

Reflection of the Month: Praying Together

The Rev'd Alessandra Di Chiara writes:

As with many Christians around the world, here on the Isle of Man we have just celebrated the feast of the Ascension when we celebrated Jesus' return to the Father.

The day marked the beginning of *Thy Kingdom Come*, a global prayer movement now in at least 114 countries with 65 different denominations praying intentionally for more people to come to know Jesus.

What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an ecumenical and international call to prayer, supported by all the Presidents of Churches Together in England.

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury has written the following message to encourage us: 'During the 11 days of *Thy Kingdom Come*, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- Deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ
- Pray for God's spirit to work in the lives of those they know
- Come to realise that every aspect of their life is the stuff of prayer.

After the very first Ascension Day the disciples gathered with Mary, constantly devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Like them, our reliance on the gift of the Holy Spirit is total – on our own we can do nothing.

Through the centuries Christians have gathered in the season of Pentecost to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. *Thy Kingdom Come* picks up this tradition. Here in Douglas our churches are involved and will meet as the *Churches Town Centre Partnership* for a celebration prayer event that will share the vision for local evangelism together. We are praying that the Spirit would inspire and equip us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our friends and families, our communities and networks. It has been amazing how many varied ways there have been in which people from every tradition have taken up this challenge. The effects have been remarkable.

It is our prayer that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and



his love for the world will hear it for themselves, and respond and follow Him. Specifically, we again invite each and every Christian to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of 5 friends who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call.

Let's pray together.

www.thykingdomcome.global

Rev'd Alessandra Di Chiara is Associate Vicar of the parish of St George and All Saints' Douglas.

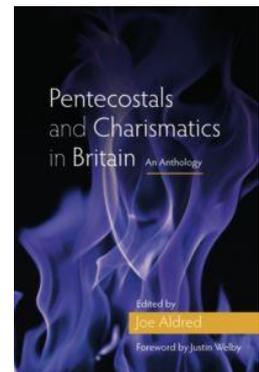
'Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain' launched

A major and exciting achievement for CTE staff member Joe Aldred is the publication of the anthology 'Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain'. Edited by Joe, this brings together key contributors on a wide range of topics.

The first of three book launches to mark its publication took place on Tuesday 7 May 2019 in the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies at Birmingham University. Postgraduate students from the university, a representative of SCM Press, the publishers, Joe Aldred, as editor of the anthology and one of the contributors all gathered to mark the arrival of this long awaited expose on the British Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement.

Further launches will follow on 13 May at Roehampton University, London and on 28 June at Luther King House, Manchester.

- [Attend one of the book launches](#) (where you can buy the book).
- [Read more about the book.](#)
- [Buy the book from SCM Press, bookshops and online.](#)



New Chair for Housing Justice

Bishop of Edmonton Robert 'Rob' Wickham, who has been actively involved with housing Justice for 18 months, took up his new role in March.



Bishop Rob said: *"I'm delighted to be the new Chair of Housing Justice, and I fully support our vision that recognises that widespread human flourishing is influenced by housing and our understanding of housing needs. Housing is one of the critical issues of the 21st Century, and it has been an issue for Christians for centuries. We are, in effect, standing on the shoulders of many visionary Christians who have shaped our housing landscape."*

Housing Justice CEO, Kathy Mohan said: *"Housing Justice feels privileged to have Bishop Rob guiding our board. The leadership he has shown in the Diocese of London for many years, and his knowledge of urban regeneration and repurposing the uses of churches will be invaluable for the projects we are spearheading."*

Bishop of Edmonton since 2015, Rob Wickham has always served in the Diocese of London. He was a Curate in the Parish Church of Willesden, a Team Vicar in the Parish of Old St Pancras, with responsibility for St Mary's Somers Town, and for nine years Rector of St John at Hackney, latterly becoming Area Dean of Hackney. While there he was renowned for repurposing church building use for the wider community.

There has been a 165 per cent increase in rough sleeping in England since 2010. At the same time faith based night shelters such as those supported and directly provided by Housing Justice have doubled in number. There are now 124 such projects across England and Wales offering a route out of homelessness. Housing Justice provides these projects with practical support, set up advice, grant funding and a Quality Mark scheme.

Housing Justice is a [Body in Association](#) of CTE

Homeless Sunday 2019

Housing Justice, is also urging churches to take part in this year's Homeless Sunday – confirmed as October 13 (2019).



