

NEWSLINK

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2025

CANTON UNITING CHURCH



The Wedding at Cana- Paolo Veronese (1528-1588)

Canton Uniting Church Deacons in October 2023

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Dear Friends,

February, 2025

What are you up to this month? Possibly not much. Our routine is in order. The to-do-list is hung on the fridge to remind us of our accomplishments. Some of us may have weeks filled with regular appointments which keep our out and about a lot. Or we may be trying to establish a new order following some disruptive days or weeks.

Living into routines, re-establishing routines, or simply living with chaos is challenging. Whatever our days hold, there are tasks that must be completed. Doing laundry, delivering and collecting children, shopping for food and preparing food, tending to gardens etc.

In 'An Altar in the World', Barbara Brown Taylor writes about the routines of life: 'To make bread, to dig in the earth, to feed an animal or cook for a stranger—these activities require no extensive commentary, no lucid theology. All they require is someone willing to bend, reach, chop, stir. Most of these tasks are so full of pleasure that there is no need to complicate things by calling them holy. And yet these are the same activities that change lives, sometimes all at once and sometimes more slowly, the way dripping water changes stone.'

These ordinary activities in which we engage for those we love or for strangers can change lives, like water transforms stones. When we make a meal for a refugee, a life is changed. When we listen to someone on the phone who expresses distress, a life is changed. When we regularly show up for our children, lives are changed. They are 'simple' things to do--Brown Taylor says we don't call them 'holy'--and yet they bring love and hope to those with whom we share those tasks. Brother Lawrence, a 17th century monk, found God in tasks like doing the dishes so there is a sense in which, based on his ideas, we can argue that all that we do is 'holy.'

There are lots of challenges in our world right now so we can take encouragement from the reminder that if we keep doing these basic things, they make a difference and change lives. In them God's presence can be known. Through them change happens. Maybe we only change the life of one person by our consistent caring, but that changed person will impact others lives and bring positive change to others. Love and healing and peace multiply.

Brown Taylor continues, 'Bodily practices remind the willing that faith is a way of life.' Brother Lawrence, I think, would affirm this statement. We know from Jesus that love is action not just emotion. Living a life of faith is about the work we do to create an environment of shalom and hope.

You do this each and every day. Keep up the good work. We may not see the stone transform, but our drips of love make a difference.

Peace,

Martha and David

Isla led Prayers of Intercession during her return to CUC:

Dear God, in this season we tell the stories of a child who grew up in an occupied state, in a world of violence and oppression, who still stood firm and taught peace to all. We pray that the peace of Christ will be known in all warzones, in Palestine, in Ukraine, in Sudan, in all fractured homes and hearts.

Dear God, the leaders of the temple sat down and were taught their own lessons by a twelve year old boy. We pray that their humility and openness to learning may be carried forward like a flag or a bright torch by those who have been called to lead in this chapter of history. We pray for compassion in governance, good faith in debate, and gentleness of agreement.

Dear God, we sit today in the days between two festivals - the holy day of your Son's birth, and the turning of the calendar to the New Year. As we leave this year behind us for the new one, be with us and help us to make good promises to you. We pray that you be beside us in everything we embark on this year - our work, our family lives and friendships, our new plans or convictions, our learning, our play. We pray for teachers and students to be blessed with wisdom, courage, and strong hearts as the new year approaches, with all the challenges it will bring.

Dear God, we come before you as the church, as part of your global Church. In all our generations, histories, nationalities, minds, we gather together to remember that we, and we collectively, are your people. We pray for our family and friends, near and far, and those whose names are in our hearts.

In the words that Jesus taught his students to pray, we now say together in whatever language or version feels comfortable:

Lord's Prayer

Amen

Tom Arthur. "SEEING IS BELIEVING"

When her guide dog Jimmy retired, I started taking Nickie for a weekly walk, sometimes around Victoria Park, sometimes around Roath Park. More recently Marieke has taken over, and Alison, because my walking was just too slow! One of the things we often talked about when I did the walking was the experience of seeing and blindness and the experience of exclusion and acceptance. The visually impaired are quick to recognize how others can be blind to their presence among them.

