



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

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 'LOCKDOWN EXTRA' 2020

Volume 77



*I will love the light for it shows me the way,
yet I will endure the darkness for it shows me the stars.*

Og Mandino



From The Manse
April Corona Extra 2020

Dear friends

I'd like to begin with a big thank you to some absolute heroes. These are strange times and frightening times and we are all having to function and operate in ways that are unfamiliar to us. Although the buildings are shut and public worship temporarily suspended there is still work needing to be done to keep things going. Let me give you a few examples.

Thanks firstly therefore to Anna as Church Secretary, and to the Elders for their help and support in making the most heart-breaking decision and for making sure that everyone knew that there would be no services in the building from Mothering Sunday onwards and that the premises were closed for the time being. Thanks to them for making sure that everyone knew of the options for alternative ways of worshipping and for keeping in touch with their groups as well. Then, thanks to Holms who kindly offered to keep his eye on hall bookings for the first few weeks of Jan's absence and suddenly found himself in the most extraordinary situation, dealing with all sorts of questions, cancellations and then the closure. Talk about everything collapsing around him. Poor old Holms, who rose to the challenge with his customary charm and kindness.

Then, thanks to Johnston who is making sure the grounds are OK. It's typical that this should happen just as everything is starting to grow again. If we're not careful nature could soon make the place look derelict so thanks for this work and thanks too to those who are checking the premises to ensure that there are no problems with security or maintenance. It's not an easy task because you never quite know that you might find and what you might suddenly have to deal with. Clearly security is a concern whilst the premises are not being used. However, Alan and Brodie are checking the premises, dealing with any post and testing the fire alarm and our insurance company has relaxed some of its conditions in the light of present restrictions.

Thanks to Norma who thought that it would be helpful if the newsletter returned to being monthly at this time in order to help keep us all in touch and as another way in which to keep the St Andrew's family together. Thanks, too, to you all for your positivity and for doing what you can to stay in touch with each other, by whatever means are currently possible. These may be strange and frightening times but I am aware that we are all pulling together - and together we'll get through this, of that I have no doubt. I'm already starting to have a few ideas about how we might be able to celebrate the reopening of the premises and the resumption of worship.

By now, you all know that I'm sending out a weekly "Thought for the Day" by email and by post to those without email. Let me know if they are not getting through or if you're having any difficulty.

So, keep your peckers up! As the old songs say, "We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when" but it will be "when the lights go on again all over the world."

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Lead", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers

Unaccustomed as I am to writing an Editorial, I thought it would be worth doing one this time for what can perhaps be considered a 'Lockdown Extra' issue of the Newsletter, since our last, double issue covered March and April. It is more important than ever, when we are facing so many new and unwelcome challenges, to keep connected to our families and friends and our Church family is way up the list. Thank you to all those who have rallied round to my request for contributions and ideas. The aim is to bring cheer. After a short spell of gloom, I realised that this time of enforced incarceration (particularly applicable for those of us in the senior category) could be turned into a time of achievement, but only if I were to manage my time wisely. To that end, I wrote out a To Do list that ranged from the ridiculously achievable such as 'Post birthday card to Geraldine' to the middle range like 'sort out under-the-sink cupboard' and at the high end of the scale 'Organise/delete as necessary all 15,000 plus photos on the computer by mid-April (it's important to have a deadline for this sort of task which has been outstanding for the past year or more!). In the past two weeks, however, other things have popped up, like my ballet class via Zoom (brilliant) and, a new venture, piano lessons via FaceTime, along with the permitted daily walk, keeping up with our street's WhatsApp group, sending and receiving many more emails, messages and making more telephone calls than ever before. I have resurrected my bike and gone for my first bike ride in over a year. Sometimes I have gone into panic mode, worrying whether I am using this time sufficiently well, as it is such an opportunity to catch up with everything long neglected when the diary is empty of social arrangements.

