

C H U R C H N E W S

Kingston United Reformed Church

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020



We're open again for tea and coffee
Socially distanced, of course, and currently on Mondays & Fridays

www.kingstonurc.org

Charity No. 1131880

This edition edited by Jean Thompson

At the time of writing (13/7) there is still a restriction on gathered worship but KURC has in place:

By Zoom:

Sundays	10.30 Worship & Communion
Mondays – Saturdays	2.00 Prayers
Wednesdays	7.30 'Take Time' Spiritual Meditation & Discussion with Stuart Chandler 8.00 As above with Rachel & James Mason
Thursdays	8.00 Janine's Thursday Night Soirée
Any time	Links to worship resources for use with children/young people are circulated each week by email. If you would like to be included in these emails, <i>please email Sally Butler on youth@kingstonurc.org or Bron Robinson on bronhr@gmail.com</i>
Daily via email	Daily Prayers. Please contact Teresa James if you would like to be included.

For details of Zoom IDs and passwords, please refer to Catherine Treweek's weekly email sent out on Fridays or contact Catherine by email: kingstonurc@gmail.com or by phone: 07807 351801 10am – 4pm weekdays only.

By Skype:

Mondays to Sundays 11.00 Coffee Mornings. Timing is a bit later on Sundays, starting shortly after the service ends. This is an informal time when everyone is welcome to pop in or stay for a longer chat.

For details please contact Rhiannon Bone by email: rhiannon.bone@gmail.com or by phone: 07837 390330

Coffee Servery Mondays and Fridays 11am – 1.30pm
in the sanctuary

Please check KURC's website at www.kingstonurc.org for possible amendments.

From Lesley:

I have 3 email addresses:

1. Catherine opens and checks – minister@kingstonurc.org - this means that Catherine either answers or she checks that I have replied. She keeps me on my toes.
2. Another one is lesley998877@gmail.com – this one only Lesley opens. It is for private/confidential matters, ie private in terms of Church business and Church people's stories. It is for Church people to use.
3. The last one covers family/zoom quizzes/gym/Newcastle United etc.

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STOP PRESS (received as going to print)

CHRISTIAN AID

As the coronavirus cases decline here in the UK, elsewhere, in the seven priority places, our help is needed. Supporters of the Christian Aid Coronavirus Emergency Appeal are signposted to the website below:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/coronavirus-emergency-appeal>

LESLEY'S LETTER



Dear All,

One thing that would really help would be some certainty. But where does that come from at the moment? Should we leave the house? The pubs need our money but is it safe? The shops are businesses that need our support but is it wise to go to them? Stay at home. Yes, but what about our mental health? Even the most introvert of us is starting to become chatty. People need people. People of faith definitely need people, otherwise we invent a religion all our own. We will all eventually have to leave the house, even the most shielded of us - but when will it be safe? Safe for us? Safe for those we love?

And just before someone says – ‘a hah I know where we can get certainty - what about science? There is only one view there’. Let me offer this quote from Richard Rhor, “My scientist friends have come up with things like 'principles of uncertainty' and dark holes. They're willing to live inside imagined hypotheses and theories, but many religious folks insist on answers that are always true. We love closure, resolution and clarity, while thinking that we are people of 'faith'! How strange that the very word 'faith' has come to mean its exact opposite.”

During this time if someone tells you something, demanding you accept it exactly, there is something wrong. All is tentative. The virus is still being explored. Balance of risks is the phrase.

We are moving out, but we might have to go back. Let's remember though, we did not hatch from an egg 2 minutes ago. We have wisdom. We have discovered some stuff. There are things we know to be eternally true - positive and negative certainties. We need to harvest the positive ones.

Alongside that, we need to wonder about our delight in frightening ourselves with the news. Why do we do that? Often, we are like teenagers with horror films, delighting in watching the screen from behind the sofa. But this is not fiction. It is real and painful. Be cautious about how much you watch.

Positive certainties? We need to suck the juice out of them. They are about love and God and life and meaning - truths about the reality of life as a tough thing and still God is with us. Let us take time with those certainties. We need to feel the power of them as we make our choices at this time.

Yours, Lesley

PS Date for your diary – Gift Weekend – 26/27 September.

MEMO FROM MARTYN



A lot has changed since mid-May! Do you feel it? It seems to be colder for a start. That's not how the summer is supposed to work, is it? I've noticed that it has been a lot windier than usual too. Is this all part of global climate change or can we blame the virus?!!

How do you feel about Covid-19 at the moment? The risks seem to be getting lower. Lots of announcements from the government, as they allow things to open up again, suggest that the worst is over, for now at least. The latest Office for National Statistics Covid-19 survey results suggest that about 1 in every 3,900 people have the virus at the moment and that most areas of the country are stable or seeing a reduction in cases with just a few showing small increases.

But what about taking those first tentative steps outside or beyond the essential shopping; risking a visit to a favourite restaurant or non-essential shop or to get our hair cut? The risk has not gone away. We could still meet that one infected person and end up as the one-person next time they do the survey. But life is like that, full of risks, many of which we are so familiar with that we pay them little heed.

