



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urchic.org.uk

Bulletin 28th February 2021

From the Editors;

Due to the current lockdown all three churches have on-line arrangements for Sunday worship. Church buildings are closed.

Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted on 01242-231602, 07483118427 or revdiain@urchic.org.uk. Please respect his day off on Mondays.

Our thanks to Keith Norcott for providing a stimulating seasonal Quiz, sent out with the Bulletin last week. Answers will be published before Easter.

Janet, Fiona and Brian

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, broadcast on YouTube:

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

28 th February	Ms Carol Drummond and Mrs Jenny Evans
7 th March	Rev Iain McLaren (Communion)
14 th March	Mr Geoff Tizzard-King (Mothering Sunday)
21 st March	Rev Iain McLaren
AGM	21 st March. 12.00noon by Zoom.

Please send Annual Reports for 2020 to Janet by March 7th

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services begin at 10.30am on Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/99456566323?pwd=UnQyME1scUkxVUVHWNZiZVdMbzZjd09>

Meeting ID: 994 5656 6323 Passcode: 825991

28th February Rev Iain McLaren (Communion) by ZOOM

Please have your own Bread and Wine ready for joining in Communion.

7th March Rev Dee Brierley-Jones

14th March **10.00am.** Rev Iain McLaren followed by **AGM**

The Pulpit at The Church in Warden Hill

Details of Services can be found in 'Lantern', available at <http://www.tciwh.org.uk>

AGM 18th April

Letter from Rev Iain

Dear Friends

I have recently been looking at the history of St Andrew's published in 1986 and came across the following quotation from the report of a Council for World Mission team that visited the URC in South Wales, Bristol and the West Midlands in 1980:

'The team feels that the URC has sacrificed to the Welfare State its identity as a caring community. It is desirable for the URC to be naturally sensitive to opportunities to care, even after the easy and obvious do not any longer shame and motivate action. ... A church which cannot be identified in the community as the source and centre of a ministry of caring and sacrificial love deserves to bear the stamp of irrelevance the team heard so much about from ordinary persons in local communities.'

Some 40 years later we are much more aware of the limitations of what the welfare state can provide. Indeed, public authorities today are actively seeking to partner with church and other faith organisations to reach people who would otherwise fall through the welfare safety net. Two recent examples locally are the new foodbanks set up at St Margaret's Hall, Coniston Road, and C3 Church, Hatherley Lane, which are partnerships between the Trussell Trust (a Christian charity), parish councils and Morrison's supermarket. They join the foodbanks operating out of Cheltenham Elim Church and St Paul's Church, Cheltenham.

During their Ramadan fast Muslims are encouraged to pay special attention to their religious duty to give to charity. There is no equivalent religious duty for Christians, but charitable giving for us is seen as an appropriate response to the command to love our neighbours as ourselves. I suggest therefore that reviewing our charitable giving might be an appropriate Lenten discipline to adopt. To what extent is our giving 'a ministry of caring and sacrificial love'? Is there more that we could be doing as individuals and as church communities? Does our giving bring joy, both for others and for ourselves? As Paul writes at 2 Corinthians 9: 7, 'Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'

Yours in Christ, Iain

LENT 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

During Lent Rev Iain McLaren will lead the group with studies based on Acts 2 v42-47, the original stimulus for '**Holy Habits**' by Andrew Roberts. This week: Prayer.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME – COME AND EXPLORE.

Zoom Coffee on Sunday 12.00noon

<https://zoom.us/j/95468666627?pwd=WTliRE96VEZMUjJDTWl0dmFldnZ4QT09>

Meeting ID: 954 6866 6627 Passcode: 961729

Host: Alison

Prayer Requests this week:

Joan Thomson and family
Eileen Attwood



GIVE THANKS FOR the success of the on-going vaccination programme and those who are staffing the centres, especially the volunteers.

Ian Thomson

Ian's funeral service will be at 2.30pm on Tuesday 2nd March at St Andrew's. Family and invited guests only in church. Private committal at Cheltenham Crematorium.

Live streaming from 2.30 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0qso0uzwPJq-Onhf6fN2TA>

Tea Time on Tuesday this week, 2nd March, will be at **4.00pm**,
Dedicated to Memories of Ian Thomson.

Please note a different link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83126693560?pwd=TzROTEZQYk42a1NabzBEYlBxcVpndz09>

Meeting ID: 831 2669 3560 Passcode: 887053 Zoom host: Tony

EVERYONE is invited to share their recollections.

ECO News

Carol has organised an hour's Talk (to include time for questions) by Richard Lancaster of 'Greenpeace' for us on Thursday 11th March, 6.00pm on Zoom. **EVERYONE WELCOME**

Climate Change, 'The Amazon and who's eating the Soya?'

