### **NEWSLINK**

JUNE - JULY, 2024

## **CANTON UNITING CHURCH**



A painting of Pentecost in Saint Anastasia church in Verona, Italy. Apse of Chapel Miniscalchi in Saint Anastasia's church from 1506, designed by Angelo di Giovanni.

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

Alison Walker (Chair) Chair@cantonuniting.org.uk

Audrey Takle Bookings@cantonuniting.org.uk

Barbara Morgans (Minutes Secretary)

Eva Elliott Garden@cantonuniting.org.uk

Fiona Harding (Secretary) Secretary@cantonuniting.org.uk

Megan Atherton

Richard Edge

Sian Jones

Steve Phillips

Ex officio

Andrew Wilson-Dickson Music@cantonuniting.org.uk

Kenneth Woods (Treasurer) Treasurer@cantonuniting.org.uk

Dear Friends, June, 2024

Twenty years ago Martha went with her church to South Africa. As part of the trip the group went to a mission school near Kruger National Park. One evening the electricity went out. It was darkness like she had never experienced before. So dark they could not see the hands in front of their faces. It was frightening.

Sometimes we have experiences in life that are like that darkness—so bleak that we cannot 'see' where we are going. Circumstances challenge us, and we find life disorienting. We lose our sense of purpose, drive, hope. We do not know which direction to turn. We cannot even put one foot in front of each other. Life is just overwhelming.

Job, Jonah, Moses, King David, and Paul all experienced bouts of hopelessness and despair. Some might term their experience 'depression.' Perhaps, however, we don't need to use a modern label; perhaps we simply need to remember that some heroes of our faith experienced times when they felt lost, alone, lonely and overwhelmed. The Psalms are full of expressions of this kind of emotional pain. One example is: "The Lord drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog" (Psalm 40: 1-2).

When we feel overcome, we may not know how to ask for help. We have no energy to find a way through the darkness to a place of light. When we notice that our friends are overcome, we also may not know how to respond or feel we have the skills to respond.

When we are feeling well, it is difficult for us to 'prescribe' what might help another. We may not be able to provide specialist care, but perhaps we can offer something. Jeremiah writes: "Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly . . . you shall cry for help, and the Lord will say, 'Here I am.'"

Perhaps we can start by watching out for each other and being present. It is very easy to get caught up in our own lives and our own fears, but instead perhaps we can pause our own thoughts to check in with others and see how they are doing.

To support others, we can be 'present' to them. Being present requires that we listen and create space for others to talk. This kind of listening means not jumping in with our own experience or our own answers.

Instead, we put our stories and experiences aside to allow our friends to name their concerns, worries, needs, and fears. This is not always easy and does not always come naturally to some of us. It is a skill we can all learn. If we find we cannot create space to be present for others, perhaps we can find someone else who does have the skills. We can then make a connection between them so we know our friend does have someone to listen to them. Being present in this way may be just the 'light' the other person needs.

Sometimes friends who are struggling may need more than a listening ear. In this case we may need to encourage them to access professional help.

Each of us, as Jeremiah suggests, can embrace the role to be light, to share God's love by being present, not preachy. When we do, as individuals and as community, we are reminders to our friends that despite their feelings of lostness or overwhelm, they are still deeply loved and valued.

Being present and being light can be a tough ask. As churches, it is in fact a journey we have long been on together. It is a journey on which we still find ourselves. We could call it our calling—being presence and light in our weary, sad world.

When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it.

#### Amanda Gorman

We would like each of you reading this to know that if you are struggling with life, there is someone in this community to whom you can turn. Ask us or indicate to someone in some way. And to all of us, whether we are struggling or we are seeking to be listeners and light, may we experience God's presence and peace.

Yours In Christ,

Martha and David

#### **Canton Uniting Church Secretary Annual Report May 2024**

It has been a busy year for Canton Uniting Church, and we are grateful to those who work so hard week in and week out to keep it all running.

We have a good usage of our buildings, both for regular, long-term use and one-off bookings. Of course, this is very helpful for our finances, but it is also good to be a centre for the community to meet, including choirs, birthday parties etc, at a time when other places such as the community centre have closed. We have maintained a good partnership with AA, and Audrey and Alison meet with their team on a regular basis. Our bookings rely heavily on Audrey's commitment, and we are extremely grateful for her hard work with this. Also, she tirelessly looks after the church premises, and is frequently on hand to open the church to let in builders, electricians and meter readers to name but a few!

