

The

Ansty Road *Window*



The monthly newsletter from
Ansty Road United Reformed Church

April 2024



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Mens Breakfast club

FRIDAYS 9.30-11.30AM

23 FEB, 22 MAR, 26 APR, 31 MAY

Ansty Road URC
210 Ansty Road CV2 3EY



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Editor

Welcome to the first edition of the relaunched newsletter, and thank you for taking the time to have a look at what it has to offer. I hope you will find something inside that is informative, or interesting, or even thought-provoking.

But, what to name it?

Following a flash of inspiration before falling asleep the other night, I came up with the title of “The Ansty Road Window”, in homage to our new entrance porch and its numerous creative and effective displays throughout the seasons and celebrations of the Christian year. Perhaps I should have more accurately named it “The Hocking Road Window”, but that would probably have just perpetuated the longstanding confusion over our name and postal address. Hopefully, both will provide a window into the life of our church and encourage those friends we have not yet met to come in and explore further.



The above said, if anyone has any other suggestions as to what to name this august journal, please feel free to let me know and I will impartially decide whether it's better than mine!

I am hoping this will be issued monthly, but that will depend on content. So, if anyone has any contributions they would like included, they will be gratefully received. I may also have a quiet word with one or two people over the next few weeks about articles – so be warned, as you may wish to avoid me if you see me approaching in a purposeful manner.

In this issue, we have news of two recent new groups that have started up, and a new initiative to engage with the local community. Also, the first of regular contributions from Tony and Kirsty and a report of the recent Synod from Paul. Kirsty has also agreed to let me have some articles around Appreciative Inquiry and the Swedish method of bible study – both of which were explored at last year's retreat. I am hoping you find them as inciteful, and challenging, as we all did. The first instalments appear in this issue.

Finally, this is a reincarnation of the popular newsletter Paul B produced for many years until he took a well-deserved rest. I hope we can deliver to his high standards and that this proves to be a worthy successor.

Enjoy!

Roger

Church Secretary

Two photographs appear on my laptop when I log on. One shows a blue hummingbird hovering to feed from a flowering plant. The other shows a group of penguins on rocks above the sea. It's a lovely reminder of how wonderful God's world is. We take so much for granted these days. We see the horrors of the world, so many people killed, cities destroyed etc., that it is difficult to remember that the world God created has everything we need. We need to do all we can in our own small way to protect God's world.



'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I also,' Jesus said.

We are only a small Church, but those words are so meaningful. If you stop to think for a moment, our Church is moving forward all the time. With God's help, we will continue to spread His love in the local area. Our Church members are involved in many aspects of 'Church' life.

At our A.G.M., most of the business was the standard information. Our Elders - Caroline, Roger and myself - were re-elected for further terms of office. Isabel continues her ministry as Elder in Local Leadership. We agreed that Church Meetings and Elders Meetings would continue to be on alternative months.

We are very grateful to Isabel for all the work she puts into organising various activities for our Church. Her faith shines through in every aspect of her work.

However, she is not alone. We need to support each other and recognise the part each one of us plays in the work of the Church.

God Bless,

Tony Pedley

Synod Report held on-line 16 March 2024

During the four-hour online synod we heard from Rev Evans on the topic “Leading your church into Growth” and from the Moderator on “Flourishing Churches Viability & Vocation” both were very interesting with one comment that particularly struck a chord about the viability of churches joining together solely just to survive a little longer. It went something like “two sinking ships tied alongside for support still will not make a safe harbour”. That was not to say mergers are a bad thing but have to be done in the belief that it will make a sustainable difference. The Moderator asked what was stopping growth in the churches. We went into breakout groups on Zoom and the overriding reason was the limited number of people able to carry out tasks, usually due to an ageing congregation. Surprisingly the lack of money, a minister and excessive administration were considered less of a restraining factor to growth.



We also had an overview of the sixth edition of the Safeguarding Policy from the Synod’s Safeguarding Officer. She stressed that safeguarding needs to be on every church meeting agenda as the impact of non-compliance could have serious consequences and invalidate insurance cover. The new edition has benefited from feedback from earlier editions as the policy is continually updated to reflect best practice. Individual members need not concern themselves with the finer detail that’s the responsibility of each churches safeguarding officer but everyone needs to be aware that it exists and who their Safeguarding Officer is so they can raise concerns should one arise.

A large part of the morning was taken Eco policies. We heard about the Synod Manse Energy Efficiency Scheme. The Synod currently pay for Manse insurance and will contribute up to £750 toward maintenance as well as exceptional repairs, but funds are also available for reducing manse carbon footprint. This may be just insulation but could include solar panel and heat pumps if appropriated. All manses have an Energy Performance Rating (EPR) to ascertain how much heat is retained in the building. The purchase of any church building needs to have a rating of C and above or a means of achieving that level soon after purchase. Large funding will need to be proved that the EPR is significantly better after the completion of the work. The grants are available not only to manses in use by a minister but also those which are vacant. However, manses rented out commercially will not be eligible. The question was raised as to whether such improvements would result in a minister being taxed as a benefit. It was considered unlikely although there was a question around electric car charging points.

