

**Swindon Old Town Partnership of Churches
Anglican - United Reformed - Methodist - Est. 1969**

PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2020

80 PENCE



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
8th November**

One in Christ - Together in Mission

CHRISTMAS CRAFT SALE AND COFFEE



**Saturday 14th November
at the home of
Janet and Noel Hunt,
20 Bouverie Avenue
2.00 pm - 4.00 pm**

This will be subject to government guidelines.

The local craft fairs that many of us would usually attend have been cancelled for this year. We hope to sell our hand-crafted cards and wooden gifts in aid of the Partnership Project from home instead. Please keep the date. Advance orders are welcomed.

**In aid of the Partnership Project
Desai Memorial Primary School, Nairobi.**

Aston Pottery, Prairie Garden



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Partnership Letter

The Manse
147 Drove Road

Dear sisters and brothers,

As an ex-teacher with a family heavily involved in education, I am concerned when politicians try to narrow the access our young people are given over what they can study; I would prefer them to study widely and then make up their minds about issues. The Department of Education put this out recently as a guide for materials used in Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education lessons:

“ Schools should not under any circumstances use resources produced by organisations that take extreme political stances on matters. This is the case, even if the material itself is not extreme, as the use of it could imply endorsement or support of the organisation.

Examples of extreme political stances include, but are not limited to:

- a publicly stated desire to abolish or overthrow democracy, **capitalism**, or to end free and fair elections;
- opposition to the right of freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of assembly or freedom of religion and conscience;
- the use or endorsement of racist, including anti-Semitic, language or communications;
- the encouragement or endorsement of illegal activity;
- a failure to condemn illegal activities done in their name or in support of their cause, particularly violent actions against people or property.”

While most of that is laudable, there is the issue of the word highlighted. I am also concerned about what defines an ‘anti-capitalist’ organisation and who defines it as such; many authors, philosophers, political writers and others would be excluded.

For example, the Dalai Lama identified himself as a Marxist at a conference in 2015. He partly blamed capitalism for inequality and said he regarded Marxism as the answer. He said, “In capitalist countries, there is an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. In Marxism, there is emphasis on equal distribution.”

Or, more likely, is it the Christian Church? ➤

Dom Helder Camara, Brazilian Catholic Archbishop said, “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.”

Óscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador said, “There is an ‘atheism’ that is closer at hand and more dangerous to our church: it is the atheism of capitalism.”

The Pope, quoting a fourth century bishop, has called the unfettered pursuit of money “the dung of the devil”,

Martin Luther King said this in 1966 when talking of poverty in America: “We are saying that something is wrong...with capitalism...there must be a better distribution of wealth and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism. Call it what you may, call it democracy, or call it democratic socialism, but there must be a better distribution of wealth within this country for all of God’s children.”

God is a God of the poor, the widow, the orphan and the alien. The word ‘poor’ and God’s command for us to care for them is scattered throughout the Bible. Read Amos especially in his condemnation of the use of socio-political economics by the powerful and rich against the poor.

Jesus tells us that it is harder for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven than it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. He tells a rich young man to give all he has to the poor, and his words in Matthew 25:31-46 are a challenge to read in this context.

We need to speak out against such restrictions on education or else we need to add another line to Niemoller’s words: “Then they came for the anti-capitalists, and because I was not an anti-capitalist I did not speak out”.

In scripture we read in 1 Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Does that make me a Christian or an anti-capitalist?

Just as an addendum, read the last two points about ‘illegal activity’. On 29th September 2020 our Government whipped it’s MP’s to vote **against** a clause “requiring ministers to respect the rule of law and uphold the independence of the court”. The Government voted this clause down. Depending on who defines what, has the Government made itself ‘extreme’?

Every blessing,



FAMILY EVENTS

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to the loved ones of

CHRIST CHURCH

- Oct 1 Robert Walter Lord, 79 years
Oct 3 Helen Livingstone, 45 years
Oct 8 Myra Hassler, 90 years

FLOODLIGHTING

- Sep 29 Thinking of you always, Denise and the girls.
Oct 23 For Iain Grant Duthie on the first anniversary of his death.
Thinking of you, as always, with love, Linda, Helen and Jo.
Nov 8 Christ Church will be lit in commemoration of the departed
as we hold a service of Choral Evensong in Christ Church.

