



The remaking of social life

Acts 2:47

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Lent edition of the T4CG newsletter, and an especially warm welcome to our new subscribers.

As this decade gets underway, we see more fragmentation across the West. The impact of hyper-liberal ideology on both the left and the right has taken its toll on human beings and the planet over the last forty years. But we have an antidote - Common Good thinking is gaining attention in some strategic places and at the grassroots we can all play our part. The necessary rebalancing will meet resistance, but churches can start from the ground up by listening to their neighbourhoods and by fostering relationships, especially across class, background and opinion.

We want to encourage church communities to see that they are called to participate with God on the ground in the remaking of social life. It's a patient and unglamorous task. The Common Good is not showy. This year, our energy will be focused on building the capacity of people across the churches to put Common Good principles into practice. Developing Common Good lay leadership is a distinctive gift that the Church can bring to contribute towards national renewal. So we're delighted to share with you that **T4CG has won a strategic award** to deliver a 12 month programme of lay leadership development in five locations with five fantastic partners. See more below.

In this edition, you'll also find an inspirational story by **Martin Robinson** about building a

transformational relationship between parish and place, and a story highlighting a unique podcast series on the **gifts of estates churches**. As usual we've also gathered some links to help you make sense of **what's going on** politically.

You'll find our latest **helicopter view** of Common Good activity across the churches, plus our **events** listings (including our day retreat coming up for clergy and lay leaders in **Yorkshire**) and the latest recommended **books**.

Finally, **we are recruiting** for two new part time roles to strengthen our little team - see below: Project Leader and Team Support Worker. Please help us find the right people by circulating the details and by keeping these two new positions in your prayers.

Every blessing for a good Lent

Together for the Common Good

What's going on?

Politics isn't everything and we know our readers represent a range of views. But whatever your opinion of the realignment now underway, it's vital to understand the underlying drivers at work. These links below will help you make sense of what's going on and hopefully help to guard against the good people of the Church being exploited as the 'useful idiots' - by either the left or the right!

Patrick Deneen [what's happening and why the elites should be replaced](#) | podcast

Danny Kruger [on home, community, identity and Christianity](#) (video)

James Bloodworth [both left and right are now engaged in class war, against the poor](#)

Mary Harrington [working-class well-being has been assaulted by both right and left](#)

Adrian Pabst: [power without purpose: why the Tories approach is contradictory](#)

Timandra Harkness [argues that Britain is more fractured than divided](#) (radio)

Eric Kaufman [why political correctness and wokeness hurts the left](#) (video)

Michael Lind [urban professionals must share power with the working class](#)

Maurice Glasman [analysis of the new political era](#) | prediction 3 years ago

Matthew Goodwin - [why Labour lost the election](#) (podcast)

John Gray [why the left keeps losing](#)

Pope Francis [why we must respect the wisdom of the poor and empower them](#)



From Space to Place

In this era of social fragmentation, how should the Church pursue mission? Leading mission thinker and practitioner **Martin Robinson** counsels that the starting point needs to be in the context of the local.

Drawing from his new book **The Place of the Parish**, he explores the crisis in identity and belonging and the importance of place. Starting by listening to the neighbourhood, the church can play a unique role in the remaking of social life, and in doing so, uncover a journey to its own renewal.

[Read more...](#)



Finding the Treasure

After a long period of neglect, the distinctive gifts of C of E estates churches are being recognised. A series of **podcasts** recorded for the **Estates Theology Project** in Rubery, Wythenshaw and Twydall is well worth a listen. The conversations show that congregations in the most deprived communities, rather than being a drain on resources, are in fact a source of treasure which should be at the heart of the Church.

[Read more...](#)



T4CG receives award to deliver lay leadership programme

We are honoured to have received a strategic award to deliver a 12 month

programme of lay leadership development with five partners in five dioceses. Each partner will deploy T4CG's "Here: Now: Us People" Common Good training resource as part of their lay formation and parish development plans. It is envisaged that 400 lay people will participate over a 12 month period. The award, from the Charles Plater Trust, was presented by **Cardinal Vincent Nichols**.

Read more [here](#)



T4CG is Recruiting:

PROJECT LEADER

12 month contract. Part time: 22 hrs pw.
£17,000 (£28,500 FTE).

Closing date **23 March**.

To view recruitment pack and download application form, click [here](#)



T4CG is Recruiting:

TEAM SUPPORT WORKER

Permanent position. Part time: 12 hrs pw.
£12 per hour.

Closing date **3 March**.

To view recruitment pack and download application form, click [here](#)



T4CG Resources:

COMMON GOOD SCHOOLS

10-week programme for KS 3 & 4



T4CG Resources:

HERE: NOW: US PEOPLE

Common Good training workshop

Strengthens lay leadership in churches

Helps young people learn the Common Good principles, find their purpose in relationship with others, enhances community engagement and wellbeing and aids character development

Find out more [here](#)

and Christian organisations, connects faith and action, refreshes mission, aids parish development and engagement with neighbourhood

Find out more [here](#)

What is the Common Good?

