

ST. ANDREWS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield, S3 7RQ

MESSENGER

Price £1.25

May and June 2022



© Colin Hinson

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CALENDAR for May and June 2022

Sun	1 st May	10.45am	Worship Group
Tues	3 May	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	8 May	10.45am	Mr Andy Lawley (HOPE UK)
Mon	9 May	7 pm	Elders meeting
Tues	10 May	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	15 May	10.45am	Rev Graham Wassell
Tues	17 May	10 am	Community Choir
Thur	19 May	10 am	Management Team meeting
Sun	22 May	10.45am	Rev Nigel Riley (Leprosy Mission)
Sun	29 May	10.45am	Worship Group
Tues	31 May		NO Community Choir
Sun	5 June	10.45am	Worship Group – Pentecost and Platinum Jubilee
Tues	7 June	10am	Community Choir
Tues	7 June	7 pm	Elders meeting
Sun	12 June	10.45am	Rev Dr Walter Houston
Tues	14 June	10 am	Community Choir
Thur	16 June	10 am	Management Team meeting
Sun	19 June	10.45am	tbc
Tues	21 June	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	26 June	10.45am	Mr Chris Limb
Tues	28 June	10 am	Community Choir
Sun	3 July	10.45am	Rev Dr David Stec - COMMUNION

FLOWERS

Jean Dickson has the flower rota for 2022 ready to be filled. Please have a word with Jean to arrange a date. Providing flowers for Sunday worship can be a fitting way to mark an anniversary or remember someone you love. As well as beautifying the church, the flowers give pleasure to the people who receive them afterwards. You can arrange your flowers yourself or you can ask Jean to do it for you. ² If you wish, you could tell us what you are commemorating.

SERVICE SHEET

If you have any notices to go in the service sheet, please send them to the person who is preparing them for that month:

Judith Adam: January, May and September
Sheila Cooke: February, June and October
Jean Dickson: March, July and November
Monica Hanna: April, August and December

A PANORAMIC VISION

The Rev Graham Wassell gave this sermon at St Andrew's on Sunday 15 May 2022. The readings were Revelation 21: 1-6, Acts 11: 1-18 and John 13: 31-35

When you have seen before you a grand or beautiful panorama, it's good to view it from various different perspectives, because then you get a fuller and more complete grasp of the view before you. On a recent holiday in Scotland, we had a distant view of a mountain from our window. Then we went closer and saw it from the bottom. Then we climbed it and felt it and finally saw the view from the top. Back at our window, the long view was now better informed.

It's a bit like that with today's readings. Remember, we're still in the Easter season, and here we get to see the death and resurrection of Jesus from different perspectives..... beforehand, in the John passage; afterwards, in the Acts passage; and into eternity, in the Revelation passage. These different viewpoints help us to see how these powerful events at Easter might impact our lives today.

Perhaps we can take the passage from Revelation first. Here we are told that "the old order of things has passed away" and that the Lord is making everything new — a new heaven and a new earth. The events of Easter are the catalyst for this seismic happening.

It seems that this renewal won't come about by gradual increments. We know very well that we aren't on a pathway where things get better and better. Rather, it often seems to be the reverse of that. So, no, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem will come down from heaven from God." God, in God's wisdom, will step in and there will be a new order of things under God. This will be completion, fulfilment... a New Creation.

All that is good will be there, and everything good that we ourselves contribute in this life will be there. Nothing is wasted. Our efforts now will not be in vain. They are like the building blocks that God will use in that New Earth, a new Sheffield even !

And that's where the other readings come in. Acts 11 reminds us that all are included in the saving work of Jesus Christ, focussed at Easter.

No-one needs to be left out. God's saving love is freely available to all. This was Peter's discovery and it's what Paul went on to put into practice in his mission to all. And we are called to reflect that in our personal and church lives. The gospel is for all, it's not just a private matter. There are people to be brought in to share in that vision of a new heaven and new earth.

