing this man, he enquired as to his identity, He introduced himself saying, "I am Major Ramirez, I represent the Salvation Army in Cuba"

Between 1994-98 my husband and I were appointed to the Caribbean Territory and during this time were able to visit Cuba having a UK Passport. It was not clear even then the state of the Salvation Army. It was thought to be a small surviving group. Perhaps one or two Corps were still operating.

We found, waiting to be officially trained, 30 Candidates and several new and thriving Corps. Officers still working and Salvationists in improvised uniforms. Praising the Lord and kneeling and praying for Cuba.

Be encouraged, the Lord has great plans.



Outside the SA hall after the meeting – Originally a house converted into a hall for worship.

Lockdown Stories Colonel Mary Elvin **VE DAY - LATVIA !**

The Salvation Army in Latvia closed in 1939 due to the 2nd World War. Occupied first by German forces in 1941 and taken by the Soviet Army in 1944 and subsequently annexed within the Soviet Union (Along with other European Countries)



Opening of building to be used to house children



Building the Army managed to reclaim. Had been used as a court house during occupation

All property was Nationalised. including Salvation Army buildings. Officers were given just a few hours to vacate offices and halls, and disband. One officer had the presence of mind to take with her documents relating to the ownership of SA properties and courageously kept these safe.

Latvia regained full independence from Russia in 1991. So in total the long lock down of 51 years ended.

With the proof of legal ownership of offices and buildings the work of the SA recommenced. One building had been used as a Court House and was immediately opened to house Street Children in Riga. Another to start caring for homeless men. I had the privilege of being present when buildings in Riga had been renovated and even more to witness and celebrate the Commissioning of the first 2 Officers in 60 years. VE Day for many was long coming, but.....

Be encouraged, the Lord has plans.



Boys – possibly children to be housed

Margaret Locke – Margi (Tributes from Margi's Thanksgiving Service)



Margaret Locke, Margi as she was known, was born in 1930 in Brentford. She spent her early years, being brought up in a Salvation Army children's home and actually spent her formative years attending The Salvation Army Corps at Twickenham.

Margi actually became an Army Officer for some time but left that vocation to enable her to marry her husband Eric. Margi and Eric had Phil, their son, and enjoyed a happy family life but sadly Eric passed away in 1978.

Margi attended the Corps at Staines for some time but then moved to Woking and so took her place at the corps here. Margi enjoyed her time spent singing with the songster brigade. She also became leader of the Home League (the Ladies meeting) and the Cameo group. Margi loved her garden and shopping and every Thursday she would take the Bustler Bus to Marks and Spencer.

Margi had three great loves, her family, the Army and nature. She loved being out in the garden. Margi loved craft, making cards, candles, stones and even had a stall at the Christmas Fayre at the Army. On one occasion, when she really wasn't well enough to do so, she wouldn't let a little bit of illness beat her. Of more recent days, Margi suffered a stroke and fractured her femur, but her stubborn determination kept her going and she was grateful to her friends who gave her lifts to the Army and helped her when she needed it.

Margi became increasingly frail and just 15 months ago, she went to live at The Grange, where she was happy and well cared for and it is lovely that some of the staff joined with the family at the service. Apparently she loved the craft afternoon that she was able to take part in and on one occasion when I visited her in the home, we enjoyed time out in the garden in the sunshine and I was kept fully entertained with tales of the times when she was Matron of her care homes. She always told those tales with a glint in her eye and I must admit to being left wondering if they were all quite as she said!!

We know that Margi loved the Lord Jesus Christ and although we had been expecting her passing for some while, she hung on, again showing that great determination. And now her presence will be sadly missed by her family and by her friends at the Corps.

(Information supplied by Jan Reed,

added to and used by Major Margaret House)

Having lost her own father barely two days before, Karinn, Phil's wife, courageously spoke so lovingly of how she met Margi and quickly found herself calling Margi Mum and as Karinn said, that was what she was to her. Karinn also spoke of how she tried so hard to put Margi's hair into her famous ringlets – alas without any real success.

Hazel spoke of her Nan with several happy memories. The day she was introduced to the world of tiddlywinks when she was given a new set by her Nan and they played for hours, well past her bed time but laughing hysterically at the counters shooting this way and that! She spoke of a busy Nan who never sat still. The Nan who dressed immaculately, everything co-ordinating and not a ringlet out of place!

The Nan who was a great listener, not afraid to tell you to pull your socks up but who encouraged her to make the most of every opportunity, seize the moment and live life to the full.

In her later years as great grandchildren came along she was promoted to Great Nan to Hazel's three children with whom she enjoyed stories, crafts, birthday parties and fun and games. 'They came to love her as much as I did. And Great Nan was a very fitting title, because that's exactly what she was. A Great Nan.'

