



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON-ON-THAMES

NEWSLETTER



Volume 75 No 5



SEPTEMBER 2019



"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower"

Albert Camus

From The Manse

September 2019



Dear friends

I'd like to take the opportunity this month to respond more fully and more honestly to something that is often said to me – but I'm not sure if it's a good idea to respond to it or not!



Something that's frequently said to me at both St Andrew's and Weybridge is that it's a shame that I can't be leading worship more often. I always commiserate and say that it's the problem of having two churches with services at the same time. Both churches have an equal share of my time and the matter is quietly left. There's nothing that can be done. Except that's not actually true.

When the joint pastorate was set up, the agreement was that the Minister would divide his (or her) time equally between the two churches, acknowledging that both services are at 10.30am. In practice, this means that after annual leave is taken into consideration, the Minister takes slightly less than 50% of the services at each church per annum. As things currently stand there is no alternative, but that doesn't mean that there is not another option and should that be considered.

I'd be quite happy to take two services on a Sunday morning - indeed, I have done in previous pastorates. I just can't take two services at 10.30 am. If one church went, say, to 9.30 am and the other to 11.00 am then I could normally take both services and be at each church most weeks. I'd be very reluctant to initiate such a conversation between the two churches though because it could be said that it wasn't up to me: nonetheless, I don't know if it would be of any interest or not. Is it something which ought to be discussed? I am reminded of the experience of another church.

Long Lane URC, in Cheshire, used to meet at 10.30 am but, when it became part of a three-church pastorate, the Long Lane church very reluctantly moved to an earlier service time to make things work. A number of people were vehemently against the earlier start. There was great opposition but there wasn't much alternative and things settled down. In time, the old three-church pastorate was disbanded and a joint pastorate of Long Lane and St Columba's was formed and, in the fulness of time, Long Lane and St Columba's united (they were only ¼ mile apart on the same road). This meant that the united church could go to 10.30am service start - in other words, back to when Long Lane always used to meet. Guess where the opposition to that came from? Yes, it came from those who had so vociferously opposed the early service time. You see, they had found that it actually worked better for them. They could go to church and still have the day free. They could go to church and still have the family round for lunch, there being time to get back from church and put the joint in the oven! Experience showed that the earlier start, though hotly resisted at first, actually suited them better and they didn't want to go back to a 10.30 am when that became possible.

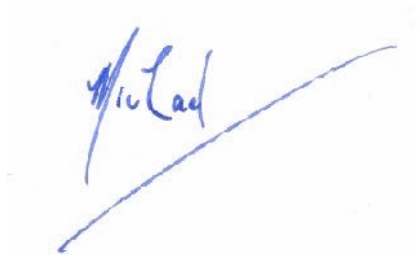
Now, don't get me wrong. In this letter, I am not suggesting that we should change our service times to allow me to go to both churches most weeks. Instead, I am just picking up on something that's frequently said to me and reacting to it more honestly than I normally do, saying that actually it doesn't have to be this way. It's not up to me to seek to change one of the understandings on which the pastorate was constructed but, if the churches wanted to think about it, then they could. It is an option and it's one which I'd be perfectly happy to go with.

I may well have to don my body armour after this letter but, over the years, I've also learnt that those who speak the loudest aren't automatically saying what everyone else is thinking and the story from Long Lane makes an interesting point too.

So, it's not really for me to push that option but it does exist and I have no idea if it may be of interest to you or not.

Now, let me take cover!

With all good wishes,



A friend of mine from the States sent me this poem which gave me a wry laugh. I thought that you might enjoy it too.

A QUESTION

His wife said, "Please be careful," and he smiled patiently
And said, "Hey, don't worry about me."
And he buckled right in with a confident grin
And his screwdriver touched a live wire.
And he let out a cry and proceeded to die
In a shower of sparks and of fire.
And the people who gave the eulogy
Spoke of honor and love and ambition.
They spoke well of the dead, and nobody said,
"Why didn't he call an electrician?"



