

Annual Report of Bearsted Churches Justice & Peace 2017-8

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.

Traidcraft / Charity Stall: Patrick manned the stall in December and took orders for Traidcraft Christmas goods. We have raised £400.

News from the Methodist and Holy Cross churches: Holy Cross held another collection for Samara which was publicised in all three churches. 80 boxes of clothing and shoes were sent off in April. In November a family quiz night raised £700 for the Samara Appeal. The Methodist Church continued with their food bank and monthly charity coffee mornings. Through Water Aid they participated in a toilet twinning scheme. They raised £700 at a quiz to finance this. Their "Faith Tea" raised money for the Salvation Army. They are celebrating their 200th anniversary in 2018.

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. The Methodist Church also raised money for this as did Holy Cross who made this one of their three beneficiaries in their Christmas collections. In January 2017 St Peter's collected goods for the Maidstone Day Care Centre.

Prisoners of Conscience: Helen supplied information about Prisoners of Conscience. This was sent to all three churches for parishioners to send cards.

Christian Aid / Action Aid / CAFOD/CSAN: The three development charities all continued to respond to the various humanitarian crises including Yemen, South Sudan and Nigeria. They also, as part of the Climate Coalition, organised action on 14th February to "show the love" for things endangered by climate change. Christian Aid continued to work on tax, including responding to the Paradise Papers, and Climate Change, where they focused on the UN talks and lead the International Big Shift Campaign to get banks to divert their funds from fossil fuels. They also increased their work on refugees, but with particular attention to Internally Displaced People, who are not covered by Refugee Conventions. A bucket collection for Christian Aid was held on 21st April at Tesco, Grove Green which raised £692. CAFOD launched a new campaign "Power to be" which focussed on Children's access to electricity and how that could be increased by using renewable energy sources. Action Aid also campaigned for fair taxation and focused on development issues as they related to women and girls.

Prayers for Peace: Patrick has produced some resources for a touring exhibition which all three churches will be involved in later in 2018.

Appeals: Lenten Fast Day and Lent Appeal raised a combined total of £438.66 for CAFOD. Harvest Fast Day raised £212.56 for CAFOD and the Advent Appeal raised £1102 for Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter.

Parish Newsletter: Janet supplied many articles including the Lent Appeal for CAFOD, a thank you for Winter homeless appeal, Samara Appeal, J & P Spring Assembly, Advent Appeal, Prisoners of Conscience.

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.

Marie Quarman
Chairperson