

# BRIDGE

**October 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

**WE REOPENED AT ST GEORGE'S  
WITH A SERVICE ON SUNDAY 13th SEPTEMBER  
PLEASE READ ON FOR DEVELOPMENTS**

## Reflection

### *READING*

During the current and recent restrictions I have found solace, comfort and entertainment in reading. I feel quite sorry when I hear people say, "I'm not a reader", I always think, "how can you NOT be a reader!?"

Reading is probably a habit acquired quite early. Some of us are lucky in that we were read to as children. I count myself fortunate that at the village school I attended, at the end of each day the head teacher read aloud to us. The books he chose were Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling, *The History of Mr Polly* by H.G.Wells and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

We, as children, were introduced to a range of authors and styles and from that time onwards I was hooked. The book that impressed me the most and that I've returned to over the years is *The Wind in The Willows*. Although usually referred to as a children's book it's so much more. It contains poetry, wonderful prose, beautiful descriptive passages about the English countryside and humorous and empathetic characters. Some chapters in the book I considered too complex and sophisticated for children to appreciate, but as I got older and reread the book I understood them and loved them.

I can't remember a time when I wasn't reading a book. On holiday I may consume half a dozen novels. This used to be quite a packing problem but the introduction of the kindle solved that dilemma. Being able to sit at home and choose books and download them instantly onto an e-reader, is one of life's great pleasures. Imagine being in lockdown and having no access to new books. Perish the thought.

Whatever we may think about the Internet, and it's not all good, being able to choose and download books is an excellent addition to civilisation. I'm certain it must be aiding the fight against illiteracy.

Recently I spent time at the mansion of a boastful toad, almost choked inhaling the tobacco of a detective in Paris, lived with some underground heroes during World War Two, rode in a horse drawn cab down Baker Street, and never left home. The magic of reading is infinite.

I hope that there has been an increase in reading during the lockdown. It would be disappointing if people were only watching more TV and being more involved with on line games. People are reading less newspapers, but this isn't something I think is concerning, because, like me, they can access a huge amount of information to read and watch on line. Anyone in possession of a tablet or laptop can find something of interest.

The closure of libraries is a blow to any civilised society. I see ours are opening again. Hopefully the joy of reading will spread. Imagine a world without books, no, it's unimaginable!

## **News From St George's**

### **News Of Members**

We were saddened to learn of the death of Alan Burgess on 3rd September in Kingston Court. We extend our loving sympathy to his daughter Susan and Stephen, Rachel and Gemma. Many of us will have warm memories of Alan, his cheerful words of greeting as he welcomed us into church at Warwick Road, and his eagerness to help out whenever he could. I can well remember his enthusiasm when he came to Wigton URC as part of a working party from St George's to help clean out all the rubbish that had accumulated outside the cellar. Sadly, Alan's last years have been challenging, but he could always raise a smile.

We continue to remember all our members in our thoughts and prayers, especially those who have to stay at home to shield for various reasons. Thank you to all those who are keeping in touch by telephone or garden visits.

## **Reopening**

As promised, we held our first service since the beginning of lockdown in March on 13th September. It was a service of thanksgiving conducted by Iain Mackenzie as we were 'welcomed back'. There were twenty-seven people altogether, but we were able to maintain social distancing thanks to all the efforts of Will and Michael to separate and tape off some of the seats. It was strange not being able to sing hymns, but Peter and Trevor managed to source and project hymns on to the screen so it felt more like one of our usual services.

Unless government guidelines change, we plan to continue to hold services every Sunday at 10.30am. We have reverted to the preaching plan that Elizabeth compiled earlier with slight adjustments.

## **From the Elders' Meeting**

The elders have been meeting on zoom, but in September we met in St George's with the Revd Dave Harkison from Whitehaven. Dave is the Cumbria URC minister who has been assigned to assist St George's. The elders have been consulted by the Cumbria Missional partnership about shared ministry for Penrith, Bewcastle and Carlisle combined with a mission enabler role for the whole of Cumbria. Synod will be discussing the post again before it is advertised.

*Rosalind Fearon (Church Secretary)*

## **Church Flowers**

On behalf of the flower ladies I would like to apologise for not using fresh flowers in church. We will, I'm sure, start to use fresh flowers again once we feel it's safe to do so, however if anyone knows of a member who would appreciate a bunch of flowers please let me know and I will arrange it. In the meantime I have sent flowers on behalf of all church members to Jennifer and Alan Burgess's daughter, Susan. It must have been so awful to lose both parents in such a short space of time. Take care and keep well.