What about the church? We've taken some small steps with the re-opening of the coffee service. Two days a week for now. A small start, but for a few people something they've been desperate for. Of course, it's been done carefully. The risk assessment has been prepared; calculations on the numbers who can socially distance within the building have been done and the cleaning materials got ready. Most importantly, enough people have volunteered to run it. Let's see how it goes and where it leads. Encouragingly we are also seeing a few people enquiring about using rooms in the premises again too.

For some though the risks are still too great. While we can be grateful for the volunteers and staff whose willingness is allowing these small steps to start, we need to be mindful of others. Zoom will continue to play a big part in our church's life for some time to come, I am sure.

We can rejoice in these new signs of hope; but then, as Christians, believing in an almighty God, we've known there was hope all along, haven't we?



PASTORAL NEWS

Church attenders continue to offer pastoral support to one another either as part of a structured pastoral system or informally. Although our circumstances differ widely, whether we live alone or with others, we can offer support by phone or internet and pray for one another.

The callous death of George Floyd has traumatised some of our members and challenged us all to reflect on how we can work for a more inclusive and fairer world.

As we move into the next stage of meeting at a social distance, we all need to be mindful of others and not to forget those still feeling isolated.

Out of care for people's privacy, Personal News has been deleted from the web edition of Church News. Anyone wishing to receive the full edition of Church News by email, should send an email to churchnews@kingstonurc.org

Persecution in India

On 4 June a 14-year-old Christian boy was murdered by Hindu nationalists who took him from his home in Odisha State to a remote location, where police later discovered his body.

On 20 May Hindu nationalists broke into the homes of three Christian families in Chhattisgarh State and beat them, causing serious injuries. The families fled for their lives and have been warned never to return home.

On 4 May three Christian families in another village in Chhattisgarh were beaten and threatened with death when they refused to participate in worship associated with the animist religion, which is practised by the majority of villagers there.

Please pray:

- For God to bring a complete stop to the violence being perpetrated against Christian communities, so that they can live out their faith peacefully.
- That Hindu nationalists across the country will be convicted and will completely reject all forms of violence.
- For complete physical and mental healing for the survivors of the attacks, and for peace and comfort for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

(Information from Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

Sue Shaw



Brief Notes from Church Meeting by Zoom – 14. 6.20.

- Elders' meetings are currently held every two weeks by Zoom.
- We have three new Elders and one returning Elder – Carol Clack, Robin Pilbeam, Bron Robinson and Ray Erskine – ordination and induction will take place when this is possible.
- The Management Committee have been working hard to ensure our staff and the building are safe and cared for during this closed period. Three of the staff have been furloughed under the Government scheme.
- The church has accepted Synod's suggestion to pay a small percentage of our contribution to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund at the present time, the balance being paid at a later date. This will help with the current budget deficit.
- The Elders are studying a booklet the URC has published outlining what the "new normal" might look like following Covid 19.

New Elders – Bron Robinson



For those of you who don't know me, I'm Bron (Bronwen) Robinson, and I have recently been nominated by you to become an Elder of KURC. I've thought about Eldership before, but didn't feel that it was the right time. This time round, with a drop in paid working hours, and generally the place that I am in my life, I felt called that it was the right time.

I was born in Manchester to Welsh-speaking parents. My father (a Methodist minister) taught in a theological college and Manchester University, and my mother (former teacher) had her work cut out raising 4 children and looking after an aunt with dementia. We moved to Anglesey, Wales when I was 9. I'm sort of bilingual, I understand the gist of most things in spoken Welsh, but my spoken / written Welsh is not great. My husband (Nick) and I met in university, we've lived in Kingston since 1987 and we have 2 grown-up children.

Church life wasn't that exciting for me once we had moved to Wales. We were members of a small Welsh Methodist chapel, the congregation were mainly a small number of "really old" people (about my age now!); there were no other children and I usually fell asleep during sermons. I tried Sunday School at another chapel in the village for a while, but language was a bit of a barrier for me. University was a chance to do other things on a Sunday morning (e.g. sleep!) and I didn't really step back inside a church until the early 1990s. The same was true of Nick.

So, what made us come back to church? It was the KURC Parent and Toddler group! I started bringing Tomos and Bethan to the group, it was fun, the helpers were incredibly welcoming and we really liked the feel of the place and the ethos. We thought about our children and reckoned that, if we didn't give them a choice, they would never get to experience going to church. If we did, they may choose to leave later on in life (as we did) but at least they have been given that choice and something of God would rub off on them. Neither of them go to church at the moment, but they are decent and kind adults. They thoroughly enjoyed the youth activities, built relationships with people of all backgrounds and ages, including many wonderful grandparent-aged people (their own grandparents living far away). So, thank you KURC for helping us to bring our children up.

My own involvement with KURC to date has mainly been with the Young People's Sunday Groups, but I've also been involved with pastoral work, operating the projector, occasional coffee serving, choir, fund-raising activities, etc. During the recent lock-down I've even become a regular at Bible Study and have surprised myself that I can enjoy that too! So, now my faith journey

enters a new phase. I'm looking forward to being ordained as an Elder when the current situation allows and to serving God and KURC in whatever way I can.

Finally, I've just celebrated a big birthday. My brothers (one in Anglesey, one in Ealing) composed and recorded their own version of the Simon & Garfunkel song "Mrs Robinson" for me. The chorus included the line: "God bless you please, Mrs Robinson; Kingston URC is where you pray, hey hey hey, hey hey hey".

