

INFORM



**URC
VAN ROAD
CAERPHILLY
OCTOBER 2020**

CHURCH OFFICERS

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An Elder writes

At the start of the local lockdown in Caerphilly, Diane and I decided to de-camp to our caravan in West Wales. Our time in West Wales seems to have involved a number of coincidences that I'd like to share.

Our first was on the afternoon we arrived. The weather was good so Diane and I went in the sea with our body boards. As I was riding in on a wave, who should I see on the shoreline but our milkman with some of his family. He was visiting St Davids and Whitesands for the day as part of a holiday break in Saundersfoot. When we were out of the water he came over for a chat and I was telling him that we often meet people there and mentioned a particular couple (Pauline and Jeff from Nottingham) we'd met on several occasions on the beach, purely by coincidence. They visit the area once or twice a year.

Later that afternoon, I was looking up surveying the beach and who should I see but this self same couple pitched about 20 metres away from us, so of course I got up to speak to them and catch up after several years. Somewhere within our conversation I mentioned the work of Llanfair Uniting Church and particularly its engagement with the local community through the Cafe. Pauline then told me about the work her church is involved with through the Renew Wellbeing project which has set up a number of cafes across the country, particularly to support the Wellbeing of people in the local community. You can find more about this at <https://www.renewwellbeing.org.uk/>. From looking at the website I see Ararat Baptist church in Whitchurch, Cardiff have set up one of these Cafes.

A few days later, Margaret asked me to contact Roberta Rominger, a former Moderator in the URC and friend of Peter and Val. Roberta is now a minister near Seattle in the

USA and had heard of the lockdown in Caerphilly in the news and wondered whether I could produce a short video explaining the impact of the lockdown on the area and to our church in particular.

Since March her church has been reaching out to people overseas and asking them to share their experiences of lockdown and she sent me a couple of examples of the type of things people have been saying. I was surprised and excited to find the first example she had sent was prepared by Heritiana, a member of the FJKM church in Madagascar who spent a year volunteering at Llanfair. We last met Heritiana in 2017 when we visited Madagascar and it was so good to see him again if only through the video link. Once I have produced a video, I'll try to share it with those I have email addresses for.

If that was not enough, a few days later I was contacted by Val Morrison, a former Moderator of General Assembly. She was asking advice on how her church in Doncaster could support projects in Madagascar where Covid-19 is impacting quite severely those that are already living in poverty. The strange thing was she told me the person that had drawn this to her attention was Heritiana - yes, the same Heritiana who had volunteered at Llanfair all those years ago.

I have always said, being part of the United Reformed Church, you are never that far away from someone you know, or knows you through someone else but these coincidences and contacts help me to realise we are part of a church that is global, and wherever you are, God is there calling you to engage in his work.

Rob

From the Editor - Close Encounters

Rob has shared with you some surprising encounters we experienced while in Pembrokeshire, however, there was one encounter he didn't mention which was both thrilling and memorable.

One morning, while standing up to our waists in the sea with our body boards, waiting for a good wave, what should pop its head up about 10 metres away, but a seal? He looked around curiously, didn't seem perturbed and stayed around for about 10 minutes then headed out to sea. We were really 'chuffed.'

A few weeks before we went on one of our favourite walks to look down on a cove and see the seals and their cubs. The cubs have a cry like that of a baby and the tiny white, furry pups' cuteness is off the scale.

It is always a privilege and a solace to be able to experience the wonders of nature. We live in such a beautiful country. During these months of trying to cope with the consequences of Covid 19, whether in the garden or further afield, nature has proved a comfort to many.



So, **October 18th-25th is One World Week!** Its focus is to remind us that God's world is precious; the need to protect and support nature, to do what is necessary to combat climate change, to support refugees and to care for all people wherever they are in the world as the whole world is suffering to a greater or lesser extent and this is set to continue for some time.

We continue to care and to pray.

Diane

Church Services

These are the planned dates but are subject to the decision of the Elders to reopen for worship in the light of current developments.

Worship leaders for October

4th	Mr Dave Clarke
11th	Mr Peter Speakman
18th	Mr Richard and Mrs Sarah Edwards
25th	Rev. Malcolm Shapland Harvest Communion

The church is set up to comply with Covid restrictions.