**Kathleen Harris**

## Alan Burgess

We have known Alan from the late fifties, at Fisher Street Church. Over the years, we have become very good friends, enjoying many happy times during our friendship at church, when we performed in many guises for the Friday Nighters' entertainment, and also during our trips to London to take in a show and enjoy a meal with the Friday Nighters' committee.

Alan was a Stalwart of the church with many roles, Elder, Manager and Secretary to the managers, duties which he performed with a great sense of humour.

It was a great privilege to have known both Alan and his late wife, Jennifer. We will miss them very much.

**Kathleen and George Murrin**

## St George's Autumn Gift Day

We look forward to our Autumn Gift Day taking place this year on the revised date of Sunday 1st November. It is hoped Members may feel able to give their support on that occasion to this fund-raising event.

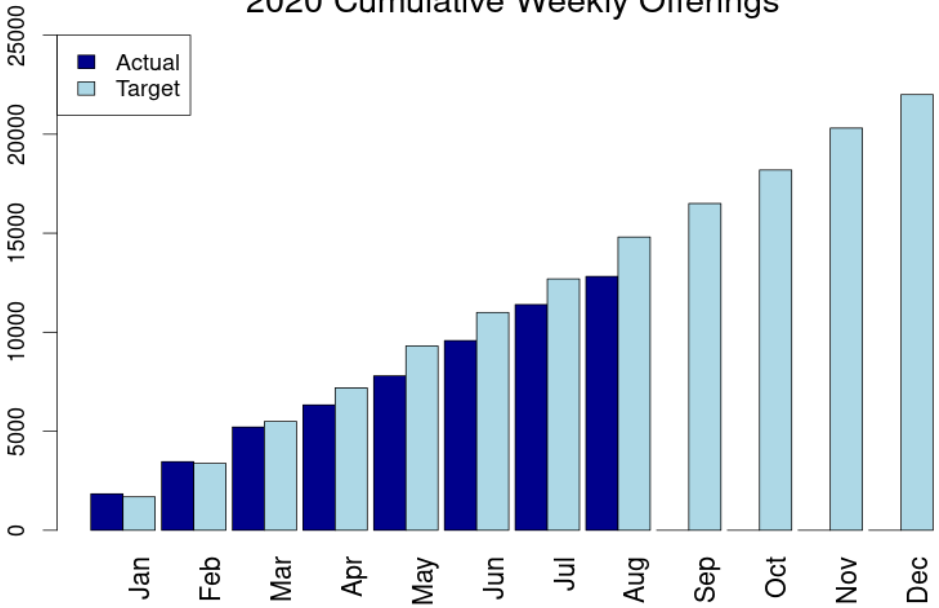
Due to the slight change in circulating "Bridge" each month, Members who receive their copies directly from Elders should have white envelopes enclosed for their contributions, and those who read their copies by email should have envelopes available separately, either at Church, or through their Elder. If, however, any Members would prefer to use their own envelopes, suitably marked, this arrangement would be fine.

Also, if Members who are registered under the Gift Aid Scheme could donate by cheque, this would be much appreciated.

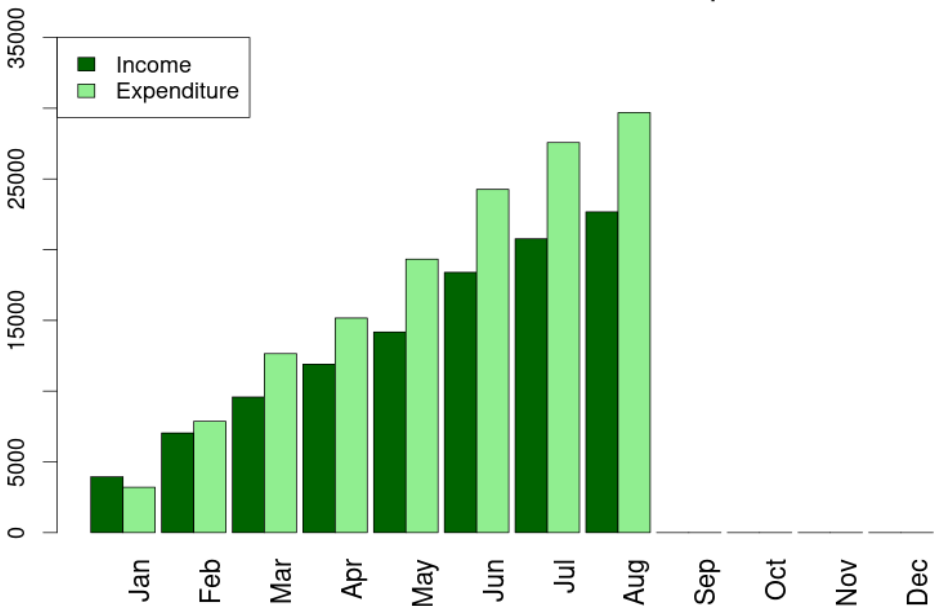
Thank you.