And one way of that coming about is by our loving one another, like we are loved by God, as Jesus commands his disciples in John 13. If you love one another, really, sacrificially, self-giving love, then the word is that people will notice and recognise our allegiance to the Lord. By his total expending of self on the Cross, Jesus is glorified, and he will be glorified again and again by our living out selfless love in our lives.

What I want to say is that these passages from Acts and John point us in the direction of anticipating that great view of the New Heaven and New Earth in our lives today. It won't be us who bring it about, only God will do that, but these readings give us a particular perspective from which to live life now, today, and where inclusivity and self-giving love become important building blocks that God can and will use.

So let's keep the vision of God's amazing panorama before us, and let us always be ready when that New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven from God.

Graham Wassell



FAMILY NEWS

Sad news: We regret to have to record the death of **Bill Macdonald**, another long-standing member of the church, on 1st May. Physical problems have prevented Bill and Lillemor from attending for some years but they retained their interest in the doings of the church and its members. They were regular attenders on Sundays and at social events like Network and we have missed them.

Bill was a well-known figure in Sheffield, having come here to set up Radio Hallam. He had a wide variety of contacts and interests, and was St Andrew's link with the local branch of the Council of Christians and Jews. Bill will be missed by many people. We send our deepest sympathy to Lillemor and their sons Roderick, Neil and Craig. The funeral was on Wednesday 25 May and the chapel at Hutcliffe Wood was full. There will be an obituary in the next issue.

We are all shocked to learn of **Michael Bayley's** dreadful road accident, which has resulted in the amputation of part of his leg. We send our prayers and best wishes to Michael and Fleur and their family.

On a happier note, **Wilma Love** is delighted to get her driving licence back but is slightly diffident about getting back behind the wheel.

John Price was able, with Janet Brown's help, to visit Jean in Burnt Tree Croft on her birthday, and found her looking well and cared for.

David Hill is in good spirits and very positive. He has been working on his mobility, going up and down stairs and for short walks outside.

LOOKING AHEAD

JUBILEE: Our service on **5 June** celebrating both Pentecost and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee will be led by the Worship Group, and there will be a special collection for asylum seekers.

The Broomhall Centre is holding a **FESTIVAL on Thursday 2 June** from 10 am to 5 pm. There will be stalls, crafts, games for children, entertainers and activities, and a buffet serving coronation chicken and cakes. St Andrew's members are invited to help by offering an hour of their time during the day or by baking cakes and biscuits for the buffet.

The BROOMHILL FESTIVAL is back in full swing from Saturday 12 to Sunday 20 June. There will be Open Gardens, History Walks, Greentop Circus offering workshops for children, other activities for young people, musical performances and more. The Festival concludes with a special service at St Mark's Church followed by a picnic on St Mark's Green, 4 - 6 pm on Sunday 20 June.

ANNIVERSARY

We should not omit to mention that many of our members will be at the Caledonian Society 200th Anniversary Ball on Saturday 28 May. What an amazing record ! There has always been a strong link between the Society and St Andrew's Church - the minister was the Society's Chaplain and a special service is held every November to celebrate Scotland's patron saint.

LOOKING BACK

The **ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING** was held after the service on 24 April. The Annual Reports and Accounts for 2021 were smoothly approved. A number of large projects were completed during the year - the roof, the Hall floor, new lighting and cabling and window cleaning; all are major improvements to the fabric of the church.

Our financial position is very healthy.

Updates were given on building work and other developments since then. Our bank, HSBC, has brought in monthly charges per account and are charging for each cheque and cash deposit, so the Treasurer is looking for another bank. Progress on the ramp for disabled access is slow but a definite plan is now in place.

ONE WORLD CHOIR

This choir, mainly of asylum seekers, gave a marvellous concert in the church on 22 April. See Margaret's review on page 8.

