February 2019

CONTACT

The monthly magazine of Bath Central United Reformed Church—30p

May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust Him. Romans 15:13
Lectionary Readings

February 3 – Epiphany 4: Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6;

February 10 – Epiphany 5: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 138;

February 17 – Epiphany 6: Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1;
    1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

February 24 – Epiphany 7: Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40;

Note: These are the Revised Common Lectionary Bible passages
    as published in the URC Prayer Handbook
Dear Friends

This month we look at the first of the holy habits in Andrew Roberts book of the same name. It is the exciting, vital and fundamental practice of “Biblical Teaching”. This practice is essential in forming and guiding us in our discipleship because it draws us to Jesus - the one who calls us to follow him. As we look in more depth at the Bible, we grow in understanding of what is involved, and what it means, to be a follower of Jesus.

Jesus taught his disciples; and the apostles carried on this practice of teaching. Their message, and ours, is the gospel of Jesus Christ - biblical teaching drawing on the Hebrew scriptures and Jesus’ own teaching recorded in the New Testament.

In the book of Acts we see that from the beginning preaching, Spirit-filled, Bible-based, Christ-centred preaching, has been an effective way of practicing of the holy habit of biblical teaching.

But preaching is not the only way to practice the habit of biblical teaching. Although Jesus preached to large crowds of people, he also spent much of his time with smaller groups of disciples and friends, helping them to understand scripture and to learn more about God through his Son. We reflect this practice in group bible studies. Whenever we meet together for biblical teaching and learning we are influenced by the context of our lives and our world. So in the new Bible study course at Central we turn to the Bible to engage with a contemporary issue - BREXIT!
The book of Acts tells us that followers of Christ devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and spent time together daily in the temple or homes. This may not be practical for us, but the practice of daily bible reading and reflection is a good habit to develop. It is a simple way in which biblical teaching can become central to our life of faith. If we wish, we can engage with the readings in creative ways - through art, craft, writing, imagination.

Biblical teaching is the foundation of discipleship and Christ-like living. And it is responsibility of the whole Church. Through biblical teaching and learning, whether preaching, group Bible study or daily Bible readings, we enrich our faith and build up one another for witness and service.

Revd Hazel

Eldership

Eldership Nomination forms are now available in the library area. These are to be returned to the minsters by Sunday 10th February. Please make this process a matter for prayer.

Our thanks goes to those who currently serve us with diligence and care.

Holy Habits

This month we are encouraged to place fresh focus upon the habit of Biblical teaching. Our worship will shine a light on this:

- Bath Central: Sunday February 3rd, 10.30am Revd Helen
- Rush Hill: Sunday 10th February, 10.30am Revd Helen
- Larkhall: Sunday 17th February, 6.30pm Revd David

All services will include the sacrament of Holy Communion
Church Meeting Notes  
Tuesday, 15th January 2019

The Church Meeting was chaired by Revd Helen Pattie who opened with devotions on the theme of ‘Friendship across the miles’.

It was reported that the Election of Elders Nomination Forms are now available.

Due to the Bath Half Marathon on Sunday, 17th March, there will be no morning service on that day.

A group of Quakers met in the Percy Hall on Sunday, 13th January for their worship. They are in need of a place to meet as their own premises in York Street will be sold in March.

The Buildings Committee now report that work on the beam in the Argyle Hall had been completed and tiling in the Middle Kitchen is being replaced with pvc sheeting.

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Walking the Way Synod Day

A message from Dinah Firmin, Synod Office Administrator: secretary@urcsouthwest.org.uk.

A reminder about the Walking the Way Synod Day being held on Saturday 2nd February at the Synod Office. There are still spaces available and the event may be of special interest to Elders and other leaders in your Churches. Please contact me at the Synod Office to book.
Encouraging Bible Verses for Valentine’s Day

For some Valentine’s Day is not a great day to celebrate. For many the day just brings back memories of loved ones gone on, or being terribly alone on a day that is supposed to celebrate LOVE…

So today, for those who are indeed celebrating the day with that special “someone”, or are struggling through the day by themselves, I hope these scriptures will encourage you and focus you on the One Who loves you more deeply and honestly than anyone else could.

Reveld Helen Pattie

Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned. Song of Songs 8:7a

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. 1 Corinthians 13:

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:7-8

Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

An old, tired-looking dog wandered into my house. Slowly he walked into the sitting room, and fell asleep on the rug.

