



Cheltenham United Reformed Church

www.urch.org.uk

Bulletin 8th May 2022

The Pulpit at Prestbury

All Sunday Services begin at 10.30am

15th May Mr Bob Alger
22nd May Rev Iain McLaren Communion

The Pulpit at St Andrew's

All Sunday Services are 11.00am, also broadcast on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0qso0uzwPJq-Onhf6fN2TA>

8th May Rev Dee Brierley-Jones Family Service

HYMNS: Rejoice+Sing 39, 41, 117, MP23

15th May Christian Aid Service to be led by Mr David Black
22nd May Mr Geoff Tizzard-King

United Pastorate Service, 10.30 at St Andrew's on 29th May

Led by Rev Iain McLaren

Followed by Salad and Pudding Lunch with CURC AGM between courses.

Please let Janet or Fiona know if you wish to book lunch

The Pulpit at The Church in Warden Hill

Details of all Services can be found in '*Lantern*', and '*Grapevine*' both available at

<http://www.tciwh.org.uk>

8th May Rev Iain McLaren Communion then **AGM** 12 noon

Prayer Requests this week:



The family of John Hutton, Geoff and Margaret Harmsworth, Mhairi Turner, Edith McKenzie, Mary Zakotti, Mary Cummings, The people of Ukraine.

Belated Birthday wishes to Geoff Harmsworth, now aged 91.

Rev Iain McLaren, our Minister writes:



I'm writing this on polling day and by the time you read this the results of this year's local elections will be known. I'm afraid I don't have a crystal ball and so I won't be commenting on the outcome of the elections. Instead, I shall take this opportunity to reflect on the relationship between Christianity and politics.

Christianity is inherently political. The original Good News preached by Jesus was that 'the kingdom of God has come near' (Mark 1: 15). People nowadays are liable to misunderstand the phrase 'kingdom of God' as our Queen is a symbolic figurehead – she 'reigns', but she does not 'rule' – and real power is wielded by our elected politicians, who are answerable to us at election time. However, we forget that the United Kingdom has only been a democracy for several hundred years. For hundreds of years prior to that kings and queens exercised real authority. The principal function of the monarch was to make and uphold laws. This was the constitutional position at the time the Bible was written.

Seen in this context, the phrase 'kingdom of God' denotes a situation in which people look, not to an earthly ruler, but to God as the source of the rules by which they live their lives. It was by God's authority that Jesus taught the crowds and gave his commandments. This explains why the Roman authorities saw Jesus as a threat and so had him put to death and persecuted his followers in the early Church.

It is not inevitable that Christians come into conflict with secular authorities. As Paul reminds his readers in Romans 13: 1-7, there are many situations in which governing authorities serve as instruments of God's will and, to the extent that they are doing so, they should be respected. However, all human authority is subordinate to and accountable to God and there is a long tradition of Christians who have protested against rulers who have departed from the ways of God. Martin Luther protested against the authority of a corrupted papacy. The Parliamentarian side in the English Civil War contested King Charles' claim to rule by divine right. A more recent example was the Archbishop of Canterbury's criticism of the government's plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda.

Being a good Christian is not about being law-abiding and keeping out of trouble. By that standard, Jesus Christ himself would fail to qualify! Rather, as citizens of the 'kingdom of God', we look to Jesus to tell us how we should live. That is a political decision.

Yours in Christ

Iain

**Rev Iain McLaren can be contacted at:
01242-231602, or 07483118427 revdiain@urcic.org.uk**

Day off on FRIDAYS.

Lectionary Readings:

Acts 9 v36-43

Psalm 23

John 10 v22-30

Revelation 7 v9-17

Christian Aid Week is 15th – 21st May

It is now only a week until the start of Christian Aid Week. This year we share the stories of three amazing Zimbabwean women who are all working with CA's partners to build their resilience to withstand the effects of the climate crisis.



Last week we heard about Jessica; this week it is Jerina who we learn has struggled to earn money in the drought. Every day was a battle for survival for Jerina and her children. With the financial support of Christian Aid, life has turned around for Jerina. She has successfully completed a training course through Christian Aid's partner, Silveira House. There, she learned skills like welding and leatherwork. Now Jerina has the dignity of doing a job she loves and is providing for her family. She is proud to be a welder working at the Lot Business Centre.

Another woman who has faced the worst of the climate crisis is Janet, a grandmother from Zimbabwe. In her village, Janet has experienced first-hand how drought pushed her family into desperate hunger. 'One year, there was so little food. Rains had not fallen. We ate things which we wouldn't normally eat. I made porridge and gave it to the children, then removed a portion for the dogs. The children picked up the dogs' share because they were so hungry.'

In Janet's case she was helped through this painful time by Christian Aid's BRACK programme. BRACK helps the most at-risk communities in Zimbabwe to prepare for and adapt to the changing climate.



On Christian Aid Sunday we will watch a short video which shows how Janet has been taught to grow drought-tolerant crops, and to build storerooms to preserve food and more. Janet's farm is now producing a surplus of food, and she is so thankful for the positive impact this has had in the lives of her family, and community.

Collecting Locally:

Please consider helping us to reach as many streets as possible in this year's envelope delivery, during Christian Aid week. We are again delivering in Leckhampton, or in the streets around St Andrews Church. The more streets we cover, the more chance of helping people like Jerina and Janet.

if you could deliver envelopes between 15th and 21st May then please see **Alison Veal** at St Andrew's on Sunday, or contact your local representatives at Prestbury and Warden Hill. Thank you.

