



The  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

**Tavistock U.R.C.**  
Russell Street, Tavistock PL19 8BD  
Founded 1652  
Loving God,  
Encouraging Questions, Welcoming all.

# CONTACT

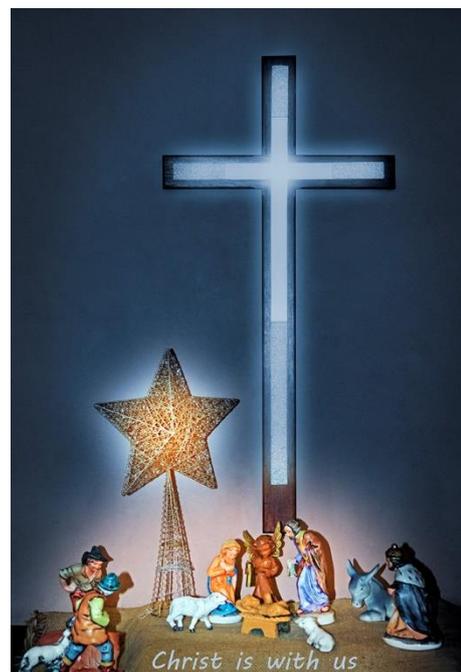
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## January 2019

SUNDAY 6<sup>th</sup> Service led by Revd Malcolm Richards with Holy Communion  
SUNDAY 13<sup>th</sup> Service led by Mr Mike Dennis  
SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup> Service led by Revd Robert Weston  
SUNDAY 27<sup>th</sup> Service led by Revd Phyllis Ball

And, lo, the star, which the wise men saw in the east, went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was.  
(Matthew ch 2 v 9)

(Photo – Peter Tulloch)



## Dates for your Diary

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January - Changes and Choices** - A day retreat from 10am to 3pm at Tinhay Retreats see page 3

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January Church Meeting** after the service

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January TACT Unity Service & AGM** 6pm and 7.15 at Abbey Chapel. Please come and learn more about what God is doing in Tavistock Area.

**Wednesdays at 2.30 Daytime Discussion Group** at our church – restarts 9<sup>th</sup>

January. ( Any change of date /venue will be announced in the notices on the preceding Sunday ).

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 10.00am–2.00pm Walking the Way Synod Day**

at The Manse; Norton Fitzwarren,TA2 6RU see page 7

**Thursday 14 February 2019 - Bread of Life** - A day retreat from 10am until 3pm at Tinhay Retreats see page 3.

## Minister's Letter

New Year - do you look forward to the new start offered by a New Year? It can be a time for looking back at the previous year, or an opportunity to look forward to a new start and the chance to do something different. In our lives there are many opportunities to try something different and it is possible that in doing so, we may enrich our lives.

So as you prepare your New Year's resolution, have a think about something you would like to try in 2019. May the God who took Abraham to new lands, who gave Miriam a new role and Peter a new job; grant us peace and joy in 2019.

Robert Weston

## Eco Church

Eco Church - Over 1200 churches and growing, Eco Church is proving to be a great tool for engaging congregations with environmental issues. Within the Church of England there are now 4 Eco Diocese Bronze award winners, congratulations to Salisbury, Birmingham, Guildford and Winchester!

Two URC Synods are working towards an Eco Synod award (West Midlands and Wessex) and in March 2019 we hope that the South West Synod will commit to the same.

## New church member

At our church meeting on 9th December we agreed to receive Jo O'Driscoll into church membership, I'm delighted to say that we will be receiving Jo during our morning worship on Sunday 20th January.

## Kitchen extraction system

The new extraction system is now in place in our kitchens and we thank Hugh and Anne for arranging everything with the contractors and helping to restore the kitchen to its usual format when the work was completed.

The extraction system has two fans: one takes the air out of the kitchen and the other allows clean air into the kitchen. Due to current safety legislation, the gas cooker will not operate unless both fans are running, therefore all our cooking smells will be extracted. Easy to follow instructions are on the wall in the kitchen.



From **Mike Dennis**:

### **Elders, Church Secretary and the AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Below are 2 paragraphs from the current constitution of the church.

