

# BRIDGE

**August 2020**



**For the United Reformed Churches in  
Bewcastle and Carlisle**

**Part of the  
Cumbria URC Missional Partnership**

## Contacts and Sunday Service Pattern

### THE MINISTER

Following the retirement of Rev Nick Mark

We are in a period of Vacancy.

Enquiries should initially be directed  
to the principal contact of  
one of the two churches  
as appropriate.

### THE KNOWE CHURCH

BEWCASTLE

Services: 1.45pm on the first Sunday in the month

Contact: Mrs Doreen Telford

Telephone: 016977 48447

### ST. GEORGE'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

WEST WALLS

CARLISLE

CA3 8UF

[www.urccarlisle.org](http://www.urccarlisle.org)

Services: 10.30am every Sunday

Contact: Mrs Rosalind Fearon

Telephone: 016973 44892

Email: [rosrayfearon@talktalk.net](mailto:rosrayfearon@talktalk.net)

When there is a fifth Sunday in the month  
the Service is for both Churches  
usually at 10.30am at St George's

**ALL SERVICES IN BOTH CHURCHES ARE  
SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

## Reflection

Sometimes I just want it to stop. Talk of Covid, protests, looting, brutality. I lose my way. Become convinced that this "new normal" is real life.

But then I meet an 87-year-old who talks of living through Polio, diphtheria, Vietnam protests and yet is still enchanted with life. He seemed surprised when I said that 2020 must be especially challenging for him. "No", he said slowly looking me straight in the eyes, "I learned a long time ago to not see the world through the printed headlines, I see the world through the people that surround me. I see the world with the realization that we love big. Therefore, I just choose to write my own headlines. "Husband loves wife today." "Family drops everything to come to Grandma's bedside." He patted my hand. "Old man makes new friend." His words collide with my worries, freeing them from the tether I had been holding tight. They float away. I am left with a renewed spirit. My headline now reads "Woman overwhelmed by the spirit of kindness and the reminder that our capacity to love is never-ending."

During the lockdown I know many people have been seizing the opportunity to declutter. And some of us have started avoiding a glimpse of ourselves in the mirror as our hair has grown longer and shaggier! Here is something I found on the internet that encourages us to declutter and unknot ourselves spiritually as well as literally.

### **Grandma, how can I live this quarantine?**

"My daughter, quarantine is a special, mysterious and sacred period. In my days, new-born children could only leave the house for the first time after their 40th day of life. It is a period of waiting and preparing for a new life. It is the period that produces a great change."

### **And how do you prepare for this change?**

"With simple, genuine and loving actions. Every morning comb your long hair with dedication and untie all the knots, even the most hidden ones that you have always neglected. It is time to put all the knots in the comb. Then dedicate yourself to untangling even your beloved one's skeins. With patience and you will try to find the end of the skein, the exact starting point of the thread. Already with these simple but powerful actions you will create order outside and inside of you. Undoing physical knots with your hands you will begin to touch your internal knots."

### **And after undoing the knots, what can I do, grandma?**

Remove all parts of you that are no longer fertile. In many funeral rites of ancient peoples, it is believed that the deceased leaves the body entirely on the 40th day after his death. In these 40 days, my daughter, cut your hair, eliminate clothes that you have not worn for a long time or that you no longer want to use, open the windows of your home well to let the stale air out, cultivate new thoughts by abandoning the old, dedicated to creating new habits, new customs, new traditions."

**Grandmother**, I'm afraid that after this isolation nothing will change. Man quickly forgets...

"How others will react to this quarantine is none of your business. Make a commitment to change and not forget. Make sure this storm shakes you up so much that it completely revolutionizes your life."

Submitted by **Sue Calvert**, *St Andrew's URC, Silloth*  
From **Elena Bernabé**, *Indigenous Peoples Cultures, April 2020*

## From St George's Secretary

It seems such a long time since we met together. I know many of you have been keeping in touch by phone, meeting in gardens and even writing letters. It is good that we can support each other at this time.

The elders met on zoom on 6th July. We discussed the possibility of re-opening, but concluded that it will not be possible for the time being. The URC has issued a personal risk assessment which allocates a score for various factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and various conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma and cancer treatment. A score of 6 or more suggests a high risk and indicates that you should continue to work or participate in church life from your home. Since anyone over 70 is given a score of 4 and over 80 a score of 6, even if they are perfectly healthy, most of us fall into the high-risk category. If anyone wishes to see the actual assessment, I can post a copy to you.

