Journey with



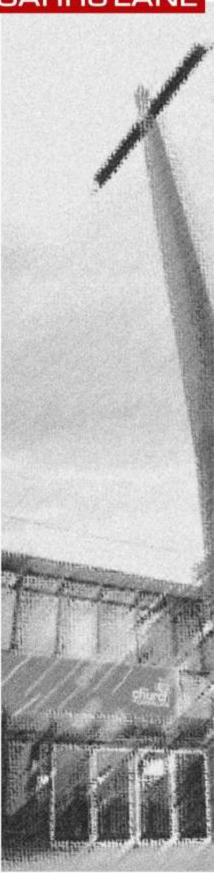
CONTINUING
STORY OF
THE CHURCH AT
CARRS LANE



Summer

Tributes to Margaret Cross, A Migrant's Journey, Commitment for Life, Christian Aid & Fair Trade News

United in Jesus | serving the city
The home of a partnership of Christian ministries
supported by the Methodist and United Reformed Churches



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'We can, we will, we are' featured on p15 is one of the poems in Soaring with Clipped Wings, a book of poems of survival available from Steph Neville for £5.

All proceeds go to <u>Stories of Hope and Home</u>, registered charity no. 1195224.

Email: stephanie@carrslanelivedcommunity.org.uk



Cover picture:

Image by Marcelkessler on Pixabay

Editorial Team: Steph Neville, Lindsay Peniston Autumn 2021 deadline: 1 September 2021

Pastoral Letter

Dear friends,

Once a friend drew my attention to a verse in the Old Testament, a verse that many would consider to be quite obscure. This was at a time in my life when the future looked uncertain, which meant that I had some important decisions to make about the direction I was going to take. The passage of Scripture that I was being directed to was from chapter 20 of the Second Book of Chronicles, when King Jehoshaphat received the news that three armies (Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites, to be exact) had joined forces and were coming against him and his people in one massive attack. On receiving the message, Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly hall of the temple in Jerusalem and began to pray. His prayer concludes with the words, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." (2 Chronicles 20:12)

We, the people of The Church at Carrs Lane, are looking at an uncertain future, which means that we have important decisions to make about the direction we are going to take as a Christian family. At the church meeting held on the afternoon of Sunday, 18th July a feasibility study about the sustainability of our current premises was discussed, alongside reflections and conclusions reached by our Elders / Trustees based on many months of discussion and discernment. The meeting also received a report about the Gifts, Time & Skills Audit that was undertaken among our members and friends, which indicates the human resource available to us as we plan ahead. Early in the meeting, it

was stated that the conversation was likely to raise more questions than answers, and that proved to be correct. For that reason, the church meeting was a significant moment in the life of our Christian family, because together we faced the critical questions that confront us.

Like Jehoshaphat and his people, at this moment in time we may not know what we are going to do, but we are facing facts, and considering our options. While we take stock, our eyes must be on God, who Jehoshaphat praises as the God of our ancestors, and ruler of all nations. For us, this is also the God revealed to us Jesus. As Christian sisters and brothers, we view God through our understanding, encounter, and love of Jesus. So, our eyes are on the one who said to people at critical moments in their lives, "Follow me", and those who did found new direction, new purpose, new life. The church meeting on 18th July concluded with words attributed to St. Richard of Chichester, may they be our prayer for today and the time ahead of us:

Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things we pray: to see thee more clearly, to love thee more dearly to follow thee more nearly, day by day.

Grace, peace & love,

Neil

Rev Dr Neil Johnson



Commitment for Life and Christian Aid

Dear Friends

A big thank you to everyone who supported Christian Aid Week in whatever way this year. In spite of the difficulties that the Covid 19 restrictions gave us, we were still able to give in a practical way. A particular thank you to Pat Davies for her continued commitment by walking each day.

I am wearing two hats at the Church at Carrs Lane at the moment - Christian Aid rep and *Commitment for Life* rep. You might wonder what is the difference and why do we support them both? To be honest, I have sometimes wondered myself!