The Common Good is the **shared life** of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate.

We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.

[Learn more...](#)



Join our helicopter view to see what's happening - just a snapshot from our research

People across the churches are building the Common Good..

...by living a shared life with people who are poor, vulnerable or excluded

St Paul's Church in Hounslow's community cafe has developed into a **one stop shop of support** and care in partnership with **Crosslight** to provide money advice and debt.

Those working with ex-offenders, prison visitors and chaplains may wish to contribute to **Monument Fellowship's** 2020 consultation, responding to the question: **what role do kindness, hope and compassion play in criminal justice?** Responses will be published in a book later this year. Find out how to respond to the question [here](#).

A Methodist **project guided by local residents on the Shieldfield Estate** in Newcastle combines faith, art and community activism, producing art by local community members expressing their hopes and anxieties. Part church, part art gallery, part community space, **Shieldfield Art Works** (SAW) is overseen by a minister and was formerly known as the Holy Biscuit.

Eden Dagenham's team of 'urban missionaries' in East London has been working with their **partner church in their local community** for almost two years now. Living alongside young people and local residents their mission has led to neighbours helping each other and forging friendships, a FareShare distribution point, two Christian unions in the local school, and positive relationships across the community.

St Helens Catholic Church in Caerphilly is partnering with Newport charity **Amazing Grace Spaces** to install two emergency **accommodation pods for homeless people in church grounds**. While it is not meant to be a permanent solution to homelessness, the vision is for church communities to provide people living on the edge with a 'safe space to recover' with support through meaningful relationships. Residents are supported by a key worker and agree to stay 'dry' while staying. Find out more [here](#) and on their [Facebook page](#).

The Proximity Network is compiling an **interactive map** to highlight ministries working in the bottom 10% of deprived communities in the UK. If you are you involved in this area and want to be included on the map, [click here](#) to find out more.

Have you ever thought about volunteering to help prisoners and their families on Pact's Helpline? **The Prison Advice Care Trust** is looking for volunteers and provides full training. [Watch their video here](#).

...by strengthening families, young people and older people

Upbeat is a preventative resource to help boys aged 13-16 develop a healthier approach to their emotional wellbeing. Created by **The Salvation Army** youth division this is a 6-session course, featuring hard-hitting video content and a toolkit to help young men take care of their emotional wellbeing, helping them engage in honest conversations and spot signs when things aren't going well. [See more here](#).

If you are planning social action projects working with families and young people you may like to know that **AllChurches Trust** have announced the second round of their

Growing Lives grants programme. Find out more [here](#).

The devastating impact of debt on family life was a focus of a recent edition of **The Bible in Transmission**. In **The Church's response to debt**, **Hannah Rich** examines the approaches taken by churches help people in debt and financial poverty, from debt advice provision, to supporting people towards greater wellbeing to challenging unjust economic structures through community organising and campaigning.

Since 2010/2011, youth services funding has been cut by 70% - resulting in the loss of youth clubs and youth workers. **Archbishop John Sentamu** is calling on church congregations to [sign a petition](#) in support of the **YMCA** campaign.

Near Neighbours continues to run Catalyst leadership training for young leaders aged 16-26 to act as positive role models in their neighbourhoods and communities. Includes a free 4 day residential training. [Apply here](#).

National couple counselling charity **Marriage Care** are recruiting for **qualified relationship counsellors** wanting to train in their **Diploma in Relationship Counselling** from September 2020. It is hoped that after the training, counsellors will continue as volunteers, offering two sessions a week, enabling Marriage Care to support couples regardless of background or ability to pay. See how to [apply here](#).

Reaching Out is a new resource for parish groups to connect with older people through group activities that are right for them. Produced by **Caritas Social Action Network**, the resource can be downloaded [here](#).

In **Why the left should be pro-family**, **Phillip Blond** argues that it is a tragedy of the first order that the family has been captured by one part of the political spectrum. He recommends key policy shifts that would advance key foundational units of society such as families.

...by playing our part in our community and neighbourhood

St Vincent's Blackfriars in Newcastle, run by the St Vincent de Paul Society with the support of many volunteers, exists to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community. Among its current activities is a series of three **free cookery sessions** to help local people plan, prepare and cook a nutritious family meal on a budget.

The government's **January 2020 Loneliness Annual Report** highlights how 'the opportunity to volunteer and give back is key to providing a sense of belonging and purpose to the people that attend.' Featured in the report is **Community Resources for Change** started by **Lifeline Church** in East London. Not a venue, a project or a service, it **helps local people set up projects** to address needs they themselves have identified in the local area. Read more about all the activity [here](#).

