

Thoughts from the Manse 22nd January 2021

We are in the middle of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity which runs every year from the 18th – 25th January for most Christians, although some celebrate later in the year at Pentecost. I have always thought this traditional timing impractical, as ministers usually take a break after Christmas and there is no time before that for planning things, strangely, and so the week is upon before we know it and planning is always rushed. This year I have been unaware of any planning as mostly we are all struggling to keep our own little pool alive and active in some way.

Week
Of
Prayer
For
Christian Unity



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

The Grandchamp Community has its origins in Europe in the 1930s, when a group of women of the Reformed tradition sought to rediscover the importance of silence and listening to the Word of God. Today the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning.



Prayer is a uniting action. There is a power in praying together for the same thing at the same time, the power comes from connecting together, becoming one mind, if only for a brief period and it is a power that can change reality. We gather together on a Sunday morning, connected over the internet, but we are united in our prayer, and united also with those who share our worship at the same time using postal copies or copies downloaded from the website. At a time when physical signs of Christian unity are few, and the pressures of reducing numbers and fewer resources are putting even more strain on working together, it is good to remember that we are united in prayer and we do all abide in the Christ which is God.

This week also sees us remember the atrocities of the Holocaust as we join together for Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27th of January. This is an expression of Faith unity as well as civic unity. I remember visiting the Holocaust Memorial Museum at Newark, it is a powerful experience and anyone who visits is moved by the stories and the evidence gathered to remind us of why we must never let this happen again. The museum is closed to visitors at the moment but many of the exhibits can be viewed on the [website](#).



This year the UK Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 ceremony will be streamed online at 7pm. This will be our first fully digital ceremony and you can register to receive the link and join in the ceremony. You can [Register here](#)

The ceremony will run from 7–8pm.



At the end of the ceremony, at 8pm, we are all invited to Light the Darkness. Households across the UK will be lighting candles and putting them in their windows to remember those who were murdered for who they were and to stand against prejudice and hatred today. **Light a candle and put it in your window at 8pm on 27 January 2021.**

In these difficult times we need to remember our oneness and join together in as many varied ways as possible, to learn together what it means to be human, what it means to be love in the world.