This week I have received a letter from Commitment for Life which answers this question and I wanted to share the answer with you. The letter starts by quoting Nelson Mandela:

"Overcoming poverty is not an act of charity.

It is an act of justice."

Why support Commitment for Life?

- 1. Commitment for Life is the United Reformed Church's global justice programme.
 - It is not aid, as much as aid is needed. It is not charity, as much as charity helps.
 - It is JUSTICE, as Nelson reminds us.
- 2. We focus on prayer and activism. Without prayer, nothing of any substance to challenge injustice will happen as Jesus taught when some disciples were trying - unsuccessfully - to cast out the devils of injustice. Prayer is key, and activism and advocacy are critical. Yes, we want to share, but giving without prayer is pretty much useless.

- 3. We don't only support *Christian Aid*, but also *Global Justice Now*, The *Fairtrade Foundation*, *Jubilee Debt Campaign* and *The Climate Coalition*. We believe that an integrated approach to justice makes sense for us as a denomination.
- 4. Commitment for Life works in partnership with our Reformed global partners through Global and Intercultural Ministries.

 This is important, because Christian Aid does such good work, but it represents a wide variety not only Reformed traditions. We think the Reformed Church offers a particular gift to the world in its work for justice, and Commitment for Life gives us a forum to offer these gifts.
- Christian Aid has repeatedly praised the work of Commitment for Life. We are unique.
 We are the reason why the URC gives by far the most per capita than any other denomination. Christian Aid really do want us to continue.

This really helped me to understand why it is so important to support Christian Aid and *Commitment for Life*. I hope it helps you too. The Commitment for Life team also wrote in the letter:

"There are many deeply unjust situations facing the world and the church today. Imagine being a worker in a sweatshop in Bangladesh: you have no worker

rights, you work insane hours with toilet breaks, in conditions which would make slave owners blush. Imagine being a young Zimbabwean farmer having to face climate





disruption with absolutely no help. Imagine being a young Palestinian growing up in Gaza, a region which has been

described by some as a vast, open-air prison. What about facing the prospect of waiting for up to 57 years before your country's COVID vaccine programme is complete when the UK will have finished its programme by February or March 2022? When we arrive in heaven, God will want to know how we worked for justice, and I want to make sure that *Commitment for Life* is a reasonable answer!"

Thank you again for supporting *Christian Aid* and *Commitment for Life*.

Justice, love, joy and hope be yours.

Díana Cullum-Hall

We received a 'thank you' card for this year's donation of £1,314



Commitment for Life – Moving Stories – July/August 2021

The 9,000 residents of Abu Rashwan area of Gaza feel safer and are better connected as a result of the support of Commitment for Life's partner, CFTA.

Abu Rashwan is an agricultural community where many families live hand to mouth – unemployment is high, and people often struggle with food insecurity.

There are no properly functioning sewage or water services, and electricity shortages prevail.

With support from CFTA to identify and advocate for their needs, the community resilience enhancement committee (CREC) in Abu Rashwan neighbourhood mobilised and coordinated private sector, municipal and local volunteers to purchase and install



Construction of a solar panel streetlight

solar panel streetlights. These changes came as a result of the local Community Resilience Enhancement Committee's improved confidence and trust in their own abilities.

The area falls between two governorates and so local authority

jurisdiction has largely been absent – this has now been improved with greater engagement from Khan Younis authority. Alongside these benefits, the committee is now employing dispute resolution methods. For example, some residents were reticent to giving up land to the new road and this was resolved with dialogue.

One of the members of the community, Mr. Wael Al Laham, commented,

"I am living in Abu Rashwan area since 25 years. This the first time, I saw the road clearly while I'm returning to home at night."

Tribute to Margaret Cross by her sister-in-law Betty Law

I feel very honoured to be asked by my brother Bob to make this tribute to Margaret.

