



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

'The Pew sheet without any Pews'

Bulletin No 20 / 26.07.20

Dear Friends

We are all looking forward to being able to meet again for public worship. At St Andrew's the Elders are working towards the 6th September, as is The Church in Warden Hill, and Prestbury intend to be back in the building for worship on 4th October.

For all of us **Stewards** are an immensely important part of our Sunday worship. At St Andrew's we envisage having teams of 4 or 5 persons each week to cover all aspects, starting in September. The role will be different from our traditional expectations, but absolutely key to the smooth, safe running of events. Prestbury intend to have a team of 4 as well.

Thank you to everyone who has completed a Questionnaire, Feedback will be given in due course.

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

Prayer Requests

It is with sadness that we record the death of Iain Willox, on 14th July, Piper of Warden Hill

Iain's funeral will be a private service on Tuesday 4th August, 11.30am in the Willow Chapel at Cheltenham Crematorium., which will be live-streamed. Further details on request to TCiWH.

Please pray for :

- The family of Iain Willox
- Eileen Ferguson
- Pat Brooks
- Pauline Aldridge
- Those with Birthdays and Anniversaries this week.
- For all of us as we cope with the 'new normal'

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 Carole and Steve Pennington on becoming grandparents to Elsie, born in Canada on 17th July.

JOYCE SMITH-of Warden Hill sends her love to all who know her. She needs to relinquish her mobility scooter and wondered if anyone at church would be interested. It was bought locally and has been well maintained. Maureen McBane (01242 – 522855) has her contact.

Lectionary Readings

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

Genesis 29 v15-28 OR 1 Kings 3 v5-12

Psalms 105 v1-11,45b OR Psalm 119 v129-136 OR Psalm 128

Matthew 13 v31-33, 44-52 Romans 8 v26-39

Virtual Services

For a list of virtual services, please visit <http://www.urchic.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 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

St Andrew's Stewarding Rota

Dear Friends,

As you all know when we open the Church hopefully in September we need 4 to 5 stewards for each service as it will be different from what we normally do.

I have started a new list of people to help, as some of the congregation will be unable to continue due to circumstances.

If I have not got in touch with you and you would like to help with Stewarding please let me know as the more people I get the less times you will be due to be on Duty.

I will only make the Rota up to December, then we can review the situation.

Thank you for all the support I have had so far.

Jean Wilson

Jean.wilson132@gmail.com Tel. 01242 510478

Christian Aid, May 2020

Normally in Christian Aid week we might expect to raise about £20,000 across Cheltenham. Obviously, this year, the amount raised was always going to be much reduced as the house to house collections and most other fundraising events had to be cancelled.

In the end, Cheltenham raised £8,500 with more than the usual amount of gift aid to be added. Thank you to everyone who responded to the online campaign. Plans for the rest of the year are still very uncertain. Cheltenham Christian Aid still hopes to hold a Covid-friendly Autumn Fair, and the Christmas carol singing. If anyone at the URcIC has a bright idea for a safe fundraiser we could do, please let me know!

For Action!!

Christian Aid has recently issued a plea for us to lobby our MP about the merger of the Department for International Development into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Please see the link :

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/dfid-fco-merger-email-your-mp>

This change is proposed at a time when Covid 19 has driven an increase in extreme poverty among the world's most vulnerable people. Please consider supporting Christian Aid in this action.

Many thanks

Alison Veal

ST ANDREW'S

OUR CHARITY APPEAL FOR AUGUST

"Just when our bereavement services are most needed, our appeal income has slowed down."

Sue Ryder needs our help this month, so its grief counselling can keep up with the demand.



From small beginnings in 1953 Sue Ryder has grown to be a partner in international health and social care projects in Europe and Africa. In its own words, it exists to "provide compassionate care services to people with long term and end-of-life needs." It provides palliative care in hospices and care centres, such as the Leckhampton Court Hospice, and increasingly now in the patient's own home, embracing family, friends and carers as well. Cancer, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, Parkinson 's disease and stroke are just some of the conditions which Sue Ryder covers, and specialist medical and psychological help is provided where it is needed.

But right now, the Coronavirus crisis is having a devastating impact on its funding and Sue Ryder urgently needs our help. With much reduced fundraising activity and with its charity shop doors closed (though you may find the Sue Ryder Shop in Tewkesbury Road has reopened), it is facing a gap of £4 million a month. For the very first time it is finding itself in the position that within the next few weeks the Leckhampton Hospice might not be able to afford to continue all its work.



In particular, the UK death toll from coronavirus is now over 44,000, and as a result, Sue Ryder has seen a significant spike in the need for its bereavement support, including the charity's free Online Bereavement Counselling Service. It has a waiting list for this service, which is growing every week.

A Sue Ryder Bereavement Counsellor said: "Many of the pastimes which may bring us some comfort when we are grieving, such as meeting friends and family or going to support groups, are not available to us right now. Having our usual routines of school, work or activities can be an anchor to life before our loss. But now this has changed for every one of us. This is a time when we need to support bereaved people to get back on their feet after loss. Sue Ryder's bereavement services can help us support people at the most difficult time of their lives."

Will you please help Sue Ryder to continue its vital work in these very difficult times, when the demand is greater than ever. If you do not already donate regularly to our Church Charity scheme, please refer to the guidance sheet 'donations to the church during the closure' as sent out with the church accounts in April. Thank you.

Robin Derbyshire



Campanula from Sandra Jeans

Reflection from Rev Canon Richard Atkins

John 6: 1-21 'The Great Challenge'

Picture the scene: the crowd had been following Jesus, marvelling at how he healed those who were sick.

Jesus needs to rest.

But even taking to the hills with his disciples hasn't shaken off the crowds.

They continue to follow him.

The Jewish Passover is upon them, with the necessity of providing a meal.

Off course, the disciples are concerned about the logistics.

Where is the money going to come from to cater for the masses?

"Yes, this boy has got a few loaves and a couple of fish in his packed lunch", the disciples exclaim, "but frankly Jesus, that's not going to go very far with this crowd".

Where the Gospel is concerned, the disciples were a glass half empty rather than a glass half full!

Ignoring them, Jesus takes the very little, turning it into plenty.

The feeding of the crowds was one example, there are others.

At the wedding in Cana he takes the impending disaster of running out of wine and transforms it into a bountiful supply of the best wine imaginable.

Both events involve hospitality, an obligation to provide for the people who have gathered.

They become opportunities to show the bountiful nature of God, who in both cases, we are told, gives more than is actually required.

There are echoes here of the Israelites being fed with manna in the wilderness as well as Elisha sharing out the first fruits of the harvest in the second book of Kings.

There is also a very close connection with events central to our Christian worship; the celebration of the 'Great Thanksgiving', Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper.

And this sets us all a challenge.

Our world often looks like an example of shortage, as we hear of hardship, famine and drought, poverty and natural disasters.

But across the planet, there really is enough for all.

Some, like the boy in the Gospel reading, have much more than they need, in abundance while others have nothing.

The challenge is for us to do what the boy did on the hillside, when he shared what he had so that others might be satisfied.

God's love is not rationed - more for one does not mean less for another.

Nor should we ration our love toward the needs of other people.

We are called to offer what we have, to share

We are called to be signs, in Jesus' name, of God's abundant love in the world.

Richard Atkins



Yellow Flag Iris from Sandra Jeans

'God grant us the serenity to accept things we cannot change,

The courage to change the things we can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.'

Anon.

Fiona, Janet and Brian