



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urch.org.uk

Bulletin 6th February 2022

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services begin at 10.30am

6 th February	Rev Dee Brierley-Jones	
20 th February	Mrs Julie Jeffries	ECO Service
27 th February	Rev Iain McLaren	Communion

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, also broadcast on YouTube:

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

6 th February	Rev Iain McLaren	Communion
	Coffee will be served after the service.	
13 th February	Mrs Julie Jeffries	ECO Service
20 th February	Dr Tony Jeans/Mr David Black	
27 th February	Mr Bob Alger	

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>

13 th February	Rev Iain McLaren	Communion
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Worship on Wednesday's

Wednesday Worship: (Prayers and Readings) takes place from 12.00noon till 12.30.

First Wednesday in the month at Warden Hill URCC starting on 2nd March.

Rest of the month at St Andrew's.

EVERYONE WELCOME

Keeping us all safe while worshipping.

Wearing masks in enclosed public spaces is no longer compulsory, but it is recommended that you still do so in crowded spaces where others are not known to you.

Please respect social distancing and the sensitivities of others around you in church.

Thank you.

Rev Iain McLaren, our Minister writes:

'They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.' (Matthew 23: 4)



Jesus' criticism of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees could just as well be applied to our Prime Minister and his senior aides who, according to the published extracts of Sue Gray's report, seem to have partied during the lockdowns of 2020 as though the rules they had imposed on others did not also apply to them. This is not the only report of serious lapses in morality by those holding public office to have been published recently. There have also been worrying reports of racist and misogynistic behaviour by officers in the Metropolitan Police.

Misbehaviour by those holding public office deserves to be called out, but it is risky to do so. None of us is perfect and threatened vested interests often retaliate with counteraccusations against their accusers. Even the Church is not immune to charges of hypocrisy, as the Archbishop of Canterbury discovered some years ago when he launched a very public attack on the immoral practices of payday loan companies only for it to be subsequently revealed that the Church of England held investments in Wonga, at the time the largest of the payday lenders. However, two wrongs do not make a right and so we should not be deterred from criticising wrongdoing.

Any Christian discussion of morality should start with the assumption we are all sinners. This means we all have the capacity, indeed the tendency, to do wrong things. Nevertheless, we are also all made in the image of God. We all possess a divine spark that grants us the capacity to do good. Furthermore, we can all be redeemed when we go wrong. Because we are all sinners capable of redemption, this means we should neither, on the one hand, seek to minimise or excuse wrongdoing, nor, on the other, seek to demonise the wrongdoer. The loving response to someone doing wrong is to challenge their behaviour and encourage them to change. When wrong is changed to right everyone benefits.

Yours in Christ,
Iain

Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted at:

01242-231602, or 07483 118427 revdiain@urcic.org.uk Day off on FRIDAYS.

News From Synod

We have had news of the deaths of **Mr Peter Pay, Moderator of General Assembly**, on 18th December. His funeral will be in Salisbury. Further details on URC website.

And of:

Rev Susan Nuttall, who died on 27th January. Susan retired to Bishop's Cleeve in 1995 and became a good friend of Cheltenham URC. Funeral details tba.

And locally:

Tony Poulter's funeral will be at St Christopher's – Church in Warden Hill, on Monday February 7th February at 12 noon, with bright colours at Tony's request.



"May they all rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon them."



Prayer Requests this week:

Pat and Dave Barnett and Family, The family of Tony Poulter, Hanne Lambley, Geoff Harmsworth, Geoff Tizzard-King, Mhairi Turner, The Ndekha Family,

Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 6 v1-13
Luke 5 v1-11

Psalm 138
1 Corinthians 15 v1-11

St Andrew's February Charity Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees

An urgent appeal for clothes has just reached us from CWR:

'A very significant number of asylum seekers have been placed in the county by the Home Office in the past few weeks. Many of these are newly arrived in the country and **there is an urgent need for clean, good quality male clothing and shoes**. GARAS has been working with local churches and now have a team of volunteers receiving and sorting donations, based in Gloucester. **Gifts of suitable clothes can be left at St Andrew's, in the Mews Room till Sunday 13th February, OR contact Robin: rmderbysire@btinternet.com, 01242 862367**



You may be unable to respond directly to this request, but it does confirm that we continue to host new asylum seeker arrivals, who, not yet having the status of refugees, will be living on benefits of £6 a day. Our church Charity Appeal for Refugees helps here, and continues to the end of February, when we look forward to handing our contribution to Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees. Thank you again, for your generous response.

