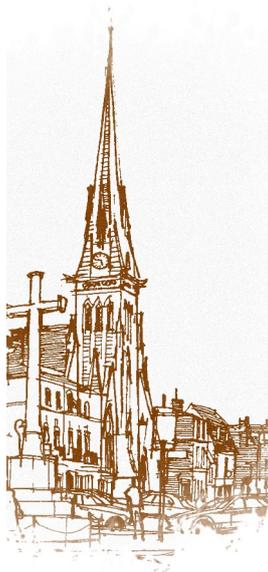


# October / November 2019

# inspire



THE NEWSLETTER OF  
THE FREE CHURCH  
(UNITED REFORMED)  
SAINT IVES

## View from the Manse



As the days draw in and the summer warmth gives way to autumn cool, we continue the worship and ministry of the Free Church. So often we can get caught up in our own patterns of life and our own responsibilities that we neglect to look outward to others. There is much this autumn in church life to help us to reach out in sharing and cooperation with the wider URC, other churches and different services in our town to widen our vision and outlook.

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October Houghton parish church have invited me to lead worship for a joint evening service. On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October Easter Synod holds its council in Whiting Street URC, Bury St Edmunds. We hold our joint evening services with our sister church, Fenstanton URC which I will be leading and Geraldine Swain on 10<sup>th</sup> November. On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October there will be an Ecology Fair put on by the Methodist Eco-Group in the Corn Exchange and by the river. On 31<sup>st</sup> October I have been asked to give a talk at the Day Care Centre at Ramsey Road. The Choral Society is presenting Handel's Messiah on 16<sup>th</sup> November at St Mary's, Godmanchester. All these events show that we are a thriving church that is serving and involved in our surrounding community.

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**Deadline for December/  
January  
17th November**

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*Copy preferably by email please to  
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## A Tribute to Sheila Downing 1937—2019 *from Catherine's Eulogy*



Sheila was born on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1937 here in St Ives at the family home in part of a thriving neighbourhood that is now North Road car park. She was the third child born to her parents, Charles and Gladys Warren. Her mother was quite surprised to find she was expecting a baby at forty-four years old, however once Sheila was born, they quickly adapted, and her mother took her with her wherever they went. Despite the 13 and 14 year difference between Sheila and her brother John and sister Margaret, the siblings were very close.

The family moved to live in the house at the Broad Leas Cemetery. It later became the Dennis Easton Funeral Home. Sheila remembered it as a very happy family home. Although much of her childhood was during the war-time years, life here in St Ives wasn't too hard. Her father was a gardener by trade and he also kept rabbits and chickens, so the family never lacked food. Sheila had a pet white rabbit which she would push around in her doll's pram. It was only in later life that she came to realise that perhaps it wasn't always the same rabbit, as bunny may have been enjoyed by the family for Sunday dinner or even Christmas lunch.

From her father Charles, Sheila inherited a love of gardening. She especially enjoyed visiting stately homes and gardens. Their home today has beautifully kept gardens, always neat and tidy. Sheila did the flowers and kept it colourful throughout the year. From her mother, Gladys, Sheila acquired her wonderful cooking skills. Many of you will have tasted her cakes and shortbread.

Sheila had many talents. She was a skilled needleworker and knitter. Her daughter Marian says she believes that in this present day she would have been encouraged to develop these skills into a career. Marian recalls how as a child they would window shop renowned stores in Cambridge, where Sheila would sketch the new fashions, and then recreate them at home for Marian.

The Free Church has always been a major part of Sheila's life. Taken by her own parents as a child, she became a member on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1953. Sheila in the past had also been a Sunday School teacher and a member of the Mother's Fellowship.

It was here at the Free Church Sheila met Cliff who was serving in the RAF at Wyton after the then Minister, Revd John Ballard, invited a group to visit St Ives. The RAF lads joined the locals to form what became a large youth group, meeting socially, holding variety shows in the Church and helping with fundraising. The young people also led services in the villages and here in St Ives.

Sheila and Cliff married here in this Church sixty-two and a half years ago on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1957. Martin Ballard was Cliff's best man. They set up home in a little cottage in Laughton's Lane, Houghton. They had their daughter, Marian, the following December.

