



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, WALTON-ON-THAMES



NEWSLETTER

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APRIL 2012

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Easter spells out beauty, the rare beauty of new life

S D Gordon



Dear Friends

As you know, we have just had our Annual General Meeting. It's good to make the time to take stock of the life of the church – and to say ‘thank you’ for all the hard work which is put in by so many people, often behind the scenes, to keep everything going. One of those jobs is to produce this newsletter month by month, and I'd like to take the opportunity to say more publicly how grateful we all are to Norma for her patience, dedication and talent – as well as her gentle persistence in chasing up late contributions from her minister amongst others: thank you, and well done!

Our AGM provides another, possibly less obvious opportunity to reflect on the life of the church: we are a conciliar church. That is to say, we are a church which is run by councils and which affirms the privileges and responsibilities of each and every one of its members in terms of participating in decision-making.

Our own local councils – Elders' and Church Meetings – are naturally the ones with which we are most closely associated. I'd be the first to admit that at times the higher regional and national councils of our United Reformed Church can seem very remote from the life of St Andrew's. But as part of the URC, our congregation is nevertheless connected to those higher councils, and this year we will have a direct involvement in General Assembly which meets in Scarborough in July: our very own Duncan Reid will be attending as one of the Wessex Synod lay delegates. I'm sure you will wish to join me in praying for Duncan and all the delegates to Assembly, as they prepare to debate some difficult issues and make hard decisions about budgets and resources.

May that same Holy Spirit, whose guidance we seek in our own meetings here at St Andrew's, enlighten, inform and direct the wider councils of our denomination and the life of all Christ's people in this country and throughout the world.

Your minister,

Ronilly

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES APRIL 2012
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Sunday 1 April <i>(Palm Sunday)</i>	10.30 am	Sunday Worship
Monday 2 April	2.00 pm	Bridge Club Hersham Room
	8.00 pm	Lent House Group (6) (<i>chez Paula</i>) 2 Knighton Lodge 39 Rydens Road, Walton-on-Thames
Tuesday 3 April	8.00 pm	Elders' Meeting Hersham Room
Wednesday 4 April	2.00 pm	Lent Group (6) (<i>chez Chrissie</i>) 4 Grange Court, Ashley Road Walton-on-Thames
Thursday 5 April <i>(Maundy Thursday)</i>	7.30 pm	Communion Service Weybridge URC led by the Reverend Roy Bones. <i>All welcome!</i>
Friday 6 April <i>(Good Friday)</i>	10.30 am	Coffee and Hot Cross Buns in the Church Hall followed by
	11.00 am	Service for Good Friday



Sunday 8 April <i>(Easter Day)</i>	10.30 am	Easter Communion
Tuesday 10 April	2.00 pm	Ladies Guild Hersham Room

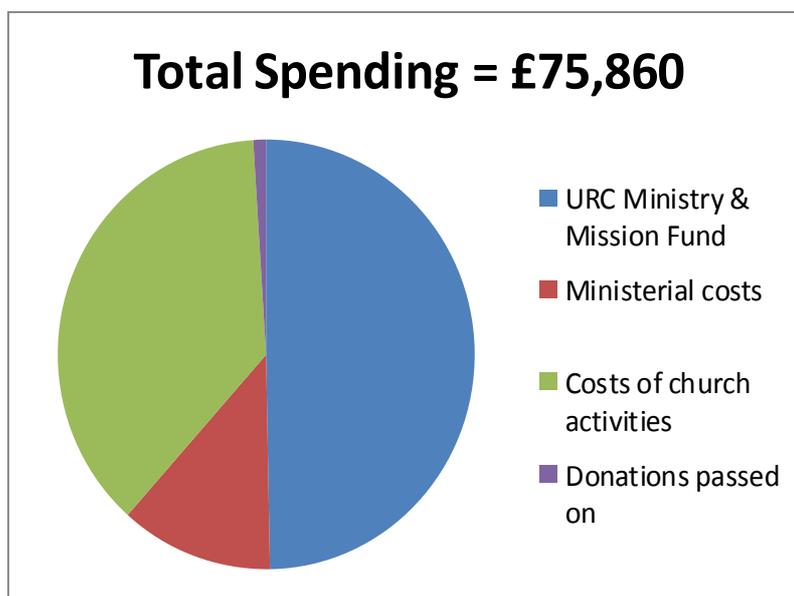
<p><i>COPY DATE FOR MAY ISSUE: <u>WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL</u> ALL ITEMS TO THE EDITOR, NORMA REID, 3 GWALIOR ROAD, LONDON SW15 1NP Email: aristocats.2000@talktalk.net</i></p>