Help for NEW ARRIVALS:

St Andrew's and St Michael's Ethiopian Orthodox Church are seeking ways to help asylum seekers from Ethiopia or Eritrea. When they arrive many of the young men are housed in hotels, receive food and a room but may not work or earn money, leaving them with little to do and nowhere to go. Feeling anxious about the future and whom they can trust, for them to meet people of their own culture, and with a church link, is greatly reassuring. Our plans may include social gatherings with food, English conversation and cultural support, something in which we can all join.

SHEFFIELD TEAM update

A farewell service was held on Sunday 22 May at Central URC for Nicola Robinson, the theology student who has been on placement with the Team for the last two years. She has been a considerable asset to the Team during the pandemic, with lots of novel ideas based on an obviously strong faith, and she will be greatly missed.

A lively service with presentations was followed by a buffet lunch. Nicola's parents were there (plus their and her dogs which occasionally joined in). Nicola will be ordained in July and move to the new Partnership of URC churches in Leeds.

The Team will also be without Simon Copley for nearly four months as he takes a sabbatical. Part of his research will be into the character and ethos of the URC - and thus have implications for its future. He will be with us on 8 July, however, to take the baptism service of Jude Kelly.

UPDATE ON THE CROSSPOOL OWL

All the leaves on the tree make it difficult to see the owl at present, but the branch may be unoccupied anyway. It is the breeding season now and she will be on her nest (elsewhere) feeding chicks. She should be back in another soon. The tree is identified with little owl stickers.



Here is the cyclamen given to David and Helena Stec at Christmas. It bloomed beautifully and, lo and behold, is in full flower again. Green fingers!



I'M SO HAPPY

I'm feeling alive and at home

I'm feeling alive and at home

I'm feeling alive and at home

I'm so Happy

Words written by a member of the Sheffield One World Choir and joyfully sung at a concert on the 22nd April 2022 in St Andrew's. There was no shortage of emotion.

The choir was formed as a way of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers as they apply for residence status. It started small, struggled in lockdown but now is growing. During lockdown a group worked to produce 50 tunics and skirts to kit out the choir and tonight, as they wore them for the first time, the choir looked stunning. The outfits are made of Kente cloth (maybe you saw the BBC Secrets of the Museum episode featuring Kente?) a traditional woven material originally from Ghana in a blend of browns and orange colours.

Ragel, the choir leader, a delightful, vivacious lady, introduced the programme which featured the Classic Steel Band and the Eclectic Café in the first half and then the 30 strong mixed choir took over. Emer McKay showed fine musicality as conductor as she energetically danced and directed songs from Egypt, Sudan, South Africa, Tanganika and Nigeria but the highlights were four songs composed and sung by choir members with the audience encouraged to join in the choruses.

"We are dancing, we are singing, we are joyful"

A bar was available throughout the evening and a disco followed in the hall. Many helpers arranged chairs and tables, served, took money and ensured a well-run event. The building was totally packed out, both with families of those performing and with many friends. There were all ages in the audience. Money was being raised to cover the costs of running the choir for, as is well known, refugee and asylum seekers are not allowed to work while their case is being considered. The choir needs money to function and helps with practical things like bus fares.

For many of the audience this was a first visit to St Andrew's and clearly they were impressed by the facilities. In chatting to people we took the opportunity to mention the many groups from many nations already using the church both for services and social occasions. A gracious thank you was given to St Andrew's for supporting the choir by allowing them to use the whole premises free of charge for the evening.

An encore was called for and the audience rose, and clapped, and moved and sang with the choir. A loud and happy ending to a great evening with the words ringing in our ears.

"I still have joy!"



Sheffield One World Choir

When I Am Among the Trees

*When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.*

*I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.*

*Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."*

The light flows from their branches.

*And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."*

Mary Oliver

A VISIT TO SOUTHWELL MINSTER

Recently I was invited to join three others to visit Southwell Minster to see a tapestry exhibition. Four of us set off on a warm sunny spring morning. Southwell is a small country town a few miles North East of Nottingham. We had a lovely drive through cross country roads to get there, to see the “Threads Through Creation” exhibition of twelve amazing stitched panels.

