

# NEWSLINK

DECEMBER, 2023 - JANUARY, 2024

## CANTON UNITING CHURCH



## The Adoration of the Kings, 1564

### Pieter Bruegel the Elder

The Virgin sits in front of a dilapidated stable with the naked Christ Child on her knee. Three men offer golden gifts – this is the Adoration of the Kings, a biblical episode imagined as a contemporary event. It's a chilly winter day: Mary's dress has fur-lined sleeves and Joseph has a thick-belted robe.

This is one of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's few religious paintings; the upright format and rich colouration suggest it might have been designed as an altarpiece. But its uneasy atmosphere is at odds with a devotional work. The kings are richly dressed but dishevelled, the soldiers menacing, the spectators bewildered or enraged. The crowding, the elongated proportions of the main figures and their nearness to the viewer add to the claustrophobic atmosphere.

What – if anything – this means must remain speculation: we know nothing of Bruegel's own beliefs and aren't sure who commissioned the painting. His technique, however, is masterly: although seemingly working at great speed every detail is a triumph of design.

### **Canton Uniting Church Deacons in October 2023**

Alison Walker (Chair)	<a href="mailto:Chair@cantonuniting.org.uk">Chair@cantonuniting.org.uk</a>
Audrey Takle	<a href="mailto:Bookings@cantonuniting.org.uk">Bookings@cantonuniting.org.uk</a>
Barbara Morgans (Minutes Secretary)	
Eva Elliott	<a href="mailto:Garden@cantonuniting.org.uk">Garden@cantonuniting.org.uk</a>
Fiona Harding (Secretary)	<a href="mailto:Secretary@cantonuniting.org.uk">Secretary@cantonuniting.org.uk</a>
Megan Atherton	
Richard Edge	
Sian Jones	
Steve Phillips	
Ex officio	
Andrew Wilson-Dickson	<a href="mailto:Music@cantonuniting.org.uk">Music@cantonuniting.org.uk</a>
Kenneth Woods (Treasurer)	<a href="mailto:Treasurer@cantonuniting.org.uk">Treasurer@cantonuniting.org.uk</a>

Dear Friends,

December, 2023

It is that time - preparations for Christmas are on our minds. At church we are already thinking about music, outings, and special services. At home we may wonder how we are going to cope this year. How can I say 'Happy Christmas' and sing joyfully, when my friend no longer sits alongside me in church or my child can't pay their bills or the world is at war?

Advent is often characterised as a season of hoping and waiting. Waiting for what? How do we hope in the midst of loss or conflict?

For many the wait is for a long weekend and holidays - relief from the routine and drag of work. For some the wait is for parties or a gathering of friends and family with a joyful tone. Some may see the church and remember the church is waiting for a baby to be born, a wee helpless thing born to refugee parents. They may remember Jesus is somewhere in the midst of Christmas, but many no longer know the origins of our festivities. If they know Christmas is linked to Jesus, they probably don't know much about his life, his teaching, or his death and resurrection.

However, we in the church are preparing to mark the birth of a man who changed the world and changed our lives - one who gives an example of what it means to live in love and embodies hope through the resurrection. Christmas gives us a space to remember that God intervened in the world through a man who cared about the most vulnerable - and calls us to do the same.

So we may know why we are waiting and preparing for Christmas, but how do we hope in these difficult times? Between wars, people who are grieving, and financial crises - what do we hope for, and how do we hope?

We came across this poem written by an American Civil Rights activist who later became the first Black female Episcopal (Anglican) priest in the USA. Perhaps it helps us hope in the midst of struggle and challenge:

*Hope is a crushed stalk  
Between clenched fingers  
Hope is a bird's wing  
Broken by a stone.  
Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty —  
A word whispered with the wind,  
A dream of forty acres and a mule,  
A cabin of one's own and a moment to rest,  
A name and place for one's children  
And children's children at last . . .  
Hope is a song in a weary throat.  
Give me a song of hope  
And a world where I can sing it.  
Give me a song of faith  
And a people to believe in it.  
Give me a song of kindness  
And a country where I can live it.  
Give me a song of hope and love  
And a brown girl's heart to hear it.*

By Pauli Murray

Hope may be crushed or feel broken, but it is not dead. We hope by working to create places of safety and security. We create them in churches and wherever we work in our world. We tell stories about lives that have value beyond financial wealth. We sing songs which indicate love is at the centre of our community. We highlight kindness and connection. We work to create a world, or a corner of the world, where these values are upheld and central. We model another way. Even if we don't feel hopeful, we commit ourselves to working in these ways and we are embodying hope. Hope is hard work, and we keep at it.

As we prepare to mark the birth of Jesus, hope is central to who we are and what we do - even when it feels the world is falling apart. We prepare for his coming and we live the life he taught. When we do this, despite the pain around, love wins.

