

CHURCH NEWS

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The
United
Reformed
Church

Partnership Ministers:

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JANUARY 2023

Friends,

Spiritual Practices

January is a time for thinking about New Year Resolutions, even though we can struggle to keep them very long! However, this month is a good time to re-set our spiritual disciplines. These practices, which engage our whole person, help our spiritual growth as disciples of Christ.

If we want more of Jesus' presence in our lives, we often find ourselves thinking, 'I'll have to try harder: to pray, listen to God or read the Bible'. Paul makes the important distinction between training and trying in the Christian life:

'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever'. (1 Corinthians 9:24,25).

Paul insists that runners undergo strict training if they are to win the race. It would be foolish to enter a marathon without adequate training. The runner wouldn't complete the course despite trying hard! The same principles apply to the Christian life: God wants us to train by developing spiritual practices: 'to train means to arrange my life around activities I can do that will enable me, over time, to do what I cannot do by direct effort alone' (Dallas Willard).

In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster lists the following spiritual disciplines:

Inward Disciplines: Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study

Outward Disciplines: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service

Corporate Disciplines: Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration

Over the coming year we will be looking at some of these. Effective discipline is not drudgery, but delightful! Richard Foster insists that we can 'celebrate' these disciplines which can help us grow.

Canon Paul Hardingham
Parish Pump

NEWS AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

As we move into a new year, we think of all friends and congregation who have been bereaved during the last twelve months. We have lost several loyal members of this church who will be dearly missed.

Our thoughts are with those we know who are unwell or disheartened. We pray especially for Mo Morton who has very recently broken her arm, and Geof Thompson and Sandy and Mary Mailer. Sandy is recovering from pneumonia and Mary is now in a Care Home following the diagnoses of Parkinson Dementia and recent health issues.

In addition to our 'in house' leaders of worship in December, our grateful thanks go to Linda Rayner and Margaret Dexter-Brown who supported us by leading our Christingle and Bereavement Services respectively.

The Christmas Coffee morning and stall realised £237 for our charities. A big thank you to all who supported this effort in any way.

Once again, we would like to thank those friends who sent Christmas and New Year greetings. We hope that you have had happy celebrations and that the new year brings good health, peace and joy.

Best wishes to everyone who will be celebrating their birthday in January particularly to Eric Ward and Ann Hardie for their 'Special' birthdays.

Happy New Year to everyone.
The News Team

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

Sun 5 MAR Traidcraft Afternoon Tea 3~5pm

CHURCH MEETING 8 JAN

A letter is enclosed for members for our meeting on 8 January together with an Agenda, the minutes of the meeting last October and Rev Marion Tugwood's notes about our thoughts on New Beginnings.

The meeting will once again be followed by a **Faith Lunch**. Please do all you can to attend.

Alison Stevens

FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

The Fellowship started Christmas festivities with the wonderful Christmas lunch prepared by Morag and Sandy. Our following meeting on 14th December was led by Eric on the keyboard when we sang carols and ate mince pies. On 21st, we celebrated Christmas with a party. We brought gifts, passed the parcel and ate sausage rolls and, yes you guessed it, mince pies.

We didn't meet on 28th but will be back together on 4th Jan to celebrate the new year. On 11th Jan we are looking forward to a musical talk from Elva. Happy new year to everyone.

Carole Davies

Thank you to the donors for all their recent contributions towards the Church charities and CHURC News.



CHURCHES TOGETHER...

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR
CHRISTIAN UNITY;**
18~25 January 2023



World Day of Prayer - Friday 3 MAR when a service will be held at All Saints Church

ROWLEY PROJECT UPDATE

Since Angela and Steve led our worship last September, Angela's SHOE THE SCHOOL campaign has been very successful. To shoe the whole primary school of 415 pupils at an average £4 per pair will cost £1,660 and so far we have designated gifts of £1,126. We will be sending the money in January and will make up the difference from general fund, monies donated by S.O. for general use where required. Thank you for this. It will be a wonderful surprise for pupils and staff alike.

