



## Churches Together in Cumbria May 2020

**Welcome to our May newsletter.** In this issue we seek both to address immediate concerns and to look to the future. Here you will find information about the county's emergency support helpline, a 'community pack' of guidance for people helping in their communities, a support offer for Cumbrian churches, advice on giving, a request for donations for a food bank, together with an update on the dementia-friendly churches project and notes about the 'Anna Chaplaincy' and 'Green Health' initiatives. We do want to hear from our readers, and we draw special attention, therefore, to 'Lockdown Plea for Stories' on page 2. The newsletter ends with prayers written by one of the Trustees of CTIC.

### **Mark's question mark**

I had been booked to speak at a service on April 25<sup>th</sup> (St Mark's Day). The sermon and the service did not take place (obviously). Before the lockdown I had however begun preparing for the occasion by reading through Mark's gospel. This is, as we know, the shortest of the gospels, clearly focusing on those matters which the writer deemed to be of primary importance. This prompts the question as to the reason for the inclusion in chapter 14 of the story of the person who returned home with nothing to put in the laundry basket: 'A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.' One can readily understand why, when Matthew and Luke came to use Mark as one of their sources, this story was excluded. There was presumably a first-century expression corresponding to 'too much information'. The story is intrusive and, frankly, rather silly – unless, that is, it lends added authenticity to the story of Christ's arrest and, by extension, to the rest of the story of Holy Week. The person who had had a walk-on (and run-off) part in the events of those momentous days was clearly someone known to the early church. 'Trust me, I was there' is the message. Personal information to underscore the truth of the narrative is used later in the gospel also. All the first three gospels name Simon of Cyrene as the man compelled to carry the cross, but only Mark identifies him as 'the father of Alexander and Rufus'. These names would clearly have significance for those who first heard or read the gospel; they may have been persons of some standing within the church.

We were not in the garden, we did not stand on the Via Dolorosa, but we are witnesses to what happened. Our lives have been changed by the Son of God who was arrested and crucified and rose again. Let us be bold in proclaiming his gospel and, by our engagement in mission and social action, showing that we know it to be true.

David Richardson: Treasurer, Churches Together in Cumbria

## Lockdown Plea for Stories

I write this as we enter our fourth week of lockdown and wonder what I have been doing with my time! However as I reflect on the past three weeks, there is much to be thankful for, and many stories of social action surrounded by God's grace.

I go an early morning prayer walk which doubles as my daily exercise. I have been doing this for many years, but I do not remember a time when spring seems so vibrant, the birds are so musical, and the air felt so clear. I have taken many photographs of new born lambs, horses looking for somebody to speak to, and colourful wild flowers.

On a very sad day recently when one of my friends had just died from the virus, I was drawn to a hedgerow where I saw a cross - clearly and unmistakably a cross, just there among the branches.



My most unusual photo was taken yesterday when I noticed a goose up a tree! I guess we all feel in a slightly strange place at present.

There is much sharing going on in our community - shopping, recipes, plants and vegetable seedlings, books, wool for my elderly mother in her care home, to name but a few.

Do you have stories about coping with lockdown and how your community and your church are responding? We would love to share them, so please send them to me, or any photographs you may have.

**Shelagh Goldie**

**Social Responsibility Officer**

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### **Dementia Project:**



With our churches closed and the usual activities for those affected by dementia and their carers suspended, I have been thinking about those things that seem small but can nevertheless make a very real difference to all our lives.

Whilst we can't meet together, we can still make contact with one another by telephone, and shouldn't under-estimate the difference that the comforting sound of another human voice can make to the day, especially if we live alone.

A telephone call can be used in all sorts of ways we wouldn't normally think of: to share a Bible reading together, a poem, even a short story, or to sing a hymn or a song together, and of course to pray together. All these things can feel a bit awkward at first because on the whole we're not used to using the telephone in this way, having become more adept at texting or emailing. But it is worth persevering as precious times of sharing together over the phone can be had.

We should also remember to smile as we speak as we would in a face to face encounter; the love and kindness contained in this will still be communicated to the person on the other end of the line, even though we can't be seen.

### **Anna Chaplaincy:**

With more time for many of us to reflect, could I invite you to consider the Anna Chaplaincy Project that we hope to launch in Cumbria in the autumn and to get in touch if you would like to find out a bit more about it. The website [www.annachaplaincy.org.uk](http://www.annachaplaincy.org.uk) is also a very useful source of information and inspiration.

**Yvonne Povey, Dementia Project Officer/Temp Anna Chaplaincy Lead.** Email: [dpoctic@outlook.com](mailto:dpoctic@outlook.com)



### **Churches Together in Cumbria AGM 2020**

Churches Together in Cumbria had hoped to hold the AGM in June of this year. Due to Covid 19 this now won't be possible. We hope to be able to re-arrange something for the Autumn, but will give further details in due course.

**Thank you for your understanding and stay safe.**

### **Appeal for Food Donations from the North Lakes Foodbank**

With Churches and public buildings closing, Foodbanks across Cumbria will have lost many of their regular food donation sites. With shop shelves empty, it is difficult to find the food to donate to the Foodbank. This is an appeal from the North Lakes Foodbank to all those who may have donated at their local Church in the past - thank you everyone - to ask people to try and donate items of food at an alternative donation point. When the supermarket shelves are empty, so are the shelves in the Foodbank warehouse.

