

CTC Review

7: Christmas
2020

GOOD NEWS FROM CORNISH CHURCHES

**#ChristmasIsNotCancelled #FourReports
#RelievingPoverty #EnvironmentallyFriendlyChristmas
#CareHomeMinistry #CathedralCrawl #ModernSlavery**



**CHURCHES
TOGETHER
CORNWALL**

inspiring unity
sharing our gifts

Cornubia : Land of the Saints

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Christmas is not Cancelled

Churches around Cornwall have been ensuring the real message of Christmas is heard more clearly this year as the usual commercial rush has been put on hold - something many have long longed for! Follow us on Facebook to see what's happening: @ChurchesTogetherinCornwall



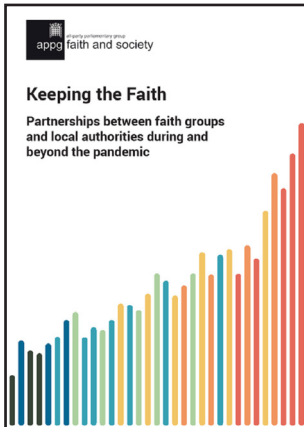
Four Reports

Four recent reports, partly researched in Cornwall, have highlighted the vital role churches play in today's society

“The best of British values that we’ve seen over the past year are also the best of Christian values. The Christian community has always been at the forefront of social activity, seeking justice and speaking truth to power. As we move towards 2021, we must look to these fundamental lessons of Christianity as a blueprint to build a better society for everyone.”

Sir Keir Starmer MP, writing in the Church Times, 18/25 December 2020

Communities



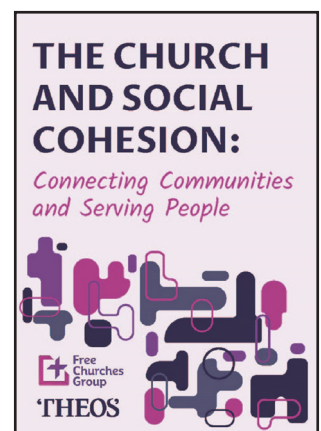
Keeping the Faith: Partnerships between faith groups and local authorities during and beyond the pandemic

<http://bit.ly/3mO24JH>

Over two-thirds of local authorities surveyed reported that there had been an increase in partnership working with faith groups since the start of the pandemic. 91% of local authorities described their experience of partnership with faith groups as 'Very Positive' or 'Positive'. And 76% of local authorities expect that new partnerships undertaken with faith groups during the pandemic will continue afterwards.

The Church and Social Cohesion: Connecting Communities and Serving People <http://bit.ly/37KKH8k>

In contrast to the crisis-driven approach of the major cohesion policy interventions of the last 20 years, this report concentrates on the range of church-based assets that are fostering positive cohesion outcomes away from the headlines: buildings, social networks, convening power, leadership, volunteer capacity, and (perhaps most importantly) vision for the transformation of their communities.

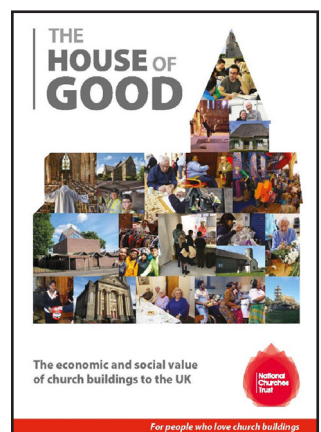


Growing Good: Growth, Social Action and Discipleship in the Church of England <https://bit.ly/3nOjDEK>

How can it be that an organisation whose membership continues to fall is, at the same time, increasing its service of the community? Juxtaposed with attendance figures that have declined continually over the last decade, the Church of England's enduring role in social action is paradoxical – and the COVID-19 pandemic has served only to highlight this further. Could the growth of the church, or the reversal of its decline, lie in its social engagement with local communities?

The House of Good <https://bit.ly/3nOjDEK>

This report from the National Churches Trust, the UK's leading church buildings support charity, has branded the nation's church buildings a 'National Help Service' after finding they provided £12.4 billion worth of essential social and economic support to local communities during the 12 months up until May 2020.