How can you describe the indescribable? The artist Jacqui Parkinson spent weeks if not months thinking about how to describe the beginning of the world. There are twelve large stitched panels in this striking exhibition.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” For the first panel Jacqui began with a spiral with three strands. The work is large, about two metres by two metres, and it is filled with this huge spiral of changing colours of purple going into blue and in the very middle changing to green, yellow, gold and red. There are gold crescent shapes following the spirals. It is all machine stitched using a white sheet as the base. And it is striking.

Panel two consists of black and white interwoven triangles with colours top and bottom and represented God creating Light and Dark. Panel three was my absolute favourite, when God created water. The top of the panel represents the land in various shades of greens, browns, blues and creams in various horizontal stripes. About a third of the way down the panel, these change to vertical blue and white stripes of varying hues and widths and they end in waves with spirals of different sizes. The whole is overlaid with silver kid stitched into long wavy ribbons. The spiral is a repeating motif, a visual theme across the whole exhibition, pointing each time to the Creator.

Panel four “God spoke –a green earth”. This is a square panel divided by a cross of wavy blue stitching and under a riot of seeds in shades of green. On the sides are two bands representing the phases of the moon and the stars. Panel five was a riot of colour as God said “Let there be light” with a huge spiral of colour representing the stars in the sky.



Panel six was water and sky splashed with colour. Every conceivable living thing is there in this striking panel. Panel seven introduces man and woman with amazing representations of all the large animals and a band down one side full of winged insects and creepy crawlies.

Panel eight “God rested and it was all good”. The last making day of creation seen by some as the climax, but to the artist as the completion. This panel was in the form of a square representing every living thing with a striking white and gold cross over the top. The centre of the cross was in the centre of the square.



Panel nine was called “Danger! A snake in the garden”. The angel Satan has come to bring evil to the perfect world God has created. This panel shows Satan as an angel falling downwards with a snake twined round him.

Panel ten was the representation of the Tree of Life. Panel eleven represents Adam and Eve choosing between good and evil with the snake depicted between them. Panel twelve, in a series of triangles, filled with lots of animals, shows Adam and Eve leaving the Garden of Eden.

This was an amazing, colourful and thought provoking exhibition.

The stitching was meticulous, the colours were wonderful and the use of the “spiral” in every panel drew it all together. I was amused by a



comment that was recorded: “These panels won’t last long, they are fraying already.” The frayed edges of materials like organza gave a wonderful lightness to the stitching.

Jean Dickson

[Ed: This wonderful exhibition is going round the country to other cathedrals including Ripon 19 October – 20 November.]

SOUP RUN EASTER MEAL

The soup run held their postponed Christmas dinner on the evening of Friday April 1st. We got into the hall at 3 pm and Niall and two students set up the tables, put the chairs round and put out the cutlery, glasses for juice and napkins. Bobbie had the turkey already cooked so set to doing the vegetables and potatoes. Other helpers were slower in arriving so she and I watched the pans and patiently waited for the gravy to thicken. Once the people had arrived the speaker started his five minute talk. Good though it was, he went on for twenty five minutes. We meanwhile were plating up the meal, expecting five minutes, and had to resort to putting the plated meals back in the oven and plate warmer to keep hot. When he stopped the plates were rushed out to everyone. Many came back for seconds. The pudding was apple pie or sticky toffee pudding. Coffee had been served on arrival.

Only about forty came as one regular, Sue, told us that the people she told didn't believe her as it was April Fool's Day. Those that were there were mainly the quieter lonely people and that made for a peaceful atmosphere. A young man from Fulwood church played the piano. The songs were mainly sixties music which they all seemed to remember and have a good sing. At the end everyone went home with a bag with hat, gloves, sweets and an Easter egg.

Thank you to St Andrew's for allowing the use of the hall. The helpers have got clearing up down to a fine art. All rubbish is taken away. Three ladies from St Luke's come armed with their rubber gloves and do a fantastic job of washing up all the trays and pans. Hopefully we will be back to normal at the end of the year for the usual celebration.

