

NEWSLINK

FEBRUARY - MARCH, 2024

CANTON UNITING CHURCH



Dear readers,

A quick note to apologise for this edition being in black and white. I usually print out the CUC Newslink but my colour printer has suffered a terminal illness and there's a delay in its replacement. If you have a computer you can see the Newslink in glorious colour on the CUC website: cantonuniting.org.uk

Andrew W-D

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,

February 2024

The following words may sound familiar. They inspired Fred Kaan to write the hymn, 'The Church Is Like a Table':

Concerning the why and how and what and who of ministry,
one image keeps surfacing:
A table that is round.
It will take some sawing to be round tabled, some redefining and redesigning.
Such redoing and rebirthing of narrow long churching can painful be for people and tables.
But so was the cross . . .
Round tabling means No preferred seating,
No first and last, no better, and no corners
For the 'least of these.'
Round tabling means being with, a part of, together, and one
It means room for the Spirit and gifts and disturbing profound peace for all.
And it is we in the present who are mixing and kneading the dough for the future.
We can no longer prepare for the past to be church. – by Chuck Lathrop

This poem is a reminder of who we are. We are a church which is welcoming of all people. There are many ways to be inclusive and welcoming--from how we provide for the hearing impaired to those who have diverse learning needs to being open to people of different gender identities. Being a round table church challenges us to continue doing the work to be who we say we are.

Secondly, 'In Search of a Round Table' is aspirational. This challenge us to go beyond what we have been and continue to find ways to be inclusive. It is very easy for churches to look back and to get stuck in the highlights of our past. Our memories are important and part of our history. We cherish them. Being part of this network challenges us to always look forward. We learn from memories and we look forward. How is God calling us to live together today? What do we need to do to be inclusive today? How do we create worship and events that are as inclusive as they can be given the needs of our community? We are people who have made and want to keep making the table round.

Finally, if we are willing to name ourselves a round table people that means we are 'inclusive.' 'Inclusion' is a concept that most people in our culture understand. When they hear us use it, they will know that they are included whatever their background, experience, needs. When they see it on our website, they trust they will find a place of welcome here.

Chuck Lathrop speaks of the work it takes to make long tables into round ones--lots of sawing and re-shaping, perhaps chiselling and remaking. God calls us to this hard work. Being part of the Inclusive Church Network is the work of God's people, welcoming all who are created in God's image. We join with others to do the work, no matter how difficult, and proclaim the message, no matter how challenging, that church is a community for all.

Welcome to the round table church, the inclusive church that is found here.

Peace,

Martha and David

SUPPORTING THE NEW BUILD

It's an exciting time here at Canton Uniting as we look forward to the re-building project.

Our draft plans are now with the Cardiff Council, at a preliminary application stage for planning permission. We hope to hear soon if the draft plan is complete enough to become the official planning application. When planning permission is finally granted, we will want to be able to move quickly and invite builders to tender.

The plans we are making will bring great changes to our church. In replacing the old halls that are expensive to maintain and heat, we will have rooms that are more appropriate for our present and future purposes. We will also considerably reduce our carbon footprint and be able to expand and develop the community garden.

These plans will require adequate funding. I don't mean that all the money will be in our bank accounts at the start of this process. Our funding plan will also include money that is available to be released by Synod and promises of grants which we will be seeking. Also included, of course, is the pot of money already in our church's building fund.

On top of this, we will need to make a united effort within our church community to raise more. This is understandably daunting to consider in the present economic climate, but we are already making a start. You know that Andrew has been getting us in the mood for boosting the church's building fund, with the 'Sunday at 3' afternoon concerts - three of them on 21st January, and then 4th and 25th February. And he has more in mind. It's an initiative in which we can encourage one another to attend and enjoy the music as well as the fellowship while raising funds for our future.

At the church meeting before Christmas one of our members invited the rest of us to join him in setting up a standing order that would run for two years, in support of this building project and in addition to current giving. If enough of us can make such a pledge to regular extra giving, our funding plans will be on firmer ground. Joining together in accepting this invitation, we'll raise both money and the community spirit of encouragement and both are obviously important.

Can we accept the invitation? What extra giving might you be able to pledge?

Ken Woods, CUC treasurer



No Faith in Fossil Fuels

Prayer Vigil for Climate Justice

Please join us as we gather in vigil to pray for creation, for our global neighbours and for bold action from the UK Government. Starting on Ash Wednesday, people from across the UK will be holding a ten-day, around-the-clock vigil for environmental and climate justice outside Westminster Parliament.

Together, let us declare,
No Faith in Fossil Fuels, Amen



When: 14 February 2024, 12.00 - 1.00pm

Where: CITY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WINDSOR PLACE



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LENT 2024 Pastorate Bible study

Once again this year during Lent we plan to meet together as a Pastorate for a weekly bible study - we will meet alternate weeks at City and at Beulah and will work through the Christian Aid Act on Poverty Lent study. (Martha will be running the same study at the Tuesday afternoon Pastorate zoom bible study, if that suits you better.)

