



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urchic.org.uk

Bulletin 23rd May 2021, *Pentecost/Whitsun*

From our Minister: Rev Iain McLaren

This Sunday is Pentecost Sunday. The Book of Acts records that, on the first celebration of Pentecost following Jesus' ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and inspired them to preach the Good News about Jesus in many different languages to the foreign visitors to Jerusalem. This event is often called the birthday of the Church.

The Holy Spirit is as essential to the life of the Church as the air that we breathe is to our own lives. The Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order of the URC includes the following statement: 'The life of faith to which we are called is the Spirit's gift, continually received through the Word, the Sacraments and our Christian life together.' However, it is easy for us to take the work of the Spirit for granted, just as we take the air that we breathe for granted – until we are gasping for breath.

Seven years ago, the Faith and Order Committee of the URC produced a report addressing fears for the future of the URC. The report was subsequently published as a study guide entitled '*What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?*' It included the following affirmation: 'the future of the United Reformed Church is ... about living more fruitfully, prophetically and adventurously, being re-energised by the power of the Holy Spirit in faithfulness to Jesus Christ. This carries with it a trusting openness to God's future, rather than a specific plan or a particular structure or a programme for reorganisation. The future of the Church lies in God's hands. Our human response is to discern the mind of Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit.'

'*What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?*' invited us to imagine six possible scenarios for the future of the URC in twenty years' time. What could not have been foreseen at that time was the impact of two years of a covid pandemic on our life together. Who could have imagined seven years ago that we could continue as worshipping fellowships despite the closure of places of worship and a ban on congregational singing? By the grace of God, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, we have been able to surmount these obstacles. We have been surprised by where the Spirit has led us, just as the apostles must have been surprised to receive the gift of speaking in tongues.

This Pentecost, let us give thanks for the leading of the Spirit thus far, and trust in the Spirit to lead us into the future, remembering that the future of the Church lies, not in our, but in God's hands.

Yours in Christ, *Iain*



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

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services begin at 10.30am on

23rd May Rev Iain McLaren (Communion)
6th June Rev Dee Brierley-Jones (ZOOM)

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, broadcast on YouTube:

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

23rd May Mrs Margaret Marshall
30th May Rev Dee Brierley-Jones
6th June Mr Geoff Tizzard-King (Communion)
13th June Mr Bob Alger
20th June Rev Iain McLaren

- 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.
- Please collect Hymn Books and Bibles for use during worship if you require them.

The Pulpit at The Church in Warden Hill

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

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

13th June Rev Iain McLaren (URC Communion)

Lectionary Readings

Ezekiel 37 v1-14
John 15 v26-27, 16 v4b-15
Romans 8 v22-27

Whitsun / Pentecost

Psalms 104 v24-34, 35b
Acts 2 v1-21



Prayer Requests this week:

John Standing, Donna Sutherland and Family
Rev Iain and his family: Diana, Gift, Kimberley and Keke

Dates for your Diary

(Government restrictions permitting)

27th June will be the United Pastorate Service and CURC AGM 10.30am at St Andrew's.

The service will include celebrations for the 30th Anniversary of CURC and the Re-Induction of Elders. A Buffet lunch will be held after the service with the AGM between courses.

10th July will be a 'Welcome Garden Party' for Rev Iain, 3.00- 6.00pm at St Andrew's

Christian Aid in Cheltenham 2021

We will not know for a few months, whether the street delivery last Christian Aid week prompted many people to donate. However, many thanks to the volunteers who delivered in Leckhampton. At the very least, we will have reminded people of the need for Christian Aid to continue its work worldwide.



It is still not too late for anyone wanting to give to Christian Aid, to do so using the remaining Christian Aid envelopes at St Andrews. These envelopes will be there until the end of June, as Christian Aid is our chosen charity for the months of May and June.

If anyone is unable to get to church and would prefer their donation to go towards St Andrew's collection for Christian Aid, please contact me and I will be happy to pick up your donation.

So far, these are the amounts of money raised :

- Christian Aid envelope donations at St Andrews church - £440
- Andrew's quintet playing outside Smith and Mann, Charlton Kings- £140
- Facebook donations - £107

It was really good to see most people gift-aided their donation - so that will increase the total further. Thankyou *Alison Veal*

Ways to give:

- **Online:**
<https://giving.tapsimple.org/online/christian-aid/cheltenham-christian-aid-week-d04b0>
- **Post:** H Bartlett, 20 Withyholt Park, Cheltenham, GL53 9BP (Cheques to: Cheltenham Christian Aid)
- **BACS:** Cheltenham Christian Aid 20-20-15 30239623
(To gift aid: notify hbartlett20@gmail.com)

“Christian Aid is seeking to be good news for poor people in less developed countries. Poor people are not only found in poor countries. Even in wealthy nations, like our own, some people are struggling to get by....”

Our Minister's words, writing in the Bulletin last week, and telling us in our Christian Aid service about its work in Kenya, helping small communities to create places where the people can begin to live and thrive, starting with a viable water supply. The offertory plate was brought in from the door, and our donations held up and blessed, as a sign of our solidarity in Christ with those less fortunate than ourselves – a more potent sign and prayer than simply a mention in a few words.



