



Minutes of the CTH Forum on Thursday 10 March 2022 by ZOOM

Our Objectives are:

- To be a visible sign of the churches' commitment to one another.
- To facilitate common witness to Christ.
- To respond to the needs of the community in shared service and outreach where this is possible.

Welcome:

Janet welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting is being held by Zoom as several people at the Congregational Church have tested positive with COVID. We wish them well.

Opening Devotions: Led by Janet Smith

Jews and Christians in Ukraine have been praying together for God's help and protection in basements and shelters, in their homes and in outside locations throughout the country. Encouraged by the Chief Rabbi of Ukraine Rabbi Yaakov Dov Bleich and church leaders, they have been reciting the words of Psalm 31, which begins with the words, "In you, Lord, I have taken refuge."

A very moving video published by the Ukrainian Bible Society shows people praying this Psalm in many different locations. Psalm 31 is a prayer for God's protection in times of persecution. Jesus' last words before His death, "Into your hands I commend my spirit," is also taken from this Psalm.

The Deputy General Secretary for the Bible Society in Ukraine said, "For me, as a pastor, that Psalm, well, I read it differently now because it's about our current situation in Ukraine. This ancient prayer – written several thousand years ago – is so alive, is living, He explained how encouraging it is to see that the Bible's verses are "not just written words" but active and applicable to real-life now. He shared the story of an older woman who approached him after a prayer meeting and told him she had been praying Psalm 31 and that after reading the Psalm, she had experienced a deep sense of comfort and calm exclaiming - "It is living words!"

Janet then shared some verses from Psalm 31 and then led prayer for ourselves and the meeting.

Present:

Janet Smith, Andy Murphy, Maureen Douglas, Derek Williams, Jackie Melhuish, Angela Zemlak, Andy Giles, Ceriann Kelly, Wendy Osborne, Peter Arnold, Jan Turner, Many Gays, David Nixon, John Pearse, Elizabeth Tubb

Apologies for absence:

Dave Tomlin, Liz Mills, Deirdre Quinn, Theresa Kendrick, Tom Grant, Barry Hill, Christopher Brown, Jeannie Brightwell, Stephen Haward, Chris O'Connor, Keith Rugg, Matthew Pittam, Alison Iliffe

Presentation by Street Pastors Claire and Lucia

This was moved to next meeting when hopefully we will be together in-person.

1. Minutes of Forum held on Monday 10 January 2022 by ZOOM

The minutes were accepted by the meeting and were signed by Janet.

2. **Matters Arising:**

Volunteering Opportunities

In an update from Emma Tayler, Headteacher of Market Harborough CE Academy on the response for volunteers to go into the town's primary schools after outlining opportunities at the last CTH Forum, Emma reported that they have had at least 10 applications from people to volunteer and they are planning on doing another advertisement campaign in the Summer Term. Emma thanks the churches for their support in this.

3. **Main Business:**

a) CTH Budget 2022 – 2023

The budget had been sent out prior to the meeting and Jackie was thanked for her work in producing this. Jackie thanked Rose Williams for her handover and assistance. There were no questions. The Executive proposed the Budget be accepted. This was agreed unanimously.

b) It's Your Move Booklets

The booklets provide information on moving between primary and secondary schools. There were no objections to Janet ascertaining the numbers of Year 6 pupils in the Primary Schools and ordering these booklets. There is £400 in the budget to cover the costs. A discount is available for ordering early.

c) New Christian Aid representative for the town.

Rose Williams had been Christian Aid representative for the Harborough District for many years and the meeting thanked her for her work. Peter Arnold had offered to become our new Christian Aid representative. Janet proposed the meeting accept Peter and it was agreed unanimously.

Christian Aid Week will take place from **15th to 21st May** and will focus on the plight of drought which numerous countries around the world face. Janet has the boxes, buckets, and banners which she will hand over to Peter. The collection three years ago raised £8,854.

A discussion took place, led by Peter, on what options we should use to collect donations.

