

A SEASON OF CREATION?

As I write this we had been basking in Mediterranean weather with mid thirty degree temperatures during the day and hot sultry nights making sleep difficult. After violent thunderstorms and torrential rain we are back to normal British weather conditions with cool wet days wondering where the sunshine has gone. Whatever the weather we will always complain. These weather conditions which are unusually extreme we are told will become more and more usual as the earth's weather patterns change.

Climate change has recently taken a less prominent place in the news bulletins as the Corona virus pandemic has rightly taken centre stage. Last month, in his letter, John alluded to the respite from pollution that less travel had provided and there is a feeling that perhaps we shouldn't (as conditions or government pronouncements allow) simply return to the previous status quo. A 'new normal' needs to be found.

In November last year the Diocesan Synod unanimously declared a climate emergency acknowledging and owning a commitment to do what it could to reverse the effects of climate change. As a diocese the church will make efforts to be carbon neutral by the year 2030. As parishes we should be looking to contribute in a significant way towards meeting this target. There is a suggestion that PCC agendas should have a standing item entitled 'climate emergency' at every meeting so as not to lose focus. Bishop Viv has said, 'We have got to look at every aspect of Church life and our own lives' to work towards this goal.

PCC's officers have received the offer of a financial incentive to carry out an energy audit. We are told that the typical saving from implementing recommendations is 20%. There is also an added focus on making changes in both Warmley and Bitton as both churches have boilers which are obsolete and in the event of a breakdown engineers won't be able to source replacement parts. Changes to greener and more sustainable energy use may come sooner than we expect throughout the whole benefice.

We are being asked to use September as a 'Season of Creation'. Christians around the world will use this period to renew their relationship with our creator and all creation through celebration, conversation and commitment. This year's Season of Creation is a time to consider the integral relationship between rest for the Earth and ecological, economic, social and political ways of living more in sympathy with God's created world.

Usually in September and October we give thanks for the bounty of harvest and the gifts God has given us through nature. Because of restrictions on worship and meetings imposed by the pandemic regulations we are unlikely to be able to celebrate in the usual way. Instead, please can we listen to Bishop Viv and think, pray about how we make space to consider as a church and as individuals how we can respond the climate emergency.

With love,

Leslie Willcox

WARMLEY WARBLINGS

We remember in our regular prayers, those of our church family who have been unwell, thinking in particular of Mervyn and Lil Little, Martin Pullin, Margaret Hill, Roger and Pauline Newman, we wish them all well.

As usual, we remember all of our friends who are in residential or nursing homes at this time, Grace Watson, Eileen Penny, John Short, Marjory Cox and Rita Jones.

Many of our older church members will remember with great affection the Rev. George Mitchell and his dear wife Patti, George was our vicar for many years and was much loved by all. I am sad to report that George has not enjoyed the best of health in recent years and is now living in a home in Gloucester, fortunately, Patti is able to visit him regularly. We send all our love to George and Patti and indeed to all of their family and wish you well in the home.

Another vicar of St. Barnabas in past years is Rev. John Porch and in August he celebrated his 90th birthday. Many of us will have fond memories of John and his wife Heather and their family, we send our congratulations, love and best wishes to John on reaching this milestone and wish him all the very best for the future.

You will see in this issue that I have written about the experience of lockdown, as has Muriel Allen in a previous issue. I would love to hear from any of our readers about their own experience of lockdown, good or bad, it would be good to get some different points of view and I would be happy to publish them,

Brian Draper



"But did they plough the fields
and scatter at a safe distance?"

LOCKDOWN IS NOT ALL DOOM AND GLOOM!

On Monday 23rd March, for most of us, life as we know it changed, the announcement that we were all to be 'in lockdown', although not a surprise, was met with concern and confusion, what did it all mean? For those classed as very vulnerable, lockdown meant just that, confined to staying at home unable in almost all circumstances to leave the house at all.

Without doubt, life became very difficult, routine tasks like shopping, travelling, meeting friends and family, going on holiday, going to school, all stopped, we all had to get used to a new way of life. There were daily press conferences, the news was full of doom and gloom, our wonderful NHS was under increasing pressure and pessimism was rife, there was very little good news. It was easy to look on the black side, however, I have always been an optimist and I think it is far too easy to be negative and I would like to look at this in a different light, good things have come out of our current situation.

