



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urchic.org.uk

Bulletin 14th February 2021

From the Editors;

Due to the current lockdown all three churches have on-line arrangements for Sunday worship. Church buildings are closed.

Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted on 01242-231602, 0748 311 8427 or revdiain@urchic.org.uk. Please respect his day off on Mondays.

It is with great sadness that we have to record the death of **Ian Thomson** on 10th February 2021, long time Member at St Andrew's. Our thoughts and prayers are with Joan and the family. The funeral will be on March 2nd, 2.30 at St Andrew's. Invitees and live streaming.

Janet, Fiona and Brian

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, broadcast on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0gso0uzwPJq-Onhf6fN2TA>

14 th February	Mr Bob Alger
21 st February	Rev Iain McLaren
28 th February	Ms Carol Drummond and Mrs Jenny Evans
7 th March	Rev Iain McLaren (Communion)

St Andrew's Charity for February

Save the Children

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services are 10.30am

28th February Rev Iain McLaren (Communion) by ZOOM

Please have your own Bread and Wine ready for joining in Communion.

7th March Rev Dee Brierley-Jones

The Pulpit at The Church in Warden Hill

Details of Services can be found in 'Lantern', available at <http://www.tciwh.org.uk>

14th February South Cheltenham Churches United Communion
(Rev Nick Davies presiding and Rev Iain McLaren preaching)

Letter from Rev Iain

Dear Friends,

This year Valentine's Day coincides with Racial Justice Sunday. Both have to do with love. Valentine's Day is a celebration of romantic love. Racial Justice Sunday challenges us to practise Christian love. Christian love is not the warm, fuzzy feeling associated with 'falling in love', but rather our response to the command to love our neighbours in the same way that we love ourselves. Christian love means loving not only neighbours we like or who are like us, but also loving strangers, even enemies, like the Good Samaritan in the parable who showed love towards the Jew he encountered by the roadside, even though Jews and Samaritans were traditionally enemies.

Shamefully, Christians have often failed to practise this teaching of Jesus concerning love for neighbours. Too often Christians have behaved as though the only neighbours they were required to love were neighbours who looked like them. In my previous pastorate in London I came across members of the Afro-Caribbean community, who had come to the UK as part of the 'Windrush' generation, who could recall being turned away from mainstream white churches on the spurious grounds that the church was not suitable for 'people like them'. Thankfully, many mainstream churches were prepared to offer a welcome to the newcomers. It is worthy of note that the overwhelming majority of mainstream churches in central London, of all denominations, that have survived into the 21st century now have multi-ethnic (often black majority) congregations.

Christians are to practise love because God first loved us. Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. Every Christian is a member of the Body of Christ. Very early in the history of the Church the apostle Paul realised the love of God in Christ effectively abolishes the distinction between Jew and Gentile so that Gentiles, like us, have equal status with Jews in the Body of Christ. The Church has been slower to recognise that the love of God in Christ effectively abolishes all distinctions on grounds of race or colour or gender for, as Paul wrote to the Galatians, 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3: 28)

Yours in Christ, Iain

Prayer Requests this week:

Joan Thomson and family following Ian's death.

Marie Birchley and family.

Mary Petroni in Washington

GIVE THANKS FOR the success of the on-going vaccination programme; and those who are staffing the centres, especially the volunteers.



Lectionary Readings (Transfiguration)

2 Kings 2 v1-12

Psalm 50 v1-6

Mark 9 v2-9

2 Corinthians 4 v3-6

LENT discussions on Zoom from Wednesday 17th February, 8 pm

<https://zoom.us/j/96204565714?pwd=Rm1iZ01ZWkpYNmVvbXZScFJISWgyUT09>

Meeting ID: 962 0456 5714 Passcode: 108557

Zoom Host: Rev Iain

Over the past few months the 'Prayer Group' has developed into a discussion group with prayer. This will be further developed during Lent when Rev Iain McLaren will lead the group with studies based on Acts 2 v42-47, the original stimulus for 'Holy Habits' by Andrew Roberts.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME – COME AND EXPLORE.

LENT COURSE (Warden Hill)

The South Cheltenham Team will be running a 5 week Lent course on the 'Message of the Parables' based on Paula Gooder's book 'The Parables' (no need to buy the book) beginning on Wed 24th Feb via Zoom at 7.30pm. Please email info@pipandjims.org.uk if you would like to attend.

Zoom Coffee on Sunday 12.00noon

<https://zoom.us/j/98622705057?pwd=NHdZaHJtZDdqVG03ckdDMnRRVVZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 986 2270 5057

Passcode: 720767

Zoom Host: Alison

Tea Time on Tuesdays

EVERYONE is invited to enjoy friendly conversation at 3pm on Zoom. Bring your own cup of tea and join the party.

<https://zoom.us/j/95570544462?pwd=Q0VHQVVuWHB1QmpBd2ZDcEZJNlIXUT09>

Meeting ID: 955 7054 4462

Passcode 686988

Zoom Host: June

AGM Dates all meetings will be by Zoom.

St Andrew's 21st March.

Please send any Annual Reports for 2020 to Janet by March 7th

Prestbury 28th March

TCiWH 18th April

Zoom Meetings by Phone

If there is anyone who cannot access a Zoom meeting because they don't have a Computer with a camera/microphone, and who would like phone in instead, please let Fiona know.

