

Courier
April 2021
Christ Church United Reformed
Church

(in Joint Pastorate with the United Church of Egham)



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SEGUIN	Richard
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.DATA PROTECTION ACT

In common with most other churches and organisations, the Christ Church United Reformed Church Windsor keeps pastoral records of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of regular worshippers and friends. The information is used for church purposes only, is never communicated to any other body and is held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Dear Friends,

It hardly seems possible that a year has passed since we first entered lockdown, following the outbreak of the *Covid 19 virus*. Amazingly, that time has passed quite quickly, although I know many people found this time of isolation difficult. By nature, we are sociable creatures, and not being able to meet with friends and family is extremely hard. Coincidentally, I am writing this month's letter in the week we are being encouraged to share a minutes silence to remember those who lost their lives due to Covid. (March 23rd.)

However, there are signs of hope. The numbers of people who have received the vaccine is very encouraging. There is a certain amount of optimism abounding - but we cannot be complacent. As things stand and following the helpful advice of the Synod Moderators, the Elders and I are aiming to re-open the Church for public worship on Pentecost Sunday, 23rd May, which is also the 'birthday of the Church.' In the meantime, we shall continue with the weekly zoom services, for which I am grateful to Glyn and others who continue to make this possible.

We are currently preparing to make the journey through Holy Week - a poignant time in the Christian calendar - as we recall Jesus' journey towards the Cross. Whilst at this time we are unable to meet physically in Church, nevertheless the message of Easter remains. It is a message of new life and new hope. Out of the pain and suffering, came new life through the resurrection of Jesus. Over the past 12 months, we have faced trials and tribulations of a different sort. Yet it is that resurrection hope that sustains us as Christians, and enables us to face the challenges that may come our way.

One thing you might like to get involved with is a pilgrimage around the 14 Windsor Churches, following the *Stations of the Cross*. Each Church is providing a reflection and prayer to share - ourselves included -, which will be on display outside the building. You can visit some or all the venues (see details elsewhere) as part of your preparation for Easter. In my own devotions, I have dipping into a book entitled '*Love is never done*', which contains a series of reflections for Holy Week. For Palm Sunday, the reader is invited to spare a thought for the donkey, which carried Jesus into Jerusalem. The writer of the reflection is Tom Gordon, who is a member of the Iona Community. He comments - 'No donkey: no means of transport for Jesus; No donkey: ne re-enactment of a Triumph; No donkey: no Palm Sunday story.' A 'beast of burden'

had done what was needed to be done. That's all. The donkey carried its passenger and made it all happen.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes ' Bear one another's burdens and in this way, you will fulfil the law of Christ'. (Ch 6 verse 2) Over the past 12 months, we have had the opportunity to bear each other's burdens, and there have been some wonderful stories of generosity and kindness being shown. Just now, there are many people carrying burdens, and in particular, the NHS staff, who are called on when needed, caring for us, carrying us, doing what needs to be done.

Perhaps this Eastertide, as we remember the image of the donkey in the story, we can find ways of sharing one another's burdens. Just a thought! A prayer...

Thank you God, for the people who carry my burdens today.
And if I'm called to to carry someone else's,
give me strength for the journey, and
give me humility to keep doing what needs to be done.

May the joy, the blessing of Easter be yours! For the Lord is risen, he is risen in deed. Alleluia!

Stay safe and well,

Your friend and Minister,
Alan

Bible Study

The weekly Bible study group will resume after Easter on Thursday 8th April at 2.30pm. The Zoom link will be sent out weekly. If you wish to join, you would be most welcome.

Prayer

Lesley Losse shared prayer with us at a recent Elder's meeting. It comes from a Muslim source, and it is worth sharing:

We are encouraged to see every day as a fresh start. From the moment we open our eyes with an appreciation of another morning until late at night when we reflect with gratitude on the day, we have the opportunity to reflect, refresh, refocus and resolve. God tells us that if we come to him walking he'll come to us running and, should we present him with an earth full of failings, he'll grant us an earth full of redemption. All we need to do is embrace each moment as a fresh start.

Good companions on the journey

Online book clubs are everywhere these days and a good lockdown tonic. Mine is the URC Bible study on zoom each Thursday at 230. Recently we discussed a series of 5, 15-minute BBC radio broadcasts that went out on Radio 4 between Christmas and New Year. They are drawn from John Barton's *History of the Bible* published in 2019 and available now in bookshops and as an audio book as members of the group can testify from getting hold of a copy. John Barton FBA is a British Anglican priest and biblical scholar at the University of Oxford.

He describes how the narratives, laws, proverbs, prophecies, poems and letters which comprise the Bible were written and when, what we know - and what we cannot know - about their authors and what they might have meant, as well as how these extraordinarily disparate writings relate to each other.