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting of Christ Church in celebration of a birthday, wedding anniversary, special occasion, to advertise your Company, or in memory of a loved one, the minimum gift per evening is **£30.00**. Cheques to be made payable to 'Christ Church PCC'. Please email: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk or phone 01793 522832 at least a week before the date of the floodlighting. GIFT AID: If you are a UK taxpayer and wish Christ Church to reclaim the tax, you may Gift Aid your donation by providing your name, the first line of your address and our postcode.

SPARE MAGAZINES

Due to lockdown and our churches having been closed, we have several copies of the church magazine from the last few months. If anyone is missing back copies, please get in touch with Caroline Pitt who will be pleased to let you have them. Tel. 521732
email: carolinempitt@gmail.com

Bath Road

Aston Pottery Garden

Probably too late for this year by the time this appears in print but thanks to BBC Monty Don's BBC Gardeners' World programme in October, I decided to take my mind off things and drive to the Aston Pottery garden just beyond Bampton in Oxfordshire. You will find it on the B4449 between Standlake and Bampton.

The owners' hobby in creating an American Prairie Garden they admit has taken them over. The result, as you can see in the pictures, is ravishing and all free! That is if you avoid the attractive café and shop. Well run Covid-19-wise. Felt completely safe. Highly recommended. *See photos on inside front cover.*

Eric Sparkes

Harvest Service, 11th October:

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's harvest. All produce and monetary gifts have been delivered to The Women's Refuge.

Goodbye and Thank you!

Susan Bothamley, the senior worker, sent me a card to say goodbye to all the helpers at Open House. She couldn't come and personally see us all due to COVID-19 and is now planning to move away as her work in the circuit has finished. She will take with her fond memories of Open House, MOPS and lunch club and appreciated everyone's efforts to make them a success.

Brenda Hewitt

Thank you for Snowdon sponsorship

Eleanor Dixon writes...

Thank you so much for the humbling generosity shown through your Snowdon sponsorship! Not only did we (the "youths" of Elm Hall Drive Methodist Church) smash our original target of £500 but we exceeded our updated target of £1000! As of 28th September, we have raised £1,435 towards the Liverpool Foodbank and EHD Methodist Church hall roof repair! See if you can spot Sarah Read in the photos of our climb! Thank you so much, stay safe and see you all at Christmas (hopefully!). *Photos are on inside back cover.*

My thoughts during lockdown

Margaret Gardiner



During this lockdown it makes one think of times when life was quieter and roads were not so busy.

In the late 1940s my friends and I had cycling holidays to Youth Hostels; we did Devon one year and Cornwall the next. So where should we go to next, somewhere different? Friends were going to France and Holland. We decided to go to Denmark that in our imagination was flat. It never entered our heads how the war had affected other countries; we were all picking ourselves up and getting on with life.

Brenda, my cycling companion, was very businesslike so she had the job of booking sailings and Youth Hostels. Of course, the map we had was pre-war and you would need a magnifying glass to read it today; we just trusted to luck.

So one Sunday morning in August 1951 I packed the pannier bags with a few clothes, bolted them on my bike and set off from Bishopstone to cycle 7 miles into Swindon, caught the train to Paddington, cycled across London to Liverpool Street Station in 25 minutes and boarded the train to Harwich. No thoughts of carrying bottles of water with us.

We found this huge ship in the harbour, a Fred Olsen line, of 4000 tons. The fare across was £15 return and 7/6d. for the bike. We were the only ones on the deck across the North Sea to the port of Esbjerg as there was a heavy thunderstorm. Not surprisingly, we were the only two in the dining room. We then went to our cabin and found two other people in there sleeping. We had no idea if they were female or male, so we had a quick wash in the tiny basin and into bed. The loo was down the corridor - not needed so much in those days! The journey across took 30 hours and we arrived about midday, I think. We found our bikes and off we went to our first night at Ribe, Denmark's oldest town.

I can't remember all of the Youth Hostels we stayed at, some were small cottages and some were like sheds. We had ferries to catch and we also cycled across the 2 km Storstrom Bridge to visit the island of Bornholm. ➤

We spent two nights in Copenhagen, the capital, as there was a lot to explore. We wanted to see the famous Little Mermaid statue in the harbour and visit the Tivoli Gardens. We went there twice as we loved the helter skelter; it was great fun. From Copenhagen we caught a ferry to Sweden. I have no idea where we left our bikes. We were only in Sweden for half a day, just so we could say we had been to another country! I think it is now accessible by a bridge. Back in Denmark, we visited Hamlet's Castle at Helsingor. The guards outside the King's Palace in Copenhagen reminded us of a Gilbert & Sullivan Opera as they were smartly dressed but couldn't keep time when marching!

