



Community
for Reconciliation

- CfR Programme
- CfR Personal Retreats
- CfR Romania
- CfR Footprints (*in former Yugoslavia*)
- CfR East Africa

Newslink
June
2019

From The Community Coordinator:

What does it mean to be committed to peace and reconciliation? I guess each of us will have slightly different answers. For me it includes recognising that although I have strong views on a number of subjects it is possible that I am wrong. I need to listen to the other person's point of view and I need to respect it and allow them to proclaim it even if I think that they are wrong. I need to speak up for those who have no voice and those who find their voice drowned out by zealots or by liberal extremists. I also need to point people towards the God who created the world as a paradise for the human race and calls on us all to live in peace. *Ian Ring*



News from CfR

You will be aware that, following a time of review, CfR is going through a period of transition. For many people the most obvious sign of this will be the transfer of Barnes Close to new ownership. In reality there is a lot more than that happening.

The future of Barnes Close is taking longer to resolve than we would have liked, mind you we never thought it would be quick and easy. We will update you as soon as there is something firm to tell you. Meanwhile we have decided to cease using Barnes Close from September 2019 and have arranged a special day on Saturday 7th September to give thanks for CfR at Barnes Close.

CfR is not just about Barnes Close. We have three International Projects, CfR East Africa, CfR Footprints and CfR Romania and we support Peace & Justice work in the UK, particularly with refugees and asylum seekers. We are currently working on how this work may best continue and be supported in the future. At the event on 7th September we will be able to give you more details of this.

We are still working on the detail for 7th September but note the date now and make plans to come to Barnes Close to celebrate. There will be an AGM, a time of worship and a buffet tea. But above all else the opportunity to meet friends, reminisce about the past of Barnes Close and help the transition of CfR's other work. Accommodation will be available over the weekend.



The day will include

- AGM
- Thanksgiving for our 30 years at Barnes Close
- Sharing plans for on-going work
- Buffet Tea

Full timings and details will be available early in August. Book the date now.

Accommodation available over the weekend



External Work Update

CfR Peace & Justice – Barbara Forbes

Being involved with asylum-seekers and refugees means multi-tasking – it means building friendships, offering support, accepting hospitality, sharing laughter and tears. It also means becoming immersed in our government’s “hostile environment”, the effects of which have been widely publicised – deportations to unfamiliar or even totally unknown countries, ever-tightening regulations (frequently not discussed in parliament but nodded through in a procedure known as Statutory Instrument), and increased despair and distress amongst the community of asylum-seekers (some of whom have to wait for years for a decision) and those who are not granted full refugee status but only “discretionary leave to remain” which forces them to find over £2000 per person every two-and-a-half years to renew this status.

Every year in June, Refugee Week is an opportunity to highlight the problems faced by asylum-seekers and refugees and to celebrate their contributions. The second Sunday of Refugee Week, this year on **23rd June**, is **Sanctuary Sunday**, when churches up and down the country will be holding special services to celebrate and encourage a better understanding between different communities. In Birmingham, we are hoping that we will also on that day present a local church with the first “Church of Sanctuary Award” under the auspices of the national City of Sanctuary network. This is a church whose worshipping community includes asylum-seekers and refugees, which is listening to the voices of those who have sought sanctuary amongst us, is intentional about being open and accessible for individuals and groups seeking sanctuary and which is committed to wider local initiatives which aim to offer welcome, end hatred and hostility, and build cultures and communities in which all are welcome, valued and safe. Sanctuary Sunday is supported and promoted by the Churches Refugee Network – maybe your church could also mark this day with a special service?

You can use this Sanctuary for All resource, prepared by Inderjit Bhogal for group study and discussion. The resource includes ideas for worship. <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SANCTUARY-FOR-ALL-RESOURCE-2.pdf>

News from Birmingham City of Sanctuary

Refugee Week starts on 17th June – and we draw your attention to three events in particular:

Wednesday 19th June 1-2.30 p.m. – Sanctuary Films in Birmingham Council Chambers

Asylum Matters will be showing 3 short films about refugee lives in Birmingham. One of which is from the Sanctuary Stories project we ran last year with St. Chad’s Sanctuary, where refugees recorded their oral histories and gave them to the Birmingham Museum who placed them in their permanent collection. The other films were made with three local organisations; Hope Projects, BIRCH and Fatima House who support and house asylum seekers in the city. We will have refugee speakers and an opportunity to listen to some of the oral histories. Asylum Matters is a partner organisation to City of Sanctuary.

Wednesday 19th June 7.30 p.m. Carrs Lane Church, B4 7SX

HOME a play written and performed by asylum-seeker and refugee students from St Chad’s Sanctuary. Free, with a retiring collection for St Chad’s Sanctuary.

Saturday 22nd June, 1 p.m. Cannon Hill Park – Picnic in the Park with food and refreshments, games and activities. Our annual City of Sanctuary Picnic!

Details of many other events can be found at <http://www.celebrating-sanctuary.org.uk/gigs>

A performance of **Feeding the Darkness** by Journeymen Theatre will take place at Bull Street Quaker Meeting House (Priory Rooms), B4 6AF, on **Thursday 11th July at 7 p.m.** with discussion afterwards with Freedom from Torture staff.

Contacting the Community for Reconciliation:

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Barnes Close Office hours: Monday - Friday 9.30am – 5.00pm

