



The
United
Reformed
Church

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

CONTACT

Minister: Revd Robert Weston Tel: 01566 784990
Church Secretary: Peter Tulloch Tel: 01579 208519
Administrator: Maureen Tulloch Tel: 01579 20851
Synod website: www.urcsouthwest.org.uk
Church Payphone: Tel: 01822 612017
Church Website: www.tavistock.urc.org.uk

December 2019

Services start at 10am

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| SUNDAY 1st | Service led by Revd Phyllis Ball with Holy Communion |
| SUNDAY 8 th | Service led by Revd Robert Weston |
| SUNDAY 15 th | Service led by Revd Malcolm Richards |
| SUNDAY 22 nd | Service led by Mr Mike Dennis |
| SUNDAY 29 th | No service today. |

Wherever and however you celebrate this Christmas,
may you know the joy and peace of God.

Revd Rob Weston



Dates for your Diary

Sunday 1st December- 2.30 to 4.30pm PCN Exeter 'Advent Gathering'. Page 4
Thursday 5th December - An Advent Adventure - A day retreat from 10am until 3pm exploring Advent, the time of preparation for Christmas. Page 4

Friday 6th December- 6pm to 9pm, **Wednesday 18th December**- 7.30pm to 9.00pm and **Saturday 21st December** -2pm to 4pm. Palestine/Israel Display in our church. All are welcome to browse and discover. Page 4

Sunday 8th December Advent Lunch in the LD Hall after the service. Please sign up on the sheet in the vestry or contact Suzy Weston (01566 784990) if you would like to book your place.

Tuesday 25th December – Christmas Day Lunch, organised by Tavistock Rotary Club in our church. Open to all. Please put your name on the list at the Lower Deck Café till if you wish to come.

And further into the future:-

Wednesday 29th January 7.30pm. Midweek Topics in our church. 'The Bible can be Sad'. This is a DVD talk by Trevor Dennis at the 2018 Free to Believe Conference.

Minister's Letter

Christmas is fast approaching and this is a time of great anticipation and preparation. The arrival of any baby is often accompanied by anticipation and preparation, so it is rather appropriate. No doubt you have your own traditions and patterns as you go through Advent. Some of you will be well prepared with presents bought and wrapped well in advance, others will be dashing round at the last minute. Suzy and I are still adjusting to new family traditions being established and very much looking forward to a full house in Lifton this year, at the last count we expect eleven adults to be gathered round for Christmas dinner. Should anyone be bored after the meal, there will be several excited dogs looking for volunteers to take them on a walk, not to mention the long list of jobs in the garden that we will be preparing!

Our Christmas preparations at the United Reformed Church are also well under way, with our team of knitters and stitchers beavering away to make angels to distribute around our local community. If you get a chance to visit the St Eustachius Christmas tree festival, do look out for the Tavistock URC tree. Our advent services throughout December will give us an opportunity to prepare for Christmas and to think about the impact of that baby born so many years ago in a far off land.

As we reflect on the birth and life of Jesus, we will be reflecting on our own journey through life and what it means to walk the way of Jesus.

Wherever and however you celebrate this Christmas, may you know the joy and peace of God.

Every blessing,
Rob

Revd Rob Weston, 01566 784990 tavistockurcminister@gmail.com

Premises News

Work is continuing in the Lower Deck to improve the facilities. The hinge to the door that was broken has been fixed. The fire protection and evacuation systems have been reviewed and some improvements will be made in 2020. New signage which is dementia friendly is being sourced.

As our treasurer reported in Church on Sunday 17th November, the remainder of the synod loan which was required for the new roof, has now been paid off in full. This means that the church has no outstanding debts, once again we thank all those who spent hours raising funds over the past few years! Hopefully the roof will give us many years of trouble free service.

We are required to have a full asbestos survey and this is scheduled to take place in 2020. Once completed this document has to be made available to all contractors who carry out work on or in our premises.

Church Constitution

It has been five years since we reviewed the Church Constitution, the elders looked at the existing constitution in their November meeting and have several recommendations to make at the next Church Meeting. Copies of the constitution and recommended changes will be sent out prior to the Church Meeting on 19th January 2020.

Angels bringing good news

There might not be dazzling creatures in the skies above Tavistock at Christmas but we can expect to see over two hundred angels bringing joy to the people of Tavistock. Members of the Tavistock United Reformed Church Knit and Natter group will be busy during Advent, producing small knitted and sewn angels which will be appearing around the town. The aim is that by sharing these little gifts, the joy of Christmas might be shared. 'We have no idea who might find them, some people might place them on their Christmas tree or on a windowsill, we don't mind how they are used,' said Suzy Weston who co-ordinates the Knit and Natter group. Tavistock United Reformed Church can be found on Russell Street and the Knit and Natter group meets on Fridays in the Lower Deck Cafe.



Tinhay Retreats - Christmas Programme

Rob and Suzy Weston invite you to join them for a day retreat at their retreat centre in Tinhay. Rob and Suzy are happy for individuals or couples to book their own retreat days (or half days) and the day can be tailored to your needs, just phone to find a mutually convenient date. Further details are on the website www.tinhayretreats.com or phone us on 01566 784990.

5 December 2019 - An Advent Adventure - A day retreat from 10am until 3pm exploring Advent, the time of preparation for Christmas. Prayers and meditations on the theme, plus the usual opportunity to enjoy the quiet, inside or outside. Details of our bursary fund are on the website - available to help any individual or group to access our retreats or camping opportunities.