We are thankful for the guidance and support of our ministers, both as Canton Uniting Church and as a member of Cardiff and Penarth URC Pastorate. The Pastorate churches, under the leadership of Martha and David, continue to find ways of working together. We are grateful for Ceri George's service as CUC's representative on the Regional Pastoral Committee, which is now no longer meeting, as its role has recently been transferred to the Pastorate Leadership Team. Alison and I attend Pastorate leadership team meetings every few months and the group shares news from the churches across the pastorate, but we are also able to bring ideas and ask one another for advice. Last June, we had a pastorate day out in Porthcawl, with church services in Trinity Methodist/URC, fish and chips, board games and afternoon tea. At our last meeting we spent some time planning for our Pastorate day this summer which will take place in City URC on Sunday 14th July. Bible studies take place across the pastorate churches in person and online – during Lent this year the study used was the Christian Aid's Lent Study 'Act on Poverty'.

We have held several charity events in Canton over the past year. We have had Saturday coffee mornings, raising money for some of our young people to go to the URC Tri-Nation event, a Macmillan coffee morning, and a fundraiser for the South Wales Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre. We continue to support the local foodbank with our collection box and especially at focused times such as during Advent, and the money raised from Andrew's Silent Film night was also donated to this cause. During Lent we brought items for Chapter community larder, which supports people who are struggling to make ends meet. On Christmas morning we took up a collection for Christian

Aid. Most recently we celebrated the retirement of our favourite guide dog, James, and raised funds for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

We have shared other times of fellowship, including our Bring and Share lunch for Harvest and Gift Day in September. We have had a few tidy up days (also accompanied by lunch) and three successful Film Evenings – bring and share teas on these occasions – followed by chats about the films we have watched. Andrew has organised and played in so many concerts to raise money for the Building Fund, and again, these are accompanied by food. Basically, all the good events have snacks.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the work of those who keep the church running, some of whom haven't yet been mentioned:

- · Those who look after the technology in church, particularly Richard Edge
- · Ken who prepares the large-print handouts, sends Nicki her handout for her braille reader, and ensures the powerpoints are all ready each Sunday
- · Katie Munnik who looks after the church's social media
- · Our safeguarding officers, Alison Walker and Ceri George
- · Audrey, Richard and Steve who look after much of what happens in the building maintenance, Health and Safety (including the fire alarm which we can confirm definitely DOES work as it went off in the last film night)
- · The members of our newly formed Eco group, who have already helped us achieve the A Rocha Eco Church Bronze award
- · Everyone who leads worship in the church, and of course Megan who, as our pulpit secretary, never rests and is always on the lookout for worship leaders
- · Those who make tea and coffee, welcome us on Sunday mornings, look after the garden, deacons and officers, Hugh as Newslink Editor and Alan as assistant treasurer...
- · Last but not least, Alison who works tirelessly as our church chair, and does so much more than I think anyone realises.

We thank God for them all and their commitment to His work in this place.

During the last year we have been saddened by the loss of dear friends and in particular, we remember with joy Millie McQuade. Last summer, we were delighted to share in the dedication of Toby as we welcomed him officially into the church family.

This is a busy church, and everyone here is valued as part of this family, young and old. Whether you think your role is big or small, here are a few words from 1 Corinthians, to remind us that we all have our part to play in our service to God in Canton, and in our wider community.

<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Fiona Harding

**Church Secretary** 

#### **Pulpit Secretary's Report for AGM Canton Uniting Church**

This is just a chance to say thank you really, to everyone who has taken part in a service here at CUC during the past 12 months!

Firstly we need to say thank you to Martha and David for all that they do. Both in the services they take and all the work they do behind the scenes.

I next need to thank all those from CUC who have taken a service over the year: Katie, Ken, Phil and Ceri, Andrew, Fiona, Isla and the Young People (more about them in a minute) and last but not least, Tom. We are so lucky that we have such a talented bunch who are an integral part of who we are.

Thank you too, if you have taken part in the service by doing a reading or been a steward/deacon on duty.

Gareth Dyer, Craig Gardiner, Judy Harris, Jason Askew, Marc and Alison, are our regular visiting Worship Leaders and I'm looking to expand that group in the next few months.

There is a fine line when filling the worship leader list because some people are booked by other Pulpit Secretaries well over a year in advance, which might be a bit too much, but on the other hand you need to make sure that you are at least 6 weeks ahead, so that services can be can relevant to our current circumstances. For example, I managed to get Eileen to come and talk to us about Eco issues, and that has proved fruitful in that we have made our first steps towards becoming an eco-church.

