



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: Jenny Dennis Tel: 01822 618142
Administrator: Maureen Tulloch Tel: 01579 208519
Synod website: www.urcsouthwest.org.uk
Church Website: www.tavistockurc.org.uk

May 2024

Our Church is open for worship on Sundays at 10.30am.
The Service of Worship will be emailed or posted to those who want it.

5th May Led by Revd Phyllis Ball with Holy Communion

12th May Led by Kit Harbottle

19th May Led by Dr Peter Fox

26th May Led by Revd Rob Weston

Christian Aid is an organisation that works all over the world to try and eradicate poverty. The organisation aims to create a more equal world, where all people have the same opportunities and rights.

Part of the work of Christian Aid involves encouraging more people to be global citizens and creating a more environmentally sustainable world.

Christian Aid has recently worked to develop what they call **sustainable development goals**.

These are aimed at protecting the planet. There are 17 goals in total, and they include

- affordable and clean energy
- sustainable cities and communities
- climate action.



Dates for Your Diary

12th to 18th May Christian Aid Week

Thursday 16th May 12pm - 1.30pm Christian Aid Super Soup Lunch at our church

Saturday 18th May 2.30pm - 4.30pm Christian Aid Quiz event at our church

Monday 20th May 7.30pm Midweek Topic at Mike and Jenny's home.

Sunday 26th May Church Meeting after the service

Church Meetings: 26th May, 28th July and 20th October

Elders Meetings: 16th June, 29th September and 24th November.

Letter from our Minister

Dear Friends,

Good news, we have found a new Moderator for the South Western Synod, see next article. I've known David Downing for many years through my work in Youth and Children's Committee and when I ministered in Reading, David was in a neighbouring pastorate.

From **Rachel Leach, Synod Clerk**

It is with great pleasure that we announce the nomination of Revd David Downing as Moderator of the South Western Synod.

The Revd David Downing has been nominated to serve as Moderator of the United Reformed Church (URC) South Western Synod after the Revd Ruth Whitehead was called to local church ministry in Pembrokeshire last year. David has served in pastoral charge of local churches since his ordination in 1999, and currently serves as minister of Maidenhead and Marlow United Reformed Churches, along with Bracknell and Windsor.

David started going to church as a teenager at St John's Hill URC, Sevenoaks, and grew up with FURY (the Fellowship of United Reformed Youth) serving it at local and national levels, including as a member of the National Youth Committee. After a career in banking, he trained at Westminster College, Cambridge, before being ordained and inducted at Rectory Road URC. He also served at Claremont, Little Eaton, Central URC Derby, Chaddesden, as Chaplain at Derby University, Alvaston, Carlton Road, Mackworth & Repton.

David said: "It is a privilege to be called to share in the ministry of the South Western Synod. I have gained so much from the life of the URC and this call is very exciting. There is also a real sense that God is in this, which is also deeply humbling. During my ministry, I have served on committees at Synod and national levels (from youth work to mission), served as a Street Pastor in Derby, and have recently been a leader in Aid for Ukraine, running from Maidenhead and Marlow which has so far sent over £180,000 of [aid since the outbreak of war](#). I am looking forward to discovering the area, and I can't wait to work with the team, not just in the office, but in all of the churches across the Synod."

Speaking on behalf of South Western Synod, Synod Clerk Rachel Leach said: "We are thrilled to welcome David to the South Western Synod to serve as our Moderator. We look forward to working alongside him as he leads us into the future."

URC General Secretary, the Revd Dr John Bradbury, said: "I'm delighted to welcome David's nomination to serve as Moderator of the South Western Synod. David brings many gifts and graces to the role including an ability to spot opportunities, and to come alongside people in all kinds of situations. His wisdom and experience will be of great benefit to the Synod and to the wider Church"

The Officers of the URC General Assembly will be invited to confirm David's appointment when they next meet.

Sunday Morning Rota for May: (Please ensure that you swap with someone if you are unable to fulfil your duty)

Date	Preacher	Organist	Elder	Welcoming Steward	Reader	Refreshments
May 5 th	Revd Phyllis Ball	Jenny	Sabrina	Stella	Sabrina	Maureen
May 12 th	Kit Harbottle	Steve	Jo	Jenny S	Jo	Jo
May 19 th	Dr Peter Fox	Steve	Stella	Malcolm	Steve	Pam and Peter
May 26 th	Revd Rob Weston	Jenny	Suzy	Stella	Suzy	Elizabeth

From **Peter Tulloch:**

My love of Photography

From my very first camera (a Brownie 127) given to me by my Aunt Nancy, when I was about 10 years old, to my current digital cameras, I have been keen on photography! I have such a bad memory that I feel the need to write things down and to record our lives, places and events in pictures. There is hardly a day goes by when I do not take a picture of something.