Remember, alternative church worship can be found at

dailydevotions@urc.org.uk



St Francis

The feast day of St Francis (4th October) marks the end of the Season of Creation. Francis was born in Italy, in 1181 AD, into a wealthy family. His father was a wealthy cloth merchant and made frequent trips to France, and their family life was lived amongst the bourgeoisie of the day. Growing up Francis received elite schooling and as a young man was known for his flamboyant lifestyle and extravagance.

As a young man, St. Francis enduring a prolonged period of illness during which Francis would spend time in the forests and caves surrounding Assisi and it is here that he is believed to have received a vision in a dream. Francis was convinced that he was called to follow a life of poverty, in following the way of Jesus.

Francis would later give back all his belongings to his father, including the clothes on his back, and choose instead to live amongst the lepers. Francis was known for preaching not only to people but also to nature, as seen in one of his most well-known writings, The Canticle to Brother Sun.

(information found on the Christian Aid website.)



The Lord's Prayer – a responsive version:

Our Father, who art in heaven...

You are also at home in the air, soil, forests and oceans,

Hallowed be Your name...

By the care we take of your creation,

Your Kingdom come...

All that you see is good,

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...

Your will to till and care.

Give us this day our daily bread...

That all may have sufficient to live life in fullness

Forgive us our trespasses...

our greed, our exploitation, our lack of concern for other species and for future generations,

As we forgive those who trespass against us...

by reconciliation with justice and peace

Lead us not into temptation...

the temptation to equate dominion with exploitation,

And deliver us from evil...

the evil of destroying your gift of creation,

For Yours is the Kingdom...

Yours Lord, not ours,

The Power and the Glory...

in the cross and the resurrection,

For ever and ever...

You were the beginning and you are the end

Amen

And so be it.

From Module 2 Eco-congregation resources

[www.ecocongregation.org]

Forgiveness

God of light and life

whose breath sustains us,

in your forgiving, inspire us with new ways of living

in your redeeming, show us our interdependence with
all creation

in your saving, grant us courage to live simply

that we may be good news for the rest of the planet.

Amen.

ONE WORLD WEEK
October 18th-25th

Lectionary Readings



October

4th Exodus 20:1-4,7-9,12-20; Psalm 19;
Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46

11th Exodus 32:1-4; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23;
Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

18th Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99;
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22

25th Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17;
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46



We hold in our prayers -

Jean Mutter Frank Frayling Roy Collins

Rev Malcolm Shapland Diana Hibbert

Vernon Holland Barbara Lloyd

Carol Booth

Dorothy Woodward Judy and Rod Jarman

Neil Watson & family following the death of his mum

All affected in any way by Coronavirus in UK, Europe and in developing nations.

All those working in the NHS and in Social Care.

Those who have died and their loved ones.

Shop workers, delivery people, post people, milk people, transport workers,

Teachers and children

Those who have lost their employment and those fearful for their jobs.

Neighbourhood volunteers, scientists, researchers and makers of testing kits and PPE.

The people of Lebanon.



Christmas Cards

As I have time on my hands I am willing to accept orders for Christmas cards. I am happy to make cards for you from the following designs. I would suggest you order in groups of five and these will be at the usual cost of £3.00 with the proceeds going equally to Church and VAN-guard.

The choice of designs are:-

Victorian Christmas

Magical Christmas, these designs are cute and childlike

Snow Adorable, these are mainly teddies in snowy scenes

“Twas the night before Christmas,
Winter wishes, traditional snowy images,
Miracle of Christmas, religious images,
Stepping into Christmas, Traditional images.

If you want to mix your images or have five from one design that is fine.

Order by telephoning me on 029 2088 7112.

I hope you are all well. I will also deliver them to you.

Best wishes

Cathy Vernalls

From Genesis 1:1-23

R	T	U	L	D	E	S	S	E	L	B	L
E	S	C	R	E	A	T	E	V	L	I	B
S	E	U	A	Y	B	S	A	K	G	L	C
G	R	K	L	K	U	R	S	H	A	G	R
N	O	O	R	T	G	A	T	N	O	N	E
I	H	O	H	A	M	T	D	O	N	I	A
E	R	G	D	M	D	S	M	H	S	N	T
B	I	R	D	S	N	O	P	T	S	N	U
N	N	Y	L	E	R	O	L	R	H	I	R
A	Y	R	V	N	O	S	A	A	H	G	E
M	B	A	I	G	N	I	N	E	V	E	S
U	E	N	D	B	N	M	T	S	A	B	D
H	A	N	I	M	A	L	S	H	K	K	Y

BEGINNING	HEAVENS	MORNING	EVENING
HUMAN BEINGS	PLANTS	ANIMALS	NIGHT
DAY	BLESSED	CREATURES	BIRDS
GOOD	LAND	SEAS	STARS
DARK	HOLY	REST	CREATE

Together In Prayer

Please pray for ...