The Moderator had talked earlier on the Synod’s Environmental Policy and the need for all Christians to take a lead in reducing their carbon footprint not just at church but personally, by taking less foreign holidays, using public transport, buying “green” electric, reusing and recycling etc. One minister raised the question that had crossed my mind. With less ministers

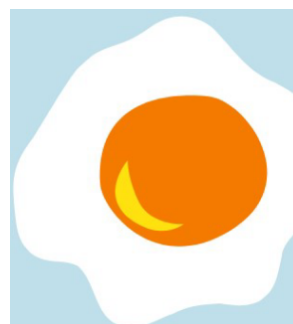
and larger pastorate ministers will be clocking up more mileage. The Moderator acknowledges nothing was perfect and later mentioned that the WM Synod off set its carbon footprint. There are websites for churches and households to calculate their carbon footprint and pay to offset the emissions. The Synod approved 100% to adopt the Synod Environmental Policy, which also encourages all churches to follow suit. For as the report said, “As a church we affirm that care for Creation, just sharing of the world’s resources, and a love for the environment in which God has placed us are fundamental Gospel commitments” To this end we need to be prepared to campaign and urge governments to do more to reduce greenhouse gasses in order to achieve net zero by 2030.

The Synod Clerk listed the nominations for various appointments which include Kirsty’s as a Synod rep for the 2024 General Assembly. All nominations were approved unanimously. The minutes of the last Residential Synod and the Zoom Business meeting a few days later were approved. Included in the morning agenda were a few committee reports covering Ministerial Development and an update from the Moderator on Children & Youth events. Should anyone be interested in knowing more about these reports I can let you have an e-copy (so as to keep my carbon footprint to a minimum).

Paul B

Men Behaving Badly

A few months ago, Steve approached the elders and asked if he could start a men’s breakfast club in the church. Steve attends such a club at Coventry City Mission and was aware first-hand of the benefits of having a space where men can meet and talk in an environment in which they feel comfortable. Some, but not all, of the men live alone and no longer work, and this may be one of only a few opportunities they have of social interaction.



As a recently retired chef, Steve thought this would be something where he could bring his expertise to the table (pun intended!) and make a significant contribution to the church’s work in the local community. Thus far, there have been two breakfasts – the first was very well attended, the second not so much, but Steve knows from attending the CCM breakfast club that numbers do tend to fluctuate from month to month and can be weather dependent.

Although promotional material has gone out, word of mouth usually produces the best results, so please feel free to spread the word to anyone who may be interested – note the key demographic! The breakfasts are held on the last Friday of the month (all things being equal).

Midweek Craft Group

Anyone passing or visiting the church on a Wednesday afternoon recently may have noticed a group of (mainly) women chatting, drinking (mainly tea or coffee), knitting, crocheting, and doing various other crafty things. Well, they will be participating in our new midweek craft group.



This was set up following a chance meeting between Janette and one of the other members and it has proven to be very popular and well-attended. All are welcome and please don't be afraid to spread the word locally. The group meets every second and fourth Wednesday – details below.

FRESH START FOR 2024?
 Drop in for our
MIDWEEK MEET-UP
Chat, Cuppa, Company
Bring your Craft Project
 Meeting at
Ansty Road United Reformed Church
1-3 PM
2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month
Contact Lyn 07966936652

Church Related Community Worker

Dear Friends

A Blessed Eastertide to you all! As many of you know, the season of Easter doesn't end until we get to the end of Pentecost, but before we arrive at Pentecost there is much to see, hear and experience with the Risen Christ.

For a few years now Thy Kingdom Come which is a global ecumenical prayer movement has encouraged and engaged local congregations all over the world by inviting Christians to pray 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 international and ecumenical call to prayer.



The reason I am telling you is because the time when this focused prayer takes place is between the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven and Pentecost. That is 10 days in length, which this year is from May 9th to May 19th. It would be wonderful if we as a church took part in this focused prayer for Wyken. One of the ways we can do this is that we can use the prayer journal which is downloadable at

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/sites/default/files/2024-03/TKC%20Prayer%20Journal%202024%20WEB%20V1.pdf>

You can also purchase copies through the CPO website and if there is enough desire, I can put an order in for a set so that we can pray together everyday for the people of Wyken between Ascension and Pentecost even though we live around the city and may not meet together. We could also organise an hour of prayer on one of the day's and come together to then at the church to pray for the community, please let me know if this of interest.

