



Churches Together Around Ludlow Newsletter

Summer 2014

Contents

Thoughts from David Roberts, CTAL Chair 2013-14	1
Introducing Simon Lambourne	2
HOPE14 (Ludlow)	3
ACTS2 / Open the book	3
Domestic abuse: what can you do?	3
Shropshire HOPE Explosion	5
A letter from Sydney Levy at Jewish Voice for Peace	6
Appetite for justice	7

Thoughts from David Roberts, CTAL Chair 2013-14

Things they are a-changing!

Immigrants. Scotland. Europe. Education in inner cities. As the ancient Greeks said 'Everything changes. Nothing stays the same'. However, one thing does need to stay and that is our Christian faith as a way of guiding us through the changes that are in front of us nationally and internationally. We are confronted by radicals who would re-model our world to their own preferences. Often that does not include catering for the weak and marginalised and those of a different faith or culture. Christians, however, should be the force in our fractured world demonstrating, by the way we get on with each other, the transforming effect of Gospel values and the resilience we should have in the face of adversity. We are the people who believe in the Resurrection. We should be the party in the world of Good Neighbours, able to acknowledge the differences there are within our common humanity, and with humility show generosity of spirit and build networks of co-operation.

Give thanks, then, for the churches of Ludlow and its surrounding area. Pray that we may be ever more effective in what we are able to do together. Deepening togetherness will enrich our own faith and it will present a welcome and an offer of hospitality to those who are searching for meaning and purpose in their life.

David Roberts

Introducing Simon Lambourne

My name is Simon Lambourne and I have been married to Hazel for 23 years – we have a daughter called Abby who has just turned 21 years old! We originate from Stockport near Manchester and discovered Ludlow eight years ago when we came for a week's holiday and stayed on Lower Raven Lane. Within a few days we had fallen in love with the place and purchased a holiday cottage in the September of that year! Initially we came to Ludlow once every fourth weekend which eventually became almost every weekend!

I worked as an Assistant Minister for Hazel Grove Baptist Church, a 400-member church, from 1991 to 1996 and after that went into sales, initially selling finance, and then in 1999 I moved into the field of recruitment and became an Area Business Manager and Sales Trainer for a leading recruitment company in the north-west of England.

During this time I continued to be an Elder and Worship Leader at Hazel Grove Baptist Church and have served on church leadership at Elder level for over twenty years. My worship-leading highlight was when I was asked to lead worship for Reinhard Bonnke, the German evangelist, at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester – we had about 3,000 people present – it was both terrifying and thrilling at the same time!

My wife is a trained nurse, midwife and practice nurse and works in various GP practices in the Ludlow area. My daughter is about to graduate with a degree from Bangor University and is continuing her studies at Manchester University, where she is going to train to be a teacher

In 2010 we started to feel the Lord calling us to relocate to Ludlow and I secured a position as a Sales Director within the field of recruitment and moved to Ludlow in March 2011. Hazel joined me in September 2011. I never thought I would return to the ministry but by mid-2013 I started to hear the call of the Lord on my life again – specifically for Ludlow Baptist Church – and the rest is history!

In my private time I am an avid gym-goer (!) and have met some great guys who have taken me under their wings and embraced me as one of the gang – we have fun, fun, fun!

I take a very relaxed approach to church leadership and am looking to develop a contemporary Baptist Church that is a safe and relaxed place to be as we go about our busy 21st-century lives. We are currently developing strong friendships with one another and there is a sense of unity and oneness as we respect one another's viewpoints and sense that most importantly we are one in Christ.

Simon Lambourne

HOPE14 (Ludlow)

Hope14 is a national initiative that encourages churches to engage with their communities to do acts of kindness that make a difference, and to allow them to share about why they are doing it. Here in Ludlow many Christians get involved with acts of kindness and that is to be applauded. Some of us felt we wanted to support this initiative by having a year where we could tie events together under a single banner; events that embraced having fun, raising finance and sharing faith. So far this year we have joined Ludlow 21 / Pride of Place in doing a litter pick around the town. We did a Clergy v Community pancake race, and a community car wash (see pictures below). We are intending to do more litter picks (around the festival time and later in the year) have a fun harvest festival, run a celebratory sing-song for seniors, and organise a family pantomime just before Christmas.

The car wash was a resounding success with £600 raised and split equally between the Fire Service Benevolent Fund, Home-Start South Shropshire and the Youth Forum.

Many local agencies are touched that the church is prepared to get behind them in this way, which results in questions as to why we would. Sharing faith becomes a matter of answering questions, which is far easier than trying to weave faith into a conversation where it may not be wanted! We always need an army of volunteers and if you would be prepared to help then please get in touch with me.