Sums it up really!

Profiles of other new Elders will appear in later editions of Church News. Ed.



A recent *Reform* article introduced readers to Dr John Bradbury, incoming United Reformed Church General Secretary.

John Bradbury will be helping to lead the URC through some challenging times, trying to work out how things have changed and how things need to change.

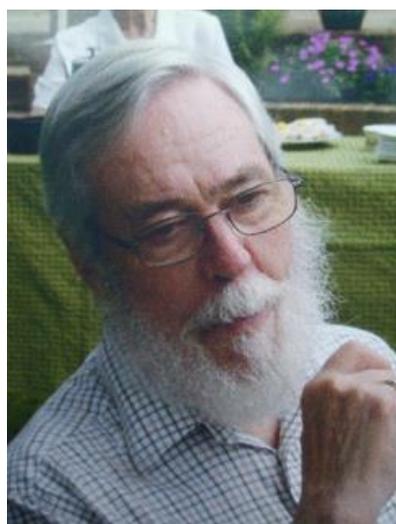
In answer to the question "*What's your hope for the coming years?*", he replied "My hope is that we can be faithful, not fearful. This is a really difficult moment to be Church in the place where we are called to be, but God has placed us into the situation we're in. The Church never dies. God always calls God's people to be present in the midst of the world. We need to learn to be faithful enough that we never lose hope. And to be faithful enough not to pretend that we are the be all and end all, and that the preservation of our own structures must be our primary concern. If we can be faithful, not fearful, that would be, to my mind, an amazing gift that the Spirit could give us."

T R I B U T E S



Helen was born in Bromborough in the Wirral in 1935. The war years were spent in Rhyl and later in Southfields where Helen attended Putney High School. At 20 she married John and moved to Ghana. On return the children were born and the family moved to Grove Crescent. During her working life Helen worked at the House of Commons (PA to Barbara Castle, Labour MP), Kingston Hospital, Kingston University and Hillcroft College. Despite coping with diabetes for 60 years, Helen had a zest for life which involved many parties, choral singing, politics (don't

mention Brexit!), travel to various parts of the world, volunteering at the Samaritans and the Bradbury Centre and opening her house to lodgers. She was known for wearing purple (more purple clothes than the Pope?!) and had a large circle of longstanding friendships. Helen was a faithful member of KURC, in addition being a Welcomer and server at the Coffee Bar.



Barry Davies was a friend of KURC through his wife, Lorraine. He was a faithful supporter of the Men's Forum and, on his motor scooter, enjoyed travelling to all the Open Gardens during the summer. Barry was a people's person and is remembered by many for his cheerful conversations.



Thank you from Steve Wenman

I was brought up to believe that one should reply to all the correspondence you receive. Much as I would love to have been able to do that, I have come to the conclusion that I shall have to admit defeat!

Sarah, Nicola and I have been overwhelmed by the avalanche of beautiful cards and kind letters of sympathy that we received following Tony's death. We read them all and were so touched by the messages of love and support and were comforted to hear how people remember him. We didn't realise that Tony knew so many people (or should I say that so many people knew Tony?!), and we have been delighted to learn how his influence in so many spheres has helped so many people. It made us feel very proud of him and so lucky to have had him in our lives.

We hope that those of you who sent us a card or a letter, will accept our heartfelt thanks for taking the time and trouble to get in touch. We really do appreciate it.

We would like to have a service of thanksgiving for Tony at some point in the future and hope that you will be able to join us.

With best wishes from us all,

Steve



Janine's 'Still Life'

It's not possible to have Church flowers at the moment, but hopefully we can return to a flower rota at some date in the future. **Jean T.**

Ministry and Mission Fund (M&M)

What is M&M? - M&M is the Ministry and Mission fund of the United Reformed church. In 2018 the M&M fund was £19 million. Over 80% of the fund is used to pay for the 400 or so stipendiary ministers and church related community workers and their training. (Lesley and Suk In, for example.)

Where does the money come from? – The M&M fund comes from the 1,400 local churches that make up the URC. Ultimately that means people like you and me. Each Synod of the URC is asked to provide a certain sum to the central church each year. They in turn ask each local church to contribute a certain amount to the fund. For Southern Synod the amount requested is based on how many members the church has, the scoping and church income. (Scoping being the number of ministers allocated to the church.) We are a large church by URC standards (average congregation size is 35). In 2019 KURC was asked to pay £76,848 towards this fund.

What is our responsibility? – In the basis of union, the first call on a local church's finances is to pay their M&M contribution. This respects what the bible talks about with the tithe coming from the first fruits of what we have (not the leftovers!). Our contribution may seem large but it helps enable some smaller churches to continue to receive ministry and witness for God in other parts of the country.

How has coronavirus affected things? – For many churches like us the lockdown and subsequent closure of church buildings has led to a significant loss of income. The Southern Synod understands that for many churches, times are tough financially. They have agreed that we pay only 50% of our M&M each month for now. This is just a deferral of payment and the expectation is that once the buildings reopen and people can use our rooms again, money will come in to enable us to pay the full amount.