More importantly I want to encourage you to deepen your relationship with God at this time, we can always find reasons and excuses not to spend time in prayer and personal Bible reading, but if we are honest with ourselves and God, the reasons aren't reasons, they are just excuses. We can all spend more time with God, myself included, and the 10 days of Thy Kingdom Come might just be the nudge we all need to spend more time in prayer and Bible study.

Over the coming months, you will be able to read about different ways to read and study the Bible in this newsletter, they won't all suit all of you, but hopefully they will give you some different things to try to deepen your spiritual time with God each day.

I hope that as we move towards the summer we all find that our relationships deepen and flourish with God as we journey with the Risen Christ.

Blessings, **Kirsty <><**

Appreciative Inquiry

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry was first developed by David Cooperrider in the late 1980s.

The Appreciative Inquiry Model is one of the key positive organisational approaches to development and collective learning.



Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a co-operation, strengths-based approach to change in organisations and other **human systems**.

SIDE NOTE Human Systems: We often think of an organisation's culture as both static and without definition: "This is just how things are done around here. It hasn't changed since I arrived, and it probably won't anytime soon." While cultures are sometimes shaped deliberately, they often emerge organically and seemingly on their own. As such, it can be a challenge to change a culture, as if trying to manipulate fog. It is more energising and enlightening to think of organisational culture as a human system—a dynamic, complex interplay among colleagues who, together, imagine, design, create, align, and deliver, against a backdrop of structures and practices that play out over time. Seen this way, culture is alive, shaped and reinforced daily by everyday actions and interactions. With this as a frame, it's more possible to do something with an organisation's culture.

The term Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is used to refer to both the AI model (the principles and theory behind a strengths-based change approach) and the AI methodology and initiatives (the specific techniques and operational steps that are used to bring about positive change in a system).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) identifies and enhances the “life-giving forces” that are present when the team/church/organisation is working at its best, serving whatever is its purpose and role.

The term appreciative comes from the idea that when something increases in value, it “appreciates”. AI focuses on the “generative possibilities” - the things that, if increased, would add value and make a difference. The term inquiry describes the process of seeking to understand through questions, and the value of paying attention to the processes and people.

So AI focuses on the good things if they were increased would make a difference through asking questions and paying attention to the process and the people involved.

AI is a transformative process that focuses on strengths rather than weaknesses and encourages active and effective participation. AI is a philosophy, an approach, and a way of

working from an appreciative, positive and strengths-based standpoint. AI is flexible, but it is not just a set of techniques. AI practitioners (people who practice AI) commit to a personal journey in self, relationships, organisations, communities.

The theology at the heart of Appreciating Church (AI in a church setting) is about a God of abundance, not pain, fear or scarcity and how we can use our strengths collectively.

The Unique Aspects of AI:

AI is different to traditional problem-solving approaches. It builds on the research showing that people become stronger and build their strengths when working from strengths. It also has strong links to positive psychology - this is not about positive thinking. Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living (Peterson, 2008). AI and positive psychology accepts that there are problems, but looks at them from a different viewpoint and encourages generating new and actionable ideas, collaboration, hope and creativity.

AI helps build relationships which enable people to be known in their relationship rather than in their role (person rather than role). It creates an opportunity for every person to be heard. It creates opportunities for people to dream and verbalise their dreams. It creates an environment in which people feel able to choose how they contribute. It gives people both discretion and the support to act and it encourages and enable people to be positive while acknowledging any difficulties.

Community Initiative

Three of us met recently with the landlady of the New Pippin. The meeting was convened in response to an initiative of the New Pippin and ourselves to encourage a greater sense of community in Wyken, bearing in mind the local authority has historically not prioritised Wyken as an area in need of support. Informal visits from Kirsty to the businesses immediately local to the New Pippin and the church suggested there is an appetite to explore ways of moving this forward.



Unfortunately, however, no-one else attended this or a follow-up meeting. Undeterred, we pressed on and came up with various suggestions to potentially run with – the first of which being a fun day to be held at one or more venues in the summer, and a date has been set of 10 August. We have come up with some ideas as to what this may involve and will put this out to the local community for other suggestions and to promote the event.

Further details will follow as and when there are any developments.

Bible Study Methods

There are many different ways that you can study the Bible alone at home as part of your own daily personal time with God. Over the coming months, I am going to introduce you to a variety of different methods for you to try as you read your Bible. The first method I am going to introduce you to is The Swedish Bible Reading Method. There are two ways to use this method and I am going to explain them both so that you can try them out. If this method isn't for you, there will be others that you can try over the coming months, but I would encourage you to give it a go.



The first way to use the Swedish method is as follows:

As you read ask yourself these questions and write notes so that you can keep track of what you have picked up.



What shines out from this passage? What strikes me? - This will be personal to each person, but that is the point of the question. It is about what occurs to you.



