



## Cheltenham United Reformed Church

*'The Pew sheet without any Pews'*

*Bulletin No 7 / 26.04.20*

### 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

It is with sadness that we record the death of

Helen Bell, on 19<sup>th</sup> April aged 93

Please pray for:

- Barry Steele
- The families of Jean Williams and Helen Bell.
- For all those who are suffering from coronavirus, their families and friends; those who have died, and those who mourn the loss of loved ones.
- For those who are helping to keep the country going - from hospital staff to refuse collectors

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

Acts 2 v14a, 36-41

Psalm 116 v1-4, 12-19

1 Peter 1 v17-23

Luke 24 v13-35



### **From Ann Lewis**

Thank you for your condolences on Mum's death. Her funeral will be on Wednesday 29 April at 3pm.

It will be a 15 min service and will be streamed live. If you would like to watch, go to <https://www.obitus.com/> where you will find login boxes at the top right-hand corner. Use username Cheltenham 0772 and password 431950.

Stream will begin at 2.55 and continue to 3.20. Replay available from 6th May to Friday 3 June.

### **Virtual Services**

For a comprehensive list of virtual services, please visit <http://www.urchic.org.uk/news.aspx>. This Sunday's service from the URC Daily Devotions <https://devotions.urchic.org.uk/> is coming from St Paul's URC in Croydon led by Rev Martin Knight.

### **BBC Gloucestershire**

Richard Atkins writes: 'This Sunday morning, join thousands of others across the nation listening to our county's very own church service. We'll be hearing and reflecting on the story of Jesus on the Emmaus Road, while the music will include a classic hymn by Charles Wesley and the contemporary sound of Stuart Townsend. Join Richard Atkins for our act of worship – this Sunday morning on BBC Radio Gloucestershire from 8. And if you missed it or would like to hear it again simply go to the BBC Sounds app on your mobile device'.

**From Rev Simon Helme** (who was booked at St Andrew's today)

I am leading a service from Dursley Tab at 10.30am. It is live streamed on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DursleyTab/> All of our services recorded since movement restrictions were introduced are available to hear again on our Facebook page as well as on YouTube (search Dursley Tabernacle URC)

**Message from Bob Alger, [realger@sky.com](mailto:realger@sky.com)**

Bob Alger is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Topic: Bob Alger's Personal Meeting Room

To join the Zoom Meeting go to <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6147530476>

Meeting ID: 614 753 0476

Last Sunday morning's Zoom seemed to work reasonably well and it was great to see so many friends. I am sending this invitation to you all again plus some others who would like to join if they can make it work! It was good to have the opportunity of greeting everyone last Sunday. Let's hope it works just as well this Sunday. If you know of anyone else who would like to join us please pass on the link and the meeting id.

Hope to see you soon - keep safe in the meantime! *Bob*

## **Messages from Janet and Fiona**

### **ST ANDREW'S**

April Monthly Charity/Retiring Offering is for 'Age UK, Gloucestershire'. Please refer to letter from Elders and Finance Committee, sent out with the AGM papers, relating to Offertory/Donations during the lockdown.

May charity is Christian Aid.

### **PRESTBURY**

Phase 2 of the Prestbury AGM is now underway – this time you are being asked to vote on the Resolutions. Please respond by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May.

**Some light hearted thoughts on the current situation from Keith Norcott.**

### **FINDING THE RIGHT KEY**

This lockdown business is very annoying. I mean, am I locked up or locked down? It's very worrying, and I think we should be told. The Prime Minister, or the Chancellor (appropriately called "Wishy" I think), or the Bank of England, the Oxford dictionary, or Elton John need to make a decision about this, in the interests of national sanity. After all, it's not the only time when up means down, is it? If you're taking something on you might well say "that's down to me" when you could just as easily say "that's up to me". Up equals down you see. Happens all the time. Those uplands in Kent are called the Downs, aren't they? See, same thing again, down means up. If you live in Sussex you travel up to London on the down train. If you're doing a bit of hunting or deer stalking you're upwind and downwind, aren't you? No, pay attention Doris, upwind and downwind have got nothing to do with the digestive system.

