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| ALLERTON  CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH |



April/May 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friends

In our previous newsletter I wrote about the way in which we have often stopped singing hymns that use the language of war like ‘Onward Christian soldiers’ and ‘Fight the good fight’. Since then we have seen the first act of war in Europe for quite some time.

Russia, under the direction of Vladimir Putin, has invaded the Ukraine. There are signs of a powerful ruler looking to re-establish the old Soviet Union and perhaps even expand it. These are truly troubling times!

So how are we, as Christians, to think about such events? What can, or should, we do about it? Firstly, I’m not going to say that there is only one possible approach to war, because Church history and Scripture show us at least two basic views. Secondly, it is one of those areas where we can definitely disagree well, as some would call it. Even though we may see the issue differently, we can still discuss it together lovingly and constructively, continuing to enjoy Christian fellowship with one another. There are practical ways in which Christians with different opinions can respond together to the war on the Ukraine.

As I mentioned last time, personally I tend towards pacifism, and certainly this is one approach that Christians can and do take in the face of war. Taking inspiration from Jesus’ words about not taking up the sword (Matthew 26:52), and His generally non-violent attitude towards the hostile forces of Rome, this approach may inspire us to seek peace first and foremost. Of course, there are many pacifists who would not identify as being Christians too.

Some, Christians and non-Christians alike, would say that such an approach does not go far enough in the face of war. There is the well-known quote, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” There is definitely some logic to the sentiment behind this saying. Perhaps some kind of action is needed in response to military invasion?

It was the church father and theologian, Augustine, who wrote about the idea of ‘just war’. He suggested that when certain criteria are met war is a less bad option than doing nothing about it. If the invasion of the Ukraine by Russia meets those criteria, which it might, then entering the war as combatants may the right thing to do. Realistically, none of us will be making our way to the Ukraine to fight ourselves, but brothers and sisters in Christ who live in the Ukraine may be making this decision for themselves. They may well be taking up arms to protect their country and its citizens against the Russian invading troops.

I suspect that amongst those reading this letter there will be those in both camps of thought, and others in between. Even if we don’t fully agree what the role of our own country should be in this war, there are things that we can and should do together as followers of Jesus. Non-violent opposition through protest and acts of solidarity for those being oppressed is one practical response. As Christians we might want to hold times of prayer specifically for the Ukraine. We may wish to provide practical support for refugees, collecting essentials or money to help those in need. We could write to our politicians urging them to allow more refugees from the Ukraine to enter our nation at this time, and/or enforce a no fly zone over the Ukraine.

Whatever our views on war in general, or on the situation in the Ukraine in particular, there are things that we can be doing. First and foremost let’s pray about the situation, and for those caught in the middle of it all. Secondly let’s remind ourselves and others of the Christian hope that we have in Jesus Christ, the very best antidote for the worries of this world. We serve a risen Saviour who has conquered sin, death and hell and we can look to Him with faith, hope and love!

Yours, Fred

Secretary’s Thoughts

We seem to have had our share of COVID over this last few weeks. First of all Aidan, Fred and Danielle caught it and then Yvonne and Trevor. Thankfully all seem ok now.

Our February Communion service was interesting! We had to shuffle things around. Big thank you to Fred for providing the music and to David for delivering Fred's service.

The main thing was we were still able to bring Daphne Pinder into Membership as planned. Always a great joy to welcome new members.

A couple of weeks later, I had Trevor on the list. Once again David stepped in to help. I think he was ready for a holiday!

We are managing to serve coffee each week but still need more folk on the rota if possible and the Readers list needs names on too.

Janet

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 9th April Leprosy Mission Coffee Morning 10.00 - 12.00

Sunday 10th April Leprosy Mission Service

Sunday 15th May Church AGM following service.

Flower Rota – flowers provided by:

Sunday 3rd April Mrs W Hume

17th April Mr & Mrs Breen

24th April Mr & Mrs Collier-Drake

8th May Mrs Garrard & family

29th May Mr C Thorp in memory of Mrs S Thorp

On Sundays not listed, silk flowers will be used.

Preaching list for April and May

3rd April Rev Fred Rich (Communion)

10th April Rev David Muschamp

17th April Rev Fred Rich

24th April Rev Terry Hepworth

1st May Rev Fred Rich (Communion)

8th May Rev Terry Hepworth

15th May Rev Fred Rich

22nd May Trevor Hipley

29th May Rev Fred Rich

Coffee Rota

As we have returned to having coffee after services, it would be really helpful if those on the rota could come a little earlier to set things up. You will not need to bring milk.

The coffee rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

Bible Reading Rota

If you would like to offer to read the Bible for Sunday services, the Bible reading rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

Finance Committee – A message from the Financial Secretary

In the last two months, little progress has been made in rectifying the issue with the main hall ceiling where it has become quite apparent that all builders/contractors are busy at this time, which, I am sure some of you may have found if you need any jobs at home. However, we continue to pursue an appropriate contractor to repair the ceiling.   
  
The ceiling has been surveyed and, on a positive note, the damage appears to be limited to a previous roof leak where, as recorded on the list of items undertaken during Covid, a fairly extensive roof repair has already been carried out.   
  
The recent bad weather has identified one or two other minor issues with the roof and a roofing contractor has been contacted and is due to address these matters.   
  
One area of activity has been to progress investigations into the likely scope of works required to commence upgrades to the electrical installation. Here we await issue of the report prepared which will identify how we should proceed and there will be some decisions which will be required to be made in respect of this shortly.   
  
The insurance renewal has been arranged, noting that the renewal has increased in cost due to the loss of our no claims discount due to the ongoing claim for loss of income during the Covid period. Further information has been requested by the Insurer to support this claim and this is currently being prepared and will be issued shortly.   
  
I hope the update is of interest and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask Chris Ing or any member of the Finance Committee.

Note from the Editor

The next newsletter is due on 27th May – please let me have any items for inclusion by 20th May.

Thank you – Carole

Sundays - Services at 10.30 am.

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