After living for a couple of years in Ely the family returned to St Ives. They moved into their home in Fairfields in 1965, which was a home full of love where all are welcome.

Sheila's working life had always been in the town. As a teenager she had paper-rounds which led to her working in local newsagents when she left school. She worked for several other local firms including Whaley's and Nuts. Her last place of work was Woolworths before becoming a greatly valued volunteer in Just Sharing.

Both Sheila and Cliff have many interests. Sheila was an active member of the Girl Guiding Association. She was proud to have been a Brownie, a Guide, a member of the Trefoil Guild and also a Guider. For many years she and Cliff were members of the American Square Dance and also Round Dance Clubs, where they developed a wonderful social life.

Since retirement bowling has give both Sheila and Cliff great enjoyment, with membership at the Needingworth Bowls Club and the Monday Night Church Bowls. Despite her limited eyesight she was a very good bowler. Other teams often did not believe she needed Cliff's help to aim. At these clubs many afternoons and evenings have been spent in the company of good friends playing competitive matches and enjoying the social events. Sheila was also a member of the St Ivian Society and the Derby & Joan Club.

When she was registered blind, Sheila took this in her stride. It was a great limitation, but she knew there was no use complaining about what she couldn't do, and so she just got on and enjoyed the things that she could do. She adapted where she could and was able to continue knitting and sewing. She would buy wool at the charity shop, knit something with it and then donate it to the Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind to raise money for their funds. This was her way of giving back to them for all the help and support that they had given her. She read over 3000 talking books and Cliff would guide her wherever they went and discreetly let her know who was coming to speak to her.

Cont'd on page 10

## Questioning injustice



I don't know about you, but for as long as I can remember, I have had more questions than answers. As a child, I wondered why the sea is blue when water isn't – and asked why we couldn't walk on the grass. As an adult, many of my questions became more pointed and focused on issues of injustice. Why is a quarter of the world hungry when the planet produces enough food to feed everyone? Why do we spend so much money on weapons if we don't want there to be wars? Why doesn't someone change the system if it doesn't work?

In the Christian faith, we hear echoes of these questions in the raging of the prophets and the laments of the psalmists. And we follow Jesus, who answered them with his actions as well as his words. The church is a community which does not settle for the world as it is, but is inspired to work towards realising the vision of God's kingdom.

I now have the privilege of working on behalf of the United Reformed Church nationally as its Secretary for Church and Society, helping the Church to question injustice and to speak and act prophetically on key issues of justice and peace facing society. We work closely with ecumenical colleagues from the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Church of Scotland in the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT). This enables us to have a louder voice in public life, and to provide resources, campaigns and events that help people to make the links between faith, politics and social action, and respond appropriately.

Our work is currently arranged around six hopes for our world and our society:

A society where the poorest and most marginalised are at the centre

A just economy that enables the flourishing of all life

A planet where the environment is renewed

A society that welcomes the stranger

A world which actively works for peace

A politics characterised by listening, kindness and truthfulness



I am still full of questions, but it is good to be working with church members, colleagues and partners on some of these vital issues which face our society today – not only by demanding answers from those who hold power and responsibility (which includes all of us, of course), but also by playing a part in proposing solutions as well.



Find out more about the Joint Public Issues Team – and sign up for its monthly newsletter – at [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk)

**Simeon Mitchell—URC Secretary for Church and Society**

**Editor's Note** –Simeon's parents were friends of Alan and I at University. Simeon remembers the thrill of going skating on a frozen Fen as a small child on a visit to us.

## Ecological Group Afternoon Tea followed by a Boat Trip & Service

Around 24 members from St Ives and Fenstanton met in Tookey's for a delicious tea of homemade sandwiches and cakes made by Mavis, Mary & Helen. Very yummy! The weather was not looking too promising but at 5pm when we were due to embark onto the electric boats for a trip along the River Great Ouse the rain stopped and the sun came out from behind the clouds. Two boats took us along the river to Hemingford Lock and on the way, we learnt about the history of St Ives and the flora and fauna. There were a number of Swans, Coots and Moorhens and we could even see fish swimming around the boat.