Christian Aid has teamed up with partner organisations across the UK to develop a six-week Lent study that will enable small groups to meet together to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of poverty - local and global. There will be stories of faith and activism that challenge the status quo, videos, bible readings with questions for discussion, as well as inspiration for actions big and small that we can all take to tackle poverty together.

We will meet on Thursdays at 7:30pm: 22 February, 7,21 March at City in the Old chapel, and 15, 29 February, 14 March at Beulah.

Please do consider joining us - everyone is welcome!



ABLE-ISM Tom Arthur

I'd like to tell you about my disabilities, and, for those who are not currently disabled, to share a few thoughts on what disability in general means to me.

Almost twenty-seven years ago now I was taking a shower and suddenly everything seemed to go sideways. That's the only way I know how to explain the sensation. Then when I got out of the shower, I couldn't explain to Marieke what clothes I wanted to put on. It was Pentecost Sunday, but I wasn't preaching. I asked Marieke for "normal" clothes.

I couldn't dredge up words from wherever they bury them, or the thoughts behind the words. But when Marieke and our youngest daughter (still in her early teens) wanted to call an ambulance, I said "No." Rachel said, "That's what they all say." "How do you know?" "I watch Casualty," she said.

I insisted Marieke go on to church as she was one of the few altos in the choir. I had a neighbourhood friend come with me in the ambulance. On the way to the hospital all I could think of was early retirement. But by the time I got there I had already decided to stick it out. And the choir insisted Marieke should come to the hospital to be with me. I never get my way.

In hospital I discovered that I had had a stroke, which left me with what they call 'hemianopia,' the same damage to the optic nerve Phil has had, that leaves you half blind. I also had severe dyslexia, unable to read for about a year, but this condition, unlike the hemianopia, was not permanent.

Welcome to the fellowship of the impaired.

The back story to all this was that about two years before I had been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, and the blood test also showed that my body was not producing testosterone, and never had. I had been told many years before that I was infertile (hence our beautiful adopted children and our seven grandchildren, the silver lining to the cloud), but no one had ever told me why.

So I had to start getting testosterone jabs. After about a year the head of the endocrine clinic decided to give me an implant that would keep my testosterone level up for six months. Shortly after this I had the stroke.

Then I got a new GP, who asked me if anyone had ever talked to me about my high blood count. No. So I started having a pint drained off every week, then every three weeks and then every six. Apparently thickening of the blood is a side effect of the testosterone jab. Hence the stroke.

So it was a struggle. I couldn't drive. Reading continued to be difficult. But I had a lot of help. A friend from my church in Chicago sent £11,000 to our church in Birmingham to support my continuing ministry, and with that we kitted out the office and hired an office assistant. It was no problem getting people to volunteer to read for me, and I got lifts to call on people out of the neighbourhood. A blind friend, John Hull, showed me the ropes on how to access resources from social services. And I found a new fellowship

among others who were disabled, one with MS, another with rheumatoid arthritis, and so on. We understood each other.

Later, after retirement, I learned that the severe loss of hearing I had experienced at age 11 was another side effect of no testosterone, as was my lack of coordination that meant I could never be a high school football star. I had thought it was a character flaw. Then more recently I discovered that no testosterone had led to my severe osteoarthritis, which in turn was behind a broken femur (undiagnosed for about five or so years). I had the repair job about a year or so ago, and now my hobby is exercising and going out for long walks.

The new circle of disabled friends who understood each other and understood what it feels like not to *be* understood, became vital to my well-being. They enabled me to feel *whole* and *fully human*. They taught me to think of disability not as the opposite of ability, but as a way of saying “No!” to the assumptions of what is called “*ableism*.” In the same way, disbelief is not the opposite of belief but the rejection of belief.

“Ableism,” according to *Wikipedia*, is the social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. In other words, “ableism” is the way I used to think before I became visually impaired myself and so on and so forth. I once thought that being “normal” was living at the peak of a Hollywood vision of adult ability – a normality that my deafness and pitiable attempts at playing sports had never allowed me to attain. I tried my best to excel in other things, but in the back of my mind I was always just a failed football hero.

Life is more varied than Hollywood likes to pretend. We are like the salmon whose life begins as a pea-sized egg born buried under river gravel. It goes through multiple metamorphoses over its life, from a small fry with eight fins to manage the swift river currents, to a fish with camouflage stripes that disappear as the salmon matures, then later with interior changes that allow it to switch from fresh to salt water. Then it changes from swimming against the current to with the current in order to make the transition from river to sea, only to return to within a metre or two of its birthplace to spawn a new generation. In the last stage of its life its jaws distort, it no longer eats -- the energy it once spent hunting for food it now spends in the last stage of its life swimming upstream to spawn. Then it dies.

