



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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## March 2020

Services start at 10am

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| SUNDAY 1st              | Service led by Revd Malcolm Richards with Holy Communion |
| SUNDAY 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Service led by Mr Mike Dennis                            |
| SUNDAY 15 <sup>th</sup> | Service led by Revd Robert Weston                        |
| SUNDAY 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Service led by Revd Phyllis Ball                         |
| SUNDAY 29 <sup>th</sup> | Service led by Revd Malcolm Richards                     |

God could not be everywhere, therefore he made mothers.  
*Rudyard Kipling*

To all mothers,  
grandmothers,  
step-mothers,  
and mothers-to-be  
everywhere.....

Loved always, but especially on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, Mother's Day,



## Dates for Your Diary

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March** 9am -11am Free Fair Trade Breakfast in our LD Hall - see page 4  
**Friday 6 March** at 2pm. World Day of Prayer Service, at Abbey Chapel, Tavistock- see page 4

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March** at 7.30pm Tavistock Peace Group/Midweek Topics in our church- see page 6

**Thursday 12 March 2020** – 10am to 3pm Tinhay Retreat 'Bread of Life' see page 4

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March** at 7.30pm Tamar Valley TLC Charity Quiz in our church- see page 4

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March** Church AGM after the service

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March** 2.30pm Dr Barbara Glasson, PCN talk - see page 7

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March** 10am to 3pm Craft Retreat at Tinhay 'Egg blowing and painting'- see page 4

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March** at 7.30pm Midweek Topics in our church- see page 6

**And later:-**

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April** 10am to 3pm Lent Retreat at Tinhay – see page 4.

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April** at 7.30pm Midweek Topics in our church - see page 6

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April** at 7.30pm Midweek Topics in our church see page 6

## Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

Lent is often associated with giving something up, a time of abstinence, a time of resisting temptation. All of which can sound a bit negative and depressing.

Lent can also be seen as a time of trying something different, a time for renewed prayer, a time for times of quiet reflection, a time for stillness in a busy world.

We're entering Lent during Fairtrade Fortnight, which is a time for new activity in the church, with our Pancake Day lunch and our Fairtrade Breakfast; both of which give us a chance to engage with friends, old and new.

These events also draw attention to our desire to work towards a world of justice and peace, or as Micah 6:8 puts it, 'to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' Phyllis is leading a discussion group during Lent and you would be most welcome to join that group, even if you can't make every session.

Whether you are giving something up for Lent, or trying something new for Lent, may you know the blessing of God as you go through this time of reflection before the great celebration of Easter Day.

Every blessing,

Rob

Revd Rob Weston, 01566 784990 [tavistockurcminister@gmail.com](mailto:tavistockurcminister@gmail.com)



### **Fairtrade News**

Fairtrade Fortnight is celebrated every year, this year it began on 24 February and ends on 8 March. The Fairtrade mark was introduced to help consumers to choose products that give those at the beginning of the chain a fair deal, often it is the cocoa, coffee and banana growers that get the poorest share of the profits. With all the discussion around Brexit trade deals we could be forgiven for thinking that all countries operate on a fair playing field, this is simply not the case. In order to redress the balance it is helpful to use the Fairtrade mark when you are shopping, it is an independent verification to confirm that people are getting a fairer deal. When Jesus talked about 'setting people free from oppression', I believe his words apply to economic oppression and exploitation, so this Lent as we reflect on the meaning of Easter, let us play our part in setting people free from oppression as we encourage one another to create a fair world for all God's people.

### **Eco Church News**

Would you like to join other churches to celebrate [Earth Hour](http://www.earthhour.org) ([www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org)) with their communities this year? All it involves is switching off your lights for an hour on Saturday 28 March at 8.30pm. Anything else you do to make it a fun / interesting / contemplative event is up to you. There could be candles, readings or poems... or just darkness and silence - the choice is yours.... Started by WWF and partners as a symbolic 'lights-out' event in Sydney in 2007, Earth Hour is now one of the world's largest grassroots movements for the environment, engaging millions of people in more than 180 countries and territories. It has become a catalyst for positive environmental impact, driving major legislative changes by harnessing the power of the people. You can do this at home or you might like to join others, contact Rob if you have any suggestions.

### **Fairtrade Pancake Celebration**

We certainly had a full Lower Deck hall on Shrove Tuesday, when we fed around 70 people the most delicious pancakes. Suzy says we used 30 eggs, 22 pints of milk and 8 pounds of flour - by the time we had served everyone we had completely exhausted our batter supply!

My thanks to all the team, especially Stella, Suzy and Maureen who were kept busy for two hours with no time for a break. Together we raised £270 to go towards the new road signs that will declare that Tavistock is 'A Fairtrade Town'.

