

## **FPCT Poverty and Justice Group**

The January meeting of the Poverty and Justice Group, in its new arrangement followed by the monthly Prayers for Peace and Persecuted Christians, was held on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> January in St. Mary's Church Hall. Eleven people were present for the action group with two more for the prayers. Sarah Rapetti introduced the topic under consideration, which was migration in general and the lot of migrants from other countries to Cornwall in particular. She opened the discussion with a quotation on the "Ethics of Migration", which we hope to share with the FPCT list in due course. We were very happy to have included in our number a Polish man living and working locally, who was able to share some of his experiences with us. We discussed the various countries from which migrants in Cornwall come at present, or have come from in the past, and the many types of work in which they are engaged. We also looked at the various reasons many have for coming to this country to work and some of the problems they face when they live here. These include the differences in culture and language, resulting in loneliness, exploitation and accommodation difficulties, and also sometimes the personal reappraisal resulting from a change of status from an academic, intellectual or senior managerial role in their home country to life as a manual worker here.

We then looked at what we in the churches could do to help them, particularly in providing some sort of replacement for the home support network which is so often lacking in the lives of those living far from their home country. Mary Bradley drew attention to the Sunday evening event at St. Mary's, "Come and See" every Sunday Evening 6 to 7 30 pm in St. Mary's Church hall, providing soup and a roll and chat, followed by prayer in the church at 7pm for those who wish, which is open to anybody irrespective of faith or parish connection. Others mentioned the Café Polyglot, meeting every Thursday evening in the Watersports Centre from 7.30 p.m. onwards, when speakers of any other languages can come and chat, whether as native speakers or as learners wishing to practise a language, which could be used to publicise both the St. Mary's Sunday evenings and anything else we decide to organize.

The idea we came up with and decided to set about organizing was a daytime International Party to be held in June in St. Mary's Church hall, when both those from other countries and locals will be invited to bring and share food specialities from their regions (the Cornish will be allowed to bring pasties or cream teas!) and when activities for all ages will be provided as well as plenty of time for chatting, sharing experiences and just getting to know one another. Watch this space!

The theme suggested for the next meeting of the group on February 10<sup>th</sup> was "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The subsequent prayer time for persecuted Christians, justice and peace focussed on regions noted in Dr. Russell Blacker's newsletter for persecuted Christians, especially a refugee camp in Ankawa, northern Iraq, and a demolished church in Ethiopia, as well as issues arising from the recent attacks in Paris. Our prayers concluded with the Lord's Prayer, which we prayed together while standing holding hands in a circle, which I found particularly powerful.

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