

NEWSLINK

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2023

CANTON UNITING CHURCH



Canton Uniting Church Deacons in October 2023

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Dear Friends,

October, 2023

There are many people who like to look on the 'bright side' of life. They like to see the good in everything. There are others who often only see the difficulties. They struggle to begin by stating a positive in a situation.

The psalmists, who often get lost in fear, anger, and negative statements, also encourage their hearers to 'give thanks to the Lord.' Psalm 107: 'Oh give thanks to the LORD, for the Lord is good, for God's steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the LORD say so.' Paul continues in this vein as throughout his letters he gives thanks for the people to whom he writes and offers thanks in a myriad of situations, including his imprisonment.

As God's people, perhaps rather than focusing on the positive or the negative we can focus on regular moments of gratitude. This does not mean ignoring the challenging things in life, but it does mean noting the events and opportunities for which we are grateful each day. Even if our day is terrible, there is something for which to be thankful--a glimpse of a flower or the sunlight refracting through the rain to create a rainbow.

Anne Lamott writes, 'Gratitude tugs on our sleeves and says, "Wake up!" Look around at the kindness that surrounds us, the love we are being shown, the hope that now makes sense. Emily Dickinson wrote that "hope inspires the good to reveal itself," and we can be taken aback by a sense of amazement at how much someone has shared with us, or even sacrificed, for us, for cranky, secretive, mealy-mouthed you, and me.'

As individuals, we can quickly implement a daily practice of gratitude. At the end of the day we can pause and think of one thing for which we are thankful. In church we can also focus on the aspects for which we are grateful, yet too often church culture today focuses on what we do not have: we no longer have many children; we have fewer people who attend worship; we have a limited number of people to do the jobs. We practice what Sam Wells calls a 'theology of scarcity.' We see what we don't have.

But Wells questions this assumption of scarcity. Is God a god of scarcity or is God a god of abundance? Wells suggests that we look to the story of the feeding of the thousands. There were a few loaves and a few fish. There were thousands of people in the middle of nowhere. And yet that little bit of food was enough for all to eat their fill. God provided what was needed. This story is mirrored in Exodus with the daily collection of quail and manna for the Hebrews in the midst desert. God provides what is needed again and again. This, Wells suggests, indicates that God is a god of abundance.

So perhaps we can put the practice of gratitude together with a theology of abundance and we can see the gifts of God within the life of our church, and within our own lives. Rather than seeing what we do not have, perhaps we can see what we do have in our community. What gifts do the people in our community bring to the life of the church? How can we use them to serve God?

As we assess the gifts among us, there may be some sadness. We may no longer be able to keep certain groups going, but we may find God is gifting us in other ways. Where is the abundance of God visible among us?

We are challenged to continue reflecting God's love today. When we practice gratitude and focus on a theology of abundance, perhaps we can do this more fully.

Yours in Christ,

Martha and David

Baptism and the Israeli-Gaza War

“The Baptism of Pocahontas, for those who grew up in my home country,” is a famous painting. It is a huge early 19th Century painting by John Gadsby Chapman, commissioned by the U.S. government in the 1830s to hang in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington. It depicts the 1613 baptism in Jamestown, Virginia, of the young Native American woman Pocahontas, the future wife of John Rolfe and daughter of Chief Powhatan, the head chief of the Powhatan confederation of tribes. Apparently, Chapman was plagued by debt, so he finished the painting very quickly in order to collect his fee. When the payment finally came it was barely enough to pay his expenses. Later he moved to Rome, where he earned a good living selling his paintings of romantic Italian scenes to wealthy American tourists.

Just prior to the years in which “The Baptism of Pocahontas” was being completed, in 1830, the same U.S. government, under the presidency of Andrew Jackson (1829-1837), passed the Indian Removal Act. This Act provided for the forced removal of Native American residents from their homes in the states to undeveloped territories west of the Mississippi River. The subsequent emptying of the states east of the Mississippi of Native Americans, which continued under the presidency of Marti Van Buren (1837-1841), became known as “The Trail of Tears,” an ethnic cleansing during which many lost not only their homes but their lives.

