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Taunton United Reformed Church



FEBRUARY 2022

Magazine



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TAUNTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MAGAZINE

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February 2022

MINISTER:

Vacant

Pastoral care

For concerns that go beyond mutual pastoral care, please see the note on page 7.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR:

Ron Williams
mobile tel: 07955 237 012
email: tauntonurc@gmail.com
office tel: 01823 286776

WORK-WISE manager - Lucille Morris

email: manager@workwise-taunton.org.uk
tel.: 01823 325030

Church website:

<http://tauntonurc.org.uk>

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From the Editor



The theme this month is Community (see the note about the cover below). I hope you will be able to see how many of the articles are pertinent to this, whether they offer definition, reflection, poetry, or an encouragement to engage.

With the encouraging news of the relaxation of Covid-related restrictions, there is now more opportunity for community engagement, an aim which is embedded in the church's vision (see back cover).

There are no colour pages this month. The number of photographs I received did not warrant the separate printing of four centre pages that would be involved. But there is always the possibility that they could return in the next issue.

We welcome a new face to the provision of the Pastoral Letter with Janet Sowerbutts, pictured on page 4 with a pastoral ice-cream, taking a turn. This is a further encouragement that a sense of community is alive at the heart of our fellowship.

With the season of Lent beginning on 2nd March and occupying most of the month, I propose that the theme of the next issue will be Temptation. This is not an invitation to you to wash your dirty linen in public, but you might reflect on what makes human motivations so powerful, what God thinks about this, and tips on mastering these. It should be interesting.

As before, all contributions are welcome, whether on the theme or not. Again you do not need to present a polished article as I may be able to help you express what you want to say.

Peter Henderson

Cover image: the Community symbol for 'Wikipedia 20', celebrating 20 years of the online encyclopaedia, an illustration by Jasmina El Bouamraoui and Karabo Poppy Moletsane.

Forthcoming Church Services

Sundays at 10:30am at the United Reformed Church, Paul Street

- 6 February Morning worship led by the Revd Iain McDonald (includes The Lord's Supper)
- 13 February Morning worship led by Miss Sue Ingham
- 20 February Morning worship led by the Revd Viv Henderson
- 27 February Morning worship led by Mrs Jo Morling
- 6 March Morning worship led by the Revd Ken Marsh (includes The Lord's Supper)

Weekly Activities

at the time of publication these are:

Wednesdays 9:30am - 12:30 **Work-Wise** in the church hall: offering support with all aspects of job seeking

Tuesday coffee mornings and prayers are on hold.

Other Notable Dates

- Thursday 3 February Elders' Meeting
- Sunday 6 February 4pm Evensong at St John's, the last led by the Revd Jane Eastell before her retirement (see page 8), preceded by...
 - 3:15pm Tea and cake
- Monday 14 February Magazine deadline
- Monday 21 February Fairtrade Fortnight begins (till 6 March)
- Thursday 3 March Elders' Meeting
- Friday 4 March World Day of Prayer services at St Mary Magdalene at 10:30 and 1:15. Prayers this year come from the UK on the theme "I know the plans I have for you"
- Sunday 6 March Social and Arts event with Geraint Jones

Pastoral letter

Dear Friends,

2022 is a year of Jubilee Celebrations. How will we celebrate? We might turn to the scriptures for guidance. Every 50 years there was a year of Jubilee. Complex directions for the celebration of the year of Jubilee can be found in the book of Leviticus Holiness Code. Scholars question whether these instructions were ever carried out in detail but certainly every 50 years faithful Jews would be mindful of what was required. Plans were set out of how land could be returned to the original owner, debts resolved, and slaves set free. It could be explained as a social blueprint founded on deeply religious concepts of justice and equality. A faithful Jew understood that the land was owned by God and his people were tenants.

Our Queen celebrates seventy years of her reign. It will be time to look back over a memorable life given in outstanding service to this country and the commonwealth. It is clear she holds a deep faith in which she has found her strength. It will surely be a time for this country to move away from the despair of Covid to a time of hope and thankfulness.

The United Reformed Church also celebrates being in existence for 50 years and as a time of Jubilee. Our General Secretary John Bradbury suggests that this should not be a time of looking back but as a time to look carefully and prayerfully where we are at the moment and where we are encountering God in the church.