I always wanted a sister and in marrying my brother, Margaret became that sister. I actually knew Margaret before Bob did because, when I joined Carrs Lane Church and Seventy Club in 1956, Margaret was already a member there. Four years later I took my little brother along and the rest is history!

Margaret Rose Rees was the much beloved daughter of Tommy and Gladys Rees, who lived in Barry. They had lost one child and thought they would never have another so when Margaret with her dark curly hair came along on Christmas eve in 1932 all their Christmas dreams came true.

It was not easy growing up Wales during the 1930s and '40s and in wartime, but with a secure homelife and plenty of family around, cousins and friends to play with, as well as her dog ... and with a beach and park nearby ... Margaret thrived.

Margaret did well at school and chose a career in the Civil Service when she finished. It was this career that brought her to Birmingham, aged only 21. She joined Carrs Lane Church and got involved in Seventy Club, a unique club for 18-30 year-olds, not only providing friendship and fun times for single people in the City but the opportunity to serve the social needs of the local community as well.

Margaret had a firm but private faith that played itself out in acts of service all her life, and some of these started in the Seventy Club regularly helping at a Blind School and other social service activities. Later, she was to be one of the founder members of the Carrs Lane Counselling Service that helped so many people in

the City. For some years she helped to run the Carrs Lane Café, serving the business community, and held various other organisational roles within the Church. She helped run Traidcraft stalls and was Church Secretary for many years and until only a few years ago was in charge of the archives there, dealing with family history enquiries.

Margaret loved all kinds of sport and especially watching cricket at Edgbaston with Bob and following tennis and rugby on the TV. She was a life-long Welsh rugby fan and nothing would move her from the tele when Wales were playing. Like her father, she was an avid reader and walker and in earlier days loved nothing more than to walk her dogs, Sandy and then Satchmo, in the Park daily, She loved the theatre and music and was a regular at the Birmingham Symphony orchestra concerts and the Welsh National Opera.

Home and family life with Bob and then with Andrew and Catherine were central to Margaret's life. Yesterday would have been Margaret and Bob's 59th wedding anniversary, a strong loving relationship that coped with all the ups and downs that life throws at you. Their love was consistent to the very end. School holidays were often spent back in Barry in the company of Tommy and Gladys, her children enjoying the beach life she had had as a child. Later when Grandchildren Emily, Laura and Charlotte came along they brought Margaret much joy. Distance meant she only saw them occasionally but she took great interest in their lives and then in the lives of the two great grandsons, Thomas and Kayden.

Family visits to us in Cornwall and York and many holidays and weekends with other friends from the Seventy Club filled these middle years and then later when children had moved on and our

Mother had moved to live with us in York, Margaret and Bob selflessly gave us two weeks of their annual leave each year to give us a break. Later we enjoyed holidays together in Cornwall, the Lakes and Scotland often with friend Maureen and Satchmo, her beloved dog in tow. In recent years they have spent most of their Christmases with us so that for my grandchildren Christmas always meant Margaret and Bob being there.

These are just some of my recollections of Margaret's life. I will have missed some things out and you will all have your own particular memories... cherish these memories and remember them as we give thanks today for a unique lady, a loving wife and mother, a compassionate



daughter, a fun loving grandma, a good organiser, a wise listener and counsellor and a loyal trustworthy friend.

Margaret, thank you for all you shared with us, all you gave to us of yourself, your love of nature, of animals, of people. And thank you, that I can call you my sister.

Now rest in peace. Life well done!

Some Memories of Margaret Cross from Maureen Brown

My friendship with Margaret goes back many decades to the mid 1950s.