Phil said of his Mum.

When I was little, Mum used to put some gravy on her plate after we finished our meal and mix it with mustard. I would then sit on her lap and she shared the mustard gravy with me. Throughout her life, we always used to have to put mustard on the table as she had it with every meal and I now have it with most meats myself, thanks Mum!

Mum also passed on her liking of puddings on to me although I stick to only one pudding whilst Mum would be quite happy to have a few puddings if she could, especially if there was custard or ice cream with them!

Finally, she also taught me how to be sociable and I talk to anyone now, the same as she always did, including all her soft toys!

She brought joy to everyone she talked to. I used to say, as long as Mum is smiling, I know she is OK. I know she is OK today so let's all smile for her and although we will miss her lots, she will always be in our hearts and I love you lots Mum.

NV Update

(Neighbourhood Visits)

Alison Campbell

Hello dear friends and teammates,

We all have modified our routines so drastically over these past months - maybe you are finding, as we are, that neighbours have been stopping for chats more easily and talking more freely about how they are coping with it all. It's an interesting time to be a good neighbour, and I think we keep learning what that looks like, including in the corps neighbourhood.

Here's a little news about what has been happening around the corps:

Just before the 'stay at home' announcements, on March 19th there was a meeting at the corps (at safe distance) of some local residents who were interested to be helpful to others during this time as 'neighbourhood connectors'. The corps visiting (SALT) team, particularly Margaret and Ian, have kept in touch. It's a little group, they have been active helping out with food support locally, and some feel more part of us now - our extended congregation, Ian calls them.

On May 19th members of the corps visiting team met outside the hall and made a prayer walk in the neighbourhood - two by two, at distance from each other - and we found peo-

ple out and ready to talk and pray together. Since then we have visited on June 5th, June 23rd, and just this week on July 23rd.

This week Ian and Sue Handscombe visited her own neighbours in French's Wells - they have quite a mix of backgrounds and life issues as well in this area, where she, as a Christian neighbour, is known and working to make a difference. Margaret and I walked from there and circled back toward the hall, meeting people along the way, and seeing beautiful flowers brightening those apartments. As one resident said, 'it's a bit concrete-y around here so I try to decorate it up'.

Corps members and neighbours alike have been happy to see us out and receive the visits as an expression of our church life even while the building is closed. It has been encouraging. I hope all of us can be encouraged to continue doing what we can where we live - in a time like this, even small actions of care can make a difference.

On a second occasion some members of the corps visiting team went out in Lakeview neighbourhood - in spite of the heat, but we did go slowly and not rush.

Three teams of two went out and spoke with some of our own corps family, people who had links through attending activities and in some cases people who had not been contacted before. They spoke with people of different faith, people with different needs, those who welcomed prayer and also the occasional invitation into someone's home. Very often the right time to visit and

above all making new connections or maintaining existing relationships.

God bless and keep us well *Alison*

Community Spirit! ASDA's generosity to the community



Majors David & Margaret were pleased to be invited to visit the Manager in their local Asda store to collect items that will be useful in the Corps' community work. The "pick up" is likely to continue for the next few months. This month toiletries were chosen that will be used to make "welcome packs" for the residents living in a new residential assisted living complex for families that has been built adjacent to the Corps building. It is hoped too that the corps

will be able to provide items of food and cleaning products also in the "Welcome Packs" as the families move into the accommodation.

The picture shows Major Margaret with the store Manager. The Majors were able to chat with the Manager in his office about life at the store during the pandemic and the effect that it had on the staff who have worked valiantly around the clock during these months.

Two King-size mattresses were also secured for families in need, living near the Army.

Neighbourhood Ministry

The first weeks of August saw the commencement of garden prayer meetings. The first was in the garden of Gill Gregory's home which began with a prayer reflection by Lt Rob Westwood-Payne, the Corps Officer at Basingstoke and then we listened to some music. Gill reminded us of the ongoing local and corps prayer concerns that she keeps in her prayer book which would normally be shared in the prayer fellowship held on a Sunday morning before our morning worship. These are then listed on Direct Line so that more people are aware of prayer needs and requests and in response prayers were shared.

A small group met in the communal garden at the home of Janet and John Thurston. Janet had made a prayer chart of the concerns of the world,

that she been made aware of from the previous evening's news. The facility was made available for people to write down prayer concerns and put them in a pot. People were given Scripture verses to share, songs from the song book were read and prayers made for the various situations in the world and then we brought to the Lord the local neighbourhood and the Corps, remembering especially our Corps members and families who have many and varied concerns at the moment. We prayed too for the young people connected with our corps who will be receiving exam results in the very near future.