How does my giving affect M&M? – Our offering to the church (which is part of our response to the amazing generosity of God in pouring out his love through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and through his risen life in the world and the church today, through the Holy Spirit) enables us to fund the work that goes on at KURC but also contributes to the wider URC through the M&M fund.

If you have any questions or want to know more about M&M, we are organising for John Ellis from the URC to come to talk to a church meeting soon. John is a financial expert and engaging speaker.

Martyn Verge



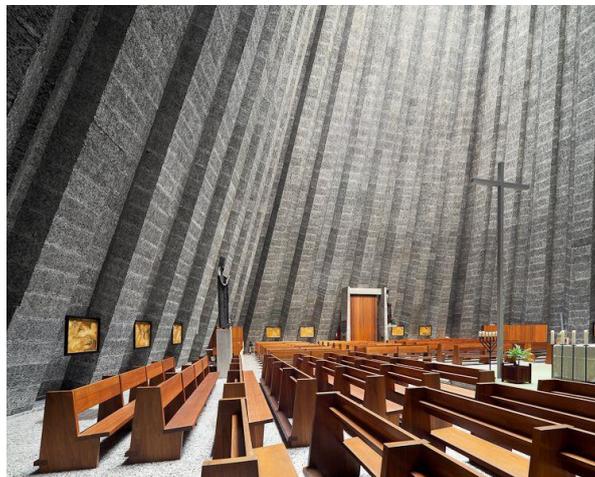
UNUSUAL CHURCHES OF THE WORLD



A 'Brutalist' Church in Belgium

Is this the ugliest church in the world? Looking like a garden compost bin, or missile silo, the church of St Rita in Harelbeke, Belgium, was designed by the architect Leon Stynen in the mid-1960s in the concrete 'Brutalist' style popular at that time. However unappealing from the outside, I found it to be surprisingly attractive inside. The walls are made of something resembling blocks of crushed aluminium strips. As in a medieval gothic cathedral, the eye is drawn upwards towards the roof. This is where the light enters. The fixed items of furniture, including the altar, are all made of concrete. The only decorative features are a simple cross and a metal statue of St Rita. I would certainly agree with the commentator who said that the interior 'bestows peace and serenity'. But the forbidding exterior does not exactly shout 'welcome'!

John Fisher



ALL LIVES MATTER

My Friends,

I was recently invited to join a zoom meeting to reflect and pray on the events following the recent death of George Floyd. I was of a mind to, but felt that I needed time to consider how to coherently respond to such an event.

This is not the first time a person on the edge of society has had their life ended by those who had power or authority over them and it will not be the last. Closer to home is the case of Sheku Bayoh who died in Kirkcaldy in 2015.

Whilst not at the hands of those in authority, remember Stephen Lawrence or anyone who was different in some way who have suffered violence or oppression. Those on the edge of society are often subject to many small and insidious events that are so commonplace that they become just part of their way of life.

We are all responsible for this.

From my perspective, I can say that I have suffered from being judged by the colour of my skin, but I have never allowed this to affect the way I live my life. I could recount many a tale of some slight I have experienced whilst at work or shopping or just out travelling from one place to another.

Interestingly, I did not experience much in the way of this whilst at school, yes, I was teased but more because I wore short trousers rather than the colour of my skin.

People are people and we are all made in the image of God.

The recent soul searching that has emanated from the death of George Floyd is, for me, like rending their clothes on hearing of this heinous event, but no amount of protestation or demolition of statues is going to undo the past.

Professor Geoff Palmer says that we should not pull down the past but leave it standing with some commentary to its context and remind us of where we have come from. Did we know who Cecil Rhodes was or did we realise that the great and the good were paid compensation by the Government at that time to free the enslaved?

Our city streets and squares are lined with the booty of the blood, sweat and tears of countless souls and there is no way we can eradicate this.

The future is in our hands, we can influence the way we respond and move on in this journey that is about equality for all. Change will not be instantaneous but by incremental steps.

I remember the boycott of produce from South Africa in the 1970's, and even to this day I think twice when picking up a bottle of South African wine!

Our response to the event on 25 May 2020 in Minneapolis should be in the same vein - life changing.

We all need to call out discrimination and prejudice of any kind, no matter how small or insignificant it might seem, and remember that nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate any of us from the love of God.

Brandon Williams

Brandon is a long-standing member of KURC and now lives in Scotland.

oooOooo

What they don't tell you

11-c-1 Firms receiving UK government help for Corona Virus

The [UK] Bank of England published on 4-Jun-2020 the names of 53 companies that had outstanding loans under the government's Covid Corporate Financing Facility - the total of these loans was £16.25 billion. Tax Watch UK published an analysis of this list on 6-Jun-2020 under the title, *Tax avoidance, bailouts and bribery – The UK government's Corona Corporate Finance Facility*. It notes that 13 companies of these companies have close ties with tax havens and have a total borrowing under this facility of £4.9 billion – details are at: [https://www.taxwatchuk.org/ccff_companies/] [<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/bank-of-england-market-operations-guide/results-and-usage-data>]

for more interesting snippets go to:

<https://onshorerresident.wordpress.com/>

Christine Thompson

Church News is currently being published every two months. The next editor is Robin Pilbeam. Copy to Robin by Sunday, 13 September.