Could your church work in partnership to meet local housing need? From a vision for empty church land, to sweat equity, to building a settled community, the **Housing**

People Building Community initiative in Toxteth has been highlighted as **an inspirational example** by the **C of E Archbishop's Commission on Housing**. To date all HPBC projects (where residents do at least 250 hours of the team build themselves) have been built on land donated by the Catholic **Archdiocese of Liverpool**, and a disused church has been converted into 11 family homes at an affordable rent.

Find out how your church could join with many other places of worship becoming **Places of Welcome**, by providing everyone in the neighbourhood with **a place to go for a friendly face**, a cup of tea and a conversation.

St Silas Blackburn has found a way to solve its problem of a building falling into disrepair and at the same time help **Nightsafe. Safe@Silas**, a **supported housing project** has been set up offering 24 hour support to homeless people aged 16 to 18.

Repurposing parts of church buildings can sustain and improve services for local residents as well as help to forge closer links between community and church. The **Plunkett Foundation** have created **a resource package** for places of worship that could accommodate community businesses (eg. shops, cafes and accommodation). Includes templates, advice on project funding, training and connecting with other support organisations.

Churches, chapels and meeting houses are being asked to take part in a national survey to gather data on the value they add to local communities. Will feed into a new research study by the **National Churches Trust** which aims to measure the social and economic benefits. **Complete the survey online here**. Deadline 4 March 2020.

The **Mission Apprentice** scheme is a two-year programme run by the **Diocese of Birmingham** and is **funded** by **AllChurches Trust**, growing new missional leaders from and for communities in parishes. Read how it is working **here**.

Church leaders may like to tell their secular partners in local authorities and third sector organisations about our friends at **A Better Way** who have created a UK-wide network of influential (mainly non-religious) leaders from the voluntary, public and private sector committed **to improving services and devolving power to communities** - using values mostly compatible with Common Good principles.

...by upholding the dignity of the human being and the dignity of work

Interactions with apparently human-like and 'emotionally intelligent' AIs are likely to become commonplace within the next ten years. In **Artificial intelligence and simulated relationships** **Professor John Wyatt** of the **Jubilee Centre** explores the risks around social wellbeing and the manipulation and deception of the vulnerable. He argues that as Christians we are called to safeguard and to celebrate the centrality of embodied human-to-human relationships.

To stay up to speed with the latest activity in Parliament relating to human dignity issues (family, life, gender, education, religious freedom, homelessness, migration, prisons etc) we recommend [signing up for the free regular Parliamentary update](#) compiled by the **Catholic Union** who have a dedicated officer monitoring activity within both Houses. Content is relevant for people across all the Christian traditions.

Teachers tasked with communicating the Christian vision of the human person, sex and relationships may find **Ten Ten Resources** helpful. Their programme for primary and secondary Catholic schools is called [Life to the Full](#) - accessed via subscription.

A network of religious sisters is working across five continents to end human trafficking. Called [Talitha Kum](#), they have partnered with street artists and animators to launch [Super Nuns](#) using graphic art to fundraise to expand their work via Patreon.

The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** has published its [UK Poverty 2019/20 report](#). Recommendations include an emphasis on the importance of work, and getting as many people as possible into good jobs; as well as improving earnings for low-income working families, strengthening the benefits system and increasing the amount of low-cost housing available for families on low incomes.

The latest letter from **Pope Francis** includes a powerful discernment about human dignity and lay leadership. In [Querida Amazonia](#) (Beloved Amazonia) he believes the Spirit is moving the Church to [recognise the vocations of lay people and women](#) which may open up new charisms and opportunities for the Church to grow. He also discerns the importance of overcoming colonising mentalities and the need to [respect that the poor have a leading role to play](#).

[...by being good stewards and caring for creation](#)

Churches are invited to join the [Global Divestment Announcement](#) on 26-28 March. Involvement means either your commitment to divest from any fossil fuel investments within 5 years or, if your church or organisation doesn't hold such investments, to pledge not to invest in fossil fuels in the future. To get involved, [contact Helena](#) at **Operation Noah** before 19 March 2020.

With the UK hosting UN climate negotiations in November, UK Christian charities and denominations are organising a unique national event, Climate Sunday, this autumn. The **Churches Environmental Issues Network** is looking for an effective project manager to develop and coordinate. Click [here](#) for more information.

The **Church of England** has [committed itself to "net zero" carbon neutral by 2030](#), despite the risk of alienating less well-resourced churches, and has [guidelines](#) for parishes to follow. In addition the **C of E Pension Board** has invested £600 million in global new stock index [backing the Paris Climate Agreement](#).

ECCR has launched a new national programme called **Money Makes Change**, a programme and set of resources to help Christians explore and make ethical choices around money. Download the resource [here](#).