**Pamela Martin**  
*Gift Aid Secretary*

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



## 2020 Cumulative Total Income / Expenditure



## Shoe Boxes

I am starting to cover shoe boxes in readiness for our Shoe Box Service on 1st November. Unfortunately, we don't now have a co-ordinator for Samaritan's Purse in Carlisle. I have, therefore, taken the liberty of contacting Boxes of Hope Cumbria and, with the agreement of Church members, our boxes will go to them this year. This is a self-funded small team who visit Romania every year to distribute boxes to children who live in abject poverty, many of whom live in one-roomed huts. A donation of £2 per box will help to cover transport, packaging etc. Boxes will be for either boy or girl, with no specific age group and we are asked to focus mainly on the fun element - small toys, games and sweets. Ideally, each box to contain a car as they receive fewer boy boxes and the children always share. For more detail on contents etc please contact me.

**Elizabeth Mackenzie**

### God in all things

'Beneath the insurmountable  
is God.

Above the unfathomable  
is God.

Beyond the indescribable  
is God.

Calm us when the way ahead seems impossible:

Hold us when we are out of our depth:

Cherish us when our world turns ugly,

that we may know  
that one day

we will skip like lambs  
who have been shepherded  
to streams of living water.'

**Rachel Poolman**



## Valerie Barlow Autobiography

**Introduced by her brother, John Barlow  
at her funeral on 24th August**

My dear sister Val has left us, but let us not be too sad on this beautiful summer day, and let's celebrate her love, friendship and support - her life. Val herself prepared this biography 2 years ago, showing how organised a woman she was; she was never one to blow her own trumpet, so I admit to having embellished it a little.

She was born a Geordie on 4th July 1938. She and I lived with Mam and Dad in Newcastle, enjoying happy seaside summers with cousins at Cullercoats and Tynemouth. She remembers pots of tea from the beach bar and egg sandwiches which inevitably got covered in sand. Most of our annual holidays were spent on the Northumberland coast at Seahouses, North Sunderland, or Craster, or caravanning near Thirlmere in what was then Cumberland.

Val left school at 18, and we moved to Carlisle where Dad was extending his Newcastle-based business. She took a job in Admin at the Yorkshire Insurance Company, joined Fisher Street Presbyterian Church where she sang in the choir, taught Sunday school, sometimes played the organ and was a popular and capable member of the Badminton club.

In her late 20's Val left Carlisle for a senior secretarial position at the Newcastle Chronicle and Journal, before leaving for more exciting positions at Times Newspapers and an advertising agency. She later returned to Carlisle and worked for 5 years at Kangol Magnet, before taking up a new post at Border Television. At "Border", she was Private Secretary to the Managing Director and later to the Chairman and Chief Executive. She often described this position to me as "the most enjoyable of my career". After 26 years at Border Television, she retired in 1998.

She devoted much of her spare time to being a Manager at the Church in Fisher Street, where she sang in the choir. After Fisher Street joined with St George's, she baked for coffee mornings where

she also helped out, organised Church cleaning and maintenance, and acted as "Authorised Person for Weddings" among other responsibilities. She became Chairman of the Board of Managers at the Church and devoted a great deal of her time to looking after its material affairs. She was also on the Committee overseeing the closure of St. George's and the transfer to The Resources Centre which became the new Church.

Val represented UNICEF in Cumbria, raised funds for it, and when she had any time left over, she cooked meals enjoyed by the players after every Saturday home game at Carlisle Rugby Club where she was a keen member of the Ladies' Committee.