Robin Derbyshire

What's on across CURC

Mon 7 th Feb	10:00 - 11:30	Prestbury URChins Baby & Toddlers	Prestbury URC
Tues 8 th Feb	14.00-16.00	CURC Elders Meeting	Warden Hill URCC
Wed 9 th Feb	14.00 - 16.00	Wednesday Social Group	Warden Hill URCC
Talk by Paul Evans – 'Humorous Poems, Readings and Monologues'			
Thu.10 th Feb	12.45 - 13 45	Qi Gong	St Andrew's
Fri 11 th Feb	10:00 - 12:00	Coffee, Chat ++	Prestbury URC
Fri 11 th Feb		Footsloggers	
Sat 12 th Feb	14.00 – 16.00	Community Film Show	Warden Hill URCC
'No Time to Die' starring Daniel Craig as James Bond			
Thu 17 th Feb		Reading Group	
Book: 'The Seven Doors' by Agnes Ravatn			

Thu 24th Feb

Family Fun Day

St Andrew's

Come and join us at St. Andrew's URC
for a



Craft

FAMILY FUN DAY

on

THURSDAY 24TH FEBRUARY

10.30am - 2.30pm

Includes **LUNCH**

Price £2 per adult



Music



Games



Stories

To book your place email fundays@urcic.org.uk

ECO News



Did you take part in the RSPB's **Big Garden Birdwatch**? Sadly, I didn't spot anything in the church garden though I did see a couple of great tits the previous week. In my own garden, there were few sightings – couple of pigeons, a magpie, a blackbird and a great tit. Other people I've spoken to have also said they are seeing fewer birds than usual. Will be interesting to see what the results are overall.

On 12 February from 10-5pm St Philip & St James' Church, Leckhampton is holding a **sustainability festival** to help people learn about the things they can do to make an eco-difference in your home, business/work, life and community.

Our first **Repair Café** of the year will be on Saturday 5 February.

Show the Love – February 2022.

For several years, St Andrew's has participated in the Climate Coalition's Show the Love campaign. Throughout February, people across the UK will join together to show the love for everything we want to protect from the climate crisis. Our service on **13th February will have an eco theme** so if you have one of the felt green hearts from previous **Green Hearts'** services, please wear this to the service. If you don't have one or can't find it, there will be a small number of available on the day. For more information, see <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/>

Carol Drummond



Desmond Tutu's words on our Humanity speak to us as we welcome Refugees to our Town of Sanctuary

Many people came forward to pay tribute to Desmond Tutu, former Archbishop of Cape Town and outspoken opponent of the things that keep people apart. They quoted his words when he spoke of our interdependence on each other, and of the things which draw us together: 'My humanity is caught up and inextricably bound up in yours: I am human because I belong. Humanity speaks of wholeness and compassion.'



When last week our MP, Alex Chalk, met people working on behalf of refugees in our town, under the banner 'Cheltenham welcomes Refugees', and 'Town of Sanctuary', they put to him that some of the proposals in the Nationalities and Border Bill now before Parliament make things worse for asylum seekers, not better: it puts forward no safe routes for them, to replace the hazardous Channel crossings, and makes them more likely to be victims of people smugglers. Far from welcoming more refugees, it has admitted no increase in refugees in recent years, and lags behind countries such as France, Germany and Italy in the numbers admitted. The bill would criminalise refugees whose arrival has not been pre-authorised, and so deprive them of their human rights.

Strikingly Alex Chalk in his reply also spoke of our need to respect the humanity of refugees. As a lawyer (and currently the government's Solicitor General), he was mindful of the tensions between the requirements of the law, and the rights of the individual. He undertook to take up the case of an Afghan family in Cheltenham separated from their relatives stranded in Pakistan who are destitute and fearful for their lives. (This story was carried in a local paper, and people have been signing a petition to Alex on behalf of the family stranded in Pakistan. Good for the Town of Sanctuary!) We also heard the more welcome story of a refugee vet on his own, who in 2014 decided to leave Syria and come to the United Kingdom, taking five years, passing through 14 countries, sometimes lacking food and drink, but now settled in Cheltenham, and preparing to restart his life as a vet. Meanwhile he has joined CWR and is helping other asylum seekers. He affirms '*that the British law is very just and restricts every action in a way to save the rights for everyone.*' It would seem from some of the above that our law sometimes lives up to this, but not always, and perhaps less so in the future.

Robin Derbyshire

From the Editors

Thank you for all the copy that you send. We can be reached on: magazine@urcic.org.uk
Janet Kemp (Design) and Fiona Hall (Technology)