We live in a wonderful world and the chance to record just a fraction is a privilege.

My favourite genre is people. Watching them is such fun and taking their pictures (preferably candid) is so worthwhile.



From **Mike Dennis:**

Having been brought up in Penzance adjacent to the fishing village of Newlyn, I have long been aware of the work of the Fisherman's Mission.

Their work is based in the roots of our Christian faith, accepting all without judgement. They take the compassion of Christ to our fishing communities, purposefully reaching out to fishermen and their families, providing practical and emotional support with every step and milestone. Imagine. It should have been like any other day at work, a routine trawl. Another few days at sea with your crewmates battling the waves to make a catch. But this time it was different. You return to port without a colleague, a friend taken by the sea. Yes, you lost a friend but there could be a wife bereaved, children now without a father and possibly no income for the family. Who is there to help? Well, this is where the Fisherman's Mission comes in. The local mission officer will provide a caring and listening ear, a supportive approach to problems to provide some financial support and access to grants, guidance through the strange land in which the family now find themselves. They also support those injured at sea, bring ex-fishermen together and provide support for families at Christmas.

People in fishing communities often have shorter lives and spend more of that short life in poor health. Alongside this, higher levels of deprivation and socio-economic challenges mean that fisherman often feel that they are "forgotten" people. And these are the people who put the fish on your plate.

That is why I proposed, and the recent AGM agreed to support the Fisherman's Mission as one of our charities for this year. A copy of The Fisherman's Mission can be found at the back of the church.

From **Mike**: (First of our folk to offer a personal history...I await many others!)

I was born in Penzance and granite and the sea seem to have been in my bones since day one. Throughout my youth there were regular trips to Gwithian beach. Dad made us wooden surf boards and I still have them though it is a few years since I last used them. Being born just after the founding of the NHS, I was grateful for their services as at the age of two, I ended up in hospital with a broken leg (gallows traction kept me off my feet). While at Junior School I recall being responsible for taking the money for savings stamps down to a local bank (something that would not happen today especially as a 11-year-old on their own). After passing the 11plus, I attended the Humphry Davy Grammar School where I mixed academic work with sports. My "A" levels were Religious Knowledge, Latin (a class of 8) and Greek (a class of one – I am sure they would not allow that today). I represented the school at Rugby, Soccer, athletics and cross-country running. I had the pleasure of running for Cornwall on one occasion. I also played football for Penzance under 18's. I was also a scout and achieved the Queen's Scout award and also the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award – the visit to Buckingham Palace was memorable though my parents probably saw more of the proceedings than me as I spent time in a corridor waiting in line for the presentation. I attended the Chapel Steet Methodist Church and at the age of 16 was invited by the Local Preacher's meeting to train as a preacher. 59 years later I am still continuing though so many of the other things from that era are no longer possible! While learning the piano, my music teacher used to take his pupils to St Ives Guildhall to play – for someone who had to graft to succeed it was a daunting experience.

At 18 I went to university in Bristol to read theology. I did seek to continue my sporting interests but having been selected to run cross-country for Bristol, I broke a leg playing football for my Hall of Residence which put paid to such activities for a considerable time. Books that I read challenged my thinking such that my journey of discovery and development in scriptural understanding was raised to previously unforeseen levels such that I produced a paper for my Professor in which I expounded an understanding of the resurrection as non-physical (I have had no reason to return to previous literal and physical ideas in the subsequent 56 years). My concern for the poor and underprivileged came to the fore as those from various Christian societies who were concerned about the use of church wealth felt that a protest needed to be made. We therefore occupied Bristol Cathedral for a weekend and fasted for the 48 hours. At the end of the second year, I joined a work camp in Brussels who were converting a property for use by homeless people.

On graduating, I went to Southampton University to do a PGCE. I then took up a post at a school in Weobley, Herefordshire but soon realised that I was the wrong shaped peg for that hole. Subsequently, I volunteered for a homeless charity in Crediton where, because it was a dry rehabilitation unit, I had to drive those under the influence of alcohol or drugs to a centre in Exeter when not talking down and disarming someone with an axe who wanted admission. Interesting times! This led to a post as a trainee social worker in East Sussex and then into admin roles dealing with adaptations for the disabled, finance and then social care contracts meanwhile gaining ACIS, MAAT and Dip CIPS qualifications. Work for Unison led to being granted a Life membership on retirement.

A work colleague introduced me to a youth club in Lewes and also to blood donations. As result I met Jenny who also helped at the youth club and I went on to make over 100 blood donations. One person's influence can make a lifetime's change! We married in 1975 and Mark, Peter and Kathryn were added to the household. Along with preaching appointments, my ongoing volunteering included treasurer for a local scout group, work for the homeless, activities for Christian CND, the Christian Socialist Movement, work for Overseas Missions in 3 separate churches and organising recycling of silver foil and cans. Grandchildren also started to arrive and have now reached seven.