News from Antigua Street Pastors

Some of you may remember I spent a large part of the last two years working in Antigua in the Caribbean. I am still in regular contact with my successor there, Barry, as well as other Street Pastor friends. So, here's a little update: The island went into lockdown in March and thankfully the prompt reaction meant casualties from Covid 19 were few. There have been three deaths, all people newly arrived from the UK, and a further 26 quarantined cases of whom 22 have recovered. As people are still restricted in their movements, the Street Pastors have stopped patrolling but have maintained a weekly soup

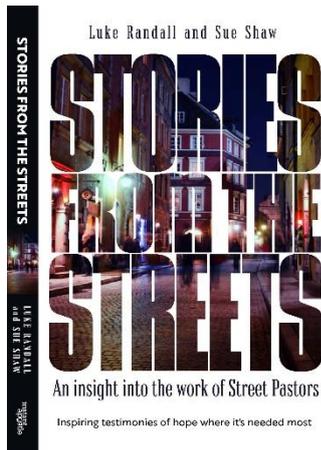


kitchen every Wednesday. Around sixty people are served a hearty filling soup by Street Pastors working from a refurbished container close to the city centre. As the island relies heavily on imported food, the government has wisely distributed free fruit and vegetable seed so people can grow their own food. Even in the capital, many people live beside a small plot of land. Tourism has opened up again. Flights from the UK resumed in early June.

Sadly, two more of the street sleepers have died. One was Kenmore, an older man and the other Carrey only 47 years old.

Churches are meeting again. Families have to sit together and everyone has to book their seats in advance. Some people have chosen not to go back yet.





While I was working in Antigua, I was invited to co-author a book about Street Pastors to be called ‘Stories from the Streets.’ The majority of the book is about Street Pastors’ work in the UK but three chapters are devoted to Antigua. The book is currently with the editors but due to be published in November by Instant Apostle. So watch this space!

Sue Shaw

Natasha’s Tanzanian Memories

My memories of being in Tanzania for 17 years are very vast, but I just want to share with Church News readers a little piece of Tanzanian history which might interest some of you. My memory of the little village called Masorocco, the birthplace of my ex-husband, and nearby village Magila, which are situated in the Muheza District, was triggered by an old photo which was sent to me by one of my ex-relatives. It shows the small village Magila near Muheza, Tanga region, where Christianity was introduced inland in Tanzania (then Tanganyika) and the first church and school were built there in 1843 by an Anglican missionary, Johann Krapf.

Although Catholicism arrived much earlier in the country in the 15th century, which was brought by the Portuguese, it did not spread inland, and the Roman Catholic Franciscans established a mission in Kilwa along the coast. The Anglican dominance became very predominant in central Tanzania, and later when I already had my two children and we were living in the centre of Tanzania, I was baptised into the Anglican faith in the local Swahili church.

The village of my ex-husband consisted of only a few houses in the 70^s when I spent more than one month there. It was hidden in deep forest just next to the village of Magila. The next and only “civilised” place was a larger village called Muheza which had one or two shops and the postal point, and I had to walk there when the supplies of certain things, like kerosene, sugar or dried shark fish ran low in Masorocco. In the company of a child or any other local woman, I had to walk approximately 5 kilometres by the only main road, or walk by a pathway through the dense forest. Now I hear from my son who is in Tanzania, that Masorocco consists of 7 houses and the descendants of the late Mzee Geldart Mhina and his wife Agnes Mamhina live there and take care of it.

Muheza then became the established provincial town with a good high school and a large hospital which is operated by Anglican missionaries. Muheza is situated on a junction where the roads to the Amani Nature Reserve and to Pangani branch off the main Tanga highway. Now these places are tourist attractions, as near Magila there is a famous mountain and a lake, and the forests which are preserved by the government. In Magila itself there is a small museum of where and how Christianity was introduced to the country.

Masorocco Now -
my ex's home village



Found on an old tea-towel in KURC... by John Watts

Ignatius of Loyola

*Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil, and not to seek for rest;
To labour, and not to ask for any reward -
Save that of knowing that we do Thy will.*

...a later addition, by an unknown hand....

And how will They note the path you tread,
When all's been done,
And all's been said?
With a pat on the back, or a pat on the head?
And when we come to tell *your* story,
What were you there for?
Graft, or glory? *Anon*

VIRTUAL LUNCHTIME RECITAL THURSDAY, 23 JULY



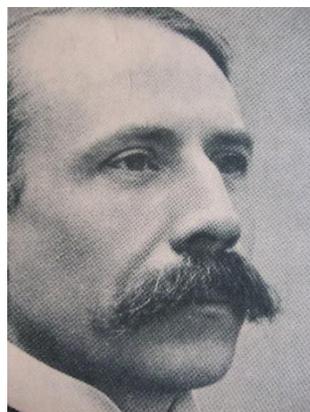
Just before 'lockdown' Constance Chow very kindly agreed to play Elgar's own piano arrangement of the Enigma Variations in Kingston URC on 23 July. Sadly, it is still not feasible to give a live performance in the church, but we're going to try something a bit different which we feel sure you will enjoy.

