



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urcic.org.uk

Bulletin 18th April 2021

From our Minister: Rev Iain McLaren

[Jesus] said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

(Luke 24: 46-48)



The Church was founded on the testimony of witnesses. The apostles were able to give first-hand accounts of encountering Jesus both before and after his resurrection. The credibility of their eyewitness accounts was such as to persuade many who had had no prior experience of Jesus to believe in him.

The Church has been sustained by the testimony of witnesses. The word 'martyr' is derived from the Greek word meaning 'witness'. The original martyrs were people who were prepared to give witness to their Christian faith, even when threatened with persecution. It was only later that martyrdom became associated with suffering death on account of faith in Christ.

The Church is still sustained by the testimony of witnesses. Of course, there are no eyewitnesses alive today who can claim to have walked, talked and eaten with Jesus. If we believed in a Jesus who lived and died two thousand years ago, then that would be a problem. However, we believe in a Jesus who is still alive and active through his Holy Spirit. We can see evidence of Jesus at work today in stories of healing and answered prayer. To be a witness to Christ today means speaking about how we have experienced him in our lives. No special training is required to be a witness. You just need to give an honest account of what you have seen, heard or experienced. Some years ago the Back To Church Sunday initiative encouraged churchgoers simply to invite a friend or neighbour to accompany them to church one Sunday. However, we don't need to wait for a special Sunday to tell other people why we believe in Jesus. Whenever we explain to other people why Jesus is important for us, then we are acting as witnesses to Christ. Let us be alert to the opportunities Christ gives us to give testimony to our faith in him.

Yours in Christ

Iain

Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted at:
01242-231602, or 07483118427
revdian@urcic.org.uk .
Day off on Mondays.

From St Andrew's Elders

Following the Elders meeting on 13th April, we are inviting **THOSE WHO WISH TO**, to return to In-Person worship from Sunday 18th April.

Live Streaming on YouTube will continue, see link below -

You are reminded that **Social Distancing** and wearing **Face Coverings** remain important.

Both main doors will be open for use on Sunday.

You are encouraged to make a **PROMPT EXIT** at the end of the service and limit all conversations. Do not let bottlenecks occur. We are still not able to sing.

Please contact Janet before 12noon on Saturday 17th April to reserve your seat. Please mention if you do not wish to be seen on camera.

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, broadcast on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0qso0uzwPJq-Onhf6fN2TA>

18 th April	Rev Iain McLaren	
25 th April	Rev Ken Martin	
2 nd May	Rev Iain McLaren	(Communion)
9 th May	Mr Bob Alger	

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services begin at 10.30am on

<https://zoom.us/j/99456566323?pwd=UnQyME1scUkxVUVHWnZiZVdMbZjZdz09>

Meeting ID: 994 5656 6323 Passcode: 825991

25 th April	Rev Iain McLaren	(Communion)
2 nd May	Rev Dee Brierley-Jones	

The Pulpit at The Church in Warden Hill

Details of Services can be found in 'Lantern', and 'Grapevine' both available at

<http://www.tciwh.org.uk>

AGM 18th April

9 th May	Rev Iain McLaren	(URC Communion)
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Prayer Requests this week:

Mary Cummings



The Death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

If you would wish to leave a message there is a Book of Condolence at:

<https://www.royal.uk/condolence>

Lectionary Readings

Acts 3 v12-19

1 John 3 v1-7

Psalm 4

Luke 24 v36b-48

Study discussions on Zoom Wednesday's, 8 pm

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

Meeting ID: 962 0456 5714 Passcode: 108557

Zoom Host: Rev Iain

We are starting a new series of discussions this week based on the Emmaus Course.

Friends from across the CURC are welcome to attend.

Zoom Coffee on Sunday 12.00noon

Note change of Link details.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84605785893?pwd=bDdOcjhSllmT3FCZy94UEdZa29Mdz09>

Meeting ID: 846 0578 5893

Passcode: 909057

Host: Tony

A visitor to Nicaragua celebrates the achievement of the women

Nicaraguan Women, a Meditation

The poor, conflict riven, climate battered countries of Central America need our help to put them on their feet. The many isolated communities lack basic resources like medical care, clean water, and healthy seeds to grow nourishing crops. The marginalised, but proud, women, who bear the brunt, need development to reap rewards for their humdrum labours, to lift them out of poverty.



One of the members of the Amos party, after we had met the Strong Women (see last week), composed a Meditation, of which these are some of the verses:

I helped my mother to sell the bread she made

It was all too much, and I left to live on the streets

I took drugs, but have been given a road to a new life.

I want to be a fashion designer and my mother will be proud of me

Do you think I am poor? Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?

I meet with my friends, and we delight in sharing news of our business ventures.

We slaughter pigs, sell clothes, bake bread

And with our profits we repay our loans and provide for our children's education.

Do you think I am poor? Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?

You ask me about faith. I am a Catholic and an Evangelical.

Faith is a gift of God. It is no one's property. I live with dignity as a daughter of God.

My theology takes me out of the door of the church into the streets

To work for justice and reconciliation.



Do you think I am poor? Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?

We nurture our children, and they are proud of being Nicaraguan

As they grow stronger, Nicaragua will continue to flourish.

They are our hope and our future.

Do you think we are poor? Do you not see

we are strong Nicaraguan women?

Robin Derbyshire

Christian Aid Collections in Cheltenham

This year we are planning to arrange a street to street "delivery only" envelope 'drop'!! There will be details on the envelope of how people can donate, and we hope that some will be triggered and be motivated to respond in this way. At the very least, it is a way of reminding Cheltenham that Christian Aid is very much still working alongside our global neighbours to free them from poverty. If you are able and willing to give it a go, please contact me, and I will try to give you a street (or streets!) that suit. For the last few years we have joined with our friends at St Peter's Leckhampton (Revd Grady's parish) to help them cover some of their patch, which proved more lucrative than the streets we inherited originally. If you would like to deliver, but stay local to your area I can arrange that too!

Christian Aid Sunday will be on 16 May this year - a chance to think and pray for the people and projects Christian Aid supports. Nearer to this date I will give you details of the various choices available for you to donate to.

Alison Veal



From The Editors:

We would love to see more people join us for **Teatime on Tuesday**. Why not take an hour out of the afternoon and come for an exhilarating conversation? **EVERYONE** is invited 3pm on Zoom. Bring your own cup of tea and join the party.

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

ID 955 7054 4462,

Passcode 686988

Zoom Host: June

Update from Marcus

The donated proceeds from making the old Church doors into crosses has so far made the sum of £325 00 there are still some crosses available for those who wish to have one.



Your new coffee venue

St Andrew's Elders have agreed that Clementine's Café, our opposite neighbours, may use our garden for outdoor seating. Come and bask in the sunshine!

When John Mears met Prince Philip

The story of how John Mears organised the refurbishment of Montpellier Walk and Montpellier Street with the help of Prince Philip.

<http://e.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/_act/link.php?mId=RC611132354427815zzzz64955b7b967bd298b12cf2e7c715735e1bf800f280c174f8f6200d7f8a12ac25d3&tId=914873>

Janet, Fiona and Brian