During lockdown, there has been the opportunity to do many of the jobs around the house that have been on the 'to do list' for a long time! Those of us that like gardening have taken the opportunity to get our gardens tidier, maybe plant some vegetables, pull out some weeds. During lockdown gardens can be a great source of pleasure and also, an opportunity to get some fresh air and exercise.

There has, for some people who are fit enough, an opportunity to explore our local area by getting out and walking. I have certainly enjoyed our daily walk and have seen areas that I have not seen before whereas prior to lockdown, I was inclined to drive instead of walking. It's interesting how much you see or notice when you are walking. It's been encouraging also, while out walking how everyone you see, at a distance of course, tend to acknowledge you with a greeting, recognising that we are 'all in the same boat', a real feeling of community spirit.

There have been opportunities to learn a new, or re-learn a skill that maybe we have had and not used for a long time. I have even heard people say, heaven forbid, they have had chance to watch some of the recorded TV programmes they have had for a long time and not had time to watch.

Never before have we realised the true value of our NHS and other key workers, where would we be without them, not just tending to the sick but keeping our shops open, our public transport available and emergency services available, no praise can be too high. The weekly 'clapping' was entered into with enthusiasm by a great many people.

Our recognition of the importance of the true value of family and friends has never been more evident, materialism has taken a backseat and the fact that for some time, we were unable to see and meet with the people we love has been a difficult burden to cope with and the lack of physical contact has been sadly missed.

Another obvious benefit, at least for those who are able to use it, has been the value of the technology. This has meant that we have been able to watch our church service on line, stay in touch with friends and family and feel less isolated.

The biggest change though and I think the biggest benefit has been the sense of community spirit, there have been countless examples of people selflessly offering support often to others they do not know. Businesses offering and in many cases, delivering food to those in need, doing shopping for others, helping by volunteering for whatever needs doing. I am not old enough to remember but I am told it's the type of community spirit that existed during the war.

The value to someone, especially those living on their own, of knowing that someone cares enough to pick up the telephone and enquire about their health or whether there is anything they can do to help is incalculable. To be on their own all day, locked down, unable to get out with no human contact must be really awful and mentally damaging. The chance to get involved in some pastoral care has been very rewarding indeed.

There are signs of light in the gloom, a little easing of restrictions but there is a long way to go to what we used to call normal. I hope though that we can all try and be optimistic, it's not all bad news. A good friend of mine and a former employer always used to say 'we are where we are'. I firmly believe that together we will get through all this and good times will return, before then however, let's stay positive and help and support each other all we can,

Brian Draper

GETTING BACK TO WORK?

When he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. Matthew 20:2

For many of us it is time to get back to the workplace, as restrictions are easing. But can we be forced to go back to the workplace if we are concerned about how safe it is?

Many employment contracts include a requirement for the employee to work at a specific place and during a certain time. Most people are entitled to written terms of employment and this would include information on where to work. Refusing to turn up for work could lead to disciplinary action. The coronavirus epidemic has changed things, so that now an employee is entitled to ask questions about how safe the workplace is.

If you have concerns about going back to work, you should speak to your employer about them. These issues might include worries about using public transport, worries with childcare or other caring responsibilities and how safe the work place is.

Employers have a duty of care towards employees, to look after both their physical and mental health, to comply with equalities legislation and not discriminate against those who have protected characteristics, such as a disability. Under the government's COVID-19 return to the office guidance, all businesses have a duty to conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment. You can ask what has been considered to make the workplace a safe place.

Some employees have a right to ask about flexible working hours, such as coming in before or after the rush hour or working some days at home. You must give reasons and you should consider any compromise if it is refused. The employer is entitled to say no if there is a good business reason.

The key point is what is 'reasonable'. Your employer will want to get back to normal business and it is in everyone's interest to have a productive successful business.

As always this is a light-hearted guide to a complex subject and always get professional advice.

14th SEPTEMBER – HOLY CROSS DAY

On Holy Cross Day the Church celebrates the Cross as a symbol of triumph, as the sign of Christ's victory over death. Holy Cross Day goes right back to 14 September 335, and we have the mother of a Roman Emperor to thank for it.