Good things do come out of bad, of course, and we can see that happening all around us. A lovely 90-year old relative in Argentina has just mastered the wonders of a free WhatsApp video call and it's such a joy to have her calling me and being able to return the favour. Lockdown there is even more stringent than here as they are not even allowed to go out for a walk. Our street of 24 Victorian terraced houses in Putney organised a little party for Shirley at No 6, who has lived in the street for some 50 years and was 85 on 30 March. We all stood in our respective porches at 6 pm and sang Happy Birthday, followed by a short singalong including 'Wonderful World', 'Sweet Caroline' and 'Yesterday' with some of the words suitably adapted for the occasion. "Yesterday COVID-19 seemed so far away, but we'll fight it every day, Oh I believe in yesterday." One of our more musical neighbours acted as compère and his wife, who has a beautiful voice, played the keyboard. Everyone loved it and the birthday girl was quite overcome. Another day, pink chalked hearts suddenly appeared on the pavement outside each house, lovingly drawn by the little girls two doors down. In the wider caring sense, a local wine store has a notice in its window offering "10% discount to NHS and front-line workers"! On 22 March, we were asked to put a lit candle in our window as a "visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ" and for the past two Thursdays, at 8 pm, we have, from our doorsteps and windows, clapped the NHS and all those involved in looking after us at this time. I am sure many of you will have examples of other acts of kindness experienced and, if so, do feed them in to me for the next issue! That, and any tips on how to keep busy and motivated so as to keep the blues away would be most welcome. Those of us with gardens are doubly blessed with more time to enjoy them and nothing can stop the advent of Spring.



Stay safe and - above all - well!

Norma

It's strange not having any Diary Dates to include for the foreseeable future
but I still need your contributions for the next issue.

So please, please send your news in for the deadline of Wednesday 22 April.

Email: aristocats.2000@gmail.com, or write to Norma Reid, 3 Gwalior Road, London SW15 1NP,
or telephone: 020 8785 4392.

Some food for thought...

In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider
which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.

Our minister, Michael, is circulating worship material to the congregation by personal email. This is an extract of a letter sent to members of the congregation recently, following the enforced closure of the church.

- 1) A Sunday Service will be available from the URC, using its daily Devotions website: devotions.urb.org.uk (we are warned that the first one may lack polish as they learn how to do it!).
- 2) A live streaming (broadcasting live) of the service from Woking URC will be available at 10.30am on a Sunday on their Facebook page.
- 3) A live streaming of the service from Wesley's Chapel, London is also available. Again, go to their website and follow the links.
- 4) Other churches offer this and undoubtedly more will be available. Email me (michael.mah@btinternet.com) or give me a ring 01932 841382 for more information.
- 5) BBC Radio 4 Broadcasts a Morning Service at 8.10am

I shall be looking at ways of making some of my own worship material available to you as well.

Sundays at 10.30am is when both our churches normally meet so, even if you're about to watch a service via the web, we could still pause at that time and say a short prayer for each other so that though we may be separated by distance, we are united in prayer and thought. As an old hymn put is, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

A big concern I have is that these restrictions will leave people feeling lonely and isolated, but this is something we can do something about and all help tackle. Please phone round the friends you'd normally see, both in church and elsewhere. Please stay in touch with each other and with me. There's no need for us to lose touch. So, at this very testing time - let's pray - let's draw strength from our faith and from our relationship with God. Let's find ways to keep our Church Membership promise to be "faithful in worship" and don't ever forget that "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." The church is not shut - we're just going to be doing in a different way for a bit.

Michael

THE CHURCH'S FINANCIAL POSITION

As you will recall from the financial report presented at our AGM held March 1, we are in a fairly sound financial position. However, with the closing of our premises due to the Corona Virus outbreak, the income from the letting activities of the Hall, the Bill Topping Room, the Garden Room and the Hersham Room have come to a complete stop. Whilst we all hope and pray that the current situation won't last too long, the financial impact on the church will be substantial. We would ask therefore that if you are in a position to do so, that you consider continuing with your Offertory as you would normally do .

HOW TO MAKE AND OFFERTORY UNDER THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES

- By making out a cheque to St Andrew's URC and posting to:
Alan Crawford (for banking)
23 Shaldon Way
Walton on Thames KT12 3 DJ
- To pay by electronic bank transfer to:
St Andrew's URC Business Account
Sort Code : 60-22-25
Acc. No : 68614195
Nat West , 73 High St . Walton on Thames , KT12 1DW
- Or put your gift in the appropriate envelope each week and hand these in when the Church re-opens
- You could also set up a Standing Order with your bank to pay into the Church's bank account (details as in (b) above).

Any of the above can be done on a weekly/monthly or quarterly basis.

Thank you for your attention to this important part of our Church's life.

STAY WELL, STAY HEALTHY!

Jan de Kok

LET'S KEEP SAFE!

Here is some interesting and, hopefully helpful, information about Covid 19. What works, what doesn't and why. It's simply set out and includes the best excuse ever for not doing any housework!! Michael

The virus is not a living organism, but a protein molecule (**DNA**) covered by a protective layer of lipid (fat), which, when absorbed by the cells of the ocular, nasal or buccal mucosa, changes their genetic code (mutation) and converts them into aggressor and multiplier cells. Since the virus is not a living organism but a protein molecule, it is not killed, but decays on its own. The disintegration time depends on the temperature, humidity and type of material where it lies.