Peace for Christmas,

Martha and David

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## Mulching and Munching

December, 2023



We are blessed at Canton Uniting Church with a small yet abundant community garden full of vegetables, fruit, herbs, flowers and shrubs. As you may well know, we are in the early stages of preparing for a much bigger garden which will emerge as part of a more extensive development of our building and grounds. We want church members and local residents alike to be part of this exciting journey and for us all to have pride in creating a rich and

biodiverse green space for us all to enjoy.

To build our knowledge and local connections we have been holding a number of workshops, led by local gardening experts. To date we feel that as a result we have shone a light on our



collective vision for an abundant and peaceful garden. On September 23rd, 2023, a workshop was led by Pat Gregory and Louise Gray who have worked for many years in south Riverside, combining their skills of gardening community development. This event was funded by Food Cardiff which enabled the workshop to be part of the Good Food Cardiff Autumn Festival.



On the day Pat and Louise helped us to prepare the ground by mulching the beds and planting suitable crops and bulbs.

These included endives, onions, and lettuce. Participants were also able to pot their own vegetables and herbs to enjoy in their own gardens or windowsill.

We also shared what Autumn vegetables were ready to munch and cook. Participants could enjoy delicious plumb yellow raspberries and could take home the last of the leeks and our green beans which have been particularly plentiful and tasty this year. In fact, they kept going until mid-November!



The opportunity to share is something that we particularly enjoy and value and we always invite neighbours to help themselves to whatever they fancy. Similarly, many neighbours have donated plants for us all to delight in.

If you wish to keep up to date with developments and participate in future events, please email us on [garden@cantonuniting.org.uk](mailto:garden@cantonuniting.org.uk).

### Christmas Greetings

<p><b>Ken Woods sends best wishes for Christmas and for 2024.</b></p>	<p><b>Best wishes to all at Canton Uniting for Christmas and the New Year of 2024.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Alan F.</b></p>
<p><b>We wish you all a blessed, peaceful and joyful Christmas.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Fred and Rowena</b></p>	<p><b>Happy Christmas and a merry New Year from Tom and Marieke!</b></p>
<p><b><i>Joy &amp; Dave would like to wish you all every blessing for Christmas &amp; the New Year!</i></b></p>	<p>Christmas Greetings to all our Church family, and we wish you all every blessing in the New Year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Love from, Doreen and Roland</p>
<p>NADOLIG LLAWEN I CHI GYD! BOLDOG KARÁCSONYI ÜNNEPEKET! A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL! CARIAD MAWR, HUGH, BARBARA A BENCE</p>	<p><b>Megan, Chris and family wish everyone a Happy Christmas and Every blessing for the coming year.</b></p>

<p>The last year has had its ups and downs but we have felt sustained by our wonderful church family: wishing you all joy, peace and blessings this Christmas time and in the year ahead, with love from Phil and Ceri xx</p>	<p><b>Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon sa inyong lahat! Christmas and New Years Greetings from the Philippines. See you all in the New Year. Malou &amp; David Smith</b></p>
<p>We have had many blessings from the Church Family at CUC this year. Our lives have been enriched in so many ways, not just in music! We wish you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas and hope soon to say so in person! Lucy and Andrew xx</p>	

### **SING WE THE SONG THAT MARY SANG**

I remember the first time I became aware of time. I hadn't been at university very long when my tube of toothpaste ran out. At home I had never experienced this because the family all used the same tube of toothpaste, which my parents would replace just as they did our endless supply of the cornflakes we ate for breakfast and the potatoes we ate for dinner.

I've never read *A Brief History of Time*, but like everyone else, I own a copy. For e there are two kinds of time. One comes to an end, like my tube of toothpaste. The other seems to go around and around as the earth does around the sun, creating the seasons and giving the impression that time is cyclical, that it repeats.

The Egyptians and the Babylonians and other early middle eastern civilizations, like those ancients who build Stonehenge, saw time as cyclical. They built their monuments, their pyramids and stone circles, to line up with the sun's rebirth at the winter solstice. These were very conservative societies that looked forward to the eternal return of what had always been. These were often repressive societies in which one's status, as king or priest or peasant or slave, never changed.

The story of Exodus tells how the Hebrews broke free from this oppression as slaves who escaped with Moses into the desert to wander for 40 years until they came into the "promised land" Scholars say the legend of the conquest of the promised land was actually an inside job, a peasant's revolt against this changeless order as it was practiced in local city states. They apparently adopted the Exodus story as their own.