Helena was a devout Christian, and after her son, Constantine, was converted, they agreed that she should travel from Rome to Israel, to seek out the places of special significance to Christians.

Of course, much of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans around 135 AD. But even so, Helena finally located what she believed to be the sites of the Crucifixion and of the Burial (and modern archaeologists think she may well be correct). The sites were so close together that she built one large church over them - the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

That church, built in honour of the Cross, was dedicated on 14 September 335.

The sign of the Cross has been used by Christians since early times. Tertullian, writing his *De Corona* (3:2) around AD 211, noted that Christians seldom did anything significant without making the sign of the Cross.

What is its significance? Well, people often put their initials or some sort of personal mark on something to show that it belongs to them. The Cross is the personal mark of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we mark it on ourselves as a sign that we belong to him. Even in the book of Revelation, we read that the servants of God are 'sealed' or 'marked' on their foreheads as a sign that they are His.

A preacher once put it this way: if you were explaining to someone how to make a cross, you would say: "Draw an I." That is you, standing before the Lord, saying, 'here I am'. Then cancel that vertical stroke with a horizontal stroke – as if to say: "Lord, I abandon my self-will and make You the centre of my life instead. I abandon myself to Your love and service."

On Holy Cross Day, we recall Jesus' wonderful promise: "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

ALL IN THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

It was:

400 years ago, on 6th September 1620, that 102 English Puritans (now known as the Pilgrims) set sail aboard the Mayflower from Plymouth, for a new life in America. After a perilous journey they landed in what is now Provincetown Harbour, Cape Cod, Massachusetts on 11th November. They had intended landing in Virginia, but were unable to reach it because of heavy seas.

150 years ago, on 20th September 1870 that Rome was captured. Italian forces defeated the Papal States and captured the city of Rome at the end of the wars of Italian Unification. The Papal States were dissolved. Rome was annexed, and it became the capital of Italy in 1871.

125 years ago, on 28th September 1895 that Louis Pasteur died. This French biologist, microbiologist and chemist was one of the main founders of the field of medical microbiology. Best known for originating the pasteurization of foodstuffs to eliminate micro-organisms that cause disease. Pasteur saved the French beer, wine and silk industries and developed vaccines against anthrax and rabies.

65 years ago, on 22nd September 1955 that Britain's first independent television channel, ITV, was launched. It ended the BBC's monopoly. Regional franchises were rolled out across the whole country by 1965.

60 years ago, on 27th September 1960 that Sylvia Pankhurst, suffragette leader, died.

50 years ago, on 19th September 1970 that the first Glastonbury Festival was held, at Worthy Farm near Pilton, Somerset. About 1,500 people attended (compared to 135,000 today). It became an annual event from 1981 and is now the world's largest greenfield festival. The first festival was billed as the Pilton Pop, Blues & Folk Festival.

40 years ago, on 22nd September 1980 that the Solidarity movement was created in Poland, with Lech Walesa as its leader. It was the first independent trade union in the Soviet bloc.

25 years ago, on 3rd September 1995 that the auction site eBay was founded (as AuctionWeb).

20 years ago, on 17th September 2000 that Paula Yates, TV presenter (*The Tube*, *The Big Breakfast*) died of a heroin overdose, aged 41. Wife of the musician Bob Geldof, she was also noted for her relationship with the musician Michael Hutchence. She was the daughter of Hughie Green, host of the talent show *Opportunity Knocks*, though she did not discover this until late in life.

15 years ago, on 24th September 2005 that the IRA decommissioned its last remaining weapons in front of independent inspectors.

LOUIS PASTEUR – FATHER OF MICROBIOLOGY

A tiny invisible thing that brings disease and death where have we heard that before?! But Louis Pasteur, who died 125 years ago this month, on 28th September 1895, was not interested in a virus from China, but in tiny living organisms that brought disease and death in other ways.