The virus is very fragile; the only thing that protects it is a thin outer layer of fat. That is why any soap or detergent is the best remedy, because the foam **CUTS** the **FAT** (that is why you have to rub so much - for 20 seconds or more, to make a lot of foam). By dissolving the fat layer, the protein molecule disperses and breaks down on its own.

HEAT melts fat; this is why it is so good to use water above 25 degrees Celsius for washing hands, clothes and everything. In addition, hot water makes more foam and that makes it even more useful.

Alcohol or any mixture with alcohol over 65% **DISSOLVES ANY FAT**, especially the external lipid layer of the virus.

Any mix with 1 part bleach and 5 parts water directly dissolves the protein, breaks it down from the inside.

Oxygenated water helps long after soap, alcohol and chlorine, because peroxide dissolves the virus protein, but you have to use it pure and it hurts your skin. **NO BACTERICIDE SERVES.**

The virus is not a living organism like bacteria; they cannot kill what is not alive with antibiotics, but can quickly disintegrate its structure with everything said.

NEVER shake used or unused clothing, sheets or cloth. While it is glued to a porous surface, it is very inert and disintegrates only between 3 hours (fabric and porous), 4 hours (copper, because it is naturally antiseptic); and wood, (because it removes all the moisture and does not let it peel off and disintegrates), 24 hours (cardboard), 42 hours (metal) and 72 hours (plastic). But if you shake it or use a feather duster, the virus molecules float in the air for up to 3 hours, and can lodge in your nose.

The virus molecules remain very stable in external cold, or artificial situations such as air conditioners in houses and cars. They also need moisture to stay stable, and especially darkness. Therefore, dehumidified, dry, warm and bright environments will degrade it faster. **UV LIGHT** on any object that may contain it breaks down the virus protein. For example, to disinfect and re-use a mask is perfect. Be careful, it also breaks down collagen (which is protein) in the skin, eventually causing wrinkles and skin cancer.

The virus **CANNOT** go through healthy skin.

Vinegar is **NOT** useful because it does not break down the protective layer of fat. **NEITHER SPIRITS NOR VODKA** serve either, because the strongest vodka is 40% alcohol, and you need 65%.

LISTERINE IF IT SERVES! It is 65% alcohol!

The more confined the space, the more concentration of the virus there can be. The more open or naturally ventilated, the less.

This is super said, but you have to wash your hands before and after touching mucosa, food, locks, knobs, switches, remote control, cell phone, watches, computers, desks, TV, etc. And when using the bathroom. You have to **HUMIDIFY HANDS DRY** from so much washing them, because the molecules can hide in the micro cracks. The thicker the moisturiser, the better.

Also, keep your **NAILS SHORT** so that the virus does not hide there



IT WAS MARCH 2020 ...

The streets were empty, the shops closed, people couldn't get out.

But spring did not know, and the flowers began to bloom. The sun shone, the birds sang, the swallows would soon arrive, the sky was blue and the morning arrived early.

It was March 2020 ...

Young people had to study on line, and find occupations at home. People could no longer go shopping, or go to the hairdresser. Soon there would be no more room in hospitals and people continued to get sick.

But spring did not know. The time to go to the garden arrived, the grass became greener.

It was March 2020 ...

People have been put in lockdown, to protect grandparents, families and children. No more meetings or meals, family celebrations. The fear became real and the days were therefore similar.

But spring did not know. Apples, cherry trees and others bloomed and the leaves sprouted.

People started reading, playing with their families, learning a language, singing on the balcony, inviting neighbours to do the same, being supportive and focussing on other values. People realised the importance of health, of suffering, of this world that had stopped, of the economy that has plummeted.

But spring did not know. The flowers gave way to the fruit, the birds made their nests, the swallows arrived.

Then the day of liberation came. People found out on television that the virus had lost. People took to the streets, sang, cried and kissed their neighbours without wearing masks or gloves.

And that's when summer came, because spring didn't know. Spring continued to be there despite everything, despite the virus, despite fear and death. Because spring didn't know, she taught people the power of life.

A few laugh lines...

I understand that the new Dyson ventilators are now in use. The first patient is said to be picking up nicely.

Bought the wife some flours this morning to cheer her up. She wasn't overly impressed.

Star Wars instead of Corrie?? The world's going mad.

Psychic Fair cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.