Sunday 15 April <i>(Easter 2)</i>	10.30 am	Sunday Worship
Monday 16 April	2.00 pm	Bridge Club Hersham Room
Wednesday 18 April	2.00 pm	Prayer Group 4 Grange Court, Ashley Road Walton-on-Thames
Sunday 22 April <i>(Easter 3)</i>	10.30 am	Sunday Worship
Tuesday 24 April	2.00 pm	Ladies Guild Hersham Room
Sunday 29 April <i>(Easter 4)</i>	10.30 am	All-Age Service led by Thelma Roberts

Traidcraft stall after the Service on 29 April

Church Money – I: Ministry and Mission Fund

At the AGM last month, we agreed the church's formal Financial Statements for 2011 – more commonly referred to as the Accounts. These are laid out in a format which pleases accountants and the Charity Commission, but not everyone finds it straightforward to understand... So over the next few months, we'll give the spending and income figures in headline terms.



As you can see from the chart, roughly half of our expenditure is what we pay into the central Ministry and Mission (MAM) Fund of the URC. This pays for

- ministers' stipends;
- training and education for ministry;
- General Assembly and its staff (Moderators etc);
- national mission programmes; and
- central administration (payroll; HR; legal etc).

Our contribution to the MAM Fund is agreed with the Wessex Synod each year and incorporated into the church's budget, which is approved by our Elders' Meeting and adopted by Church Meeting.

Romilly Micklem, on behalf of the Finance Committee

CHURCH LUNCH



WEDNESDAY 11 APRIL
12.15 - 2.00pm

With an Easter theme, this lunch will include a programme of seasonal readings, hymns and music by the Choir

BRIDGE CLUB



Monday 2 and
Monday 16 April
2.00 pm
Hersham Room

LADIES GUILD



Tuesday 10 and
Tuesday 24 April
2.00 pm
Hersham Room

Please do come along with your knitting and catch up with the chat!

PLEASE NOTE...

The last Lent groups are on Monday 2 and Wednesday 4 April

PRAYER GROUP

Wednesday 18 April
2.00 pm
At Chrissie Brooman's home
4 Grange Court, Ashley Road
Walton-on-Thames



EASTER SERVICES

(All at St Andrew's except for that of Maundy Thursday)



Palm Sunday
1 April 10.30 am

Maundy Thursday



Thursday 5 April
7.30 pm
Weybridge URC

The service will be led by the
Reverend Roy Bones
All welcome

Good Friday
6 April

10.30 am



Coffee and Hot Cross Buns
served in the Church Hall

11.00 am

Good Friday Service
Music will include excerpts from
The Passion of Christ by
Arthur Somervell



Easter Day

Sunday 8 April
10.30 am
Communion Service

NEWS FROM THE ELDERS



Anne Fitzgerald

Magnolia time at St Andrew's

Since I last reported we have had two business meetings, December and January. We did not get away with a holiday in December - we were asked to read a booklet by Alison Gilchrist entitled: "Creating A Culture Of Welcome, in the local church". This thought- provoking booklet stimulated much discussion at the end of our January extra meeting. Best summarised in the following two scenarios.

Scenario 1

I had done my research and the time of the service was 10.30. I stood outside the church for a number of minutes, the doors were open and the lights gave a welcome glow. Deep breath and I walked in, I was greeted by with a "hello", given a book with a piece of paper sticking out, a door was opened and I was ushered in, the door closed. I stood looking down the length of the church, but where were the people, there was only ten minutes to go till the service started, the website had given a different impression. I looked at all the empty places and wondered where to sit, if I had the courage I would turn and flee.

