

**December 2017**  
**The Bridge No. 23**

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



**Mostar, Bosnia: The Bridge dividing two communities, Muslim and Christian, destroyed in the war but now restored.**

## **MINISTER`S LETTER**

We are a bridge church – a church by the bridge which is why we are uniquely placed to reach out to other Christian Churches in the quest for wider unity. But, as Archbishop Bernard Ntahoturi reminded those of us gathered at a meeting in our neighbour`s building on the piazza (the international union of superior generals of religious orders and communities), our ecumenical task requires us also to reach out to other faith communities, Muslim and Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist, and others.

Archbishop Bernard reminded us of the tragedy of countries like his and neighbouring Rwanda where “ethnicity trumped religion” leading to terrible inter-tribal violence in supposedly majority Christian countries. He also reminded us of the persecution of Christians in countries of the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent.

A respect for basic human dignities, rights and freedoms are crucial to the well-being of our fragile world. We need to confidence not only to engage in dialogue with other Christians but also with those of other faiths. In Colombia in Latin America I was privileged to meet with world leaders of different communions in the Christian world family, Catholics and Lutherans, Evangelical and Pentecostals and those mainstream Protestant churches. In a country torn by divisions and war over 52 years now entering a period of fragile peace, we Christians from elsewhere met with local church leaders and with politicians, some of whom had not encountered each other before. We modelled a way working towards unity, by our doctrinal agreements on justification, and by the many examples of “ecumenism of action” when different Christians came together to

work for the good of the societies they serve. During a visit to Colombia in September 2017, Pope Francis stated *'violence leads to more violence, hatred to more hatred, death to more death. We must break this cycle which seems inescapable...this is only possible through forgiveness and reconciliation'*. We pray that the peace process will continue.

Unity and Mission belong together. It was not always so. When Henry Piggott came to Italy in 1861, he wanted to convert all the Catholics here. When he died in 1917, the ecumenical century had begun in which Protestants and Catholics and Orthodox started to talk together and respect each other. Chiesa Insieme is not just for Methodists and Waldensians but all Christians. Our faith must surmount differences of language and ethnicity. As Paul writes in Galatians 3.28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

He is the One who is the "heaven-born Prince of Peace" for whose birth we again prepare to celebrate this Advent and Christmas season ahead. May we be instruments for unity and mission in God`s world today as followers of the One who is Love, who "came down at Christmas" "with healing in his wings". Glory to God in the highest, and peace to people on earth".

May you experience again the love, peace and joy of Christmas.

Pastor Tim

## **INTERN NEWS**

November has been another busy month but I have had the opportunity to attend many different talks and events.

At the start of the month I attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> talk of the Autumn Series at the Lay Centre, 'The last periphery: Death?'. The talk was given by Father Edmund Power, O.S.B., former abbot of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, on All Souls Day. It was an interesting talk where he shared with us how he believes that death is not a periphery but a centre. He said 'death is a door. We don't know what is behind it. Is it even a door?'.

One of the busiest days in November was Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>, where I had the opportunity to attend three different events. At the start of the day I attended a lecture by Professor Monica McWilliams titled '*From the Margins to the Mainstream-Women's Participation in Peacemaking in Northern Ireland and Elsewhere*' at the residence of the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See. McWilliams spoke about the different lessons learnt from the peace making process in Northern Ireland and how women demonstrate resilience as they act as agents of change. A powerful message that I took away from the talk is that women need to confidently speak out and play a role in peace and decision making, challenging unfair situations. In the afternoon I went to Sapienza University to the VI International Conference. There were many interesting talks, discussions and reflections on Methodist Mission in Italy, Mission in Africa and new perspectives of the mission. From there I then went to a fundraising Ethiopian dinner at St. Paul's, which was a very enjoyable evening where we got to try different Ethiopian dishes. It was also a opportunity to meet other supporters of Joel Nafuma Refugee Centre (JNRC).

On the 21<sup>st</sup> November I flew to London for a three day residential training with the other interns who are on the ONE Intern Programme. The residential focused on Discipleship. We had sessions on Discipleship by Jude Levermore, Andrew Roberts and Gareth Powell. As well, some sessions were on mindfulness and self-care in life and work. It was great to see the other interns again and hear about what they have all been up too. Whilst back in London I also had the chance to meet up with friends and family, as my Mum travelled to London for a few days to see me. Overall, it was an enjoyable week.

