



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 2020

Services start at 10am

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| SUNDAY 5 th | Service led by Revd Robert Weston with Holy Communion |
| SUNDAY 12 th | Service led by Revd Phyllis Ball |
| SUNDAY 19 th | Service led by Revd Iain McDonald |
| SUNDAY 26 th | Service led by Mr Mike Dennis |

Come young and old of every faith,
Bring all your treasuries of prayer,
And seek the living Spirit's breath
To realise the truth we share.

Excerpt from hymn by Richard G Jones



Dates for Your Diary

Sunday 19th January Church Meeting after the service

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.

Wednesday 26th February 7.30pm. Midweek Topics in our church

Minister's Letter

The beginning of a new year is a wonderful opportunity to look forward to the coming months and our Christian discipleship as individuals and as a community of faith. Personally, I enjoy making plans and lists of things to do, at the beginning of the year I often sit down to reflect on what has been happening and what God might want me to be involved in next. You might enjoy the same approach, or you might prefer to sit with one or two friends to reflect on what God is calling you to be involved in next year.

The raging bush fires in Australia are a reminder to me that we need to continue to work together to reduce our carbon emissions and to encourage others to do the same. There are many people who wonder if their small contribution makes any difference, we need to affirm that every little step makes a real difference! At the same time we need to remind our politicians that there are very important steps required by government, nationally and at town council level, in order to achieve real reductions in carbon emissions. Alongside our actions, we need to continue to pray for our environment and for all the people who share God's earth. May the Jesus who came to bring good news continue to inspire us to be the people who share good news.

Every blessing,
Rob

Revd Rob Weston, 01566 784990 tavistockurcminister@gmail.com

Church Finance and Mission

The elders met in December to discuss the 2020 budget which is based largely on the 2019 budget, this will be presented to the Church Meeting on 19th January. There is a proposal to set up a 'mission projects' budget, from which we will be able to invest in a number of new mission activities. The first of these projects is to offer 'cook and eat' opportunities to anyone who would like to improve their cooking skills, the aim is to run the first group in the Spring. The second project is called a 'Feast of Fun' which is a series of children's activity mornings followed by lunch, aimed at local families in the summer holidays, the aim is to run four sessions in August. The budget proposals include the planned work to improve the vestry and to update the electric circuits as recommended in our electrical safety inspection.

Church Constitution

As 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. If you have not seen a copy, please contact the Church Secretary, Peter Tulloch.

Eco Church January Suggestion

Why not get ready to join in with the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch which is happening from 25 to 27 January. All you need to do is set aside an hour to sit and watch the birds in your garden or a local park. So how will you do it? Quietly with a cuppa? Socially with friends and family? However you do get involved your results will give the RSPB a picture of how wildlife is faring. If you want some ideas for your garden, then visit the RSPB website where gardening expert Adrian Thomas can tell you what last-minute prep you can do for the Birdwatch. You will also find a round-up of 2019's results so you can see which birds were seen the most last year. Further details at www.rspb.org.uk



Well done Pam, Margaret, Jenny, Anne, Phyllis and Suzy – beautiful angels, distributed around the town for people to take and use as they wish.

From the NHS – via [Revd Phyllis Ball](#) – author unknown

When I wander

When I wander, don't tell me to come and sit down. Wander with me. It may be because I'm hungry, thirsty, need the toilet, or maybe I just need to stretch my legs. When I call for my mother (even though I am ninety) don't tell me she has died. Reassure me, cuddle me, ask me about her. It may be that I am looking for the security that my mother once gave me.

When I shout out, please don't ask me to be quiet....or walk by. I am trying to tell you something, but have difficulty in telling you what. Be patient, try to find out. I may be in pain.

When I become agitated or appear angry, please don't reach for the drugs first. I am trying to tell you something. It may be too hot, too bright, too noisy. Or it maybe because I miss my loved ones. Try to find out first.

When I don't eat my dinner or drink my tea, it may be because I've forgotten how to. Show me what to do, remind me. It may be that I just need to hold my knife and fork, I may know what to do then.

When I push you away whilst you are trying to help me wash or dress, maybe I have forgotten what you have said. Keep telling me what you are doing, over and over again. Maybe others will think that you are the one who needs help!

With all my thoughts and maybes, perhaps it will be you who reaches my thoughts, understands my fears, and will make me feel safe. Maybe it will be you whom I need to thank.

If only I knew how.

From the **URC Communications Department**:

The Moderators of the URC General Assembly have joined Christian leaders from a number of denominations to urge the UK government to pay more attention to its international role on the impact of climate change. Published in *The Times*, the letter stated that the UK should support poorer countries in their responses to the climate crisis.

Some good news from **Mike Dennis**:

By the year 2021, Costa Rica plans to be completely carbon neutral. For several years now, Costa Rica has run on entirely renewable energy for an average of about 300 days per year. Costa Rica is pioneering the future of running on renewable energy and may be the model for future countries to follow suit. In the last four years, Costa Rica has generated 98.53% of its electricity from renewable sources.

How? With its unique geography, forward thinking solutions, and commitment to sustainability, Costa Rica has used its rivers, volcanoes, wind, and solar power to generate its country's power.