October

4th Edwardsville URC, Treharris, The Plough URC/
Union of Welsh Independents, Brecon

Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,
Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and
Uzbekistan

11th Bethesda'r Fro URC, St Athan and Sardis URC,
Llangynidr

Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal

18th Senghenyddand Abertridwr URC and Ebenezer
URC, Upper Chapel

India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

25th Bethesda URC, Tongwynlais and Hanover URC,
Llanover

Indian Ocean Islands: Comoros,

Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles



The Operation Noah Prayer

Creator God, how deep are your designs!

You made a living earth, cloud, rain and wind,
and charged us with their care.

We confess that the way we live today

is changing the climate, the seas and the balance of
life

dispossessing the poor and future generations.

Build our lives into an Ark for all creation,

and, as you promised Noah never to repeat the Flood,

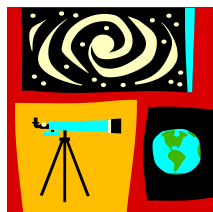
so make us heralds of a new rainbow covenant:

choosing life for all that is at risk -

for creation, neighbours near and far,

our children and ourselves.

Amen



See Operation Noah www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah

From the Treasurer

In last month's INFORM there was a letter from the URC's treasurers thanking members and churches for their continued support for the central Ministry and Mission fund and explaining a little about how the money is spent. As treasurer of our own church I would like to add my own thanks to the way the folk at Van Road have continued to support the work of the church financially, despite the fact that we have not met together for over 6 months. This has been achieved in many and varied ways.

Some people have continued to put money in their envelopes each week which I collect about once a month (when we're not at the caravan), some write a single cheque to cover a particular period and drop it in to me or ask me to collect, others have set up standing orders to pay a regular monthly amount, others simply transfer money directly to the church's account as and when it is convenient.

As treasurer, I always say I am happy to receive money whichever way it arrives. This has meant the church has managed to pay its bills and been able to set aside a little in preparation for the winter fuel bills. These may not be as large as in previous years as the use of the building will be reduced, but it will be important that we maintain a level of heat to ensure the fabric is maintained.

Regarding the damage that occurred in the tower in February, we have had estimates provided for the cost of repair, but are awaiting an insurance loss adjuster to visit before the work can proceed. The local lockdown in Caerphilly meant his planned trip had to be postponed.

Thanks should also go to those who contributed to the cost of the big clean in August, in preparation for the start of worship in September. Sadly this has also had to be postponed which means we continue to find alternative ways of worshipping.

I have been interested to hear of the various ways people are worshipping, from using broadcast services on radio and television, joining other family members in their church's Zoom services, using the URC's Daily Devotions, either online or the printed copy Margaret distributes or even watching services on Youtube.

My mother often sees my sister's service in Tonyrefail which is broadcast using Youtube, though she also has the opportunity to listen to a service from her own church by ringing a particular phone number and even attended church a week ago, albeit the service took place in the church's car park as they have not found a way of opening the building for worship safely.

I'm not sure how long this will continue given the change in temperature and weather. As Malcolm wrote recently, although there are many alternative ways of worshipping, there is something about meeting together that helps us to be the people of God and respond in worship together. However, it would be interesting to hear people's experience of how they've worshipped over the last few months. I'm sure Diane would be happy to receive contributions for the November INFORM.

Rob

REQUEST

This edition is slimmer than recent ones due to the lack of articles etc. being received.

Please can you send contributions for November by 19th October?

The contributions can be from your own thoughts / ideas, possibly prayers or poems, (care with copyright is needed,) reflections etc.

I have been grateful for the response over recent months and hope my Inbox will be full for the next edition.

Thank you! Diane.



CHURCH ELDERS

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Mrs Cathy Vernalls 02920 887112

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Any items for the next edition should be
submitted by the 19th of the month

to

Mrs Diane Moverley

dianemoverley60@gmail.com

(or if not on e mail then items can be left
in the box at the back of the sanctuary)



**The earth is the Lord's and the fullness
thereof.**