Caritas Middlesbrough Newsletter

Winter 2021

Welcome to the first Caritas Middlesbrough Newsletter

What is Caritas? Caritas is a Latin word which simply means "charity" or "love". "Caritas Middlesbrough Diocese" is a group of people – a "council" - set up by Bishop Drainey to help develop ways in which we as a diocese can put our Christian love into action. The group's members are all people who work in different ways to alleviate need and poverty in our diocese: by reaching out to poor and deprived families, working on initiatives to combat hunger amongst school children during holidays, working with those affected with dementia; working with refugees and asylum seekers. Groups such as the SVP, Cafod, Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland, CAUSE, Justice and Peace are represented on this Bishop's Council. We try to respond to the needs of people in our own diocese, as well as seeking to promote Church's Social Teaching – often described as the Church's "best kept secret".

Clearly our little group doesn't cover all the work which is carried on within our diocese to combat poverty and to assist those on the margins of our society. Rather, we try to coordinate our efforts, encourage each other and to raise awareness of the centrality of what is sometimes called the "Social Gospel" in the life of every Catholic Christian.

We take very seriously those words of Christ found in the parable of the Final Judgment: "when I was hungry you gave me to drink, when I was sick you visited me, when I was a stranger you welcomed me".

We are part of a national network of dioceses and catholic charities called CSAN (Caritas social Action Network) which is a body set up by the Bishops of England and Wales (and chaired by our own bishop Terry Drainey).

You can find out more about CSAN here: https://www.csan.org.uk

In this regular newsletter, *our aim is to raise awareness of all that is done to put the gospel of love into practice within our diocese* - both by the Church in our diocese, by individuals and by other collaborators. We hope to spread the good news of the various initiatives – often hidden or seemingly unremarkable – which already take place. Another aim is to explore recent papal encyclicals and initiatives that follow from these. And we would like to think that the newsletter may encourage people (you!) to get involved – as and when they may be able – in putting flesh and blood on the love of God for those in need.

Canon John Lumley, Chair of Caritas Middlesbrough Diocese

Fratelli Tutti-To Brothers and Sisters All

For this first newsletter, we begin to explore Pope Francis' latest encyclical which he offered the world in the hope that people may prove capable of responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will become deeply imbedded in us all. This seems to me to be the perfect foundation for the work of Caritas.

It is an encyclical which invites reading and re-reading as there is so much to absorb. We are invited to consider two kinds of response – a response where the words remain on the paper and the response where the words enter into the soul and change our human character. As we look towards life beyond the pandemic, the encyclical offers a vision for recovery and a better way forward.

He asks us to gaze at the world, so that we come to see the basic, indispensable relation of all things and people. It is of course, a serious challenge to every aspect of our lives, ecological, political, economic and social. But it has also been described as above all 'a proclamation of deep rooted joyful truth, presented here as a well -spring for a fatigued world'.

His plea is for dialogue. – urging the world to make the immense moral effort to change its underlying philosophy from self-interested individualism of I and me to the model of the interior life of a family where 'we' and 'us' is second nature. He focuses on 'listening' and the 'art of encounter' because "each of us can learn something from others. *No one is useless, no one is expendable." Others who are different from us are a gift and enrichment for all. Globalisation proclaims universal values but fails to practice encounter and attention – especially to difference and the most vulnerable.*

It is a document of eight chapters, the fourth of which is dedicated to the theme of migration. Our diocese welcomes many seeking refuge and safety – often fleeing from war, persecution or unscrupulous trafficking. Pope Francis sets out clear steps to a just and humanitarian way forward for a global response to this movement of peoples – focused on understanding and respect. It makes welcome reading.

The message he wants us to hear is that we are made fully human by what draws us beyond ourselves. What makes this possible is a divine love, open to all, that endlessly renews. This love is the basis of Pope Francis's call to us with St Francis's words of loving attention: 'Fratelli tutti'…

Barbara Hungin

Letter from Bishop Terry

"I would like to support and encourage in every way this initiative of a Diocesan Caritas Newsletter. One of my national roles is Chair of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN). Caritas Social Action Network is the official domestic social action agency of the Catholic Church in England & Wales, a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Inspired by Gospel of Jesus Christ we animate and coordinate our network of Caritas dioceses and member charities to help poor, vulnerable and marginalised people find their voice and to enable them to improve their lives. We work in collaboration with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and as part of the Caritas Internationalis confederation.