HARVEST LUNCH AT ST ANDREW'S

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

At 12 noon in the Church Hall - All welcome



NEWS FROM THE GUILD



*Janet tries out a
new chair*

The ladies were very surprised when Alan informed them that an account in the Guild's name, had £2000 in it. After a few enquiries, it was decided to purchase new chairs for the Church Hall. Searching on line, the decision was taken to go for upholstered chairs in blue, with an aluminium frame which meant that the chairs would be lighter and therefore easier to stack. Thank you to everybody for the positive comments and to Jim and James for treating the chairs with Scotchguard, setting them out in the sun to dry and stacking them in the hall ready for use.

The Ladies Guild had over £100 pounds in petty cash. Using this, they donated £25 on two occasions for flowers and £50 pounds to ArtPeace. We are hoping the Guild will survive for another year but currently we have, disappointingly, only five members. We do enjoy our social get-togethers every other Tuesday, so if you know of anyone who would like to swell the numbers do bring them along. They will receive a warm welcome!

Janet Sommerville

GRANDAD'S LITTLE HELPER



The church garden has proved a nightmare to manage in the recent blistering hot spell of weather and many flowers wilted under the intense heat. So, it was all hands to the pump or rather tap in the inner garden. The photo (left) shows Johnston's grandson, Gethyn (daughter Kirsty's son), lending a hand but he was rather perplexed by a steady flow of water trickling from a hole in the side of our old watering can prompting the song: 'There's a hole in my bucket dear Grandad dear Grandad!' **JS**



We are all very grateful to Johnston for his untiring work in the church garden which can be admired by passers by, as well as enjoyed by all of us at St Andrew's. Ed

Checking Sunday school childrens' knowledge, the teacher asked "Cleanliness is next to what?"
A small boy replied "Impossible."

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES SEPTEMBER 2019

Sunday 1 September (Pentecost 12)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion conducted by the Minister
Tuesday 3 September	2.00 pm 8.00 pm	Ladies' Guild Hersham Room Elders' Meeting Hersham Room
Sunday 8 September (Pentecost 13)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by Mrs Vivien Gerhold
Monday 9 September	2.00 pm	Bridge Club Hersham Room
Wednesday 11 September	12.30 pm	Organ Recital, Weybridge URC featuring Alan Rapley, Organist at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Horsell, Woking (see page 7 - last concert in this series)
Friday 13 September	10.30 am	Prayer Group Garden Room
	12.30 - 2.30 pm	Ladies Who Lunch, Weybridge URC (see page 7)
Sunday 15 September (Pentecost 14)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by the Minister
	3.00 pm	 Messy Church
Tuesday 17 September	2.00 pm	Ladies' Guild Hersham Room

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ALL ITEMS TO THE EDITOR, NORMA REID, 3 GWALIOR ROAD, LONDON SW15 1NP
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Sunday 22 September (Pentecost 15)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by Mr Graham Pearcey
	 Fairtrade after the service 	
Monday 23 September	2.00 pm	Bridge Club Hersham Room
Friday 27 September	10.30 am	Prayer Group Garden Room
 Sunday 29 September (Pentecost 16)	10.30 am	Harvest Thanksgiving service conducted by the Minister
	12 noon	followed by HARVEST LUNCH in the Church Hall
	11.00 am - 1.00 pm	MENCAP Jumble Sale at Burview Hall Weybridge (see page 8)



MESSY CHURCH



Despite its being the start of the summer holiday season, we had a goodly turnout at Messy Church in July. The children loved preparing fruit for fruit salad which we enjoyed during our meal at the close. As usual, icing cakes was a must. The children made bracelets decorating circles cut from kitchen rolls, made collages and added their names to a cloud.

We did some simple science experiments making fizz with vitamin tablets, and walking colours - filling glasses with different coloured water and connecting them with paper towels.

There's something for everyone ...



Watching it fizz



'Walking colours' - the glasses show capillary action



I made the bracelet myself!

Skittles was a favourite with all, adults and children. During the celebration we talked about Martha and Mary and how we all have to be busy at times, but also need time to learn and then be still and listen to God: a lesson for us all.