What's on across CURC this week

The Repair Café celebrates its 6th birthday on Saturday 7 May. Have a wander down memory lane with these films from 2016 (thanks to Sandra Jeans for reminding me of these).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mwtbr4cUU10> – made by students
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Abqjqlr0aPg&t=13s> – produced as part of a series of Good News projects around the Synod

Sat 7 th May	10.00	User Groups Meeting	St Andrew's
Mon 9 th May	10.00 – 11.30	Prestbury URChins Baby & Toddlers	Prestbury URC
Wed 11 th May	12.15	Midweek Worship	St Andrew's
Wed 11 th May		Wednesday Social Group Outing to Tintern	
Fri 13 th May	10.00 – 12.00	Coffee, Chat ++	Prestbury
Sat 14 th May	14.00	Community Film Show	Warden Hill URCC
		'Six Minutes to Midnight' Cert12	
Mon 16 th May	10.00 – 11.30	Prestbury URChins Baby & Toddlers	Prestbury URC
Wed 18 th May	12.15	Midweek Worship	St Andrew's
Thu 19 th May		Reading Group	
Fri 20 th May	10.00 – 12.00	Coffee, Chat ++	Prestbury

For your Diaries:

Tues 31 st May	Family Fun Day at St Andrew's
Fri 3 rd June	Queen's Jubilee Coffee, Chat++ at Prestbury
Sun 5 th June	WHITSUNDAY / Queen's Jubilee
	A picnic for all + friends at lunchtime in the garden at St Andrew's.
Sun 26 th June	Afternoon Concert by Montpellier Brass at St Andrew's
Sat 9 th July	Prestbury Village Celebration
Sun 4 th September	Thanksgiving Service for 'The Church in Warden Hill', 3.00pm
Sat 17 th September	Heritage Open Day at St Andrew's

MIDSUMMER FIESTA

An afternoon of family fun
July 2nd 2022 in Montpellier Gardens

St Andrew's have booked a stall at this event which is advertised as being **ECO themed**. We propose using the stall as an 'everyone wins' Tombola and as a vehicle for advertising/informing about our ECO work at St Andrew's, in the form of a display with posters, flyers, information sheets, giveaways. ****We shall need volunteers** to man this stall throughout the afternoon (12 to 6, plus setting up and clearing away.)—we suggest an hour at a time. Please contact Carol or Janet if you are able to volunteer.

****We are collecting small items** for tombola prizes. There will be a box at St Andrew's for you to leave donations. Any type of item is acceptable – consider whether you would like to win it !

Thank you

Janet and Carol

www.midsummerfiesta.com

ECO News

The Big Plastic Count run by Greenpeace and Everyday Plastic runs from 16-22 May. I've signed up for this. The aim is to find out how much plastic we throw away and how much is recycled. The objective is to use the information gathered to convince the Government, big brands and supermarkets to take action on plastic packaging. For more information and to sign up – see <https://www.everydayplastic.org/the-big-plastic-count>



Carole

Keith's Column

MAKE DO AND MEND.....OR NOT.

What are you going to do with all that old stuff you've got in cupboards, sheds, attics and spare rooms; assorted bits of string, washers, furniture, crockery and so on because "it might come in handy one day"?

Permit me to offer a few tips that might help you decide. First a word of caution. There are currently a number of trends...er trending, so it's really confusing, trying to cope with "shabby chic", "retro", "vintage" and of course "antique". Added to that you've got recycling, upcycling and "make do and mend", not to mention that other option – downcycling, which involves the energetically destructive use of a 14-pound hammer. Jolly good that too for relieving stress.

Here's a challenging example of the sort of dilemma you'll face- (can you actually "face" a dilemma – must check that). Oh yes, that example. In the shed there's that tatty old pair of shoes that you use for gardening. They're liberally scratched, mud stained, no laces, and you bought them in the Co-op forty years ago. So they're retro, vintage and shabby chic, well OK a bit chic (chicish?), but trendily shabby. The options are: leave them as they are and flog them off on Ebay; recycle them by shoving them in that big bin in the supermarket car park; upcycle them as flower pots, or convert them into lamps by sticking in a cable and a bulb. But you've become quite used to them and they're fine for gardening, so, never mind all that heavy brain work, you're going to keep them aren't you? In other words you're into the "make do and mend" mode. The thing is, this make do and mend is all very well, but what does it really mean? The "make do" bit generally means keeping something in the cupboard, shed etc. for a few more weeks and then dumping it, while the "mend" bit means patching it up, keeping it for a few weeks and then... well....dumping it.

The other serious problem here is of course are you able to mend it? It's not as easy as it used to be in years gone by, when make do and mend generally involved the use of glue, sticky tape or a big hammer and four inch nails. Those methods usually worked and produced what were known as "good solid jobs". Nowadays this "mending" business is a bit more tricky isn't it, risky too? Can you get the spares, are you working in inches or mms? Tools? Knowhow? Do you actually want the thing anyway? And what about that worrying moment when you've finished the job, but there's this bit left over and you've no idea what it's for or where it fits. Even more worrying is the realisation that you've lost that small but absolutely vital final bit - you know, that tiny screw that's in inches and you're in mms so you can't just go and buy another one.

Just goes to show how handy it is to have people around who can do proper repair jobs, like those at the monthly repair café at St Andrew's. Bet they don't use big hammers or lose important screws.

Keith Norcott

From the Editors

Thank you for all the copy that you send. We can be reached on: magazine@urcic.org.uk