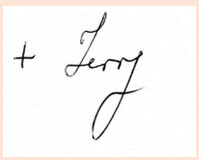
We are committed to improving the circumstances of people of all faiths and none who are in poverty, excluded or unjustly treated. We are committed also to and promote Catholic Social Teaching at every opportunity.

I have had the great privilege of being chair of CSAN since 2014. I worked with Helen O'Brien as CEO and then, more recently with Dr Philip McCarthy. Dr McCarthy will retire from this position in March and we have just appointed his successor, Raymond Friel. He will begin his time with us in April.

I hope and pray that this Newsletter will help us to see what needs to be done and what is already happening in so many places, homes, parishes, groups within our diocese and beyond. We know that our Holy Father Pope Francis also encourages us to go out to the peripheries and to work with and for the poor and marginalised in our Society.

"Now is a good time to recover 'the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment' (Laudato Si', 229). In a word, until we revive our sense of responsibility for our neighbour and for every person, grave economic, financial and political crises will continue." (Pope Francis' message for the World Day of the Poor 2020)

Yours in blessed hope, "



Pope Francis' Prayer Intentions

January-Human Fraternity
May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

February -Violence Against Women
We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

March - Sacrament of Reconciliation
Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God

The effects of the pandemic in parts of our diocese

As we continue to struggle through this pandemic which has affected each one of us in so many ways bringing great suffering and loss, we also see much love and **so many** examples of self-giving and sacrifice. On the next pages we share some examples of how communities in our parishes have come together to help and support the most vulnerable and those bearing the greater hardships, finding ways to overcome the barriers of COVID 19 and to reach out. Coming together to celebrate the Eucharist, and hearing the words of our Priests and praying together along with this support has been a lifeline to so many bringing courage and healing as we wait in hope for a time when our parish communities can flourish and celebrate the sacraments and life to the full together again. TL

Scarborough during Lockdown

The Rainbow Centre next door on Castle Road is run by the Church Of England with volunteer staff many of which are our parishioners. We work closely with the centre.
We had a regular food collection for them especially during the lockdowns. The Centre has been closed during the lockdowns to people calling.
Each day they delivered 120+ food bags across town to needy families. The fire brigade helped as well as volunteer drivers.
This outreach is much admired and supported by us all here in the catholic community.
As a parish we also did shopping for some isolated people and took food hampers and meals to those in need.
A telephone ministry keeping in touch with older parishioners is still ongoing.

Eddie Gubbins

Our Lady's Acomb, York

From the start of the pandemic, we have had a weekly streamed Mass, available afterwards as a video. We were fortunate to have a competent technologist who could put together videos of parishioners reading and singing, writing and reciting bidding prayers, sharing the greeting of peace (children from our school who were in the same bubble). We were able to have recorded music covered by our copyright license. This meant the Mass was as participatory as it could be and there have been many volunteers. Our Sunday Mass is followed each week by a chance to chat on zoom for half-an-hour or so. One of the very positive aspects of this has been the inclusion of many former parishioners from all over the country and even abroad. People have communicated with messages before and after Mass and would often comment to each other on news, specially concerning someone who is ill or sadly has died.

For those who wanted it, there has been Mass in the church under strict Covid-safe conditions twice a week. Those of us who had access to the streamed Mass were asked to stand back to allow those without it to attend in church. These Masses have had to stop during lockdown. Our p.p.has emailed a regular weekly Newsletter to all who wanted it and also posts out about 30 to people without email. We also have a parish Whatsapp group which is used regularly.
Other activities have continued: In general, I have to say that the parish has continued to operate much as one would hope a parish would operate but without a visible community.

The greatest loss has been not being able to meet in community and above all, not able to sing together. Those of us who have been visitors to the elderly and house-bound could mostly not continue, especially to those in Care Homes which were closed to visitors. Therefore we have not been able to catch up with each other's' lives as we could before. There is no substitute for the physical community.