Our Captain was very knowledgeable and passed around old photos of St Ives and kept us enthralled with his knowledge of the area. Our boat had the youngest and very able co-pilot, Loanne (Veronica's granddaughter) who steered us most of the way home and kept us amused with her chatter and jokes. There was only one occasion when we gently crashed into an overhanging tree and were rescued by our able Captain.

The afternoon finished with a service led by Catherine Ball which included hymns, prayers and a poem on an eco-theme. A lovely afternoon enjoyed by everyone.



**Mary Anthony**

### ***Sheila Downing—note from the editor.***

Sheila was one of the loveliest, most courageous and kind people you could ever meet. When planning her service of thanksgiving she asked if possible that Derek Newton should say a few words which he did. He spoke of the wonderful fellowship he and Hazel enjoyed with Sheila and Cliff at the Bowls Club where they shared their faith whilst admiring Sheila's gift of being a fine bowler despite her sight loss. He also spoke of her favourite hymn that was sung at the service "Summer suns are Glowing". I remember with affection talking to Sheila about this hymn when some years ago we published a series of articles on Favourite Hymns. Verse 3 particularly spoke to Sheila:

*Lord upon our blindness thy pure radiance pour:  
For Thy loving kindness make us love thee more  
And when clouds are drifting dark across our sky  
Then, the veil uplifting Father be thou nigh.*

**Chris**

## Christian Aid Week 2019



### St Ives Area

As in previous years, it is the miraculous efforts of our neighbouring villages, Fenstanton, Holywell-cum-Needingworth and Houghton and Wyton that deserve first mention as in combination they have brought to the Christian Aid cause over £9500. This represents almost 95% of our Area total.

There is clearly a pride in the villages surrounding us that St Ives itself struggles to match. Perhaps the prospect of trying to cover a much larger population is too daunting. As the villages' efforts have increased in recent years, St Ives' Christian Aid response has undergone a significant sea-change.

The Free Church is now the lone member of Churches Together in St Ives that remains part of our Christian Aid Area. Our contribution in 2019 was noticeably lower than in recent years due to Charlotte Jordan's appeal for the Lesvos migrants centre occurring at the same time.

In the pleasantly amicable telephone conversation with Christian Aid Central Office, Pam Richardson was fulsome in appreciation of our focus on the migrants' cause, recognising a very similar desperate need to those that Christian Aid traditionally supports.

I now turn to the future as we need to consider whether our Church Office can continue to be the Distribution Centre for all the items of stationery that are necessary for Christian Aid Week to operate.

In this respect, Gill Innes has been our Area Organiser for some years now. Christian Aid Week is in May but necessary preparatory work begins in early February.

***Brian Lodde - St Ives Area Treasurer.***

### Bank Holiday Snack Bars

Our August Bank Holiday snack bar raised £570. The total raised at all four Bank Holiday snack bars is over £2800 towards our much needed church funds. This is an excellent total and I want to thank all our volunteers for their hard work and commitment. Enjoy your rest.

Thank you,

Mavis

## Church Activities

Tue s 8thOct & Tue 12th\Nov	14.30	Meditation led by John Williams at Fenstanton URC
Wednes- days	10:00 - 11:30	Tots & Carers (term time)
Wed 30th Oct & 27th no	19:45	Poetry Group in Tookeys
Mondays Not 14th Oct	19:00	Bowls Club

## Christmas Choir

Where has the year gone?  
Yes, I know, it is still warm  
but with Inspire every two months  
now this one will cover October.

Sooooo.....just to let you know  
that Christmas Choir will be  
starting on 30th October. If you are  
interested in singing with us please  
let Irene or Brian know, we do have  
good fun.  
Irene