An hour later he went to the door, and I let him out. The next day he was back, walked by me into the house, and again slept for an hour or so in the sitting room. This daily visit and nap continued for several weeks. Curious, I finally pinned a note to his collar: ‘Are you are aware that your sweet dog comes to my house each day for a nap?’

The next day he arrived with a different note pinned to his collar: “He lives in a home with my six children - he’s trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?”
To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. *Mark 12:33*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16*

Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs. *Proverbs 10:12*

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. *Romans 12:9*

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. *1 John 4:12*

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. *1 John 3:18*

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. *Romans 8:28*

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. *1 John 4:16*

We love because he first loved us. *1 John 4:19*

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. *Colossians 3:14*

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. *John 15:13*

Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ *Matthew 22:37–39*
Commitment for Life

The pre Christmas news article is now pinned up on the notice board. It informs us that Linda Mead’s replacement is Revd Dr Kevin Snyman with the admin assistance of Suzanne Pearson. Dr Kevin says that “everyone in our London HQ are in awe of the incredible justice work you do to support our global partners. The effort, the prayers, the activism, the offerings—all go outward and upward to achieve God’s purposes for the sake of a fairer, kinder and more equitable world.”

This month’s Moving Stories includes a pre-Christmas address by Bishop Attalah Hanna, the outspoken former Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem, a member of Sabeel, who has long supported the cause of Palestinian refugees who cannot return to their homeland. He says: “... the (Christmas) feast should be accompanied by expressions of the virtues of love and mercy towards our brothers and sisters, especially the tormented, oppressed and imprisoned who suffer injustice, persecution and tyranny.” “As Christians we stand in solidarity with the displaced and the victims of war . . . in Iraq, Libya, Yemen and all over the world. We stand with the Palestinian refugees and all our Palestinian people who have been subjected to injustice.” “Peace is absent from the city of Jerusalem. Peace cannot be achieved by racist walls that separate one human from another. Peace needs bridges of love, community and communication”.

The second page tells us the story of a Palestinian village of 1,300 inhabitants which is facing slow destruction because it is in a newly designated Israeli military firing zone (like 60% of the Jordan Valley). Homes have been knocked down, two settlements and a huge farm nearby control their water and no permits are allowed for farming and building. We pray for a fair outcome.

Jenny Stephens

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*It is a bad plan that admits of no modification. – Publius Syrus*
Christian Aid

Christian Aid (CA) has a new Chief Executive, Amanda Khozi Mukwashi (say it quickly several times to remember!). She has already made herself heard on Radio 4 Any Questions and Sunday Service at 9.15am on 20th January. The latest CA magazine has an editorial written by her, reflecting on her visits to Malawi, Kenya and Zimbabwe and the Rohingya refugees.

Another excellent article tries to answer the question: “What does BREXIT mean to Christian Aid?” There are serious implications! The EU is one of the biggest donors worldwide. In 2017 about 10% of CA’s total income came from EU grants — around £10.5 million. Once outside the EU, UK-based charities will no longer be eligible to access EU funding. Read all about it!

Jenny Stephens

Bath Child Contact Centre

Siobhan Thompson, Child Contact Centre Co-ordinator writes:

I am writing to thank you and the congregation on behalf of all at Bath Child Contact Centre for your generosity in organising and donating Christmas gifts to the children who attend the Centre.

As is tradition on the Saturday before Christmas Santa’s Grotto was set up and the children were very excited to meet Father Christmas and to receive their Christmas gift. Their parents also expressed their thanks to all involved.

Any child who was not at the Centre on Saturday 22nd December 2018 received their gift on the following Saturday 29th December.

Please would you pass on our good wishes for a happy and healthy 2019 to all at the URC.
Historic Churches Share in Funding Payout

77 churches and chapels in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are sharing in a recent £430,000 grant payout from the National Churches Trust, the charity supporting church buildings of all Christian denominations across the UK.

Broadcaster and journalist Huw Edwards, Vice President of The National Churches Trust, said: “The UK’s historic churches and chapels are a vital part of our national heritage. The cost of this work is far beyond what most congregations can pay for themselves and the latest grants from the National Churches Trust will help ensure that 77 churches and chapels are safe for future generations to enjoy.”

In 2018 the National Churches Trust awarded grants of £1.2 million to help 202 projects at churches and chapels around the UK. Demand for funding from the National Churches Trust continues to grow, with 583 grant applications received in 2018, up from 473 grant applications in 2017, a 23% increase.