For some years, we have supported local charities such as Carecent, a breakfast club for rough sleepers, and the local Food Bank. For the past couple of years, there is a weekly collection of food and toiletries which is taken to Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Primary School for the families who need help. This has grown considerably as things got harder for many families. The collections are very well-supported.
Since all public meetings have stopped, many zoom meetings have taken place. We support CAFOD, and Pax Christi regularly as well as joining each other for leisure and conversation.

Nan Saeki

NEWS FROM REDCAR

The Redcar area Caritas grassroots action group are very keen to help our local communities and churches to play a vital role in the "Building Back Better" initiative as we emerge from the pandemic. There is much to learn from these months as to how we must look to work collaboratively in our local communities for the greater good of all and especially to help safeguard our most vulnerable.

Group members were able to collect Christmas Shoeboxes which were safely delivered to members of the Saltburn Recovery Group. Group members are all at different stages of battling their own drug and alcohol issues and are very isolated and stigmatized. I have been able to keep the Recovery Group going by meeting outdoors when we could and online at other times. Moreover, I have been able to offer weekly wellbeing and resilience sessions online to many members of our communities through the pandemic which are proving to be a vital lifeline indeed.

Also, some of the Redcar Caritas Group have been working as Volunteers with the Methodist Asylum Project MAP, a partnership which is providing a vital service in helping to stay connected with local Asylum Seekers. MAP were able to utilize some core funding to provide mobile phones to many of their service users in the early months of lockdown. This proved essential as the volunteers have been able to continue providing English lessons and other ways of supporting some very isolated and vulnerable people.

We will be looking to recruit more members for the Redcar area Caritas Group as we move forwards. A special mention should also go to the way Canon Derek Turnham and his team have developed their online communications and services throughout the pandemic which have really helped people to stay connected and to receive a regular dose of spiritual nourishment and nurture.

Monsignor Ricardo and his team at Saltburn have been doing their best to stay in contact with the Parish despite not having any digital presence. Moving out of the pandemic our churches should maintain and develop some kind of digital and social media in their communities to build upon such effective outreach and communications especially for people who might struggle to access Church services for whatever reason.

Terry Doyle

ASYLUM-SEEKER SUPPORT IN MIDDLESBROUGH, JANUARY 2021

Like everyone else, asylum-seekers in Middlesbrough are currently locked down within their homes. MAP is currently still able to offer its Phone-Loan scheme, and within this around 100 local asylum-seekers are being provided with a basic smartphone on loan, and 64gb data plan. MAP is also providing a programme of free online activity classes so that English conversation, singing, storytelling, relaxation exercises, children's music and meditation can be accessed remotely.

We are still seeing some new arrivals in the area. Covid & lockdown make shopping around, and thus living on a budget, much harder. For that reason MAP is still open every Wednesday in Avenue Methodist Church, but we are distributing basic groceries rather than clothing.

In order to comply with the spirit of lockdown, we are distributing only emergency clothing i.e. the basics which can allow someone to remain warm, or 1 duplicate set of clothing for someone who has only what they are wearing: it is **very difficult to get one set of clothing washed and dried indoors in winter so** a spare set really is a necessity.

Donations of basic groceries are welcomed. We are not currently encouraging donors to bring clothing to Avenue on Wednesdays. If you have an item that you think might be a core "emergency" item e.g. a weatherproof coat, or shoes, or a duvet then please do get in touch to discuss whether donation might be arranged.

Thank you to all who continue to support refugees and asylum-seekers in the area.

Ailsa Adamson,

MAP Middlesbrough (07970192841 mapmbro@gmail.com)

COPING WITH COVID-19 IN RYEDALE

From early in the pandemic the churches in Ryedale, co-operating with the Local Authority, were providing the following:
Ryedale Foodbank (based in Norton-on-Derwent)
Free Fridges in Malton, Norton, Pickering, and Kirkbymoorside
Community Kitchens in Malton/Norton & Pickering.
Food in School Holidays (FISH) in Pickering

The Parishes of St. Leonard & St. Mary, Malton and St. Joseph's Pickering.

We have not been live-streaming our Services, but have remained in contact with parishioners through a weekly mailing currently sent to over 180 by email and over 40 by post.