Our hope fifty years ago was that the URC would not exist as it does today but would be united with, and embraced by, other denominations, and there would be a United Church. At the time ecumenical hopes were running high. The vision was that paths would be made straight, barriers broken down and that together a united church could become a strong prophetic voice.



The creation of the URC in 1972 was the merger of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales. One MP described this merger as: one of the most historic measures in the history of the Christian churches in this country. Hope of continual expansion was acknowledged by the Churches of Christ when they joined in 1981 followed by the Scottish Congregationalists in 2000.

How are we in Taunton URC going to celebrate? Dare we do something differently?

How are we going to communicate our faith with the people who will come to live in the new build opposite? As we sang carols outside the church this year we laughed and waved and the passers-by waved back! We may not have the best choir but the people enjoyed what we were doing!

The URC Prayer Handbook this year is given over to the theme of Jubilee. It offers some interesting worship. Here's a snippet from Karen Campbell.

When, O God, when is the time
for releasing, embracing
listening, life-giving
justice, sharing
renewal and praise?

God of Eternity says
now is the time – time and past time
Today is the day for Jubilee.

God Bless

Love Janet

Praying through the week

Some suggestions for your daily devotions

Sunday	Remember to count your blessings. Think of three occurrences, however simple, that have been a blessing to you today. Ask God for the awareness to make this a daily habit throughout the week ahead.
Monday	Give thanks for for the Taunton Foodbank, especially at this time of increased demand with the rising cost of living. Pray for the co-ordinator, the volunteers, and the successful recruitment of more volunteers.
Tuesday	Pray for whoever is planning to lead worship next Sunday (see page 3 for names). Ask God to give them inspiration and wisdom, and the ability to convey God's word.
Wednesday	Pray for those who visit Work-Wise, and the manager and volunteers who seek to serve them. Ask God, whose gift is life, to give opportunity for livelihood for those without this, and a the discovery of a new sense of vocation to replace boredom and hopelessness.
Thursday	Pray for our church Elders, and particularly for those elected to eldership for the first time. Ask for God's help for the Elders to develop good team-work.
Friday	Pray for our Church Administrator, Worship Group, and Pastoral Team as they manage many of the routine aspects of church life that we take for granted.
Saturday	Pray for the healing of the distrust and polarisation in society that has grown in recent years. Ask God to challenge and equip those who communicate in the media (and social media) to do so with grace, humility and integrity.

Revised Common Lectionary for forthcoming Sundays

6 February	13 February	20 February
Isaiah 6:1-13 Psalm 138 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Luke 5:1-11	Jeremiah 17:5-10 Psalm 1 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 Luke 6:17-26	Genesis 45:3-11, 15 Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 Luke 6:27-38
27 February	6 March <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i>	13 March
Isaiah 55:10-13 Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 Luke 6:39-49	Deuteronomy 26:1-11 Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 Romans 10:8b-13 Luke 4:1-13	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 Psalm 27 Philippians 3:17-4:1 Luke 9:28-36

PASTORAL TEAM

Our aim is to foster care and concern for each other in the congregation.

However, If you have a emergency and need help or concern, do not hesitate to contact a member of the Pastoral Team.

Mrs Isobel Tosh Robb, Mrs Meg Cardy, Dr Eryl Harris,
Mrs Sheena Helliard, Miss Sue Ingham, and Revd. Janet Sowerbutts.

Church Family News

Election of Elders

At the Church Meeting on Sunday 16th January 2022, the following members were elected to as Elders: Mrs Meg Cardy, Mrs Sheena Helliard, Mr Frank Callanan and Mr Stuart Trott.

For Meg and Stuart, already serving Elders, their terms were renewed. Sheena and Frank were elected for the first time, at this church at least, and so will be ordained to eldership in due course.

Retirement of the Revd Jane Eastell

Revd Jane is retiring from her post as Associate Vicar at the Church of St John the Evangelist in February. Her last services will be on Sunday 6th February 2022 with an evensong at 4pm to which all are welcome; tea and cake will be served beforehand at 3:15pm.

Jane was for some years, until 2016, the Diocesan Adviser in Prayer and Spirituality. She was licensed as Priest in Charge of St John's in 2013 and has been a steadfast servant of God in ministering to the people of Taunton. As a supporter of the partnership of Three Churches — St John's, Temple Methodist and the URC — she has been a good friend to this church and a valued colleague to Revd Susan, our previous minister.

We wish Jane a long and happy retirement.