Constance is going to video a performance of the Enigma Variations on her own grand piano. This will be streamed 'live' on YouTube at 12.30pm on Thursday, 23 July via the following link <https://youtu.be/dl3mZQbxHRc>. From then on you will be able to watch and listen wherever and whenever you wish.

Instead of a retiring collection, Constance has suggested that donations be made to Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness. Constance's JustGiving webpage can be found here. <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kurc-virtual-lunchtime-recital>

Though seldom heard nowadays, Elgar's piano score of 'Enigma' (1899) is just as captivating as the orchestral version and reveals many hidden facets of this familiar and much-loved work. The video will include a brief introductory talk by Constance, notes about the music, and photos of all the 'friends pictured within'.

The Music Committee



Elgar

Why should we encourage diversity on the Eldership team?

John Watts' article in the last Church News raised some interesting questions about representation, inclusion and diversity with regards to Elders' elections, and how this aligns with our belief that we are all one body under Christ. I would like to have a stab at exploring some of these questions here.

What counts as under-representation? Well, one might argue that it would involve the number of people of a particular group in the leadership positions being proportionate to that of those they represent. But under this model, if you represent a minority, you will always be on the back foot. A local example of this could be seen in the style of service we see in the Sunday morning Zoom worship – very similar in style and content to the 10am service, which suits the greater number of people in the church. What about those who prefer to attend the 11:30, or 6:30, or lunch-time service on Wednesdays, or just like to attend a different service for a change sometimes? This is not intended to be a criticism of these decisions – at least, not a bitchy one! – as everyone involved in the decisions about worship have had to make some rapid and tough choices in an unprecedented context, and these issues are now beginning to be explored. However, it serves to illustrate my point – if your particular preferred worship style happens to be in a minority, you will just have to wait for a bit more normality before it can continue. Thus, a balanced representation is not necessarily the same as having an *equal voice*.

And this argument comes before the fact that in the world outside the church doors, statistics show that a 1:1 ratio of people in power to the groups they serve has not been achieved. Thus, using the Galatians passage about “neither Jews nor Greeks” as an argument against affirmative action is a fallacy – we, as a society, do *not* tend to practise this belief. And this is something that we must highlight and challenge if, as a church, we would like to act as an example of Christ's love. But to simply ignore our differences in favour of unity is akin to responding to the Black Lives Matter movement with a cry (or social media post) of “All Lives Matter” – it ignores the very real circumstances which people from under-represented groups live under, whilst conveniently skating over our own roles in maintaining those circumstances and keeping the centre of power firmly within our own hands. Thus, it effectively ignores the very voices of those who dare to proclaim that their lives, and opinions, matter too. Far from being an effort at tokenism, or a quick fix

to a very real problem, highlighting under-representation and encouraging widening participation, may be a first step on a journey towards real change.

In nominating members to Eldership, we are perhaps most likely to vote for the people who are part of our own social worlds. It is much harder to naturally think beyond our immediate social circles, and having the instruction that certain groups are under-represented may make us think wider – who are the people in these groups who we generally have less to do with, but maybe with whom we have had conversations in the past and who might have unique gifts and insight to offer?

This may go some way to answer the question of why so few “Greeks” might be nominated. As to why they (or we, writing as a person with a disability) might turn the position down, if offered?

Ask us.

Not literally “why don’t you stand for such-and-such”, but just make an effort to get to *know* members and friends of the church outside of our own demographic, church practice and social group. Listen to what matters to other people – their struggles in life, their triumphs. Recognition and understanding can form the beginnings of real change.

Rhiannon Bone



*Taken from: **We Will Meet When the Danger is Over** by John Bell, Wild Goose Resource Group, The Iona Community*

We will join to give thanks and sing gladly,
we will join to break bread and share wine;
and the peace that we pass to each other
will be more than a casual sign.

So let’s make with each other a promise
that what we’ve all come through is behind
we will share what we missed and find meaning
in the things that once troubled our mind.

Until then may we always discover
faith and love to determine our way.
That’s our hope and God’s will and our calling
for our lives and for every new day.

EDITOR'S AND OTHERS' RAMBLINGS



Hampton Court Park by Bernie Gulliford who worships with us on Sunday evenings



New Life on the River Thames, Kingston, by Jenny Tarbutt



NHS Thank You, spotted by editor on local walk

To make a financial donation to Kingston URC, please see the last page

There's something wrong with my computer

There's something wrong with my
computer
It's gone on the blink
It's making strange noises
I don't know what to think.

I rang the computer helpline
Listened to an automated voice
Offering me options one to seven
But which is the right choice?

At last I get through to a human
Who talks slowly and patiently
About servers and bytes and
broadband
And hard drive capacity.

Have you checked your
connections?
Where am I supposed to look?
You can't really expect me
To refer to the handbook?

I try to go it alone
Be brave and hit a few keys
But what's happening now?
I seem to have made it freeze.

Now I fear a knock at the door
From an officer at the police station
For according to my computer
I've performed an illegal operation.

I feel like a criminal
I'm not sure why
I was only typing a message
To the local W.I.

Will I be hauled in front of a judge?
Forced to stand in the dock
Thrown into a prison cell
Hands tied with chain and padlock.