Falmouth & Penryn churches vow to help people with money problems due to the pandemic



St Budock Parish Church alongside other churches in Falmouth & Penryn is urging people impacted financially throughout the pandemic to seek help now and not allow their debts to build up further.

The Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Debt Centre is supported by nine churches in Falmouth, Penryn and surrounding villages. It is offering free help to local people facing money problems due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Jacqui Bennett, Falmouth & Penryn CAP Debt Centre Manager, said: “We know that many people wait as long as three years before finding help with their debts. At first it may seem like you can manage a drop in income but when bills start to get missed debt can rapidly build up until it becomes unmanageable.

“Debt can be caused by many different reasons – ill health, bereavement, relationship breakdown or low income – so it may not just be due to the pandemic although we know that many people in our area have had a reduction in hours or income and may be struggling. Getting help as early as possible can make a big difference.

“We want everyone in our area to know that our service is here, completely free of charge. We don’t want anyone going into the winter and towards Christmas worrying about how they’ll manage.”

Since the pandemic hit, the CAP Debt Help service has adapted to follow social distancing guidelines to stay safe whilst still offering its award winning debt help, along with unique support, across the local area. This support includes helping clients with practical things such as linking up with local food banks, arranging emergency fuel top ups, support, encouragement and a friendly voice at the end

Social Action

of a phone.

CAP client Jude said: “Being in debt was awful. I dreaded the postman. Every time he came it was just debt, debt, debt. I was completely alone and there was no one to talk to. I had to cut back a lot, skipping meals and going without different things. Then I got in touch with CAP. It was amazing. You get these lovely people who are prepared to help and do whatever they can. They’re so kind. Because I was going without meals, they brought me a big bag of stuff from the church’s food bank. At last someone was here to listen to me and help me. I could finally breathe.”

Jacqui added: “It doesn’t matter whether people have reached the desperation Jude faced, or whether they’ve just begun to struggle. We are able to help and are determined to do whatever we can to alleviate the additional pressure that many people are facing as they negotiate loss of or low income.

“We may all be affected by this pandemic but we’re not all in the same boat. Asking for help is a positive step.”

If you are struggling with debt and need help, get in contact with CAP today on 0800 328 0006 or visit capuk.org.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK charity determined to reduce UK poverty delivering debt counselling, money management, job clubs, life skills groups and support for people breaking habitual dependencies.

We only work through local churches (more than 580 of them!) Take a tour at capuk.org/about-us

CAP is committed to its services being available to all individuals regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Contact:

Local contact: Jacqui Bennett, jacquibennett@capuk.org, 0737 66 55 711

Local PR team: pr@capuk.org, 01274 760801

An Environmentally Friendly Christmas *Anna Barrett*

I think we can all agree that this has been quite a rough year. For many of us, attempting to have an ethical, environmentally friendly Christmas is the last on a long list of priorities, but I am here with three tips to make it easier!

Donate to an effective charity (if you can). Some of the statistics coming out at the moment about destitution in the UK are absolutely terrifying, and very often, but especially now, the most effective thing that we can do is give money, not time. If you want to learn more about effective giving, I highly recommend that you check out the 'Effective Altruism' movement, and the 'GiveWell' charity, two sister organisations that exist to give advice on the charities you can give to where your money will go the furthest and do the most good. Some of their highest recommended charities to give to:

If you want to save the most lives, or help the destitute...

- *Malaria Consortium*
- *Against Malaria Foundation*
- *The Trussell Trust*

If you wish to fight the climate crisis...

- *Coalition for Rainforest Nations*
- *Sandbag*
- *Climate Emergency Fund*

When it comes to gift-giving, there are few things better than donating on someone's behalf, but if you wish for something a bit more tangible, there is also an absolutely amazing range of eco-friendly and ethical online shops to buy Christmas gifts from. Some of the ones I rate very highly are:

- *The Big Issue Shop*. I did not know Big Issue had an online shop until very recently, but have been amazed at their range of gifts (their graphic tees are particularly fantastic)
- *Buy Me Once*. Their products are quite a bit pricier than the others on this list, but this company has waged war on planned obsolescence, believing that things should last longer, and so they collate tried and tested products that will last you a very long time. From tights to coffee presses, I highly recommend you check them out because you never know what you might find...
- *Green Tulip*. This is an excellent online store much like any other, with very similar products, just all ethically sourced, reasonably priced and planet-friendly.