- i. It was agreed that door to door collections would be harder than in previous years and unlikely to get many volunteers
 - ii. Collecting outside supermarkets or possibly churches would need permissions, so not thought possible
 - iii. The Congregational Church are planning the Big Brekkie with delivering to people's homes as last year and which actually raised more money than before. Sharon and Rob Brennan are organising
 - iv. The Methodist Church are planning a Quiz evening
 - v. The Christian Aid website has information on e-envelopes and QR code which enables people to auto-donate. Alan at St Hugh's knows how this works
 - vi. Having a mixture of various methods seemed to be popular:
 - a. Volunteers to deliver information around the town (it was thought we would get more people to do delivery without collection)
 - b. Delivering an envelope with information on where to post / drop off in town
 - c. Providing a QR code both to homes and in churches for auto-donate
 - vii. Christian aid will provide envelopes and other materials
- Peter will investigate which are practical and workable methods [Christian Aid](#)

d) Good Friday update:

Janet and Maureen had met with David Wright from HDC and the paperwork to allow the event to take place is being completed. They had also confirmed that the LED screen will be used. The screen had been paid for in full in 2020 and some churches had already honoured the pledge. The rest were being asked to contact Jackie to arrange for their contribution to be sent in.

Andy Murphy, who is organising the service on the day, thanked Janet and Maureen for their work.

He explained that:

- i. The service preparation is underway, and the theme will follow the Objectives of CTH (noted above)
- ii. There will be four hymns and Steve Pointer is leading a small band
- iii. Not all ministers are involved but members of the churches have already been asked to participate
- iv. Local school children are being asked to read different accounts of the Passion
- v. The screen will display a short presentation before and after the event and the hymns during the half hour service
- vi. Street Pastors were willing to be present, in uniform
- vii. There must be a 1st Aider present so the churches should be asked if they have someone available
- viii. It is planned to have children's activities to give out and therefore volunteers are needed to help. Anyone interested should contact Andy Murphy to ensure that there is no overlap in what is provided
- ix. The service will be from 11.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m., but it is hoped that people from the churches would gather from 10.30 am to start the crowd.

4. **Reports of recent events:**

a) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:

The sessions took place via zoom and averaged 10 devices each day over the week. Thank you to those who led the sessions. Although there was no united service this year, churches were invited to light a candle and pray a prayer that Andy had written.

b) Peace Vigil:

For half an hour on the Square a group of Church people spent the time in prayer back in January.

c) World Day of Prayer:

A successful World Day of Prayer Service hosted by St Hugh's Church on Friday 4th March at 2pm. There was between 50-60 people in attendance, a good representation from across the church traditions.

d) Lent Reflections:

'Into the desert – A Lenten Journey towards deeper Faith' began last week with the Baptist Church beginning the series on the theme of, 'the Desert of Testing – facing and overcoming our demons and weaknesses.' The reflections are happening each Friday from 12.30 – 1 p.m. during Lent on zoom. Week 2, tomorrow is led by the Anglican Team who will be bringing us thoughts on 'The desert of provision – being sustained by God in hardship and suffering'. Please join in with these reflections if you can.

5. **Communications:**

Derek had no report, but the churches were asked to let Derek know of any special open prayer or other events they were holding for the Ukraine crisis. The following events had already happened

- St Dionysius had been open everyday for prayer and to light a candle.
- Baptist Church had changed its format of service a week ago to give over half for prayer for Ukraine.

6. **Brief Headlines from our organisations:**

(i) Street Pastors:

Mandy asked for prayer for the Pastors and Prayer Support teams. They still need more volunteers. The two sleeping bags used recently for the homeless have been replaced and they will appeal for more in due course but understand that the Ukraine appeal takes precedence. They are holding a Coffee Morning at the Theatre on Saturday 7 May between 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

(ii) Homeless/asking for help:

During the last month Janet has been contacted by Beacon Care who work with the homeless and vulnerable here in MH on 2 occasions, for sleeping bags and hot food vouchers for homeless people who have made themselves known to Beacon Care and the council. We were able to provide the 2 sleeping bags from the Street Pastors who keep a couple for use at such times and hot food vouchers through the arrangement we have with the Cod's Scallops fish and chip shop on Abbey Street.

(iii) Cube:

Counselling has started and there is a Vinyl night in April to fundraise for new outdoor counselling space.