Mam and Dad lived on Croft Road in Stanwix for 47 years. In their later years, they were blessed to be cared for by Val when they fell ill with cancer and motor neurone disease. A few years after their passing, Val left Croft Road for smaller but modern apartments on Scotland Road and latterly on Lismore Place.

Val had been the only pupil at school in Newcastle to take and pass "O" level music. Music became a life-long passion. My sister was an accomplished pianist and was most fortunate in studying pianoforte under Doctor Wadely (a protégé of Edward Elgar) who was at that time Master of Music at Carlisle Cathedral.

Val's passion was music - everything from Classical to Jazz - she couldn't imagine life without it. When I was young, she and I would listen to Frankie Lane, Johnny Ray, Sinatra, and later, when living in London she would attend concerts by Sammy Davis Jr., Tony Bennett, Ray Charles, Count Basie, and many other stars. She was particularly fond of orchestral, piano and opera works and attended hundreds of concerts over the years, collecting many of the programmes. She was particularly thrilled to have seen her absolute favourite, Luciano Pavarotti in the flesh, performing at three concerts in London and in opera at Covent Garden.

Val loved cooking, baking, and jam-making, and I was always a beneficiary when I visited.

She was devoted to her nieces, Sarah and Mary, their children Francesca, Gabriella and Allegra, and visited them in London and Madrid when she could. They also came and stayed with her in Carlisle from time to time.

Val cared for many different people. She helped all who needed help without expecting anything in return. She was the most unselfish person I have known. She was a loving sister. She was a loving Aunt to Mary (who hasn't been able to travel here from home in Madrid owing to Covid-19 issues) and to Sarah, who has done so much to organise this gathering today.

We are missing Val more than she would ever think possible - but let's not be sad, and let us celebrate her exemplary life and the good memories we have of her.

### **And from Tony Wiseman**

I am very grateful to Pamela Martin and Jean Graham for the information they have given me relating to Val's "Fisher Street Presbyterian Church Years". They have known Valerie since her family came to Carlisle in the 1950's and they joined Fisher Street Presbyterian Church.

Val played an active roll in the life of the Church which had a huge membership at that time and also a considerable number of organisations. She was a Sunday School Teacher, Chior Member, Manager, and in the Youth Fellowship. She also gave tremendous support to so many of the Church Activities - Carol Services, Nativity Plays and Musical events to name but a few. She, along with her great friend Eleanor Bell, were two of the "mainstays" of the Church. Both carried out their duties wholeheartedly and to the highest standard. Indeed Jean reminisced that she had sung with Valerie in the Church Choir from the 1950's until this year - over 60 years!

The union of Fisher Street and St. George's was extremely seamless and successful and Val was very involved in that.

As Chairman of the Managers she was often at Church to admit tradesmen - in fact one meter reader saw her so often he thought that No35 was her house and that she lived there. She was very involved in the move to West Walls and was helpful in deciding what could be kept and very definite in deciding what was to be assigned to the skip!! When we had moved to West Walls she continued in her Church Activities, though for the past 2 years it has been a struggle but she rarely complained and got on with things.

Since "Lockdown" when Val had to self isolate she was grateful to friends and neighbours who were able to help with shopping and collecting prescriptions.

It was a great comfort to Val that her brother John and his daughter Sarah were able to be with her during her last days.

WE WILL ALL MISS VAL VERY MUCH

## **12 Faces of Hope (12)**

### **Being friends rather than enemies**

I hope that all people and communities of the Holy Land will learn to peacefully coexist and discover that their own being benefits when they are friends with the 'other' and when everyone cares for each other. I hope and am sure that this will lead to social and economic prosperity which everyone here will enjoy. For my own people, I hope that the Jewish Nation will continue to develop into the social and spiritual model for the whole of humanity that it should be.

For many decades, the situation has been going up and down. People sometimes have unrealistic expectations that the conflict can be solved in a short time and then they lose hope. We need to look at the long-term perspective of building inter-communal relations on the ground and when we do that we gain hope easily. It is like the stock market: it sometimes goes up very quickly and then down very quickly.

Therefore, it is usually impossible to make big profits in a short time. But if you look long term you will see that the market grows steadily over time and this growth is sustainable. This is what we do at Interfaith Encounter Association, by encouraging people from all backgrounds, all faiths and all beliefs to talk together regularly in a way which unites them. One encounter at a time, a few more people each time, we bring hope to the participants and to people who learn about our work.