The topic will be the links between Amazon deforestation and climate change and Richard will also tell us a little about his own personal journey as a Christian environmental campaigner.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89185548071?pwd=NklnNVZxNGNhM3diUlhbQk5pVFpuZz09>

Meeting ID: 891 8554 8071 Passcode: 204375



Richard Lancaster is a retired software engineer, with two adult daughters and four to support the anti-whaling campaign and agreed with Paul Watson when he said "The truth is that if we cannot save the whales, we will not save ourselves." By giving talks to schools, universities, youth, community and faith groups he hopes to inform people of the dangers facing the environment, enthuse them to take action and to give them the belief that they really can make a difference, so that together we can make a better world.

CURC Easter Greetings on Video 2021

If you would like to be included, please send us your contributions by **Sunday 14th March** and we plan to have the video ready to view on YouTube in the "Unlisted" mode by **Easter Sunday 4th April**. The link will be published in due course.

Sandra's email address sjeans@jeanstda.plus.com

We look forward to hearing from you

Sandra and Tony Jeans

Creative Cards



As some of us are unable to get out to buy cards, Creative Cards are putting together a pack of four different cards suitable for Easter for £2.50.

If anyone is interested please let me know either by email :-annstanding44@icloud.com or by phone: 07779 473445, or even by post:

64 Furlong Lane, Bishops Cleeve, GL52 8NL

The sale of cards goes towards helping all three of our churches.
Ann Standing

Knitted Crosses for the Anna Chaplaincy Easter appeal

Remember all crosses should be at St Andrew's by 12 noon on Saturday 6 March.

Thank you.

I will be there.

Ann Lewis 01242 317960

Did You Know???

That Anne Strathie has been working on a biography on Herbert Ponting the photographer with Scott's Antarctic exhibition.

An article on Ponting was featured in the Telegraph last Saturday to promote the book, which is due to be published in March and can be pre-ordered on Amazon.

Well, done Anne!

Elspet Carter

St Andrew's Spire Appeal

Still time to order for Easter.

Marcus has been busy making these crosses and fish out of the teak of the old doors at St Andrew's. If you would like to order one please contact Marcus Dann: marcusdann9@gmail.com



Donations for the Spire Appeal.



Flowers will seed anywhere!

Primroses in the gravel at Prestbury URC

St Andrew's Charity for March and April



CHELTENHAM OPEN DOOR

In March and April the St Andrew's Appeal is for **Open Door**, to help the homeless, vulnerable and lonely men and women on the streets of Cheltenham, offering them hospitality, warmth and food. The staff and volunteers offer a variety of services in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, to all who are in need whatever their age or background: those unable to work because of injury or illness, struggling with reading and writing, coping with mental health problems, recovering from alcohol or drug abuse, sleeping rough, or coming to terms with broken homes or relationships. There is no charge for any of these services, which include hot drinks and a

midday meal.

But how can this be done during lockdown? I asked the manager, and got this reply:

“Thank you for your lovely email and for wanting to help support Open Door! Although currently our doors aren't open, we are still looking after our guests! When the pandemic hit, we had to be creative about how to help everyone whilst also keeping them safe. According to the restrictions in place each week we have offered either a takeaway or delivery service. With takeaway, our guests come to the door. We make time to have a chat and everyone gets a hot meal, pudding or drink and anything else they need, like food parcel, toiletries or clothes. In the strictest lock downs we have a mobile that our guests ring. We build a parcel for them and deliver it. We know most of our guests well so can make sure we send them things that suit their accommodation and lives. Since the pandemic the number of people using our services has risen by 60%. Catering for so many, in either way, is a huge operation. Open Door receives no central funding. During the first lock down, donations of dry food items could not keep pace with demand; our costs doubled as we shopped to keep the food parcels filled. The takeaway service, catering for so many, has also drained funds with higher weekly ingredient costs. Additionally, our guests sometimes need items that are rarely donated. Having funds allows us to respond to individual needs - we can shop to provide specific dietary items or health and hygiene products that each guest needs to keep them safe, nourished and clean.

So, we are very much still operating, just amending what we do to balance safety with care!

Although cases are dropping, we suspect that the economic and psychological fall out will continue to hit our guests for some time to come and we are likely to see more people as time goes on, as job losses and mental health issues increase. Donations allows us to look ahead and have confidence that we can continue to provide practical support, general and specific, to our guests. **So I can assure you that donations from St Andrew's will be used in practical ways to support our many guests' needs.”**

Please give generously, and while we are not meeting in church, send your donation to David Black or Donna Sutherland. Thank you!

Robin Derbyshire