When we met I was 20 and Margaret was 21. Originally from Barry in South Wales, Margaret's job with the Ministry of Transport moved from Wolverhampton to Birmingham. At first, she lived on the Hagley Road at the YWCA where a contact introduced her to 70 Club. Our friendship developed solely from

our shared interests. Full of energy, with youth on our side, we enjoyed the company of 70 club members on the regular Saturday rambles. That then led to Easter Weekends, youth hostelling in either North Wales or the Lake District, plus a youth hostelling main summer holiday in Ireland where we had three bases - Dublin, Killarney in County Kerry, and Valencia Island just off the west coast of County Kerry. Before Bob was on the scene there would be an occasional theatre visit; on one occasion we stayed in London to fit in a theatre visit or two. In addition to Ireland, we shared two other main holidays together in Bournemouth and Montreux in Switzerland. Linked with the social service side of 70 club, groups would regularly spend evenings together doing decorating jobs for elderly folks. Monday was the regular evening to help youngsters at Lickey Grange Blind School. Journeys for all these various activities were done by bus.

Way back in the 1950s, within the premises of the previous Carrs Lane Church building, was the café run by Elsie. She presented a good tasty lunch and although most tables were intended to sit 2 or 4 people the centre one was oval and spacious and so encouraged sociability enjoyed by all of us who made use of it. All these memories date from before Margaret and I married Bob and Ron in the early 1960s.

However, one last memory and deep thanks I must recall of Margaret that goes back to 1997 at the time of Ron's last few days. She moved into our house to help care and provide meals for myself and our three boys who had returned home to be close at hand at the end, enabling us to be with Ron for those final precious days.

Easter Flower Arranging Workshop on Zoom







Arrangements on Saturday morning













With thanks to Jill, Christine and Liz for joining in so enthusiastically and Neil and Anne who lent moral



And in full bloom on Easter Day





Julie Grove

A Migrant Journey: A Book Review, of sorts...

For the past few days, I've been travelling north with a Mexican woman called Lydia Pérez and her eight-year-old son, Luca. They are fleeing their home in Acapulco, desperately seeking to escape the grip of a drug cartel and reach safety in the US. They carry few belongings, some cash and a bank card Lydia dare not use because it would reveal her whereabouts. They are also both carrying a deep and harrowing sense of grief and loss.

Married to Sebastián, a journalist well-known for his campaigning, Lydia enjoyed a comfortable, middle class life. She owned a successful bookshop, popular with customers who liked to chat about what they might read; she kept a supply of her favourite titles and loved it when someone choose to buy one of her chosen books. That was what happened the first time Javier Fuentes came into the shop and they shared a conversation about the three books he had chosen, all on her list. Gradually their relationship developed, first into real friendship and then – professed by him - something deeper.

It is only in a conversation with Sebastián about an article he had written on *Los Jardineros*, the most ruthless of all the drug cartels, that she discovered the identity of her new friend and the extent of his brutality. His reputation went before him across all parts of the city and he was justly feared as the boss of this highly influential gang. Lydia feared for Sebastián's life when she knew what he had written, but the description sat uneasily with her as she remembered her cultured, well read, poetry-writing

friend and they agreed she should warn him about the forthcoming article. It was a foolish, life-changing mistake.

So now Lydia is on the run, desperately telling herself not to think. Not to allow herself to go back to the mind-numbing carnage of that afternoon when the masked, black-clad gunmen murdered sixteen members of her extended family in the yard at the back of her grandmother's house where they had gathered for a barbecue. By a twist of fate, she and Luca were inside the house and managed to hide but she knows Javier will come after her and all because of what Sebastián had written. She flees her home and her city; she knows she must keep vigilant, keep on the move, stay low, leave no trail, just keep moving towards *el norte*.

Her journey - and mine with her - involves nail biting encounters with people, some in authority but all of them suspicious because the tentacles of the cartels reach every place, so no-one can be trusted. After covering the 230 miles to Mexico City huddled down at the back of a bus, her plan to fly north from the airport was foiled because, although she grabbed her passport before she left, she has no papers for Luca. They are forced to walk to a migrant camp in Huehuetoca where two teenage sisters from Honduras befriend Luca and teach him and his mother how to jump onto the roof of *La Bestia*, the goods train heading north. Soledad and Rebeca are old hands at navigating the perils of the journey, the death-defying leaps, the arrests, the injuries, the thefts and the corruption. Nevertheless, heart-stopping risks fill their

days and dark terrors their nights. And their constant companion is suspicion about everyone they meet.

