



## Cheltenham United Reformed Church

*'The Pew sheet without any Pews'*

*Bulletin No 23 / 16.08.20*

### 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 6<sup>th</sup> September, as is The Church in Warden Hill, and Prestbury intend to be back in the building for worship on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

We have received the following message from Synod Office on behalf of Jan Scott, Synod Spirituality Consultant.

"I would like to recommend to you the attached leaflet which will help to guide your prayers in these strange times. Those who joined one of the Synod pilgrimages last summer will be familiar with **prayer walks in the company of others**. This year our Prayer Walks have been cancelled, but Rev Marion Thomas has produced this valuable resource – information, reflection, meditations and prayers in words and pictures, to enable you to embark on your own prayer walk alone or with others."

See attachment 'Prayer Walks' sent with this Bulletin.

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

### Prayer Requests

- Charlotte
- Joan, Steve and Julia
- Pat Brooks
- Those who have been bereaved this week
- For all those who have received their SCE, A-Level and BTEC results in the last few weeks and those who will receive their GCSE results next week

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.

## Lectionary Readings

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

Genesis 45 v1-15	OR	Isaiah 56 v1,6-8
Psalms 133	OR	Psalms 67
Matthew 15 v(10-20), 21-28		Romans 11 v1-2a,29-32

## Virtual Services

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

## Coffee and Prayers

Alison Stagg is running the Zoom **Sunday 11.30 am Coffee Chat** from this Sunday.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72040188247?pwd=UHZtU1Fkd2RNaW05ZGxMbllUdkVDUT09>

Meeting ID: 720 4018 8247    Passcode: bZ9ze6

Tony Jeans has temporarily taken over the Zoom **8.30pm Monday Prayers**.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77476228981?pwd=VXFRM3ViNzEyY0JrcTJvYyt4ek1kQT09>

Meeting ID: 774 7622 8981    Passcode: 4pFKY1

## ST ANDREW'S

### News from the Elders'

Many of you have been accessing live streaming of worship during the lockdown. The Elders have listened and organised an upgrade of our WIFI and AV system to include a camera suitable for live streaming, which will be through YouTube. Details of codes etc will be sent out later.

Once we return to Church on 6<sup>th</sup> September we shall be limited to 30 worshippers (unless the rules change). **This means that if you wish to attend, a seat will need to be booked.** Please let Janet or your group Elder know. Face coverings must be worn, unless exempt.

Services initially will be about half an hour. Bob is leading the first one. There will be no singing, and the screen will be used for all information. If you wish to use a Bible in the service please bring your own. There will be no refreshments after the service. The chairs in the sanctuary have been rearranged, thanks to Alison, in a colour pattern so that we can socially distance with the minimum of worry. St Andrew's congregation will use the PALE BLUE chairs, the Brazilian congregation will use the PURPLE chairs.

Whether you choose to use YouTube or be physically at church we look forward to being with you.

*Janet*

### Attached Photos – Slow Train

Tony & Sandra Jeans have kindly sent us some more pictures of their garden. They suggest that the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6OHD2uCpfU> would be an appropriate accompaniment.

*An information update on Commitment for Life in Central America.*

**Our giving and our prayers for Cfl are working to bring Good Governance and defeat Corruption**



This is not a normal classroom scene in Guatemala, where only a minority of youngsters of the age group in the picture still attend school. This year the country has a new government and a new President. The previous president disregarded the rule of law, defying court rulings and protecting criminal networks with deep roots in government. The new president Alejandro Giammatei, has promised “A new phase of growth and prosperity”, but some fear that the country’s economically powerful, corrupt elite are back in control, and little is expected to be done to relieve poverty. In neighbouring Honduras, the situation is much the same, but here Christian Aid, through the HondurACTION project is working closely with pioneering local organisations against corruption, in defence of human rights, transparency and to promote gender equality.

Action against Corruption begins with the young generation. Schools in Central America have a limited curriculum, and do not teach democratic principles. But this class, as part of the HondurACTION project are learning about their rights as citizens, and how to protect these rights. The aim is to empower them so that they will be able to take part in strengthening their communities. As an example, in the district of La Paz a Youth Council has brought together 1,300 young people, belonging to the minority Lenca ethnic group, who are economically and socially sidelined and disadvantaged, working together, campaigning for their rights, to improve their economic position, and their standing in the community.

***Our Prayer today for the people of Central America:***

Lord, we bring to you the needs and the concerns of our sisters and brothers in Central America. Support the weak, the poor and the oppressed, guide the hands and hearts of those who exercise power, and bless the work of those who help them and who give them hope of a better future. Amen.

*Robin Derbyshire*

## Reflection from Rev Dr Louis Ndekha

### The Faith of the Phoenician Woman Mt 15: (10-20), 21-28

Jesus' encounters with individuals provided useful learning moments for both his disciples and all those of us with access to the gospels today. His meetings with the rich ruler (Lk 18: 18-23) and Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10) are some examples of instances when Jesus communicated important truths to his disciples. In the story, we see the Phoenician woman desperately pleading with Jesus to help her. Although Jesus apparently ignores her based on her ethnicity, she finally gets what she sought after; her daughter's healing. Jesus attributes the healing of the woman's daughter to what he calls her "great faith." One wonders how much faith Jesus meant by "great faith." Understood in modern terms, how much faith do we need to get by in our walk with Jesus?

In her conversation with Jesus, it is clear that the odds were against her. Yet her expression of faith in who Jesus was (she calls him the son of David) and what he was able to do for her becomes the immediate basis of her commendation. It would, therefore, seem that for Jesus "great faith" is having the certainty and confidence in his willingness and ability to intervene in times of need. Such type of faith was often lacking among Jesus' Jewish audience and was instead often found among his Gentile audience (cf Mt 8:10; Lk 7: 9). This exaltation of the faith of Gentiles must have been significantly embarrassing to Jesus' mostly Jewish disciples. It also presented a challenge and encouragement for the disciples to emulate such expression faith in him.

The faith of the Phoenician, therefore, helps us to understand what Jesus expects of his disciples both then and now. He wants us to have similar "great faith" demonstrable in our trust in him to take care of the daily exigencies of life. He expects us to pray like the Phoenician woman while believing in the possibilities that are available for those who love the Lord. He wants us to persist in our prayers, not out of sheer routine, but with the conviction that, as the Lord of our lives, he is both willing and able to intervene in our situations.

May the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us as we reflect on the faith of the Phoenician woman. **Louis Ndekha**

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day

### *The Far East Prisoner of War (FEPOW) Prayer*

*As we that are left grow old with the years  
Remembering the heartaches, the pain and the tears  
Hoping and praying that never again  
Will man sink to such sorrow and shame  
The price that was paid – we will always remember  
Every day, every month – not just in November.  
We shall remember them.*

*Arthur Ogden and Victor Merrett*



*The FEPOW Grove  
at the National Memorial Arboretum*

*The Burma Railway Memorial  
at the National Memorial Arboretum*

*(Photos © The Imperial War Museum)*



*Janet, Fiona & Brian*