

In touch



information from Dawlish URC

the church with the spire

February 2015

FROM THE MINISTER

The good news of Jesus sets us free from the mistakes of the past and concerns about how successful and how good we are, because we know that in the end what matters is our relationship with him and the work of the Holy Spirit through our lives. It was said of Lesslie Newbigin when he was Moderator of the General Assembly that it was a delight to see him preside with obvious joy on his face through his faith.

Someone, not from a church in Dawlish, said to me recently that going to church had become a burden because he did not find the worship helpful and he was expected to do more than he wanted. Committed church members can feel that the tasks they have to do can be wearisome.

Sometimes it is difficult to reconcile the offer of new life and joy with the burden of the practicalities in running an institution. At the heart of the gospel is both crucifixion and resurrection. We can be called to tasks which demand all we have and more because Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me" and that seems far from the resurrection freedom Jesus offers.

When I was talking to a senior Christian leader about how the institution can detract from the call of ministry to pastoral care, the comment was, "You have to do what the Lord puts in front of you to do". The commitment for each of us is to do what God wants, which may not be what we want. In the end the Lord will ask not "What have you achieved?", but "Have you been faithful?".

But it is also important that those who are not in demanding church jobs pray for those who are, and express their gratitude. And those who feel burdened should see their work as part of God's wider purpose.

To quote George Herbert's hymn, "Who sweeps a room as for thy laws/makes that and the action fine."



ROGER WHITEHEAD

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN DAWLISH AND DISTRICT



Good progress 2014 opened with CTDD in debt by £250. During the year a retiring collection was held which raised the magnificent total of £647 and six individuals agreed to give personally which raised £425. This support was heartening, and the Treasurer, Derek King, explained that this had enabled CTDD to pay for a rear-projection screen for the Nativity on The Lawn before Christmas; to continue to give to pupils moving from primary to secondary school a Scripture Union book explaining the move and helping to prepare for it; and to give a replica of the John's Gospel given to every combatant in the first World War to those attending the centenary Commemoration of Dawlish people killed in action.

The healthy state of CTDD finances reflects the healthy development of church relations in Dawlish with more participation from the churches. Together with UCADD the churches play a significant part in the life of the town.

There will be another retiring collection this month when we have our annual pulpit exchange (see page 7). This will fund the venue for the General Election Hustings that CTDD provides for the town as well as a major event on The Lawn planned for Pentecost Sunday (24th May) which coincides with the late May bank holiday and the start of the Dawlish Arts Festival week.

An open meeting was planned this month on the future of the **Prospect Services** (see page 7) and concern was expressed about the number of **homeless people** in the town. Either CTDD or UCADD will seek advice from the professionals about whether there is anything which can be done. CTDD's voucher scheme to provide meals for those without money will be revised to include the Inspire Café.

Arrangements were made for the new monthly **Taizé services** and another person has been asked to take charge of the CTDD website which has been in construction for over four years!

At the meeting Jenny Turner, Practice Manager at the Barton Surgery, talked about plans **to re-shape community health services in Dawlish and Teignmouth**. Everyone was encouraged to submit comments and to raise issues of concern at the Hustings.

UNITED CHRISTIAN ACTION IN DAWLISH AND DISTRICT

Change of officers: UCADD has not had a **treasurer** since it started two years ago and it was relief and gratitude that the Board appointed Revd Dr Tom Bush, who has recently retired as URC minister in Teignmouth. The inspiration for UCADD has been based on the vision and energy of its first **Chair**, Professor Dave Finnegan. He has resigned as he begins training to become an Anglican priest. UCADD was fortunate to be able to appoint the Revd Alan Smith, an Anglican priest who retired last summer to Dawlish (incidentally to live next door to Tom Bush!). Alan brings the same commitment to deepening the relationship and work of the churches in Dawlish, with the added benefit of very considerable experience of the workings of the Anglican Church.

Projects

Christians Against Poverty: There has been sufficient financial support from the churches across Teignbridge to begin the process of registering as a CAP debt centre. It is hoped to be able to nominate the first debt coach in February, so that she or he can attend the four day training course in Bradford later in the spring.

Education: Kay Partridge is handing over her educational involvement with UCADD as she discerns God's calling to other Christian work. UCADD is looking for someone to take on the school Assemblies and lessons, and another person to develop Kay's very successful school children mentoring. Five local pupils have been mentored, four with very considerable success, and this work is highly valued by the schools

Nightshift: continues to receive praise from the police for its work in defusing difficult situations. It has started an 'apprenticeship' scheme for those waiting for the next training programme: apprentices accompany the Nightshift team as observers not participants. More volunteers are needed so that there can be a Nightshift team in both Teignmouth and Dawlish every Saturday night.