## Community Activities

<b>Mondays</b>	<b>10:00</b>	<b>CRUSE</b>
<b>Tues- days</b>	<b>19:30</b>	<b>Photographic club</b>
<b>Thurs- days</b>	<b>09:45</b>	<b>Sunny Steps</b>
<b>Wednes- days</b>	<b>14:00</b>	<b>Senior Citizens</b>
Thurs 3rd Oct	19:00	WI
Sat 5th Oct	09:30 - 15:30	Saints Crafters Fair
Tues 5th Oct	10:00	Alzheimers Support Drop-in Café
Tues 15th Oct	19:00	Gardening club AGM
Fri 25th Oct	9:30- 16:30	Just Sharing Christmas Preview and Shopping Event
Sat 26th Oct	9:30- 16:30	Just Sharing Christmas Preview and Shopping Event
Wed 30th Oct	19:30	RSPB
Sat 2nd Nov	09:30 - 15:30	Saints Crafters Craft Fair
Thurs 7th Nov	19:00	WI
Fri 15th Nov	19:30	Civic Society
Tues 19th Nov	10:00	Alzheimers Drop-in Café
Wed 20th Nov	19:00	Gardening Club

## Fenstanton Worship

Sun 6th Oct	09:30	Revd Derek Newton Holy Communion
Sun 6th Oct	18:30	Houghton Chapel
Tue 8th Oct	14.30	Meditation led by John Williams
Sun 13th Oct	09:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball -
Sun 13th Oct	18:00	Joint worship at Fenstanton Catherine Ball
Sun 20th Oct	09:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 27th Oct	09:30	Keith Cakebread
Sun 3rd Nov	09:30	Revd Derek Newton
Sun 10th Nov	9:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 10th Nov	18;00	Joint Service led by Gerry Swain
Tues 14th Nov	14:30	Meditation led by John Williams
Sun 17th Nov	09:30	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 24th Nov	9:30	Revd Peter Ball

## Free Church Worship

### Chapel Prayers 10am Daily Mon—Sat



Sun 6th Oct	11:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball Holy Communion
	18:30	Houghton Chapel Service (at Houghton Chapel)
Sun 13th Oct	11:00	Dr Christine Macleod
Sun 13th Oct	18;00	Joint worship at Fenstanton Revd Catherine Ball
Sun 20th Oct	11:00	: Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 27th Oct	11:00	Revd Derek Newton
Sun 3rd Nov	11:00	Rev Dr Catherine Ball Holy Communion
Sun 10th Nov	10:40	Remembrance Sunday. Out- door service
Sun 17th Nov	11:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball
Sun 24th Nov	11:00	Revd Dr Catherine Ball Cafe- style worship
Sun 24th Nov	10;45	Hinchingbrooke Hospital Chapel

### Trial changes to the Office

As you will have noticed from the sign on the front door of the office we are having a trial period of closing the office door for two days a week. This is to allow important office work to be done without interruption. One of the advantages of having our two temporary administrators covering for Gill is that they have been able to give us fresh views on the workings of the office with thoughts and ideas to help make life easier. The main observation is that there is a constant stream of visitors, some just passing, and some staying for a while.

Trying to concentrate on the more important jobs ie. invoicing, setting orders of service, banking, making bookings and book-keeping with a constant stream of interruptions is hard going. Although the door will be closed on these two days the office will be manned Monday to Friday 9.00am.-1.pm. for the foreseeable future.

Please bear in mind when Gill became ill the burden of the office fell on the shoulders of ad-hoc volunteers and now we are trying to re-establish the office routines with fewer handovers.

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# We Need to Talk About Food



A new report in the medical journal *Lancet* suggests we must talk—and act—on food. The findings of the report were both challenging and hopeful. It asked the question: “how could we feed a predicted global population of 10 billion without destroying the planet?” The answer was: it’s possible, but only if we change our diets radically, particularly cutting global red meat consumption by a whopping 50%. Clearly environmentalists need to address food; but when environmentalists (as well as Christians!) have a reputation for simply being killjoys, how can we do that and bring people with us rather than turn them off?

The report is useful to us. It doesn’t just tell us what not to do, but establishes positively what a nutritionally balanced and environmentally sustainable diet would contain – the ‘planetary health diet’. This need not cut meat entirely and gives options for personal and cultural taste. Moreover, as well as looking at how we can feed 10 billion people within environmental limits, it has an equal focus on good health. Adopting the guidelines would avoid 11 million premature adult deaths a year resulting from poor diet, such as the continuing increase in side effects of obesity.

Nevertheless, it’s a challenge. Taking up this ‘planetary health diet’ would mean Europeans, for example, eating 77% less red meat and 15 times more nuts and seeds. But if we are to face the fact that our agriculture causes around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions, half of that from livestock, we can’t avoid this challenge.