You can't keep good team mates down!!! 6 NV team mates carried out local neighbourhood visits in extreme heat, but they were found to be very beneficial to all.

On one occasion Major David was able to spend time in a garden visit with Chris H, Pauline, Dorothy and Pam. An ideal way to spend a sunny afternoon and a new twist on pastoral ministry!!



Comedy Hall
D.O.H.
(Department of Humour)

The year 2030

Boy: "Dad, why is my sister called Paris?"

Dad: "Because she was conceived in Paris."

Boy: "Oh right, thanks Dad."

Dad: "You're welcome Quarantine."

A three year old went to the Doctor for a check up and refused to be weighed. Her mother said, "You've seen me do this lots of times, just do what I do." At this the little girl stood on the scales, looked down and said, "O darn"!!

A clever dog went to college. His owner asked how he was getting on. "I'm not too good at History or Science," said the dog, "but I'm pretty good at languages." The owner asked him to say something in a foreign language and the dog said, "Meow".

A lady took her car into the local Garage reporting a clunking noise every time she turned a corner. The mechanic took it out for a test drive and sure enough there was the noise when he turned left or right.

When the lady arrived to collect the car she asked if he was able to fix it and the mechanic said, "Yes it's all done." "What did you do?" she asked. "I removed the bowling ball from the boot," he replied.

Who would have thought you could put on a mask, go into a Bank and demand money and get away with it!!

Keep smiling

Major Laugh

Are we being a dustbin?

Do we have anything in common with dustbins? The original dustbin took everything, now I have a landfill, recycle and gardening waste. Sadly we are more like the old bins which take everything. We become dustbins when we listen to gossip. Socrates is credited with three tests for gossip.

1. Do you know it is true?
2. Is it good about the person involved
3. Is it useful?

If it fails any test, then thank the gossip and decline to listen.

We begin life as a dustbin, that will accept anything, good or bad. This is the state of the un-regenerated soul, we are an enemy of God (Romans 5:6 -10), but there is hope?

Dustbins can be emptied, removing all the rubbish and stench. This is the state we are in when we attempt to approach a righteous God, under our conditions. The Almighty

God who cannot have any contact with anything or anyone stained with sin. 1.John1:9 gives us the evidence of our hope. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". We tend to miss the last part of 1Jn1:9. ...cleanse us from all unrighteousness. There is no time limit on the experience of righteousness (0.1, 1second, 1minute, 1 hr, or longer). We may not remain in a state of grace for very long, but we have experienced it. How thrilling it is to really be at peace with God. How easily we lapse from this condition. We must remember our experience of God's grace, mercy and love and He is so keen to cast our sins away from Himself, as the east is from the west, provided we repent and confess our sin. May God the Holy Spirit help us to truly repent as we confess our sin, and guide us to love God with heart and soul, that Jesus will be glorified in us..

Frances Rutherford

All good wishes to everyone for a happy and healthy Autumn

from

Frances and all her family

Direct Line

What a rollercoaster we've been on over these past months – our complacency challenged as some prayers have seemingly gone unanswered – an intensity in prayer that perhaps we have never experienced. Our routines and regular worship style have been turned upside down and yet amidst this maelstrom there have been moments of strong God-awareness, innovation has helped us set up our own church where we live, moments of peace and tranquillity have brought soul relief and in it all lessons are being learned.

Speaking of the pandemic, someone said to Bill Gaither, "We are all in the same boat".

"No" said Bill, "We're all in the same STORM but not in the same boat."

We will all be tackling this in our own way and sometimes our 'boat' will be tossed round and on other occasions it might seem as though there's a slight lull in the storm. Wherever we are in this storm prayers will continue – whether with us praying for others or others praying for us.

Prayers for the people of Beirut as they recover from the recent disaster, world situations and the oppression so many people are forced to live under.

Prayers for the family of Margi Locke and also for the family of Joan Clark who were both recently promoted to Glory. Both loyal Salvationists and unique Christian women.

Prayers of thanksgiving for the remarkable recovery Major Karl Gray has made. Karl phoned and is so grateful for the love and prayer support that he, his wife Ruth, and his children have received.

Prayers for teachers and children as the schools and colleges start back.