Thank you for bearing with us when we try out different forms of worship: Café church for example, as we try to make our services as inclusive as possible.

Thank you to the Music group members for all that you do to enhance the worship here at CUC.

Thank you to Ken, who types hymns for the weekly PowerPoint and prepares printed copies of words in large print for those who need them and words for the Music Group.

I want to finish by thanking the Young People for all the times they have enriched our services by being themselves! From their being a lot of donkeys at Christmas time (I don't know what that was about!) to the services you have taken and taken part in. I want to thank you for all that you do...

Finally If you want to take part in the service in any way, or, even better, take a service ... come and have a chat.

Thanks everyone.

Megan

#### **Junior Church Report**

We continue to grow and thrive here in Junior Church. There is a regular attendance of around 10 children, however this does vary from week to week. It is a privilege to be part of the JC gang, who are a wonderful group of children, who all get along and look after each other.

We have now started to separate the children into their age groups for our Sunday morning lessons for the first time since covid, which is working well. We stay in on the second Sunday of the month to be part of morning service.

We continue to support services in church and help out with the young people when they do a service.

There are 22 JC members and young people all together, each with their own talents and fab personalities.

We decided to have an Easter party this year instead of the annual Christmas one and this was held after Sunday service on April 7th and was a success. Here's to the next one!!!

We welcome Rob to our team and we thank him for joining us. Ann is retiring from JC but is on hand to help out if needed.

Alan continues to be our treasurer and I'm informed we have a healthy bank balance.

JC continue to support Compassion UK to sponsor a child through their education in a developing country. Currently we are supporting Dashley who lives in Haiti. There is a donation box with her picture on it on the communion table every Sunday. Thank you to those who contribute.

Our door is always open to anyone who would like to be part of our team.

Thank you for all your continued support. We appreciate it.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 14:19

JC team Rob, Abi, Ann, Alan and Sian And of course, our children <sup>©</sup>

#### **URC Youth Assembly Report**

In January the young people of CUC attended Youth Assembly 2024 in Whitemoor Lakes, Lichfield. The theme for this year being 'Story, Story, Story'.

First and foremost, it was amazing to be reunited with so many old friends from the last year's Youth Assembly, with many of us looking forward to seeing old faces as well as new ones with more and more people from across the URC attending Youth Assembly this year.

Throughout the weekend we learned about the power we have in telling our own stories as well as the importance of actively hearing (not just listening to) other people's stories. All of us took part in a variety of workshops including making short videos, drama and acting as well as craft.

One of the most impactful workshops was a Liberation Theology Bible study, which gave us the opportunity to learn more about the current conflict in Gaza through a video call with a Palestinian Christian, Samuel. Through our key-note speakers Rosalind Selby and Tessa Henry-Robinson we learned more about our role and purpose in God's story.

We also had a range of late-night activities like karaoke, sports, and games. With karaoke being incredibly memorable! It was also fun to listen the poet Harry Baker who entertained us with silly and comedic poems.

We also voted on many motions to bring to General Assembly to help improve the wider URC.

Youth assembly came to a surprising end as we said goodbye to Whitemoor lakes and hello to a new location in Northampton! However, this mood was slightly dampened by the fact it will now place in March rather than January, meaning more time away from friends, old and new. Overall, this Youth Assembly allowed us to

further connect with young people across the wider Church as well as further understand CUC youth's role in the wider Church.

Ore Kassim

#### **Music Group report 2024**

People are divided on Martin Luther's opinions, but in one respect he got it absolutely right:

I truly desire that all Christians would love and regard as worthy the lovely gift of music, which is a precious, worthy, and costly treasure given to mankind by God.

The riches of music are so excellent and so precious that words fail me whenever I attempt to discuss and describe them.... *In summa*, next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. (Foreword to Georg Rhau's Collection, 'Symphoniae iucundae')

He points out that this is why music plays such an important role in worship – as is the case with us. But we could be more imaginative in the way it is applied. I have conflicts between the need to honour the musical suggestions of the service leaders and my own ideas, which are to do with broadening the way music is used (brief vocal solos, instrumental background to readings or prayers, singing the Sanctus or Agnus Dei at communion (in English of course), singing psalms – the Bible's own precious resource.

And each year I point out our need for more singers in the Music Group (let alone instrumentalists).

However, it is hugely encouraging that the commitment of the Music Group members is ironclad. We particularly benefit from Emily and Gloria, my piano pupils, who are finding more and more ways of contributing to the music of the church – Gloria on her bass guitar (which has also led her to form a rock band in Cardiff High) and Emily, who is developing skills in piano playing and sightreading which will be benefitting her for the rest of her life.