Because of this virus many factories are shut down/up See how confusing it all is? I know our American cousins often speak a different language from us, but it's no surprise when President Trump talks about doubling down on something when he might just as well say doubling up. Gets worse when you start putting the word "lock" into the equation. So here we are then, locked up and locked down, and probably locked in as well. Makes you feel a bit down doesn't it, fed up with the whole thing? That chap Wishy I mentioned earlier actually rambles on about something called a "triple lock", and I did wonder if he meant the triple lock we pensioners are now in - locked up, locked down and locked in. All so confusing isn't it? Maybe I should ask my friend Eustace from Gloucester. I'm sure he'll have all the answers. After all, he is a locksmith.

**Useful addresses if you or someone you know should need practical help at this time:**

Gloucestershire CC [Community Help Hub](#)

Cheltenham Borough Council Coronavirus – [Community Advice and Support](#)

The NHS is still here for all of us. We should not delay seeking help with serious time critical conditions as this could result in poorer outcomes for our future health. We are asked to continue to call 999 and attend A&E Departments if we believe our or a loved one's health is at risk.

An emergency dental practice run by the Gloucestershire Health & Care Trust is now up and running in Cheltenham. You can apply for an emergency appointment via 111 or direct on 0300 421 6440, but please contact your own dentist in the first instance.

If you are feeling low <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scenBq6PVSM&feature=youtu.be> has information on local support that is available to you.

### **A PRAYER ABOUT THE OUTBREAK**

God of Compassion,  
Be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
In their loneliness, be their consolation;  
In their anxiety, be their hope;  
In their darkness, be their light;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross,  
but reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen.

(This prayer comes from "Prayers for use during the coronavirus outbreak" published by The Church of England. This booklet and further prayers can be found online at [CofE.io/ChurchOnline](http://CofE.io/ChurchOnline))

### **Reflection from Rev Richard Atkins**

The disciples were fishing just off the shore; suddenly a bloke appears on the beach.

Like the story on the road to Emmaus, they fail to recognise who he is but as he seems to know where the fish are at that time of the morning so they follow his advice.

“Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.”

They did as he suggested and were then unable to haul in the net because there were so many fish.

In a moment Peter’s eyes were opened. Impulsively, he dives in and swims to the shore.

They all follow and by the time they all get out of the water, Jesus’s barbecue has begun.

At the back of his mind Peter must have hoped that his refutation on the night of Jesus’s arrest might have been forgotten in the drama of the resurrection.

He had denied Jesus three times; exactly what he had been told would happen, but had been certain he would never do.

Now Jesus wants a quiet word.

If that had been me I would have gone cold, been anxious, worried wished I was anywhere but on that beach with my friends and Jesus.

What on earth was Peter to say to Jesus?

After all betrayal is betrayal, denial is denial.

But we have to ask ourselves, would Jesus have gone through all that he did just to come back and be spiteful? Condemn Peter? Absolutely not!

So Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Wow, what a thing to ask Peter?

“Yes, Lord,” says Peter, “you know that I love you.”

Of course he does, he always has loved Jesus that is what makes his denial worse, that and knowing Jesus appointed him as the leader, the main man among the disciples.

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Is that it, he thinks to himself, can I get back to the bread and fish?

But no, there is more...twice more Jesus asks him questions,

“Simon son of John, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?”

He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.

What strikes me about this passage is that Jesus calls him Simon.

Not Peter “The Rock” the strong man of action who could haul a full net of fish - but “Simon” his childhood name.

In this way he reaches out to the vulnerable man, allows for the shortcomings of the human condition but still gives him his momentous commission.

The lesson to each of us is that Jesus recognises our shortcomings, vulnerability and all the baggage of our lives - nevertheless he has a commission for each of us that he will make possible, despite the odds.



*St Peter's Beach, Sea of Galilee – Janet Kemp*

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

*Romans 15 v13*

*Janet, Fiona & Brian*