Tim Coles, 07734 106275, timcoles@me.com

ACTS2 / Open the book

There are growing opportunities in our primary schools to get involved with conducting assemblies and other special events. Actually, far more than we can currently cope with! Training is provided but we need help now. If you would consider this, please get in touch with either Andy Summers or Tim Coles.

Domestic abuse: what can you do?

CTAL recently worked with South Shropshire Domestic Violence Network to put on an information event at the Methodist Church. Anne Weller reports:

We talked about what domestic abuse is and how it affects people. We explained the support available in our area.

Domestic abuse involves a range of behaviour where one person exerts control over another person. It is the emotional, physical, sexual, psychological or financial abuse of a person by their partner, family member, or someone with whom they have had a relationship.

Domestic abuse is very common and dangerous. In the UK 2 women every week are killed by a present or former partner. 30% of the adult female population have experienced some form of domestic abuse since they were 16. 7% of women and 4% of men have experienced domestic abuse within the last year (Official Crime Figures 2013).

Domestic violence and abuse are used for one purpose and one purpose only, to gain and maintain total control. Abusers use fear, guilt, shame, and intimidation. An abuser may also threaten you, hurt you, or hurt those around you.

Domestic violence and abuse does not discriminate. It happens among heterosexual couples and in same-sex partnerships. It occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds, and economic levels. And while women are more commonly victimised, men are also abused — especially verbally and emotionally, sometimes even physically as well. The bottom line is that abusive behaviour is never acceptable, whether it's coming from a man, a woman, a teenager, or an older adult.

Domestic violence and abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused, or denied. This is especially true when the abuse is psychological, rather than physical. Noticing and acknowledging the signs of an abusive relationship are the first steps to ending it. No one should live in fear of the person they love. **Every person deserves to feel valued, respected, and safe.**

People who are subjected to domestic abuse need to know that they are not alone, and that there is always someone who they can talk to, someone who can help. In Shropshire we have a **24-hour Domestic Abuse Helpline**, run by West Mercia Women's Aid, which women can call if they have recognised that they are in an abusive relationship and they want help and support. **The number is 0800 7831359.**

Women can also contact South **Shropshire Domestic Abuse Services on 0300 303 1191** or to **Refuge-Shropshire on 07919 478581.**

There is also an advice line for men to call, which is **0808 801 0327.**

In Shropshire several agencies work together to provide services to victims of domestic abuse.

Refuge and South Shropshire Domestic Violence Services offer support where they live to victims of domestic abuse who wish to stay in the community and keep safe from abuse. Emotional support and guidance are offered face-to-face, over the telephone, or by email. There is also one refuge in the south and one in the north of the county where women and their children can come and be safe and secure while rebuilding their lives. There is also a wide range of small-group support programmes in the south and north of the county according to need.

West Mercia Women's Aid runs the 24-hour helpline. They also run the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service, which supports high-risk victims, including those who have to go to court. They also offer a community support package and a comprehensive programme of recovery and empowerment groups.

Ludlow CHATS (Compassion, Help, Awareness, Trust, Signposting) is a new self-help group for survivors of domestic abuse in our area. They meet regularly to offer support to each other. Contact them through the Foyer in Ludlow, or by emailing Lynne.Carline@sshropsha.co.uk.

SEEDS Shropshire (Survivors Empowering and Educating Domestic Abuse Services) enables survivors to have their voice heard by those who provide domestic abuse services, in order to get services improved. Contact them on 07756 127850.

What can you do? Probably the most important thing you can do is to listen and believe if someone tells you they are suffering domestic abuse. You may be the only person who does.

You now know the contact details of several agencies who offer specialist help. You can pass on that information. More information can be found at freedomshropshire.org.uk.



Anne Weller, South Shropshire Domestic Violence Network

Shropshire HOPE Explosion

On Saturday 5 July a whole day of free events is taking place at the Telford International Centre. You'll find all the details on the Shropshire Hope website, shropshirehope.co.uk/shropshire-hope-explosion, but here's a taster of what's happening. Please note – this is a revised version of the timetable on the printed publicity materials:

- 10:00-12:00 Primary School Celebration of Choral Talent hosted by human theatre artist Steve Murray – over 350 primary school children attending
- 12:00-12:45 Saltmine Theatre Company drama workshop – places limited to 35 people attending (see website for more details in order to book a place)
- 13:00-16:00 Youth For Christ Nomad Football Cage – in the car park
- 13:30-14:30 Shropshire Prayer Breakfast with Eric Delve – come and pray for our county
- 15:15-16:15 Saltmine Theatre Company present *From Eden to Eternity* – a whistle-stop tour from Genesis to Revelation
- 16:30-17:30 Youth For Christ multi-media presentation with "Stance" (street dance group), music and video
- 18:15-20:15 "Bringing HOPE to Shropshire" with evangelist Eric Delve, Stance and Steve Murray presenting the Gospel

In addition there will be other entertainers, exhibition stands and activities taking place during the day. And it's all entirely free – even car parking. I really do hope that you will come and bring folks with you who may never darken the doors of a church, but who would appreciate a family-focussed free event.