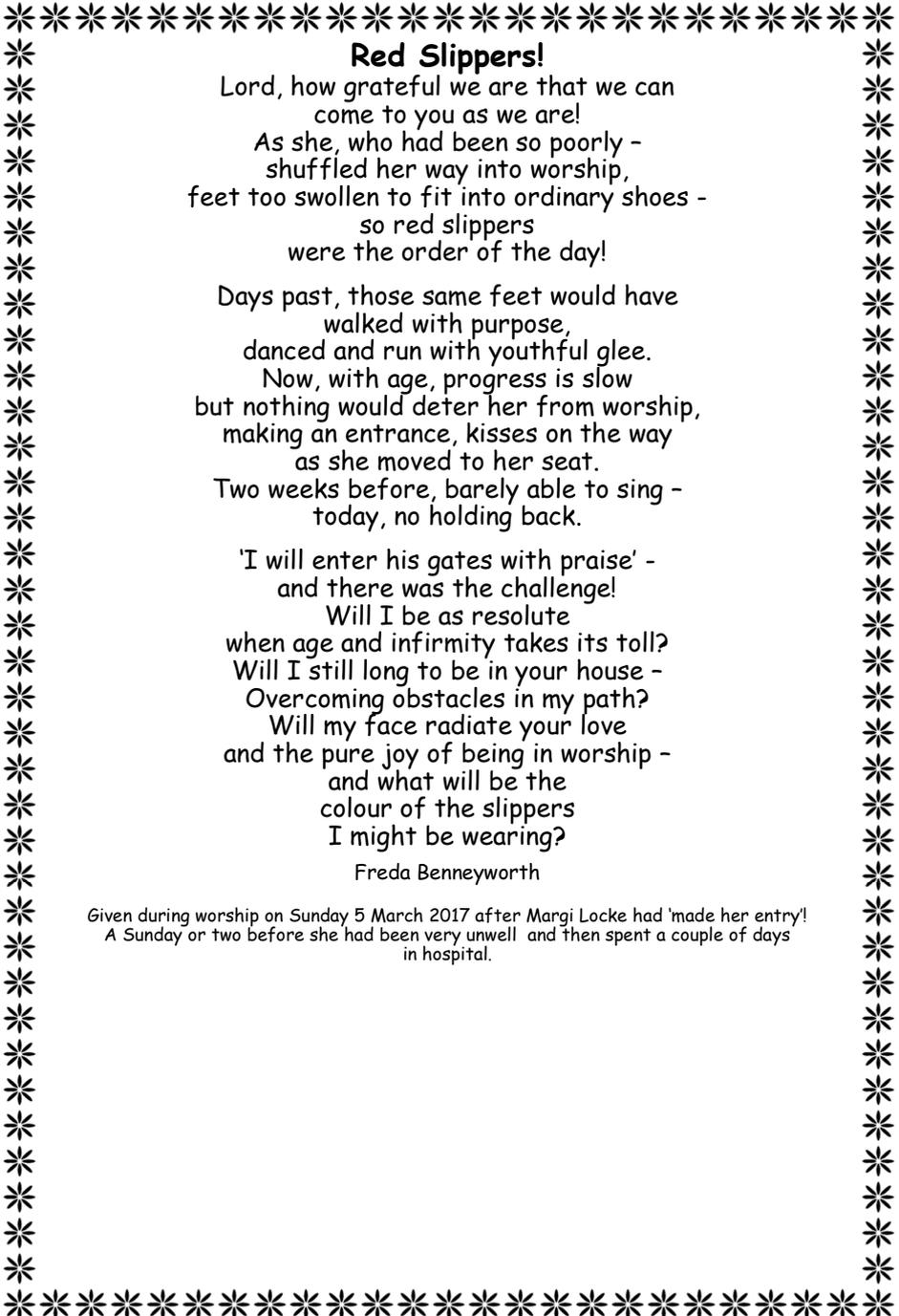
Prayers for our Corps as we start to open up and decisions are made as to how and when.

Stay safe and blessed

Freda

Blessings

Freda



Red Slippers!

Lord, how grateful we are that we can
come to you as we are!
As she, who had been so poorly -
shuffled her way into worship,
feet too swollen to fit into ordinary shoes -
so red slippers
were the order of the day!

Days past, those same feet would have
walked with purpose,
danced and run with youthful glee.
Now, with age, progress is slow
but nothing would deter her from worship,
making an entrance, kisses on the way
as she moved to her seat.
Two weeks before, barely able to sing -
today, no holding back.

'I will enter his gates with praise' -
and there was the challenge!
Will I be as resolute
when age and infirmity takes its toll?
Will I still long to be in your house -
Overcoming obstacles in my path?
Will my face radiate your love
and the pure joy of being in worship -
and what will be the
colour of the slippers
I might be wearing?

Freda Benneyworth

Given during worship on Sunday 5 March 2017 after Margi Locke had 'made her entry'!
A Sunday or two before she had been very unwell and then spent a couple of days
in hospital.