

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

PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

APRIL 2020

80 PENCE



Photo by Janet French

One in Christ - Together in Mission

CHRIST CHURCH ORGAN RECITAL SERIES 2020



A series of recitals is planned to celebrate the completion last year of the major refurbishment, cleaning and enhancement of the organ, which was only possible thanks to bequests from John Sondermann and Peter Ford and with the support of the *Friends of Christ Church*.

Entry is free with a retiring collection in aid of the *Friends of Christ Church*, *Christ Church Choir* and the church.

Refreshments will be on sale beforehand.

Wednesday lunchtime recitals, 1pm, on the following dates:

Refreshments for purchase from 12 noon.

8 April - Tim Eyles, *Director of Music at Christ Church*

22 April - Henry Geidt, *film and popular music*

13 May - Robert Anderson, of St John's, Bathwick

3 June - Ian Crabbe, *formerly organist at Marlborough College*

17 June - Charles Vince, *Assistant Organist at Christ Church*

1 July - Dr John Henderson, *Organist at Wroughton Parish Church*

15 July - Organ Duets - Robin Jackson & Maureen McAllister, *Corsham*



Saturday Recitals, 7.30pm

27 June - David Halls, *Organist Salisbury Cathedral*

1 August - Jean-René André, *Rennes Cathedral, Brittany*

Refreshments from 7pm

Your Contacts

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Web site: www.bathroadmethodistchurch.org.uk
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PARISH OFFICE: at the Community Centre, SN1 3HB. Tel. 522832

e-mail: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Usually the Parish Office is open Monday-Friday, 9.00am to 1.00pm,
Thursday evening 5.30pm-7.30pm, Sat 10am-12 noon.

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WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER CHURCHES IN OLD TOWN

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Partnership Letter

The Manse, 147 Drove Road

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It has been a rather difficult time lately for so many people. We had so many suffer from the floods around the country after the three weekends of storms. The high winds caused minor and major damage for many households, but the flooding itself affected so many homes, businesses and community facilities in such a devastating way that it will take many a long time to recover, long after the newspapers and cameras have lost interest.

We then find ourselves in the midst of Coronavirus. Whilst we must be vigilant and listen to the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, we must not become panicked as usually in those situations people defer to their own needs and forget the needs of the vulnerable.

In both cases our first response is to pray for those affected, especially hoping that they will know they are being prayed for. At a distance this is often all we can do. We can also give to relief efforts. We remember those who go to help and rescue those in dire circumstances and those who treat the sick and are seeking a cure for that which ails many. We can heed advice and seek to help those who may feel vulnerable.

Perhaps the greatest thing we can do is to offer help and succour, where the need is close, and where the need is far away to give as we can. BUT, above and beyond that, it is to keep the needs of those affected in our hearts and prayers after the spotlight has shifted on to another situation or disaster and, even more, to keep highlighting any needs or issues that lead to the problem. So often, once the spotlight has gone, so does the concern and promises made; these are forgotten and it happens again because little or nothing is done.

Briefly, back to China. Stalin is reputed to have said 'One death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic.' Grieved as we are over those in China who have died from the virus, possibly the old and those of poor background and health, our governments nor people seem at all upset over the number of executions each year, or the use of work camps and 're-education' camps that lead to so many deaths. Perhaps my world weary view is that the West and the rest can catch the virus, no chance of the other things affecting us.....
in Jesus Name,



Since Mark wrote his Partnership Letter, the coronavirus epidemic in our country has increased dramatically and he writes...

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

These are indeed strange times we are living in. Times that frustrate us in all we may wish to do, times that may worry us in what may come. But it is a time for us to stand away and apart from some parts of our society. Not away and apart as in not engaging, though that is limited anyway, but in the way we behave and show ourselves.

We have an opportunity to be church where we are, each one of us. When the Israelites went into exile they asked in Psalm 137:

“By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?”

Well we are in a strange land, but we can still sing the Lord's song. Whilst we may not be able to meet together to share worship, we can still share our support, fellowship and love with those around us and those of our church.

Those of us who are still able still to get out and about can offer to get shopping or medicines for our neighbours who are self-isolating for one reason or another. There are a number of local support groups that are being set up on social media and through local advertising, there is the chance to be involved while still adhering to advice given.