From Parish Pump

In the Month of February

200 years ago, on 14th Feb 1819 Christopher Sholes, American inventor was born. He developed one of the first typewriters and invented the QWERTY keyboard.

90 years ago, on 11th Feb 1929 Italy and the Vatican signed the Lateran Treaty, which recognised the Vatican City’s independence and sovereignty.

70 years ago, on 14th Feb 1949 Israel’s parliament (the Knesset) convened for the first time.

50 years ago, on 3rd Feb 1969 Yasser Arafat was appointed leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

40 years ago, on 1st Feb 1979 Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran after more than 14 years in exile. In November, following a referendum, Iran became an Islamic Republic with Khomeini the Supreme Leader.
Church Diary – February

**Every Friday**
10.30am  Friday Coffee in the Argyle Hall.

**Sunday 3\(^{rd}\)**
10.30am  Communion Service: Revd Helen Pattie  
*Foodbank & Traidcraft*

**Tuesday 5\(^{th}\)**
2.30pm  Women's Guild AGM

**Wednesday 6\(^{th}\)**
2.30pm  Woodside Nursing Home Service

**Sunday 10\(^{th}\)**
10.30am  Family Worship: Revd David Pattie

**Tuesday 12\(^{th}\)**
10.00am  Study Group in the John Williams Room  
2.30pm  Elders' Meeting

**Sunday 17\(^{th}\)**
10.30am  Family Worship: Revd Dr Hazel Starritt

**Sunday 24\(^{th}\)**
10.30am  Family Worship: Revd David Pattie

**Tuesday 26\(^{th}\)**
10.00am  Study Group in the John Williams Room  
2.30pm  Men's Fellowship

**March**

**Sunday 3\(^{rd}\)**
10.30am  Communion Service: Revd David Pattie  
*Foodbank & Traidcraft*

**Tuesday 5\(^{th}\)**
2.30pm  Women's Guild

**Sunday 10\(^{th}\)**
10.30am  First Sunday in Lent: Revd Helen Pattie

**Tuesday 12\(^{th}\)**
10.00am  Study Group in the John Williams Room  
2.30pm  Elders’ Meeting

**Sunday 17\(^{th}\)**
No Service – Bath Half Marathon

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Nigel Beeton writes: The passage in Luke 12:24, ‘Consider the birds of the air’, could be taken to mean that we can leave the care of wildlife to God. So we can, but I think He is pleased if, during a cold February, we offer Him a little help…!

Consider the Birds
Consider the birds of the air
They do not store up what they eat
They need not to worry or care
Or tweet with a worry-filled tweet.
God looks after them, O it’s true!
He grants them their insects and grains
He gives all their feathers their hue;
And shelters them all from the rain.

But at certain times of the year,
When birds have to eat, or they freeze –
Though God clearly holds them all dear,
Assistance from us will Him please.

So think of the birds of the air,
And, after your breakfast is chewed,
Get up, get a coat, get out there
And give the poor darlings some food!

By Nigel Beeton

Good take
A minister in a little church announced: ‘Before we pass the collection plate, I would like to request that the person who stole the chickens from Brother Martin’s hen house please refrain from giving any money to the Lord. The Lord doesn’t want money from a thief!’ The collection plate was passed around, and for the first time in months everybody gave.
**Immigration**

*Faith leaders urge government to rethink approach*

Representatives from the United Reformed Church have joined faith leaders in urging the government to rethink its approach to immigration, and to move away from a hostile environment towards a culture of sanctuary, as MPs return to parliament after the festive break.

In an open letter to the government, published on Sunday 6 January, the faith leaders wrote:

‘As representatives of faith communities, we are dismayed by the current debate around immigration. The long-awaited Immigration white paper is misguided and disjointed, the promised engagement unclear, and the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination Bill a missed opportunity.

‘Urgent action is needed to create a more humane system. Refugee families must be kept together, and close family members allowed to join their children in the UK. The right to work after six months should be extended to all people seeking asylum. There must be a time limit on immigration detention, an end to the detention of vulnerable people, and a genuine discussion about the often impossible standards of proof required by the immigration system. The first reaction to those arriving in boats should not be to disbelieve their stories.