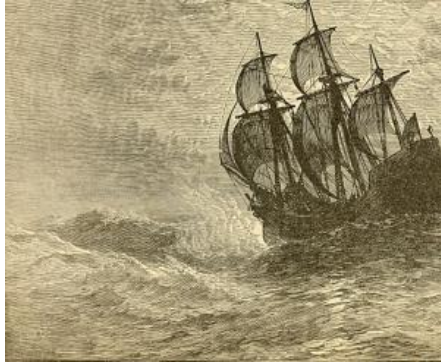
Pasteur made some outstanding breakthroughs. He discovered the principles of vaccination, and then created the first vaccines for anthrax and rabies. His medical discoveries provided support for the germ theory of disease and nullified the theory of spontaneous generation.

But Louis Pasteur is best known for his invention of the technique of treating milk and wine to stop bacterial contamination, a process that was named after him: pasteurisation. In doing so, he saved the French beer, wine and silk industries.

All in all, this gifted French biologist, microbiologist, and chemist well deserves his title as the ‘father of microbiology,’ and to be seen as one of the three main founders of bacteriology.

CELEBRATING THE 400th ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOYAGE OF THE MAYFLOWER

If we find it difficult to cross the Atlantic just now, it was even worse 400 years this month. On 6th September 1620, 102 determined Puritans climbed on board the *Mayflower* and set sail from Plymouth. They had 30 crew to steer them across 3000 miles of open, perilous ocean.



Those Puritans, or 'Pilgrim fathers', could never have dreamed that their journey would become one of the most influential in world history. Their courage and purpose for the voyage would help shape the very history and culture of the USA.

The Pilgrim fathers themselves were in search of religious freedom and a new life. Years before they had rejected the Church of England, due to its Roman Catholic past, and in 1608 they had moved to Holland, where they could worship freely. But life was very hard there, and so the New World beckoned to them.

They had originally intended to use two ships, but the *Speedwell* sprang a leak shortly after sailing, and so they crowded as many as possible into the *Mayflower*. After a long and difficult 10 weeks at sea, they reached America, but could not reach their intended destination, Virginia, because of heavy seas. They finally landed in Provincetown Harbor, Cape Cod, Massachusetts on 11th November.

That presented the next great challenge: the bitter, harsh winter of Massachusetts. Half of the Pilgrims perished that first winter, of hunger and cold. Without the help of the local Indigenous peoples to teach them food-gathering and other survival skills, all of the colony would probably have perished.

After months of hard work, by the 'Fall' of 1621 the tiny colony had its first harvest. They celebrated this great achievement with their new Indigenous friends. It became Thanksgiving. The Pilgrims had been convinced that God wanted them to go to the New World. They wrote:

“We verily believe and trust the Lord is with us, and that He will graciously prosper our endeavours according to the simplicity of our hearts therein.”

The Mayflower was one of the earliest pilgrim vessels, and so became a cultural icon in the history of the United States. This year, until coronavirus put a stop to things, many celebrations in the USA, England and the Netherlands had been planned.

MOTHER’S UNION THANKYOU TO KEY WORKERS’ APPEAL

The Mothers’ Union wants to help families of key workers by offering them a range of free day trips/experiences and short breaks. It is appealing to MU supporters to help make this possible.

As a spokeswoman for MU explains: “There has been an outpouring of compassion and care during the crisis from our hospital workers to our delivery drivers, carers to cleaners and our refuse collectors to bus drivers. But because of their personal sacrifices, quality family time has not always been possible.

“Therefore, we are extending our existing Away from it all Programme (AFIA) to say a special ‘thank you’ to key workers in these unprecedented times.

“Any donation will help provide a range of day trips/experiences and short breaks for families of key workers, especially for those who have been kept apart or who are on low incomes – families who would generally be unable to have experiences like this.”

If you would like to send a donation, go to:

[Say thank you to a keyworkers family today – Donate now](#)

CHURCHES WARNED TO PREPARE FOR 'A 'TIDAL WAVE OF POVERTY

Church leaders are being urged to be ready to respond to the lasting impact of the pandemic on the country's poorest people.

The effect on urban, suburban and rural communities is likely to be severe with many thousands of jobs being lost and livelihoods threatened. The poorest in society may find themselves hardest hit.

Churches are being encouraged to respond to the devastating impact of the pandemic and to build on the numerous social projects already in place.

The Trussell Trust that supports around 1200 UK foodbanks is warning of a 'tidal wave of poverty' poised to engulf the country.

Chief Executive Emma Revie has called on church leaders to talk to their congregations about justice and compassion and to work to address the root causes of poverty.