We can also make phone calls to those of our fellowship and in our neighbourhoods, who are self-isolating. We have an opportunity not to let them feel alone or, at worse, forgotten.

So, sisters and brothers, in this strange land sing as Wesley says in his ‘Instructions for Singing’ at no.4 “Sing lustily and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength ...’

God bless you all,



FAMILY EVENTS

BAPTISMS

We welcome into the family of the Church

CHRIST CHURCH

Feb 16 Arthur George Eddolls
Mason William John Weir
Feb 23 Tobias William Jordan
Thomas James Mazonowicz

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to the loved ones of

CHRIST CHURCH

Feb 5 Margaret Wanja Gassmann, 64 years

IMMANUEL

Mar 2 Margaret De La Haye, 89 years

FLOODLIGHTING

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 write to the PARISH OFFICE, COMMUNITY CENTRE AT CHRIST CHURCH, SWINDON, SN1 3HB 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.

TEA/COFFEE and CHAT

this month at the Goddard Arms has been cancelled

Please note that some of the Organ Recitals and services of Choral Evensong advertised in this magazine may subsequently be cancelled due to the Coronavirus.



Partnership Birthday Service

Sunday 8th March saw the celebration of the Partnership's 51st birthday with a united 10.00 am service at Christ Church.

A debt of gratitude is due to our Focus Group and the team who drew up the order of service. Building on last year's memorable service when Martin Palmer challenged us all to take on board the worrying issues of global warming and other ecological matters that are now to the fore throughout the world, this year's service was very much in the same mould. It was good, too, to see how well it linked up with the theme of our Lenten house groups this year.

Centred on the story of the prodigal son, our visiting preacher, the Rev'd Dr Mark Siddall, took us through the parable and perhaps made some of us see it in a new light – I doubt many had really seen the link between the Greek "oikos" (home) and how it linked with both 'economy' and 'ecology' which are so closely interrelated.

The whole service was a timely reminder of how important it is to return to the 'family farm' and find our right place in God's creation. Mark certainly had a way with the children who will doubtless always remember how the wayward son scattered his money around with such gay abandon (what a pity it was only Monopoly money!)

Mark certainly practises what he preaches as Simon told us that Mark had cycled from his home in another part of Wiltshire to be with us, a distance of 25 miles, and then, of course, he had to cycle home again.

Hymns were well selected and well-known, the prayers and readings all meaningful and it was great to have the update on Messy Church to remind us of all the outreach work that goes on in our name each month.

My only criticism is that the church wasn't packed....we surely didn't have three full congregations crammed into Christ Church! Those who couldn't make it missed out!

Steve Brain

Bath Road

Church closure

In line with Government guidance, we are sad to have to say that all services, both morning and evening, will cease until further notice, along with all meetings that take place on church premises (including Open House, Sunbeams, MOPS, CRUSE, uniformed organisations etc).

Pastoral Advice:

If you are an older member (the Government states over 70) and/or if you have a medical condition that causes weaker health and greater vulnerability, you should stay at home for the time being to avoid infection or worries about infection.

If you are not an older member and don't have underlying health conditions, but are feeling ill and/or displaying the symptoms of a cold, please consider self-isolation.

As a church we will carry out pastoral 'visits' by phone. Please let your pastoral visitor know if you are going to self-isolate and if you have issues with shopping or collecting medication. These concerns will be passed on to Mark and a small response team to deal with.

Remember that if you are anxious, please contact your pastoral visitor who will speak with Mark.

All advice and updates will be posted on the church website and there is more information on the Circuit, District and Methodist Church in Britain websites. For those of you who do not use web sites, your pastoral visitor will keep you informed by phone.

Church website: www.bathroadmethodistchurch.org.uk

The Circuit website:

<https://www.northwiltsmethodistcircuit.org.uk/welcome.htm>

The Connexional website: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>

Dorothy Kennedy

Bath Road's new website is live: www.bathroadmethodistchurch.org.uk

Just as ours is a living church, we intend the same for our web site. It has been designed to be:

- Easy to find things, within three clicks of your mouse
- Clear
- To be used

We have added things such as audio recordings of services (although we really would prefer to see you in person), so you can listen to us now if you are home poorly, at the top of Snowdon or sunbathing on the beach!