Alison

NEW SYNOD MODERATOR

The Revd Clare Downing, currently Moderator for the United Reformed Church's (URC) Wessex Synod, has been nominated as the **Transitional Moderator of the North Western Synod**.

Clare is serving as Moderator of the URC General Assembly from 2020-22, along with the late Peter Pay. She has also been the Wessex Synod Moderator since 2011, and has previously served at Braunston and Evington Road, Leicester, and in a Special Category ministry specialising in inter-faith issues based at the St Philip's Centre, Leicester.

FILM MATINEE

Saturday 28 JANUARY 2023

2.30 pm

The Revd John Bradbury, General Secretary of the URC, said: "The North Western Synod has been through a difficult period in the last few years. The Officers of the General Assembly, with the Synod Executive, discerned that the appointment of a Moderator who would exercise a transitional ministry within the Synod would be helpful.

"I'm delighted that Clare has accepted a call to this role. Clare brings many years' experience as a Synod Moderator and a wisdom deeply rooted in her faith. Transitional ministry aims to heal old wounds, help the church discern God's call for the present and the future, and determine the gifts and graces that will be needed when the time comes to call a new Synod Moderator in 2026.

"Clare has been offering support to the Executive in the North Western Synod for the last couple of years, and chaired most of our Synod meetings. I am delighted that Clare and the Synod both share a sense of excitement at the ministry they will exercise together.

"I also want to thank the many people who have offered exceptional ministry during the last two years as the Synod has functioned with a Moderator on long-term leave.

"Tim Hopley is a superb Synod Clerk who exercises a ministry beyond anything that could reasonably have been asked of him; Elizabeth Gray-King has brought wisdom and expertise in her service as a 'Synod Pastor'; and Richard Bradley has represented the Synod in our Synod Moderators' meeting with grace and wisdom".

The Revd Fiona Bennett, Moderator of General Assembly 2022-2023, said: "The calling of the Revd Clare Downing to serve as a Transitional Moderator in North Western Synod marks a new stage in its journey. Clare brings to the Synod a wealth of wisdom and experience in enabling leadership, to collaboratively support, nurture and steer the Synod and its Missional Partnerships onto the next stage of its life.

Tim Hopley, North Western Synod Clerk and Operations Manager, said: "North Western Synod has been through a very challenging couple of years and it is a real boost to know that Clare, with all her experience, understanding and expertise, is going to be walking the next few years alongside us.

"I know that the news of Clare's acceptance of the invitation to become our Transitional Moderator will be received positively and gratefully by all in Synod, and we are already looking forward to the things that we will be doing, together, in the Synod."

URC website

'Breakfast Before'

9.30am ~ 8 Jan 2023

[& every 2nd Sunday]

Typical menu:

Drinks, toast, Cereal, pancakes,

...maybe

Croissant or pain au chocolat

SOCIAL INVESTMENT

-using God's money

WHY?

Investment is the use of repayable finance to help an organisation achieve its purposes. You either loan money to an organisation or take a share in something meaning you also share in the profit or loss; for example, a house or business start-up. Either way be sure of what you are signing up for and take financial advice where appropriate. If you are more confident financially, social investment may be attractive as it allows you to have a personal involvement in the success of a project. For others who are actively working, you have enough income for now, but don't want to give your money away completely as you are likely to need it in the future. Social investment allows you to put it to good use in the meantime.

HOW?