Who are we? Ableism would like to define us as if we were only the adults salmon swimming bravely and freely in the Atlantic. But the salmon is a salmon at every stage along the way. And we are fully human from crying baby to bed-ridden old age.

And given the variety of possibilities, we can be born without testosterone or with type 1 diabetes or with MS or a learning disability or deaf or blind or both, and we are still fully human and more than welcome – expected! – at God’s table.

I usually never think of myself as disabled or impaired or whatever. Like I didn’t think to bring my stick with me on a visit to Barry Hospital last week. I just get on with it, though more slowly. But I have a strong dislike of curbs, and a strong love for accessible places like Canton Uniting Church.

Canton Uniting Church Services Rotas: DECEMBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024

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

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: Alison and Marc D.

Deacon/Steward: Richard

Readers: Alan and Richard

Refreshments: Hugh and Bence

Sunday 11th February 2024

Lectionary Readings: 2 Kings 2.1-12; Psalm 50.1-6; 2 Corinthians 4.3-6; Mark 9.2-9

Worship Leaders: Ken

Deacon/Steward: Fiona

Readers: Nikki and Jan

Refreshments: Sian and Josh

Sunday 18th February 2024

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 9.8-17; Psalm 25.1-10; 1 Peter 3.18-22; Mark 1.9-15

Worship Leader: Martha or David

Deacon/Steward: Alan

Readers: The Munnik family

Refreshments: Marieke

Preparation of communion: Alison and Eva

Serving at Communion table: Ceri and Audrey

Sunday 25th February 2024

Lectionary Readings: Genesis 17.1-7,15-16; Psalm 22.23-31; Romans 4.13-25; Mark
8.31-38

Worship Leader: Tom

Deacon/Steward: Eva

Readers: Taiwo and Mairake

Refreshments: The Munniks

Sunday 3rd March 2024

Lectionary Readings: Exodus 20.1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1.18-25; John 2.13-22

Worship Leader: Eileen Newington

Deacon/Steward: Steve

Readers: Steve and Ceri

Refreshments: Abigail

Sunday 10th March 2024

Lectionary Readings: Numbers 21.4-9; Psalm 103.(1-7),8-13; Ephesians 2.1-10; John 3.14-21

Worship Leader: Chris

Deacon/Steward: Rob

Readers: Eva and Hugh

Refreshments: Hiroko

Sunday 17th March 2024

Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 31.31-34; Psalm 51.1-12; Psalm 119.9-16; Hebrews 5.5-10; John 12.20-33

Worship Leader: Martha or David

Deacon/Steward: Megan

Readers: Alan and Megan

Refreshments: Boys Brigade

Preparation of Communion: Hugh and Bence

Serving at Communion table: Steve and Fiona

Sunday 24th March 2024

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 118.1-2,19-29; Philippians 2.5-11; Mark 11.1-11

Worship Leader: Martha or David

Deacon/Steward: Sian and Josh

Readers: Fiona and Alison

Refreshments: Fiona

Sunday 31st March 2024 (Easter Sunday)

Lectionary Readings: Acts 10.34-43; Psalm 118.1-2,14-24; 1 Corinthians 15.1-11; Mark 16.1-8

Worship Leader: Martha or David

Deacon/Steward: Ken

Readers: Ken and Richard

Refreshments: Marieke and Alison

Sunday 7th April 2024

Lectionary Readings: Acts 4.32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1.1-2.2; John 20.19-31

Worship Leader: TBA

Deacon/Steward: Richard

Readers: Sian and Abi

Refreshments: Rob

ENVOI:

The next concert at CUC is on February 25th Sunday at 3pm

MARVEL AT THE MUSES

Recital by Kate Woolveridge MBE (mezzo) and Nicola Rose (piano) with 'cello music and poetry readings.

Kate Woolveridge is a well-known singer in the professional world of opera but has taken a further big step in creating the Forget-me-not Chorus which has already done wonders for the state of mind of dementia sufferers. The organisation has spread to other parts of Wales and is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. To see a Forget-me-not Chorus in action go to

https://youtu.be/1qB-b2PovWI?si=WT_Ywarv_UICHEXB

Kate will be talking about Forget-me-Not during the concert. Expect large numbers to come! Her piano accompanist is Nicola Rose, who lives hard by CUC! Expect her to be giving a concert in CUC with Andrew in May! Refreshments are included.

Tickets are available on the door (£10 adults, £5 full-time education) OR in advance from *Eventbrite.co.uk* (search on their website for the date or for the title of the concert: "Marvel at the Muses").

The concert will be raising money for the Forget-me-Not Chorus which exists entirely on donations.