#### **Election of Elders**

Elders are ordained for life. The term of service is 3 years. After 2 consecutive terms of service Elders shall stand down for one year after which they may stand for re-election. Elders are elected at the Annual General Meeting which shall be held within 4 months of the end of the financial year.

All members of the local church who are over 18 years of age and have been in membership of the United Reformed Church for at least 12 months are eligible to serve as Elders.

At the church meeting prior to the AGM members will be informed of elders who are standing down and those who do not wish to seek re election. Members will be invited to nominate new elders subject to their willingness to stand for election. All nominations must have a proposer and seconder and be submitted to the church secretary two Sundays in advance of the AGM. Voting shall be by secret ballot at the AGM. A two thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote is required to be elected. 2 scrutinisers shall be appointed by the church secretary to count the voting slips. The results will be handed to the minister to declare the results.

#### **Church Secretary**

The Elders shall nominate from among themselves a Church Secretary. The Secretary shall be approved by the Church Meeting to serve for a term of 5 years. An Assistant Secretary may be appointed in the same manner. Each committee shall appoint a minute secretary.

Both Jenny and Mike have completed 6 years as serving elders and are required to stand down. Garth is also proposing to stand down. Therefore new elders are required. Mike and Jenny have also completed 5 years as church secretary and must stand down. A new secretary is sought. If you would consider standing or would like to recommend someone else, but need clarification as to what is involved do have a word with Robert, Mike or Jenny. Those offering to serve do not have to commit for the maximum terms above but you are encouraged to consider how best these offices in the church can be filled in the immediate future. It may be helpful to note that Jenny and Mike are willing to provide the new secretary with support as well as continuing with other tasks not central to the primary role of the secretary.

From **Anne-Marie**, URC Communications Officer:

Mission Council has expressed sincere gratitude to those who approached the United Reformed Church (URC) to voice and share their experiences and stories as part of safeguarding's Past Case Review (PCR). At the autumn meeting, held between 16-18 November, at The Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire, an apology was also made for the Church's past failure to prevent the abuse of victims by those in positions of trust, and for failing to listen to them. The admissions were made following the presentation of three reports aimed at encouraging and improving the safeguarding ethos of the URC. The main report offered key learning points and themes that came up as a result of the PCR.

Also from **Anne-Marie:**

The Church of Bangladesh and Council for World Mission (CWM) have issued an update on its Rohingya appeal. The two organisations are now working with the Coastal for Social Transformation (COAST Trust) and a local NGO which will receive international grants to support the refugees in Bangladesh. Since November 2017, URC members raised £10,000, which was match funded by the Church, to donate a total of £20,000 towards the Rohingya relief efforts. CWM is satisfied with the work of the trust and that URC funds will be properly stewarded through them. What started as a contribution from congregations of the URC through CWM, has now seen further support from other member churches of CWM.

From **Paul, CEO of Churches together in Devon:**

Watching and waiting are themes on all our agendas at the moment as we watch the news and the parliamentary debates, and wait with hope or dread at the final outcome of the Brexit decisions. Brexit, whatever side of the argument you may be on, has polarised our nation and created a hot bed of opinion in the media, press and in social media. It feels to me at the moment that we are all *watching and waiting* with fear, anxiety and uncertainty about what the future will hold.

As Christians I believe we have a very real part to play in this. Not just in political involvement, although that is important whatever the flavour of your particular persuasion, but particularly as we *watch and wait*. Within your particular church or congregation and across the different churches and traditions in your area there are clearly a wide variety of views. But beneath that seething storm of concern, there will be a sense that we *watch and wait* for the One who is able to draw all things together and in whose hands the future is held. The One who brings peace to all people. Perhaps the timing of the Brexit debate gives us a God given ecumenical opportunity to offer a gift of peace amidst the storm. Jesus comes to bring that gift. The familiar story, told in so many carol services and midnight masses, and our sharing ecumenically in these things will perhaps offer a sign to our society that, despite different opinions, in Jesus we offer something more - an alternative to the mayhem that surrounds us and a Lord who is the Prince of Peace.