We have added our flower, coffee and worship rotas, so no more having to check pin boards at church. One word of caution however - if a change has been made in pen on the board, please remember to tell us about it so that we can alter the information on the website - we are good with the software but we do not have psychic ability!

There's a link to our next quarter's preaching plan on the Welcome page, so you now know who is preaching, any special arrangements and when Junior Church is on.

We have had permission to scan *The History of Bath Road Church 1880-1980* onto the web site, too; this is a genuinely fascinating read. Our Property & Finance Committee noted that within ten years of being built they were already having problems with the roof!!

And we're not quite finished. We want to get the calendar working so you can see when the rooms in the church are available and when your committee meeting is taking place. We also want to add some pictures and to have a page devoted to the plants in our bank of wild flowers...but we need them to grow first!

The site is meant to be used and low-maintenance. We have a couple of people loading the weekly notices and order of service and audio onto the site. However we'd welcome anyone else who might be willing to lend a hand - it's only 10-15 minutes a week but every little helps. And you really, really don't need to be a technical expert to master what needs doing. If you can use a laptop, tablet or smartphone then you're pretty much qualified.

Allison Davies and Steve Sparkes

Book:
The History of Bath Road Methodist Church 1880-1980.

Now on: www.bathroadmethodistchurch.org.uk

Some of you will fondly remember Barbara and Reg Carter. Barbara was a renowned full-time genealogist, scouring census records long before the internet and 'Who Do You Think You Are?' Reg was a member of the choir and took on many other roles in the church.

They were responsible for 'The History of Bath Road Methodist Church: 1880-1980', a wonderful little fundraiser, full of facts about the church building and church life as well as a reflection of local social history. It's available to read for the first time on our revamped web site.



I tracked down their son David, to get permission to scan the book onto our web site; it was good to catch up. David and Jenny have lived in Appledore for 16 years.

They run a wonderful gallery and Aladdin's cave, www.doctoncourtgallery.co.uk, in a Grade II-listed building that David, true to form, painstakingly

restored. At c.1600, it's a little older than our own venerable church building! They are heavily involved in organising the local book festival, which has a line-up that rivals our own here in Swindon, and supporting the RNLI.

David and Jenny wish to pass on their best wishes to all who remember them and if you are ever down that way they would love to see you in the gallery.

Steve Sparkes



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2020 – 10 TO 16 MAY

As I write this, Christian Aid Week 2020 is still scheduled to go ahead from 10th to 16th May. However, in view of the Coronavirus situation, there will be some changes. In particular there

will be no house-to-house collections (although “delivery only” envelopes may still be used) and events such as Big Brekkies, lunches and coffee mornings will not be able to take place.

Christian Aid are working on alternative “virtual” or on-line fundraising ideas and we will share these in next month’s magazine.

One thing that currently will still be allowed is street or supermarket collections and we have been given permission to collect at Swindon railway station again this year.

The planned dates and times are slightly different this year and are:

Monday 11th, Tuesday 12th, Thursday 14th and Friday 15th between 8am and 10am and 5pm and 7pm each day.

Obviously, given the rapidly changing situation this could change but if you can offer to help collect for an hour or two during any of these times please let me know.

Please bear in mind that the help that Christian Aid provides will be needed as much, if not more, as ever. If/when the Coronavirus spreads to the countries where Christian Aid works they will not have access to the type of healthcare that we take for granted and they will be more vulnerable due to not having access to clean drinking water or enough nutritious food.

Please continue to pray for Christian Aid in this difficult situation. They are highly reliant on the income from Christian Aid Week which will inevitably be reduced, and they are also in the process of implementing their major reorganisation. If you have any ideas of alternative ways to raise money do let me know.

Thank you in anticipation.

George Kennedy (Tel: 01793 772589,
email: george.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com)

Immanuel

CORONAVIRUS Tuesday 17th March 2020

To all Immanuel Church members and friends,

Given the recent guidelines issued by the Government (Monday 16th) and a letter from South Western Synod Moderator today, in consultation with the Immanuel Elders we have decided to suspend all activities taking place at Immanuel, and that includes Sunday Services as well as all church related activities.