Ornithologists are keen on storks coming to live in the Somerset Levels but in Denmark they made huge nests on top of telephone poles and looked very ungainly. Although my camera worked very well, one film was lost in developing, so no record of two very strenuous days of cycling.



We arrived at a lake, marked 'Ferry' on the map. It turned out to be one man rowing a boat, with no sign of the man! When he did turn up it was a squash to get ourselves and two bikes on the boat! This meant that we were late arriving at the Youth Hostel which was closed for the night. The hostel consisted of two huts and someone shouted to us to go back to the village for the key! The warden gave us the key and an egg sandwich for our supper. Back we went to the hostel, only to nearly die of laughing as one was for males and one for females and we couldn't tell which was which! I suppose we must have sorted it out in the end.

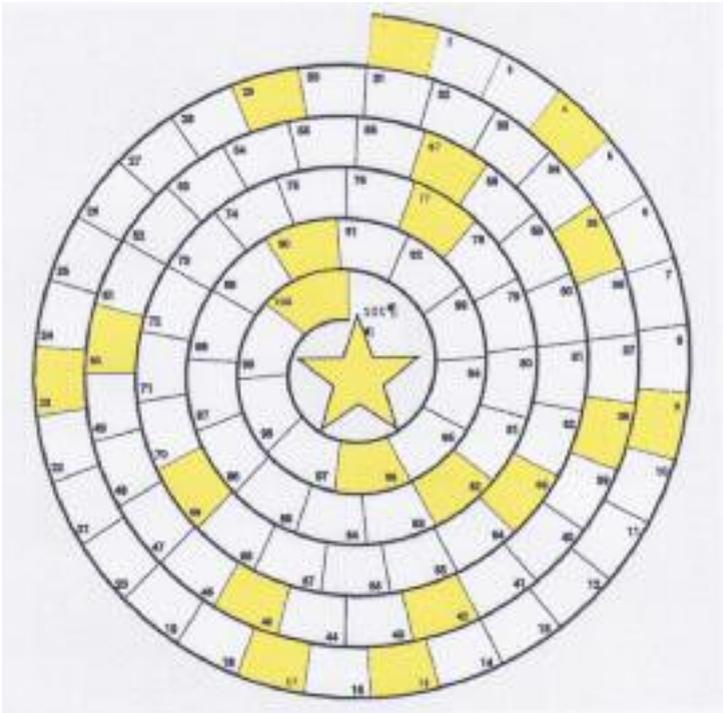
Our next day was very hard work, it was windy and the roads were rough; many were not made up properly and some were of gravel. One day we cycled 80kms in a gale and arrived at Aalborg, which had a superb hostel with hot showers (our only ones on the holiday). We had supper, then a shower and we were in bed by 6.00 pm as we ached so much. Twice the warden woke us up to tell us we were missing a conducted tour of Aalborg. We told him where to go!! The beaches there were superb with white sand, and we had a lovely rest the next day swimming and sitting on the beach with no thought of applying sun cream.

We arrived back at Esbjerg and boarded the boat. On arrival in Harwich we did the journey in reverse from Harwich to Swindon, then on our bikes once more to cycle the last few miles home. ■

Editor's comment: What carefree abandonment! Life was very different then, knowing nothing of drug abuse, coronavirus, Brexit etc!

Spiral Puzzle

Write your answers in a spiral form from the start to the centre. The last letter of each answer is the beginning of the next.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Wrote Acts of the Apostles | 45. Prophet in time of King David |
| 4. Married King Xerxes | 50. Where Mary and Joseph lived |
| 9. Isaac's wife | 57. People shouted this as Jesus entered Jerusalem |
| 15. Son of Noah | 63. Paul became one |
| 17. A Gospel writer | 69. New Testament book |
| 23. A celebration where water was turned to wine | 77. He anointed David to be King |
| 29. Messenger sent to Mary | 82. Old Testament book |
| 35. Jesus said to him 'Follow me' | 90. A name Christians call Jesus |
| 38. Jacob's father | 96. She saved Joshua's spies |
| 42. He murdered his brother | 100. Make up your own clue to lead to 101 |

Sent in by a reader from Bath Road. Answers on page 14

Immanuel

Harvest Sunday, 4th October

In contrast with a traditional display of flowers and produce, this year saw a much simpler presentation and service – perhaps more in keeping with the times in which we live. Nonetheless, led by the minister, we did indeed celebrate God’s bounty to us in a range of beautiful music, hymns, readings and poems.

