



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

'The Pew sheet without any Pews'

Bulletin No 15 / 21.06.20

Dear Friends

In company with all other organisations, the Church is following Government guidelines and not meeting for worship while the coronavirus emergency is on.

This weekly bulletin has worship, news, prayer requests, information about virtual services, plus anything else that might be 'in the notices'.

Prayer Requests

- Geoffrey Harmsworth, Mhairi Turner, Sharon Williams, John Standing
- Steve and Joan Osmond, friends from Christchurch
- Those with birthdays and Anniversaries this week.
- The country as we start to slowly emerge from lockdown

If you know of anyone who would like to be added to the prayer list, please let us know and they will be included in the next bulletin.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Rev. Dr. Louis Ndekha on completing his PhD studies and being awarded his Doctorate.

Lectionary Readings

Jeremiah 20 v7-13

Romans 6 v1b-11

Psalms 69 v7-10, (11-15), 16-18

Matthew 10 v24-39

Virtual Services

For a list of virtual services, please visit <http://www.urch.org.uk/news.aspx>

Coffee and Prayers

Please join Bob Alger on Zoom for :

- The 11.30 am **Sunday morning Coffee Chat**
- The 8.30 am **Monday Prayer Meeting**

The link is: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6147530476> (Meeting ID: 614 753 0476/Password : 6Bcgyc)
Any problems please call Bob on 01242 512343 or email realger@sky.com

ST ANDREW'S

June Charity – Air Ambulance

If you have not signed up for regular giving to our monthly charity, in lieu of the retiring offertory plate please see the document from Finance Committee sent out by email prior to the AGM in April.

Robin Derbyshire

PRESTBURY

Gwen Hewinson – An Appreciation



In June, Prestbury URC lost two of its long serving members to COVID-19. Anne Grant was the first and then, a few days later, Gwen Hewinson who was truly Prestbury's Oldest Member.

The James family have long been associated with Prestbury Chapel. Looking at the Membership Roll for 1914, there are the names of Mrs James (Gwen's grandmother) and Master R James (Gwen's father Reg). A little later appears the name of Miss Annie Akers who was to marry Reg in 1921. In 1922 Gwen's Uncle Reuben appears and continues to do so, even after moving to Canada. Gwen grew up in the church and was admitted to Membership on June 5th 1938 aged 15. As a child, she represented the chapel in scripture competitions; 'our team' winning at least twice! She, her father and brothers served as Deacons and later Elders from the 1930's. Gwen's husband Joe Hewinson joined the church in August 1951 and was appointed a Deacon later that year. By 1953 the names of the Aldridge family appear who would long remain close friends and neighbours.

Gwen James was born at 8 Glebe Rd, Prestbury on a snowy 29th November 1923 to Annie and Reg. She had two older brothers Ron and Bertie(who sadly died at 8 years after having his tonsils removed) and a younger brother Vic who was born with Cerebral Palsy in 1929. Gwen attended Prestbury St Mary's and the old All Saints Secondary and left school at 15 to work at Ayris' Drapers on the Promenade(later to become Cavendish House), then to Gilham's Stationers on the Strand and finally to Spirax Sarco in Charlton Kings.

It was at Spirax Sarco that she met Joseph Hewinson and they married at Prestbury Congregational Church (now the URC) on 4 June 1949 and set up home in Charlton Kings. Later they moved to Prestbury High Street and finally to 33 Glebe Rd, just along from her parents. Not only did they have a very active social life with Spirax



Sarco and their extended families, but they also were very active members of the Church. In her time Gwen has been church pianist, Sunday School lead, chorister, flower arranger and fund raiser, and she became an Elder in 1991.