I didn't know I was in the wrong
I will plead in my defence,
Have mercy on me please m'lord
I'm sorry for being so dense.

Perhaps I'll be put on probation
Be tagged or given a fine
Maybe I'll get an ASBO
Or be banned from going online.

Now there's a new message on my
screen
It says you have an infection
I'd better be off to the doctor's
For a thorough examination.

The doctor says I have a virus
That I sound very stressed
He writes out a prescription and
Books me further tests.

I've clearly caught a dreadful
disease
That affects my ability to think
There's nothing wrong with my
computer
It's me who's on the blink.

Sue Shaw

Christian Aid Week 2020 – Feedback and Thankyou



As with all things, COVID 19 impacted Christian Aid and how we in the Kingston Group could fundraise. After considering a few alternatives, you will know we decided upon starting the JustGiving page and set up a gruelling challenge, of the sort Vaughan has organized and undertaken in the past! We challenged our ministers, Lesley and Suk In, together with Jonathan and Mark from All Saints and St. John's, Karl from Kingston Methodists, Father Martin from St. Luke's and myself to walk a minimum of 10,000 steps for every day in May. We are pleased to say all completed the task, each doing well over 300,000 steps **with a total of 2,683,104 steps walked.**

Through their efforts, often in higher temperatures than in the Sahara and without the usual seasonal rains, the walkers persevered. Through this and the overwhelming generosity of the supporting church members, friends and families, from Kingston to Japan, we have so far raised **over £18,000 for Christian Aid.**

See www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kingston-caw2020

This includes approx. £700 for the quiz, which, at the time of writing we are planning to re-run on Friday 17th July.

This has been a **tremendous result** for our group and **we thank everyone** for their generosity both in money and time to support this in walking, donating and managing the social media sites that ensured we kept this alive, being one of many positives in what is a very difficult time for many.

Christian Aid's organization in the UK has been affected by the overall decline in giving due to Covid 19 and they have had to reduce some staff numbers, furlough employees and take other measures to reduce costs. We hope as restrictions ease, they can get their teams back up to strength, to continue their great work, alongside their local partners in the countries they work in.

As all governments, including our own, struggle with the burden of covering the economic cost of the coronavirus epidemic, we should continue to work, to ensure that our aims to eradicate global poverty stay true to our belief that we should love our neighbours as ourselves.

For more information see christianaid.org.uk

Thank you all again for your continued generosity in supporting Christian Aid.
Ray Charlton

Oh, those early mornings....

Any time of the year really, but perhaps more often in the summer... Too early to get breakfast, can't go back to sleep. But then Radio 4 awakes from its overnight slumbers, and we're into worlds that otherwise never touch our urban lives – the Shipping Forecast takes us mentally all round these islands; Farming Today takes us into the lives and struggles of all the people who work to feed us. And in between, Prayer for the Day.

I have heard it said 'Who cares what's on Radio 4 anyway?' Well, it's worth caring because every so often you come across a piece of pure 'radio gold'.

Philip Blackledge is the Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Melrose, and told us how much he was missing his choir, in the pandemic. And then we heard this:

.... the first prayer I ever truly prayed was music. I was a singer at a Cathedral at the time, and although employed by the church I was an avowed atheist. We were singing an Agnus Dei by William Byrd, a composer who lived through some of the most tumultuous times in the reformation. I remember thinking this music, written four hundred years ago, was as fresh and vibrant as though the ink was still wet, and I felt connected to everybody who's ever sung it, and everybody who's ever heard it, and Byrd himself who wrote it, and in that choir in that rare moment, no voice predominated, no one person stuck out or led, we were locked into a paradise of pure harmony. It was communion - with one another, with those long gone, with those who were yet to come, and with God himself. And when the final amen sounded, I knew something of God that I hadn't known before, and that I couldn't put into words even now, but whatever it was, it was harmony.

BBC Radio 4, 'Prayer for the Day', 2nd July 2020 – worth caring about.

John Watts

Kingston Child Contact Centre are holding their AGM by Zoom on Sunday, 16 August, at 5 pm. A Magistrate from the Family Courts is the keynote speaker. Everyone welcome. Subsequent details from Lesley.

ARCHIVE OF THE MONTH

Our photo this month shows members of our church's Cycling Club around the year 1900. By this date the 'penny-farthing' had been superseded by the modern 'safety bicycle' with chain drive and pneumatic tyres. The London to Portsmouth road was a favourite route with numerous pubs along the way and virtually no cars.



Covid-19 quotes of the month:

From 2 Corinthians:

“The Father of mercies does not stay two metres away” (1v3)

“The Spirit gets behind all our masks” (3v16)

John Proctor, outgoing General Secretary of the United Reformed Church

“People are like teabags, when the water gets hot, the good stuff comes out.”

“How can we find a happy balance between offline and online expressions of Church? We can have both ‘bricks and clicks’.”