Finally, make sure to enjoy yourself, stay safe, and be merry - despite restrictions!

Social Action

Care Home Ministry in a Pandemic *Peter Richards*

December is traditionally a hectic time for care homes, with many visiting groups providing seasonal entertainment. As this extraordinary year comes to a close, celebrations will no doubt be more muted, although the prospect of a family member visiting and a vaccine in the offing will bring some comfort and cheer. This is normally one of the busiest times for the Falmouth & Penryn Churches Together Care Home Team, squeezing in eight or more carol services, singing from room to room in a nursing home, eating mince pies and handing out Christmas cards. This year we've been equally busy, but in a different way.

The pandemic led to innovative ways of keeping connected to the homes we've not been able to visit. We ventured into the world of YouTube and have provided a monthly video, which has been shown on communal televisions and iPads (see <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGYmw3RRK8T1jTSYU5Z2Hgg>). Residents have been able to see familiar faces, enjoy well-known hymns and hear a relevant message from the Bible. For the Christmas video we were able to include some socially-distanced carol singing and the whole recording was put onto a DVD for each home. We've also given a CD of carol tunes specially recorded by one of our pianists, Nicki Tumbridge. Recently we've been circulating "The Monthly Link", an illustrated article, which some homes include in a regular newsletter or copy for all their residents. This year the decision was taken to give a Christmas card to every resident in the Falmouth care homes – that's 160 cards!



A Cornish Quaker's Cathedral Crawl



when the Norman nave fell into ruin. Most Bristolians worshipped at St Mary Redcliffe across the harbour and I had heard so much about this church that I was willing to brave the mad Bristol traffic, forego the Cathedral and visit the church that locals fondly treat as their cathedral. I parked nearby. The ornate entrance was as impressive now as it must have been for those Bristol Merchant Venturers who invested heavily in the church and whose monuments can be seen inside. Many of these families were plantation and slave ship owners and there is a local story which says that when Wilberforce's bill to ban the trading of

Lesley Chandler
is diverted by the Saint Mary Churches of Gloucestershire on her pre-lockdown odyssey around English cathedrals

"The fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England."

(Said reputedly by Queen Elizabeth I on a visit to St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol in 1574).

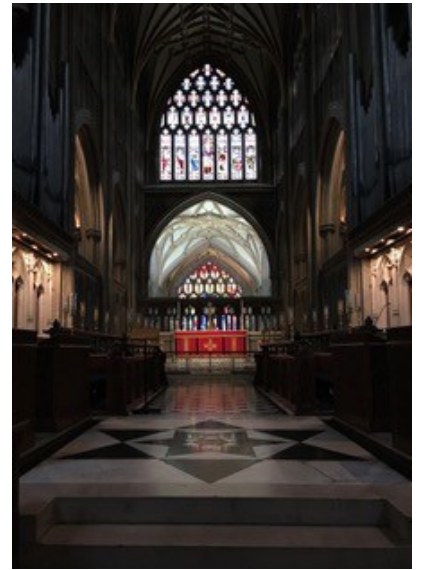
On my 2019 tour of never personally visited cathedrals I was distracted but guided towards detours of significant and historic churches in Gloucestershire. 'Guided' by friends with similar interests and who like me, often refer to Simon Jenkins' English Cathedrals and also England's Thousand Best Churches. SJ awards Bristol Cathedral 3 stars on account of extensive architectural changes the most notable occurring in the 15th century



Pilgrimage

slaves wasn't agreed in Parliament in 1771, the bells of St Mary's allegedly rang out as part of the celebrations all over the City of Bristol.

Bristol traders were responsible for shipping about one fifth of the total enslaved Africans (over 500,000 men, women and children) carried on British ships and the profits from this trade can be seen in the richly decorated St Mary's. With the passing of the Emancipation Act in 1834, these business men received over £500,000 in compensation for their losses (in today's money worth up to £2,036, 000, 000.)