Tim Coles

A letter from Sydney Levy at Jewish Voice for Peace

It was, by all accounts, an unscripted moment. While leaving occupied Bethlehem, Pope Francis asked his driver to stop next to the giant wall that separates thousands of Palestinians from their land, their families, and their histories. He touched his forehead to the concrete, next to the freshly painted words "Free Palestine", and bowed silently in prayer.

That simple gesture has produced an image for the ages, bursting with all the poignancy, humanity, and irony (for we Jews who know the suffering inflicted by walled ghettos) one can bear.

Now a predictable backlash has begun. Unless we speak out now and thank Pope Francis for his heartfelt acknowledgement of Palestinian suffering, the next leader who visits the West Bank will get the message that it is too dangerous to speak out. Sign the petition: ThankYouPopeFrancis.org

As Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, atheists and so many others; as mothers and fathers, daughters and sons; veterans of war and conscientious objectors; we are united in our love for justice and liberation for all peoples.

We are profoundly moved by the Pope's act of solidarity with the suffering of Palestinians. And we are called to join together, across faiths, across language, across nationality, to stand for an honest and painful but necessary accounting of injustice in order to create the conditions for a lasting peace. We want the Pope to hear our thanks. Go to: ThankYouPopeFrancis.org.

Israel says the wall where Pope Francis stood was designed to protect Israelis from attacks, yet some 85% of the wall's planned 400 mile route is on confiscated Palestinian land – not on the Green Line. It enables the annexation of land for illegal settlements, and separates Palestinians from their land, teachers and students from schools, and families from each other. In the moment Pope Francis stood for all the cameras to see, the wall became more than prison wall. It became a message to the outside world showing clearly a reality that Israel tries to hide.

Young Palestinians who felt long forgotten by much of the world made this moment happen. They knew the Pope would pass by, and despite all efforts to stop them, managed to write the graffiti'd message on the wall that inspired the Pope to stop.

Let us remain inspired by their sumud* - steadfastness - and let's make sure the Pope knows how much it meant to people all over the world.

Contributed by Penny Bridstrup

*Sumud means 'steadfastness' in Arabic.

Appetite for justice

Last October, students at the Universities of Manchester Catholic Chaplaincy launched a food bank. Here the chaplain, **Tim Byron**, explains the effect this has on their education and formation

"For I was hungry and you gave me food." Reflecting on the experience of the first six months of the only student-run food bank in Britain, those words from Matthew 25 cut to the heart of the matter. It also happens to be part of the mission statement for the Trussell Trust, which runs the largest network of food banks in the country.

Our food bank, which runs from Manchester Universities' Catholic Chaplaincy, was born out of the experience of a vibrant student Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) group. Currently it makes soup runs five nights a week, and it was from that experience of encountering destitution that the idea of the food bank came. Reflecting on their experiences with members of the Jesuit community, the students were convinced that over the months they were seeing more people on the streets. They decided that they would like to do something to arrest that trend, to help people who were one level above destitution, to stop them falling through the net, and thus the food bank was born.

It has been remarkable how quickly the service has become busy, after linking with the Trussell Trust and launching with financial support from the churchgoers at the Holy Name which serves the university.

There is a danger that students can live in campus bubbles, and tensions with locals increase as they sweep in and out of the community, with the annual rhythm of classes, exams and holidays being very different from that of local residents. Being involved with the food bank has educated them about the local area and the lives and struggles of the people who are often their neighbours.

In terms of formation, of the 50 or so students who are involved in the food bank, about half of them are motivated by a religious faith. That creates an interesting atmosphere, as this engagement challenges stereotypes about religious people that seems to be growing in student circles, where it is currently cool to be an atheist. Also the skills and experience involved in setting up a charitable incorporated organisation and a body of trustees and applying for grants give the students a lot of confidence. In just six months, the food bank has distributed almost 4,000kg of food to nearly 500 people. Those who come must

present vouchers, which have been distributed by one of 56 partner referral agencies. This means that no decision needs to be made about whether someone is "worthy". That judgement and filtering happens at the referral stage. The agencies that refer include local head teachers, charities, the probation service, council-run family services, the mental-health service, job centres, housing associations, local churches, and so on. The vouchers must be signed by an authorised signatory and bear a unique serial number which only the food bank can print out. To stop people becoming dependent, anyone who claims more than three vouchers over a six-month period is flagged up on our database – and we ask the referral agency why they are still in crisis.