Before we re-open the elders will have to conduct a church building risk assessment and issue recommendations, which we will then have to submit to our insurers and Synod. Since government restrictions are changing all the time, the elders believe it is better for us to wait a while.

On July 5th the Cathedral opened for public worship and two of our members attended. Apparently, it was very well organised, with social distancing maintained; about 80 attendees and hymns recorded by the Cathedral choir. We are warmly invited to attend until such a time that we can re-start our own services. As part of the Heart of the City Mission Community this is an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to working and worshipping together.

The Revd. Dave Harkison, minister at Whitehaven URC which is part of the West Coast group, has been appointed to give us pastoral oversight and advice.

If any of our members are in hospital please either let me or Dave know and he will arrange for a chaplain to visit them.

For those who are not online, but have children or grandchildren who could help them - why not consider asking them to help you connect using a smart phone? This would enable you to have zoom virtual coffee mornings, something that is proving very popular in some churches. I am going to join our granddaughter's birthday on zoom when she and her friends are having a cookery lesson to make 'mud pies'.

We understand that the Food Bank and Carlisle Key are still receiving support from various agencies and the supermarkets are donating food. I have renewed our membership of Fair Trade, and received a new certificate to display at church.

I am continuing to liaise with our Mission community on zoom, and Will has been joining in the Cumbria Mission Partnership meetings.

### **Church Meeting**

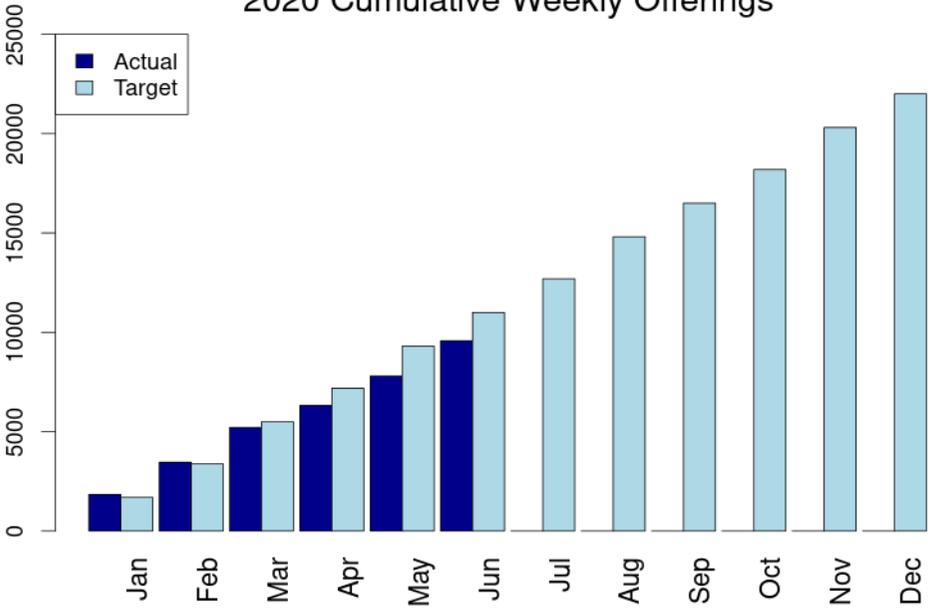
It will not be possible to hold our scheduled meeting on 22nd July. When we are able to reconvene, we will need to have an AGM.