The tomb of the father of William Penn, an early Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania is inside the church. Quakers have long been noted for their abolitionist stance but the Penn story is an interesting one and shows how deeply ingrained the slave trade and the acquisition of wealth from these new overseas colonies had become. William Penn senior had offered his fleet of ships to the exiled King Charles II whilst at the same time being appointed Admiral under Oliver Cromwell(!) At the Restoration of the Monarchy, Charles II offered American restoration lands to Admiral Penn's son, as a repayment of his debt to Penn senior. Hence the birth of Pennsylvania. Both father and son had black servants.

St Mary's Church in Fairford had a completely different feel to it. I visited the church on a very cold day because of its highly acclaimed complete set of 28 medieval stained glass windows. SJ awards the church 5 stars. Once again a merchant (wool this time), John

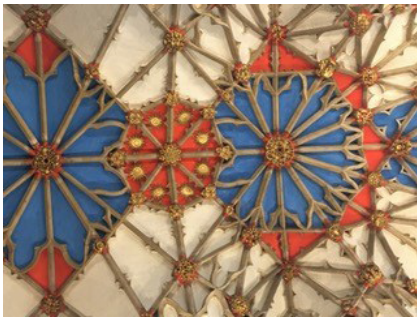


Tame and his son are largely responsible for the stained glass (1490s-1530s) and most of the church decor. The

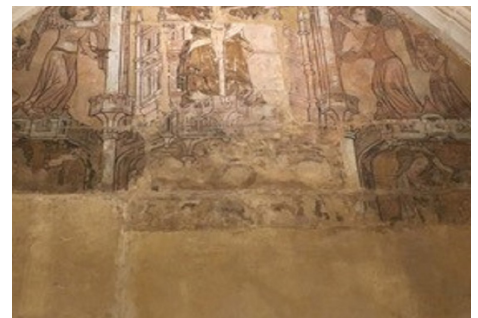
church is truly about the windows and the bible stories they tell. The glass is of the rarest and highest quality of its time and is mostly attributed to a glazier of Flemish



origin called Barnard Flower who worked on Westminster Abbey and King's College Cambridge. Such was the wealth that wool brought to churches.



I visited Tewkesbury Abbey on the same day. The interior has to rate as one of the coldest churches in the land but the visit is filled with warm memories of Tewkesbury itself, the town's rich history and the role the abbey played in that history. Another 5 star church dedicated once again to St Mary. Tewkesbury is a survivor from the period when Monasteries were 'dissolved'. The good folk of Tewkesbury who clearly included some wool merchants, offered to buy the abbey from Henry VIII for £453 to serve as their parish church thus saving it for me to enjoy on that very cold day. The brothers Oddo and Doddo are claimed to be the Saxon founders of the first abbey at Tewkesbury. The building of the present abbey church began in 1102 as a Benedictine monastery built of Caen stone imported from Normandy and floated up the Severn. Before becoming the parish church, Tewkesbury was one of the richest abbeys in England. Famed for the Battle of Tewkesbury in The Wars of the Roses on 4th May 1471 some defeated Lancastrians sought sanctuary in the abbey. The victorious Yorkists led by Edward IV forced entry into the abbey, killing those inside. It took a month to clean, purify and re-consecrate the building. Although the abbey is built in an area which easily floods, flood waters have only reached inside the abbey during the great floods of 1760 and 2007.



My favourite Gloucestershire church dedicated to St Mary is the Priory Church at Deerhurst. Much of the church is Anglo-Saxon and dates from the 8th century when Deerhurst was part of the kingdom of Mercia. Altered in the 10th century after the Viking invasion, enlarged in the 13th and altered again in the 14th and 15th centuries it is described as 'an Anglo-Saxon monument of the first order.' Until the Dissolution, it was a Benedictine Priory. The font there has been acknowledged as the finest Saxon font in existence, carved from a single block of limestone but my favourite carving there is a 9th century head of a beast at the door (one of pair) with traces of the original colour. A hugely fascinating church.

Modern Slavery

FEBRUARY 2021

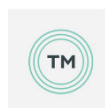
HIDDEN VOICES

Modern Slavery training for Cornish Churches

Starting on **Thursday 4th February 2021**, Hidden Voices is a five week online training course which will take place in five separate sessions between 7.30pm-9pm.

Places are free of charge but numbers are limited so please book early.

To register your interest go to:
www.newstreetchurch.org/community/hiddenvoices





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