In the light of the reality (the Trail of Tears) and the myth (the painting hanging in the Capitol Rotunda), what, I wonder, is the meaning of baptism? In the history of our faith, it has often been a symbol of conquest, pacification, suppression, as, for instance, the mass baptisms of defeated peoples in early European history.

I cannot help but think of the mythology and the reality of my home country when I hear about the Israeli call for the evacuation of northern Gaza. This will be old news by the time this issue of Newslink hits the streets, but today I am thinking of what is happening in Israel/Gaza today. You probably know the background to this story. A 1947 United Nations decision, Resolution 181, proposed that historic Palestinian lands be divided between Israelis and Palestinians. The resolution was seen as pro-Zionist by its detractors, with 62% of the land allocated to the Jewish state despite the Palestinian Arab population numbering twice the Jewish population. After the 1967 Yom Kippur war, Israel took control of yet more land, establishing settlements (or kibbutzim) in Gaza and the West Bank. Jewish settlers were later removed from Gaza, but Jewish settlements on the West Bank continued, and the current far-right Israeli government has proposed doubling the current number.

Resolution 181 led, in 1948, to what has become known as the “Nakba”, or “catastrophe,” which, like the Trail of Tears, was an ethnic cleansing. But the Nakba is not only what happened in 1948. The demolition of “illegal” Palestinian villages in Israel continues today, and the Nakba continues to be experienced in the Palestinians’ own territories (for instance the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem) and in refugee camps throughout the region in which those families displaced in 1948 continue to live, overcrowded and under-resourced.

I’ve seen this apartheid in practice. In 2007, just as Hamas came to power in Gaza, I spent two weeks visiting my friends Ismael and Kathy Abu Saad, who live in Ismael’s family’s Bedouin village some fifteen miles outside of Be’er Sheba. Only recently was the village able to have water supply, though for many years a water pipe ran past the village to a near-by kibbutz. Ismael, who teaches at Ben Gurion University in Be’er Sheba, had to use a petrol-driven electricity generator for years to run his computer. Residents have to walk the fifteen miles into the city to get their pension cheques because there is no post office in Lakiya. Nor are any shops allowed, though illegal

grocery markets are run from residents' living rooms. The village is basically illegal, as are the kibbutzim, but for the Israeli settlements there are no problems. On the other hand, I saw where a smaller Bedouin village that had been bulldozed during the two weeks of my visit. The Nakba continues as a daily reality for the Palestinians.

The Nakba, the “catastrophe,” is the proverbial elephant in the room in this Israeli-Gaza war. With British and American warships on their way to the region and neighbouring countries choosing sides, who knows what the situation will be like by the time you read this. But the elephant in the room will continue to be the Nakba, and the Trail of Tears, and the Holocaust. And when religion gets behind the atrocities of war the ugliness of humanity shows our character like nothing else. “Baptism” becomes an emblem of conquest rather than liberation.

In a sermon some Sundays ago I spoke about the Israelites in Psalm 105. In that psalm the conquest of the Promised Land described there as a looting of the wealth of the people they found there. This is not what actually happened, according to the archaeological evidence. What the archaeologists found from the time of Joshua was the evidence of a social



Palestinians evicted from their lands in 1948

revolution in town after town, village after village—burned to the ground. There was evidence of a social uprising that spread across the land against the pressure, the injustice, of their lives being shaped by the desires of the rich and the powerful. The Old Testament scholars were calling it “the Yahwist Revolution,” after “Yahweh,” the new name for God in the time of Moses that means “I am.”

The story of the “conquest” of the Promised Land is actually a story of liberation. I think that changes our understanding of baptism and what we experience within us when we are baptised. I have always thought baptism to be a kind of liberation, liberation from the pressure and definitions society (and religion, too often) puts on us to be racist, or xenophobic, or patriarchal, or mindless consumers whose desires are shaped by capitalism’s marketing propaganda. It seems to me that baptism is liberation from the demons that otherwise possess us. It liberates us to be peacemakers, not conquerors.