I look back at our organisation and I think about so many people we brought hope to. This makes me think that the animosity



between our people is not as deep as it appears, and this view adds even more hope. I feel lucky that for me the current context does not only include what we hear on the news, but also includes daily experience of thousands of Jews, Muslims and Christians coming together, overcoming

prejudices and negative attitudes, and building true friendships of mutual care. Seeing this happening again and again not only brings me hope but also teaches me that it is much more natural for people of the Holy Land to be friends than to be enemies.

Hope is important because it can lead to effective positive action. When people know that interfaith encounters lead to really bridging the gaps and building good inter-communal relations, they actually join and make it happen. If we share the same space, we have to learn how to live together and together, we will change our reality.

**Yehuda Stolov**

*Executive director of the  
Interfaith Encounter Association*



## **Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

### **Shining a light for children and young people across Gaza**

Christian Aid's longterm partner the Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA) was established in 1991 to improve life for the children of Khan Yunis refugee camp in Gaza. Today it runs community activities across six centres for young children (Ash-Shuruk wa Al-Amal and An-Nawwar), teenagers (Bunat Al Ghad and Palestinian Children's Cultural Centre) and for women (the Women's Health Centre and the Gaza Women's Loan Programme). In their centres, local residents are able to interact, explore, experiment, connect and create with each other.

CFTA provides a diverse and dynamic range of activities and programmes initiated by the young people themselves, so they can express themselves and contribute towards the cultural life of their peers and local communities. CFTA's work is absolutely vital to those living in Gaza, as more and more children and young people have sought out their services. In the summer of 2018 CFTA summer camps were attended by over 1,000 children.

CFTA have been working towards peace-building strategies, particularly in the aftermath of the Great March of Return, when many local people protested the ongoing denial of the right of return for Palestinian refugees. CFTA have been teaching many young people who were involved in the protests vital ways to protect themselves in the face of conflict, and to use non-violent tactics in the face of violent situations, encouraging peaceful cultural activities such as drama, music, Dabkeh and writing.

### **A safe space for children to play**

Over the last year, new measures put on Gaza by the Palestinian Authority have resulted in increased difficulties for many living in Gaza, and many young people (predominantly men aged 18-35) have been increasingly looking to leave the area, often on a dangerous and expensive journey through Egypt in the hope of a

better life, free from conflict. One way in which CFTA has tried to combat this is to support young people to look for livelihood options in Gaza so that they will be able to stay.

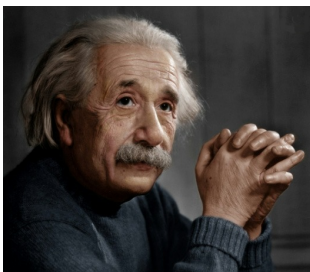
In addition to this, CFTA have also been providing training for young people on human rights in relation to youth rights and community issues in Gaza. Within

**Commitment  
for Life**

this, CFTA have provided training and held meetings to support young people on how to launch community initiatives - through training on photography, film production and music, as well as training on leading discussions on relevant community topics and issues. Thanks to this vital work, 35 young people have become human rights defenders, and together with the support of CFTA, these young people have successfully led a community campaign on immigration, and the importance of people's right to stay on their land.

As well as working tirelessly with the people of Gaza, CFTA continue to do everything possible to ensure that they run a fully inclusive service. Over the last year they have recruited an inclusion coordinator as well as two sign language interpreters, and have converted three of their six centres to be fully accessible.

### Do Not Grow Old



**Albert Einstein**

Do not grow old. No matter how long you live, never cease to stand like curious children before the great mystery into which we were born.

## Olive Cronie writes

I have recently read a poem by a former pupil; she says it was written when she was grown-up but still not too far from her childhood. I'm sure many of us have similar memories tucked away in our minds. Perhaps now is a good time to bring them back to the surface and share them.

### *A GENERATION AGO*

*A generation ago  
time ran liquid  
in the autumn glen  
and memory was forgotten sunshine  
in the green dawn  
of a summer's night  
and the days were without end  
in the golden shaft of sunlight  
of the child's forgotten dream  
where night and the sun  
remembered  
the human names of things.*

(The beauty of these words, spoken aloud, slowly and softly, fill me with such pleasure that (she says) I introduced her to the fascination and power of words in my first primary school class when she was ten years old.)