Anne Fitzgerald



Icing cakes



Anything that involves food is sure to be a big hit!

QUARTERLY CHURCH MEETING

Date to be advised. Look out for
information on the weekly
Service Sheet.



BRIDGE CLUB

Mondays 9 and 23 September

2.00 pm
Hersham Room



LADIES' GUILD

Tuesdays 3 and 17 September

2.00 pm
Hersham Room

PRAYER GROUP

Fridays 13 and 27 September

10.30 am
Garden Room



LADIES WHO LUNCH

**Friday 13 September at
Weybridge URC**

Soup, rolls, dessert and coffee for just £4.00
per person
Convivial company and second helpings
allowed!

Book your place with Margaret Faultless
Tel: 020 8399 3402 /
email: ladieswholunch@weybridgeurc.org.uk



LUNCHTIME ORGAN RECITAL

**Wednesday 11
September**

12.30 pm at
Weybridge URC,
Queens Road, KT13 9UX

This is the last in this year's popular
series of concerts and features Alan
Rapley, Organist at the Church of St Mary
the Virgin, Horsell, Woking

Bring your sandwiches and enjoy the
music. Tea and coffee available. Free
entry with retiring collection in aid of
Musicians' Benevolent Fund



GRAND JUMBLE SALE

**Sunday 29 September 11.00 am - 1.00
pm**

Burview Hall (off Queen's Road)
Walton-on-Thames KT12 5AB

Do come along and bag some great
bargains!



Confidence in Sharing the Gospel

**Saturday, 7th September 2019,
10am-4.00pm**

**Westborough URC, 4b Southway,
Guildford, Surrey. GU2 8DA**

A day led by Revds Andrew and Sally Willett (the
GEAR Evangelism and Renewal Advocates within the
URC) of worship, prayer, and seeking God together -

for greater confidence in our
invitation to people and sharing of
our faith as individuals and churches.

The day is free.

Tea and Coffee (and pastries) will be
available, but please bring your own sandwiches.

And please email admin@westboroughfreeuk.com for further details, and to let
us know you are coming.

Westborough Church
Church for Everyone



Sally is based in West Thomas Road, London, where
she and Andrew have planted West Thomas Road
Community Church a new URC, Anglican and
Methodist. Church of England. And was even as a church
planter alongside Sally, as well as leading a JOC
conversation in Chelton.



Our illustrious leader, Paula

Elmbridge Mencap are having a very busy year. Four of us attended the Sandown Racecourse Community Day on the very hot Thursday in July. We were treated to lunch in the Royal Box. Don't ask me how, but I came home £18 richer (betting on the name or the colour shirt of the jockey)! We joined our loyal band of helpers after the last race with collecting bucket and collected £766 from the punters who had some money left.

Our pantomime horse entry won the Pantomime Horse race, the horses being set off by Michael Aspel. How they ran in the heat I will never know!



One lucky lady!



The Pantomime Horse with Mayor Mary Sheldon and Michael Aspel



*The Pantomime Horse
(two-legged version)*



*Some of our hard-working
Collectors
taking a break*

We had three riders in Ride London this year (albeit I know this is not popular with some of you, as it prevents you from getting to church). So far, this has raised about £1000 with, I hope, more to come.

In September some of us are going to a Ladies' Lunch, all profits to be donated to our charity. In October, a Quiz Night is planned (not my strongest suit but I am hoping there will be a prize for the worst player!). Our Autumn Jumble Sale will take place on Sunday 29 September. As always, donations of any kind are welcome and the better items will be put aside for our Christmas Fair in November. Clubs, Cinema night, Family Fun, Get up and Go are all on the go once more following our short Summer break. The Burview Hall is used almost every day for children and adults with a learning disability. A great place for great people.

Jean Rigden

Congratulations



Congratulations to Sue and Ray Groves who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on 23 August. We wish them many more happy years together!



It is always a tonic to hear of our young people doing well. We are delighted to share in the happiness of Paula McGechan and Sarah Ripley and their families following recent excellent exam results and wish them every success in the future.

