



## Cheltenham United Reformed Church

*'The Pew sheet without any Pews'*

*Bulletin No 9 / 10.05.20*

### 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

Anne Grant, on 30<sup>th</sup> April in Glasgow

Gwen Hewinson, on 4<sup>th</sup> May aged 96

Please pray for:

- Families of Helen Bell, Ann Grant, Gwen Hewinson
- Barry Steele, Geoff Harmsworth
- Liz van Zyl and family
- Those with birthdays and Anniversaries this 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

Acts 7 v55-60

Psalm 31 v1-5,15-16

1 Peter 2 v2-10

John 14 v1-14



### Virtual Services

For a comprehensive list of virtual services, please visit <http://www.urch.org.uk/news.aspx>.  
If you know of any others, please let us know.

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

Bob Alger is having his usual Sunday Coffee Morning at 11.30am. To join in, just go to <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6147530476>. Don't forget to bring your own coffee! **Bob**

**ST ANDREW'S** May charity is Christian Aid.

**Christian Aid Week**

*Please see the attachments with this Bulletin*

Obviously we are unable to hold street collections or any fundraising events for the foreseeable future to bolster the great work of Christian Aid, which last year raised £!8,133 in Cheltenham alone. This shows what a drastic dent there will be to CA funds going forward.

Clearly, the impact of this on some of the world's poorest communities may be immense, and then there is climate change and the threat of Coronaviris as well. So, of course we are appealing to all our loyal supporters and anyone who is able, both in and beyond our church, to still remember, donate and pray for the needs of our Christian Aid partners. I would encourage everyone to look on the CA website on [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk) to learn more about where and how our donations have made and can continue to make a difference to people in circumstances we can perhaps only imagine.

***Alison Veal***

**Foodbank appeal for donations**

It would be very helpful if you could, by whatever means you may have available, encourage those who are able to continue making donations to the foodbank.

Last year we helped feed, on average, 290 children and adults per month. The figure for March was 574 people and for April it was 872 people, an increase of 33%. This means we are having to dig into our reserves at an increasing rate.

People can help in several different ways. They can

- leave donated items at the foodbank donation point in their supermarket
- make a cash donation through the foodbank's website <https://cheltenham.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/>
- take donations directly to the foodbank - we have extended our hours for this purpose to Monday-Friday, 9.30 to 3.00
- organise a community collection - for example, organising neighbours or members of an organisation to make a group donation.

Please let me know if you have any query about either of these matters - and thank you for your continued support.

***Hilary Scott***

**Spare Ink Cartridges**

Following an excellent offer I purchased a lot of HP364 and 364XL printer cartridges which I understand is suitable for many printers. Murphy's law applied because soon after my printer died hence I have for disposal 1 black and 5 each of cyan yellow and magenta cartridges a mixture of HP originals and refills. Hope they could be useful for someone. No charge but a donation to church funds would be nice.

**Peter Ricketts 01242 571200**

**Tony and Sandra Jeans** have provided some more pictures of their lovely garden (see Attachment). They are only sorry they can't invite anyone over at the moment!

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

Gloucestershire CC [Community Help Hub](#)

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

The NHS reminds us that we should 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 [Glos NHS Trust](#) has information on local support that is available.

**Age UK** Have produced a useful guide to local help and services, shopping etc (not just for the elderly!) (attached)

If you feel you would like to give a donation to Age UK to support their work at this time, please donate to: Age UK Gloucestershire, Sort code: 30-93-48, Account: 04914898

**The Long Table** <https://www.thelongtableonline.com/>

This charity has now switched to providing takeaway meals with a focus on those in most need in our community. Whether you are self-isolating, know someone who is, or would just like a great healthy and delicious dinner they are now offering free delivery for all meals. In addition, every meal you buy helps them to feed those in most need.

They work with fresh vegetables and food that supermarkets give so they don't always have a set menu, but it's always guaranteed to be delicious!

There's no delivery fee, and you're welcome to pay £25 for 7 meals, or have the 7 meals for free if finance is a barrier. Just let them know, as they don't want money to stop people eating.

Their 'ready meals' page is: <https://www.thelongtableonline.com/ready-meals>

Tel: 01242 323693 or email [Cheltenham@thelongtableonline.com](mailto:Cheltenham@thelongtableonline.com)

You cannot choose what you will receive, but they will avoid some dishes if you discuss your dietary needs with them. They ask that you place an order by 4pm, the day before you want the delivery.

This is a worthy cause and can be supported either by purchasing a meal package or from direct donation. It is also a cause with a strong vision for the future which has a set of values to support a healthy and caring economy.

## Reflection from Rev Richard Atkins

### John 14: 1-14

Jesus had many conversations; it was part of what he did, talked and listened to people, especially his closest friends.

There is something intimate and very human about sitting down and having a conversation, a chat if you like; at a dinner table, on the way back from the theatre, sitting in the garden at the end of a warm day.

Of course, at the moment, for most of us that intimacy is lost to a large extent; Coronavirus has seen to that.

For the foreseeable future our conversation with friends and family will be confined to Zoom and WhatsApp; whether they live on the other side of the world or next door.

But thankfully Jesus didn't need either as this reading from John's Gospel illustrates.

It offers us a conversation between Jesus and his closest followers, notably Thomas and Philip.

The first few verses provide a reading of comfort, sometimes spoken at funerals because it quotes Jesus saying he is going "to prepare a place for you".

It may seem an obvious reference to us that Jesus was describing life after his death, somewhere we might call heaven, but clearly Thomas was not so clear about either; where Jesus was talking about, or about the way to get there!

Jesus responds to Thomas that "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" and this brings Philip into the conversation to ask Jesus to reveal the Father to them.

It is perhaps dangerous to interpret moods from the written word of the Bible, just as it is difficult to interpret the mood of someone writing an email or text message

I have a hunch that Jesus may have been rather exasperated when he replies to Philip along the lines of.....

'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you such a long time?'

Or perhaps, 'Don't you remember all that we have been through; what I taught you; haven't you been listening; do you really care about this work we are engaged in'.

Or there again, 'Have you that short a memory, Phillip that you don't remember?'

One of my colleagues recently wrote this on Twitter;

'Amazing because before the lockdown I never spoke to my neighbours and now we're all friends and it's kind of amazing really'.

So, keep talking and keep communicating because it's not only good for our mental health but it's also at the heart of the Gospel.

In essence the conversation between Jesus and his disciples has become, for us at this time, the conversation between God in Christ and his creation.

**Richard Atkins**

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever, Amen." *Ephesians 3 v20-21*

**Janet, Fiona and Brian**