ANNA CHAPLAINCY

Knitted or crochet crosses for care homes

We are reprinting from last week the instructions for the knitted crosses to give to care home residents for Easter.



Using double knitting yarn and 4mm needles, cast on 10 stitches

- **Knit 28 rows (also known as garter stitch)**
- **Cast on 6 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows**
- **Knit 10 rows**
- **Cast off 6 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows.**
- **Knit 14 rows**
- **Cast on 6 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows**
- **Knit 10 rows**
- **Cast off 6 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows**
- **Knit 28 rows on remaining 10 stitches**
- **Cast off leaving tail for sewing up.**
- **Fold in half and sew up putting a little stuffing between the two crosses being sewn together.**

For crochet version use the above instructions but replace knit (garter stitch) with double crochet.

Please wrap each cross in tissue paper, and (if you wish) attach a tag reading: *'May the hope of Jesus Christ be with you always. With love from the Cheltenham and Bishop's Cleeve Anna Chaplaincy [and, if you wish, add the name of the organisation you are knitting with].'*

The project aims to collect all the crosses by **12th March 2021**.

Message from Ann Lewis

I am willing to collect the crosses from St Andrew's for Anna Chaplaincy and pass them on to Gill. I will be down at Church on Saturday 6 March from 10.30am-12 noon if you would like to drop them off. If this is not convenient please give me a ring on 01242 317960 or if you have access to the building please leave them on top of the lockers. I also have some spare filling if required. Thanks, *Ann Lewis*

Fall Prevention course by Zoom from Sandfields Care Home.

Tim and Dorothy Odell are recommending this series of events. They are willing to talk to anyone who would like more information.

'Our next Falls Prevention event is on Wednesday 24th February, 2-3pm. The sessions are run by Kerrie Hodges, Clinical Physiotherapist at Cheltenham General Hospital, if people would like to join they will be warmly welcome and can book by either sending me an email on laura.sayburn@careuk.com or calling 01242 258800 or 07442505504.'

Laura Sayburn | Customer Relations Manager | 07442505504, Sandfields Care Home | St Georges Road | Cheltenham | GL50 3EL | 01242 258 800

CURC Easter Greetings on Video 2021

To follow from our video Christmas Greeting, we are now planning to produce one for Easter.

If you would like to be included, please send us a short message as a Word file or in the text of an email. If you would like to include a photo of yourself or a spring scene with your message, please send us the picture as a JPEG picture file.

If you are familiar with the video feature on your device, you might wish to send us your message as a short video clip. If you do this, please allow 5 secs before and after your message to assist with editing. Your message should be short.

When everything has been edited and put together, it will go onto YouTube in the "Unlisted" mode. This means that to watch it, you will need to be given the link. Search engines like Google will not be able to find it.

To send us your message etc. please use Sandra's email address sjeans@jeanstda.plus.com

The deadline for getting stuff to us is **Sunday 14th March** and we plan to have the video ready to view by **Easter Sunday 4th April**.

Sandra will be doing the editing and production and will be able to provide assistance by email if you need help. Again for this, please use her address.

We hope you will support this idea.

Sandra and Tony Jeans

Christian Aid News

As many in our congregations have rightly been delighted and relieved to receive their first Covid 19 vaccine, the Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel, is encouraging the people and Churches in Gloucestershire to respond with thanks, by making a donation to **Christian Aid**.



I know many of us support our Christian Aid partners when we can throughout the year. As UK citizens, we are fully aware of the profound implications this virus has had on everyone here - and still we live in a wealthy nation, which we trust will ride this terrible storm, with a vaccine rollout that exceeds any across the world.

In the poorest of countries however, extreme poverty has increased with this virus, hunger is more widespread, livelihoods destroyed and health conditions are worsening, beyond even the spread of Covid.

Recently I listened to Dr Nandy, the chief of Immunisation at UNICEF. He talked about the ambitious international scheme COVAX, which aims to make sure vaccinations are shared fairly among all nations. Our Government is an important partner to COVAX and has donated over £500m (figures from early this year) Still, it's sobering to learn that inequality between the rich and poor nations not only persists, but is exacerbated by this awful virus. In mid January a small group of rich countries comprising 16 percent of the world's population, had purchased 60 percent of the global vaccine supply. COVAX's task of

coordinating and supplying vaccine to all countries is clearly huge, complicated and of course crucial. Then Dr Nandy says, this pandemic has disrupted existing vaccination services and there are thousands of refugees such as the Rohingya from Bangladesh, the Syrians and Yemini people, who for obvious reasons could be some of the worst hit by the virus.

The challenges faced seem overwhelming - but as Christians we are called to respond and pray and help our global neighbours practically however we can. Our **Christian Aid partners** have already directly helped half a million people in 27 countries distributing food packages to families who have lost work in the lockdown. Christian Aid will be supporting vaccination programmes in countries where it is operating, providing data on hard to reach populations, helping to prepare the way for people to be vaccinated. Challenging the stigma faced by those who've contracted Covid, and challenging the mistrust and misinformation about the vaccine, forms part of our partner's work too.

Let's share our hope and love by praying, and supporting our neighbours across the world.

<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/2021/generosity-in-thanksgiving-for-vaccinations/>

Christian Aid virtual supporter conference - 22-26 February. Speak to *Alison Veal* for details

"First Signs of Spring - pictures from our woodland taken by our neighbour Natasha" ©Natasha Coombes sent by Tony and Sandra Jeans