Paula will be going to Worcester College, Oxford to read Linguistics and Psychology. Sarah is off to Portsmouth to study Criminology.

NEWS OF OLD FRIENDS

Sophia and Rob Swanson left the UK for Texas in late 2016 and have settled in Montgomery (birthplace of the Texas flag). Sofia was a treasured member of St Andrew's Ladies' Guild and some of you may remember, as well as her undoubted baking prowess, the beautiful quilt she created as a future family heirloom for her son and which was displayed at the Patchwork Quilt Exhibition in the Gateway in September 2016 (see the Newsletter of October 2016 for an account and colourful photographs of some of the work displayed). Thank you, Sophia, for sending your news. We miss you! Ed

"Hello St Andrews friends! Our family in Texas has increased with the addition of two Labrador puppies, Scout (yellow male) and Kona (chocolate female). They are 6 months old and litter mates. I often confide to Scout that, 'life would be so dull with just one puppy.' It's nice they have each other to play with and sometimes get into double trouble. We are having loads of fun with them and can't imagine one without the other."

Rob and Sophia Swanson





FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Eleanor Milne



It was with sadness that we, at St Andrew's, heard that Eleanor Milne had died. She was a very private person but in her professional life Eleanor was an extremely caring, organised and competent teacher respected by both pupils and parents alike. At St Andrew's we remember her quiet faithfulness, gentle friendship and support of the Prayer Group until increasing frailty kept her at home.

At the funeral, her son and daughter both paid tribute to their mother, Keith writing:

Eleanor was born in Aberdeen 15 December 1926 to John and Eleanor Clubb. John, also from Aberdeen, was a carpenter but Eleanor was from Orkney and had moved to Aberdeen for work as a housemaid. Our mother and her younger brother, Ian, were brought up in a three-room first floor tenement with an outdoor toilet. A bath involved a trip to the local bathhouse.

Such an upbringing seems today from a different planet. Eleanor did well at school and gained a place at teacher training college. Whilst there, she met Jimmy Milne, who was studying for a degree in electrical engineering at Aberdeen University. He came from a similar background with family roots in Aberdeen and they married in 1952.

They started married life in Aberdeen but Jimmy's job took them south, initially to Edinburgh where Lindsay and I were born in 1956 and 1958, then to Woking and then Uganda in 1964. It was in Uganda that Eleanor resumed her teaching career at Nakasero Primary School. On their return to England, they bought their forever house in Weybridge and concentrated on sending Lindsay and me on our way.

Eleanor continued her teaching career at Ambleside Infants' School in Walton. She stayed there for over 20 years, leaving in 1992 as the Deputy Head. There are many in Walton and Weybridge whose introduction to reading and writing was in Mrs Milne's class. She was stopped on a number of occasions when out shopping by past students, now with their own children, to be asked if she was Mrs Milne, as they remembered her as their first teacher.

Once Lindsay and I had flown the nest, Eleanor and Jimmy took advantage of their freedom and travelled widely on holidays to the United States, Africa, the Far East and Derbyshire, sometimes with friends and sometimes just the two of them. They were active members of Rotary and Inner Wheel and Eleanor supported Jimmy's work as a Local Councillor. Sadly, Jimmy died in 2000 and Eleanor's interest in travel waned. She kept active in Inner Wheel. She was on the Appeals Committee for the local school, Cleves, and she took up Bridge. She also returned to choral singing, an interest she had first kindled and enjoyed in Aberdeen. However, these activities were slowly given up as she found them increasingly difficult, not so much due to ill health but more due to her advancing years. Latterly she had two worries: cancer and dementia. She fought off breast cancer twice and her only dementia and confusion came from reading the 'Daily Mail'. I think she won!

Anne Fitzgerald says:

"I was her elder and loved visiting. We had a lot in common having taught locally. She almost could have taught me in Edinburgh as was teaching in a local school when I went to school. She always asked after members of the congregation when latterly unable to come to church."