Lent Course

The Three Churches - St John's, Temple Methodist and Taunton URC - are holding a Lent Course on

Tuesdays 8th and 22nd March and 5th April
at 7.30pm at Taunton URC and online.

They will be led by a minister from each church.
The subject is Spirituality

A happy new year from a pastoral bubble

An invitation was extended to those with whom Janet and Sheila relate through the pastoral bubble scheme to meet at their home on 1st January. Those who were able to make it are pictured here.



Birthday Corner

Special greetings this month go to our magazine distributor, Dawn Wright who has a birthday on 3rd February. May God bless you, Dawn.



Zoom.... Again!

As one of a number of people who volunteer to 'host' the Sunday service on Zoom, I have been very aware of recent disappointments and frustrations, on behalf of us all, with regard to the quality of sound for those who attend the service via Zoom. This technology is an important aspect of maintaining our church and wider community in times of restrictions and other constraints, and I believe it is good that the church has invested in new technology. Initially the use of a personal laptop at the lectern was enough but ultimately not sustainable. However, we are all beginners in this area and patience, support and care has to be the way forward.

Recent consultations with the installer of the equipment has hopefully resolved a number of issues. Ron has engaged with this and Lee was involved with testing the further adjustments. Thank you to you both.

Sound advice for Zoom hosts

As the host or co-host in a meeting, you can mute and unmute participants.

Due to privacy and security reasons, the host cannot unmute other participants without their consent.

1. As people join by video or phone welcome the participant via the microphone. Remind them that they will be muted during the service.
2. Inform participants when the Bible is brought in and explain that you will mute all participants... or invite them to mute themselves. Go to the Participants icon on the Zoom bar, identify individuals and MUTE them individually or MUTE ALL.
3. NB A telephone attendee can only be unmuted by the attendee. It is not possible for the Host to unmute a telephone attendee from the laptop. These attendees can be invited to unmute at the end of the service or when required.

continued on page 11

Sound advice for Zoom attendees

All attendees can mute or unmute themselves but the Host will respectfully request that you do so only when appropriate.

Telephone attendees ***need to unmute themselves*** since the Host cannot do it. This is how you do it:

On your phone please press * (star) and 6 (six) and the automatic Zoom voice will confirm UNMUTE.

Clare Callanan

QUOTE

We are God's poem — created to be people who, in the midst of an uncertain world, are always offering the invitation live the questions, to stay with the mystery.

Drew Jackson, American poet and pastor

Social and Arts

Dates for your diary:

Sunday March 6th

Geraint Jones will entertain us with pieces on the piano and organ.

Sunday April 3rd

John Hudson will give us a talk on The West Country smuggling in the 18th century.

Geraint and John will join us for coffee and a snack lunch following the service.

Saturday July 2nd

Strawberry tea in the Church garden.

May and June: work in progress

Janet and Sheila



Community

The first record of the word community is around 1325, and comes from the Latin *communitas* meaning joint possession or use. Further breakdown of the word gives us *co* = together, *muni* = change or exchange and a second element *munia* = public duties.

So it seems that community is a place that we **hold in common** (this can include physical place, geographic location, as well as principles, history, resources), a place where we take initiative to make **changes** and **share** with each other, and where each citizen has **duties and functions**. Finally, a community must be a place where people are comfortable to **talk openly**, to befriend, to support, to grieve and to celebrate **together**.

In exploring this sense of community we can see how we can be part of a number of different communities which may, or may not, overlap and/or interact with each other. Meeting common needs seems to be the driving force behind the formation of communities; most people identify and participate in several of them, often based on neighbourhood, nation, faith, politics, race or ethnicity, age, gender, hobby, or sexual orientation.

We may miss the sense of community we recall from earlier days, though being aware of the possibility of romanticising those 'good old days'. We may have had experience or wish to experience living in an intentional community of like minded people. We may have held a recognised position within a community. We may have stayed within one geographical community most of our lives or we may have travelled the world and found ourselves adjusting and adapting to different communities for varying lengths of time.

The element of exchange within community feels important to me. It gives a sense of movement, of something organic and growing, of a nurturing. I wonder whether it is possible to be passive within a community? Perhaps there may be periods when you receive care and support from that community during illness or difficult times; yet at some point you will return and offer such care and support to others. Community is both a feeling and a set of relationships among people. They have an individual and collective sense that they can, as part of that community, influence their environments and each other.