I found a place about mid way down and settled into my space. About five minutes later, having listened to the lovely organ, there was a stir behind me, suddenly the church was filling with people, no time to greet each other let alone notice a stranger. The service proceeded; I muddled along not really knowing what I was doing. After the service I filed out with every one else, they were all busy chatting to each other, handed in my book, shook hands with the preacher. Now what?

It had been announced there was coffee in the hall, I could do with one! I followed a group of people to what I assumed was the hall. Quite a large space with tables at the far end where I noticed a servery. I joined the queue, had a cup of coffee, stood with my back to a wall, and left as soon as I could. I had felt almost invisible, a few had smiled and said hello, but I felt an outsider.

Scenario 2

I had done my research and the time of the service was 10.30, I stood outside the church for a number of minutes, the doors were open and the lights gave a welcome glow. There were people walking in. Deep breath and I joined them, I was greeted by a cheery "Hello, welcome to St Andrew's, may I give you a hymn book and service sheet?" I accepted these gratefully saying, "Thank you, this is my first visit", the cheery smile responded with "Allow me to show you in, would you like to sit near some one?"

They opened the door and I was shown to a seat and introduced to the member of the congregation. As I sat waiting a number of people smiled and acknowledged me, there was a warm buzz as people greeted each other. The service proceeded, my new friend helped me with the routine, and after the service came with me introduced me to the preacher, and then asked if I would like to go to coffee? As I could do with one I said "yes". My friend, unable to stay, introduced me to someone who escorted me to the hall, chatted and introduced me to others as I enjoyed a mug of coffee. I could not stay too long but I had been made welcome and felt here was a community that I could relate to.

How do you think we rate at St Andrew's between these two scenarios? The Elders felt that much could be learnt from both, positive and negative. We also need to be aware that welcome does not just mean new-comers, but also those who we see regularly week by week. Do we make them welcome? Do we always feel welcome?

Since this was written another meeting on welcome has been held. In this the Elders looked at other ways to be welcoming, from "kerbside appeal to atmosphere to giving of lifts etc". Also the need for assessment of the service we offer not to just the congregation as we are, but also to the wider community, in involvement with, and what we provide. Our vision for the future is not just inward-looking.

Anna Crawford

JUNIOR CHURCH – MARCH 2012

In March Junior Church has had a very varied programme, matching the different themes of the main services.



We started the month thinking about the courage of Jesus, as he set his face towards Jerusalem, despite Peter's attempts to persuade him otherwise. We looked at how the cross is (amongst other things) a symbol of courage – with a particular example being the Victoria Cross, which is awarded “for valour”.

The children made their own crosses to remind them of this.



We also thought about prayer – and how much Jesus relied on prayer to give him strength and to guide his thoughts. A prayer ball provided a nice way of capturing the many moods and aspects of prayer.



The story of Nicodemus was a prompt for thinking about Jesus as the Light of the World. We made lanterns to reflect this. They look very effective with a small night-light candle inside.....

Finally, at the all age service, we tackled the subject of angels – traditional and modern.

Although most of the children preferred to decorate angel chains of the traditional variety, the session produced one set of “modern angels” who like the Street Angels, have no special costume, and arrive on the scene in normal street clothes. I have to confess, I liked these best....



Bridget



KIDSPEAK...

A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, 'I'm drawing God.' The teacher paused and said, 'But no one knows what God looks like.'

Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, 'They will in a minute!'

One day a little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, 'Why are some of your hairs white, Mum?' Her mother replied, 'Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white.'

The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, 'Mummy, how come all of grandma's hairs are white?'

The following items were taken from a recent Synod E Newsletter

BBC LISTENERS HEAR THAT UNITY IS “IN OUR DNA”

Forty years of “life with unity” within the United Reformed Church was offered as an encouragement to Christians of other traditions, during Sunday Worship live on BBC Radio Four. The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe, Moderator of the URC’s General Assembly, led the service, marking the 40th anniversary of the coming together of Congregationalists and Presbyterians in England and Wales to form the United Reformed Church. She told the congregation and radio listeners that unity had become part of the Church’s DNA. This year is also the 350th anniversary of the passing, in 1662, of the Act of Uniformity, and what became known as “The Great Ejectment”. Kirsty Thorpe said that when the Act had been passed “everyone who had got used to saying publicly what they thought about religious matters had to shut-up or get out.” Around 2000 independent-minded ministers left parish churches and sowed the seeds from which many of the oldest Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian churches were born. However, the URC and the Church of England had this year re-committed themselves to working alongside one another in a service of reconciliation at Westminster Abbey. She added: “What matters to people around us is not why Churches may have fallen out with one another centuries ago, but what interest contemporary Christians have in the communities where they are now placed.” The service was broadcast on Sunday 19 February from Wilmslow United Reformed Church, where Kirsty Thorpe is minister. The church choir, members of the congregation and some of the children of the church, also took part.