The Munniks have proved key contributors, from Mike's repertoire of Canadian songs to the musical talents of Isla and Leo. Leo has very quickly developed his timpani skills as second-incommand to Huw, but Isla's education will take her away from next year on, adding to the occasional weakness of the group, which is susceptible to absences through illness, injury and other reasons.

We are very very lucky to have such loyalty from each member of the Music Group, but with one or two more, we could do so much better!

AWD May 2024

The recent piano duet concert of Andrew and Nicola Rose was such a pleasure to be at. A variety of duets were played, featuring a piece by Andrew.

Thanks to both performers, and of course to Emily, who turned the music pages!





#### FROM THE TREASURER'S REPORT (AMOUNTS IN £'000s)

- 1) Do we have the funds we need?
- a) Our total funds stood at £120.3k as at 31st December 2023.
- b) Our biggest fund the **Building Fund** stood at £68.9k. If we add the investment held by Synod on our behalf, and grants from Synod and URC central sources for which we may apply, the latest calculation shows a deficit of around £30k for our building development project. However, the project cost estimates are over a year old and therefore subject to inflation. The push to accelerate fundraising has been given impetus through Andrew Wilson-Dickson's initiative in the Sunday at 3 concerts. And also a thank you to Tom Arthur, who has initiated a push for special giving as a result a total of £400 per month is being donated since 1st January 2024. Anyone who would like to join in with this initiative, please talk to Ken Woods or Alan Farnham.
- c) Our second biggest fund the **General Fund** grew with a surplus of £24.1k during 2023 to a balance of £47.3k at 31st December. This is a healthy situation. However, the surplus for the year included a one-off catch-up on room rental income and a grant from Synod. Also, our previous treasurer Bev had fixed our energy prices until February 2024. With the new energy prices now kicking in and with other known items, we may have a reduction in our General Fund balance in 2024. The trend of income and expenditure as known in early April suggested a possible reduction of £6.7k for the year, but a number of factors may change things significantly up or down.

#### 2) For what outside causes have we raised money in 2023?

Birthday Box for BMS £158; Christian Aid £225; Cardiff Foodbank £455

DEC Earthquake Appeal £294; South Wales MS Therapy £520

Nativity Service for Cwtch Baby Bank £130

TOTAL FOR SPECIFIC CHARITIES £1,782

Add to that: Sunday tea and coffee money £125

TOTAL MONEY RAISED £1,907; compares favourably with 2022 (£1,229)

#### 3) Is the money that we have deposited/invested being put to good use?

- a) Of the total funds of £120.3k, £66k was deposited with the Baptist Union, who use the money mainly to provide loans for home mission projects.
- b) The money held by Synod pending use for our building development project is invested in shares in the Charities Ethical Investment Fund. These were worth £345k at 31st December.

#### **DEVELOPMENT PROJECT REPORT**

Thanks were recorded to Chris Atherton, for his work over the years as project manager. Ken Woods had taken over the role during 2023.

In April 2023, a meeting was held with two of our three local councillors – Susan Elsmore and Jasmin Chowdhruy. Stephen Cunnah was unable to be there. They showed great interest in what we are trying to do and took some photos of the church garden.

In October we agreed with Caroe & Partners what we would take to the Council for its preplanning review of our proposed demolition of the halls, creation of new rooms and a garden layout that had been designed for us by Rosie - a landscape gardener from Barry.

In November, Caroe submitted the plans to Cardiff Council and we paid our £300 to get advice from the planning department. This preplanning process is designed to avoid issues in the formal planning process that would result in unnecessary rejection and a costly resubmission. As at end-May we have had no substantive reply from the Council, although there has been quite a lot of communication with the Planning Department. The next stages after preplanning are (1) the planning application proper, then (2) application to outside sources of funding, then (3) tenders for the demolition and building work.

Congratulations to Canton Uniting Church, Cardiff on achieving their Eco Church Bronze Award.

Thanks to the hard work of their recently formed Eco Group, they completed the A Rocha survey in record time and are now enthusiastically thinking ahead to Silver!

Rob Harding of CUC says, 'Canton Uniting has been awarded Bronze for the Eco Church programme. Well, we've started but we won't stop. Canton Uniting has always had an eye on our environment. We are amid a church building renewal and our hands are tied by the back of our building being over 90 years old. Soon we will have a new building but until then we do the best we can. Our church garden is amazing. What was once a bit of no man's land left from the 1995 re-development, has been turned into a garden growing food and flowers. So many of Canton Uniting's congregation work so hard on the garden. So

much positive has come from Canton Uniting focusing on the environment.'