Homeless Sunday has been part of the Christian calendar for more than a quarter of a century. It is an opportunity for churches of all denominations and people of all faiths to unite and show solidarity with those experiencing homelessness and to reflect and plan practical action on homelessness.

The focus this year is 'The impact of volunteering on the volunteer', apt as Christians and church communities are at the forefront of the response to the rise in homelessness including the most visible aspect, rough sleeping. There were just 65

night shelters operating across the Housing Justice network in 2013, today there are 125 across England and Wales.

Last year the event was permanently switched to October, close to World Homeless Day. This was in response to feedback from church leaders and congregations and the growing number of churches involved in hosting Church and Community Night Shelter Projects. It was felt that as most shelter projects tend to open towards the end of October the alignment allows the opening of the night shelter season to be marked in prayer.

Updates about Homeless Sunday, and materials to support involvement, including activities for children, ideas for worship and for theological discussion will become [available on our website](#) in the coming months.

The Lectionary for 13 October is Jeremiah 29 v1 and v 4-7, 2 Kings 5, 1-3 and 7-15, 2 Timothy Ch 2 v8-15, Luke 17 11-19, very relevant for Homeless Sunday.
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New funding to support work with children and young people



Allchurches Trust has launched a new grants programme – Growing Lives – aimed at helping churches and Christian organisations throughout the UK and Ireland to connect with children and young people and forge lasting links with families in their local area.

Grants of up to £25,000 are available, and the amount you receive will depend upon the cost of your project and level of need in your community, ranging from 10% of project cost through to 80%. You can apply for funding under the Growing Lives programme even if you have received a grant from Allchurches Trust within the last two years.

Many churches of all denominations and Christian organisations are already running innovative, impactful projects that are helping young people to explore and grow in faith, get active, access training and work opportunities, develop life and leadership skills and feel less isolated. Others are running major social action initiatives in some of our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

However, recent research by Allchurches Trust* has shown that while 82% of churches provide activities for children aged 0 to 10 years; that figure drops to 58% of churches working with young people aged 11 to 18, and 41% rate the support they provide to this older age group as inadequate.

Our poll also revealed that 96% of churches would like to offer more activities for children and teenagers if they had all of the right skills and resources in place to do so.

For more ideas about how this new programme could help your church or Christian organisation and to apply online, visit www.allchurches.co.uk/growinglives

*Allchurches Trust online research carried out in April 2019 with 2016, 2017 and 2018 church beneficiaries from a range of denominations throughout the UK and Ireland. 810 responses were received.

And Finally ...

2019 David Goodbourne lecture

Michael H Taylor, Emeritus Professor of Social Theology at the University of Birmingham, presented the 2019 David Goodbourne lecture 'Sweet Charity', organised by the [Centre for Theology and Justice](http://www.theologyandjustice.org), and Luther King House. Charities have come under increasing scrutiny in recent times and this lecture focussed on their capacity, or otherwise, to bring about social justice, whether by 'incremental' or 'structural' change. It also looked at the role of faith and theology in achieving this.



[Churches Together in Britain and Ireland links to the lecture](#)

The Wall of Answered Prayer

The winning design for a piece of public art with one million bricks, each representing an answered prayer, has been revealed. It will be located at Coleshill in the Midlands by the motorway and Archbishop Bernard Longley has said; "The Wall of Answered Prayer promises to be an exciting project. I hope that all those who visit it will find some space and inspiration to consider the value of prayer in their lives. The local Catholic community looks forward to playing its part in supporting this work so that together we can leave a legacy of faith for generations to come."



www.thewall.org.uk/press for more information.

JPIT Briefing on Universal Credit

The Joint Public Issues Team that serves Baptists Together, the Methodist Church, the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church, has produced a briefing about:



<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Universal-Credit-Increasing-Hunger-by-Design.pdf>

Faith leaders Training Initiative

A new training course for faith leaders, provided free of charge by the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion and funded by the UK Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, looks at the rapidly-changing world keeps posing new practical challenges for faith leaders. How do we lead our organisations effectively? How can we identify, confront and prevent abuse of all kinds from occurring in our communities? What does British law say about marriage and divorce, about equalities and hate crime. The programme beginning in June 2019 will be in Manchester, Birmingham and London: www.birmingham.ac.uk/FLTI



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