Letter from The South-West Synod Moderator The Rev’d. Ruth Whitehead



You may have heard the account of a US soldier, Commander James Stockdale, who was asked to explain why only 591 soldiers survived the Prisoner of War camps in the Vietnamese war and many thousands didn’t.

He explained that the ones who hadn’t made it out of the camps were the optimists. “In Vietnam, the optimists believed they were going to be home by Christmas. When that didn’t happen, they thought they’d be out by Easter. That didn’t happen either, so then they said the Fourth of July. Then Thanksgiving. Then Christmas again.” It sent those POWs on a wild rollercoaster of false hope and delusion, only to come crashing down. It shattered their endurance and ultimately their will to live. Stockdale observed that only the pessimists had “the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of their current reality.” When disaster strikes, accepting the brutal reality of your situation is key. Then move on, focusing all your energy on how you will get through.

I wonder if this resonates with where we are in the Covid pandemic. We have survived 6 months of restrictions, only to face the news that we might need to endure another 6 months. Yet we have made it so far and with God’s help we will make it through to Spring 2021. ➤

False hope may crush us, but hope in God will give us the perseverance, confidence and resilience we need to get through.

I love the description in Romans chapter 5 of 'life in Christ'. You can tell in what he writes that Paul knew a thing or two about suffering and perseverance: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

I pray that in the months to come you will know God beside you, pouring the gift of hope and love into your heart.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

A poem:

'Change' by Kaiyah Dixon, 14 years

The world is changing; it's a brand new day.
Our voices will be heard instead of brushed away.
No more of our people aching, no more of our people slain.
And although there's hurt in our hearts, the struggle will not be
in vain:
We will rise above the hatred; we will walk the way they paved,
We will love, live and be free, for we are the dreams of slaves.

This time we won't be silenced – told we're too angry or out of place.
This time we'll speak our thoughts, all communities will be a safe
space.
We will now be taught our history in every aspect of our learning
Instead of searching for it ourselves, because our ancestors are
deserving.
By any means necessary, we will fight for a better day;
Because a great change is among us,
and we are leading the way.



The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work and Communications Teams have launched a new Advent and Christmas kit for churches to engage with families.

'Advent Hope & Joy' is a low cost kit that can be given to families to show that the church remembers them, cares for them and wants to connect with them, and are sized so that they can be posted through letterboxes.

Inside each oversized A4 red box is a wealth of material to enable people of all ages to discover a little hope and joy in this most difficult of years. Over the six weeks from the start of Advent to Epiphany, six aspects of the Christmas story are explored. Each week has a pack with ideas for activities which range from quick and simple to more complex (and tasty!).

Each box includes: Colours of Christmas story book; A3 colouring sheet and Christmas story 'spot the difference' puzzle; weekly activities; colouring pencils; gold pen; labels; cookie cutter; tea light candle; postcards; wooden star; wooden crown; Walking the Way foot and cord; stained glass window to decorate and display; Nativity set to make; conversation starters; craft ideas; reflective activities; social justice engagement; prayer practices; a link to the weekly Families on Faith Adventures@Home online resources for deeper faith-focussed engagement.

The kits will be despatched from early to mid-November, and have limited availability ■

Family tree

At a drinks party at a wealthy golf club, the conversation turned to the subject of ancestry. "Of course, we trace our family back to coming over with William the Conqueror," observed one lady with satisfaction.

She turned to a second woman, who was new to the club, and asked, "What about you dear? Can you go back very far?"

"Not very far," came the reply. "You see, all the early family records were lost in the Flood."

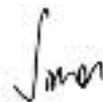
Christ Church with St. Mary's

During stressful times, such as the Coronavirus pandemic, it is good to be able to enjoy nature. With the Autumn season introducing us once again to so many beautiful colours, we would like to invite friends across the Partnership to take a walk through the Christ Church churchyard and burial ground. We have received so many appreciative comments recently, with many saying it has never looked better.

We are very grateful to all those who have worked so hard over the last few months on our behalf. We would like to mention Lyn Eggers, our Burial Board Clerk and the Burial Board, Rob Pean, our Sexton, Simon and Jamie who work on Thursday afternoons, Ian Handy and his team for their work on the new Remembrance Garden, and for their exciting plans for the Rose Garden, Brian Gibbs, Gervin Senior, Jim d'Avila, the Community Service payback team and their supervisors, the Good Gym team, not to forget members of the public who have lent a hand as part of such a hardworking team.