This is the Year of Luke in our three-year lectionary cycle, and while the story of the man born blind (in which the Pharisees are shown to be the really blind ones) is in John, this theme of "seeing" is very central to the Gospel of Luke.

Look at the preface at the beginning of the Gospel. The author says he has built his gospel on what people have actually "seen"-- on eyewitness accounts :

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. Luke 1:1-4

Eyewitness accounts imply the first kind of seeing, literal seeing that enables an account that is reliably true to the facts as historical truth. The idea that this gospel is based on eyewitness seeing draws the reader in. This is going to be the real stuff. No fancy poetry.

Maybe you've been reading Luke for years, but you've probably never noticed that the idea of "seeing" runs through this gospel like a thread holding everything together.

Think of all the instances of "seeing" in Luke, from the shepherds who hurry down to Bethlehem to "see this thing that has taken place" to Zacchaeus, who "climbed a sycamore tree" to see Jesus.

And then at the end of the gospel, in the post-Easter Emmaus story, the diners' "eyes were opened." Did they simply "see" Jesus, or were their eyes opened to understand his essence was still with them as they broke bread together with a stranger? The gospel poses the question for you to answer.

At the end of Acts (Luke and Acts are one continuous story), we hear Paul interpreting salvation as a kind of redeemed seeing and hearing:

Paul . . . made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: "'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'" (Acts 28.25b-27).

Paul's mission to the Gentiles is "to open their eyes" (Acts 26:18). Is this the kind of improved vision you would get from Specsavers? Of course not. The literal vision of mere "facts" gets us nowhere. The "eyewitness" sources for the Gospel of Luke, we now understand, are those who have insight and understanding, an "awakened" vision.

To "see" as Luke wants the Christian to see has social and political implications, as in the currency of the word "woke" that we hear the far-right American politicians complaining about today. "Woke" is the awareness of social and political issues affecting African Americans, as in "Stay woke"--stay awake. Why do the rich, white politicians feel so threatened by such awareness? As the song says, "Wake up sleeper, rise from the dead!" We only really begin to understand the good news when we can see with such awakened vision. That awakened vision includes being able to see life as those we have marginalized see it. The whole journey from the beginning of Luke to the end of Acts is a journey from one kind of seeing to another, from mere physical vision, which doesn't get us anywhere, to insight and understanding. Early in Luke the old man Simeon says he can now be dismissed to go in peace, "For my eyes have seen your salvation." This "is The Song of Simeon", Luke 2.29-32. In the URC's 'Rejoice and Sing', Simeon's words are set to a lovely antiphon with verses by Brenda Stephenson: Now, Lord, you have let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.

We often find this "Nunc dimittis" (as it is called in Latin) sung at an Evensong service, as if we have seen the light and can now put our jammies on and go to bed in peace. But what Simeon has "seen" is the arrival of the promised Kingdom of God, a matter of insight rather than sight, for the "light" is an enlightenment of the understanding, the ability to live in a new way and to love as we have been loved by God. The world turns upside down.

Can the Kingdom be SEEN? Well, we catch glimpses of it. Our redeemed vision enables us to see where it is happening. It is the church's job to work in partnership with God in making it more visible in the real world. That is our job as a congregation here in the place we have been given. Sometimes, when blindness prevails, the world can get very dark, as it is now, and the voice of the church shrinks behind the loud megaphones of the marketplace and the super-rich who can only see commodity. A book I read recently, Michael Lerner's *The Left Hand of God: Taking our country back from the religious right*, talks about the failure of the mainstream churches to champion a sense of vision beyond self-interest.

Whatever the cost, we are invited to open our eyes and see. I am getting old, like old Simeon. I have seen the Kingdom in fleeting moments, in the ministry of beautiful people whom I have served and in many others across the church and beyond. Salvation isn't always spelled out in capital letters. It is often like a flickering candle, just enough to push the dark away. I have often wished the world had made a greater shift in my time. When I was young there was great hope, but then came the assassinations, the re-awakened racism, the xenophobia and the resistance to climate action. Drill, baby, drill.

