



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urch.org.uk

Bulletin 27th June 2021

From the Editors:

Due to the extension of the Covid restrictions to 19th July we have amended arrangements for our planned events:

- **The CURC AGM will be on Sunday 27th June as part of The United Pastorate service. 10.30 start, at St Andrew's. The Buffet is cancelled. Please make sure you have booked a seat with either Janet or Fiona.**
- The AGM meeting papers have been sent out by email.
- The planned Garden Party is postponed till the autumn. Date to be arranged.
- Rev Iain is changing his day off, as from July 1st – it will be FRIDAY.

Janet, Fiona and Brian

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services begin at 10.30am

4th July Rev Dee Brierley-Jones

25th July Mr Bob Alger (Communion)

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, broadcast on YouTube:

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

27th June Rev Steve Faber/Rev Iain McLaren **Service starting 10.30am**

4th July Rev Iain McLaren (Communion)

11th July Mr Geoff Tizzard-King

18th July Rev Iain McLaren

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

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>

11th July Rev Iain McLaren (URC Communion)

From our Minister: Rev Iain McLaren

This morning, courtesy of the URC Equalities Committee, I received a booklet produced by the Church of Scotland entitled 'Diverse Gender Identities and Pastoral Care'. It is offered as a 'contribution towards understanding and properly valuing and supporting trans people and their families in all our communities and many of our churches.'



I must confess I've not given much thought to transgender issues, even though arguments about trans rights are very much in the news nowadays. I have in the past encountered transgender people, but this has always been after they have transitioned and I have simply accepted them as who they have presented themselves to be. It has not occurred to me to ask about the thought processes that lead a person to take the decision to transition, nor have I reflected upon the impact this has on their family or their wider community. I have not really investigated the theology around the issue.

I must admit to feeling somewhat conflicted. Part of me wants to say the bodies we are born into are God's gift to us and so we should celebrate and treasure them as they are, no matter what shape or form they take. However, we do not accept bodies born disabled are condemned to remain disabled for the rest of their lives. Indeed, developments in genetics have opened up the exciting possibility of curing some inherited conditions. So it is not really tenable to say changing our bodies is inherently immoral.

One thing I do feel sure about, however, is that when someone encounters Jesus, Jesus loves them as they are, without being overly concerned about the chain of events that led them to becoming that person. What matters is how they respond to the invitation to follow him. As the apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5: 17, 'if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!'

Yours in Christ

Iain

Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted at:
01242-231602, or 07483118427
Email: revdiain@urcic.org.uk
Day off on Mondays
(Fridays from 1st July)

Prayer:

'Give us gifts of discernment, gracious God,

That we might know

How to welcome the stranger with gentle ease,

How to love the child into the family of the church,

How to greet the one who once a worshipper returns after years of absence,

How to value those younger or older without patronising either,

How to receive the unexpected offer of service,

How to release those who find their tasks a burden,

And more, how to discover the gifts you have given each of us;

To use them as we are enabled,

And not feel rebuffed if others are chosen before us.

Gift-giving God, we seek your help.'

Donald Hilton in 'Called to Praise' 2005

Lectionary Readings

Wisdom of Solomon 1v13-15, 2 v23-24
Psalm 30

Mark 5 v21-43

OR Lamentations 3 v23-33
2 Corinthians 8 v7-15



Prayer Requests this week:

Donna Sutherland and Family,
Bill and Morag Notman,
John Hutton, Eileen Attwood, Hanne Lambley
Rev Iain and his family: Diana, Gift, Kimberley and Keke
Laura Stagg and Nick Heathcote on the occasion of their Marriage



Message from Jean Wilson

Jean has now moved house, her new address is
47 Wedgwood Drive, Longlevens, Gloucester, GL2 0AD
New phone No: 01452 – 505825

Treasurer

Donna will be away, with her son till October. PLEASE NOTE: All Financial matters are being dealt with by David Black.

Thankyou from Joan Winterbottom

Thanks very much for the email each week, it's good to hear bits about friends etc.
Congratulations to URCiC (!!!!), on 30 years. So it's 30 years since I joined you on April 13th,
the day after my 45th birthday! Long years ago.....
Love to everyone, Joan x

Wanted

Someone who speaks Hungarian. Rev Iain is in touch with a family who need a translator.

St Andrew's Charity Appeal Results in 2021 so far

January/February: Save the Children £265

March/April: Open Door £300

Figures are inclusive of gift aid.