Most of us participate in multiple communities within a given day. The residential neighbourhood remains especially important for single mothers, families living in poverty, and the elderly because their sense of

community and relationships to people living near them are the basis for the support they need. But for many, community lies beyond. Technology and transportation have made community possible in ways that were unimaginable just a few decades ago.

A community is a group of people who share an identifying narrative. It is a group of people who share a story that is so important to them that it defines an aspect of who they are. Those people build the shared story archetypes (characters) of that community into their sense of themselves; they build the history of those communities into their own personal history; and they see the world through the lens of those shared stories.

In this year 2022 we, as a community at Taunton United Reformed Church, will be sharing our narratives of the past 50 years as a part of the wider community of the United Reformed Church. What does that mean for us? What are our stories? What is our history and how can we recognise it? How will we use this opportunity to build stronger and closer links with each other, with the denomination, with the world wide church, with God... and with those our neighbours?

Clare Callanan

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A Time to Talk by Robert Frost.

The American poet Robert Frost (1874 - 1963) wrote many poems based on rural life. He lived for a while in Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire, befriending a number of English poets, before returning to America. I think this poem speaks into friendship and the gentleness of community and care and support.

When a friend calls to me from the road
And slows his horse to a meaning walk,
I don't stand still and look around
On all the hills I haven't hoed,
And shout from where I am, What is it?
No, not as there is a time to talk.
I thrust my hoe in the mellow ground,
Blade-end up and five feet tall,
And plod: I go up to the stone wall
For a friendly visit.

God Speaks Through Wombs

Shortly before last Advent, and in time for the start of the new lectionary year featuring readings from Luke's gospel, a friend sent us a book of poetry by a black, American pastor, Drew Jackson. The book, *God Speaks Through Wombs*, comprises poems by the author reflecting on passages in the first eight chapters of Luke's gospel. Each poem has a scripture reference, sometimes only one or two verses; they are arranged in biblical order, and are no longer than a page each. Viv and I are reading one each day together.

When I trained to be a minister, the importance of trying to relate the Bible to the context of everyday life was impressed upon us. Preachers do not always find this easy; resonances between a given scripture and lived experience can be difficult to find, particularly given a deadline. Although my context is very different from that of the author, I find his poetic reflections help me to think in different ways to open up new possibilities of fruitful interpretation.

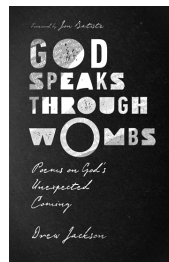
An example which aligns with the theme of this issue is the poem which reflects on Luke 4:16-17, where Jesus is about to speak on a passage from Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth. Written from the perspective of Jesus, who sees himself as a member of a 4x100m relay team running "against the grain / to lead us to a better way", the poem continues:

But I must put myself in position to
succeed. To follow through on what
we've been asked to do. This is faithfulness.
Who I am is not separate from the whole.
Ubuntu. Watch me run as I grab this scroll.

I found it interesting to consider Jesus as part of a team, receiving the baton from Isaiah and earlier Judaism, carrying out his part in the human team, with a view to handing on the prospect of a victorious finish to others like me. This is a picture of Jesus our brother, a team member, very different from the notion that Jesus is the supreme head of the Church, and one to which I can meaningfully relate.

God Speaks Through Wombs was published by InterVarsity Press last year.

Peter Henderson



Community thoughts: Ubuntu

The recent death of the world renowned and much respected Archbishop Desmond Tutu has given many of us cause for thought and reflection on his life and work. I have turned to his book 'God is not a Christian' (what an amazing statement and title!) to remind myself of this collection of his material; excerpts from speeches, sermons and other writings, answers to journalists' questions and letters.



In particular I have always been drawn to his concept of ubuntu, a Xhosa word approximately meaning "a person is a person through other persons." It is the understanding that we need other human beings for us to learn how to be human, since none of us come into this world fully formed. The sense that I have gifts that you do not, and you have gifts I do not means that our difference shows us how we need each other. To be human is to be dependent. Tutu writes:

"Ubuntu is the essence of being human. It speaks of how my humanity is caught up and bound inexplicably with yours...I need other human beings to be human. The completely self sufficient human is being subhuman. I am because we are, for we are made for togetherness, for family. We are made for complementarity. We are created for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence with our fellow human beings, with the rest of creation.