Jean Rigden writes:

"Eleanor Milne was my daughter Linda's teacher at a difficult time in our lives. Linda and Susan's father died in 1976 and Linda was only 10 years old. The support and care she received from Eleanor was amazing and left a lasting impression on Linda. Eleanor and her husband Jimmy also where so helpful when Elmbridge Mencap went to Walton Charity to ask for a new Burview Hall. Jimmy was a trustee at Walton Charity at the time and without his support I'm not sure if we would have been successful."

I used to love visiting Eleanor at her home having a cup of tea and talking about the old days. A truly lovely lady."



Angus James Macleod



St Andrew's members with long memories may remember with a smile Angus Macleod, who passed away in June, aged 94.

Angus, Mary and family moved to Shepperton in the early 1960s. Having five of a family – Malcolm, Duncan, Alastair, Christine and Alison – Angus inevitably became Sunday School Superintendent at St Andrew's and also played the organ, as did Malcolm for his father's service.

Angus was the organiser of St Andrew's annual day trip to Ruislip Lido in double-decker buses, and the arrival of a donkey on Palm Sunday. The year that Malcolm and Hugh ran out of carrots was a high – or low – point.

Angus and Mary moved to Hampton when the threat of building a motorway across the field beside their house became reality and the M3. Once the children had left home – which happened much sooner than nowadays, said Duncan – Angus took early retirement. Twenty years ago they down-sized and moved again, this time to Dorset, to a village outside Salisbury where they again became actively involved in their local church, providing Angus with more DIY opportunities and a haggis to address on Burns Night.

Angus and Mary were at St Andrew's for the celebration of Fred Brooman's life (2007) and again for Chrissie's (2014), and Lesley was pleased to be able to return the compliment.

Lesley Brooman

Nan Mercer has happy memories of Angus. She writes:

"I was teaching in the Sunday School in Lesley Noble's time and Angus took over from Lesley as supervisor. It was quite an exciting time then. We had a very active church and, although we had a big congregation, Angus and I used to try and increase the Sunday school by knocking on doors! Getting the donkey into church was quite brave and we all enjoyed the picnics at Ruislip Lido. Those were good times!"

We send our thoughts and prayers to the families of Eleanor and Angus.



A SERVICE WITH A DIFFERENCE ON 'RIDE LONDON' SUNDAY

"Bike ride Sunday" and an evening service at Weybridge on Sunday 4 August gives me an opportunity to do something a little different each year. You may remember that last year it was a service about Children's hymns, with lots of the old Sunday School hymns being sung. This year, it was an overview of the story of hymns in general. Singing hymns in worship is something the Christian Church brought in from its Jewish roots and singing was part of worship at the time of Jesus; we even read in the Bible of Jesus and the disciples singing a hymn together. A good-sized congregation therefore began by singing Psalm 100 - "All people that on earth do dwell" - before thinking a bit about how Psalm 24 may have been used in Jerusalem and how that's been picked up in its use in Communion as "Ye gates, lift up your heads on high."

As the service progressed, we recognised some hymns from the early church which are still in use today, such as, "All glory, laud and honour" and "The Day of Resurrection" before we thought about the impact of the Reformation. Then it was time for the role played by people such as Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge in moving things forward. The way was thus paved for a hymn or two from a couple of obscure brothers (John and Charles I think their names were!), which was followed by a brief excursion into the evangelical revival of the 19th century and a few American imports and, before we knew where we were, it was the 20th century. We'd seen how certain social groups and influences had contributed hymns and books, particularly in the 19th century, and so had availed ourselves of the opportunity to affirm our temperance credentials with a resolute rejection of the evils of strong drink, spreading "ruin through our happy land" as "thousands press to share the cup of madness and despair". Thus inspired, we sang a hymn to remind us of the 20th century ecumenical movement, of which the URC is a part - "Bind us together, Lord, Bind us together" - and, after prayer, concluded with a hugely popular hymn, written in 1967 - "Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided."