Three examples of Christian social investment opportunities are Hope into Action, Green Pastures and Stewardship:

Hope into Action is a Christian charity partnering with investors and churches to house the homeless. Investors can participate in house ownership, whilst a local church charity provides the support for individuals to get back on their feet. The minimum investment is £5,000 and there is no maximum. The ideal is for a group of people to invest in one house jointly to support a particular ministry: <https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/investinahome>

Green Pastures owns properties to enable Christian ministry. To expand the number of properties and impact, up to 5% interest is offered to individual investors on unsecured loans. The minimum investment is £1,000 and there is no maximum:

<https://www.greenpastures.net/invest>

Stewardship services has a vision 'For the world to encounter Jesus through the generosity of his church'. The resources they offer churches are numerous including banking, charity formation, a payroll bureau and accounts examination. A new venture is to engage with individuals to invest in loans to churches to achieve 'financial, social, and spiritual financial returns':

<https://www.stewardship.org.uk/social-impact-investing>

Internet

www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

STILL FIGHTING LEPROSY

Leprosy was a problem in biblical times, and sadly, even today, between 200 and 300 thousand people worldwide are diagnosed with it each year. Two ~ three million people are living disabled lives because of it.

Leprosy, caused by a bacillus, *Mycobacterium leprae* (a relative of TB), is **mildly** infectious. It is most often found alongside dirty water, poor nutrition, and low standards of living, and where people's immune systems have been weakened.

The Leprosy Mission (TLM) is an international Christian organisation which works in many countries to help people affected by leprosy. Founded in 1874, TLM is the oldest and largest leprosy-focused organisation in the world. As leprosy affects people's lives in many different ways, so TLM cares for their physical, social, spiritual and psychological needs.

TLM explains, "Leprosy is not understood by most communities and as a result people are fearful of it, which means those affected by leprosy are often stigmatised. We want to see a leprosy-free world. Our vision is for 'leprosy defeated, lives transformed'."

For details on World Leprosy Sunday 29 JAN, see: www.leprosymission.org

Parish Pump

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A DOG'S LIFE

A couple had gone to their minister for counselling because their marriage was in trouble. The husband began by complaining that he led a dog's life at home.

To the minister's surprise, the wife agreed!!! "YES!. he rushes into the house with muddy feet, tracks across my clean floors, barks at nothing, growls at his food and makes himself comfortable on the best furniture. Then he falls asleep but snaps at you if you disturb him..."

EXPLAINING BIRTH

An expectant mother let her four-year-old place his hand on her tummy and feel the baby kick. The little boy was amazed and wondered aloud how the baby would ever get out. To keep it simple, the mother just said, "The doctor will help." Her son's eyes widened: "You've got a doctor in there too!!"

Parish Pump

WARM SPACE NEWS

We have now been running this initiative every Tuesday at lunch time since 1 Nov, even over Christmas.

We meet in the coffee lounge from 11am until 2pm and provide a couple of newspapers and free drinks (plus often other things to eat, but not advertised). Anybody is welcome who wants to get warm or just to talk and chat, or just read.

There is a coffee meeting on two Saturdays each month too which you could also regard as a warm space. We keep the 'old' newspapers to read, but the 1st Sat is our charity raiser and the 3rd Sat is our prayer meeting.

Tuesday is 'our' day and others in Cheadle Hulme Churches Together have their own arrangements on other weekdays. There is a council website with all the details inc libraries etc that are also warm spaces.

Elders will soon be reviewing this community outreach initiative to decide if we are going through to March and warmer weather (hopefully) - but meanwhile there's still time to come!

Bernie

I HAVE PLANS FOR YOU

Although of course we will heartily wish one another a Happy New Year, we have to be honest and realise that for very many the future in general, and the new year in particular, holds a great deal to be feared. War, energy costs, inflation, we've all just come through a nasty pandemic. The future looks very frightening indeed. So it did for the Israelites in the time of Jeremiah. Exiled to Babylon, surrounded by their enemies and by false prophets, there was nothing whatsoever for them to look forward to.

And yet, in Jeremiah 29:11-13 we read this promise by God to His people: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find me when you seek Me with all your heart." Because of our faithful God, we can truly say: Happy New Year!

Parish Pump Editor, **Nigel Beeton**

MY PLANS FOR YOU

When your troubles are great
And you fear so much
When you've gone to a land far away;
When all those that you love
Are far out of touch
And you're scared of the night and the day.