### **The Bridge**

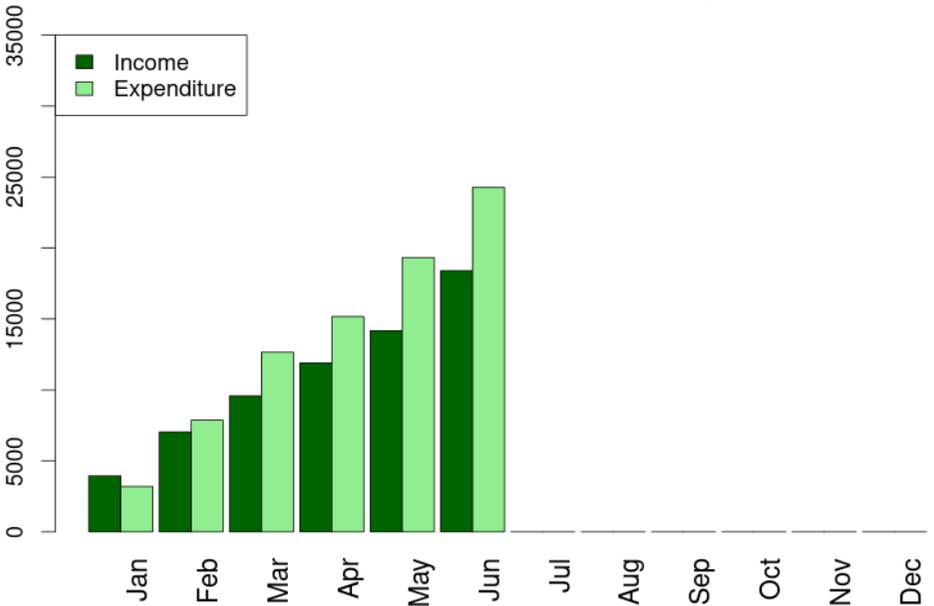
Since April it has not been possible to personally distribute copies of the Bridge. Those who are online are able to read it on our website, but Pamela and Jessie have also very kindly agreed to print copies to post. If anyone would like to contribute an article, poem, reflection or some photos, I am sure Peter would welcome them. We are extremely grateful to Peter for continuing to produce the Bridge, and for circulating links to worship services. If anyone would like printed copies of services produced by David Pitkeathly or Dave Harkison, please let me or Peter know and we will post them to you.

*Rosalind Fearon*

## St. George's URC Carlisle 2020 Cumulative Weekly Offerings



## 2020 Cumulative Total Income / Expenditure



## Canterbury Tales (2020) part 3

### Fox Glacier

Fox Glacier is famous for its proximity to Lake Matheson. In the early morning and evening when the wind dies down it is possible to see a perfect mirror reflection of the Southern Alps in the Lake. We chose to lie in bed, and then drive to the lake for breakfast. By the time we walked round the lake the surface was ruffled but we could still see the reflection. As the day heats up the low-lying clouds rise up and obscure the mountain tops. We understand now why NZ is called the 'land of the long white cloud'. It was while we were staying at Fox Glacier that we heard from our friends in Australia the disappointing news that we would not be able to visit them after all. I had to cancel all our bookings and trips. We toyed with the idea of visiting the North Island of NZ instead, but then rejected the idea because there was so much uncertainty.

### Wanaka

The next day our journey took us inland over the Haast Pass to Wanaka, stopping wherever possible to enjoy the breath-taking views of lakes and braided rivers. At one point we walked down to the lake side and gathered some driftwood that had been worn down into intriguing shapes.



Wanaka is a lovely town, set on the lake-side, and more than a match for any of the towns in the Italian lakes. It was here that we sampled our first Airbnb, a self-contained unit in a private house owned by someone who originated from Nottingham! We had our own garden area and, in the morning, we could lie in bed and watch and listen to the songbirds, the bellbird, the New Zealand robin and the fantail or Piwakawaka. The robin resembles a larger version of the British robin, only with a creamy yellow chest. The Piwakawaka's distinguishing feature is a black and white tail that fans out as it alights on a tree. It was in Wanaka that we experienced our final two meals out before the lockdown. Already there were signs of what was to come, with bottles of hand-gel everywhere.

### **Kinloch Lodge**

So far, we had made little use of our walking poles, but this was remedied at our next stop, Kinloch Lodge near Glenorchy. We took the road over the mountains and saw a lot of dead trees on the hillsides. These were the descendants of pines imported during the nineteenth century to provide shelter for the crops. Unfortunately, the fallen carpet of pine needles chokes the native plants growing beneath the trees. The natural habitat of indigenous birds and mammals is destroyed. Now New Zealand has instigated an ambitious programme to eliminate all foreign species by 2050 in order to protect the native species. We stopped briefly at Queenstown which reminded me of Bowness-on-Windermere on a busy day. It is a centre for sporting activities, but less attractive than Wanaka.