This is not a decision taken lightly as given the age of the congregation and the health issues that lots of people have there is no other possible decision; the welfare of all is an absolute priority. This decision will continue until further notice.

During this time we would like to affirm our belonging to a caring and loving community that does not cease when we cannot come together for a service - we continue to be God's children and the children of God over history have experienced the closeness of God during hard and difficult times.

We would invite you to keep connected, phone others asking how they are, if they need anything, or simply to say "Hello".

The United Reformed Church sends out an electronic Daily Devotion, which we would encourage you to receive, it's easy to do and it's free. Each day you will receive a text and short reflection as a way to keep the unity we have. The link to receive these devotionals is <https://devotions.urc.org.uk/>, on that same link, and due to this situation, the URC is offering a Sunday Service which you can request to receive. Why not try it?

During the time ahead Elders will be considering further actions or suggestions to keep us in touch and further communication will be coming forthwith.

continued overleaf

At the foot of this letter we share "A prayer for uncertain times" written by the Moderators of General Assembly.

With the blessing with which the Synod Moderator closes her letter

May God the Father hold you safe in arms of love,
May Christ the risen Lord shine in your homes,
And may the Holy Spirit be with you as your comforter and protector.
Amen

In trust and in hope,

Minister and Elders of Immanuel United Reformed Church, Swindon

Choral Matins

I have been both very pleased, and indeed uplifted, by the many positive and supportive comments received from those of you who came to the Choral Matins Service last Sunday Morning. Whilst I am well aware that this style of service doesn't go well for some folk (It's too Anglican, seems to be the reason), it was very clear to me that it meant a great deal to many of you.

My sincere thanks to the choir and friends who made this possible.

Choral Evensong

On page 14 you will see the dates we have planned for our series of Choral Evensong. We are giving you advanced notice so you can put the dates in your diary and come along. This is a 1 year pilot to see if it is a service folk in Swindon want and will support.

Geoff Gleed



Fairtrade Coffee Mornings raise £115: A big thank you from the World Concerns Committee to all who supported the Fairtrade Coffee Morning on Saturday 29th February and Sunday 1st March. We raised £115 to send to the Traidcraft Exchange charity and also sold £230 worth of products over the weekend. This will also allow Traidcraft to further their work around the world.

Liz Gleed

Church Action for Tax Justice believes in a world where all people can flourish. Global resources should be distributed so that no one is held back from their full potential. A just world is what it means to pray ‘Your Kingdom Come’. But many multinationals fail to pay the taxes they owe in poorer countries. It has been estimated that tax dodging by multinationals costs the developing world up to \$400bn each year –three times the amount that is given in aid to those countries. That’s why we want the British government to ensure that developing countries can collect their fair share of taxes from multinational corporations.

At the last Elders meeting it was agreed that we would invite the congregation to sign a petition.

A Time to Pray... *Excerpt from a letter from Jerusalem*

A tiny virus, smaller than a micrometer has brought the world economy to its knees with plunging stock markets, international travel at a virtual standstill and many peoples and nations gripped with fear at a pandemic. The advice to wash hands is so taken seriously that disinfectants are being stolen in large quantities out of European hospitals.

The Coronavirus should call all of us to seek God and search our hearts to follow the advice of James who said, ‘Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands; and purify your hearts. *James 4*. Remember, too, God saying in *Haggai 2*, ‘Once more in a little while I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations...’

Let us pray that the Lord will move mightily to spare lives and eliminate suffering and fear caused by this tiny virus. Pray that God’s will would be accomplished in the earth amid this global crisis. Pray that medical systems and government authorities will be able to quickly contain and eradicate this public menace and nullify the threat. Remember Elijah prayed and a whole nation was delivered from starvation, and Jonah prayed and the most evil nation then was entirely defeated.

Barbara Ferguson, Immanuel

Margaret De La Haye



Margaret was born in West Bromwich on the 18th September 1930 and the family moved to Weston-Super-Mare when she was in her teens.

The family then joined Weston Victoria Methodist Church and Margaret soon became a choir member. She also worked in the local Bank at Weston. It was in Church at Weston that Margaret met Barry. They were married in the Church in October 1955 and

they were blessed with two sons, Martin and Malcolm, of whom they were very proud.