Liberation is hard work. I think coming to church every Sunday is the least we can do to support one another in the journey toward freedom and the liberation of our neighbours, too many of whom live out their own version of the Trail of Tears. It requires prayer, serious conversation with one another and with yourself, and a determination to make this journey we are on rich and meaningful and deeply fulfilling.

Tom Arthur

Prayer Call

October			
1st	Our neighbourhood	2nd	Abigail, Matt, Brooke and Toby Powell
2nd	Marc and Alison Dummer	3rd	Julie Richards
3rd	Gareth Dyer	4th	Janice Richens
4th	Hiroko, Richard and Emily Edge	5th	Doctors and nurses
5th	Toni Edwards	6th	Lucy Robinson and Andrew Wilson-Dickson
6th	Eva Elliott	7th	Barbara Smith
7th	Calum Ellis	8th	David and Malou Smith
8th	Uniformed organisations	9th	Audrey Takle
9th	Alan Farnham	10th	David and Joy Thompson
10th	Ceri and Phil George	11th	Alison Walker
11th	Linda Gibbs	12th	Remembrance Sunday and world peace
12th	Rachel, Kate, Evan and Emily Gill	13th	Liz Williams and family
13th	Bronwyn Gregory	14th	Kenneth Woods
14th	Rob, Fiona, Isobel and Alistair Harding	15th	Rita, Francis, Gloria, Gabriel and Michael
15th	Carers and those working in nursing and care homes	16th	Tom and Marieke Arthur
16th	Jean Hawkins	17th	Chris and Megan Atherton
17th	Barbara Jones	18th	Geraint Atherton
18th	Sian, Joshua and Harri Jones	19th	Those in hospital and hospices
19th	Elinor Kapp	20th	Gwyn Atherton
20th	Olaide, Taiwo, Ore, Korede and Nifemi Kassim	21st	Lowri and Amelia Baldwin
21st	Jenny Keenor	22nd	Keith Bick
22nd	The United Nations	23rd	Doreen Cassam
23rd	Beverley, Christopher, Ioan and Evelyn Kibble	24th	Debbie Cheshire, Paige and Lola
24th	Cindy Lim, Arwyn McCabe, Nye Buckle and Caian	25th	David Cooke
25th	Ann and Tom Lloyd	26th	Those who are lonely or afraid
26th	Angie Luther	27th	Clive Curtis and Constantino Dumangane
27th	Audrey Morgan	28th	Fred and Rowena Davies
28th	Barbara, Hugh and Bence Morgans	29th	David Dean, Martha McInnes and family
29th	Harvest	30th	Ann Dobbins
30th	Michael and Katie Munnick, Isla, Leo and Tate	December	
31st	Danielle Phillips, Laura, Will, Cian and Ruby	1st	Marc and Alison Dummer
November		2nd	Gareth Dyer
1st	Mandy and Steve Phillips	3rd	Advent 1: Thy Kingdom Come
		4th	Hiroko, Richard and Emily Edge

Thanks

David would like to thank everyone who has sent him cards and messages wishing him well following his recent surgery. Also, thanks to those who have telephoned to check on his progress, particularly Audrey Takle. He has appreciated the kindness.

Thank you.

CONCERTS in CUC

Andrew is hoping to raise money for the church refurbishment by presenting two concerts on Sunday afternoons. Here are the details. If you want to guarantee a space (!), you can book on line through **Eventbrite**, or just come on the door. Most of the money raised will go towards that £100,000 shortfall in the building fund! So let's fill the place. The music is classical: the first concert 18th- 19th- and 20th century and the second from the more distant past. But classical music is trending at the moment so come and help CUC get to the forefront...

Two Autumn Concerts at Canton Uniting Church Sundays at 3pm



12th November

Skittles and Dances

Brahms: Clarinet Sonata in F minor
Billy Mayerl: Two Syncopations
Lutoslavski: Dance Preludes
Mozart: 'Skittle Alley' Trio, K 498

John Cooper (clarinet)
Ania Leadbeater (viola)
Andrew Wilson-Dickson (piano)



26th November

A Harmonious Murmur

16th- and 17th-century music for six viols,
led by Lucy Robinson

Orlando Gibbons, John Jenkins,
William Lawes, Christopher Simpson,
William Byrd

Refreshments included. Tickets (£12 full, £10 seniors, £5 full-time education)
in advance online from *eventbrite* or on the door.