Eventually they reach the border at Nogales where they meet up with the girls' coyote, *El Chacal*. Their passage has been arranged by their cousin in the US but Lydia clears out her mother's bank account to pay him \$11,000 for her and Luca to join the group. The two-day crossing through the Sonoran Desert is physically gruelling and mentally tortuous, as individuals fall by the wayside, but it is understood that nothing will hold up the group's progress, timed with precision to avoid border patrols. The wisdom of Lydia's caution about one fellow traveller is proven when she discovers he has been sending messages about their whereabouts back to Javier. Her moment of release comes, not so much as they finally reach safety after sixteen days and 2,645 miles, but when she uses Lorenzo's phone to tell Javier his spy is dead and she is free at last.

American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins is described as 'an urgent, blistering, unforgettable book'. At the time of reading it, there are renewed reports of thousands of migrants, many unaccompanied children - 10,000 in February - making the journey from South to North America. And for me, Lydia's story, though fictional, gives a face to each of those migrants who are fleeing violence and near-certain death in search of life. It is a never-to-be forgotten read.

Julie Grove

We Can, We Will, We Are

We can know ourselves deeply We can see what we can see

We can still breathe in the icy air
We can dream

We can change our lives
We can create and grow new ideas

We can dance and shout together We can do anything

We can communicate We can tell stories

We will sit together under the trees
We will blossom

We will go beyond the moon We will live our dreams

We will survive, we will rise We will shine brightly like stars

We will wait patiently for our time We will celebrate very soon

We will write on blank, white paper We will tell stories

We are full of wisdom We are a family

We are the circle of the world We are the mirror of our dreams

We are a boat on the sea We are on a journey to our destiny

We are conquerors over our challenges
We are strong together

We are welcoming and we are welcomed We are our stories

A letter from Traidcraft Exchange Chief Executive, Charlotte Timson regarding the India and Bangladesh COVID situation.

Dear Friends,

You will have seen on the news the devastating impact that COVID is having in India. Every day, we see more and more people struggling to get their families and friends to hospitals, to get access to oxygen. It is a desperate situation.

At Traidcraft Exchange, we are doing everything we can to keep our staff, partners and the communities we work with safe. There isn't anyone who is unaffected. Everyone is doing what they can to help colleagues who are sick and whose families need urgent help.

I'm sad to say, that the situation is far worse than the official data being shared would have us believe. COVID is spreading into the rural areas. Villages that were isolated and protected from the virus last year are now being affected. And while the major cities might have been locked down, social distancing isn't possible in these communities.

While Bangladesh has mostly stayed out of the news, this new wave has already started to spread. The situation there is getting worse by the day. Hospitals are overwhelmed in Dhaka and oxygen supplies are running out. Many of the communities we work with have little or no healthcare to rely on.

We are doing what we can to help in this emergency. We are ensuring people have correct information about COVID. We have been working hard to ensure marginalised populations are included in local government vaccinations programmes, where these have existed. And we are coordinating with others, to ensure that people know where to get help.

And beyond this immediate health crisis, there is the growing economic crisis. Homeworkers in India's garment sector have no work. Migrant workers have had to travel once again back to their villages, without work or food. Small scale farmers who are harvesting their crops can't sell them in the markets.

Thanks to the support that many of you gave last year to our Recovery Appeal, we've already been able to support some of the communities most affected. And we know that we will have a lot to do to help people survive and recover again. Once again, we are working closely with our partners to revise our plans and will share more with you in coming weeks.