The link to the latest Cube News is [Cube News - February 2022 \(office.com\)](https://www.office.com/news/cube-news-february-2022)

(iv) Bower House:

- The first few months of 2022 have flown. A new wave of student enquiries about placement opportunities at the Bower House has led to numerous house visits and we are pleased to have recently welcomed three new counsellors and two support workers to the team. Our volunteers continue to show unwavering commitment to the service, and we are particularly grateful to our support workers who have covered shifts at short notice because of illness or emergency.
- We received a flood of client enquiries after Christmas, and this led to us making the difficult decision to write to local GPs to temporarily halt their sign-posting to the service. Whilst never an easy call to make, we felt it was necessary to ensure the waiting period for counselling remained reasonable. At the time of writing, the phones have become noticeably quieter, and we hope that we can contact GPs to reverse this decision in the very near future.
- Three of our dedicated counselling team started a bereavement group in January, after plans had previously been put on hold due to the challenges of COVID. Spaces were quickly filled, and the group has met weekly over the last ten weeks. Not only does the group provide a safe, empathic space to share feelings but it has also enabled

connection and relationship and so we are very pleased that such an important group has been able to run.

- We excitedly await the start of our building project which will enable equal access to differently abled clients, visitors, and volunteers. The work will reconfigure the main entrance to the Bower House and create a toilet that can properly accommodate wheelchair users. Two of our funding bids have been successful and we are awaiting a decision regarding the third. This is due to be decided very soon. Local accommodation has been found to re-locate the service whilst these major works are being undertaken and we foresee that counselling will not be significantly interrupted during this period.
- Our team 'Away day' is due to take place on March 19th at the Methodist Church and will focus on the theme of 'Uncertainty', a subject that feels particularly pertinent in the wake of recent world events. Despite the gravity of such a theme, we hope it will also be an opportunity for the team to connect, relax and enjoy being together again. We are also planning a Jubilee themed coffee morning in May and look forward to being able to re-connect with the community more tangibly around us.
- After six years as Service Co-ordinator, Trish will step-down from the role in the near future. We are very pleased that she will remain part of the service in a volunteer capacity and are thankful for the way we have benefitted from her leadership and wisdom over the years. The position has been advertised, both internally and externally, and we hope that you will join us in praying for potential applicants.
- Finally, we are so grateful for the support that you all afford us and thank you for the way you continue to undergird the work, both financially and in prayer. We look forward to being with you again in person soon. Every Blessing, Trish and Cara

(vii) Jubilee Foodbank:

The committee is continuing to work on the charity application. There have been applications for trustees. However, there were no applications for the External Links Trustee which does involve attending CTH meetings as well as making links with other organisations. Please get in touch if you are interested.

The numbers of referrals are staying pretty steady but there is expected to be an increase after April and with the cost-of-living increases predicted. Thank you for your continued support and prayers. UHT semi-skimmed milk (the green one) is particularly welcome at the moment.

Thank you, Liz

7. Coming Events:

Thy Kingdom Come, 2022 Ascension to Pentecost, May 26th – June 5th 2022.

This year there are the usual resources available like the prayer journals, written this year by Justin Welby on the different images of the Holy Spirit, novenas with some fantastic art illustrating it plus some new resources, new Cheeky Panda video and online resources for the children and families extending from last year, youth resources called 'The Way' available on social media platforms with the theme of the 'Gifts of the Spirit.' By way of digital engagement there is a lot that will be available – not all of it had been finally produced at the time of the launch but they promoted 11 days of video clips including 'the monks of Mirfield,' interviews with the 3 newly consecrated bishops of Barking, Loughborough and Willesden, testimonies from a Paralympian, and one on George Muller a Victorian evangelist. Lectio Divina based resources and audio reflections. So much is available. Underpinning all the above remains the importance of 'praying for 5' people as in all the years before. Churches are encouraged to promote the

resources and commend the 10 days of TKC to the churches and for churches to do their own things over the 11 days.