Since retiring to Tavistock in 2009, I have been treasurer of Transitions Tavistock, Secretary and treasurer of Tavistock Area Senior Voice, treasurer of Hillingdon Philharmonic Orchestra, a hospital car driver, helper for the Food hub as well as activities within the church and I still continue to jog on the moor. Life continues to be busy.

From **URC Communications:**
Commitment for Life launches Gaza appeal



Commitment for Life, the global justice programme of the United Reformed Church, has launched an urgent appeal in response to the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The aim is to raise as much money as possible to provide vital support and aid through partner agencies Christian Aid, the Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA), and the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC). Recent reports reveal a grim reality that Gaza's two million people are experiencing "severe levels of acute food insecurity". [Learn how to donate to the campaign.](#)

Image: A still from Channel 4 News/YouTube.

From LINK to HOPE:

Today is a very sad day for us and our work in Ukraine. Link to Hope and Door of Hope together purchased a house in Zhelannoye, Ukraine in 2019 for the children who had been traumatised by the last war. It became a haven of comfort, love and security for them, alongside games, teaching and food under the leadership of the very brave Alexandra G.

Simon (D of H) and I went to Ukraine to visit the property before we bought it and although we were wary of how close it was to the front line even back then, it has been a major blessing. As the shelling has rained down on the village, not only has it been a place of sanctuary for the children but also for the village who have sheltered in the very large basement that the Angel of Light has. Today that all ends, as they are now having to leave the Angel of Light behind. The Russian army is now too near and it is too dangerous to stay. Here is the message we have received this morning from Alexandra.

"We began evacuating people from Zhelanny. The situation is becoming critical. Airstrikes are being carried out on the village. The Russian army is getting closer every day. We evacuate people to different places where they are ready to receive them and have housing. Keep us in prayer.

People are panicking and fearful. The evacuation of families with children is being carried out by the White Angels police unit. They have such opportunities. The adult population is evacuating our Angels of Light club and several other volunteers. This month will be very difficult! If you can help financially for fuel, we will be very glad to receive such help.

We also continue to help people with food and clothing. Which will be useful to them in their new place of residence.

I hope that we will withstand this time physically and emotionally and that Russian shells will not hit us. It was so difficult at the beginning of the war. Although no, it's harder now..." Please pray for them at this extremely difficult time as they not only evacuate the Angel of Light but also as many villagers as they can and salvage items from the centre. Please pray that they will all reach safety and that there will be new homes for them to go to that will mean they are safe.



Christian Aid Week 2024

Super Soup Lunch

Thursday 16th May 2024 from 12pm - 1.30pm

Tavistock United Reformed Church will be holding a Christian Aid Super Soup Lunch on 16th May. A simple lunch: soup with bread roll (gluten free will be available) plus Fairtrade fruit. Plus refreshments: Fairtrade tea, coffee and hot chocolate will also be available.

This event is free with all donations going to support the relief and development work of Christian Aid.

Afternoon quiz

Saturday 18th May 2024 from 2.30pm - 4.30pm

Tavistock United Reformed Church will be holding a Christian Aid Quiz event on 18th May. A fun quiz with several different rounds and Fairtrade prizes for the winning team. Refreshments will be served during the event. Teams of 4 to 6 people. Open to all ages. This event is free with all donations going to support the relief and development work of Christian Aid.

From **Jenny Dennis:**

There will be a service of thanksgiving for Joan Joynes and her daughter Rebecca at Tavistock Methodist Church on Friday 17th May at 2pm. The family would love to see people there who were connected with Joan over the years she came to the URC before her death in 2020. There will be a reception in the Methodist church hall following the service and they would like an idea of numbers. If you are planning on going please can you let Jenny Dennis know by Sunday 12th May.

From **Mike Dennis:**

Midweek Topic for May will be held at Mike and Jenny's house on Monday 20th May at 7.30pm. The theme will be Pentecost and the group have decided that we will use hymns to stimulate discussion as to what we understand about Pentecost and whether our hymns reflect our situation in 2024. All are welcome to join us.

Also from **Mike:**

Tavistock Peace Action Group's 'Ceasefire in Gaza' vigil continues every Friday between 4 and 5 pm in Bedford Square. The intention is to continue until there is a ceasefire. The slaughter of women and children and the starvation of those still alive requires an immediate ceasefire. If you are in town on a Friday and can support the vigil (even for a very brief time), I would encourage you to show support for those who have had their land occupied for 75 years and have endured increasing restrictions and incarcerations during this period.

As a Gold Award Eco Church, we email out copies of our magazine and use recycled paper for our printed copies.

CONTACT items for June– please email them to me (maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk) by the 23rd May. Many thanks.