

## **Annual Report of Bearsted Churches Justice & Peace 2018-19**

The Justice & Peace group meets on the first Tuesday of most months bar August at 7.30pm in St Peter's parish room. The following are current members:

**St Peter's/Good Shepherd:** Marie Quarman (Chairperson), Janet O'Neill, Wieslaw Kordek, Patrick Harrison, Margaret Conan. **Holy Cross:** Helen Judges (Secretary). **Methodist Church:** Daphne Bower, Ann Smith.

**Membership** has remained the same throughout the year. We would encourage anyone who is interested to attend any meeting.

**Charity Stall:** Patrick took orders in December for Christmas cards.

**News from the Methodist and Holy Cross churches:** In 2018 the Methodist Church celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Methodist Church in Bearsted by staging an historical exhibition in May and a Flower Festival in June. Funds had been raised to install new lighting, chairs and notice boards. Their Harvest Festival with lunch and auction raised £57 for the Maidstone Day Care Centre. They distributed knitted angels around the village during Advent which was very well received. They provided soup and bread after Carols on the Green. They hosted the service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Holy Cross Church was sad to announce the death of lay reader Jim Gibson. The Church appointed a new Youth Worker, Nichola How who took up her position in the Summer. Various fund raising events were held as part of the Raise the Roof campaign, including a quiz night, a flower festival, and a Christmas fayre. These events along with other donations raised over £7,500. The Church Fair also raised £2,000 for roof appeal. Money raised from their Christmas 2018 appeal was divided between Christian Aid's work with victims of conflict, Crossline Counselling, and Dandelion Time.

**Homelessness & Poverty:** Both the Methodist Church and Holy Cross made monthly donations to Maidstone Day Care Centre. St Peter's Advent Appeal raised money for the Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. In January 2019 St Peter's collected goods for the Maidstone Day Care Centre and they were delivered by Janet and her husband.

**Promoting Peace:** Marie visited Japan and wrote an article for the parish magazine on the promotion of peace in modern Hiroshima. Holy Cross made a permanent display of white poppies in memory of those who died in First World War.

**Christian Aid/ Action Aid/ CAFOD/CSAN:** All the international organisations dealt with the fallout from safeguarding stories in the press as they sought to meet the requirements being issued by the Charity Commission and DFID, as well as communicating with supporters. All responded to various emergencies including the Indonesian tsunami, the Kerala floods, and the typhoon in the Philippines. They attended climate talks in Poland. A collection for Christian Aid at Tesco at the end of January raised over £600. On 4th April there was a special service at Westminster Abbey organised by Christian Aid to

commemorate fifty years since the assassination of Martin Luther King, which was well attended and broadcast on Radio Four. There was a huge campaigning success for all organisations, but particularly Christian Aid, that had worked on encouraging parliament in its Tax Bill to require overseas territories to publish company registers. They continued to work in Bangladesh responding to the Rohingya crisis, as were Action Aid, and also advocacy work on Internally Displaced Persons. Their Big Shift campaign to switch to Green Energy had led to its adoption by many churches. They also campaigned to protect the International Aid budget. Action Aid reported on the rape of young girls in Kenya and drought problems in Africa and had some success on defending land rights. Daphne had been asked by Action Aid to go to Mombasa, Kenya in October 2019 to help build a school. CAFOD announced that £4.2m income from the Lent Appeal would be match funded with money raised going to fund a programme addressing malnutrition. This would help 245,000 in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Eritrea. CAFOD launched their campaigns for Share The Journey walks to draw attention to the rights of people on the move from April to June. They covered more than 100,000 miles which was enough to more than lap the planet four times. 30,000 people signed the "Power to be" petition calling for renewable energy access for the world's poorest people. They launched a new appeal Global Healing.

**Appeals:** The Samara Appeal was well supported by all three churches both in terms of donations and collectors. Lenten Fast Day and Lent Appeal raised a combined total of £387.90 for CAFOD. Harvest Fast Day raised £350.90 for CAFOD and the Advent Appeal raised £647.40 for Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. It was decided to donate £400 from the proceeds of the Traidcraft/Charity Stall to split between each of two charities – CAFOD Indonesian Earthquake Appeal and Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. The Christmas collection from the Methodist Church also partly supported The Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter.

**St Peter's Parish Newsletter:** Janet supplied many articles including Refugee Week, Lent collections, 40th anniversary of Justice & Peace, Hiroshima Service, CAFOD retreat, Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter, Climate Change, donations from Charity Stall, Advent Appeal, CAFOD World Gift booklets, sale of Christmas Cards, Homeless Appeal, Lent CAFOD Appeal and Fast Day.

### **Summary**

This year has been busy. All our group members have continued their commitments to working for human rights and justice, and combating poverty, and we thank them for their efforts.

Justin Welby: "Justice is God's nature but it is our responsibility"

Marie Quarman  
Chairperson