This is not a CTH event and Janet suggested that this year individual churches decide if and how to be involved. Barry Hill is on the TKC board and there will be a commissioning service on 22 May to allow time to prepare for this year's TKC as some of it coincides with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

See website <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

8. **Platinum Jubilee celebrations**

A weekend of national celebrations is planned. Sunday June 5th is also Pentecost. The Executive wondered whether churches would like to join together for a bring food and socialise picnic between 12 noon and 4 pm (ish) at the Cube for Pentecost / Platinum / Thy Kingdom Come. We are aware that street parties ('The Big Lunch') around the places we live for the Queen's jubilee may well be taking place on that Sunday, which is being encouraged as part of the national celebrations.

Several of the churches were planning their own events so it was decided not to have a CTH picnic. The Cube will be informed.

- St Dionysius have planned tea and cake after the service
- St Hugh's and St Nicholas have planned lunch on Little Bowden green
- Pep Hill is organising crocheting and knitting red, white, and blue bunting. If anyone would like to join the team, then let someone at St Dionysius know
- Other churches had not yet made plans

HDC are supporting the planning of a picnic and fireworks event at the Showground but not known whether this is Saturday or Sunday.

9. **Airfield Development /Harvest Road Update**

Barry Hill sent the following message after Janet requested an update to feed back to the Forum: "Just before Christmas an update was sent to the Anglican worshipping communities. The expectation is still that Rob will work more closely with Christians who live on the development then has been possible from June when his academic training finishes, with the aim to help them grow into a self-led missional group which we can then support from the Anglican Team, but without the planter moving to start as originally thought, which may lead to something closer to a fresh expression of Church forming rather than a larger planted church at this stage." Prayer is requested/

10. **Supporting Refugees:**

a) Ukraine

We have seen in recent days the world's response to the refugee crisis as it continues to unfold in Ukraine. The town's response in terms of collecting and sending aid has been truly marvellous and we wait as the government continues to formulate the national response to refugees coming here. As churches we can continue to pray and prepare for welcome. Donations to the Anglican Team's collection of goods which was collated centrally at St Di's has been really good. The van is being loaded and heading off. Donations of money for cost of fuel and van are still being sought. There is a collection happening in Leicester from 10 am to 1 pm.

b) Syrian Family

We continue to support the family who came to our town from Syria over 4 years ago. The eldest son has just passed his driving test. At some point a request another appeal will be made but not whilst Ukraine appeal is ongoing.

c) Afghan relocation scheme

Janet heard from Tom Day, Service Manager, Community Partnerships at the Council on 2nd March who said, "It's fair to say that things have been a lot more chaotic than we expected with the situation regularly changing with regards to finding families for the 4 properties that were identified / put forward by private landlords last summer. It has been a massive logistical challenge for the Home Office and Strategic Migration Partnerships with 100s of Afghan families still arriving every week from other countries where they fled last summer but qualify for the resettlement scheme. As it stands, we have resettled one family in Scraftoft, who arrived before Christmas. We hope to link families with remaining properties in the next few weeks, but this is largely out of our control."

A family has been settled in Scraftoft and there has been a request for bikes. The Baptist Church has an adult's bike available.

d) Resettlement

There is a great need to resettle both Ukrainian, Afghan and Syrian families. The Executive feel that this should not be CTH led as there is an ongoing commitment of care needed which it would be difficult for the Churches to maintain. The needs of individuals and families cannot be fully met by HDC either, so better to involve other larger community groups, with Churches Together continuing to offer appropriate support where possible.

Any Other Business:

- The Forum still needs a lay Vice Chair (several people have been approached but not accepted the possibility of standing for election)
- There is also a need for a Minutes Secretary as Angela is stepping down at the AGM

Dates for the Diary

Fri, 15 April	Good Friday from 10.30 am	Service 11am – 11.30 am	Town Square
Sat, 7 May	Street Pastor Coffee Morning	10 am – 12 noon	Harborough Theatre
Sun- Fri, 15-21 May	Christian Aid Week		

Dates of next Forum meetings:

Monday	16 May	2022	AGM / Forum	Methodist (tbc)
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Dates for future forum dates for the next 2 years will be agreed at the AGM

Janet thanked Andy M for hosting and Angela for taking the minutes.

Janet closed the meeting with prayer, and everyone joined in with the Grace