



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urcic.org.uk

Bulletin 2nd May 2021

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services begin at 10.30am on

<https://zoom.us/j/94776218942?pwd=MENyLzNaNTdTYlhxOVNMbGFXN2FqUT09>

Meeting ID: 947 7621 8942

Passcode: 009380

2nd May

Rev Dee Brierley-Jones

23rd May

Rev Iain McLaren (Communion)

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, broadcast on YouTube:

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

2nd May

Rev Iain McLaren (Communion)

9th May

Mr Bob Alger

16th May

Rev Iain McLaren

Special Service for Christian Aid Week

23rd May

Mrs Margaret Marshall

If you wish to attend Andrew's services please reserve your seat with Janet before noon on Saturday.



St Andrew's Charity/Retiring Collections for May and June will be for Christian Aid.

Christian Aid week is 10th-16th May. Please place your contribution in the Offertory plate in church or send direct to Christian Aid.

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>

9th May

Rev Iain McLaren

(URC Communion)

Lectionary Readings

Acts 8 v26-40

Psalm 22 v25-31

1 John 4 v7-21

John 15 v1-8

From our Minister: Rev Iain McLaren

'For in [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.' (Colossians 1: 19-20)



During the two years I spent living in Zambia, I used to attend services and Bible studies at the local CMML mission, CMML being the missionary arm of the Christian Brethren. I was thereby introduced to the 'dispensationalist' theology of John Nelson Darby, founder of the Brethren. According to this system, the world is destined to be destroyed at the end of the age, at which point believers will be 'raptured' up into heaven to be with God. Belief in 'the Rapture' has spread far beyond Brethren circles and seems to be particularly popular among American Fundamentalists.

If it is true that God intends to destroy the earth, then it doesn't make sense to be too preoccupied with the future of our planet. It follows that believers in the Rapture don't tend to be active in campaigns around global warming and climate change. This would not be because they would deny the reality of climate change (though some might), but rather because they would regard the destruction of the planet as inevitable and divinely ordained. The first chapter of Paul's Letter to the Colossians, however, seems to challenge this contention. In verses 19 and 20 Jesus is portrayed as the one who reconciles all things – both on earth and in heaven – to God by means of his self-sacrifice upon the cross. This, to me, seems more consistent with the loving God who made the world and declared it to be good (Genesis 1: 31) and who promised Noah there would never again be a flood to destroy the earth (Genesis 9: 8-17).

Christian environmentalism is based on the premise that God intends, not to destroy, but to redeem the earth. It follows that we are working as partners with God when we campaign to safeguard the integrity of creation. In our current context this means working to reduce carbon emissions so as to avert a manmade climate catastrophe.

One of the things that attracted me to Cheltenham URC was your interest in environmental issues, as evidenced, for example, by St Andrew's Silver Ecochurch Award and the developing interest in Ecochurch at Warden Hill. The measures our churches are taking to address environmental concerns are not fringe issues, nor a case of jumping on a secular bandwagon. Rather, they are a theological statement of the sort of God we believe in: a God who loves and cares for the world he has created.

Yours in Christ,

Iain

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



Prayer Requests this week:

Mary Cummings, Tim Odell, Hanne Lambley, Eileen Attwood

Christian Aid Week

May 10th-16th 2021

The twin threats of Covid-19 and the climate crisis will be the focus of this year's Christian Aid week. Coronavirus has sharpened the issue of a reliable source of water - but climate change remains the biggest challenge for the communities CA works with.



In Kenya, we meet **Rose** who features on the CA poster. She is a determined grandmother of six, who is alone in bringing up her grandchildren. Water is of course crucial for Rose to grow vegetables, to cook and for washing. There is a nearby dam just minutes away from Rose's home. This is sadly not wide or deep enough for everyone in Rose's community in times of drought. Extreme wet weather makes little real difference to provision, as the dam empties quickly and the rains put Rose's community at greater risk of flooding. Rose often has to set out on an 8 km

journey to collect water for her family. At 68 years of age and with 'Aids' those journeys are gruelling for her. Christian Aid will be helping Rose's community to build a better dam, to sow drought tolerant crops and to set up advocacy groups to demand change and to take more control in decision making in their community.

Contrast Rose's plight with **Florence**, a widowed farmer, who together with her community built a dam near their village, with the help of one of Christian Aid's partners ADSE (Anglican Development Services-Eastern) Florence uses the water to grow vegetables, especially onions and papayas. She is able to keep honey bees, selling the honey for cash at market. Her children eat healthily and the family is thriving. The dam withstands the most unpredictable weather and remains a reliable water source.



This climate crisis and the pandemic impacts us all. But people living in poverty, like Rose and her family, get hit the hardest. By supporting Christian Aid we give our partners in Kenya real opportunity to help empower communities to live safely and adapt to the extreme climatic conditions. The attached picture shows Florence at her nearby dam.

Alison Veal

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 have started a new series of discussions based on the Emmaus Course. **Week 3-'Jesus' Friends from across the CURC are welcome to attend.**

Zoom Coffee on Sunday 12.00noon

Note new Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81553963020?pwd=bkF0MlVBSk52QnVRakUva2FISzFRZz09>

Meeting ID: 815 5396 3020

Passcode: 483356

Host: Tony

Teatime on Tuesday



We would love to see more people join us. 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

'Open for Prayer' HELP NEEDED

As part of an outreach initiative at St Andrew's Church we have trialled a weekly 'open hour' on Tuesday mornings from 10.30am - 11.30am.

It is hoped that this will give an opportunity for members of the local community - or visitors - to come into our Church for a quiet time, maybe for a prayer, maybe for solace, perhaps for a chat or just an opportunity to have a look around.

Unfortunately, recent lockdowns somewhat scuppered our efforts and the number of visitors was limited but those who did come in were glad to be able to do so. Now, as restrictions are being lifted, footfall in the vicinity is increasing and with the undeniable bonus of Clementine customers enjoying al fresco refreshments in our grounds we are hopeful that this may well generate renewed interest in who we are and what we may offer.

At the moment, we are a small team of three and would welcome some assistance to lighten the load a little. The tasks are not onerous but generally we need to be on site at about 10.00am, prepare the Prayer Space, erect the banner and be ready to receive guests at 10.30am. Closing up at 11.30am does not take long.

Are you able to help occasionally? It only needs a couple of people to be present and if we could form a team of 'volunteer pairs' then we could draw up a rota of 'stewards' who attend, perhaps, on a monthly basis.

Please give this some thought and if you feel that you would like to join us please contact Geoff Tizzard-King on 01242 523595 or by email: tizzardking@btinternet.com.

With many thanks,

Geoff T-K, Bob Alger and Ann Lewis

Quiz sent by Lyn and Peter -

Spot the 30 books of the Bible hidden in the passage

(Published last week)



The Answers- in the order on the page:-

Congratulate yourselves if you found them all.

Amos, Mark, Luke, John, Joel, Judges, Job, Hebrews, Esther, Acts, James, Ruth, Romans, Titus, Matthew, Genesis, Philemon, Chronicles, Nahum, Daniel, Hosea, Lamentations, Revelation, Timothy, Samuel, Numbers, Malachi, Peter, Exodus, Kings.