A good place to start is by talking and praying about it with other Christians. As we do so, we must emphasise the benefits for all – not just those who care about the environment. We must discover the joy in sustainable food that is different from what we have become accustomed to; and in being healthier for it.

***From the church eco group courtesy of A Rocha.***

## **Our church flowers.....**

Visitors and worshippers alike often comment on the lovely flowers we have around the building and we are grateful to the team that ensure they are fresh and attractive. However we have a rapidly decreasing number of people who are fit and able to manage to arrange pedestals and we urgently need people to join the team. Ever fancied having a go? We can arrange tuition if you would like to try! If you are interested please contact Valerie Temple on 01480 466204 or [vjtctemple1@ntlworld.com](mailto:vjtctemple1@ntlworld.com). There is a flower fund which you can draw on to offset the cost of flowers.



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## ***A View from the Pew or the Window—a very personal reflection from Rosemary Whiffen***

### ***ALL Things Bright and Beautiful***

"ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL"

When Christine asked me if I would do another "View from the Pew" I smiled to myself because for the past four months my only view has been limited to the view from my bungalow windows!

It all started when Andrew became a member. I fell over in my lounge and found it very hard to move. I knew that Andrew was looking forward to church very much and I didn't want to disappoint him so I struggled and finally stood up. Jim Riddell was picking us up to take us to church in his car as he often does! I survived the service and sat most of the time.

However, Jim thought I should be at the hospital so when we arrived home he went across to my neighbours. They promptly took me to A & E where it was discovered I had broken my kneecap as well as other injuries. I was told I had to stay in hospital as they would probably operate that day. The consequence was that I was put in a plaster cast from my thigh to my ankle (everyone delighted in drawing colourful pictures on it!). I had a two week stay in hospital. The cast was left on for seven weeks and then I progressed to a brace from thigh to ankle for another six weeks. I currently have a support which is in place for another four weeks. In all this time I couldn't straighten my leg so I wasn't able to get in a car or get up and down steps let alone walk! Imagine my excitement when at last I was taken to Tesco!



I have learned that there is beauty everywhere if you have eyes to see.

Looking from my window, I saw the changing of the seasons and the birds rearing their young the fledglings leaving the nests and the flowers coming and going with the season. I also had the joy of so many visits from friends and family. I was very aware of the beauty and love of God. I had time for Bible reading and contemplation on the many gifts God has given me.

Thank you all for the love and concern you have shown me. In a way, it was almost worth being incapacitated.

God bless you all as He does me!



Rosemary xxx

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## Jean

We recently received these photos of Jean Grabaskey attending the wedding in July of her granddaughter Emily in Guiting Power in The Cotswolds. Jean, who is now 97 years young, has been a church member since she and her late husband Hedley "Grab" joined the church way back in 1966. She has recently moved from her bungalow in Houghton to which they moved on Grab's retirement and is now settled in Field Lodge. Earlier in the year whilst on holiday in Southwold she met up with Bill and Denise for a meal and a visit to the chapel where Bill is a Trustee.



### *Tribute to Sheila Continued.*

Her greatest love was her family. Her beloved husband Cliff, her daughter Marian and husband Mark, along with their children Natalie and Daniel. She was very pleased when the gift of great-grandchildren came, Natalie and Kieran's girls, Amelia and Elizabeth and Daniel's boys, Alfie and Ollie. She would sit looking out of her lounge window to see her grandchildren wave as they walked home from school. She could make out their outline with her peripheral vision. She would say that a visit from her great-grandchildren was the greatest tonic in the world.

In February 2017 they celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in the usual Downing way, with family and friends gathered together with lots of food and fun. Their anniversary week started with a family weekend at Centre Parcs where the four generations enjoyed spending time together. This was followed the next weekend with an afternoon tea for the wider family and many friends.