Church Finance News from [Hugh Williams](#)

The Elders will be meeting in December to discuss the 2020 budget which will be based largely on the 2019 budget which we have managed to keep within. Thankfully there have been no unexpected items of high expenditure this year which means we will be able to invest in a number of new mission activities next year. More news of these will be shared in the next magazine!

Twelve Faces of Hope - an exhibition at Tavistock United Reformed Church

Half a century has passed since the six-day war when Israel occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Despite stalled peace processes and the sufferings entailed by the occupation, people still hope for a better future. Members of Tavistock United Reformed Church are keen to support the people who live in these troubled regions. Minister, Rob Weston says 'This is a moving exhibition detailing the lives of twelve very different people, each of them contributing towards a hopeful and peaceful future for this troubled land. As Christmas approaches, our thoughts often turn to Bethlehem which was an occupied territory 2000 years ago and today it is once again patrolled by armed soldiers.'

The exhibition is displayed on 12 boards with the personal stories of 12 Palestinians and Israelis, it has been developed by the World Council of Churches and is being hosted at **Tavistock URC** in Russell Street, Tavistock, PL19 8BD. The display will be in the church from Friday 22nd November until Monday 2nd January. The display boards will enable visitors to read about the experiences of 12 people with different backgrounds sharing their hopes for justice and peace in the Holy Land.

You will be able to view the exhibition on **Friday 6th December** which is Dickensian evening from **6pm until 9pm**; on **Wednesday 18th December from 7.30pm-9.00pm** and on **Saturday 21st December from 2-4pm**. All are welcome to browse and discover more about the lives of those who suffer under the occupation and both Palestinians and Israelis who work for reconciliation.

From [Liz and Garth Sanders](#):

Link to Hope Appeal

Thank you to all who knitted blankets, hats, gloves and scarves, and to those who filled shoe boxes for this year's appeal. Thank you to Maureen for the many blankets she sewed together for me.

We sent 18 blankets in the end and 12 boxes. Well done, everyone!



Keep Knitting !!!!.

(Thank you, Liz and Garth, for all you do for the Link to Hope Appeal every year)

Also from **Liz**:

Thank you to all who have covered for me in the Lower Deck Café. Especially those who were on the till. I am still recovering well, but having a few hiccups. My thanks for all your prayers, cards, flowers and visits.

Love to all *(Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Liz)*

From **Mike Dennis**:

The Next PCN Exeter event will be on **Sunday December 1st**, from 2.30 to 4.30 at Southernhay United Reformed Church hall in Exeter: Southernhay East, Exeter EX1 1QD. The hall is at the rear of the church and has disabled access.

The theme is **An Advent Gathering**. It will be led by the Revd Iain McDonald.

If anyone wants to attend and would like transport, please have a word with Mike.

Christian Aid 2019

The total is in...

An astonishing £7.56 million was raised during Christian Aid Week 2019!

Over 10,000 churches took part in celebrations supported by 40,700 amazing volunteers in churches and communities across the UK and Ireland.

Over 7,500 of you signed our petition urging the chancellor to use his influence to drop the healthcare debt for the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone.

33,678 resources were downloaded from our website and 2,079 Big Brekkie packs were ordered.

All of these individual actions from delivering an envelope to donating at your church's coffee morning, bring us closer to our aim of transforming the lives of the poorest communities in our world. **Thank you.**

But the story doesn't end there...

Your gifts have such an important impact. Over the past year, Christian Aid has helped provide vital healthcare in Sierra Leone:

- Over 58,000 people have access to well-built health clinics, helping nurses to save lives.
- 64,000 people have received hygiene training, helping mums and children to fight off illnesses.
- 1,300 women are able to save and pay for things like transport to their nearest clinic, through community savings groups.



Nurse Judith stands proudly outside the newly built clinic in Sawula Village, Sierra Leone.

From **URC Communications Department:**

On a visit to Central URC in Derby, Simon Peters, Walking the Way Project Manager, learned how reflection and prayer led a congregation into community action. Realising that many older members of the community lived in isolation and with mobility issues, the church developed a weekly '3Fs' group which focuses on fellowship, food and fitness. Simon said: "In looking around the everyday realities of the people in its community, Central URC has found a way to be the loving presence of Jesus in the lives of some of the community's most vulnerable people."

(Note from Editor – is this something we should look to do? Increasingly some of our own church folk are becoming isolated in their homes as infirmity means they can no longer get to church, or out into the community; suggestions to our Elders, please)

Let us remember and pray for the folk we know who are now less mobile than they used to be, more isolated and often more lonely. We think in particular of Joan, Muriel, Dorothy, Neville and Valerie, Tom and Jane, Thelma and Audrey. May God bless them and keep them.

Prayer by Michael Walker from 'A Treasury of Prayer'

Thank you, Father, for this loved and familiar season
for tuneful carols,
for re-unions with families and friends,
for giving and receiving,
for a sense of celebration everywhere,
for all the ways of saying 'Christ is born'.

We ask that the familiarity of Christmas may not smother the truth that we celebrate together.

May Christ be amongst us, as real, as close, as warm as at that first Christmas.
Amen



May we wish all our readers a very

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Any items for January CONTACT should be emailed to Maureen Tulloch by the 27th December (maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk). Many thanks.