

June 2019

The Bridge No. 39

**Newsletter of
Ponte Sant'Angelo
Methodist Church Rome**



Community Life

Minister`s Letter

Last month, we were privileged to have 13 staff and students of the University of Roehampton come and share in our worship as part of an ecumenical experiment in intentional living in community at Barat House, owned by a Catholic religious society, the Society of the Sacred Heart. It came to England in 1842 and eventually bought the property of Elm Grove in Roehampton, South West London, and founded a school there. For 45 guineas p.a. (approximately £50) the pupils were housed, cared for and taught. The school was organised on French lines, not immediately popular with its would-be pupils, but the organisation was gradually modified and the school became more successful. The site has a long history, including being the home, for his last years, of William Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood.

Over the years the site has evolved from that of a small boarding school for girls, to a teacher training college (Digby Stuart College) which later diversified to provide other courses, and eventually federated with three other local colleges , Whitelands (Anglican), Southlands (Methodist), and Froebel (secular). This Institute eventually became the University of Roehampton in 2004. I am now a member of the University Council and one of the Trustees of Southlands, where Angela was once a student training to be a teacher.

Colleges offer models of living in community, of shared values and openness in a world where many put up barriers. Barat House residents are exploring how to live in a smaller micro-community, around eating together and praying together and having discussions about common action. This is an ecumenical venture, drawing Anglicans, Catholics and Methodists together to show a common witness to the world.

Churches have a lot to learn from the Pentecostal model of living together that the Acts of the Apostles (Chapter 2; 43-47) makes clear. They shared their possessions and gave generously to the poor, they ate together and shared close fellowship, they worshipped in the Temple and had house

fellowship around a table. In all things they gave thanks to God, performing miracles and displaying wonders in the lives so that many others joined them.

As we review our Church`s life here at Ponte Sant`Angelo, we give thanks for our life together, centred on table fellowship in communion and at pot luck lunches, evident in our hospitality and outreach. May we continue to echo the words we sang on World Church Sunday:

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat :
A banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us ... ALL ARE WELCOME.

INTERN NEWS

After the busyness of Holy Week and Easter, I took the opportunity to leave Rome for a while and visit Naples and the nearby island of Ischia. It was fantastic to see another part of Italy, and visit places that I have always wanted to go to, such as Pompeii, Herculaneum and Mount Vesuvius.

Once I was back in Rome, I attended a fundraising dinner at the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center, 'Tastes and Sounds of Latin America'. It was great to finally attend one of these dinners, having been volunteering at JNRC since November, and to catch up with different members of the community. We enjoyed food prepared by the chef Alessandra, who is from Ecuador, including arroz marinero, a rice dish described as the 'South American/Latin cousin of Spanish seafood paella' and encebollado de pescado, a soup made from tuna and yucca.

At MEOR, we have just finished hosting our final course of the year, on Photography and Spirituality. Hosting visitors in MEOR has been an interesting experience, and offered the opportunity to connect with Methodists, and non-Methodists, from around the world.

Over the last few weeks, I have started to plan for a pilgrimage in July along the Camino de Santiago in Spain with a group from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The Way of Saint James is a network of pilgrimages, which date back to the 9th century AD, and over five days, we will walk 114km from Sarria and finishing in Santiago de Compostela, where it is believed that, within the cathedral, the body of the apostle Saint James is buried. This year in Rome has given me much to think about, and I am hoping that the pilgrimage will provide this space for reflection. I am especially looking forward to the ecumenical aspect of journeying with a Catholic group, hopefully having the opportunity to share and learn from each other's experiences and expectations, and grow in fellowship and community along the way.

In June, I will return to the UK for the final residential of the internship. As always, I am looking forward to catching up with the other interns, and for the learning opportunities that these residential meetings provide.

EDUCATION FOR ACTION CONFERENCE

On 7th May, Rachel Sheppard and Tim and Angela Macquiban attended a conference at the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (also known as the Angelicum). The conference was called 'Education for Action: The Urgency of Interreligious Leadership for the Global Good' and celebrated the 10th anniversary for the John Paul II Center.