Barry's work subsequently brought them to Swindon and they lived in Grosvenor Road for some years. They also soon became members of Bath Road Methodist Church, and the late Arthur Walters, who was the Choirmaster, invited Margaret to join the Choir, of which she was a member for 40 years. Margaret was a very talented soprano and took solo parts in many anthems, and she is particularly remembered for her solo part in 'Lead Me Lord'.

They subsequently moved to Henrietta Court where they were among the first residents.

Margaret was also a Registrar in the Swindon Register Office for some years, she was also involved in Church activities, and was well known for her excellent trifles!! Being a School Governor and being involved in the Swindon Music Festival showed Margaret's many talents.

Latterly Margaret and Barry have been worshipping at Immanuel United Reformed Church.

It was a privilege to have known Margaret as a good friend over 50 years and our thoughts and prayers are with Barry, Martin, Malcolm and the wider family at this sad time. God Bless you Margaret.

Colin Smith

Barry would like to thank you all for the many kind messages and cards he has received. They have been a great comfort to him and his family.

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

Immanuel Church

Upham Road, Old Walcot, Swindon SN3 1DH

A SERVICE OF CHORAL EVENSONG

Sung by the Choir

*A beautiful, short, relaxing service
of readings, prayers & music*

Being Held on

Wednesdays at 6.15pm

May 13th

June 10th

July 15th

September 16th

October 21st

A warm welcome awaits - Ample parking.

www.immanuelurc.org



The theme for this Messy Church was FRIENDSHIP, based on the story of David and Jonathan.

David and Jonathan were best friends and nothing came between them. To illustrate this, the young people made two card friends which were coloured in and then fastened together with a heart!

In the bible story, Jonathan sent three arrows into the sky to warn his friend David that he was in danger, so we made arrows, either by sticking an arrow head and tail onto a lollipop stick and adding a feather or attaching an elastic band to a curved lollipop stick to make a bow, decorating it with stickers, then using the cotton buds as arrows.

A verse from Proverbs 17:17 'A friend loves at all times' is very relevant to the story of David and Jonathan. Have you ever thought that the 'best ships' are friendships! While talking about what makes a good friend, a boat was made, using templates, then a name, or suitable words describing a friend, was added to the boat's sail.

'Friends Sandwiches' were made, using heart and people-shaped cutters! An owl was produced by sticking together the cut-out shapes, adding googly eyes, heart shaped feet and a beak with the words 'Hoo loves you?'

Jonathan loved David, just as he loved himself, so there was the reminder that Jesus loves each of us and asks us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

A Messy Church Friendship Tree was produced by using painted hand prints and names added. Then, to take home, a bracelet was made to give to a friend, also using material and grass-seed, There was a 'Grass Head' to sit in a plastic cup but it would need care in the coming weeks for the grass to grow, similar to the way we should care for our friends to help our friendships grow.

The young people were eager to show what they had done during the afternoon before joining in the songs and prayer at the time of worship. As usual they all enjoyed sitting down to enjoy tea together.

Due to the coronavirus, Messy Church will be cancelled until further notice.

Christ Church with St. Mary's

All services have been cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for all you are doing to support one another in the light of the coronavirus outbreak. This is a massive reset for the whole of the human race and for us all here in Swindon. Please join us in praying for one another. Being part of the church in this country is going to look very different in the days ahead. Our life is going to be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday or in the week and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day. Bristol Cathedral tweeted a great summary 'The church is not closed, the church is changing.'

What does this mean for Christ Church with St Mary's? The Community Centre, including the Parish Office are closed until further notice. Our administration and planning is being done remotely with us all working from home. Christ Church will be kept open for private prayer. I, with a few colleagues, will continue to say Morning prayer each day at 9am. This will include our Partnership Prayer and the Lord's Prayer. Why not join us at that time from your own home and use these prayers as well? It would be wonderful to know that you are praying across Swindon with us then. We will record a service each week and this will be available each Sunday from 10am on our Christ Church website www.christchurchswindon.co.uk. It is the intention also to keep St Mary's open on a Sunday morning, again for private prayer.