Along the way we also thought a little about tunes and composers. We heard Handel's final flourish to the hymn "Rejoice the Lord is King" and also heard a few tunes by composers who may have been a little over optimistic in the vocal dexterity of the average congregation and whose tunes had therefore failed to be adopted. Oh, and we looked at a few hymns which had been submitted to hymnbook editors but whose words were too outrageous to be accepted.

If I'm honest, the service went on a little longer than intended, but the general reaction to that seems to be that people were surprised when they looked at their watches because it hadn't seemed it.

So, a good time was had in this service and I know what I'm doing next year: hymns being brought into our worship today from the World Church.

Michael

Footnote: The Prudential Ride London-Surrey 100 is the biggest annual charity bike ride in the world. It covers 100 miles. In 2016, RideLondon 46 was introduced, opening up the event to cyclists keen to experience the excitement of riding through the capital on closed roads over a shorter 46-mile distance. There's plenty of time to enter in 2020 - Entry fee only £1.00! Ed

FLOWER POWER



A message from **May Dow**

"It was a lovely surprise to receive a wonderful bunch of flowers during coffee after last Sunday's service. It was a very colourful arrangement of bright blue agapanthus and white roses that has been much admired. Thank you to everyone at St Andrew's for thinking of me and thanks also to all of you for the cards and good wishes you sent me during my recent spell in hospital - they certainly made all the difference to my recovery!"

Fiona Reardon says:

"I was surprised and delighted to receive some lovely flowers from Irene after the service on Sunday. Thank you to Moira for such a wonderful arrangement of colours and to everyone at St Andrew's for thinking of me - it really was kind and is very much appreciated."

Mary Taylor would like to say thank you for a posy of flowers she received a few weeks ago, taken to her by Irene. She loves the flowers from church and would also like to thank Christine and Netta for their visit. She so enjoyed seeing them as she doesn't get many visitors these days and can feel a bit lonely. More thanks are due for the flowers she received this month with a welcome visit from Irene and Norma.

David and Mavis Netherwood much enjoyed their recent visit to St Andrew's and express their thanks for the lovely roses and alstroemeria which brought much pleasure. They look forward to returning early January.



RECOVERY CORNER

We send our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Holms Carlile and Jan de Kok, both of whom have undergone recent surgery.

We are happy to hear that Holms is making good progress. Jan is back in action, cautiously savouring the delights of a new knee (albeit still a little painful at times) and was spotted in church, walking unaided, in double quick time! Keep it up, both!



ARTPEACE 20 YEARS ON – THE HIGHS AND LOWS. I remember clearly the first time I visited Zimbabwe before my retirement wearing my Commitment for Life ‘hat’. The Director of Silveira House was Fr Dieter Scholz, the ‘freedom priest’ who fought so hard for beleaguered Zimbabweans in the late President Ian Smith’s reign. Dieter was imprisoned and then expelled from the country for 12 years. My visit came at the height of the new president Robert Mugabe’s reign of terror which had left its bloodstained mark on the country. One day, a large white open backed Mercedes arrived at Silveira House bristling with Mugabe strongmen armed to the teeth to search the premises and interview personnel. Artpeace and others lived in terror of ‘the monster’. Gradually, with the help of the Jesuits and other friends who took considerable risks, we established a network of sorts to support the artists and their extended families both financially and from an artistic perspective by bringing their work over to the UK.

One mild mannered artist who spoke out against the atrocities was horribly tortured and imprisoned had his modest home burned to the ground. Friends looked after him in a ‘safe house’ - a crippled emaciated wreck of a man. I was asked if I could help by selling jewellery he fashioned from raw copper. We gradually got his life together and he was reunited with his family but that’s another harrowing story. He is in pain but alive to this day. Once, our artists were over a hundred miles away in the mountains at Kwekwe mining for raw stone. They were all arrested for taking photos of poor villages for our Newsletter. After interrogation along with a beating they spent the weekend in a cramped dirty cell in jail. I recall this so well as I was attending a sale at Southwark Cathedral at the time and my phone never stopped buzzing with text messages asking for help! A lorry driver friend bribed police to release them. So many sad stories - some artists lost the will to live and died through abject poverty.