In any case, the change in the understanding of time was the same. The new understanding of time was "revolutionary time", not the eternal return of cyclical time but time that comes to an end. New concepts emerged, like freedom from oppression. We see this especially in Luke's story of Jesus (Luke 1:68,69a), where John the Baptist's father Zechariah says, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel! He has taken care of his people and has set them free." Also in Luke, the mother of Jesus sings something similar:

He hath shewed strength with his arm.  
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He hath put down the mighty from their seat  
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

As it says in the Passover *seder* liturgy, this freedom is to be won anew in every generation. Some things just have to come to an end, like a tube of toothpaste.

But we have been accustomed to celebrating Jesus not in terms of social change or political activism or conversion, whether that be personal conversion or conversion of the whole congregation. We celebrate Christmas in the habits of a pagan cyclicalism, an eternally returning winter solstice that has nothing, really, to do with Jesus.

Scholars say Jesus was probably born in the springtime. Early Christians in Rome moved the birthday to the winter solstice to compete with the Roman Saturnalia. But Saturnalia has largely won. “Christmas” lights, trees and holly branches, office parties and Black Friday sales are driven by a conservative, materialistic society’s solstice anxiety.

The whole business of a Christian liturgical year revolving around the winter solstice and the spring equinox is largely the idea of more conservative denominations like the Church of England. The heritage of nonconformists like us not to celebrate Christmas (Ebenezer Scrooge was a Congregationalist) is largely because of our commitment to a different understanding of time—revolutionary time that saw an end to slavery, saw the establishment of child labour laws, public education, labour rights and other movements that get up the noses of the privileged.

Real Christmas makes a break from the past. This is why Fred Kaan wrote his version of Mary’s Magnificat to the tune of “The Red Flag,” the blood-soaked flag made internationally famous by the striking steel-plant labourers of Merthyr Tydfil:

Sing we a song of high revolt;  
Make great the Lord, his name exalt:  
Sing we the song that Mary sang  
Of God at war with human wrong.  
Sing we of him who deeply cares  
And still with us our burden bears;  
He, who with strength the proud disowns,  
Brings down the mighty from their thrones.

By him the poor are lifted up:  
He satisfies with bread and cup  
The hungry folks of many lands.  
The rich are left with empty hands.  
He calls us to revolt and fight  
With him for what is just and right  
To sing and live Magnificat  
In crowded street and council flat.

Tom Arthur

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Following the two concerts given to support the CUC refurbishment fund (on 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November) we raised £365 with an additional sum of £165 to the Back Up Trust. Thanks to everyone who came to support. The audiences numbered nearly 50 and 15, the majority coming from outside the CUC community. This is a valuable way to put CUC ‘on the map’ as a welcoming space for the community. Do consider supporting the next one, which is on **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February** at 3pm which will also donate its funds to CUC.

Andrew W-D

**A Nativity  
wordsearch for the younger at  
heart!**

## Nativity

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

  

star	Bethlehem	Joseph	
Saviour	frankincense	miracle	gold
stable	King Herod	myrrh	Mary
innkeeper	shepherds	journey	

**Prayer Call**

<b>December</b>			
1st	Marc and Alison Dummer	2nd	Mandy and Steve Phillips
2nd	Gareth Dyer	3rd	Abigail, Matt, Brooke and Toby Powell
3rd	Advent 1: Thy Kingdom Come	4th	Julie Richards
4th	Hiroko, Richard and Emily Edge	5th	Janice Richens
5th	Toni Edwards	6th	Lucy Robinson and Andrew Wilson-Dickson
6th	Eva Elliott	7th	International Peace
7th	Calum Ellis	8th	Barbara Smith
8th	Alan Farnham	9th	David and Malou Smith
9th	Ceri and Phil George	10th	Audrey Takle
10th	Advent 2: The Bible Society	11th	David and Joy Thompson
11th	Linda Gibbs	12th	Alison Walker
12th	Rachel, Kate, Evan and Emily Gill	13th	Liz Williams and family
13th	Bronwyn Gregory	14th	The homeless
14th	Rob, Fiona, Isobel and Alistair Harding	15th	Kenneth Woods
		16th	Rita, Francis, Gloria, Gabriel and Michael