Sheila Dunstan



“BORROWED” ARTEFACTS

[We’ve had some feedback about the Edinburgh tabot story in the last issue.]

I have some sympathy for Father Tesfa’s response.

There is a strong argument to be made for works of art to be exhibited in places where they can freely be seen and carefully preserved even if that is not their country of origin.

However, I question whether this applies to Edinburgh’s Tabot! If we recognise that this is not a museum piece, illustrative of Ethiopic culture, but a sacred object with vital links to a living worshipping community, is it not better to restore it to its primary context in the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia?

Fleur Houston

Several years ago I visited the manuscripts in the British Library (right next to St Pancras) and was greatly taken by the Ethiopian printed books. The books are beautiful. I asked Fr Tesfa if he had seen them and he replied ruefully that these had been looted from his country.

Monica Hanna

Ethiopian items on display in Edinburgh:



THE SYNOD OF OXFORD

On Sunday 8 May 2022 a special service was held at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, to mark the 800th anniversary of the 1222 Synod of Oxford. Held on 9 May 1222, at Osney Abbey, in Oxford, that Synod was a council of the (Catholic) church in England, convened by Archbishop Stephen Langton. Langton's ambition was to reform the English church, especially with regard to monastic law.

This Synod is notable for a number of the decisions taken and canon laws set, in particular for harsh anti-Jewish laws. Social relations between Jews and Christians were blocked; church tithes were levied against Jews; and English Jews were forced to wear an identifying badge. The construction of new synagogues was also prevented. The Synod was following and implementing the anti-Jewish decrees laid out by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which Langton had helped to draft. These "prejudicial" laws passed at Oxford in 1222 were the precursor to further anti-Jewish statutes, in particular those passed in 1253 and 1275, and repercussions across Europe. This increasing intolerance culminated in the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290.

This Synod is also famous for deciding that Saint George's Day should be celebrated as a holy day in England, although it stopped short of declaring St George the patron saint of England, which did not happen until 1347.

The anniversary service this month, arranged in association with the Oxford Jewish Congregation, offers a symbolic opportunity to apologise for these shameful actions. It also recognises the positive reframing of Jewish-Christian relations since the publication of *Nostra Aetate* ('In Our Time'), a report of the Second Vatican Council in 1965: 'This Synod...deplores and condemns hatred and persecutions of Jews, whether they arose in former or in our own days'.

This understanding was reinforced by the Archbishop of Canterbury's call, in the 2019 Church of England report, *God's Unfailing Word*, that 'only by looking back and recognising our failures as Christians can we begin to move forward with authenticity'. It was an opportunity to "remember, repent and rebuild". The Chief Rabbi emphasised that profound friendship must be accompanied by honesty so that together we may be a blessing to the world. This commemoration will reflect the depth of interfaith encounter and service that increasingly exists across our society.

The Bishop of Oxford, County and Civic dignitaries, and representatives from other religious traditions were present.

This momentous occasion was recorded and makes for fascinating watching. The link to the service is: <https://youtu.be/O0mx7lbzfHQ>

O, that lone flower recalled to me
My happy childhood hours
When bluebells seemed like fairy gifts,
A prize among the flowers.

Anne Bronte



HYMNS

[Douglas, an expert on liturgy, explains some of the considerations when he selects the hymns each week.]

A question appeared on the internet recently asking where the Office Hymn should be sung at Choral Evensong.

It's an interesting question in that Choral Evensong (ie Evening Prayer, sung) or Choral Matins (Morning Prayer), whilst being termed 'Offices,' are really each a combination of older monastic services. The monks (or nuns) who still follow a regular pattern of services throughout the day know these as their 'offices' because it is part of their work or duty to attend regular prayer times during the waking day. For them it's just like any working person going to the office to work, hence the name.