On a brighter note, sales surged in 2010 thanks to massive efforts from many URC churches across the country who held exhibitions opening sanctuaries for 1 – 2 weeks selling thousands of pounds worth of crafts I somehow managed to ship over. These were anxious but exciting times and to this day these tremendous congregations who worked wonders, talk with enthusiasm of one of their biggest ever church ministry successes - well supported by local dignitaries, celebrities and the public.

However, it is a different story today and Southwark Cathedral is our main selling point for their smaller works thanks to Dean Andrew Nunn who happened to visit the old URC centre at Windermere and learned of this initiative. Sadly, most URC’s with depleted largely elderly congregations are understandably no longer able to help. However, little Marlow URC are the exception and still play an enormous role in various lifesaving ways whilst donations from Kettering and Fleetwood URC are a godsend. St Andrew’s Harvest donation has plummeted to a few hundred pounds compared to several thousands in better days partly due to a depleted congregation and maybe even over exposure. The situation since Mugabe’s departure has not improved. This year, peaceful demonstrations were violently broken up by armed police who beat and shot dead unarmed citizens. The same old corrupt regime aided by some equally corrupt judiciary, army and police personnel still crack the whip! The country is in chaos and our friends remain at the bottom of the pile.



Despite a year of rhetoric from President Mnangagwa that this was a 'New Zimbabwe', recent events have shown the world that nothing has changed. The streets of Harare were recently filled with unarmed, running, screaming people chased by riot police using their baton sticks. People were repeatedly beaten, their images filmed for the world to see. People sitting on the streets were beaten. There were no cars being stoned or shops being looted and no signs of any violence, making the reaction of the police simply incomprehensible. Civic and political activists were abducted and tortured ahead of the planned march. So much for the November 2017 march involving hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans caught up in a tide of euphoria and joy at the end days of Robert Mugabe. The new Zimbabwean Bond dollar has lost 98% of its real US dollar value. Few can afford medical treatments and medicines anymore; fuel prices have multiplied by 7, and food prices quadrupled. The World Food Programme said 2.3 million people in rural Zimbabwe need emergency food aid now and this number will increase to 5.5 million in the coming weeks. The government estimates another 2.2 million people in urban areas also require food aid, bringing the total to 7.7 million, over half of the total population.

All this is very disheartening and at times my spirit flags but I take encouragement from my three main contacts over the years at Silveira House, Dieter Scholz, Bishop Emeritus of Chinhoyi, Fr David Harold - Barry and Fr Koni Landsberg all close friends who have visited St Andrew's and who have spent around 50 years of their working lives in Zimbabwe – they have seen it all! If they can still soldier on at 80 on and keep smiling, perhaps I have a few years left in me. The good folk of Southwark Cathedral also have the bit between their teeth, ably supported by key CAFOD staff and friends. I have met so many nice people on this journey who have gone the extra mile to help and believe me it has made such a difference to many lives. ArtPeace are so grateful for our support over all these years and a personal thank you to a member of our congregation who recently gave generously illustrates this.

Dear ..., It is heart-warming to know there are kind souls like yourself amidst the global meltdown and difficulties. Thank you for your kind donation to ArtPeace which is not only much appreciated but timely as well. We pray that God bless the source from which you gave and that he blesses your kindness that shines a light on a dark generation. Your donation will go a long way towards the needs of our families, immediate and extended. May God richly bless you.

With love

ArtPeace



Some of this donation went towards buying essentials for Blessing the little disfigured boy on the left. Poor Blessing's plight was sent to me by artist Fortune. He lives with his mum Nomsa who struggles to make a living by selling firewood which she travels long distances to collect. Her two other children live with the grandmother in a rural area. Blessing often begs for lunch from neighbours. He does not go to school but when he grows up he told me (via a short video sent by Fortune) that he wants to become a policeman. The two of them thought Christmas had

arrived! It does not take much to bring joy into some people lives and so good to hear from the recipients.

Please pray for Zimbabwe.

Johnston Simpson



MINISTER

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Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

**Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.**

1 Peter 4 vv 8-10