The event started with a marketplace of ideas fair, featuring 19 different organisations (including Sant'Egidio and Focolare Movement) working at grassroots and global levels to promote interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding. The welcome remarks were made Fr. Stipe Juric, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology. Fr. Stipe talked about the role of religion in the world, and how religion has been recognised, by governments, for its work in human rights, fighting poverty, justice and promoting the common good. The phrase 'interreligious dialogue' has been used by the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council, which ran from 1962 to 1965, and recognised the

need for dialogue and communication between different religions. Any authentic dialogue, Fr. Stipe explained, must come from the heart.

A highlight of the conference was an interactive panel, moderated by Joyce Dubensky, the CEO of Tanenbaum, a secular, non-profit organisation working to promote mutual respect with practical programmes bridging religious difference and combating prejudice. The question was asked, 'What is a global leader who is capable of moving us towards change?'. The panel's discussion covered the ideas of a global leader as someone that listens to others and assumes responsibility wherever they are, in order to make the world a better place. They have a heart as big as the world, but also respond to local needs, and importantly, they are not necessarily somebody with a title, or a politician. When asked what we, as individuals, can do to promote interreligious dialogue, Joyce Dubensky stressed the importance of reaching out to those who are different and who see the world differently, and that we are prepared to truly listen. This doesn't mean agreeing, but finding a way to say our own truth, and get the other person to listen. We find new truth and perspectives, even if we disagree with it, and we can see the journey that others have taken to get where they are. Joyce Dubensky explained that although violence against religious believers, particularly in houses of worship, is not a new phenomenon, currently, we seem to be at a precarious and dangerous moment in world history. We live in a wounded, fractured and deeply divided world. It is important that we mobilise the silent majority to speak up, and to provide a counter narrative when we encounter hatred, particularly online.

Another highlight was when Angelica Berrie, who founded the John Paul II Center, spoke about her work as a philanthropist. She said that philanthropy is like planting a seed, through which communities and generations can be transformed. Angelica Berrie said that she takes inspiration from the quote by Mother Teresa, 'Do small things with great love', and through her work every day, she sees the importance of interreligious dialogue in bridging divides and reminding each other of a shared humanity. **Rachel Sheppard**

LONGER TABLES, LOWER FENCES

This was the theme of our Easter Offering service on 19th May, which has also now become our annual World Church Sunday. This year the stories, or snapshots, from around the world spoke of how tables are being lengthened and fences lowered as people are responding to God's call to radical hospitality and outrageous generosity.

The theme was inspired by these words: "When you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a higher fence." As a church with an international membership, the stories, in the form of dialogues, were mostly read by members from that country or part of the world - Britain, South Africa, Bangladesh, Germany and Ethiopia. Two songs were enthusiastically led by our choir of African members.

As in previous years, the service was projected on the screen and each snapshot was accompanied by a photo. If you missed the service or would like to read the stories again they can be found on the website of Methodist Women in Britain at www.mwib.org.uk. One of the members of the task group which produced the order of service, Sandra Goodwin, MWiB President, visited PSA in March as part of the pilgrimage group led by Jill Baker. The snapshot from Ethiopia was of Jill's visit there with All We Can during her time as Vice-President of the British Methodist Conference.

An additional contribution to the service was when Fiona Kendall, our fellow mission partner in Rome, spoke about her work with Mediterranean Hope, supporting refugees and migrants. She illustrated her talk with a short PowerPoint presentation and then presented the church with a very special Wandering Peace Candle. This had begun its journey in 2016 in Germany, then travelled to Greece the following year. Fiona encountered it on Chios, the island next to Turkey where many asylum seekers land, and are stuck, as they attempt to make a new life in Europe. The candle is a symbol of light for those in darkness and by lighting it we express solidarity with those who suffer.