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST PAUL

Stephen Thornton is leading a pilgrimage next year throughout Greece, in the footsteps of St Paul, from April 12 to 20 2013 and invites all interested to join the group.

Last time, the highlights were a communion service beside Lydia's stream; Athens and Corinth, but we also visit Philippi, Thessalonika, Berea, Delphi and much more. It is a great experience!

For details and a brochure please contact Stephen on 01252 409494; at smthornton@ntlworld.com or 3, Hartsleaf Close, Fleet GU51 3RD

CHANGING THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

A PERSONAL VIEW



The Marriage of the Virgin, Raphael

The Government is considering changing the definition of the traditional and sanctified meaning of marriage. The general view is that marriage is a commitment between a man and a woman to form a family and to share continuing responsibility for the nurture of children – the offspring of that marriage. This commitment is clearly the building blocks of society. This is recognised not only by Christianity, but also by other world wide religions: Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. It has benefits not only for the nuclear unit but also for the care of older relatives and implications for the stability of the “Big Society” as a whole as well as for the future generations of this country.

One wonders whether full consideration has been given to the reasons for this proposed change in the Law in the historical context of this country and the legal implications of such a change as well as the effect it might have on future generations. Have the implications for the effect on children been fully considered?

It will be clear that I am strongly opposed to the Government’s proposal. I do not apologise for raising this controversial subject because it seems to me to be of considerable importance for the wellbeing of the future of this country. To do nothing may be regarded as apathy or indifference to this proposal. If you consider it to be a matter of some importance, either add your name to an on-line petition, or write to your MP without delay. If sufficient voters show that they do not agree with the proposal, the Government might at least be forced to reconsider.

Margaret Ward



The good folk of St Andrew's and friends must be psychic as every time I fret how to respond to pleas for help when funds are low, support appears as was the situation only last week when several kind folk, touched by God to help mend his broken world, either sent a cheque or pressed notes into my hand on Sunday. Artpeace, although in dire straits, continue to send details and photos of poor Zimbabweans worse off than themselves. The first plea for help in his own words



comes from young Ignatius Chinyama. Quote: 'Hie John. Chrispen Osweke is a 29 yr old man and his father is 76 yrs and originate from Tanzania. They live in Magunje Village in the Chinhoyi Rural Area. Chrispen has been disabled all his life and cannot do anything for himself. He depends entirely on his father and cannot even go to the toilet; his father has to carry him, as Chrispen can only crawl along the ground. The mother died 19 years ago to leave the father to take care all by himself. They seek money for food, clothes and medicals as the father cannot even attend the fields as he has to constantly keep an eye on Chrispen.

He has had some treatment as a open wound on his foot caused a serious infection through flies and other insects which laid eggs in the wound. Please John try your best. Many thanks, Ignatius'. Although the sound is poor, you can see sculptor Ignatius via: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkrujJihNAY> & <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G89sM4jD5g0>

The second report comes from artist, Lovemore James. Quote: 'My wife Anolisi who was elected to do part time work with an organization called BEAM in our community



came across this old widow when she was taking down names of orphans who are not going to school. Together we decided to visit 67 yrs old Kerinas. She had two children Crispen and Mary who both married. When her husband succumbed to cancer in 2005, her son Crispen's house was demolished by government agents (Murambatsvina). Crispen as the only son took care of his mother so moved into the main house and shared some rooms with his mother and his family. All

hell broke loose when his sister Mary was divorced and returned with her 4 children namely Tafadzwa now 17yrs with red top on photo, Shupikai (15) with red skirt, brothers Tapuwa & Brian - off site. Crispen had 3 young girls of his own. Sadly, Mary died in