Funding: UCADD has benefitted very much from having Ceci Kokubu as its Administrator. Unfortunately grant making bodies do not think administration is attractive enough to support, so there has to be some hard thinking about how the costs of supporting the work of UCADD can be met.



SPECIAL CAFÉ WORSHIP ON 15th FEBRUARY

As we all know, the government has legislated to permit same-sex marriages to be solemnised in churches under certain conditions. In the case of the United Reformed Church, the law states that local churches are only allowed to register for same-sex marriages if the URC General Assembly votes to allow them to. If it does, a local church will only be allowed to register if its Church Meeting agrees. No church or minister will be compelled to participate in same-sex marriage services against their personal convictions.

Last year the Assembly debated the issue at length and could not reach a consensus. Local churches are now asked to hold meetings to discuss whether the Assembly should give permission or not; these meetings are **not** asked to vote for or against same-sex marriage, but on whether the Assembly should allow those who wish to do so, to conduct same-sex marriages.

A report of the meeting will be sent to the Assembly indicating the strength of feeling for and against to reflect the mind of the church. To help the process the Assembly has appointed trained group leaders. Revd Dick Gray and his wife are trained and will be coming to lead our discussion. Dick is a non-stipendiary minister and Synod Treasurer, now living in Starcross.

Many of us find discussing same-sex marriages rather embarrassing. There are strong views for and against. Many wish the subject would go away. This café service is part of our worship as together we seek to discern the guidance of God. We are usually best at discerning to God as we listen to one another.

It is also important to realise that we are not discussing whether we in Dawlish would agree to register to conduct them if permission were given. The discussion is about whether we are for or against the Assembly allowing those churches which want to conduct same-sex marriages to do so.

I intend to reflect on how Christians might cope with issues which deeply divide us at the service on 8th February. It is an age-long problem, for example in the Anglican Church over women bishops or in the Catholic Church about celibate clergy. Perhaps in the end learning to cope with such divisions may be more important for spiritual development than the issue itself.

OBSERVING LENT



Lent begins on 18th February (Ash Wednesday)

We are holding our annual united Ash Wednesday service with the Methodist Church at 10.00 in the auditorium. (The café will not be opening until 11.00.) This is a Communion Service, and gives the opportunity for ‘ashing’.

Ashing

Traditionally the Ash Wednesday service marks the beginning of Lent, and includes the possibility of ‘ashing’ before receiving Holy Communion. In this ancient tradition the minister applies ashes in the shape of the cross on the forehead of those worshippers who wish it, while speaking the words, “For dust you are and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). This is what God spoke to Adam and Eve after they eaten of the forbidden fruit and fallen into sin. They remind us that the bitterest fruit of their sin was death. As we begin the Lenten period of penitence and reflection, the imposition of ashes reminds us of our sinfulness and mortality, and, thus, our need to repent and get right with God. The sign of the cross reminds each penitent of the good news that through Jesus Christ crucified there is forgiveness for all sins, all guilt, and all punishment.

Many Christians choose to leave the ashes on their forehead for the remainder of the day, not to be showy and boastful (see Matthew 6:16-18) but as a witness that all people are sinners in need of repentance and that through Jesus all sins are forgiven.

Christians are free to take part in the imposition of ashes or not; there should be no embarrassment at not taking part. The important thing is use Ash Wednesday as a time at the beginning of Lent to reflect about the faith journey Jesus calls us to. Lent is not only about giving things up, but refocussing our lives in Christ.

OFFERINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL INCOME

	Sunday Offerings*		Special Collections and Events
	2014	2013	
December	£1,313	£1,350	Donations in Nov (Nov £13 = £10) £10
Total for year	£25,137	£17,053	Sunday coffee money now goes to the Inspire Café which provides the coffee

* includes standing orders etc but not Gift Aid rebates

NOTICE BOARD

On Sunday 1st February

at our service a new member will be received into our congregation.

This is a time of encouragement and welcome, and we look forward to a larger than usual congregation.



afterwards our church Bring & Share Lunch will be held. Please sign the list if you are staying. If you are able to (and we know not everyone is) we would be grateful for offers of food – please sign the list or talk to Jan Adams.

Annual reports

We hope to hold our Annual General Meeting in March, and we need reports from organisations. Please let Roger Whitehead have them as soon as possible. If they can be typed, it would be helpful but not essential. Date of the meeting will be announced in church.