Fiona took the candle to St Andrew's Church of Scotland, in Rome, where it remained for a few months, being lit each Sunday. And now we have it for a while here at PSA before it goes on to Sicily and Lampedusa. As we acclaimed in our service the following week, "With God's help we will keep the flame alive!" It is a practical witness to longer tables and lower fences as hospitality is shared with refugees and migrants here in Rome.

Hospitality was also shared after the service over our pot luck lunch. A visiting group of staff and students from Roehampton University, London, attended the service and enjoyed lunch after. The group included the Methodist, Catholic and Muslim chaplains to the University, all female, and all worshipping and eating together.

The service included the dedication of the Easter Offering which realised a total of 502.24 euros. This goes to the World Mission Fund of the British Methodist Church to support work with its partner churches, including here in Italy. Thank you to all who contributed to this splendid total and thank you to all who took part in the service.

AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE NEXT DOOR

Over the past few years we have got to know our next door neighbours on the Lungotevere at the HQ of the International Superiors General of Catholic Sisters. They host events when they share information about the work of Sisters worldwide, including in South Sudan and with anti-trafficking initiatives.



Recently we were invited to provide a short ecumenical service at a meeting of the Board of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations. Dr Donna Orsuto, Director of the Lay Centre, and Tim led the service and Rachel, Tim and I led the singing, along with a member of the All Saints' choir, accompanied by a musician who was part of the Roehampton University group visiting PSA at that time. It was a truly ecumenical occasion!

We enjoyed meeting some of the women from around the world and shared a sign of peace. We led some world church songs in Spanish, Portuguese and English which they enthusiastically joined in with and several took part in the prayers with petitions in a variety of languages including Korean, Spanish, Urdu, French and Swahili. English translations were projected on the screen and we were all invited to pray the Lord's Prayer in our own language.

Tim was invited to say a little about Methodism and the Wesleys. Some of the women had encountered Methodists in their own countries and were interested to learn more about them. After the service we had conversations with some of the women about the similarities between their worldwide Catholic sisterhood and Methodist women worldwide. The President of WUCWO, Maria Lia Zervino, lives in Rome and we hope the contact will continue. Alison Judd, our Methodist World President (of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women) was very interested to hear about our meeting with her and the Board. The two organisations are run on very similar lines in their national and international structures.



It was good to discover that both Catholic and Methodist sisters worldwide are engaged in similar projects, campaigns and outreach locally and nationally. We both have representatives to UN bodies working for equality, justice and empowerment for women and are working to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is hoped that our relationship with each other will become closer in future. Thanks be to God! **Angela Macquiban**

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We are sorry to hear of Margaret Marinelli's fall and damage to her knee. We wish her well for her recovery period.

Jerry Horner has lost his uncle, Max, and has been back with the family for the funeral. We are thinking about the family at this time.

We had news of the death of Steve Twomlow. There may be a memorial service here in Rome at some stage soon, which we will announce in our notices when details are known. We received the following notes from Luke about his father:

ANNA AND LUKE TWOMLOW WRITE:

On the 22nd of May, International World Biodiversity Day, a great man died. My father, Stephen John Twomlow, he was a great man, a loving father, a wonderful husband and an incredible person. He was born on the 7th of June 1960 in a small town called Tamworth meaning he wasn't even 59 when he died. He lived an amazing life and whatever he did he tried to live it to the fullest. History books maybe not remember him but he touched millions of lives and each and every one he touched will remember what he did for them, I definitely know that I won't forget all that he did for me. From the day he left high school he worked towards helping the world become a better place. He started this path by attending the University of Newcastle and graduated with a bachelor of science in agriculture. Afterwards, he attended the University of Wolverhampton and completed a post-graduate certification in education. After this, he moved his entire life to the island nation of Papua New Guinea pg where he spent two years building a school and teaching local kids in the village of Kundiawa. He then spent 3 years working towards a doctorate at the University of London. Before the age of