While, as you all now know public church services, have been suspended, including here at Christ Church and St Mary's, the Staff team will continue to take funerals and weddings. Please pray for us as we adjust to the sensible restrictions placed upon us in doing this. In addition we are working on offering pastoral and spiritual support to as many people as possible. If you would like to be involved with this, please don't hesitate to get in touch with myself, any member of the staff team or email the Parish Office and we will see how we can help.

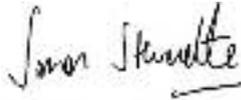
I would like to end by quoting from Bishop Viv's letter to our Bristol diocese;

'Throughout my ministry, I have carried in my cassock pocket a hazelnut (I think I am now on my tenth) to remind me of Julian's vision of the tiny

hazelnut in the palm of her hand, and of God's love for the world held which 'lasts and lasts for ever because God loves it.' Julian self-isolated herself during a time of pandemic and from that isolation wrote of the assurance she had been given that "God said not 'Thou shalt not be tempested, thou shalt not be travailed, thou shalt not be dis-eased', but he said, 'Thou shalt not be overcome.'" May we, too, notice tiny details of God's re-creative care for us and the world. May we journey together in these tempestuous and dis-eased times confident in Christ in whom all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.'

Please be assured of our friendship, prayers and support and in our anxiety may we know God's healing presence, love and strength. Above all may we be sustained by renewed Christian hope, looking out for each other as we approach Easter.

Every blessing,



A prayer for us all

Loving God,
Bless us all, particularly now.
Particularly when we are comforting others.
Particularly when we are offering hope.
Particularly when people are isolated.

Easter Eve (Saturday) Walk - cancelled

In the light of recent Government advice with respect to coronavirus, including Ramblers GB decision to suspend all group led walks, it is not now planned to go ahead with the traditional Partnership Easter eve walk. It is hoped to resume the Partnership walks when the situation becomes clearer.

With thanks, *Daniel Pitt*



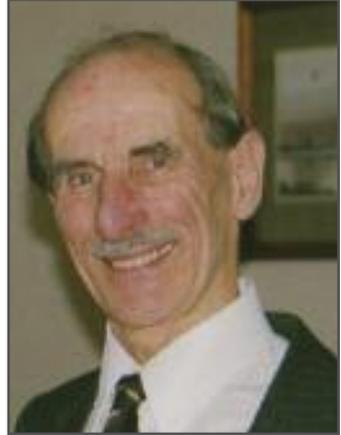
Church Mission Society

At a recent Gift Sunday, Christ Church with St. Mary's raised £741.58 for the Church Mission Society for Jimmy and Katia Rock's work in Brazil.

LYN ADAMS

At the end of February we held a thanksgiving service at Christ Church for the life of Lyn Adams, a thanksgiving for his 102 years on this earth! Lyn and Margaret (who died a year ago) were regular worshippers at Christ Church and were members of a home group since home groups came into being in the parish.

Lyn was a man of few words and rarely talked about his own life but was always interested to listen to other people's stories; in fact many of us learned more about his early life at his Thanksgiving Service when Julian his son spoke about his dad, giving us an insight into life a century ago. We learned about his time in the Royal Air Force and his ambition to fly.



If I were to sum up Lyn in a couple of words, I would say that he was a “true gentleman”. He never grumbled or complained, even when he fell and broke his hip when he was over 100 years old. He was fiercely independent, returning from hospital to live in his own home with carers going in to offer assistance. It was only in the last couple of months that he was persuaded to go into a care home where he could be nearer to family members.

We send our love and prayers to Julian his son and to Melanie his daughter and their families. *M.W.*

Did you know that old postcards can be valuable?

A reverend gentleman in Essex has raised £210,000 over 25 years from selling postcards to collectors. People collect by categories, e.g. certain publishers, street scenes, hospitals. If an individual postcard is rare it can be worth over £100 on eBay. When we delivered a box-full recently he was unable to tell us how much it would raise without looking at each card individually. The writing on the postcard however is not of interest to collectors.

The Essex chap sells the postcards in aid of MAF- Mission Aviation Fellowship, which has been one of Christ Church's charities. Previous members of our congregation, Neil and Frances Cullen, were also involved with this charity that provides medical assistance by plane to remote places which cannot be reached any other way.