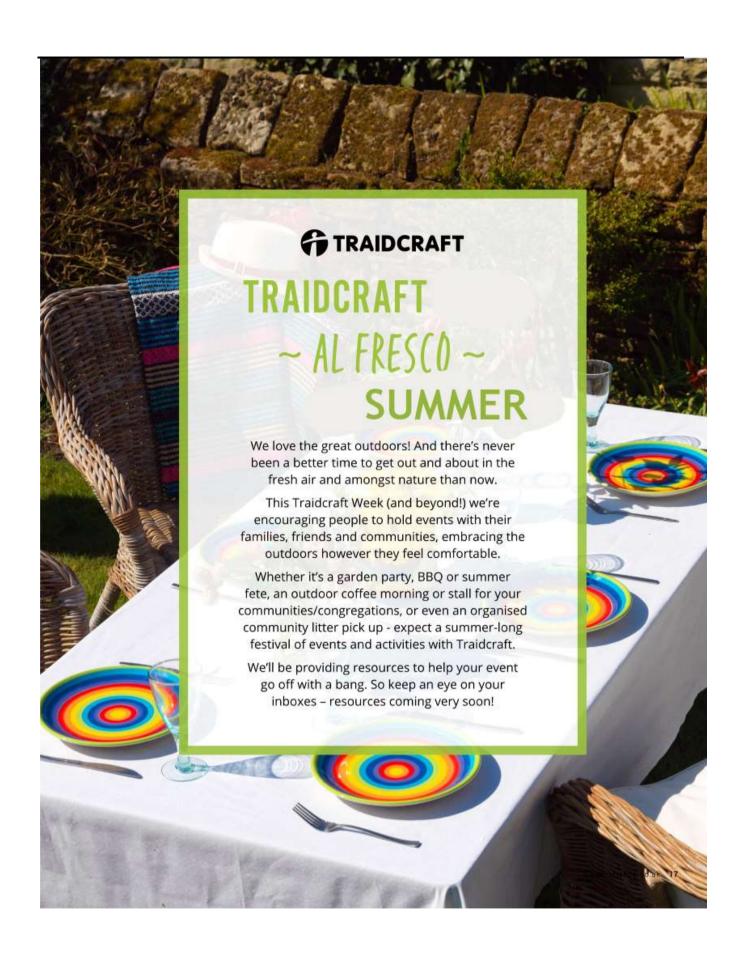
But right now, I wanted to write to share something of how serious this situation is - and to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to support the people we work with in India and Bangladesh.

We will be in touch with more information as soon as we can.

Charlotte Timson

Chief Executive, Traidcraft Exchange

Used with thanks from p15 of the Traidcraft Summer 2021 bulletin



From "Living Fair", May 2021, p17



The distinctive calico bags have been handsewn by South African charity, Deaf Hands at Work, adding an extra personal touch.

New!

BARRETTSRIDGE"



2021... and added a new flavour, too!

Barrett's Ridge Olive & Rosemary Beer Bread 450g **68652**



Barrett's Ridge Chilli & Garlic Beer Bread 450g 68834



Barrett's Ridge Garlic & Herb Beer Bread 450g 10401

HERE'S WHY WE LOVE IT SO MUCH...

For those of you who may be new to our beer breads, allow us to fill you in on what you're missing out on! You simply buy a bag, add a brew and bake... it really is that easy! With this authentic mixture of ingredients, you will have all you need to bake a steaming loaf in less than an hour! The bag provides

all the dry ingredients – leaving you to add 330ml of beer (could also use cider, or a soft drink like soda water), mix together and bake! If you're not into your bread baking, that's okay...the beer bread mix is extremely versatile, as it can be used to batter chicken and fish, too!

Set up by Tayrene and based on her Grandmother's recipe, Barrett's Ridge Beer Bread is packaged at Ukama Holdings in Cape Town, who provide on-going training, mentorship and support to black-owned micro-enterprises. They offer each micro-enterprises the platform, premises and required certification to run their own operation, each employing an average of four people from their local communities, who may have otherwise found it difficult to find secure and regular employment.

traidcraftshop.co.uk



Earl Grey-Flavoured Ice Cream Recipe

If you're a fan of the blissful bergamot blend that is Earl Grey, this ice cream recipe is perfect for you to try out this summer! If you're entertaining in your garden, it will be a real talking point when you get this out of the freezer...

