



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urcic.org.uk

Bulletin 4th July 2021

From the Editors:

Due to the extension of the Covid restrictions to 19th July the planned Garden Party is postponed till the autumn. Date to be arranged.

- We have heard that Rev Richard Atkins has moved – we wish him well.
- Our Thanks to June for ably leading the conversations on Tuesday Teatimes. She is now having a well earned break.

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>

4th July Rev Iain McLaren (Communion)
11th July Mr Geoff Tizzard-King
18th July Rev Iain McLaren **Followed by Church Meeting**
25th July Mr David Black

- If you wish to attend St Andrew's services please reserve your seat with Janet before noon on Saturday.
- The next **Church Meeting will be on 18th July** following Worship. Agendas will be sent out earlier in the week.

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



One of the things I am looking forward to once social distancing is eased later this month is the opportunity to resume truly public worship. At last Sunday's United Pastorate Service we sang, in one of my favourite hymns, "All are welcome in this place." Church worship ought to be a public affair, allowing all and sundry to receive God's grace without precondition. Jesus showed a special concern for social outcasts and so no one should be considered unworthy to come into his presence. Our acts of worship should reflect this fundamental Christian truth.

Regrettably, throughout most of the past year, it has not really been true that all are welcome at our worship. Due to the measures taken to limit the spread of covid, for much of the time our churches have been closed and, when they have reopened, the need to limit numbers has required attendance registers and, in some cases, a requirement to book seats in advance. It has not been possible for passing strangers to join our worship and I think we have lost something as a result. I hope we will soon be able to declare our worship open to all who are seeking an encounter with God.

It would be remiss however not to recognise that offering public worship is inherently risky. There can be no guarantee that unsavoury characters will not seek to take advantage of our openness. Many clergy, including myself, have been accosted by beggars at the end of a church service, and some worshippers have had purses or wallets stolen. In some cases, openness to the public has had tragic consequences, as for example with the church shootings some years ago in Charleston, South Carolina, and Fort Worth, Texas, or the knife attack in a church in Nice last year. Significantly, none of these acts led to the places concerned ceasing to offer public worship. Whilst it is sensible to take reasonable precautions to keep ourselves safe, this needs to be balanced against the imperative to share the Gospel through offering a welcome in Christ's name.

Last Sunday our Moderator challenged us to attend worship in the expectation of encountering Jesus. Christ's presence with us is the ultimate guarantee of our security. I'll close by quoting further lines from that hymn:

*'Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live, ...
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.'*

[Marty Haugen, © 1994, GIA Publications Inc]

*Yours in Christ
Iain*

Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted at:
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Day off on Fridays

The General Assembly of the URC takes place from 9-12 July.



You can watch the business sessions on the URC website, on our Facebook page or YouTube channel. The Moderators of the URC General Assembly are warmly inviting members of the denomination to join General Assembly's Sunday worship service on 11 July. The Revd Clare Downing will preach at the service which will be livestreamed from the URC's national website and Facebook

Lectionary Readings for this week.

Ezekiel 2 v1-5

Psalm 123

Mark 6 v1-13

2 Corinthians 12 v2-10



Prayer Requests this week:

Andrew Sutherland, Bill and Morag Notman,

Margaret Derbyshire, John Hutton,

Eileen Attwood, Hanne Lambley

Rev Iain and his family: Diana, Gift, Kimberley and Keke



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

Cheltenham Food Bank operates from Elim Church in 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. There are also 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. 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 David Black. More information on Cheltenham Foodbank can be found on its website.

Please be generous, and Thank You!

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

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: Bob



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.

ECO News

Regeneration & Repair Café The first café this year at the beginning of June saw a steady number of visitors. Thank you to all who supported the event.

Open first Saturday in the month from 10.00am.

Plastic Free July is a key initiative of the Plastic Free Foundation which works towards a vision of seeing a world free of plastic waste. For more information see <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org>. You can find examples of what other people have done to reduce their plastic use and sign up for the Plastic Free challenge. A Rocha's **Wild Christian newsletter** included a link to a five-minute 'pesky plastic' quiz, which gives you a flavour of what you might be able to reduce or phase out completely over the monthly challenge.

From 7 June to 5 July, in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society BBC Radio 2 are running **The Big Bee Challenge** - a children's competition to design a bee friendly garden for the NHS. The competition is a fun and creative way to learn more about bees and other insects that help provide much of the food we eat, and are essential for a healthy environment. For more details and tips for a bee friendly garden, see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p09j4g1m>.

Carol Drummond