*"I know," says the Lord, "of My plans for you,
"Plans for good not for ill – you will see!
"Your future and hope in My plans for you
"When you pray, and you call out to Me!"*

When the darkness surrounds
And the night is long
When the storm's blowing hard on your door;
When your bones ache with pain
And you feel so wrong
And you really can't take any more.

*"I know," says the Lord, "of My plans for you,
"Plans for good not for ill – you will see!
"Your future and hope in My plans for you
"When you pray, and you call out to Me!"*

When your world has gone wrong
Though you've tried so hard
And the ends never seem quite to meet;
The betrayal of friends
Leave you deeply scarred
And it all seems to end in defeat.

*"I know," says the Lord, "of My plans for you,
"Plans for good not for ill – you will see!
"Your future and hope in My plans for you
"When you pray, and you call out to Me!"*

When you seek you shall find
If you search for Me
You be sure that I will do My part;
You know I will be found
And I'll hear your plea
When you search with the whole of your heart!

*"I know," says the Lord, "of My plans for you,
"Plans for good not for ill – you will see!
"Your future and hope in My plans for you
"When you pray, and you call out to Me!"
"When you pray, and you call out to Me!"*

By Nigel Beeton

		6					9	
1	5		9	8				
4			6	5				8
6	4	3				9		
		7				8	3	1
5				3	2			9
				4	9		5	6
	2					3		

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SUDOKU

The number 1~9 must appear just once in every row, column and small block .

PARTNERSHIP MINISTRY

The partnership began with 16 churches, sharing mission and resources and 4 ministers were to be assigned to service their spiritual needs.

The commissioning service was on 19 July 2019. Alan retired at that point and our pastorate with Bramhall also dissolved. 1 minister didn't join, and 1 was half time (but soon on extended leave). Not the best start. We gained a mission mentor and a steering group convener, both very good, both ministers. Unfortunately, the Moderator, the driving force for Partnerships, went on extended leave.

The steering group (acting as “elders” for the Partnership) interviewed 2 possible calls before Jonnie, Altrincham’s student on placement, expressed an interest. Even in his 1st year, he turned out to be very organised, very personable, a very good all-rounder, especially with computers.

Our half timer came back, (full time!) and we interviewed by video and called an energetic minister from Zimbabwe, Kurauone Mutimwii. Unfortunately, 2 churches closed, 2 churches were allowed to move to other partnerships and 2 churches are in the process of joining.

So, we are now only 11 Churches but the numbers looked fair, with 3 ministers.

However, almost together, Marion answered a call to minister to East Cheshire Hospice and Jonnie a call to a neighbouring Partnership. Dave Fraser, the good mission mentor, had left for a hospital chaplaincy.

And then there was one.
And he in a new culture too.

The mission mentor is succeeded by an equally promising replacement. Furthermore, a Transitional Moderator has been appointed, in post from next June, to complete the term to 2026.

We have been promised lots of help, and that we **could** have one vacancy declared soonest, so a scramble is ensuring to update our (11) profiles and the Partnership introduction. BUT, the supply of ministers has not improved so beyond one extra minister they will not go, yet.

Bernie

SERVICES

Elders' wish to keep everyone safe, so please wear masks (especially for singing) and understand our plans may change with little notice.

We may sometimes have a speaker and sometimes a simple in-house led service. Video conferencing continues and Leaders or readers may Zoom in or speak in church.

Duties are performed by a small team on a rota. Please check the board for swaps.

Date	1 JAN	8 JAN		15 JAN	22 JAN	29 JAN
Service	Morning Worship	Morning Worship	Evening Service	Eco Service	Morning Communion	Joint Service
Time	10.30 am	10.30 am	6.30 pm	10.30 am	10.30 am	10.30 am
Leaders	Sandy Smith	Morag Smith	Partnership	Liz Delafield	Bernie Stevens	Rev Kurauone Mutimwii
Elder Duty	P Oliver	D Phillips	Zoom Service ~computer	B Stevens	S Smith / P Oliver	A Stevens
Door	M Smith	M Hardie		H Elsden	G Elsden	P Grieve
Reader				D Green		
Flowers	Christmas	D Green		silk flowers	B Platt	silk flowers
Coffee	H Elsden	M Hardie		D Green	S & M Smith	B & A Stevens
Notes	EPIPHANY	BAPTISM OF THE LORD	Meeting ID: 821 8150 8988 Password: 716978		HOLY COMMUNION	5th SUNDAY JOINT SERVICE WITHIN PARTNERSHIP

