



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urcic.org.uk

Bulletin 25th April 2021

From our Minister: Rev Iain McLaren

'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)

I'm writing this the day after a jury in America found the policeman Derek Chauvin guilty of murdering the African American George Floyd. The verdict has been described as a racial reckoning for the United States, but the ramifications of the case extend far beyond America. The Black Lives Matter protests of last summer spread across the world, even to the UK. Sadly, we need to acknowledge racism is still a problem blighting society. Even the much-maligned Sewell Report admits the reality of racism here in the UK (the controversy has been generated by its narrow definition of 'institutional racism').

The Church, I'm afraid to say, is not immune to racism. Revd Martin Luther King once said the Church in America was at its most segregated on a Sunday morning: with black people attending black churches and white people attending white churches. Closer to home, it has recently been reported a black ordinand studying theology at Durham was turned down for a curacy in a parish in southern England on the grounds that the community was monochrome white working class and so he would not be welcome.

Such attitudes are fundamentally unchristian. The Jews had been expecting a Jewish Saviour of the Jewish race, but the apostles soon realised Jesus is the Saviour of the world. It follows that the Church includes people of all races. As Paul explained to his Galatian readers, this meant whether someone was a Jew or a Greek (this being the main racial division in his day) was of no relevance amongst believers in Christ. Applied to our own day, this teaching implies all Christians, regardless of race or skin colour, should be equally welcome in all churches. We are all one in Christ Jesus. To claim otherwise is to call our own status in the body of Christ into question. If Jesus is not the Saviour of the world, then we cannot claim him as our own Saviour.

Yours in Christ,

Iain



Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted at:
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Day off on Mondays.

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, broadcast on YouTube:

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

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

Good to see folks back in Church at St Andrew's last week. If you wish to attend please reserve your seat with Janet before noon on Saturday.

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>

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

Mary Cummings, Hanne Lambley



Lectionary Readings

Acts 4 v5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3 v16-24

John 10 v11-18

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/84021660903?pwd=dUNtMXd5Z3NDdnUvS29FRWo2SUIodz09>

Meeting ID: 840 2166 0903

Passcode: 241228

Zoom 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

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 Christian Aid website

www.christianaid.com



Did you know.....?

- Our work in **Africa** includes strengthening peace-building in South Sudan, promoting resilient farming in Kenya and challenging inequality in Sierra Leone. We are also working with women to increase their access to green and sustainable energy in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Malawi.
- In **Asia**, our programmes include promoting women's rights in Afghanistan, justice and peacebuilding in Myanmar and ensuring people can access the services they need in Bangladesh.
- In **Latin America** and the **Caribbean**, we help promote gender justice in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Guatemala, peace-building in Colombia, and support marginalised communities to adapt their livelihoods to climate change in Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti.
- Our work in the **Middle East** includes defending people's rights in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, protecting women at risk of violence in Iraq and providing humanitarian assistance to refugees in Lebanon.

A poster inviting your help locally this Christian Aid Week is attached to this mailing

Open Doors World Watch List 2021

(Do not confuse with Cheltenham Open Door)

The charity **Open Doors** supports Christians world wide who suffer for their faith. In the UK and Ireland, Open Doors works to raise awareness of global persecution, mobilising prayer, support and action among Christians.

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>

The Word Watch List 2021 has recently been published and is available from the web site. It lists the 50 worse places to be a Christian currently. The worse five are North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya and Pakistan.

The plight of persecuted Christians does not get much publicity in this country, in part because of the hostility to the Church of many in the media. Please hold our suffering sisters and brothers in prayer and consider supporting Open Doors.

Tony Jeans

Quiz sent by Lyn and Peter - Can YOU find all the books???

Spot the 30 books of the Bible hidden in the passage below

There are the names of 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? This is a most remarkable puzzle.

It was found by a gentleman in an aeroplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his John boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalised. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a Minister or a scholar to see - some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fundraising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight". Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown.

One revelation that may help is that these books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mass exodus, there really are 30 books in the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found.

Fiona, Janet & Brian