What questions do I have? - This is where you list the questions so that you can look up answers from trusted Biblical sources or your minister, elders, Bible study leaders.



What signs do I see here of Jesus? Why he came? What he achieved? - These questions are in some respects obvious, but they are designed to challenge you to think about what you are reading and how it relates to Jesus.



How does this apply to me? What changes do I need to make? - This is where we always need to take our scripture reading, we always need to ask how the Bible applies to the way we live and move through the world as Christ's followers.

The second way to use the Swedish method is as follows:



I agree with this. I like this. - write down the things that you agree with or like and why you feel that way.



I disagree with or don't like this. I find this hard. - write down the things you disagree with or don't like, or what you find hard and why you feel this way. This will highlight areas you may want to talk over with someone else.



What surprises me? - write down the things that surprise you and why they surprised you.



How does this fit in? Why does the author say this? - how does what you are reading fit in with what you have read previously in the same book or group of books? Is there anything at the start of the book that tells you anything about the author or the time in which the book you are reading was written? Write these things down to reflect upon with the questions before and after.



Where else have I read something in the Bible like this? - this enables you to start making connections across the Bible so that you can see the big picture, the whole story of God's love for us. Write down the links and connections you are making so that you can see the patterns develop over time.



Who could I talk to about this? Who would benefit from this? - Write down who you would want to talk to about what you have learnt, discovered, uncovered, questioned so that you can understand more. Who do you want to share this with to encourage and excite them to pick up and read their Bible more. Who would you want to share this with who doesn't know God and what would you want to tell them?

Elders and Officers

The URC has a three-tier structure, which is open for everyone to participate in.

Local churches have an Elders' Meeting, in which the Ministers and Elders share pastoral and spiritual oversight and leadership, and a Church Meeting, where all members gather to seek God's will and to discuss the life and work of the church.

The current elders and officers serving Ansty Road URC are

Church Secretary	Tony Pedley
Church Treasurer	Caroline Linney
Elder in Local Leadership	Isabel McIntyre
Elders	Caroline Linney
	Roger Linney
	Tony Pedley
Church Related Community Worker	Kirsty-Ann Mabbott

Safeguarding

We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and operate in accordance with current procedures and recommendations. Full details can be found in the church welcome area.

Our safeguarding coordinator is	Amanda Donnelly
	07796 274151
	safeguardinganstyroad@gmail.com

Building Use

Our building is a valuable community resource and is used by various outside organisations not directly connected to the church. Income received from our lettings helps pay our bills and contributes to upkeep of the building and grounds.

Groups currently using our building on a regular basis are

Hope in Unity	Monday 9.30am to 4.30pm
Coventry Scratch Orchestra	Tuesday 7.30pm to 9.30pm
Coventry Pilates Studio	Wednesday 9.30am to 10.30am
Midweek Craft Group	Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday 1.00pm to 3.00pm
Slimming World	Thursday 4.30pm to 8.30pm
Men's Breakfast Club	Every last Friday 9.30am to 11.30am

Meetings

Meetings scheduled for April are

Monday 8 April - Elders

Lectionary

A lectionary is a cycle of biblical readings that runs through the Church Year, beginning at the start of Advent. The United Reformed Church uses the Revised Common Lectionary, which was developed in the 1980s and is now used throughout the world by many Christian denominations.

The primary lectionary readings for April are

7 April	Easter 2	Psalm 133	
14 April	Easter 3	Acts 3:12-19	Luke 24:36b-48
21 April	Easter 4	Psalm 23	John 10:11-18
28 April	Easter 5	John 15:1-8	
5 May	Easter 6	Psalm 98	

Offertory

We rely on freewill offerings made by church members and the congregation for upkeep of the church and to pay our Maintenance and Ministry contributions to the URC. Offerings are received by either standing order payments or by cash in the plate at the entrance to the sanctuary. All offerings are blessed during the service.

The offerings received for March totalled £1,034.

Worship and Devotions

Our family worship takes place in church every Sunday at 10.30am, to which everyone is welcomed. All services are also live streamed via Zoom for those who are unable to attend in person. The link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88656126155?pwd=ZzZGOVhOSUdIZVkyR0xDM2dLYTRIQT09>

Meeting ID: **886 5612 6155** Passcode: **103563**

Upcoming services

				Preacher	Reader
7 April	10.30am	Easter 2	Communion	Margaret Sedgwick	Chris
14 April	10.30am	Easter 3		Elders	Roberta
21 April	10.30am	Easter 4		Kirsty-Ann Mabbott	Roger
28 April	10.30am	Easter 5		Shan Dobinson	Sue
5 May	10.30am	Easter 6		Margaret Marshall	Amanda

Open prayers are held via Zoom every first and third Thursday of the month and bible study every second and fourth Thursday at 7.00pm. The link for both is the same as that for Sunday worship as shown above. Again, all are welcome.