The mailing contains:
The weekly newsletter with homily and bidding prayers, a CAFOD item and an environmental comment.
The Wednesday Word.
Children's Liturgy Resources (CAFOD)
School Newsletters: St. Mary's Malton, St. Joseph's Pickering, All Saints York
Information from the Diocese and resources for personal retreats and the church year.

Sacramental Life

Our churches have remained open whenever possible.
First Holy Communions were celebrated last summer and present preparation is taking place on Zoom. 10 candidates are preparing for confirmation.

Pastoral

Telephone contact has been maintained with those who are housebound/shielding, through the Ministers of Holy Communion and the Pastoral Team, who meet regularly.
The Sacrament of Reconciliation has been available throughout – socially distanced in the Parish Community Centre, or in the churchyard.
The RCIA Group continues to meet weekly on Zoom.

Churchyard

Throughout the pandemic we have continued to manage the churchyard as a haven for wildlife.

Tim Bywater.

Urgent action needed for our Common Home

Climate breakdown is the direct challenge to that aspect of God's grandeur, the cosmos, incorporating our planet teeming with self-sustaining life, human and otherwise, yet imminently under threat through human activity. Cop 26 in Glasgow in November, postponed from 2020, seeks inter alia to demonstrate how efforts since 2015 have given teeth to that year's non-binding Paris agreement, and how decarbonisation of our atmosphere will be achieved.

The urgency of the need for action, no longer merely to mitigate the effects of climate change but to reverse the process, is clear now for all to see as we, the poor first, perish under the influence of flood, fire, desertification, loss of soil productivity and of biodiversity, famine, war and migration.
There is nothing inevitable about this mass extinction. Those economic and commercial agencies which, reducing government to servitude, deprive so many of our brothers and sisters of justice are those same forces behind the destruction of our planet.
Our commitment between now and November will determine the success of Cop26 and the future of planet Earth. Nothing is more important. Prayer, action and hope are our weapons because, as Hopkins reminds us in God's Grandeur –

" for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings."

David Cragg-James
Ampleforth Justice and Peace

CAFOD WALK FOR WATER

In 2020, the world experienced the worst health crisis in a century. The coronavirus pandemic has devastated lives and shattered families in the UK and across the world, with disastrous consequences for people's jobs, livelihoods and health.
This year 150 million people are set to fall into extreme poverty and an additional 130 million people will be left hungry. This is on top of the unprecedented difficulties caused by the immediate impacts of the climate crisis.
People like Abdella, who is 23 years old and lives in Afar, Ethiopia – one of the hottest places on earth. Like hundreds of people in the area, he spends most of the day walking to get water for his family. Usually this takes him 10 hours a day, every day. It's a journey of 6.5 miles.

He told us: "I'm so tired, I find it hard as I collect so little, then what I get is not good -its bad quality. It has made us sick before."

He knows that if there was water near his home, his family wouldn't have to worry any more about getting enough to stay alive. And he could start on the dreams he has for the rest of his life.

Fratelli Tutti summons us to be actively involved in rehabilitating our wounded societies. Charity is important . Giving is important but love calls for a greater ability to accept others and to reach out to the margins – to communities like Abdella's in Ethiopia. A love capable of transcending borders is the basis of "social friendship". We'd like to work with parishes and individuals to respond to Pope Francis' call to a new way of thinking about the world and take an active part in renewing our troubled societies by embracing the universal values of solidarity and fraternity.

We must also act to promote the common good, to promote values that advance integral human development – not just in our own country but in communities left on the margins by their own countries, again like Abdella's, or countries left on the margins by rich countries, as we've seen in the race for coronavirus vaccine distribution.

Lent Challenge -
Walk for Water In solidarity with Abdella in Ethiopia.
This is primarily an individual physical challenge, for people who are inspired by Abdella's story and want to take on a challenge for Lent. You can sign up on the CAFOD website and set up a "Just Giving Page." The challenge is to walk 10,000 steps (roughly 5 miles) every day in Lent. On Saturday 20th February at 2pm, we're inviting everyone to walk together as part of this national, virtual event! Walkers doing the 40-day challenge will be asked to walk at this time also.
We'd love as many people in the parish as possible to walk (separately but simultaneously) on this date and set up an online fundraising page for sponsorship.