30, my dad was already a doctor. My father had a saying “if you do what you love you will never work a day in your life.” And that is what my father did. He worked from the age of 29 until the day he died doing jobs that he loved. He met my mother, Lindsay Twomlow, her name was Harrop then. They got engaged after just 6 weeks of dating and got married on the 16th of April 1992. Almost 2 years afterwards they had their first child, Anna Twomlow. She is currently following in our father's footsteps and is in the pursuit of her own PhD. He then spent the next 6 years of his life working for a company called Silso and travelling the world. Then on the 18th of December 1999 I, Luke Twomlow, was born, and after 10 months my dad changed jobs and moved our whole family out to Zimbabwe, Africa. He worked at for ICRISAT, a research institute for 8 years, based out in a small research station in the middle of Matopos national park, he loved every bit of it. He applied for a job in UNEP, a branch of the UN. We then moved again to Kenya, where we spent five incredible years of going on safari and tanning on the beach. We then moved from Nairobi to Rome, my dad had transferred agencies within the UN from UNEP to IFAD. Here he was the climate change specialist for east and southern Africa. This was by far his favourite job as he could travel all around Africa and as he used to say “I can be in a meeting with the head of agriculture for a country in the morning and sitting under a tree, drinking beer with a farmer in the afternoon.”

On June the 9th 2018, after a long day relaxing on the beach, my dad had 3 consecutive seizures and was rushed to one of the best neurological wards in the country. On the 15th of June 2018, my dad went through open brain surgery and the malignant tumour that caused the seizures was removed. It was unknown at the time that it was a tumour. On the 28th of June, my dad was diagnosed with 4th stage kidney cancer. My family then went through an emergency move to the UK, where my dad received treatment at one of the best cancer hospitals in the country, the Christie. He got better over the next couple of months and seemed to be beating the cancer. However, cancer is a fickle beast and it started to spread to his liver. He then underwent a change of treatment to combat the mutated cells, it then spread once again to his pancreas. This is when my mom, my dad and the doctor decided to stop

treatment as my dad was too weak to start a brand new regime. He was given the prognosis of 3 months to live on the 5th of April 2019. He just kept deteriorating from then onwards. On Saturday the 11th of May 2019, my dad was admitted to hospital under palliative care, he was then transferred to a hospice that specialises in palliative care on the 16th of May 2019. He died 6 days later surrounded by his loving family.

I love you Dad, I won't forget you ever.

CHURCH COUNCIL AND AGM

Copies of the Annual Report will be available on the 23rd June. There will be a meeting of the Church Council that day. If you have any matters to raise please talk to one of the members.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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| 22 nd June | Evening concert here at PSA given by the New Chamber Singers (Tim and Angela are members of this choir) |
| 26 th June | Ecumenical evening prayer service at Caravita at 7:00pm presided over by Cardinal Koch, preacher Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, Geneva Secretary of the World Methodist Council. |
| 29 th June | Ecumenical garden open day at San Gregorio al Celio in the morning.
New Chamber Singers concert at St Paul's Without the Walls at 17:00. |

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: the Bible class continues at PSA at 10:30am. The next meetings are on 5th June and 19th (concluding with lunch together). See Sandra Mi if you hope to come.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

2 nd June	No Communion (national holiday parade). Guest preacher Revd. Graham Thompson.
9 th June	Pentecost Communion service with Pastor Tim
16 th June	Pastor Tim: preacher Rev. Ruth Gee
23 rd June	Pastor Tim followed by Church Council meeting
30 th June	Pastor Tim with service to include the Annual General Meeting followed by birthday basket

Weekly Offerings [P =cash; E =Envelopes; BB = Birthday Basket.]

5 th May	P 316.92	E 510		TTL 826.92
12 th May	P 66.47	E 353		TTL 419.47
19 th May	P 137.20	E 210		TTL 347.20
26 th May	P 153.38	E 248	BB 120	TTL 521.38

May Total 2234.97 Euros

We need to achieve a target of 2000 euros per month to meet our obligations. Please consider joining the envelope scheme and giving regularly so that we don't fall further behind.



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