**Caption Competition:**

Email me your most imaginative captions for these photos – and have the best published next month! [maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk](mailto:maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk)

With thanks to all who helped with our Advent Lunch.

Photos by **Liz Sanders** and **Malcolm Richards**



From **Revd Rob Weston:**

For those who haven't seen the Tavistock Times, I bring tidings of great joy!

Our angels have made the front page, well done to all the knitters.

Not only have we had coverage across the town, we even had a Christmas card saying thank you from some of the children who discovered the angels.



From **Mike Dennis:**

**Midweek Topics.** These will meet on Wednesdays for a trial period.

9th January "Black Sheep and Prodigals" with Dave Tomlinson

6th February "The Bad Christian's manifesto" with Dave Tomlinson

6th March "The Story of Judas Iscariot" with Bishop John Shelby Spong

3rd April "The Passion of Jesus: Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter" with Marcus Borg.

In January and February, the Midweek Topics will be using material from Dave Tomlinson. Here are two quotations about his work:

Excerpt from Hodder and Stoughton publishers. "Do you feel more at home on the edges of faith than at the centre? Would you call yourself a bit of a black sheep? Too often Christian spirituality has been associated with conformity, or a subculture where people don't feel able to ask questions. But Dave Tomlinson, author of *How to be a bad Christian*, doesn't think it has to be like this; instead, our spiritual communities can be places where we can explore issues of faith and spirit with openness, imagination and creativity. Welcome to black sheep spirituality - where doubts and questions are an essential part of faith; where difference of opinion is a sign of a secure community; and where faith is something that is lived and practised rather than embalmed in beliefs or ritual."

Excerpt from the Church Times: "I FINISHED *Black Sheep and Prodigals* impressed by the work of Dave Tomlinson; here is a priest who celebrates holy communion with Hobnob biscuits and communicates the unbaptized. What shines through is Tomlinson's commitment to people whom the Church has missed, or grasped all too eagerly and burnt in the process. Tomlinson has been a shepherd for 25 years to these "black sheep" and "prodigals", deterred by associations (or experiences) of fundamentalism, or by a crushing, legalistic moralism. That was Tomlinson's own background, and it has left him zealous to demonstrate a different way. We might wish for a thousand more like him."

Also from **Mike**:

**New books for the library (a quote as a taster)**

**In the beginning – a new interpretation of Genesis. By Karen Armstrong.**

The authors of Genesis imagined him responding to events and experiencing the divine to break down old certainties and expectations. Religion has often been used to stunt a person's psychological growth or to encourage a wholly otherworldly vision. But Genesis indicates that it is the function of faith to make us more productive and more at ease with the world. God should not be experienced as a wholly ethereal panacea but as a mysterious presence that helps us to make sense of the bewildering circumstances of our life on earth.

From **Janet Gray**, Synod Pastoral Adviser for Cornwall, Plymouth and North Devon:

Please take some time to read the notice below about a "Walking the Way" day that is being run in the Synod. Stephen Newell is on the national Committee for "Walking the Way" and Lythan is chair of the Synod Ministries committee so they should both be worth coming for. It looks like a really good day.

Blessings to you all.

**Walking the Way Synod Day**

Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 10.00am–2.00pm Including free lunch!  
The Manse; Norton Fitzwarren, TA2 6RU

Worship, Discussion, Resource Sharing, Encouragement. A day for anyone interested in working out what discipleship means today. We hope this day will be of special interest to Elders and other leaders.

RSVP Dinah: [secretary@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:secretary@urcsouthwest.org.uk) 01823 275470 (Free lunch- please inform of any dietary requirements) Cost: Only your time commitment and travel.

**JANUARY prayer**

Come walk with me  
when life is tough and burdens heavy.  
Come walk with me  
when you feel vulnerable and scared.  
Come walk with me  
when walls divide and relationships fracture.  
Come walk with me  
Together we can rebuild, lighten loads and give hope.

**Any items for February CONTACT should be emailed to Maureen Tulloch by the 30<sup>th</sup> January ([maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk](mailto:maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk)). Many thanks.**