From Queenstown we had a long drive along the shores of Lake Wakatipu to Glenorchy. Like many of the narrow winding roads on the South Island this one had plenty of single-track bridges with signs to tell you which direction takes precedence. Woe betide you if you lost your concentration!

Glenorchy was not our final destination. We had another hour's drive along a narrow road which eventually became a rough and bumpy track to Kinloch Lodge Youth Hostel.

Despite its remoteness we enjoyed some delicious meals there; we just had to put our order in the day before. The owners were caving friends of our family who were having to adjust to the sudden drop in business, included a wedding cancellation, due to the new government-imposed restrictions.

The main reason for our stay at Kinloch Lodge was its proximity to the famous Routeburn Track. This is one of the most famous hiking tracks on the South Island. It goes across the Southern Alps from near Glenorchy to the road to Milford Sound. There is a series of huts, managed by wardens, where you can sleep for the night, but you have to bring your own food and bedding. The numbers are strictly regulated, so you are only allowed to stay at the huts if you book in advance. The complete trail takes about 3 days. We walked up to the first hut and back just for the day. It was easy walking through the trees up beside a river and then crossing over a rope bridge. In places we were accompanied by the robin and Piwakawaka. This is not because they are particularly sociable; rather it is because the walkers disturb the insects on which they feed. Unfortunately, we did not see any kea, notorious for attacking windscreen wipers, but we did see a Kakariki or red-crowned parakeet hunting for insects in the undergrowth. Some parts of the walk were similar to our Lake District, but then we would come across a tree palm to remind us that we were the other side of the world! The warden at the first hut told us how just four weeks previously walkers had to be rescued by helicopter after heavy rains turned the rivers into raging torrents. People had to form a chain to cross the rivers which rose from a depth of a few inches to chest height in a matter of minutes.

At various points along the Track we came across poison traps to kill the mice which were providing a food source for stoats, another introduced species. The stoats are eating the eggs of the blue ducks, an endangered species that requires about 1 mile of river for each pair to breed successfully.

## Milford Sound

Milford Sound in Fjordland is a must-see for all visitors to New Zealand. It is a three-hour drive from the nearest town of Te Anau, which was our next stop. Te Anau is another lovely lakeside resort with a spacious waterfront and many motels, but there were very few people about. The lockdown was beginning to take effect, and



we had to give our phone details when we checked into the motel as part of the contact tracing scheme. We set off at 7.30am to allow plenty of time for the journey. The road had only just been reopened after a landslide caused by heavy rain.

Fortunately, the weather was sunny for us and we took a small boat along the Sound and out into the Tasman Sea, seeing basking seals on our way, but no dolphins. There were only a handful of tourists on the boat as Chinese visitors had already been excluded before our holiday started. There were 23 empty bays in the coach park, which gives some indication of how busy Milford Sound is normally.

The next morning, we received news that all international flights out of New Zealand were coming to an end and we needed to return to the airport immediately. We were staying at the furthest point on our route from Christchurch, entailing a 400-mile drive taking 8 hours. It was at this point that my NZ SIM card came into its own,

as I had to cancel all our future bookings and warn the car hire company that we were returning early. Regretfully we headed North, on our way catching a fleeting glimpse of the remarkable turquoise Lake Takepo and a distant view of Mount Cook, where we had planned to go walking.

The airport was teeming with people, all trying to get flights home before they ceased altogether. Our onward flights were to Australia, which was already closed to incomers, and we had no hope of getting a flight to the UK. We found an airport hotel where we were able to order meals to be brought to our room, but by the second morning the breakfast was rather haphazard, and this was obviously not going to be a long-term option. Once more my SIM card came into operation and we found a motel just a bus ride from the airport for the next unanticipated stage of our holiday.

### **Regrets?**

We never got to Adelaide, Tasmania and Brisbane to see our friends. We left the driftwood in the car because we were worried that we would be stopped by customs.

### **Good memories?**

Beautiful scenery and wildlife, a spacious and sparsely populated country and plenty of time to relax and wind down. Friendly people and a slower pace of life. Ray learnt how to use his mobile phone!

*Rosalind Fearon*



Cardboard church

## Twelve Faces of Hope (10)

### **The reason to wake up in the morning**

My hope is to have PEACE - internal peace and to live in peace! My hope is not to see so many soldiers and weapons. Not to feel the tensions of war, especially in Jerusalem. My hope is to end the flow of the refugees from all over the world and to end this suffering, since I believe that no one deserves to be a refugee.