If they can do it, is there any reason why, with forward thinking and commitment, we should not be able to do the same in the UK?

Extract from **Mike Frost's comments on "Scene of the massacre of the Innocents"**, from **Jenny Dennis**:

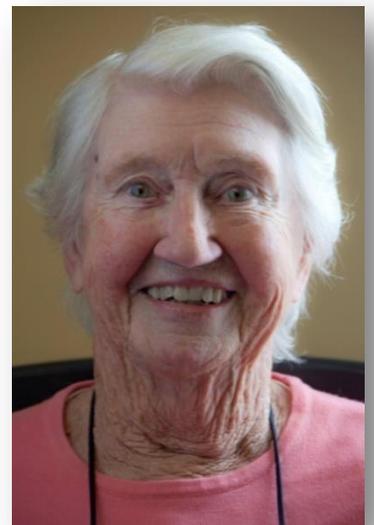
Maybe Christmas is gone but we have a responsibility to continue our care for those in need.

After Christmas, by all means remember the angels and the shepherds and the magi and the little boy-child Jesus in his manger. But also remember mothers and children afraid for their lives on the streets of Aleppo, Homs or South Sudan.

The coming of the Christ was to set in train a revolution of love and justice that would eventually sweep away all tyrants and free all victims and end all wars.

Remember that the followers of the Christ are called not to side with empire, but to sit with the terrified, to comfort those who mourn, to join the meek and merciful and pure in heart. And to hunger and thirst for the righteousness only Jesus can bring.

We said goodbye to Valerie Donovan who passed away peacefully on 29th November. A faithful and regular member of our church family. Our thoughts and prayers are with Neville and their family and friends.



We were also told of the death on 19th December of Thelma Newell. Thelma and her husband Tony were very much involved in the life of our church, Thelma running Art4Fun, and Tony with the maintenance of the building. We have fond memories of them both.



Thank you, Lord, for the lives of Valerie and Thelma.

From **Mike Dennis**:

Some new additions to the library for 2020.

A significant number of pamphlets from Free to Believe have been added to the bookshelves. Free to Believe is an informal network of liberally minded Christians who are committed to an open, inclusive and thinking church. The organisation began within the URC but now includes some from other groups with similar aims such as Modern Church and the Progressive Christianity Network.

The pamphlets, which are no more than about 12 pages long, cover topics such as Interfaith, liberal Christianity, the Reformed tradition, Sex and the Gospel, fundamentalism and feminism.

To start the New Year, I have selected some random quotations for thought:

“Where reason fails with all her powers, there faith prevails and love adores”. (Isaac Watts). “Yes”, said Dr Caird of Mansfield College, “then but only then”. Faith only comes into play after the application of reason. The fundamentalist uses the Bible as a drunk uses a lamppost, for support rather than illumination.

God is compassionate consciousness. We are in God. It is a shared experience that we can enter into.

The words of the Bible are not what is important. It is the ideas behind the words that matter. Increasing knowledge of the language, text and context of the documents which make up the Bible – to say nothing of the spin any translator or group of translators bring to their work – should increase our awareness that biblical ideas have priority over the words we read in many of the current translations. We have always known that we have to translate the documents from Hebrew and Greek to English but we have been less quick to see that we have an equal, if not more important task, in translating ideas from the culture of biblical times to our own culture.

This is Tavistock URC's Christmas Tree at St Eustachius, beautifully decorated by Pam and Stella, and in pride of place by the pulpit!

There was a wonderful display of decorated trees from most of the organisations in the area. Well done, Tavistock!

From **Mike Dennis**:

There are a number of DVDs and books in the old office which are unlikely to be needed for use in the church. During **February**, they will be placed on a window sill and you are invited to take any that might interest you. Meanwhile, there are options to borrow books and DVDs from the library. Could be very useful on a cold night or a wet afternoon!

12 Faces of Hope The World Council of Churches exhibition entitled "12 Faces of Hope" was hosted by Tavistock URC during Advent 2019.

Church members were particularly interested though the exhibition boards also proved a conversation starter with some of the hirers of the church premises who use the church for their activities. One visitor said that he knew one of the people, Jean Zaru, a Quaker, as he had previously worked in Ramallah. He had been a gardener at the Friends of Ramallah Quaker Centre. Another viewer, who is currently an asylum seeker without benefits, expressed appreciation of the situation facing all minorities who suffer persecution in their own lands.

It is to be hoped that all who took advantage of the opportunities to view the exhibition will be inspired to both seek reconciliation between the two groups living in the same land and support the rights of the Palestinians to a full life in the land of their birth.

Prayer for Peace from Commitment for Life:

*We dare not merely pray that You end all war;
for You made us in your own image, O God of Peace,
we dare not merely pray that You end starvation;
for You have blessed us with plenty, O God of
Abundance;
we do not merely pray that You end all prejudices,
disease, poverty and hatred.*

*We pray instead that You give us strength,
determination and wisdom to live as Jesus lived,
as living reminders of the coming Kingdom.
Amen*



Any items for February CONTACT should be emailed to Maureen Tulloch by the 29th January. (maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk). Many thanks.