Check out the CAFOD webpage for information and resources.

We can promote the common good:

By thinking and acting in terms of community;

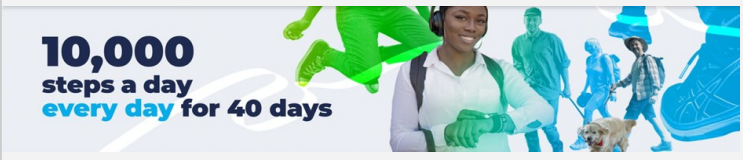
By combatting the structural causes of poverty and inequality;

By requiring the state to be present and active and to invest in assistance to the vulnerable;

By ensuring that no-one is excluded;

By establishing a real and lasting peace based on a global ethic of solidarity and service

Carol Cross



February 8th St Josephine Bakhita
Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking

St Josephine Bakhita was born in Sudan in 1869 and enslaved as a child, cruelly ending her happy childhood, aged 9. Sold from slave-trader to slave-trader – six times in all – she was beaten, tortured, punished, and bore the brutal scars on her body. Eventually she was sold to an Italian diplomat and taken to Italy. He sold her to a friend Augusto Michieli, who used her to babysit his daughter and accompany the child to Venice to a convent run by the Canossian Sisters. For the first time, since the age of nine, she experienced love, affection and kindness from the sisters. This was the beginning of her path to freedom. She learned about God's love and Jesus' dying on the cross and served him faithfully until her death in 1947.

8th February is also an International Day of Prayer and Awareness against human trafficking. We bring to mind the increasing number of women, men and children trapped in this dark world of slavery and pray for all affected by this evil and all organisations working to abolish it particularly the work of Sister Imelda Poole IBVM with Mary Ward Loreto against trafficking in Albania and RENATE (Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation).

In his recent book, Let us Dream: the Path to a better future, Pope Francis writes:

"Migration is a global issue. No one should be obliged to flee their country. But the wrong is doubled when the migrant is forced into the hands of people traffickers in order to cross borders; and tripled when they reach the land they thought would give them a better future, only to find themselves despised, exploited, abandoned, or enslaved. We need to welcome, promote, protect, and integrate those who come in search of better lives for themselves and their families "

At a recent webinar Sister Imelda reiterated Pope Francis words *that we cannot be indifferent to human trafficking a transnational global crime a wound on the side of humanity, a scourge in our world today.* We are all called to awareness and to open our eyes to what is happening around us in every day life. Opportunity to act must not be missed in the Hospitality Industry and Health. She also warns that when buying cheap goods or attending a cheap car wash we could be partly responsible. Do we check where these are sourced? Factories must be safe and unethical child labour confronted.

We saw how story telling is used to inform those at risk of human trafficking and how powerful it can be in warning of the deceit, tricks and false promises of the traffickers.

Further information and how to support their work is available from the Mary Ward Loreto, MEDAILLE TRUST, RENATE, AND MECPATHS, websites.

Teresa Lyth

Days of special prayer -appointed by the Bishop's Conference

Jan 17th for Peace- Pope Francis in his World Peace Day message calls for a **"*Culture of Care in 2021*"**

Jan 31st Racial Justice Day

Feb 8th For victims of trafficking- Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita

Feb 11th World day of Prayer for the Sick

Feb 14th For the unemployed

Feb 26th For the needy and hungry of the world. (Lent Fast Day)