Vic moved in with Gwen and Joe after Annie died in 1974 and older brother Ron and his family moved into the old family home. Sadly, Joe died after an illness in 1977, but Gwen indomitably continued working until her retirement in 1983. She then joined the committee of the Spirax Senior Club until she could no longer attend the meetings. With them she arranged events, holidays and trips in which she and Vic were keen participants. Vic did not let his disability get in the way and was always keen to join in. In later years they took part in all that the Prestbury Memorial Trust could offer – more day trips and social events

The family were all keen gardeners and 33 had a large and bountiful garden providing their own fruit and veg.

As they went into their 80's , Vic grew more infirm, but Gwen continued to care for him and take him out in his wheelchair. He died in 2008.

Until a fall which broke her hip in 2014 Gwen continued to be active and independent, but afterwards relied more on her family and friends. She had another fall in February this year and whilst in rehab decided it was time to be cared for full time. Unfortunately she fell victim to COVID-19.

Gwen will be missed by the many who knew her, her family and friends and those she helped through their difficult times with her sympathetic and practical advice. It would be true to say she made a big difference to many in her long life.

Fiona (taken from the Eulogy by Dee)

TCiWH

Following an extensive risk assessment, I am pleased to inform you that St. Christopher's, subject to all the necessary actions being completed, will be reopening to visit for prayer on a Monday, from 2-4pm, each week, commencing on Monday 29th June to a max. of 6 persons at any one time (this will be stewarded). This is a positive first step and one which I hope will provide us with a foundation from which to re-open further as it's safe to do so, and restrictions begin to lessen in the coming weeks/months.

Revd Gary.

Reflection from Rev Richard Atkins

In October 1987 I was in my first appointment as a Methodist minister, in Cornwall, caring for six small churches up and down the coast.

One of them was called North Country, set in one of the most deprived areas in the county at that time.

One morning, following the Great Storm, I was called out to North Country only to find that the entire ceiling in the vestry had collapsed during the night.

As one of my stewards said at the time – “You could see God and God could see you”.

Here was a church that could hardly pay its way, often existing on favours, but had a small faithful congregation of twenty.

This hurt, upset them, they were so downhearted.

What was to be the way forward?

At the end of June 1993 I was the minister in Newquay.

Driving up through town I saw smoke rising high in the sky.

It came from St Michael's, a lovely stone parish church with a delightful and faithful congregation.

Within hours the church was gutted, it was heart breaking.

How was this Christian community to move forward?

The past three months have been challenging and painful for many people.

Tens of thousands have died in the pandemic, families have suffered, those in lockdown isolated; not forgetting the many people who have bravely worked on the front line of Coronavirus.

It's also been a testing time for the faith communities, including the churches.

Thankfully, many like St Andrews have found new and creative forms of worship.

Then came the events of last week; the arson attack on St Andrews; the doors 'burned into ash'; the building filled with smoke.

I realise that this is a painful and hurtful time, with a sense of violation and the question why?

Many of the same questions were asked by the two churches I wrote about earlier.

So, what did these two Cornish Churches do after the event?

The little Methodist chapel at North Country managed to scrape enough help to sort out the roof,

But they wanted to do more, move on, be creative.

So, as an act of faith, we gave each member of the congregation £10 at Easter.

They took the money, made it work, and then brought it back at Harvest.

That £200 investment harvested over £2,000,

They had been downhearted but they made things happen in adversity and their ministry flourished.

The Parish church in Newquay took over three years to repair.

When it was completed we celebrated as a community, thanked God, and looked forward to the new work we had been called to undertake together.

We even made BBC Songs of Praise in 1995!

So, do not lose heart my brothers and sisters for being a Christian, being a Christian community is about living the Gospel and sometimes carrying the cross.

But it's always about looking beyond Calvary to the empty tomb, the gift of the Spirit and life in all its fullness.

Richard

God Is Everywhere

Even when we are worried, Bowed down with every care,
It helps if we remember, That God is everywhere.

When we are feeling lonely, Our secrets we can share
With Him, our friend and Father, Because God is everywhere.

So dream your dearest dreams, And all your joys you share,
In every single moment With God, who's everywhere.

Blessings, Dee

Fiona, Janet and Brian