Speaking at a Bible Society webinar she encouraged church leaders "increasingly to talk to their congregations about God's concern for justice and compassion to characterise the structures of our society: the way our benefit system works, the way our economy functions, people's employment conditions and wage levels.

Emma Revie said that the Trussell Trust was "very clear that food banks are not a solution to poverty" and the charity wanted "to see people experiencing fullness of life and not being trapped by poverty."

She praised the vital role played by churches in running foodbanks and encouraged congregations "That when we pray for our foodbanks, that we would also allow ourselves room to lament the injustices that make them necessary in the first place and seek wisdom about how we might be part of bringing about change.

"Because if we don't concern ourselves with these things, the tidal wave of poverty is going to be too high and too powerful for us to respond to and we will see many more people being swept into destitution in the UK."

At the webinar 'Mission during lockdown and beyond,' the Bible Society published research showing that church leaders are expecting increased demand for food banks, poverty relief, mental health work, bereavement support, relationship counselling, as well as courses such as Alpha that introduce people to the Christian faith.

The insights resonate with responses to the impact of the pandemic from other church leaders. The Bishop of Tonbridge, Simon Burton-Jones, warned a Church of England webinar that the pandemic would cause growth in the 'precariat', the numbers of people on zero-hours contracts or juggling several jobs to survive.

The bishop also forecast an increase in tension between the generations, with the future particularly bleak for many young people who have lost their jobs, and those living in insecure rented accommodation.

WHAT TO EAT WHEN YOU DRIVE?

Here is a way of staying awake at the wheel on those long motorway drives: avoid heavy foods such as hamburgers, chips and cakes. They only encourage drowsiness, which accounts for 23 per cent of fatal car crashes, according to France's motorway companies.

Instead, choose a meal high in water content, with some bitterness and acidity to round it off. For example, how about: some radishes, a lentil dish, and then kiwi fruit and dark chocolate, washed down with water? This sort of meal has a low glycaemic index, which means there is no sugar rush followed by a drop in your alertness.

The idea is based on research done by the French insurers' federation Assurance Prevention.

THE SPIRIT OF FRUITINESS

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)

It was quarterly review time for Max, a personal banking manager. He sat opposite his area manager, cup of tea in hand, as shoppers pootled along the High Street below. "So", the area manager began, "How do you feel things have been going since we last met?"

"Pretty good," answered Max. "I've definitely been feeling calmer at work; you know, less stressed... I guess more at peace with myself."

"I've noticed that too," she responded. "You do seem calmer; less irritable. I've not really heard you complain about anything. Can I ask why you think this is?"

That conversation happened just a few months ago, and Max was able to share how he'd recently become a Christian, and what a difference God was making in his life. When God's Holy Spirit makes Himself at home within us, our lives change. St Paul calls this 'the fruit of the Spirit'.

Fruit is a great metaphor. The fruit of the Spirit isn't something we stick onto the outside of our lives, like baubles on a Christmas tree. Rather, it flows out from us, as we soak up the nutrients of God's Word and His holy presence. We cannot force out this spiritual fruit by tapping into our inner resources or by trying harder. This really is about God changing us, as we 'keep in step with the Spirit'.

Healthy fruit is a sign of a healthy tree, and it shares its harvest with the surrounding ecosystem: birds, insects, Homo sapiens, and even our mortal enemies, wasps... Paul has already shown us how sin dehumanises and robs us of life, but the Spirit makes us more like Christ, the most fully alive human of all. And when we are like Him, it's good for everyone.

Fruit brings blessing. It's a manifestation of the life of God's kingdom, bringing the sweetness of His presence to the people and places where it's tasted. In that way, it furthers God's mission. The fruit in our lives is a signpost to the life-giving God.

So today, do not hide your fruit under a bowl! Instead, put it out on the table, that people may taste your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

MUSIC AND MEMORY

Have you ever heard a certain song or tune that immediately takes you back to your youth? It can be a very poignant moment.

When researchers at the University of Westminster examined the choices of 80 different guests on the BBC radio show *Desert Island Discs*, they found that most guests had chosen music which dated back to when they had been between 10 to 30 years old. This time span was identified as a 'self-defining period' in their lives.