EASTER IS STILL COMING

It is unimaginable that we will not be celebrating Easter in church this year, but the Minister is sending out a short "Thought for the Day" and a Prayer for Palm Sunday and Holy Week and for Easter Day. In the Easter Day notes we shall also be able to see our church decorated for Easter, using photos from previous years. Thanks to modern technology we are able to follow services on radio, television and other media and so we shall be with one another in spirit during Holy Week and Easter. Here is an extract from the letter the minister circulated by email for Passion Sunday, which seems worth being reminded of.

"Things are just so strange and so abnormal at the moment. I don't know about you but I'm actually finding it quite hard to settle and apply my brain to things. I suppose that's because routine is so disrupted and nothing feels right. The knowledge that God's love is with us always, no matter what, is so comforting- God's faithfulness and constancy. Another well-known hymn talks about storms raging about us and reminds us that "God is round about (us) and can (we) be afraid?" In the 16th century St Teresa of Avila also sought to reassure, saying "Nothing distress you. Everything passes but God will abide." The love of God, shown to us through suffering, never deserts us, even when things are at their most worrying, concerning and disturbing."

I close with a short prayer which was actually written over 400 years ago, hence the old-style language, and I thought it rather appropriate for the current situation.

"We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. "

On a lighter note, it is still possible to find chocolate Easter eggs - perhaps doubly appreciated this year!

*"O the Easter bells are gladly ringing, let the whole world join the happy lay,
Let the hills and vales break forth in singing, Christ the Lord of Life is risen today." Lizzie Akers*

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 6 MARCH 2020 ZIMBABWE



This year's service was prepared by the women of Zimbabwe and, in Walton, it took place at Walton Methodist Church in Terrace Road. There is a committee of five from the various churches in Walton and I have been privileged to represent St Andrew's on it for several years. We take it in turns to host and lead the service and this year it was led by Chris Mills from the Methodist Church, to whom thanks. Attendance numbered about 50 and we were delighted and honoured that the Mayor of Elmbridge, Cllr Mary Sheldon and her husband, John, joined us.

Since St Andrew's has a particular interest in Zimbabwe through ArtPeace, I was happy that Johnston Simpson agreed to take part, as well as five other members of St Andrew's who each read a short Bible passage. Sadly, the video Johnston had had prepared featuring Christine Ndoro (right), one of the talented artists from ArtPeace speaking movingly and eloquently about the tragic state of Zimbabwe at this time, refused to play, but it was later circulated as a email attachment. Johnston had set up a small display of sculptures at the entrance to the church, the sale of which raised, together with some donations, the sum of £350 that was delivered to the artists a few days later. They were highly delighted and most appreciative. This was something positive that emerged from the service and the money will go to assist with rents, medical/school fees and even the purchase of two egg-laying hens to replace a clutch recently stolen from one of the artists. Next year, St Andrew's will be hosting the service which is being prepared by the women of Vanuatu. *Anne Fitzgerald*



ORGAN RECITAL AT WEYBRIDGE URC ON 11 MARCH



An enthusiastic, small band of music-lovers was transported at the first of the 2020 series of lunchtime organ recitals given by Katherine Dienes-Williams on 11 March. As it turned out, sadly, this would be the first and last of these popular concerts for the foreseeable future. Our minister Michael, has contributed this appreciation.

Our 2020 series of lunchtime organ recitals began in very fine style. Katherine Dienes-Williams from Guildford Cathedral was on the organ bench and fair made the the organ sing - as she did herself on a number of occasions when her programme required a vocal line as well as an organ part.

Pieces of contrasting styles and ages made for a varied programme which were, as one might expect, superbly played. Beginning with some John Stanley (18th century) and concluding with Widor (19/20th century) the programme included a Mendelssohn organ sonata (No 3), some Bairstow and a set of variations on the New Zealand National Anthem (Katherine is a New Zealander). Particularly striking, I felt, was Katherine's choice of registration (the organ stops she used) which, coupled with her very precise playing, was an absolute joy. On occasions, I was very glad of the camera projection which allowed me to see the registration. Always happy to nick a good idea that works!

Listening to Katherine's playing, I was reminded again of how fortunate we are to have such a fine instrument at our Weybridge church. A first-class organ being played by a first-class organist was a real lunchtime treat which I am certain was relished by everyone present.

Michael Hodgson

NEWS OF FRIENDS

Janet and Jim Sommerville are on their way home from a cruise and family visit to New Zealand. Janet has recently been in touch.