Ubuntu teaches us that our worth is intrinsic to who we are. We matter because we are made in the image of God. Ubuntu reminds us that we belong in one family - God's family, the human family."

Pages 22 and 24. *God is not a Christian: speaking truth in times of crisis.* Desmond Tutu. Edited by John Allen. 2013.

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Contributions for the March 2022 magazine should be with the Editor
Peter Henderson - 14 Somerset Avenue, Taunton, TA1 5HU
Telephone: 01823 254668 - e-mail: tauntonurc.mag@gmail.com
by MONDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2022 (or earlier) please.

The theme is: Temptation

New Reality, Same Mission

In 2020, members of the URC's Church-Related Community Work, Church and Society, Children's and Youth Work and Walking the Way teams, along with Church Action on Poverty, started a conversation called 'New Reality, Same Mission' about helping congregations think about mission and community engagement in these challenging times.

One of the resources they produced was a 24-page booklet entitled 'New Reality, Same Mission - A stimulus to renewed community engagement as we emerge from the pandemic' [the editor has a copy]. In this they encourage the use of a way of working which focusses (in turn) on experience, exploration, reflection and action.

What follows is a summary of the section looking at **Experience**.

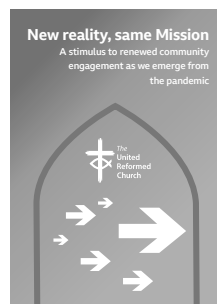
Listening to how people have been affected by the pandemic, and understanding the groups most at risk in our neighbourhoods and communities

We are all sharing the experience of the storm caused by Covid-19 and the lockdown, but it is increasingly clear we are not all in the same boat. Some are being buffeted but remain fundamentally secure, yet it is clear that some groups are at risk of being financially overwhelmed.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- How have you experienced this crisis?
- What have you found hardest?
- What have you appreciated, and where have you found new joy amidst the crisis?
- What have you learned about the world, your neighbourhood and local communities during this time?

(Source: adapted from Tearfund, *The World Rebooted*)



What's happening in our neighbourhoods and local communities?

The questions below can offer a good insight into thinking about the aspirations and needs of different individuals and communities in the area and, subsequently, how local churches might respond, in partnership with other agencies, for the mutual benefit of everyone.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- Take some time to think about the neighbourhood where you live and/or your church is part of.
- Who lives in it? Who works in it? Who plays in it? Who learns in it?
- How have different groups been affected by the pandemic restrictions, or responded to it?
- How are local people - of different ages and backgrounds - feeling at the moment? Who might have been pushed 'to the margins' by the crisis? Which people, groups or voices are not being heard?

Listening to those most affected by this crisis

"We are not living through an era of change, but a change of era. We are entering a new chapter in the history of the world, and of the church. The scale of the challenge before us demands a careful response."
(Pope Francis)

Action:

Identify 6-10 people in your local neighbourhood to talk to who can help you understand the impact of the crisis from their perspective. This could include local professionals (teachers, health visitors etc), but should also include people directly affected (eg. people who have lost family or friends, work or income, or who have had to apply for benefits - maybe for the first time).

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- What do we now know about the challenges and aspirations in our local neighbourhoods and communities?
- What injustices have been raised by your listening and research?

Could this summary be helpful in assisting the church to look at its mission, perhaps with use in a group discussion, leading to a renewed focus on prayer, maybe following on to the next phase Exploration?

Taunton Foodbank

The Foodbank relies on the goodwill and support of donors.

Food items may be deposited at the donation points in local branches of Asda, Co-op, Morrisons, Sainsbury, Tesco and Waitrose. They may also be left at the Foodbank warehouse at Unit 4, Belvedere Trading Estate in Albemarle Road on weekday mornings between 9:00 and 12:00, on the ledge outside the warehouse door.

Each complete foodbank parcel contains items which are designed to fit together to provide 3 nutritionally-balanced meals plus snacks per person for 3 days.

A typical food parcel includes:

- Breakfast cereals
- Soup
- Pasta
- Rice
- Pasta sauce
- Tinned beans
- Tinned meat
- Tinned vegetables
- Tinned fruit
- Tea or coffee
- Sugar
- Biscuits
- Snacks

Priority List	
Urgently needed food items	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instant mash • Instant custard sachets 	
The Foodbank has plenty of	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasta • Soup • Baked beans • Sanitary items • Cereal 	

Stock levels of the many items in a foodbank parcel are often high. (They usually have 80+ crates of baked beans and 50+ crates of pasta). So the request is ONLY to donate items from the Priority List above; this is essential in helping to balance stock.