Sadly, the following July, after her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, Sheila became poorly with cancer. She had surgery and went through treatment but then a year ago she learned she had secondaries. Cliff regularly took her to the Woodlands Centre at Hinchingbrooke Hospital for treatment and through it all her faith was her strength. Sheila was a lovely warm and friendly person; whenever I visited her, either at home or in hospital, she was always positive and cheerful. She was grateful for the care and treatment that medical staff and carers gave her. She was very brave when she learned that she didn't have long to live and was grateful that she was able to go home to receive palliative care. Her family were able to be with her and to say goodbye.

**Catherine**

# Christmas Shop

and Annual Sale

at

## Just Sharing

The Fair Trade Shop  
St Ives Free Church  
Market Hill, St Ives  
01480 496570  
email: justsharing@stivesfreechurch.org

on

**Friday 25th &  
Saturday 26th October**  
**9.30am — 4.30pm**



**Make a purchase  
that makes a difference**



Now is the time to look for your spare shoeboxes – to fill them with gifts and goodies for those children who live abroad. Operation Christmas Child is brought to you by the charity Samaritan's Purse UK.

At this special time it will be the only opportunity to send them our love with something special just for them this Christmas. Look out for leaflets in and around the Free Church (Tookeys Coffee Shop for instance) or pick one up from the church office on Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 9.00am to 1.00pm.

Please bring your boxes to the church office, or to me, by the first week of November 2019.

THANK YOU  
VAL BUSH

## News of Little Gidding

Dear Friends,

Well ahead of time we are giving plenty of notice for two Little Gidding dates next year.

February Saturday 29th 2020 which is the day before the first Sunday in Lent, title etc. yet to be decided.

"Limping into Lent" springs to mind but that is because we are all politically exhausted at the moment.

Hope springs eternal as we know and all will be well and that sort of thing so please put the date in your diary.

Similarly we have booked Saturday 28th November 2020 the day before the first Sunday in Advent.

We hope it provides the antidote to any form of Christmas panic bombardment annually hurled at us in all its many shapes and forms.

More details to come.

Every Blessing, Joey, John, Gerry.

## FROM THE ECO GROUP

Lots of wrapping paper contains plastic. Glitter used to decorate cards also contains plastic.

M&S has announced a glitter-free Christmas range to reduce plastic waste. This applies to wrapping paper, cards, tags, gift bags, calendars and crackers.

All designs which previously featured glitter are now widely recyclable. Their Christmas wrapping paper rolls have recycling instructions on the back.

(Do not forget to remove sellotape and bows etc from your presents).

Waitrose are also aiming to ban plastic glitter in Christmas products.

Check other shops too before you buy.

Aim to buy cards printed on recycled, uncoated cardboard or send an e-card.

Mavis.

## Contacts

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Vacant

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Vacant

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### Asst Manager

Rosemarie Smith  
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### Church Office 468535

[office@stivesfreechurch.org](mailto:office@stivesfreechurch.org)  
Open 9am - 1pm Monday/ Wed/Friday

**Room Bookings should be made  
through the Church Office**

*The Free Church is committed to the  
safeguarding of children and  
vulnerable adults.*

## View from the Manse cont'd

The Lord Jesus, when he came to Earth lived in a particular time and place and reached out to the people in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestine. Now as risen Lord he rules over all the world. We as his people today are to celebrate our local responsibilities and also to be concerned about the wider world as we seek to further the Lord's purposes of bringing peace and justice to all people. We can be involved by supporting wider movements such as Fairtrade and charities that go overseas such as Christian Aid who support and help those who are living in difficulty, refugees in war-torn countries and those struggling in long-term poverty.

For a while the development of our communications technology through the internet, along with the spread of globalisation through international trade and cooperation suggested that our perspectives were broadened, and our understanding of different races and cultures widened. However, more recently and sadly, many countries seem to be turning inward with protectionist and nationalist agendas and personal interest. And churches in Britain, too, seem less focused upon our unity and shared ministry to the world, than on trying to survive in an increasingly secular society. Differences have become divisions and cooperation has in so many cases become conflict.

2 Corinthians 5 says that God has reconciled us through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, so we are ambassadors for Christ to share with others, God's grace and mercy. Our role is thus to further God's purpose of reconciling the world to himself and humans to each other. May we buck the recent trends and continue to forge our wider church and ecumenical bonds and be open to learn and share with the wider world in grace and peace.

God bless,

**Catherine**