Churches Together is looking for new officers

Sylvia Teed recently resigned as CTDD Secretary, and John Teed wants to step down as Co-Moderator. Ideas of who might be willing to take on these jobs would be appreciated.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT **21st February - 7th March 2015**



Do you drink tea?

Then please come to a TEA PARTY at the Strand Centre auditorium

on TUESDAY 24th. FEBRUARY from 2.30 pm.

It is hoped that Paul Tiony, a tea-grower from Kenya will be travelling around Devon during Fairtrade Fortnight, and will join us at the Tea Party from 3.00 pm. He will tell us how the farmers in the southwestern part of Kenya benefit from being part of the Fairtrade organization which produces tea for Café Direct.

If you wish to enter a **FAIRTRADE COMPETITION**, please bring with you

EITHER: A novelty decorated tea-pot or tea-cosy

OR: A drawing or painting of an unusual tea-pot

Entries will be judged by Paul and the winners will receive a Fairtrade prize!

Do come and join us on Tuesday 24th. February from 2.30 pm.

SERVICES HAPPENING OR PLANNED



CTDD Pulpit exchange Sunday 22nd

We welcome Revd Di Cain who is a priest at St Gregory's Church; our minister is at St Mary's Church, Cofton.

Love, Life and Praise Friday 20th at 6.30 in the auditorium

A time of praise and worship built on modern Christian music is uplifting and powerful, led by Lawson Spiller who is an international worship leader.

Taizé Service Sunday 22nd at 6.30 at Dawlish Christian Fellowship

This is the first CTDD Taizé service which will be hosted by each church in turn.

Prospect Services Are you interested and willing to help?

There used to be a bimonthly Prospect Service, which is accessible to everyone including those with disabilities. It stopped last year because of lack of people willing to organise it. There is a meeting about it on 4th February at 7.30. If you might be interested, please speak to Roger Whitehead.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS THIS MONTH



The URC supports other parts of the world through Christian Aid which works with partners throughout the world. The URC focuses on three countries, one of which is Bangladesh.

We pray for



Golam and his elderly parents as he continues to grow his small business following the devastating loss of his shop and goods during a cyclone



Those supporting community groups who have played a crucial role in ensuring vital local government services reach the poorest and most vulnerable



All those we do not know, trained by Christian Aid partner Shushilan, in poultry farm rearing, crop cultivation, small income generating schemes, disaster preparedness and more.

A PRAYER FOR LENT

Almighty and Everlasting God, you have given the human race Jesus Christ our Saviour as a model of humility.

He fulfilled your will by being man and giving his life on the cross.

Help us to bear witness to him by following his example of service and suffering and make us worthy to share in his resurrection.

Amen.

SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Morning Services at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

1	Holy Communion	Revd Roger Whitehead
8	Family Worship	Revd Roger Whitehead
15	Café Worship	Revd Roger Whitehead
22	CTDD Pulpit Exchange	Revd Di Caine

Other services

18	10.00	Ash Wednesday Service	preacher to be arranged §
22	6.30	Taizé Service	St Agatha's

REGULAR CHURCH EVENTS

Thursdays 10.00 - 12.00 **Coffee & Kids** (Toddlers Group) §
2.30 - 3.30 **Keep Fit** §

Fridays 11.30 - 12.30 **Prayer Meeting** vestry

§ in the auditorium † in the Strand Hall x lounge # Carey Room

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY

(on our premises unless otherwise indicated)

Sun	1	12.15	Church Bring and Share lunch §
Tues	3	12.30	Torbay URC Ministers Lunch meeting, Central, Torquay
Sat	7	10.00	Table Top Sale §
Wed	10	12.30	CTDD Ministers meeting, 28 High Street
Fri	13	7.30	Filling Station , Shaldon School*
		3.45	Messy Church (Methodist Church Hall)
Fri	20	6.30	Love, Life & Praise §
Tues	24	2.30	Fairtrade Tea Party § (see page 6)
Thurs	26	9.00	Prayer & Reflection Away Day for Dawlish senior ministers

* lifts available

THE STRAND CHURCH

Minister	Revd Roger Whitehead	28 High Street	889 098
Acting Sec	Mrs Jean Potter	1, Ivy Lane, Teignmouth	773856
Church phone: 01626 889038		church website www.StrandChurch.org.uk	
For information about the church visit www.strandchurch.org.uk about Jesus visit www.rejesus.co.uk			