Q U O T E	Life can only be understood backwards. <i>Søren Kierkegaard, philosopher</i>
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News from Taunton churches

St Mary Magdalene church - Afternoon Tea Concerts

- Saturday 12th February 2022 3pm
Matthew Redman (Director of Music, St John's Church, Glastonbury) organ
- Saturday 12th March 2022 3pm The Skylark Wind Quartet
- PALM SUNDAY 10th April 2022 3pm
Charlotte Stus clarinet, Andrew Carter piano
- Saturday 14th May 2022 3pm Jonathan Delbridge piano & organ
- Saturday 18th June 2022 3pm Stephen Bell organ
- Saturday 16th July 2022 3pm
François Cloete (Organ Scholar, Hereford Cathedral) organ
- Saturday 11th September 2022 3pm
Miles Quick (Director of Music, St Mary Magdalene Church, Taunton) organ

Taunton Foodbank is looking for volunteers

If you would like more information please contact them on info@taunton.foodbank.org.uk or by calling office: 01823 270316 mob: 07761 624216. Please note: These numbers are not manned 24/7

Brigade Captain sought

The 1st/3rd Taunton Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade Association (based at Rowbarton Methodist Church) is looking for a Captain from September 2021. That person would need to be a Christian and be willing to take the necessary leadership training.

We have a small but committed group of young people, aged 5-14, and dedicated leaders and helpers.

If you can help, please would you contact Rev Deborah Kirk, 01823 334854, or Carol Stowe 07789791927

Commitment for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Helping United Reformed Churches work for a fairer world and for peace with justice, recognising that change and response starts with each one of us.

Envelopes for your donations and Information Leaflets are available in the Dora Cox Room. Please feel free to put in what you can, when you can, no amount is too small.

Revd Dr Kevin Snymon - Commitment for Life Programme Officer,
Suzanne Pearson - Commitment for Life Administrative Assistant

Moving Stories

News from our Partners around the World

Zimbabwe

When a Joke Bombs...

Sheila Murimoga, Senior Programme Officer for Gender and Inequalities for Christian Aid Zimbabwe writes:

'There is a joke circulating on WhatsApp suggesting that corruption is so endemic in Zimbabwe that if someone is supposed to procure a bomb, they are more likely to pocket the money and buy firecrackers instead.

It is not a funny joke. Two lives were lost and at least 45 people were injured when a bomb detonated at a rally during the 2018 elections. So why the dark sense of humour? My colleagues at

Christian Aid Zimbabwe and I agree that the reason lies in an exhausted capacity to cope. For the last 10 years Zimbabweans have had to cope with multiple economic and political crises.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches continues to expose human rights violations. It has developed a good working relationship with the Police Election Command Centre to enable swift action against those who interfere with elections. Christian Aid continues to invest in understanding the context, engaging partners on their security and planning ahead for every scenario, with the ultimate goal of promoting sustainable peace for Zimbabwe.'

News from Bangladesh

Kamal Gazi's Story

Traidcraft has shared Kamal Gazi's story, a farmer living in Bangladesh. Kamal summarises the struggles of his community in just one sentence...

"Our children's education is in peril; their books have been washed away."

Just imagine a school in Norfolk or Tenby having all its books washed away in a flood... These books represent hope to people like Kamal - an education, the chance of a bright future for his children.

Not only climate disruption, but COVID has also impacted on communities like Kamal's. These hardships make ordinary life more difficult, and poverty less escapable. Kamal continues:

"Before, I used to work and earn a living only by farming but now I have to work as a day labourer in addition to my agricultural work. Climate change has turned a farmer into a day labourer."



Khuku and Kamal Gazi - photo credit: Traidcraft

By supporting programmes like Commitment for Life and through your purchase of Traidcraft products, you can make a difference.

Central America

Tax Justice in Honduras

The United Reformed Church supports a campaign by The Council for World Mission's calling for a much stronger global taxation regime to tackle inequality. You can download the #ZacTax toolkit that covers the theology of taxation and the Zacchaeus story. It equips and empowers churches to encourage national and international systems of taxation to reward work and redistribute gains, promote gender justice and ecological sustainability, and to penalise 'public bads' such as speculative, polluting, and resource-depleting activities. There are practical suggestions and resources for churches to raise awareness and design a nation-wide campaign. Also included are bible studies, liturgical resources, and a reflection story for children to encourage reflection and discussion.