His view is that the context, circumstances, and parameters need to be taken into account of the period when it was written the culture, and the priorities of the day - which Paul had to address for example.

The broadcasts are entitled: Ancient book modern world, The Gospel Truth, In the beginning, Who's in, who's out, Nine lessons and carols

Some of what struck me...

New learning for me these has included such observations that Paul's letters were written before the Gospels starting with Thessalonians and Galatians. In our bibles they are simply ordered by length, longest first...

The Bible takes its name from the Latin *Biblia* ('book' or 'books') which comes from the Greek *Ta Biblia* ('the books')

The first translation was from Hebrew into Greek for Jews in Egypt around 30BC

There are 5 billion bibles in circulation with a recent spike in sales

The New Testament was written in codex, a sort of notebook format and were not revered at the time whereas the Old Testament was written on scrolls.

None of the gospels are first-hand accounts. Mark was the first to be written.

Becoming a good companion....

Alan sends out a weekly email with details of the weekly discussions and we'd be glad to see you there.

Colin Shearer

The Teacup Story

There was a couple who used to go to England to shop in the beautiful stores. They both liked antiques and pottery and especially teacups. This was their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

One day in this beautiful shop they saw a beautiful cup. They said, "May we see that? We've never seen one quite so beautiful."

As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the cup spoke. "You don't understand," it said. "I haven't always been a teacup. There was a time when I was red and I was clay. My master took me and rolled me and patted me over and over and I yelled out, 'let me alone,' but he only smiled, 'Not yet.'

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the cup said, "and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. Stop it! I'm getting dizzy! I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, 'Not yet.'

"Then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat!" the teacup said. "I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled and knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips as He shook his head, 'Not yet.'

"Finally the door opened, he put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. 'There, that's better,' I said. And he brushed and painted

it, stop it!' I cried. He only nodded, 'Not yet.'

"Then suddenly he put me back into the oven, not like the first one. This was twice as hot and I knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening, nodding his head saying, 'Not yet.'

"Then I knew there wasn't any hope. I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and placed me on the shelf.

One hour later he handed me a mirror and said, 'Look at yourself.' And I did. I said, 'That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful.'

"I want you to remember, then,' he said, 'I know it hurts to be rolled and patted, but if I had left you alone, you'd have dried up.

I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled.

I knew it hurt and was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked.

I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened; you would not have had any color in your life.

And if I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't survive for very long because the hardness would not have held.

Now you are a finished product. You are what I had in mind when I first began with you."

~ Author Unknown



Christian Aid Week this year is from 10th to 16th May and the Windsor Christian Aid Group is gearing up to get involved. Last year, despite the complete lockdown we were living through, Christian Aid raised £4m across the country, far exceeding their expectations. In Windsor you also gave generously and they raised just over £4,000. This year they may not be able to deliver house to house envelopes but will be holding activities which we hope you will support. There are concerts, quizzes, Big Brekkies, sponsored walks that we all could get involved with and you can find out more at the Christian Aid website:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

This year's Christian Aid Week film is about Florence from Kenya, and how droughts are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis. Florence and her family, and millions of people in Kenya, are struggling to get enough food and water. We know that every activity, every gift saves lives and we want to support Christian Aid in their work bringing water, hygiene, health and safety to those less fortunate than us. You can learn more about Florence's story at:

[CAW 21 - Florence's Story - YouTube](#)

Please think about what you could do individually or as a Church to get involved. Tracy Tickle tracytickle@hotmail.com is the Chair of the Windsor CA Committee and would be pleased to hear from anyone who has ideas for a fund raising activity or would like to get more involved. Look out for more information coming soon!

ZOOM to Zimbabwe

with **christian
aid**

11th May
2021
2 pm

Updates, Music,
Food & Friendship

Email Suzanne for link
suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk

Hosted by

Commitment
for **Life**

Dear Friends

Commitment for Life in partnership with Christian Aid are organising during Christian Aid week, on **Tuesday, 11th May at 2pm 'Zoom to Zimbabwe'**. We do hope that you are able to join us for an afternoon of updates, music, fellowship and more.

Global & Intercultural Ministries is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Zoom to Zimbabwe CFL in CA Week

Time: May 11, 2021 14:00 London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93023982876?pwd=QlRhTStDcGhtQ29vWUMybFdWLys4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 930 2398 2876

Passcode: 750863

One tap mobile

+442034815237,,93023982876# United Kingdom

+442034815240,,93023982876# United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 930 2398 2876

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/abkl3WEwi4>

We look forward to welcoming you on 11th May.