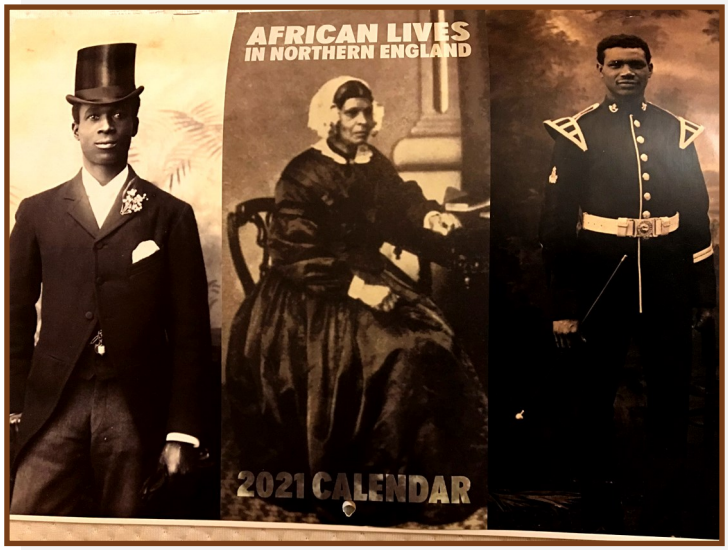
March 5th Women's world day of prayer

African Lives in Northern England

We are using the final page of the newsletter to promote a project from a group in the North East – inspired by the Black Lives Matter events of the summer.

For Barbara Kentish – one of the group who has spent her adult life in London but who grew up in County Durham – Black Lives Matter sparked memories for her of racism experienced by her family in the 1970s and 80s. Her husband was Jamaican born – one of the Mangrove Nine - and her two sons had very difficult experiences during family visits to the North East, receiving outspoken abuse and comment. For them this was in stark contrast to their lives in London as part of a multi-racial society.

While recognising that the North has 'moved on' there was still an uneasiness about this time. When the protests in 2020 occurred Barbara met with two women of African origin from Newcastle who were engaged in equality and anti-racist work in the North East. They talked of the situation today and the recent research done about black presence in the North.



The idea of a 'Black lives in the North' calendar was born and became a collaboration between many friends and like-minded people, historians, writers, educators and activists with the expertise to make the project work.

Historians have done extensive research and David Olusoga's BBC TV series, Black and British, disclosed fascinating historical evidence that Northern lives have not always been white lives. Archaeological research in South Shields and Burgh by Sands indicate the presence of Africans amongst the Roman military settlements along the Roman Wall. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries there was a significant black presence, well documented by the Evening Chronicle. The North received visits from Martin Luther King, Muhammed Ali and Paul Robeson to mention but a few.

Today, of course, the North is becoming far more multi-racial. As part of this we welcome refugees from many parts of the world who contribute to our communities and help us to recognise the gifts of those who make their homes here. This is an example of the 'encounter' Pope Francis talks about in Fratelli Tutti.

The calendar showcases the long history of African lives in Northern England from Roman soldiers on Hadrian's Wall to actors in the twenty-first century and includes the enslaved woman who escaped across the Atlantic and settled in North Shields, as well as the first black J.P. in Britain.

The successful pilot publication of the African Lives in Northern England 2021 calendar has encouraged its creators to embark on a further venture. The calendar illustrated many aspects of the lives of Africans and those of African Caribbean origin in the North. The first black newspaper editor, for instance, Celestine Edwards, who lived in Sunderland, and the first black professional footballer, Arthur Wharton, who played for Darlington, were but a few who contributed to Northern life and should be recognised fully in the region's history. The presence of African soldiers and civilians on the Roman Wall illustrate, moreover, that African influence did not begin in the recent past, with twentieth century immigration, but reached back many centuries.

The group is now embarking on a new two-prong project: a pamphlet aimed at the general public, expanding on the calendar subjects, and a pictorial map for schools, giving a taster to young people in the North of this rich seam of their history. See the website for more information: www.newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk/africanlives or contact the coordinator Beverley Prevatt Goldstein via email, bpg@blueyonder.co.uk

I do have 4 copies of the calendar if anyone would like one. My contact details are below.

Barbara H

Event

Racial justice webinar hosted by the National Board of Catholic Women -Friday 12th of February 7 to 8:30 pm

What is racial justice? Why does it matter? What can we do?

A panel from the Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ) will be speaking on recognising racial injustice exploring catholic social teaching and inviting us to consider what this means at a personal level. Each short presentation will be followed by small group discussion in zoom breakout rooms. To allow an exchange of views on some challenging questions. This event is free but you need to register. Visit our website for more information.

Margaret Clark NBCW

Please pass on your ideas for future Newsletters and share what is happening in your community.
We also welcome letters, requests for more information and comments.

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