Abigail

### **CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

We are sorry to be losing two of our Young Adults who are moving away. **Trevor Pook** who has returned back to Singapore to continue his medical studies there or in Australia. We will also be losing **Anna Twomlow** who is moving to London because she has been offered a funded PhD at Imperial College London with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering starting in February 2018. Anna will be researching how to visually communicate flood risk to vulnerable populations in Nepal and Tanzania. We wish them both the best with their studies.

Nancy and Marco Saro are pleased to announce the arrival of their granddaughter **Norah Cellini**, born on 8th September to Surya Savo and Federico Cellini.

## **FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM-Women's Participation in Peacemaking in Northern Ireland and Elsewhere**

This was the title of a lecture at the Irish Embassy to the Holy See which Abigail and I attended recently. It was given by Professor Monica McWilliams who has been involved in peace-making and human rights for many years.

She was involved in the negotiations leading to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement between the British and Irish governments nearly 20 years ago. The 'Troubles' had lasted for 30 years, during which thousands had been killed. She co-founded the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, a political party which won some seats in the male-dominated world of politics and faced much resistance. She showed photos of many of the struggles women engaged in, on civil rights marches and protests. What came across to us very strongly was that women do things differently and don't buy into traditional models of power. By everyday ways of resistance, for example through the grassroots levels of civil society and trade union involvement, women were able to make their voices heard and get into places where men couldn't. They informed people about the issues and created space where they could express themselves and participate in the process of peace-making. In the words of Nelson Mandela they had to make peace with their enemies, not their friends.

Women don't just give up, she said. We know that from our family lives where women hold things together. The most important part of conflict resolution is good leadership which recognises the humanity in the other person and doesn't just see them as the enemy. Women

often have to take risks and are used to facing opposition. Instead of tolerating unfair situations they challenge them by standing up and speaking out with confidence. They need to form networks of support to be influential and play a full part in the decision-making process.

Professor McWilliams has led capacity building workshops in Syria, Myanmar and Colombia, sharing lessons learnt from the Northern Ireland peace process. Women are given the skills to believe they can be agents of change rather than victims, and can play a part in decision making which helps in transforming their situation.

All of us who were privileged to hear her speak, both men and women, were very impressed by what she had helped women to achieve over many years, often at great personal cost. After the violence ceases there is still much work to be done in reconciliation, but with determination many obstacles can be overcome, as she powerfully demonstrated.

Angela Macquiban

### **ROME CONFERENCE ON FORGIVENESS, JANUARY 18<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Greetings from the United States. I write to you today to let you know of the Rome Conference on Forgiveness (to be in English) that will be held on January 18, 2018 in Rome. The event is sponsored by the Rotary Action Group for Peace and the International Forgiveness Institute in Madison, Wisconsin, USA

([www.internationalforgiveness.com](http://www.internationalforgiveness.com)), a service organization that developed from my scientific work on forgiveness at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where I have been a Professor for the past 39 years.

**Rome Conference on Forgiveness, January 18, 2:30pm to 7pm, University of Santa Croce (just off the Piazza Navona).** The first talk on the science of forgiveness will be presented by Professor Robert Enright (who pioneered the study of forgiveness within the social sciences) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the USA. The second talk by the educator Annette Shannon of Belfast, Northern Ireland focuses on how forgiveness education works in helping children learn to forgive. This will be followed by three talks on how forgiveness fits into Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Two Italian governmental representatives then give presentations on the practical implications for forgiveness in societies. This event is free of charge and open to the public.

Robert Enright, Ph. (Madison, Wisconsin USA), Professor of Educational Psychology and Founding Board Member, International Forgiveness Institute, Inc. ([www.internationalforgiveness.com](http://www.internationalforgiveness.com))

## **REPORT ON THE RICE BOWL PROJECT 2017**

**Murhaf writes about the current situation in Syria with the refugee camp we supported through the Churches Together Lent project:**

Well, things here are much more better and relaxing despite the fact that we are still new here and we don't know yet the negative points and problems of our new life and area, but our first impressions are fine.

During the day people can go out to wander around and most of them do, 90% of them from Aleppo originally, so they know their way well into the city. Some people went to see their houses or shops and streets; some are trying to find their families or friends. On Sunday we took group of kids to the Citadel (outside) they were happy (some of them haven't seen it before).



The Umayyad mosque is open but they may close it again because they are going to restore it. I didn't go there yet as we are far from that region.