2008 from Aids soon after testing positive. Mary's husband refused to take the children so Kerinas had no option but to look after her grandchildren. It proved difficult for the mother in law (Kerinas) and daughter in law (Crispen's wife) to stay under one roof. It did not go well with Crispen's wife to take care of her own children and Mary's children so she left for South Africa and never returned. Kerinas now popularly known as "Ambuya chirera nherera" literally meaning the one who looks after orphans. She sometimes visits churches asking for any help. Crispen's death was the killer blow. The Catholic and Dutch reformed churches helped Kerinas to pay Crispen's burial costs when the body was in mortuary for a week. Kerinas now also cares for her 88 year old mother (photo above) taken in the family home). The big lady tries to smile after I told her the photos will be seen by people in Britain and maybe she could be helped. The children and older girls are no longer going to school. Water and electricity were disconnected due to none payment of bills. She is asking for any form of help.'



Lovemore is also concerned about Junior Runyanga, a young struggling single mother/talented artist friend. Quote: 'Junior is not feeling well although she is now free from TB. She is not eating properly so decided to visit her rural home to try and find what might be wrong. It is believed in our African Culture that someone might be bewitched hence they will ask from the spirits if someone from the family is casting some evil spirits. It is said no one from outside the family can send evil spirits away except the relatives with whom you share the same totem, so we are waiting to hear from her if God overcomes the situation.' Old superstitions die hard although most artists are Christians. Many carvings feature spirit elements; indeed, I have an impressive piece titled Spirit Medium perched on my desk by my PC staring down at me! It was carved by the late Nicholas Mukomberanwa a master sculptor who taught a few Artpeace artists. His work was an extension of his soul and Shona culture. The latest donations enhanced by a generous cheque from a special lady at Toller URC, Kettering plus some sculpture sales made whilst Susan and I attended the URC Windermere Centre a few weeks ago will give quick support to all these deserving cases plus our artist friends and their families: Some might argue this is simply papering over the cracks but at least our continued support through the grace of God will allow many poor Zimbabweans to live and fight another day giving them hope, help and compassion from fellow Christians to bear their personal crosses.



Israel and occupied Palestinian territories (CfL partner).

Do you like couscous? Apparently it is the up and coming food in Belgium and Italy which is great news for a co-operative run by Palestinian Relief and Agricultural Committee (PARC) in Jericho. With a population of two thousand, Jericho, which means 'smells good', relies on agriculture as its first source of income. Tourism is



second with archaeological digs and attractions such as a cable car and camel rides for the visitor. The area was given back to the Palestinians after the Oslo agreement so is in Zone A. This means it is ostensibly under the Palestinian Authority. However Jericho is less prosperous today than it has been in the past. Jerusalemites often built second homes here but with the uncertain political situation many are now empty. Unemployment is rising and so getting a job is very important to the local people. Helen, the

Head of the co-operative, run by PARC, explained how much the industry has grown. Originally there were six women working in the factory and today there are thirty two, producing one ton of couscous daily. The couscous is made, packed and labelled by hand which means they have the maximum number of workers. The women are happy as they make around sixty shekels a day which is a good wage. There are three other co-operatives in the area and demand is growing especially in Italy and Belgium. However export restrictions can often mean that goods are kept for long periods at borders. Helen spoke of the way PARC has helped them create jobs and independence and they are very grateful for this.

Couscous is from the wheat plant; it tastes a bit like nutty pasta and is the size of a large grain of sand. In spotless but humid conditions the women sit on the floor and take wheat flour from Jenin, another town in the West Bank. They add boiled water shaking it in a circular movement with large sifters. This is then steamed and re-sifted. The couscous is transferred to greenhouses to dry naturally with warmth from the sun. When dry it is brought back into the factory to be sterilised in large drums. Finally it is spread out to dry again for about a day before being packed and labelled.

Success means that PARC will pass the co-operative to the women who hope to expand the business. PARC also exports almonds and sun dried tomatoes through Fairtrade sources. That is what development is all about, empowering people to take their future and shape the way ahead.

Christian Aid support PARC with core funding. This helps them with everything from organising 600 farmers and workers co-operatives to making the Fairtrade links and setting up income generating schemes. They are the biggest Palestinian NGO and employ around 140 people, but reach out to over 160,000 in the West Bank and Gaza.