‘Today is Epiphany, the twelfth day of Christmas; the story of the flight of the Holy Family echoes the plight of refugees around the world. We say to the government: let us help you transform the hostile environment, not into a compliant environment, but into a culture of sanctuary.’

From URC News

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*Every country has the government it deserves. – French proverb*
*We have seen better days. – Shakespeare*
*And many strokes, though with a little axe, hew down and fell the hardest-timbered oak. – Shakespeare*
'And now for something completely different!' is a phrase which could describe well The Argyle Players Spring production. After bringing two of Agatha Christie’s intriguing murder mysteries to the stage last year with ‘Murder On The Nile’ and ‘And Then There Were None’ the first offering of 2019 is indeed something completely different. ‘Alarms and Excursions’ explores life today with its multiplicity of modern electronic aids which often make existence so much more complicated than in days of yore. Playwrite Michael Frayn’s hilarious romp will touch a chord with most who watch, as the characters onstage replicate the disasters offstage of many who wrestle with modern technology. Come to this Players’ production and you will soon realize that you are not alone as you try to eliminate that flashing light or annoying bleep on your washing machine/dishwasher/smoke alarm/motor vehicle, etc. As you laugh at, and with, the actions being played out before you, the thought in your head may be ‘That could be me!’ These, and many other aspects of modern living, are sharply brought to life in this thoroughly modern comedy. Vanessa Bishop will be in the Director’s chair for this presentation, and has drawn together a large cast, some of whom are new to the Players, who are all busy rehearsing for what will be an exciting production. It will take to the stage in the Tovey Hall Wednesday 8th-Saturday 11th May each evening at 7.30pm. Don’t miss it! It is with great sadness that The Players have to record the death of one of their most loyal members. Liz Kingsley was one of that group who worshipped in other churches in the city, but came to The Argyle Players because of her love of theatre. A Churchwarden at St Saviour’s at Larkhall, Liz had both acted and taken on important tasks backstage for many years. She will always be remembered for her gentle wit and ready smile, which cheered many a rehearsal. She will be missed with great sadness.

Michael Burgess
The following is the collective prayer for this month. We ask you to join us in prayer on the **third Wednesday** of the month — 20th February. We shall pray at 7.30am and/or 7.30pm: please join us.

**A Prayer for February**

In these worrying times in our country and the world,

let us pray that political leaders will not abandon ways of bridging the gap between rich and poor, have and haves, black and white.

Lord, we give so many thanks for what we ‘have’.

Show us how to share our good fortune with others and how best to respond in the present crises.

In Your Name we pray. Amen

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**Last Months Crossword**

**Across:**
1 Armour 4 Twelve 8 Ulric 9 Imitate 10 Lectern 11 Trees 12 Endurance 17 Harem 19 Newborn 21 Divorce 22 Erica 23 Wisest

**Down:**
1 Aquila 2 Miracle 3 Uncle 5 Written 6 Leave 7 Ever so 9 Ignorance 13 Damaris 14 Erosion 15 Shadow 16 Onward 18 Raves 20 Wheat

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**Prayers**

Each week we pray for:

**3rd February**

Minister, Revd David.

*From those who use our halls:* Tracy King Theatre School.

**10th February**

Minister, Revd Helen.

*From those who use our halls:* U3A Creative Writing and Play Reading.

**17th February**

Office Manager and Editor of Contact, Martin Cawte.

*From Churches Together in Bath:* Ourselves (Central United Reformed Church).

**24th February**

Organists co-ordinator, Hilary Bodger, and the team of organists.

*From those who use our halls:* Wutan School of Tai-Chi.
Intercessory Prayer Chain

If any reader of CONTACT needs someone to pray for them, Central URC has a prayer chain in operation. Each matter for prayer will be treated in the strictest confidence. If you would like prayer please ask your elder or contact Peter Rouse (☎01225 332760).

Sudoku

Each row, column and 3x3 block should contain all numbers 1 to 9.

The church heating fund could only stretch to buying a copy of 'Boiler Repairs For Dummies'.
St James the Least of All by the Rev Dr Gary Bowness

On how to survive a parish retreat

The elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained…

My dear Nephew Darren

We have just returned from our annual parish three-day silent retreat at St Epiphanius’ Priory. We had the usual attendees: those husbands who see it as an opportunity to stop their wives talking, however briefly; those wives who can keep their husbands temporarily from the 19th hole at the golf club; and those who want to see if it might be a suitable home in which to park an inconvenient relative.