Well, I have impression that here is a different feeling than Ain Dara. There it was limited to go and return just like a camp (a close community with rules), here as a city it is different. I feel our place here is more like a school, restaurant and hotel. Even last night some people didn't return and came back the following morning (spent the night with relative or friend). I don't know if this good or bad! Either we have to take more control or leave it like this. For example yesterday 20% of the food hasn't been touched because people are out! We will have to see how things work out in time. Sorry for sharing our concerns with you my friend but I feel good and not good at the same time.

Yours, Murhaf

### **TEDDY BEAR PROJECT**

Donations needed for nearly new clothing, shoes and toys/books for babies and up to age 5. This program benefits immigrant mothers and their toddlers. A box will be provided at the back of the church marked TEDDY BEAR PROJECT into which items may be put week by week. Thank to those who have donated items.



For information please contact:- Leslie Kiely T. 380-126-2916 E.

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## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**CHRISTMAS BAZAAR:** Big Christmas Bazaar on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 11am to 7pm, at the Italian Methodist Church, Via Firenze , 38.

**MY FAIR LADY:** On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 9pm and Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am (primarily for school bookings, but open to others) Rachel Barry will be performing in My Fair Lady as Eliza. Other performances are Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am , Friday 8<sup>th</sup> at 9pm, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> at 5pm and Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> at 5pm (where Rachel is in the chorus for these performances). Shows are at Teatro in Portico in Garbatella. Tickets are 14 euros each. The email address to contact is [artsinenglish@outlook.com](mailto:artsinenglish@outlook.com)

**CONCERT AT ALL SAINTS on 3rd December at 20.45.** Tickets for a Handel and Vivaldi concert at a reduced price of 5 euros are available from Pastor Tim today and next week. See poster.

**CHRISTMAS BAZAAR:** Big Christmas Bazaar on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 11am to 6pm, at the Italian Methodist Church, Via Firenze , 38.  
Tante idee regalo, buona compagnia e momenti musicali...

Ore 12:            aperitivo in Sala Giovani

Ore 13:            pranziamo tutti insieme!

Ore 17:            thè con te!

**CHRISTMAS MARKET AT ST PAUL'S WITHIN THE WALLS:** Christmas market on 9<sup>th</sup> December, to raise funds for the JNRC, 12pm – 5pm. There will be crafts from all over the world, bake sale, mulled wine, food stalls, activities for kids and more!

## **WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

The week of prayer for Christian Unity is from 18<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> January. The theme for this year 2018 is Your Right Hand, O Lord, Glorious in Power(*Exodus 15:6*). The week will start on the Thursday with a service at the Centro Pro Unione and end a week later at the Papal Vespers at St. Paul's Without the Walls. Times will be announced in the notices.

**Sunday 17th December is the next ecological Sunday, when we have our family service and pot luck lunch. We will try to make sure arrangements are in place to maximise attendance and assist people to come.**

## **FORTHCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES**

### **December**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Church Anniversary with Communion.  
The Rev. Gareth Powell to preach
- 10<sup>th</sup> Pastor Tim
- 17<sup>th</sup> All Age Worship with participation of the children  
6.00pm Carol service at All Saints
- 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve Traditional Carol service followed by mince pies
- 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day Communion service
- 31<sup>st</sup> Kassim Conteh (Pastor Tim and Angela in the UK for their niece's Wedding)

### **January**

- 7<sup>th</sup> Covenant service with Communion
- 14<sup>th</sup> Pastor Tim
- 21<sup>st</sup> Christian Unity Week services:

10.30 here. Preacher the Most Rev. Archbishop Bernard Ntohaturi, the new Director of the Anglican Centre  
5.00pm, Churches Together in Rome service at St. Patrick's (American Catholic Church, Via Boncompagni, 31). Preacher, Fr. Tony Currer, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

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

|                        |               |                |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 5 Nov. P 97, 13        | E 738, 00     | TTL. 835, 13   |
| 12 Nov. P 61, 32       | E 341, 50     | TTL. 402, 82   |
| 19 Nov. P 117,64       | E 223,00      | TTL. 340,64    |
| 26 Nov. P 107,30       | E 388, 00     | TTL. 495, 30   |
| TTL. P 383, 39         | E 1, 690.50   | TTL. 2, 074.43 |
| <b>Birthday Basket</b> | <b>210,00</b> |                |