Having hope is the reason to wake up in the morning. You can't do anything without hope. Therefore, hope is crucial. Without it, more despair, destruction and desperation. Losing hope under occupation is to hate life. You need hope to be happy!

Hope is a very positive word and it's not only about justice. All of us need to compromise, because peace is more important than total justice. The main priority is to prevent people from being killed, to save our children, to feel free to meet people and not have to worry all the time.



I believe in the words of the song that says "every land is a holy land, every people are the promised people." I believe in embracing other faiths.

My personal hope is for my family to return to Iqrit in Northern Israel. My personal struggle is a small part of the Palestinian people's struggle - the hope of all the Palestinian people all over the world. I am a hopeful person and my hope is to end the occupation. There is a lack of basic justice for all Palestinians under occupation. I call occupation war - a bad reality, which is hard to keep up hope in. People are suffering. Both sides have had huge losses and paid a huge price. And we are still losing kids, women,

men, youngsters. But from the bottom it can only get better. It is time to stand up and act in order to bring change and hope to people.

Christianity is all about peace and forgiveness. We believe in the role of the church as Christians. The church can play an active role beyond the Christian part. A conflict resolution, inspired by the elementary parts of Christianity. It's about justice and peace, regardless of religion. It is about what is right!



**Shadia Sbait**

*Activist in the struggle of the people of Iqrit village*

## **Commitment for Life**

### **A Bible study by Professor Anthony G. Reddie**



Many thanks to Professor Anthony Reddie for sharing the following Bible reflection. Anthony is a leading Black Theologian, and a good friend to Commitment for Life.

'She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' (Matthew 1:21. This reflection is based on Matthew 1:18-25.)

This section from the opening chapter of Matthew's Gospel marks the 'run in' to the climax that is Jesus' birth. It follows the opening 'Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah', which serves to establish Jesus' credentials as part of the line of King David.

The story of Jesus' conception, from the engagement of Mary and Joseph through to his birth, is covered in only seven verses. This highly compressed version of the story does not seek to offer an authoritative historical record of the events of Jesus' birth. Rather, the author's aim is to interpret the meaning of this event in the salvation history of Israel and ultimately, the whole world.

Across the centuries as people have reflected on this passage, some have taken the Virgin Birth to mean some form of repulsion by or rejection of the legitimacy of sexual activity.

However, many Black religious scholars have argued that the nature of Jesus' conception and birth should not be taken as a rejection of human sexual activity. Rather, they have argued the Virgin Birth should be seen as a means of showing divine involvement in the emergence of God becoming human and entering into human history.

The concern of these scholars has been to seek to rehabilitate black sexuality from the demonised notions perpetuated by racism of black people. These misguided notions have led many black Christians to adopt extreme holiness codes in which sexual activity is deemed as ungodly and abhorrent to God.

The key text line for many people is verse 21: 'She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' Jesus, the saviour of the world, God's anointed One who is a blessing on the world - enters into our world in order to transform all that has gone before and all that will ever be.

Jesus' birth brings new hope for all oppressed and marginalised people. The old order is no more. There is something new in our world, that means that all the people who thought they ruled are now challenged by a new power, a new reality of justice and peace. This passage is a key resource for Black Theologians, for Jesus Christ is the sign of the new age to come when all forms of oppression and injustice will come to an end. Jesus is the key sign that God has sided with those who are oppressed and marginalised. God, who is revealed in Jesus the Christ, identifies with the struggle of black people.

Commitment  
for Life

## Things to ponder

- Jesus is a blessing to the whole of humanity. In what ways are you a blessing to others? In what ways does your life stand for justice, peace and equity?
- In what ways will Jesus' presence in the world, and perhaps in your life, inspire you to break with the old rules and find a new way of being you?

## What Have You Got to Smile about?

Quite a lot really!

### Smiling Is Infectious

by Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious,  
you catch it like the flu,  
When someone smiled at me today,  
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner  
and someone saw my grin.  
When he smiled I realized  
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,  
then I realized its worth.  
A single smile, just like mine  
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,  
don't leave it undetected.  
Let's start an epidemic quick,  
and get the world infected!