The Appeal for Christian Aid remains open to the end of this month, or slightly beyond, if necessary. Please use an envelope, and return as soon as possible.

Thank you!

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

Study discussions on Wednesday's

We are working on a series of discussions based on the Emmaus Course. 8pm on zoom.

EVERYONE WELCOME

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

Meeting ID: 962 0456 5714 Passcode: 108557

Zoom Host: Alison

Teatime on Tuesday

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

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

ID 955 7054 4462, Passcode 686988

Zoom Host: June

June has given notice that she will be unable to host this meeting after the end of June. Please consider if you are able to take over this duty, and thus the future of this meeting. Response to Janet please.



Coming soon

Footsloggers the first walk will be on **12th July**, Jenny has sent out details. Please contact her direct if you have not received them.

Qi Gong aims to reopen at St Andrew's on **Thursday 29th July 12noon to 1pm**. Further details from Tony Jeans.

CHELTENHAM STREET PASTORS are recruiting

Cheltenham is the third largest night time economy in South West England following Plymouth and Bristol with up to 30,000 revellers on the street usually on a summer Saturday. As lockdown restrictions ease, we anticipate an increased activity in the town centre and are looking to expand our patrols. We currently have 45 Street Pastors and 35 Prayer Pastors and we would like to increase those numbers. Practicing Christians are needed, of any age.

Cheltenham Street Pastors (CSP) has been operating every Friday (22.00 to 04.00) and Saturday (22.00 to 04.00) continuously since December 2009, except during the recent lockdowns. We provide a Christian presence on the streets offering help in various ways. We do not preach nor are we judgmental. Our purpose is to offer help and reassurance to those in need. This can be a great opportunity to show God's love to the people in Cheltenham in action and word. We act independently but at the same time closely with the police and local authority.

Those interested are invited on a tour to see Cheltenham Street Pastors in action or the opportunity to speak to Prayer Pastors. Short talks for churches/groups are also offered.

More information at: <https://streetpastors.org/locations/cheltenham/>.

or talk to Anne Gimingham 01242-581097



In July-August St. Andrew's is supporting the Cheltenham Foodbank.



Last year the Foodbank manager told us he expected increasing numbers to be coming to the Bank, and this has proved to be the case. Government spokespeople have told us that they are helping the unemployed out of poverty not by increasing benefits (eg by maintaining the extra £20 on Universal Credit), but by supporting those actively seeking new employment opportunities. This will help some, but it does not help single parents who devote so much of their time to caring for children, or those with mental health problems or disabled adults or those requiring care. The figures quoted by Church Action on Poverty show that those receiving Employment Support Allowance, or Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit are 30-45% more likely than normal to experience food insecurity, that is to have insufficient food, or food lacking in the nutritious quality which ensures good health. And so the parents or their children may go hungry.

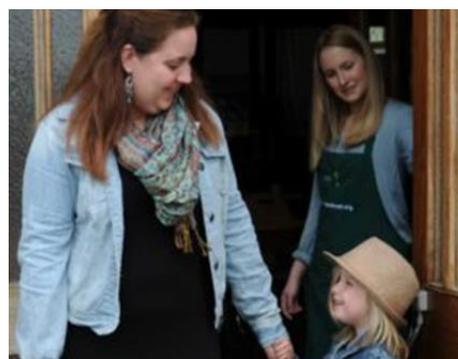


Cheltenham Food Bank is there to fill the gap, operating from Elim Church in St George's Road, with other distribution centres at St Paul's Church, and the Pavilion, Hatherley Lane. Those needing help obtain a voucher from a local referral agency, which will entitle them to three day's supply of nutritious, balanced food from a Centre. You are probably familiar with the collecting points for gifts of food at supermarkets and elsewhere, where you can drop in that extra purchase when you shop (holy habit!). The Bank also appeals for funds to cover the running expenses of storage, transport, etc, and to buy in extra food supplies. Many of its staff are volunteers, and

the bank is always seeking new volunteers.

From your giving St Andrew's hopes to be able to make a substantial donation to the foodbank at the end of August. You can make your contribution in the collecting plate at either door. Please use an envelope if you wish it to be gift aided. If you are not attending Sunday services, please send it to the Treasurer. More information on Cheltenham Foodbank can be found on its website. Please be generous, and Thank You!

"The people at the foodbank were wonderful. They understood us and saved us."



Robin Derbyshire