The prayers, many of which are sung, include biblical and devotional songs; canticles, psalms, hymns and longer sequences; and the lessons and gospels of the Bible will be read. Presumably an hymn would be sung at some point during the office, if and where appropriate. I would imagine that the chief singer (chanter, cantor) would introduce the hymn at the right time by singing the first line, after which the others would join in. This, I guess, would be the office hymn. I don't suppose in the early days of hymnody that they would have had a fixed place for it during the office.

Nowadays, the use of hymns is much more frequent. At celebrations of the Lord's Supper, hymns are sometimes sung where the 'Proper' of the Mass used to be ('Proper' just means the texts which vary daily, weekly or seasonally as appropriate, as opposed to the 'Ordinary' which remain constant; Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei). But there is no provision for hymns in the eucharistic liturgy otherwise.

In quires and places where they sing, modern practice varies, depending on local tradition. The offices are the 'daily duties' of the clergy and ministers (including any choristers, if sung). Every parish priest must say prayers for his or her flock every day, even if it is a private devotion in the vicarage study or 'home office', so to speak. If a congregation is present, they might help recite the psalms, maybe antiphonally, and even sing hymns. In churches and cathedrals, on a weekday there are usually no hymns during the offices, or just one, usually sung before the first canticle. On Sundays and other festivals, additional hymns are often sung at appropriate moments, perhaps (rarely) at the beginning, maybe before the intercessions if there isn't an anthem, and another at the end. Mostly these are for congregational participation, or just because good hymns are there to be sung, and enjoyed!

Douglas Jones

NEED HELP WITH YOUR DIGITAL DEVICES?

At the **Broomhall Centre**:

Digital Access for All - Thursdays 10am – 12noon

Free. Open to all. Expert help and training. Access to Wifi.

Find new ways - Zoom, Email, Social media, Shopping, Online forms.

Bring your phone, tablet or laptop.

OR

Age UK free, digital drop-in sessions at **Sheffield Central Library**

1st and 3rd Friday of each month 11:00 – 13:00

If you or a friend would benefit from advice and support to use your phone, tablet or other digital device then come along.

No need to book! Just turn up and one of our friendly volunteers will be there to help. Friendly support in a comfortable computer suite.

Remember to bring your charger, a face mask and a note book!

LECTIONARY READINGS for May and June 2022

May 1 st	Acts 9 : 1-6, (7-20); Psalm 30 ; Revelation 5 : 11-14; John 21 : 1-19
May 8	Acts 9 : 34-43; Psalm 23 ; Revelation 7 : 9-17 John 10 : 22-30
May 15	Acts 11 : 1-18; Psalm 148 ; Revelation 21 : 1-6; John 13 : 31-35
May 22	Acts 16 : 9-15; Psalm 67 ; Revelation 21 : 10, 22 – 22:5; John 5 : 1-9
May 29	Acts 16 : 16-24; Psalm 97 ; Revelation 22 : 12-14, 16-17, 20-21; John 17 : 20-26
June 5	Acts 2 : 1-21; Psalm 104 : 24-34, 35b; Romans 8 : 14-17; John 14 : 8-17, (25-27)
June 12	Proverbs 8 : 1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8 ; Romans 5 : 1-5; John 16 : 12-15
June 19	Isaiah 65 : 1-9; Psalm 22 : 19-28; Galatians 3 : 23-29; Luke 8 : 26-39
June 26	1 Kings 19 : 15-16, 19-21; Psalm 16 ; Galatians 5 : 1, 13-25; Luke 9 : 51-62
July 3	Isaiah 66 : 10-14; Psalm 66 : 1-9; Galatians 6 : (1-6), 7-16; Luke 10 : 1-11, 16-20

RECYCLE

Instead of throwing stuff away when it is apparently finished with, a number of charities can make use of our waste.

ADDRESSES OF CHARITIES to which to send:

STAMPS

Support Dogs

21 Jessops Riverside, Brightside Lane

Sheffield S9 2RX

Stamps go here to help those with Autism, Epilepsy and Disability.