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- ✓ 2 cups single cream
- ✓ 2 cups whipping cream
- ◆ 8 bags Traidcraft Earl Grey Tea
- ✓ 1 ⅓ cups Traidcraft
 Golden Caster Sugar
- ✓ 2 teaspoons real vanilla extract
- ✓ ½ teaspoon salt

HOW TO MAKE

Combine single cream and whipping cream in a saucepan.

Over medium/high heat, bring to a low boil (this will take around five minutes).

Remove mixture from heat, and add eight tea bags; let them steep for five minutes, before removing them. Remember to squeeze excess liquid from the teabags.

Add tea mixture, sugar, vanilla, and ½ teaspoon salt into a mixer bowl; beat on medium speed until sugar dissolves (this sound take about a minute or two).

Place in refrigerator and allow to cool completely.

Once cool, place cream mixture into the ice cream maker to process.

DID YOU KNOW

Our best-selling Earl Grey tea has a Great Taste Award from the Guild of Fine Foods. Being awarded this Great Taste Award is so important to us as it differentiates our products from the norm, and means that you, our valued customers, have a guarantee that the products you are buying have a reliable and recognisable seal of approval, based simply upon their great taste.

Recipe from the Traidcraft Bulletin – May 2021, p16



Items we recycle

find us Recycling for Good Causes

14 Amber Business Village Amington Tamworth **B77 4RP**

مال 0800 633 5323

email info@recyclingforgoodcauses.org

visit www.recyclingforgoodcauses.org

Jewellery

Unwanted gold & silver including damaged items Costume jewellery Watches



Coins & Currency

Banknotes & Coins Any currency UK or foreign of any age/unchangeable currency



Mobile Phones, Cameras & Gadgets

Mobile Phones . Video Cameras Old Film Cameras . Digital Cameras . Sat Navs Game Consoles . Games & Accessories . iPods **MP3 Players**. Tablet Computers





Stamps

Loose / Single Stamps **First Day Covers Presentation Packs**







Please bring your items in a clear plastic bag so they do not need to be opened on church premises.

Then, please place in the box provided in the church foyer. Items donated will raise money for Traidcraft Exchange.



Worship at Church

Monday to Friday at 8:30 (Summer break from 23 July)

Morning Prayer with the Lived Community is live-streamed on Facebook.

Go to: https://www.facebook.com/carrslanelivedcommunity

(Summer break from 23 July)
Tuesday evenings at 18:30
Prayer, followed by 19:00:
Bible reflection with option to discuss on Zoom afterwards
Go to: https://www.facebook.com/carrslanelife

Sunday mornings

10:15 Pre-service gathering on Zoom followed by morning service together at 10:30 - Morning Worship in the church building For all Zoom gathering links, contact clerk@carrslane.co.uk or ruth.yorke@live.co.uk

Our Facebook pages:

https://www.facebook.com/carrslanelife
https://www.facebook.com/carrslanelivedcommunity

Our YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmwd1hKP4ED-e33AoplWyDA

Lectures



Progressive Christianity: Hope for the Future?

In association with Progressive Christianity UK and the final Marcus Borg Memorial conference

Revd Deshna Shine

Ordained Interfaith Minister and Chaplain in USA, published author and International speaker; Former Executive Director of ProgressiveChristianity.org

Bishop Jeremy Greaves

Assistant Bishop of Brisbane in the Anglican Church of Australia; describes himself as a progressive Christian who "lives on the edge of the church"





on Zoom on

Tuesday 19th October 2021 at 8pm

Tickets: FREE

booking at

https://pcnbritain.org.uk/events/detail/ progressive-christianity-hope-for-the-future

Lectures in Radical Christian Faith

for further information: 0121 643 6151/ clerk@carrslane.co.uk