The students welcome people, talk to them about the nature of their crisis and "signpost" them to other places that can help – so a mum who comes to us with kids in tow can find out about the mother-and-toddler group up the road, or the young man from the probation hostel who is moving from prison to civilian life can find out about the free cookery classes being offered by the charity that is based a mile away. We also give out a lot of advice to people who are in debt – something that students are experts at. Recently we have seen a rise in demand for "kettle packs" – food that can be prepared by those without access to cooking facilities. Some of these are being requested by people who cannot afford their fuel bills and so are having to choose between keeping either their electricity or gas on, which can have a drastic impact on their heating. We supply emergency food boxes to the local hospital for discharged patients, many of whom are older people who are going back to an empty fridge and a cold home.

What this experience has shown us is that there is a lot of "hidden poverty". The students often talk to me about how this makes them realise the importance of family. It seems that as the welfare state is being rolled back, those who do not have the support of an extended family are left stranded. The argument that food banks are for scroungers does not stand up in our experience. Many who come are the working poor, on either zero-hour contracts or very insecure part-time work. Cardinal Vincent



A student volunteer prepares food packs for distribution

Nichols was spot on in his recent criticism of welfare reform.

Some students are referred to us. They are very embarrassed at having to be helped by their peers. We allow them to come out of hours when they can get food more discreetly and I usually serve them. The present economic climate is a tougher one in which to be a student now, with tuition fees and debt the norm. One of the saddest experiences of student poverty I have seen is how ruthless the private landlords can be – turning their tenants out on to the street when they get behind with rent. It is the international students who are the most vulnerable to this.

Patterns are emerging. Towards the end of the semester, we see more students coming to us, referred by student services, as they try to bridge the gap till the next part of their loan comes in. During half-term, or more extended breaks, there is a spike in the number of families coming to the food bank as their children are missing out on free school meals.

The politicians and journalists who are quick to condemn those on benefits should come and spend a week with us, and look into the whites of the eyes of people who are struggling. We have a faith and politics group here – and it was interesting to note that in 2012 when the Labour conference was in Manchester we had a few politicians who came and spoke to the students. Jim Murphy MP came even though he had lost his voice. Last year it was the Conservatives in Manchester – and although a couple of MPs signed up to come and speak to the students, they cancelled at the last minute. I will mention no names, but it crossed our minds that it was awkward for them to be photographed visiting the place where the first student-run food bank was operating. The food bank is a wonderful example of the Big Society – but inconvenient for any incumbent government.

■ Fr Tim Byron SJ is Catholic chaplain to the Universities of Manchester.

22 March 2014 | TABLET Education | 53

Contributed by Anne Westmacott

Member churches

Ludlow Baptist Church	Mr Simon Lambourne 01584 874076	LudlowBaptistChurch.co.uk
St Laurence's, St John's, St Giles', Church of England	Venerable Colin Williams 01584 872001	stlaurences.org.uk
Living Waters Church	Mr Andy Summers 01584 879297	bluebox.talktalk.net/Living_Waters_Ludlow/start.html
Ludlow Methodist Church	Rev. Frances Biseker 01568 612406	ludlowmethodistchurch.org
Ludlow Quaker Meeting	Wendy Bartlett and John Nurse (Co-Clerks) 0870 7656 980	ludlowquakers.co.uk
St Peter's Roman Catholic Church	Canon Christopher Walsh 01584 872906	cornmill.freeshell.org/stpetersludlow

Associated church

Elim Christian Fellowship	Rev. Tim Coles 01584 878634	ludlowelim.co.uk
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Editor's note: The newsletter welcomes expression of a range of views. Those expressed in articles are those of the contributors. They do not necessarily represent the position of CTAL.

For a large-print newsletter please use the version on the CTAL website, or for a printed copy contact any of the churches.

Contributions for the next newsletter should be sent to the editor, Wendy Bartlett, at wendy.bartlett@hmqquakers.org.uk. The last date for items for the next issue is 14 October 2014.

Sustainability: Please print out only as much of the newsletter as you need. On the Print menu state which page you want. Your printer details will say if you can use the back of already-used paper. And using the Fast Normal or Fast printing settings on the printer Properties menu will save ink.

To make it easier to read the newsletter on screen, you can change the font size: if you are using Word, click on View, then Zoom, then type the size you need (eg 125%) into the box.