The research concluded: "The music we know and love between the ages of 10 to 30 will play a significant role throughout our lives, connecting us as individuals to other people, places and times that become central to our identity."

What songs trigger the big memories for you?

HOW CAN A SCIENTIST BE A CHRISTIAN?

I used to ask this question as a student. I wondered what it was like to have a career in science, and how being a Christian might make a difference.

Eventually I met a good number of successful scientists who were sincere Christians, and I learned that science and faith are a great combination. Dr Francis Collins, former Director of the

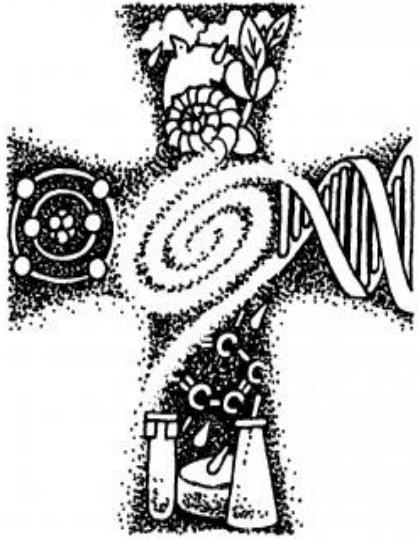


project to decode the whole of human DNA, wrote that it is “possible for the scientist-believer to be intellectually fulfilled and spiritually alive, both worshipping God and using the tools of science to uncover some of the awesome mysteries of His creation.” So, what do people like this make of the opportunities and challenges of a life in science.

Although our beliefs may affect what we notice about the world and how we interpret our data, they don't affect the outcome of the experiments themselves. If a Muslim and a Christian drop the same ball from the same height under identical conditions, it will fall at the same speed. This means that a scientist can be respected by her colleagues for doing good work, regardless of what she believes and what her colleagues think of her world view.

Science is an exercise in observing and measuring things, and coming up with general principles about the way things are. The world has been declared by God to be ‘very good’ (see chapter one and two of Genesis), and exploring it is a way to express our gratitude to Him. Scientific discoveries can also bring a sense of awe and wonder that feeds into our worship.

Some people don't want to get involved in certain lines of research because of ethical concerns. On the other hand, there are many issues that make Christians want to get stuck into new research that will help care for people and the rest of creation, such as medical research, ecology or developing appropriate technologies.



Organisations such as Christians in Science and the Faraday Institute gather together scientists who are also people of faith, and others who are interested in the subject. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, and express their beliefs in a variety of different ways. What they have in common is the conviction that you don't have to choose between science and God. As the young people in our churches prepare to return to their studies, online if not in person, let's encourage them that science (along with many other fields) is a great way to serve God.

Dr Ruth Bancewicz is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge, and a member of Christians in Science.

See www.faraday.cam.ac.uk/churches and <http://www.cis.org.uk>

A LITTLE HUMOUR

Are politicians the oldest profession?

A surgeon, an architect and a politician were arguing as to whose profession was the oldest. Said the surgeon: "Eve was made from Adam's rib, and that surely was a surgical operation."

"Maybe," admitted the architect, "but prior to that, order was created out of chaos, and that was an architectural job."

"But," the politician pointed out in triumph, "somebody had to have created the chaos in the first place!"

Political career

American teacher to students: "Be diligent and steadfast, and you will succeed. Take the case of George Washington, our first ever president. Do you remember my telling you of the great difficulty that George Washington had to face? The big problem that could have been the end of his political career?"

"Sure," said a student. "He couldn't tell a lie."

School

Mother to young daughter after first day at school: "Well, dear, what did they teach you today?"

Daughter: "Not much. I've got to go back again tomorrow."

Borrowed

Teacher: We borrowed our numerals from the Arabs, our calendar from the Romans, and our banking from the Italians. Can anyone think of other examples?

Student: Well, we borrowed our lawnmower from the Smiths, our ladder from the Browns, and our hose from the Jones....

Late

Being the office supervisor, I had to have a word with a new employee who never arrived at work on time. I explained that her tardiness was unacceptable and that other employees had noticed that she was walking in late every day.

After listening to my complaints, she agreed that this was a problem and even offered a solution. "Is there another door I could use?"