We have set aside May and June to learn about and pray for countries such as Kenya. Your continuing giving to this cause is still very welcome. Then in the following two months our giving will be for our local Food Bank, where there is also a great need. More about this later. This is our broad practical answer to the biblical question: 'Who is our neighbour?'

Robin Derbyshire

What's on this week?

Prayer Time on Tuesdays

St Andrew's will be open for Prayer on Tuesday from 11.00 till 12.00

WE WELCOME ALL

Teatime on Tuesday

Come and join us for an hour of excellent conversation, 3pm on Zoom.

Bring your own cup of tea and join the party.

<https://zoom.us/j/95570544462?pwd=Q0VHQVUuWHB1QmpBd2ZDcEZJNlIXUT09>

ID 955 7054 4462,

Passcode 686988

Zoom Host: June



Study discussions on Wednesday's

We have embarked on a series of discussions based on the Emmaus Course. 8pm on zoom.

Week 6

EVERYONE WELCOME

<https://zoom.us/j/96204565714?pwd=Rm1iZ01ZWkpYNmVvbXZScFJlSWgyUT09>

Meeting ID: 962 0456 5714

Passcode: 108557

Zoom Host: Rev Iain

Book Group

The Book Group will meet on **Thursday 27 May** at 7.30pm to discuss 'The Rose Code' by Kate Quinn. Please contact Mary Cummings if you would like to join in.

Coming Soon

Repair Café at St Andrew's reopens 5th June, 10.00am

Footsloggers aim to restart in July – contact Jenny Evans for details nearer the time.

Qi Gong aims to reopen at St Andrew's in July

In the moment: exploring Mindfulness in a Christian context

An invitation to

those who have some experience of Mindfulness and those who have none.

This is the fifth quarterly session - you are welcome whether or not you attended previous sessions

Date: Saturday, 5th June 2021, 10 am - 12 noon

Venue: Online via zoom, In a quiet room with a comfortable chair

The zoom session will be no more than 2 hours, but I will leave you with ideas and activities to pursue afterwards, either the same day or during the following days.

You will need to book in advance

so that I can send you the zoom link and other information.

There will be no cost, but you may like to consider an extra donation to your local church which will have a reduced income at this time.

To book a place, please contact Jan Scott jan.scott@live.co.uk using reference ITMonline 050621 by 2nd June 2021, 12 noon.

M&M Thank You Letter

The URC Finance Committee have sent out a 'thank you' letter to all the churches for keeping up their Ministry & Mission Fund payments over the last year. The M&M payments fund Ministry (including Ministers' salaries), training and mission. The letter is sent as an attachment with this bulletin.

ECO News

The Daily Mail and Keep Britain Tidy are teaming up for the **Great British Spring Clean** which takes place from 28 May to 13 June 2021 -

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/home>.

Participation in a community clean-up project eg local litter pick is one of the activities under Eco Church's Community and Global Engagement

section so this seemed a good opportunity to see what we might do as individuals and a church.



Anne Gimmingham has been looking into this and has found there are a couple of groups in Cheltenham doing litter picks that people could join. **Cheltenham Litter Picksies** has groups covering Benhall, Oakley, Prestbury, Pittville, St Paul's, St Peter's and the Moors, Springbank, and St Marks. If you're a Facebook user, you can find details on Facebook, otherwise Anne can provide contact details.

The Prestbury group do a monthly litter pick on the last Saturday of each month (so the next one is 29th May) meeting at 09.45 at the Prestbury Parish Council office at the playing field. You have to sign up for it and you can do that on their website:

<https://prestbury-pc.gov.uk/litter-picking-project-goes-live/?fbclid=IwAR0DkDoxFo2SZPwGDTg6VSP62Q1qQf87Ib4SBwqDAMsZZ0NdRYst7wNjYFU>
or by contacting the Prestbury parish council.

Anne and I also plan to do a litter pick in the streets around the church on Saturday 12 June. We'll meet at St Andrew's at 11 am and will take no more than 1 hour. More details nearer the date. Let us know if you are interested in joining us – all welcome.

If you're wondering what the greenest energy supplier to use is, 'Green Christian' believes for the present, the answer is Ecotricity, Good Energy or Green Energy UK. Green Christian reports "These are the most longstanding renewable energy companies. They only sell tariffs backed by 100% renewable electricity and supply a proportion of 'green gas' (from biomethane). Ecotricity uses money from its customers' bills to fund new renewable generation. Good Energy buys its electricity from more than 1,600 independent renewable generators. Green Energy UK sells 100% green gas."

I joined the online **prayer for climate justice** service hosted by Christian Aid, CAFOD and Tearfund on 19th May, ahead of the G7 Summit. During the service we were reminded that we are part of a global community and cannot walk by on the other side. We heard from people in communities affected by climate change in Honduras, Kenya and the Philippines and were encouraged to pray for leaders attending the G7 summit in Cornwall on 11-13 June. We were also encouraged to join people across the UK in the 'Wave of Hope' by drawing, tracing, printing or painting a hand' and displaying it in our windows ahead of the G7. For more information see <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/wave-hope>.

On 10 June from 7-8, there will be a G7 Interfaith Event reflecting on the impact of the pandemic and how we rebuild which is being livestreamed from Truro Cathedral. More information at <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Events/G7-interfaith-event-Truro>.

Carol Drummond