Caroline Pitt

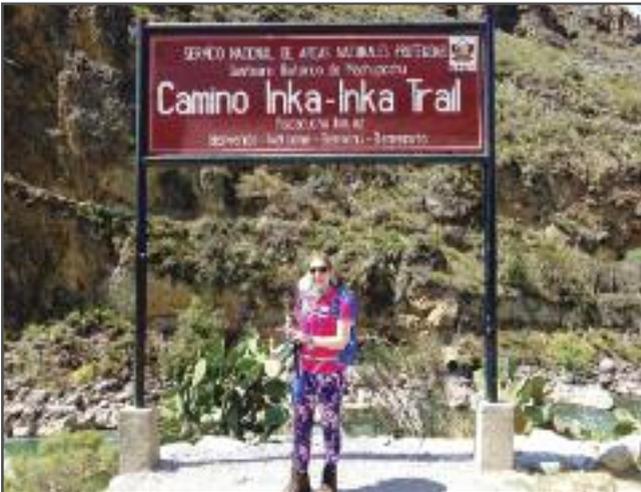
AN INCA-REDIBLE ADVENTURE

By Kara-Jane Senior - Guide/Ranger Leader

Late on 11 October I set off with 11 other Girlguiding volunteers from all over the UK on the adventure of a lifetime, travelling over 6,000 miles to Peru in South America. Our aim was to walk 26 miles through the Andes along the famous Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. We had spent the past year preparing for this trip and spreading the word to fundraise thousands of pounds for Girlguiding and had only met once prior to the trip.

After a brief stop in Bogota (Colombia), we landed in the city of Cusco, which was once the capital of the Inca Empire. At 3,400m above sea level, I soon felt the effects of being at altitude - and jet lag didn't help. We went out to explore Cusco with our local guide but struggled through a large dinner due to being so tired.

In the morning we got ready for the warm-up walk. We took a minibus up to about 4,000m and then took a route around several Inca archaeological sites, descending gradually back down to the Cusco.



The next day we set off at 5.30am to drive through the Sacred Valley of the Incas to the Inca Trail start point: KM 82 (2,650m). Here we met our crew of porters and cooks for the first time - about 20 local men preparing to carry a lot of our luggage as well as tents and cooking apparatus along the entire trail!

The weather was mostly good and we had a fairly gentle walk for the first day, though there were still some steep climbs. We passed through the last few residential areas we would see for a few days. Already we had spectacular views and passed many archaeological sites, such as the Llactapata ruins (2,630m).

Lunch was our first experience of how well the local tour company looks after trekkers. We had a mess tent with tables covered in tablecloths and folded napkins. We were served fresh lemonade, soup and a rice dish, which after many hours of walking was very welcome. After a few more hours of walking, we reached our first campsite at Wayllabamba. We were served dinner as the sun set and the stars came out. Due to the lack of light pollution, you could see the milky way clearly, but I couldn't stargaze for too long as sleep was very much needed.

On day two of the Inca Trail we left the campsite at 6.15am. This was to be the toughest day as we had over 1km of altitude to ascend, up the aptly named Dead Woman's Pass (actually named because of what the mountain's profile looks like). Eventually we reached the top of the pass at 4,215m.



It was quite chilly up here so we had to layer up, and unfortunately quite foggy, so we had to imagine some of the view! Here I like to believe that I saw a condor which was a very spiritual bird to the Incas.

After enjoying the sense of achievement, we began to descend 800m into

a valley, towards our campsite for the night.

Departure on day three was the same as the previous day. Immediately we began on a steep climb upwards. We ascended the Runkurakay Pass, the second highest point on the trail (3,920m), descended a little, then up the third pass Phuyupatamarca (3,600m). There were several Inca ruins along the path to explore and learn about. This was a day of some spectacular views across the Andes. Whilst day two was the toughest climb-wise, day three was the longest in length, and we ended up completing the last part literally descending into darkness. ►

On day four we had to get up at 3.30am to allow the camp to be cleared so that the porters could run down to the train station in Aguas Calientes (the town of Machu Picchu) and get the train back to KM82, ready to start the whole trail again with another group! We had to wait for the Sun Gate check-point to open at 5.30am and then headed on a gentle incline up to Inti Punku (Sun Gate). Unfortunately, we were unable to experience the sun part and didn't have a view of our goal yet, but we knew that we were very close. As we continued along the path, for the first time since the first day, we met people coming in the opposite direction. These were day trippers who had taken the less intense route to Machu Picchu (by train)!