Download the #ZacTax toolkit today. from www.cwmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ZaccToolkitebookSmall.pdf

Similarly, Commitment for Life partner ICEFI is a regional institute for research and advocacy. It monitors Honduras' tax system. It also works to raise the profile of tax justice in the region.

Among its main success is the creation of the fiscal covenant for Honduras. This is a joint effort between civil society and academics to create a new and more just tax system in Honduras. Your much appreciated support for Commitment for Life ensures that organisations like ICEFI can continue their work.

Prayer Time

God, I am angry at the loss of innocent lives; that people don't have enough to eat; at the police for not executing justice, with the very rich for hoarding wealth and then oppressing the helpless; at the stupid military forces for making people homeless. I am angry with the unequal distribution of resources around the world. God, this is damn unfair! Amen.

Edited from Liturgies from Below: praying with peoples at the ends of the world, p.190, Claudio Carvalhaes

Life in its fullness

In case you missed them, there were reports in the media in December of an Indian grandmother from Kottayam in the Kerala region, who had learned to read.

Kuttiyamma Konthi, who was married at the age of 16, had always dreamed of going to school; while she could read some of the newspaper, she was never able to write. She had wanted to be a teacher but, like her siblings, had been required to help around the house rather than study.

A year or so ago, sitting next to her grandchildren and watching them do their homework, Ms Konthi decided that the time had come. When a teacher asked if she would like her own set of books, she readily accepted. She has now participated in the government-run programme to improve adult literacy and achieved a score of 89% in the three-hour exam, which tests reading and writing in the Malayalam language, maths, and general knowledge.

Kuttiyamma Konthi is 104 years old.

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Learning to read English

Somerset libraries support adults who would like to improve their literacy and reading skills, and people who are not native English speakers. They have, or can obtain, books in the "Skills for Life" collections to equip people at various levels of literacy.

MORNING COFFEE ROTA FOR FEBRUARY

6 Feb	Heather Parsons & Isobel Tosh-Robb
13 Feb	Pamela Bamber & Carol Roswell
20 Feb	Chris Trott & Sheila Rudofsky
27 Feb	Pamela & Alan Bamber

OFFICE HOLDERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF TAUNTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Car-Park..... Eryl Harris
 Christian Aid..... Sheila Rudofsky
 Church Heating Church Administrator (see page 1)
 Church Secretary..... Sue Ingham (07818 637155)
 Commitment for Life Contact..... Sue Ingham
 FINANCE - Treasurer..... Eryl Harris
 FINANCE - Covenant Collections..... Paula Powell
 Flowers Pam Elliott, Sheila Woolvin
 Letting Secretary Church Administrator (see page 1)
 Magazine Distributor..... Dawn Wright (01823 331800)
 Magazine Editor..... Peter Henderson (01823 254668)
 Prayer Handbook.....
 Property Stuart Trott
 Pulpit Supply Church Administrator (see page 1)
 Reform Magazine Pamela Bamber
 Social and Arts Group Janet Sowerbutts, Sheila Rudofsky (01823 617411)
 Sound Paul Cottrill
 Sunday Coffee Organiser Pamela Bamber
 Sunday News-Sheet the Church Secretary
 Synod Representative Sue Ingham
 World Day of Prayer

SERVING ELDERS

Sue Ingham <i>Secretary</i> 07818 637155	Meg Cardy 01823 443245	Stuart Trott 01823 281551
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Sunday duties

	Duty Elder	Communion Elders		Zoom host
6 Feb	Meg	Sue	Eryl	Sue
13 Feb	Eryl			tba
20 Feb	Stuart			Peter
27 Feb	Sue			Eryl
6 Mar	Eryl	Stuart	Meg	Sue

Taunton United Reformed Church

Vision Statement

For the sake of the Gospel, we will be:

- ✦ a church that welcomes, whoever you are
- ✦ a church that cares and responds with action
- ✦ a church that works with others and plays its part in the community
- ✦ a church that knows and shares the love of God
- ✦ a church that is growing in faith and knowledge of God
- ✦ a church full of hope and joy