The annual **40acts** Lent challenge launches on the 26th February. [Sign up](#) for prompts to your inbox and join over 100,000 others in a 40-day mission to take actions of kindness and generosity within your community.

Live Lent is a 40-day challenge in the form of a **pamphlet** created by the **C of E**. With a reflection for each day, and a theme for each week based on the days of creation as described in Genesis 1, it also has prayers and hymns. Mutlipacks are available. See a preview [here](#). There is an accompanying children's version.

There are now **over 450 eco-congregations** in Scotland and there is a mapping tool. If your church is not yet registered, you can join **Eco-Congregation Scotland** and get involved in the environmental mission of the church, either by taking action at home or by going for a Gold Award as a congregation. [Resources and support via this link](#).

The latest report on land use in England by **Shared Assets** looks at land owned or run by community businesses: [Common good land use in England: state of the sector report 2019](#). Although the report uses 'common good' to mean shared assets rather than a shared life as it is understood in the Christian sense, the **report** may be of interest to churches with land that could be repurposed.



Events listings

On our [website](#) we share information about our own events and a general listing page for announcements by our friends and partners. The latest listings include events by **Proximity; Joint Public Issues Team; JW3; Theos; Justice, Peace and**

the Integrity of Creation; Capital Mass; Livability; Together Liverpool; Places of Welcome; Westminster Abbey Lectures; Jubilee Centre; Westminster College; Christians in Politics; Operation Noah; The Big Green Event and more.

[Read more...](#)



Building the Common Good in Yorkshire: 29 February

We are holding a one-day **action retreat** near Skipton next week **for clergy and lay leaders** to reflect together on our calling to build the Common Good, to review social action and forge new links that benefit local communities.

Saturday 29 February, 10.30am - 3pm in the Boyle Room at Bolton Priory, Skipton, BD23 6AL. Cost: £25 per person including two course hot lunch.

Book your place via Eventbrite: www.bit.ly/CommonGoodYorkshire



Calling People of Goodwill - a bible study for Lent

Our little booklet is ideal for Lent - it's designed to help you understand the Common Good in the Bible and respond to God's calling to transform the world.

With six short chapters this is a bible study that works well over six weeks. Suitable for Christians of all traditions and all ages from 14 upwards. With scripture, reflections, questions and prayers to prompt discussion and action. Content is ideal for prayer groups, residential communities, school assemblies, conferences, retreats as well as for personal prayer.

[Read more...](#)



Recommended books

Some of the latest titles we recommend, or which have been recommended to us.

Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

The New Class War: Saving Democracy from the Managerial Elite

Michael Lind

The Place of the Parish

Martin Robinson

12 Rules for Christian Activists

Edited by Ellen Loudon

Free, Fair and Alive - the Insurgent Power of the Commons

Bollier and Helfrich

Saying Yes to Life (Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book)

Ruth Valerio

You may also be interested in our

- [Leading Thinkers](#) collection of articles
- [Section](#) on Catholic social teaching
- [Previous reading lists](#)

ABOUT T4CG

Together for the Common Good helps people across the churches play their part to strengthen the bonds of social trust.

We do this through Common Good resources, training and events. Everything we do is in partnership, boosted by help in kind and the *pro bono* support of our wonderful associates and volunteers.

As the demand for our work grows, our tiny team is becoming very stretched.

Without a good number of regular donors we cannot plan ahead.

Would you join us and make a regular donation of £10, £20 or £50 per month?

Please click [here](#) to lend your support or [get in touch](#) to discuss.

Download our [2018-2019 Annual Report](#) and see what we've been up to!

[Donate safely online here](#)



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About us

Together for the Common Good is a charity working to strengthen the bonds of social trust. Our work calls people to fulfil their vocational responsibility by putting Common Good principles into practice and by working with others of different opinions and backgrounds in shared purpose.

T4CG partners with people across the churches and offers resources, training and events. We are non partisan, independent, ecumenical in character and proud of our different Christian traditions.

Our People

Team: Jenny Sinclair (Founder Director) and Alison Gelder (Director of Operations, p/t)
Board of Trustees: Richard Holman (Treasurer and Acting Chair)
Catherine Brady (Director of Resource Development, *pro bono*)
Andrew Bradstock, Geoff Knott, Holly Terry (Company Secretary).

T4CG punches above its weight thanks to help-in-kind and our wonderful Associates, Volunteers and Working Groups who contribute on a pro bono basis to different strands of our work, too many to name here. We'd like to thank in particular Fiona Foreman, Catherine Brady, Nicholas Townsend, Annette McBride, Miriam Brittenden.

Our sincere thanks

We are most grateful to our regular donors for their faithful generosity.
The Sisters of Mercy kindly allow us to use free office space.



CCLA has generously sponsored the design and build of our smart new website.



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