We descended towards Machu Picchu (2,430m), passing a few other ruins, and the clouds finally parted to allow us our first sighting. Magical!

Reaching the end of the trek was exciting. We savoured the experience, spending a few hours exploring the world renowned ruins, and then headed into the town of Aguas Calientes for a very well deserved lunch before catching the tourist train. We whizzed past the areas we had trekked through the last few days. At Ollantaytambo we disembarked and boarded a minibus to complete our journey back to Cusco and the comforts of our hotel.

The next day we enjoyed a bit of a lie-in and explored Cusco further, including a large market selling all sorts of goods. In the evening we had a meal to celebrate our achievements.

This adventure was truly Inca-redible, and worth all the efforts of fundraising. Together we fundraised £46k+. This money will support a range of things, including new unit grants, grants for accessible guiding and supporting units in deprived areas; funding volunteer recruitment and developing new volunteer training materials; supporting campaigning work, and helping to fund GOLD (Guiding Oversees Leadership Development).

A massive thank you to everyone who supported me with this challenge. Muchas gracias!

The first in our series on how other people worship

We asked Elsa Ashworth, whose daughter lives in Greece, to tell us how the Greek Orthodox Church celebrates Easter. Elsa told us that she especially likes to visit her daughter at Easter time as she enjoys this celebration so much.

Red Eggs at Easter

One of the oldest Easter traditions of Greek Orthodox Christians is the red-dyed eggs associated with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

On the Thursday of Holy Week, in every house, about 2 dozen eggs are hard boiled in a pan of red-dyed water. When cooled they are rubbed with olive oil to make them shine and then placed in a large ornamental bowl. Any caller to the house is given one of these eggs that represent drops of the blood of Christ.

On Easter Saturday everyone in Greece, babies, children and adults, including the elderly, go to church, taking a decorated candle and an egg. Some go about 10.00 pm in order to take part in a service, but the majority go to be there by midnight. At midnight a priest appears with a lit candle symbolising "The Light of the World". This light is then passed from candle to candle until everyone inside and in the crowd outside has 'The Light'. This is a time of great joy.

Everyone 'gently' cracks their egg against the next person's egg, symbolising the resurrection of Jesus, and the eggs are eaten to break their fast. Then we all make our way home, keeping the light glowing.

We used to go to a monastery high up in the mountains and it was a breathtaking sight looking down on Thessaloniki. Everywhere you looked in all directions you would see large areas of light from outside every church.

At home the house is blessed, using the light to make the sign of the cross, and we say a short prayer. Then we go inside for soup (usually made from lamb) and finally to bed.

Easter Sunday is a great day of feasting, roasting a whole lamb on a spit in the garden, and traditionally everyone who comes by is welcome – even strangers. ■



Church of England sets 2030 Net Zero carbon target

The Church of England's General Synod has now set new targets for all parts of the church to work to become carbon 'net zero' by 2030. The original target was 2045.

At its February 2020 meeting, members voted in favour of a revised date encouraging all parts of the Church of England to take action and ramp-up efforts to reduce emissions. The motion follows the launch of the Church of England's first ever Green Lent (#LiveLent) campaign for 2020.

The Church of England has also announced an appliance-style footprinting tool for parishes to calculate their carbon footprint.

Following the debate, The Bishop of Salisbury, Nick Holtam, the Church of England's lead bishop for the Environment said: "To reach Synod's target of 2030 we will each need to hear this as an urgent call to action. This is a social justice issue, and if the Church is to hold others to account, we have to get our own house in order." ■

The Food We Eat *(page 26 of the March magazine)*

The answer to last month's question, 'Which of the foods generally do not contain gluten?' is Heinz baked beans. Some of the other products listed are available with allergy aware recipes but they are not the bulk standard 'grab off the shelf'.

No quiz for this month, just the thought that as we leave the time of Lent and look forward to once again eating chocolate, cake, biscuits, or whatever else you gave up, possibly it's a good time to check what exactly is in those luxuries we can take for granted.

Noel Hunt

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