The couscous is sold in this country through Zaytoun www.zaytoun.org.uk

EASTER MISCELLANY



Painted eggs from Romania and Russia

Historically, the resurrection of Christ occurred at the time of the Jewish feast of Passover (“Pesach” in Hebrew). In the early years of Christianity, Jewish Christians observed the Resurrection and Passover together on the 14th day of Nisan, the Jewish month roughly corresponding with April.

However, Gentile Christians celebrated the Resurrection every Sunday with a special emphasis on the Sunday closest to Nisan 14 (preparation day for the Passover). To settle this difference, at the Nicene Council in 325 AD, churchmen fixed the date of Easter on the first Sunday following the Paschal full moon. This is the first full moon after the northern hemisphere’s vernal equinox, March 21. This system is still followed today. Therefore, Easter Sunday moves between March 22 and April 25.

The term “Easter” was first used when Christianity was introduced to the Saxons. Prior to this time, the Saxons had held an annual feast in honour of the pagan Teutonic goddess of spring, Ēostre. The name was transferred to the Christian observance of Christ’s Resurrection.

People of many lands and languages have given names to the celebration of spring. Through the years, many different customs and traditions have developed. As people have emigrated, their customs have blended with native observances, and to this day, the arrival of spring is acknowledged in a multitude of ways. But, wherever and however Easter is kept, it is universally a joyous, happy time. Easter is the holiday of spring, hope and new life. From prehistoric times, people everywhere have rejoiced to welcome spring. The awakening of the earth after its long winter sleep has been observed with feasting, singing, dancing and worship. Many countries, especially in Eastern Europe, have a tradition of painting Easter eggs (as in the photograph above). The egg has been held to represent the Resurrection, and the promise of re-birth through Jesus Christ. When dyed red, it also symbolises Christ’s death on the cross.

In America and most European countries, Easter is traditionally a Christian holiday. On this day, Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as it is told in the Bible. This holy day celebrates the triumph of life over death.

Sourced mainly from the internet



FLOWER POWER

Katherine Leitch would like to thank St. Andrew's for the beautiful flowers from the Communion Table which were recently delivered to her at Whiteley House by Chrissie Brooman and Irene Pearson. Thanks also to both ladies who had time to stay for a chat which was much appreciated.

Margaret Ward says:

"It is always a delight to receive flowers from St Andrew's. In March, one Monday, I received a lovely bouquet of yellow and white roses. I wish to thank Marigold Crampton and Irene Pearson for delivering them."

A message from Joyce Wallbrook:

"Thank you for the flowers brought to me last week – they were lovely and much appreciated. Thank you, also, to Irene Pearson and Marigold Crampton who kindly delivered them. I did enjoy their visit and it was so nice of them to stay for a chat."

Christine Carlile sends thanks to Irene and Marigold for the lovely church flowers they brought on behalf of the church. They certainly brightened up the day.

Connie Radford says:

"I'm sending thanks for the very lovely flowers Irene and Marigold brought plus the enjoyable time they spent with me."

Ghislaine Stevenson writes:

"It was a lovely surprise to have a dull Monday morning brightened by the arrival of Irene and Marigold. The beautiful bunch of yellow and white roses which they brought me from St Andrews continued to bring sunshine into my living room for a considerable time afterwards. Many thanks."

Daphne Weston thanks Marigold and Irene most warmly for the beautiful yellow roses that they brought from the church, which gave her much joy on the grey winter days.

Elizabeth Edmiston says:

"Thank you for the beautiful flowers which were brought to me by Anne Fitzgerald one Sunday afternoon. The flowers brought me enormous pleasure as did my lovely chat with Anne."

Shona Luther thanks St Andrew's for the lovely flowers she received recently, delivered by Anne Fitzgerald. She really appreciated the thought.

And last but not least, a message from our Minister:

"It really lifted my spirits when Bridget brought home flowers for me from church when I was unwell. Thank you for all your good wishes, prayers and support while I was off – and for coping without me!"



Thanks to Shelagh Needham for our cover picture of swallows nesting in the eaves of her house in Canada