But I HAVE seen the Kingdom of God and seen enough to assure me that there will always be enough who have seen and not bowed their heads to Mammon, but have taken it as their mission to enlighten the eyes of the Gentiles. I have seen your salvation, Lord. Now I can go in peace.



From: Ken Woods
Flat 4 The Lindens
Romilly Crescent
Cardiff CF11 9FF
11th January 2025

Dear Friend

I am writing this letter to all church members on behalf of the deacons.

Firstly, I would like to thank the congregation for the continued generous giving during a period which has been extra difficult for many of us.

Secondly, I would like to draw your attention to a number of issues concerning our financial arrangements. Please feel free to discuss any of them with me.

1. **Bank charges** – in line with other UK banks, our bankers (Lloyds) are introducing bank charges that are designed to discourage use of cheques and cash. In particular, we have been advised that we will be charged £1 for every cheque that we pay in. If you give to the church by cheque and prefer to continue with cheques, that is fine. But if you are able to arrange a standing order or other electronic transfer – many banks will provide free in-branch assistance to do this – then that will save the £1 per cheque.

Bank details: Canton Uniting Church; account 02232891; sort code 30 96 91

2. **Gift Aid** – many of you have signed the form that enables us to claim the tax on your giving to the church. Please check that the tax you are paying continues to exceed the tax we are reclaiming. If the tax you are paying falls below what we are claiming (i.e. if the tax you have paid in the tax year is less than a quarter of your giving), you should notify Alan or me.

If your spouse is still paying sufficient tax but you are not, you are allowed to designate your joint giving as coming wholly from the tax-paying spouse - the money may come from a joint bank account or the tax-payer's account.

If you are not gift-aiding at present but the tax you pay is greater than a quarter of your giving, please consider gift-aiding and talk to Alan or me.

[Cont'd]

3. The church's financial management

- a. **Day-to-day expenditure** – good practice is to aim at balancing normal expenditure with normal income for the year. For this to work well, members review near the start of each year what increase is possible in their regular monthly giving. From the resulting pattern of giving in the first quarter, the church has some reliability in forecasting members' giving for the rest of the year. This is an important aid to our financial housekeeping.

However, because gift day comes as a highly unpredictable amount towards the end of the year, the forecast of members' overall giving is much less reliable. To address this, deacons have discussed a proposal that we invite the congregation to merge their gift day giving with their ongoing monthly giving i.e. consider whether they might add one-twelfth of their gift day giving to their present monthly giving. We will aim to continue social events that have traditionally been associated with gift day, but in future link them with other occasions.

Church meeting in February will be asked to endorse the proposal for merging gift day giving with regular monthly giving.

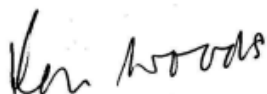
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- b. **Development Fund** – we hope soon to get planning permission for the creation of a community garden and small new build to replace our present halls. The fund-raising for this is very different from day-to-day housekeeping. In particular, when we have planning permission, we will be seeking significant external funding to supplement our own fund-raising.

Our Development Fund has grown to over £95,000 as at 31st December 2024. Additions in 2024 include a grant of £10,000 from the URC's Synod of Wales, £7,300 from members' donations, £5,000 legacy from Tricksie Perryman, and £1,586 from our sponsored events.

I hope this gives you a clear picture of the financial arrangements covered in this letter. Thank you again for your generosity. I am happy to answer any questions you have, relating to the above or other financial matters.

Best wishes



Ken Woods
Treasurer

Concerts in Canton Uniting Church:

'Home and Away': a song recital on Sunday 2nd March at 3pm:

Katherine Macauley (soprano), Jonathan Reynolds (baritone) accompanied by Andrew Wilson-Dickson (piano).

This concert has a remarkable musical range, from Mozart to Schumann, from Cole Porter to Danny Boy. It's the closest we can get to St David's Day, exploring the sentiment of keeping the homeland with you wherever you may be.