CF5 1LQ at the junction of Theobald Road and Cowbridge Road East.

Raising money for church refurbishment.

Enquiries: music@cantonuniting.org.uk

Autumn

t w i g i n t i c y
r s o n p a e h e m
a e r a b d c l o h
c a a c r j l x c a
t s n c o o a e l r
o o g u w n r i l v
r n e h n b f y m e
r s q u i r r e l s
v a u t u m n e t t
s h p u m p k i n n

autumn
harvest
tractor
yellow

pumpkin
twig
squirrel
brown

season
orange

Canton Uniting Church Services Rotas: OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2023

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

Sunday 1st October 2023

Lectionary Readings: Ezekiel 18.1-4,25-32 Psalm 25.1-9 Philippians 2.1-13,
Matthew 21:23-32

Worship Leader: Revd Craig Gardener

Deacon/Steward: Megan A

Readers: Andrew and Lucy

Refreshments: Marieke A

Sunday 1st October 2023

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 55 v1-5; Psalm 145 v8-9,14-21; Romans 9 v1-5;
Matthew 14 v13-21

Worship Leader: Revd Craig Gardiner

Deacon/Steward: Megan A

Readers: Andrew and Lucy

Refreshments: Marieke and Alison

Sunday 8th October 2023

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 5.1-7; Psalm 80.7-15; Philippians 3.4b-14; Matthew 21.33-46

Worship Leader: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Richard Edge

Readers: Steve and Eva

Refreshments: Hugh and Bence

Sunday 15th October 2023

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 25.1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4.1-9; Matthew 22.1-14

Worship Leader: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Sian and Josh

Readers: Fiona and Ken

Refreshments: Ann Lloyd

Preparation of communion: Alison Walker

Serving at Communion table: Steve Phillips and Audrey Takle

Sunday 22nd October 2023

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 45.1-7; Psalm 96.1-9,(10-13); 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10;
Matthew 22.15-22

Worship Leader: Revd Gareth Dyer

Deacon/Steward: Ceri George

Readers: Alan and Ceri

Refreshments: The Munniks

Sunday 29th October 2023

Lectionary Readings: Leviticus 19.1-2,15-18; Psalm 1; 1 Thessalonians 2.1-8;
Matthew 22.34-46

Worship Leader: Katie Munnik

Deacon/Steward: Eva

Readers: The Munnik family

Refreshments: Hiroko

Sunday 5th November 2023

Lectionary Readings: Micah 3.5-12; Psalm 43; 1 Thessalonians 2.9-13; Matthew 23.1-12

Worship Leader: Revd Gareth Dyer

Deacon/Steward: Ken

Readers: Jan and Taiwo

Refreshments: The Hardings

Sunday 12th November 2023

Lectionary Readings: Amos 5.18-24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18; Matthew 25.1-13

Worship Leader: Revd Dr Tom Arthur

Deacon/Steward: Jan

Readers: Nicky and Marieke

Refreshments: Megan

Sunday 19th November 2023

Lectionary Readings: Zephaniah 1.7,12-18; Psalm 90.1-8,(9-11),12;
1 Thessalonians 5.1-11; Matthew 25.14-30

Worship Leader: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Rob

Readers: Megan and Richard

Refreshments: Abigail

Preparation of Communion: Hugh and Bence

Serving at Communion table: Megan and Alison

Sunday 26th November 2023

Lectionary Readings: Ezekiel 34.11-16,20-24; Psalm 95.1-7a; Ephesians 1.15-23;
Matthew 25.31-46

Worship Leader: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Steve

Readers:

Refreshments: Marieke and Alison

Sunday 3rd December 2023

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 64.1-9; Psalm 80.1-7,17-19; 1 Corinthians 1.3-9;
Mark 13.24-37

Worship Leader: Rev Jason Askew

Deacon/Steward: Megan

Readers: Alan and Alison

Refreshments: Sian and Josh

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

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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 and are
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, 19th of November, 2023.**

We will be including the traditional **Christmas Greetings** in the December / January edition.