CARTRIDGES

Ink Cartridge Recycle

Leatham House, 13 Napier Court, Barton Lane,

Abingdon, Oxon OX14 3YT

This is for breast cancer.

CLOTHING

Families Relief has a number of Clothing Banks in Sheffield:

133 Abbeydale Road S7 1FE

Farrar Road S7 1BU

Glover Road S8 0ZW

OLD SPECTACLES

Sight Savers collect these.

LAPTOPS

Laptops for schools - Ring 07766 374 924

[Ed: I don't know who sent this picture, but it reminds me of Alison Uttley's Little Grey Rabbit.]



[It is good to hear that other facilities in the area are thriving. Ian Cooke is on the Board of the Broomhall Centre, and Margaret Fall and Elizabeth Draper attend meetings of the Broomhall Group of Groups to discuss local issues; Jillian is Co-Chair of that. The building is the former Chapel of Ease of St Mark's parish church, which continues to support the Centre in reaching the community.]

UPDATE ON THE BROOMHALL CENTRE

We have survived two years of the Covid-19 pandemic and, like so many organisations, been challenged but also found new strengths and new ways of doing things. Our income plummeted as regular groups and parties were cancelled, but we were able to furlough some of our staff and bookings have picked up again. Some groups are new and stronger:

- When the Jesus Centre had to close, we started hosting the Broomhall base for the S6 Foodbank and they now have a regular slot on Monday mornings and a shipping container in the yard to store their supplies.
- We applied to various 'Covid recovery funds' to expand the Women's Health sessions, which allow lonely, vulnerable women to meet. We appointed Rosie Chitty as an activities facilitator and she has encouraged users to transition to being valuable volunteers supporting these sessions (sewing, knitting, conversation, Zumba/chairobics).
- The Homework Club continued on-line, developed stronger links with the Girls Group (run by St Mark's) and spawned a 'lit club', promoting reading and writing by young black women. It is now meeting face to face again and has a new, large, cohort of younger children being helped by volunteers, many of them university students.

It was clear from early in the pandemic that the virus was primarily airborne and we made a successful bid to the Veolia Environmental Trust, which distributes landfill tax revenue, for funding to install heat-retaining ventilation. This means that up to 30 people can meet in the main hall with the same level of safety as if they were outdoors because the air is cleaned and recirculated every 10 minutes. There is no need to open doors and windows which saves heating bills and prevents noise escaping. There is also a simple, much stronger, extractor fan for larger groups (i.e. parties).

We are hoping that having a Covid-safe space will encourage more bookings, especially for vulnerable people (e.g. elderly or those with chronic illness or disability).

Our Centre manager is now Rafik Al-Sakkaf, who is an engineer from Yemen, but who has not been able to work in that profession since arriving in the UK and had been spending his time volunteering and teaching IT.

He took up post just as the first lockdowns hit us, so had a baptism of fire, but has nurtured the building and supported the Board and users with great enthusiasm, imagination and practical skill. The fact that he has fluent Arabic and a deep knowledge of Islam has drawn in new users and helped us negotiate various cultural and religious celebrations with more understanding. The Centre feels as multicultural as ever and a very welcome development is that the Board is beginning to reflect the diversity of our local population and users.

Ways to help the Broomhall Centre

Volunteering

- Sewing, knitting, craft at the Tuesday women's health session;
- English conversation club on Friday mornings;
- Homework club on Thursday evenings;
- Finance & Admin support (monthly invoicing to regular groups);
- Writing material for the website and Facebook.

Donations

- Fabric, wool, knitting needles;
- Tins and dry food for the S6 Foodbank;
- Money – once off or regular donations. (See www.broomhallcentre.com or email me.)

Use the Centre and/or encourage others to do so.

- Book your party/event/group at the Centre;
- Recommend us to others, especially providers looking for weekday daytime slots.

Jillian Creasy

Chair, Board of Trustees

chair@broomhallcentre.com



Let us pray for Ukraine