Jonathan Reynolds is a rising star from the Irish Republic with an international career; he is joined by Kathy Macauley, currently based in Manchester but born and raised in Cardiff. She, too, has sung in British opera houses - Waterperry, Gresford, Buxton, WNO - and sings in professional choirs. This is her first professional appearance in her home city.

Tickets for the Sunday events are available from [*eventbrite.co.uk*](http://eventbrite.co.uk) (search for the concert title) or on the door. Pay for unreserved seating on the door by cash or card.

And:

Piano duets by The Dream Team (Nicola Rose and Andrew Wilson-Dickson), Sunday 30th March at 3pm.

Music by Mozart, Ravel, Walton and Bax !

Refreshments are included in the concerts on March 2nd and 30th.

And a special bonus in this week of St David's:

Join Bohan Chen, pianist at RWCMD for a special concert celebrating Welsh music and heritage. This evocative program showcases the richness of Wales' musical tradition, featuring works by some of the nation's most remarkable composers. Experience the atmospheric "Four Welsh Impressions" by Morfydd Owen, the evocative beauty of "The Seasons" by Cyril Jenkins, and the lyrical intimacy of Meirion Williams' "Nocturne," along with other gems from the Welsh piano repertoire. From pastoral landscapes to expressive nocturnes, each piece captures a different facet of Wales' musical and cultural identity.

Canton Uniting Church Services Rotas February 2025 - March 2025

If you cannot do duties, please find someone to replace you. Thank you.

Sunday 2nd February 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader: Revd Gareth Dyer

Deacon/Steward: Eva

Readers: Eva and Roland

Refreshments: Fiona and Rob

Sunday 9th February 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leaders: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Rob

Readers:

Refreshments: Marieke and Alison

Sunday 16th February 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Jan

Readers:

Refreshments: Sian and Josh

Preparation of communion: Fiona

Serving at Communion table: Fiona and Eva

Sunday 23rd February 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Deacon/Steward: Alan

Readers:

Refreshments: Hugh and Bence

Sunday 2nd March 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader:

Deacon/Steward: Steve

Readers:

Refreshments: Megan

Sunday 9th March 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader:

Deacon/Steward: Ken

Readers:

Refreshments: Hiroko

Sunday 16th March 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader: Revd Martha Mc Innes or Rev David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Abi

Readers:

Communion preparation: Fiona

Serving communion: Marieke and Megan

Refreshments: Ann

Sunday 23rd March 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Ceri

Readers:

Refreshments: The Munnik family

Sunday 30th March 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Deacon/Steward: Fiona

Readers:

Refreshments: Marieke and Alison

Sunday 6th April 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Deacon/Steward: Sian and Josh

Readers:

Refreshments: Fiona and Rob



**The Wedding at Cana-
Paolo Veronese (1528-1588),
detail**

CANTON UNITING CHURCH was established in 1995 when New Trinity United Reformed Church joined with Llandaff Road Baptist Church and in 2013 joined with Grand Avenue United Reformed Church Ely which in 2005 had united with Saintwell URC. We are committed to ecumenism through our links with Cytûn, the Covenanted Churches and Churches Together in Canton. Our previous minister was the Chair of the Committee of the Covenanted Baptists which, with the Church in Wales, the Presbyterian, Methodist and United Reformed Churches seeks to bring about the goal of uniting together.

CONTACTS

Ministers: Revd. Martha McInnes - Tel.: 07519 831405
Revd. David Dean - Tel.: 07772 714388

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Chair: Mrs Alison Walker Email: Chair@Cantonuniting.org.uk

Website: www.cantonuniting.org.uk

USUAL WEEKLY DIARY & MONTHLY EVENTS -

The Wednesday evening prayers on Zoom have finished.

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

AND FINALLY ... Please hand in material for the next Newslink to Hugh Morgans by the end of the Morning service on **Sunday, 16th of March, 2025.**

Email address: hughmorgans@hotmail.com