A Rocha has just celebrated 1,000 Silver – awarded Eco churches across England and Wales. Here, in the Synod of Wales, we now have 4 Silver awards and 12 Bronze awards. Thank you and congratulations to all those churches and to their eco teams for their hard work and inspiration. Could your church be the



next Silver, or maybe even Gold? Let's see what we can do by the October Synod meeting!!

Don't forget to keep in touch with news of your eco events. Thank you, and good luck! Eileen, Synod Green Advocate greenadvocate.urcwales@urc.org.uk







# Cardiff and Penarth URC 14 July Pastorate Day



# @ City URC from 10.30 to 5 WORSHIP @ 10.30 BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH WORKSHOPS FROM 1 TO 2.15 AND 2.30 TO 3.45 AFTERNOON TEA @ 4 CLOSING WORSHIP @ 4.30 WORKSHOPS INCLUDE: CREATIVE WRITING, FLOWER ARRANGING, MUSIC, CLOUD WATCHING, WALK IN BUTE PARK, CRAFT, YOUTH ACTIVITIES

#### Canton Uniting Church Services Rotas: JUNE - JULY, 2024

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

#### Sunday 2nd June, 2024

Lectionary readings: 1 Samuel 3.1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139.1-6,13-18; 2 Corinthians 4.5-12;

Mark 2.23 - 3.6

Worship Leader: Judy Harris Deacon/Steward: Richard Readers: Fiona and Eva

Refreshments: Marieke and Alison

#### Sunday 9th June 2024

Lectionary readings: 1 Samuel 8:4-11,(12-15),16-20, (11:14-15); Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians

4.13-5.1; Mark 3.20-35

Worship Leader: Chris Atherton

Deacon/Steward: Fiona

Readers: Richard and Marieke

Refreshments: Rob

#### Sunday 16th June 2024

Lectionary readings: 1 Samuel 15:34–16:13; Psalm 20; 2 Corinthians 5.6-10(11-13)14-17;

Mark 4.26-34

Worship Leader: Revd Martha Mc Innes or Revd David Dean

Deacon/Steward: Alan Readers: Fiona and Megan Refreshments: Sian and Josh

Preparation of communion: Hugh and Bence Serving at Communion table: Ceri and Richard

#### Sunday 23rd June 2024

Lectionary readings: 1 Samuel 17:(1a,4-11, 19-23),32-49; Psalm 9:9-20; 2 Corinthians

6.1-13; Mark 4.35-41

Worship Leader: Rev Tom Arthur

Deacon/Steward: Eva Readers: Nikki and Jan Refreshments: Megan

#### Sunday 30th June 2024

Lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 1:1,17-27; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 8.7-15; Mark 5.21-43

Worship Leader: The young people

Deacon/Steward: Steve Readers: The Young People Refreshments: The Munniks

#### Sunday 7th July 2024

Lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 5:1-5,9-10; Psalm 48; 2 Corinthians 12.2-10; Mark 6.1-13

Worship Leader: Ken Woods

Deacon/Steward: Rob Readers: Alison and Hugh Refreshments: Abigail

#### Sunday 14th July 2024

Lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 6:1-5,12b-19; Psalm 24; Ephesians 1.3-14; Mark 6.14-29

Worship Leader: Pastorate Day – no service in CUC

#### Sunday 21st July 2024

Lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37; Ephesians 2.11-22; Mark

6.30-34,53-56

Worship Leader: Rev David Dean or Revd Martha McInnes

Deacon/Steward: Megan Readers: Alan and Steve Refreshments: Hiroko

Preparation of Communion: Fiona

Serving at Communion table: Audrey and Marieke

#### Sunday 28th July 2024

Lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14; Ephesians 3.14-21; John 6.1-21

Worship Leader: Revd David Dean or Revd Martha McInnes

Deacon/Steward: Ken Readers: Ceri and Eva Refreshments: Ann

#### **Sunday 4th August 2024**

Lectionary readings: 2 Samuel 11:26–12:13a; Psalm 51.1-12; Ephesians 4.1-16; John

6.24-35

Worship Leader: Revd Tom Arthur

Deacon/Steward: Richard Readers: Taiwo and Ken

Refreshments: Marieke and Alison

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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Treasurer: Kenneth Woods Email: <u>Treasurer@Cantonuniting.org.uk</u>

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**, **the 20th of July, 2024**.