



## **Cheltenham United Reformed Church**

*'The Pew sheet without any Pews'*

*Bulletin No 17 / 05.07.20*

### **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 Standring
- 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.

### **Street Pastors**

Anne Gimmingham asks for prayers for the Street Pastors as they start patrols again in the town centre this weekend. She is the team leader for this Saturday.

"The Street Pastor patrols started this Saturday (4th July) and will then be out every Friday evening. The patrols will be out from 8-10 pm. They will only be walking and talking to people who may want to, so if they come across someone who requires more than this they will alert the camera rooms to keep an eye or ring for police/ambulance assistance."

### **Virtual Services**

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

### **Our Way Forward**

Please remember that although churches 'can' reopen this weekend, we are not until we can be confident that it is safe to do so (See Bulletin 16)

## Coffee and Prayers

Please join Bob Alger on Zoom for :

- The 11.30 am **Sunday morning Coffee Chat**
- The 8.30 pm **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](mailto:realger@sky.com)

## Lectionary Readings

From June to November there is a wider variety of lectionary readings. ROOTS and the URC Handbook use different selections.

Genesis 24 v34-38,42-49, 58-67

OR Zechariah 9 v9-12

Psalms 45 v10-17 / Song of Solomon 2 v8-13

OR Psalm 145 v8-14

Matthew 11 v16-19, 25-30

Romans 7 v15-25a



*Garden of Gethsemane Olive trees – Janet Kemp*

## Questionnaire

Please support the attached questionnaire by completing it either

- By downloading it to your PC and then sending it as an email attachment to Fiona or Janet
- Or in writing as a printed document, again sent to Fiona or Janet by post or by hand, or via your group Elder.
- Please return by Sunday 19th July

## ST ANDREW'S

### News

At St Andrew's we have been making good use of the lockdown by having our planned update to the AV system installed. We now have a new large screen and projector in the church with a monitor screen for those on the dais. The original screen has been moved to the Garden Room.

Following the success of live streaming services in many churches, which many of us are most grateful for, the Elders have agreed to update our system further so that we too can live stream our services as soon as we return to public worship. **Volunteers will be needed to form a rota/team to work the camera. I understand it is a very simple process, and training will be available.**

This should not be left to just the Elders – we are sure there are folks who would love to make this their new mission. Please talk to any of the Elders if you feel this is a way you could help.

Live streaming in this way will enable those who are not able to physically be at church to take part in worship services, and it can also be for other churches to use.

Looking forward to hearing from you

*Janet*

### Our July Charity

Commitment for Life is the URC's channel for giving to, learning about, and praying for, areas where some of the world's poorest are struggling with the effects of poverty, climate change and injustice. The areas at present supported by CfL are Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Central America and Israel/Palestine, and churches choose which area they wish to focus on. The money raised goes via Christian Aid to its partner organisations in the chosen country, who devote it to meeting needs of the people. The partners work across all political and religious boundaries.

This year our money will go to a group of countries in Central America, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. All of these suffer from poverty, endemic violence, and the effects of climate change in this tropical region. Education and training is generally of a poor standard, and the ambition of many young people is to move to the United States where opportunities are greater. Women and their families are often at a disadvantage from gender-based violence, and lack of education in family planning. 80% per cent of the population depend on agriculture, and weather extremes cause real problems.

Commitment for Life reports regularly to supporting churches on these and other projects which it is involved in through Christian Aid.



Last year St Andrew's contributed £1,234 to Commitment for Life. Please will you give generously to our July charity of the month to ensure that we reach or surpass our last year's total. If you do not already donate regularly to our monthly charity, in lieu of the retiring offertory plate please see the guidance sheet 'donations to the church during the closure' as sent out with the church accounts in April. Thank you.

*Robin Derbyshire*

## **Reflection from Rev Richard Atkins**

### **Luke 10: 1-11; 16-20**

In team sports, whether it be football, rugby, cricket it's not just about the team that starts the game - the 'first eleven' so to speak.

It's about a squad, where every player has their part to play.

We often forget that Jesus took a large squad with him on his travels.

The twelve might have been seen as the 'first team', but Jesus had many other men and women in his squad.

This passage tells us how Jesus sent out the seventy of these 'others' ahead of him.

Interestingly enough, only Luke tells this story.

In the previous chapter (like Matthew and Mark) Jesus sent out the twelve.

Now he sends out these others, in pairs for mutual support.

Teams of two!

Clearly they were well trained and Jesus knew he could depend on them.

Note that one important aspect of whole of Luke's Gospel is just how inclusive it was.

In this passage from Luke 10, Jesus twice urges the seventy to eat the food their hosts provide.

Whatever it is –even if it doesn't comply with strict Jewish food law - accept it.

Anticipating the mission to the Gentiles that Luke records in his sequel, the Acts of the Apostles, we're reminded that Jesus places a higher value on human beings than on race or religious practices.

This gospel also names a number of women among "the others" who followed Jesus; clearly gender was no barrier either.

What matters more, then as now, is a willingness to hear the message that Jesus brings - the good news that the kingdom of God is already near, among us, whoever we are, wherever we are.

When the seventy returned, they could report doubt and unbelief overcome by a message of peace and the saving love of God for all people.

If we consider ourselves to be in God's first team - and I've met many who do over the years - then we're missing the point completely.

For all are welcome, called to proclaim the good news of God's love to all people.

But not by bashing people over the head with a floppy Bible or by saying that the kingdom is only for a few who know the right words or actions.

Bringing in the kingdom of God is often more about actions than words.

If you doubt that then read on in this chapter as the editors of the gospel have very carefully placed the parable of the Good Samaritan, with its emphasis on helping our neighbours, whoever they are.

The kingdom of God is not an exclusive club for the few; like the church, the Christian community, it is inclusive - for all people.

***Richard***



*Clematis – Mary Cummings*

**Psalm 117**

“Praise the Lord, all nations !  
Praise him all peoples !  
His love for us is strong and his faithfulness  
is eternal !  
Praise the Lord !

**Fiona, Janet and Brian**