It can come as quite a shock for first-timers: the ladies are appalled to discover that there is neither coffee shop nor hairdressers, and the men that there is no bar or billiards table. The resident community certainly frowned on the four men among us who were discovered silently pushing a car down the drive late one evening before starting it at the main gates as they escaped to the nearest pub. Those of us who are older hands know to bring our own supplies – carefully wrapped, so that the clinking of bottles is not too obvious as one ascends the main staircase. The near universal retreat to bedrooms before dinner is less an opportunity for quiet reflection and more one for a restorative sherry.

The more experienced also know that temperatures in the house are Siberian. All the movement and hand waving during Services is less charismatic enthusiasm and more an attempt to maintain blood flow to the extremities. The series of addresses were given by an aged member of the community. That some of our party fell asleep during the addresses was excusable; that the person giving them also occasionally did so, was not.

During one stroll round the gardens, I noticed clouds of smoke coming from behind the hedges near the chapel. My hope that it was parishioners experimenting with incense to be used in church on our return was soon crushed when I found it was a group of hardened parishioners topping up their nicotine levels. Seeing them nervously huddled in the shrubbery made one think of schools and bike sheds. I now find it difficult not to picture them all in short trousers and wearing caps.

And so we return, knowing that we have done our bit once again for the spiritual vigour of the parish, and also that three days of vegetarian cooking will mean a long queue at the village butchers tomorrow morning.

Your loving uncle, Eustace
Crossword
From Parish Pump
The Bible version used is the NIV!

Across
1 Salary (Isaiah 19:10) (4)
3 Question Jesus asked of those healed of leprosy, ‘Were not all ten — ?’ (Luke 17:17) (8)
9 Wide, elevated level area of land (Joshua 13:9) (7)
10 ‘So you also must be — , because the Son of Man will come... when you do not expect him’ (Matthew 24:44) (5)
11 ‘[He] said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He — — , and his hand was completely restored’ (Luke 6:10) (3,2)
12 ‘Who has gathered up the wind in the — of his hand?’ (Proverbs 30:4) (6)
14 Not born again (13)
17 ‘Again and again he — the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins’ (Hebrews 10:11) (6)
19 Mails (anag.) (5)
22 ‘He — — here; he has risen’ (Matthew 28:6) (2,3)
23 Defeated (Judges 20:43) (7)
24 Soldiers’ quarters (Acts 21:34) (8)
25 ‘Pillars of marble’ were how the Beloved described those of her Lover (Song of Songs 5:15) (4)

Down
1 Totally destroyed (Genesis 7:23) (5,3)
2 What the Philippian jailer was told to do with his prisoners Paul and Silas (Acts 16:23) (5)
4 Object of ridicule (Job 12:4) (8-5)
5 In most years, the month in which Easter falls (5)
6 For example, Caesarea, Joppa, Tyre, Sidon (7)
7 ‘[Jesus] was in the desert for forty — , being tempted by Satan’ (Mark 1:13) (4)
8 ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power — to our God’ (Revelation 19:1) (6)
13 Mend dots (anag.) (8)
15 Purifier (Malachi 3:3) (7)
16 Attacked (1 Samuel 27:8) (6)
18 The good Samaritan to the innkeeper: ‘When I return, I will reimburse you for any — expense you may have’ (Luke 10:35) (5)
20 How Matthew described the crowds who followed Jesus (Matthew 4:25) (5)
21 For example, one of 25 Across (Judges 19:29) (4)
Activities

Sunday Worship: 10.30am Family Worship for all ages.
Church Meeting: Third Tuesday of alternate months at 2.30pm (Jan on)
Elders’ Meeting: Second Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm
Women’s Guild: Secretary: Mrs Jane Tollyfield
First Tuesday each month at 2.30pm
Men’s Fellowship: Programme Secretary: Mr John Osborne
Fourth Tuesday each month at 2.30pm
Allsorts Group: Contact: Mr Paul Swift
Third Saturday each month
Argyle Players: Secretary: Mrs Helen Brettell
Thursdays at 7.30pm
Argyle String Orchestra: Church Contact: Martin Cawte
Thursdays at 7.30pm

Committees

Buildings: Convener; Mr MHH Burgess  Secretary; Mr RM Short
House: … Convener; Mrs Sheena Carter  Secretary; Mrs Angela Campbell
Finance: … Convener; Mr RB Turner  … Secretary; Mr WE Richardson

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