You may like especially to rest a while in the Garden of Reflection and then take a walk along the top lawn looking over towards The Lawn. Christ Church is also open for personal prayer.

Every blessing,



SUPPORTING BEREAVED PEOPLE
Commemoration of the Departed, Special Service
'Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray.'

SUNDAY 8th NOVEMBER, 4.00 pm at Christ Church
CHORAL EVENSONG

Numbers are limited for COVID-19 reasons and it will be necessary to book for this in order to comply with social distancing

To book your place, please either phone the Parish Office (01793 522832) and leave your name and contact details, or use this link to complete our online form: <https://bit.ly/reserve8>

We are looking forward to inviting back those who have been bereaved this year to remember their loved ones and also community friends to this service which will be led by Christ Church choir. ➤

Do look out at the 'Beacon on the Hill' that evening when the lights will be on for all those who grieve across our town, remembering the words of the 1662 Prayer Book Collect which the choir will sing;

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

OFFERING HOPE AS WE FACE A SECOND WAVE

The Church has a vital role to play in offering hope and comfort to the nation as we face an expected second wave of the coronavirus, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have said.

In a joint letter to the bishops of the Church of England, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell set out a stark assessment of the challenges facing the country amid the pandemic, including hunger, homelessness, mental health pressures and domestic violence.

But, they say, the Church of England, through its presence in every community, can play a vital role in serving the nation - especially those most in need - and in bringing hope to all through the gospel.

Churches are especially well placed, through networks and partnerships across the country, to help those most in need, who are hungry and homeless, they point out.

"Most of all we need to draw close to Christ and continue to offer the hope and stability of the Gospel," the Archbishops write. "It is this gospel joy, even in the darkest times, that alone can help us through this crisis, bringing hope and an eternal perspective to the very pressing trials of the moment."

The Archbishops also highlight the particular pressures faced by small businesses after months of restrictions and issue a challenge to banks to show the same mercy to those in difficulties now as banks themselves received during the financial crisis.

Referencing the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18, they add: "It will be for us and others to encourage the banks, who received such help in 2009, to be equally merciful to others as the nation was to them."

"St Matthew 18:23-35 seems highly relevant."

CANCELLATION

Friends of Christ Church Christmas Market 2020

The Trustees of the Friends have reluctantly decided not to run this highly successful event originally scheduled for 21 November 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Zoom Zoom Zoom!

The pandemic is leaving a “lasting digital legacy”, and changing the UK’s internet habits and behaviour “indelibly”, so says a recent Ofcom study.

Since March we have broken the four-hour barrier, which means that, on average, we spend more than a quarter of our waking hours each day online. That is up from an average of three hours and 29 minutes this time last year. Zoom has soared in popularity. Last December it reached 498,00 people in the UK; by April this had soared to 13million in the UK. TikTok, which lets users share short videos set to pop music, had 5.4 million UK users in January; by April it had 12.9million users.

In February, 35 per cent of UK adults made a video call once a week. By April that had soared to 71 per cent. The largest increase has been among the over-65s, with now 61 per cent of them making weekly video calls.

Older people favour Zoom, in order to ‘visit’ their relatives and friends; while many teenagers have become addicted to TikTok and endless videos.

SWINDON MUSIC FESTIVAL 2021 CANCELLATION NOTICE

With so much uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and with the current Government measures in place for a further 6 months, it is with much regret that the Swindon Music Festival Committee has decided to cancel the 2021 Festival which was due to take place during March.

Answers to the Spiral Puzzle on the inside back cover:

1. Luke; 4. Esther; 9. Rebekah; 15. Ham; 17. Matthew; 23. Wedding; 29. Gabriel; 35. Levi; 38. Isaac; 42. Cain; 45. Nathan; 50. Nazareth; 57. Hosanna; 63. Apostle; 69. Ephesians; 77. Samuel; 82. Leviticus; 90. Saviour; 96. Rahab; 100. *Make up your own clue to lead to 101*



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Snowdon climb raises £1,435

Eleanor Dixon, along with Sarah Read and friends at Elm Hill Drive Methodist Church, Liverpool, climbed Snowdon and raised £1,435 for the Liverpool Foodbank and the repair of the church hall roof of EHD Methodist Church.



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