CHURCH REGISTERS - none

LECTIONARY for JANUARY 2023

1 JAN: Ecclesiastes 3.1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21.1-6a; Matthew 25.31-46
 8 JAN: Isaiah 42.1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10.34-43; Matthew 3.13-17
 15 JAN: Isaiah 49.1-7; Psalm 40.1-11; 1 Corinthians 1.1-9; John 1.29-42
 22 JAN: Isaiah 9.1-4; Psalm 27.1,4-9; 1 Corinthians 1.10-18; Matthew 4.12-23
 29 JAN: Micah 6.1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1.18-31; Matthew 5.1-12

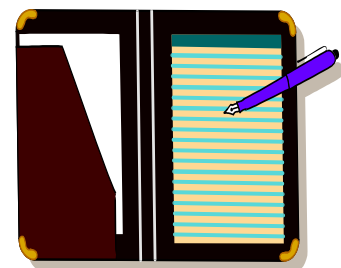
INTRUDERS

At Christmas **1977**, vandals broke into our **Victorian** church and set a fire which ruined the roof timbers.

Days before Christmas **2022** thieves again broke into church and damaged a number of doors. One exterior door was fixed though the internal doors may take a little longer. We rarely keep any significant cash on the premises but unfortunately this time there was the sum of £37 from book loans, waiting to be blessed on Christmas Sunday. Perhaps they could smell it, for they battered the vestry door, with our own tools (!) even though it wasn't locked (!) and took the cash. The Police have been helpful, though not hopeful. Elders will be looking at a number of steps in response to this incident.

Bernie

CALENDAR



.....to the best of the editor's knowledge, unless you know better.....

JANUARY 2023

Mon 02	
Tues 03	11am ~ 2 pm WARM SPACE in coffee lounge
Wed 04	10.30 am Elders' Meeting - church 1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE - Swann Grove
Thu 05	
Fri 06	2.00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat 07	10am~12 noon Coffee morning ~ for Leprosy
Sun 08	9.30 am Breakfast Before 11.45 am CHURCH MEETING
Mon 09	
Tues 10	11am - 2 pm WARM SPACE in coffee lounge
Wed 11	10.30 am Elders' Single Agenda item Meeting - church 1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE - Swann Grove
Thu 12	7.30 pm Worship Group meeting on Zoom
Fri 13	10am Management meeting at Church 2 pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat 14	10am~12 noon 'Drop In' Coffee & Prayer Time
Mon 16	
Tues 17	11am ~ 2 pm WARM SPACE in coffee lounge
Wed 18	WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY BEGINS 1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE - Swann Grove
Thu 19	
Fri 20	2pm Choir Rehearsal
Mon 23	
Tues 24	11am ~ 2 pm WARM SPACE in coffee lounge
Wed 25	1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE - Swann Grove
Thu 26	
Fri 27	2pm Choir Rehearsal
Sat 28	2.30 pm FILM MATINEE
Sun 29	Leprosy Sunday
Mon 30	
Tues 31	11am ~ 2 pm WARM SPACE in coffee lounge

Sudoku answers...

3	8	6	2	7	1	5	9	4
1	5	2	9	8	4	7	6	3
4	7	9	6	5	3	1	2	8
6	4	3	1	2	8	9	7	5
8	1	5	3	9	7	6	4	2
2	9	7	4	6	5	8	3	1
5	6	8	7	3	2	4	1	9
7	3	1	8	4	9	2	5	6
9	2	4	5	1	6	3	8	7

Last date for FEB 2023 copy is 15 JAN 2023

Published & Printed by Alison & Bernie Stevens 01625 877 180
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