Thank you helpers, thank you pancake eaters, hope to see you all at the Fairtrade Breakfast on Friday 6 March.



## **Premises News**

Since the Church Meeting, you may have noticed the new signs on the doors to the toilets, these are the new dementia friendly toilet signs, which have a yellow background. We have also had our asbestos survey carried out by D&C Surveyors and their report will be sent soon, this is a requirement of the synod and the report will contain a list of areas where asbestos is suspected or confirmed. The report is to be given to any contractors who might accidentally disturb asbestos by drilling or abrading (which releases the dangerous fibres). Elders have discovered that Tavistock URC is eligible for a 50% facelift grant from the Synod, more details will be shared at the next Church Meeting.

## **Day Retreats at Tinhay Retreats**

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2020** - Bread of Life - A day retreat from 10am until 3pm begins with a short time of worship on the theme and the opportunity to make and bake your own bread. Also time to wander round eight acres of grounds, sit inside or outside and pray, read or relax in quiet.

**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020** - Lent Retreat - A day retreat from 10am until 3pm during the time of Lent. Time of reflection on the theme, plus opportunity to wander round eight acres of grounds, sit inside or outside and pray, read or relax in quiet.

## **Craft Day at Tinhay Retreats**

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2020** - Egg blowing and painting; your chance to empty out some eggs using a special gadget, then decorate and create a colourful springtime mobile.

## **Fairtrade Breakfast , Friday 6th March 2020 9.00am until 11.00am**

Lower Deck Hall, United Reformed Church, Russell Street, Tavistock PL19 8BD  
Enjoy breakfast or brunch (including items with Fairtrade ingredients). The breakfast is free and donations will go to the Tavistock Fairtrade group. We will be joined by two cocoa producers from Ghana, who will tell us something about their experiences from 10.00am. Also includes Fairtrade stall offering fairly produced goods.



From **Jo O'Driscoll**:

## **Tamar Valley Tender Loving Care CHARITY QUIZ**

7.30pm Saturday 14th March

£4pp - Teams of 6 at Tavistock United Reformed Church Tavistock PL19 8BD  
Contact Julia to book 01822 890225 or Jo on [joanne odriscoll@hotmail.com](mailto:joanne_odriscoll@hotmail.com) ( there is an underscore between joanne and o'driscoll).

Maybe some of our church family might like to enter a team?

From **Anne Snook**:

## **World Day of Prayer Service**

Friday 6 March 2pm Abbey Chapel

Please come along, all are welcome, to take part in the largest church congregation in the world. This year's service which will last about an hour has been prepared by the Christian Women of Zimbabwe and will be taking place in thousands of places throughout the world on the same day. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

## Flower Rota for March:

Just to serve as a reminder-  
1<sup>st</sup> March – Salvation Army  
8<sup>th</sup> March - John and Anne  
15<sup>th</sup> March – Anne Snook  
22<sup>nd</sup> March - Christine Reid  
29<sup>th</sup> March – Jo O’Driscoll



And to say **thank you** to you all.

From **Mike Dennis:**

When I put out the rubbish every fortnight, I have been noticing that the proportion of general rubbish in black sacks far exceeds the amount of recycling.

I believe that all hirers are expected to take their own rubbish home but there may be items that are left in bins etc or put in the external shed. I wonder whether it might be possible to send a message to hirers, cleaners and church members (these through Contact) reminding everyone that only general rubbish should be put in the black sacks and that all recycling should be put in the appropriate green box. There should be no paper, card, plastics, tins etc in general rubbish. It should not take anyone long to sort their rubbish appropriately but it can take me a lot longer to sort items just thrown in to the shed especially on a wet evening.

It may be that this situation could affect our environmental gold award.

## Behind Closed Doors

Recently, a member of Defence for Children International was invited by the Belgium government as a child rights expert to brief UN Security Council members in New York on how armed conflict impacts Palestinian children. As soon as Israeli diplomats were informed of his attendance, they pressed Belgium to cancel the invitation. Israeli officials and right-wing organizations, like NGO Monitor, and their affiliates mounted a well-orchestrated political and media disinformation campaign to press the Belgians to capitulate. He then received an early morning phone call informing him that Brussels had decided to change the Security Council event from an open meeting to a closed meeting — meaning that he was no longer a participant. Such organisations are increasingly targeted and attacked by Israeli officials, Israeli government ministries, and a network of rising conservative nationalist social forces in Israel, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe. They use misinformation campaigns, they harass individuals and spread lies in an effort to defame, discredit, and defund the work of those seeking to support the work amongst children in Palestine. Rather than demand Israeli forces stop killing Palestinian child protesters in Gaza or end ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian child detainees, many states create and disseminate misinformation in an attempt to silence legitimate human rights work and criticism of Israeli policies and actions toward Palestinians.