We are specifically asking people at this difficult time, if they are able, to donate items of food in preference to making a financial donation towards the work, because it is proving to be a significant challenge for the Foodbank to actually source the food items.

#### **Food Donation Collection Points:**

Workington: Tesco, Morrisons, Asda, Iceland, Foodbank Centre at the Bridge Centre

Whitehaven: Morrisons, Tesco, Foodbank Centre at New Life Church

Cockermouth: Sainsburys, Co-op, Cockermouth Foodbank Centre at Lorton Street Methodist Church

Wigton: Co-op, Wigton Foodbank Centre

Maryport: Maryport Foodbank Centre

Cleator Moor: Co-op

Silloth: Co-op

Egremont: Co-op, Egremont Foodbank Centre

Keswick: Booths Supermarket



To see when the Foodbank Centres are open, go to our website

<https://www.thefoodbank.org.uk/centres>

Scan down the page and look for the town and you will find all the opening details for the Foodbank Centre

You can find our weekly appeal on the home page of our website and this is updated each week with the items we are most short of.

**Currently we are short of 1 ltr UHT Fruit Juice, 1 ltr UHT milk (not skimmed) Tinned Rice Pudding and Sponge Pudding.**

Thank you for your support to help us help those in crisis in the local community.



## COVID-19 EMERGENCY SUPPORT HELPLINE

Only for people at high risk of becoming seriously ill as a result of COVID-19, who do not have support available from friends, family or neighbours and are struggling for food, medicines or other essential supplies.

**0800 783 1966** or **COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk**

Full details can be found online at [cumbria.gov.uk](https://cumbria.gov.uk)

Provided by Cumbria County Council and partners including District Councils, CVS, Cumbria Community Foundation, community and voluntary sector, and private sector.



**SUPPORT EACH OTHER**  
**#TogetherWeCan**

## Cumbria Together We Can

A new 'community pack' of useful guidance for people who are helping in their communities has just been published.

[Coronavirus in Cumbria - Helping in your local community](#) is a joint collaboration between Cumbria County Council and Cumbria CVS.

With 300 community groups now formed across the county to help during the coronavirus pandemic, the community pack provides advice on ways to help and how to help safely.

It is likely to need regular updates as the situation continues but the latest version will always be available [here](#).

Groups are also encouraged to share stories and pictures of how they are helping in their community via [@TogetherCumbria](#) on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) using the hashtags [#TogetherWeCan](#) and [#TogetherCumbria](#).

## New Support Offer To Cumbrian Churches

Team Rubicon UK are an established organisation working across the world in disaster relief.

Primarily ex-service men and women they have many active members based across the UK and are offering to try and help support local parishes where they are aware of any unmet needs in their community. This offer of partnership has been extended to the churches in Cumbria.

They have expertise in many areas but would be willing to help with food distribution, transport, collecting prescriptions, hygiene supplies and so on (this list is by no means exhaustive as they will try to help with any unmet needs).

If you can think of anything where help may be needed then please contact either [Archdeacon Lee Townend](#) or Team Rubicon's [Mary Lockwood](#).

## New Advice Published Around Giving

The Church of England nationally has published new advice on how churches can help people to give financially during the coronavirus pandemic.

The guidance notes: "Many individuals are going through financial uncertainty as a result of lost or changed employment during the restrictions, and that may affect their giving too. This means that it is even more important that those who can give are able to do so. You could consider including an update in a bulletin or online parish magazine to let people know how to go about giving online or by standing order or direct debit."

[For further guidance visit Parish Resources.](#)

## **Prayers for today**

Lord, we pray for your world at this time of fear, uncertainty and loss. We pray for all who set or enforce public policy or tend the sick or seek a cure. We pray for all who mourn, most especially for all who had been unable to be with their loved one at the end. Lord, hasten the day when we need no longer be afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness. Amen

Lord, we pray for the churches in this county, for all Mission Communities, Churches Together groups and places of worship. Keep us united in love for you and our neighbours, make us creative and faithful in the ways in which we respond to need. Heavenly Father, may we know the sustaining presence of the Spirit in these challenging days as we seek to bear witness to the gospel of the Son who triumphed over evil and death. Amen

## **GREEN HEALTH CUMBRIA**

CTiC is developing a "Green Health" project using churchyards and other community spaces for therapeutic horticulture. A group of interested people met recently with Bishop James who gives this work his full support. We are working closely with the NHS, whose interest in this comes from Social Prescribing and Integrated Care Communities. These agendas aim to use communities to work together to address isolation, loneliness and other issues which do not need specific medical intervention.

If you are interested in finding out more, please do get in touch.

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### **Reminder**

Please remember to keep looking at the CTiC events page which is regularly updated with all the events we are notified about. Please send information before 15th May for our newsletter: [ebctic@outlook.com](mailto:ebctic@outlook.com)

Find out more about the work of CTiC in our overview paper, available on the website: [https://www.churchestogethercumbria.co.uk/Groups/318434/About\\_Us.aspx](https://www.churchestogethercumbria.co.uk/Groups/318434/About_Us.aspx)

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