15th	Jean Hawkins	17th	Tom and Marieke Arthur
16th	Barbara Jones	18th	Chris and Megan Atherton
17th	Advent 3: Prisoners of Conscience	19th	Geraint Atherton
18th	Sian, Joshua and Harri Jones	20th	Gwyn Atherton
19th	Elinor Kapp	21st	Christian Unity
20th	Olaide, Taiwo, Ore, Korede and Nifemi Kassim	22nd	Lowri and Amelia Baldwin
21st	Jenny Keenor	23rd	Keith Bick
22nd	Beverley, Christopher, Ioan and Evelyn Kibble	24th	Doreen Cassam
23rd	Cindy Lim, Arwyn McCabe, Nye Buckle and Caian	25th	Debbie Cheshire, Paige and Lola
24th	Advent 4: Those who hear God's call	26th	David Cooke
25th	Christmas Day: The Salvation of the World	27th	Clive Curtis and Constantino Dumangane
26th	Ann and Tom Lloyd	28th	The economy
27th	Angie Luther	29th	Fred and Rowena Davies
28th	Audrey Morgan	30th	David Dean, Martha McInnes and family
29th	Barbara, Hugh and Bence Morgans	31st	Ann Dobbins
30th	Michael and Katie Munnick, Isla, Leo and Tate		<b>February</b>
31st	The New Year	1st	Marc and Alison Dummer
	<b>January 2024</b>	2nd	Gareth Dyer
1st	Danielle Phillips, Laura, Will, Cian and Ruby	3rd	Hiroko, Richard and Emily Edge

## **Canton Uniting Church Services Rotas: DECEMBER, 2023 - JANUARY 2024**

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

### **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

### **Sunday 10th December 2023**

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 40.1-11; Psalm 85.1-2,8-13; 2 Peter 3.8-15a; Mark 1.1-8

Worship Leaders: Drs. Phil and Ceri George

Deacon/Steward: Richard

Readers: Andrew and Lucy

Refreshments: Marieke

### **Sunday 17th December 2023**

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24; John 1.6-28

10.30 Nativity Service

Worship Leader: Junior Church

Deacon/Steward: Ken

Readers: The Young People

Refreshments: Ann and Alison

Preparation of communion: Hugh and Bence

Serving at Communion table: Steve Phillips and Audrey Takle

## **6.00 17<sup>th</sup> December, Carols by Candlelight**

Worship Leader: Martha McInnes

## **Sunday 24th December 2023**

Lectionary Readings: 2 Samuel 7.1-11,16; Luke 1.47-55; Psalm 89.1-4,19-26; Romans 16.25-27; Luke 1.26-38

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Deacon/Steward: Alan

Readers: Steve and Nikky

Refreshments: The Munniks

## **Christmas Day 25th December, 2024**

Worship Leader: Rev Martha McInnes

## **Sunday 31st December 2023**

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 61.10-62.3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4.4-7; Luke 2.22-40

Worship Leader: Megan

Deacon/Steward: Eva

Readers: Eva and Fiona

Refreshments: Fiona

## **Sunday 7th January 2024**

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 1.1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19.1-7; Mark 1.4-11

Worship Leader: The Young People

Deacon/Steward: Jan

Readers: The Young People

Refreshments: Abigail

## **Sunday 14th January 2024**

Lectionary Readings: 1 Samuel 3.1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139.1-6,13-18; 1 Corinthians 6.12-20; John 1.43-51

Worship Leader: Rev Martha McInnes or Rev David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Ceri

Readers: Ceri and Phil

Refreshments: Hiroko

## **Sunday 21st January 2024**

Lectionary Readings: Jonah 3.1-5,10; Psalm 62.5-12; 1 Corinthians 7.29-31; Mark 1.14-20

Worship Leader: Revd Martha McInnes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Steve

Readers: Alison and Taiwo

Refreshments: Rob

Preparation of Communion: Marieke

Serving at Communion table: Eva and Alison

## **Sunday 28th January 2024**

Lectionary Readings: Deuteronomy 18.15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8.1-13; Mark 1.21-28

Worship Leader: Chris Atherton

Deacon/Steward: Megan

Readers: Sian and Abi

Refreshments: Ann and Alison

## Sunday 4th February 2024

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 40.21-31; Psalm 147.1-11,20c; 1 Corinthians 9.16-23; Mark 1.29-39

Worship Leader: TBA

Deacon/Steward: Richard

Readers: Alan and Richard

Refreshments: Hugh and Bence



**CANTON UNITING CHURCH** was established in 1995 when New Trinity United Reformed Church joined with Llandaff Road Baptist Church. In 2013 it 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  
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Treasurer: Mrs Beverley Kibble      Email: [Treasurer@Cantonuniting.org.uk](mailto:Treasurer@Cantonuniting.org.uk)

Chair: Mrs Alison Walker      Email: [Chair@Cantonuniting.org.uk](mailto:Chair@Cantonuniting.org.uk)

Website: [www.cantonuniting.org.uk](http://www.cantonuniting.org.uk)

**SILENT FILM NIGHT ! On 16<sup>th</sup> December, Saturday at 6pm, Andrew Wilson-Dickson will accompany classic comic silent films on the piano. Free entry with a charity collection in the pink bucket for a charity yet to be named! Enjoy the amazing creativity of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd...**

**USUAL WEEKLY DIARY & MONTHLY EVENTS (see the website for details)**

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, the 21st of January, 2023.**