As members of the URC we continue to financially support Commitment for Life and their work in Israel/ Palestine but we also need to be aware of the forces and vested interests in governments and the media which seek to prevent us from knowing why the Palestinian children continue to suffer.

From **Revd Rob Weston:**

**Café Theology:**

Café Theology is sponsored by the Diocese of Exeter, Plymouth Marjon University, St Mellitus College SW and the South West Ministry Training Course and aims to offer accessible theology to clergy, ministers, readers, ordinands and anyone with an interest in theology. Seminars are held in the Marjon Chapel on Monday evenings, 7.15 to 9pm. All are welcome. Marjon offers free evening parking. Seminars are to be held on 14th May, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 12<sup>th</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020– details will be in future CONTACTS.

From **Christian Aid:**



**A chain of prayer for climate justice**

Across 2020 Christian Aid want to unleash a year of non-stop prayer for climate justice.

Prayer that will amplify prophetic voices and transform us and the actions we take.

Prayer that will help us to understand God’s care for those that are most affected by the climate crisis and to repent for our role in causing it.

Prayer that will act as a deep source of energy for the struggle ahead.

Over 2020, leaders and nations will be making decisions that could set us on the path to a better, safer world. At the end of 2020, the UK government will host the UN climate change conference. All eyes will be on the UK and the government will be keen to show its leadership. We have to ensure that leaders make the right choices. Underpin the year in prayer and help make climate justice a reality.

How can I get involved?

- Sign up as an individual to cover an hour’s slot.
- Sign up your church community to cover a day or half day and start planning a prayer and action event.
- Sign up at <http://caid.org.uk/prayerchain>

From **Mike Dennis:**

**Midweek Topics at the URC;**

Organised by the Progressive Christianity Network  
All meetings held on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.

**11th March** Talk by Tony Staunton on “Global Dangers” in conjunction with Tavistock Peace Action Group.

**25th March** The passion of Jesus: Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter. A youtube talk by Marcus Borg.

**8th April** Talk by Martin Mowforth of Tavistock Peace Action Group entitles “Who’s that knocking on my door?” focusing on US Concentration camps and Migrant Caravans from Central America.

**22nd April** “The Cross as the moment of Glory – He did not die for your sins”. A youtube sermon by Bishop John Selby Spong.

Also from **Mike:**

### **‘What’s the story?’**

The Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, the current President of the Methodist Conference will be speaking at the PCN meeting in Crediton on **Sunday March 15th at 2.30pm**. She was well known for starting the Bread Church based upon the making of bread. Barbara has remarkable stories to tell of her own faith journeys, stories which will no doubt challenge and encourage all who can attend.

Crediton Congregational Church, 98 High St, Crediton, EX17 3LB

A warm welcome awaits all who are interested in exploring progressive Christianity. Admission is £3 for members –free admission for first time visitors (donations always welcome)! Refreshments available. [www.pcnbritain.org.uk](http://www.pcnbritain.org.uk)

### **Some good news**

Great news revealed last week - the Church of England General Synod has agreed to set a net zero emissions target of 2030.

Efforts by climate activists have won huge changes to Scotland's new public bank. *‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.’* Margaret Mead

**Lent** begins on 26 February this year so if you’ve been meaning for a while now to switch to green energy, go plastic free or change your method of transport then why not make Lent 2020 the time to start doing something positive (or give something up) to benefit nature and help address climate change.

Nurdles are tiny plastic pellets that bring chemical contaminants to all the world’s beaches. They are packed with chemicals that make plastic flexible, colourful and durable, but also make it a long-lasting pollutant that packs a toxic punch. The nurdle chemical cocktail includes harmful hormone disruptors, like bisphenol A, as well as other pollutants. Seabirds, fish and coral have all been found to ingest nurdles, making this yet another route for harmful chemicals to get into the food chain. This toxic transfer is the overlooked plastic pollution problem. Why not join people from all corners of the earth to join us in heading to a beach between 13th and 22nd March this year, searching for nurdles and submitting data online. See **Great Global Nurdle Hunt website** for more details

### ***A Christian Prayer for Peace, from Commitment for Life:***

*Jesus said*

*“Love your enemies;*

*do good to those who hate you;*

*bless those who curse you.*

*To those who strike you on the cheek, offer the other also.*

*Give to everyone who begs from you.*

*And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them”.*



**Any items for April CONTACT should be emailed to Maureen Tulloch by the 25<sup>th</sup> March. ([maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk](mailto:maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk)). Many thanks.**