Both quotes from Premier Radio

IBRA READINGS FOR AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

RUNNING THE RACE: THE BIBLE AT THE OLYMPICS

1 Renewed in spirit

Saturday 1 August Hebrews 12:1–13

2 The nations as one

Sunday 2 August Psalm 46
 Monday 3 August Deuteronomy 4:1–8
 Tuesday 4 August Psalm 100
 Wednesday 5 August Isaiah 2:1–4
 Thursday 6 August Psalm 33
 Friday 7 August Acts 17:16–31
 Saturday 8 August Revelation 22:1–7

THE BIBLE AT THE BEACH

1 Resting

Sunday 9 August Mark 6:30–32
 Monday 10 August Psalm 131
 Tuesday 11 August Luke 12:24–31
 Wednesday 12 August Luke 10:38–42
 Thursday 13 August Genesis 2:1–3
 Friday 14 August Psalm 23
 Saturday 15 August Psalm 95:1–6

THE BIBLE AT THE BEACH

2 At the beach

Sunday 16 August Luke 5:1–11
 Monday 17 August Mark 2:13–14
 Tuesday 18 August Mark 3:7–11
 Wednesday 19 August Mark 4:1–9
 Thursday 20 August Mark 4:35–40
 Friday 21 August Job 38:1–11
 Saturday 22 August John 21:15–19

ROMANS 9–16

1 God's faithfulness

Sunday 23 August Romans 9:1–5
 Monday 24 August Romans 9:6–18
 Tuesday 25 August Romans 9:19–33
 Wednesday 26 August Romans 10:1–13
 Thursday 27 August Romans 10:14–21
 Friday 28 August Romans 11:1–12
 Saturday 29 August Romans 11:13–24

ROMANS 9–16

2 Different gifts

Sunday 30 August Romans 11:25–36
 Monday 31 August Romans 12:1–8
 Tuesday 1 September Romans 12:9–13
 Wednesday 2 Sept Romans 12:14–21
 Thursday 3 September Romans 13:1–7
 Friday 4 September Romans 13:8–14
 Saturday 5 September Romans 14:1–12

ROMANS 9–16

3 Welcome one another

Sunday 6 September Romans 14:13–23
 Monday 7 September Romans 15:1–13
 Tuesday 8 September Romans 15:14–22
 Wednesday 9 Sept Romans 15:23–33
 Thursday 10 Sept Romans 16:1–16, 21–23
 Friday 11 September Romans 16:17–20
 Saturday 12 Sept Romans 16:25–27

FAKE NEWS AND THE GOOD NEWS

1 Fake news

Sunday 13 Sept Deuteronomy 18:18–22
 Monday 14 Sept 1 Kings 13:11–24
 Tuesday 15 Sept 1 Kings 22:4–28, 34–35
 Wednesday 16 Sept Jeremiah 23:16–32
 Thursday 17 Sept Jeremiah 28
 Friday 18 September Micah 3:5–12
 Saturday 19 September Acts 13:1–12

FAKE NEWS AND THE GOOD NEWS

2 Good news

Sunday 20 September Luke 4:14–21
 Monday 21 September Luke 24:13–27
 Tuesday 22 September John 4:21–29, 39–42
 Wednesday 23 Sept 1 Corinthians 15:1–11
 Thursday 24 Sept John 11:49–52
 Friday 25 September Acts 26:1–20
 Saturday 26 Sept Romans 10:1–15

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (3)

1 Resting with Jesus

Sunday 27 Sept Matthew 11:25–30
 Monday 28 Sept Matthew 12:1–14
 Tuesday 29 Sept Matthew 12:38–50
 Wednesday 30 Sept Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

Kingston United Reformed Church – Information

Ministers:

Rev Lesley M Charlton, tel: 020 8399 4423 e-mail: minister@kingstonurc.org
Rev Dr Suk In Lee, tel: 020 8949 2070 e-mail: leesukin@hotmail.com

Church Secretary:

Martyn Verge
Mobile: 07801 979009
e-mail: chsec@kingstonurc.org

Treasurer:

Christine Chippendale, mobile: 07738 562457 e-mail: treasurer@kingstonurc.org

Youth & Families Worker:

Sally Butler, mobile: 07807 348326 e-mail: youth@kingstonurc.org

Missionary:

So Young Jung, e-mail: 2005eo@naver.com

Mission Development Worker through Music:

Han Sol Kang, e-mail: hansolk524@gmail.com

PA to the Minister and Premises Manager:

Catherine Treweek Work Mobile: 07807 351801 (between 10 am – 4 pm only)

Facilities Assistant:

Gaffar Zarei
Monday – Friday: 09.00 – 17.00
Tel: 020 8549 1888 e-mail: premises@urckingston.org.uk

How to contribute to Church News:

Contributions on matters of reflection and opinion as well as reports of activities are welcome. Copy for **Church News** must reach the editor, preferably by email, no later than midday on the **second Sunday of the month**.

The next copy deadline is 12 noon on Sunday, 13 September. Editor: Robin Pilbeam

FINANCIAL DONATIONS may be made to the church in a number of ways, including via our *Virgin moneygiving* page, accessible via our website at www.kingstonurc.org. You can also pay directly into our bank account: sort code 20-46-76, account number 33054942. If you would like more information on giving to KURC, please ask any elder.

Kingston United Reformed Church is a member of the **Local Ecumenical Project** in Kingston Town Centre with its partner, **All Saints Parish Church** in the Market Place.

The town centre ministers meet regularly.

*We are a part of **Churches Together in Kingston**.*

*Kingston URC is also affiliated with the **Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)** and the **Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK)***