"We are on a mystery cruise. Instead of China we have south coast of Australia and now anchored off Durban for fuel etc. Cape Town is also off. Last port was Fremantle. Everything is normal on board, having a great time. Better here than home. Very choppy today but we are fine. Thinking of everybody at Church. We have 15 days' sailing ahead [at 27 March] - back on Easter Sunday. Regards to all at St Andrew's."

We were happy to learn that Moira and Jan de Kok managed to return safely from South Africa, albeit disappointing for them that they have had to curtail their holiday and family visit.

Sophia Swanson writes from Texas

"No church, no school, limited stock at stores although our restaurants have been open for carry out or drive thru orders. I was very sad to hear of May's passing, she was a lovely friend. I am trying to make home-made masks for family and friends. Watched some YouTube videos and it gives me something to do that helps with going out in public. I have plenty of fabric scraps."

FLOWER POWER

Our flower fairies are on furlough but hope to resume their much appreciated delivery service just as soon as our church is open again!



A message from **Anne Lewis**, one of the last to receive church flowers before we had, sadly, to close the building.

"The flowers I received last Sunday are still giving me pleasure, in this time of incredibly depressing news. So many thanks."



CELTIC CIRCLE PRAYER



Circle me Lord.
Keep protection near
And danger afar.

Circle me, Lord.
Keep hope within.
Keep doubt without.

Circle me, Lord.
Keep Light near
And darkness afar

Circle me, Lord.
Keep peace within.
Keep evil out.



NOW IT'S ZIMBABWE'S TURN

Zimbabwe's 'lock down' commenced on 31st March. Their once well managed hospitals are shambolic, but Zimbabweans have been in emotional, psychological and financial 'lock



down' for two decades and they know how to cope with fear, isolation and loneliness. Nevertheless, I shudder to think how our ArtPeace friends will cope should the virus spread like other countries. Only the other day, artist Fortune Masiyiwa made 3 journeys trying to get essential medicines from his local hospital but was refused as staff had no protective clothing. He is in a bad way and sent me a 'farewell' text before his phone died as he clearly did not expect to last much longer. We managed via artist Peter (alongside Fortune in photo) to buy some vital medicine though a pharmacy but the price had quadrupled. Fr David Harold Barry SJ is isolated at Silveira House but sent the following homily.

Johnston Simpson

YOU CAN HEAR THE BIRDS SING

I remember little of the philosophy we studied in Latin aeons ago but one of the phrases of St Thomas Aquinas that remains with me is, *Deus non vult malum sed permitit et hoc est bonum!* God does not want evil, but he allows it and this is good. This saying comes back to me in the present crisis. God does not want his people to suffer. He did not want

Jesus to suffer the cross. But he allows suffering, knowing the good that follows.

People are already listing the good things that are emerging from this crisis even though nobody wants it and we all look for a speedy release from 'lock down'. In the words of Richard Hendrick, a Franciscan friar,

... in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
(and) ... after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear ...

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality...

We 'are slowing down and reflecting'. Boris Johnson is said to be a great admirer of Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister during the Second World War. Churchill shocked his defeatist nation into believing they could 'win this thing' and now Johnson is using the same language about corona. He seems to relish the challenge and is using all the language and strategies – for instance, national mobilisation – of war time. Roger Riddell, chair of the 1980s Zimbabwe Riddell Commission, writes from the UK: 'our government has today announced measures to support almost 95% of UK citizens with effective income support. No socialist government has ever done so much – ever'.

Are we glimpsing a promised land of citizen care, cleaner air and global warming arrested? Governments would have fretted for decades to try to achieve what this deadly virus has done in a matter of weeks. And even in our little corner of the globe a woman has said, 'at last we are seeing our husbands at home!' The default stance of most Zimbabwean men seems to be to

spend their leisure hours in places where men gather, away from home and family. And on an institutional level, St Anne's Hospital, which has lain empty for years, a victim of our economics, is to reopen in a response to the crisis.

We are not, to quote the man already referred to, Churchill, at the 'beginning of the end of the crisis. But perhaps we are at the end of the beginning'. We still have the worst of the crisis ahead of us. And we may well slip back into our old ways once the danger is past. Donald Trump is aching to get back to the state we were in before. He is profoundly uncomfortable with this new horizon. To quote Churchill again, introducing the sixth volume of his *History of World War II*: 'How the great democracies triumphed, and so were able to resume the follies that had so nearly cost them their life?'

So, the question will be can we build on the signs we see before us? This Sunday we have the story of the raising of Lazarus after he was four days in the tomb. It is prefaced by the words of Ezekiel; 'I mean to raise you from your graves my people ...and I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live.'

29 March 2020
Ezek. 37:12-14

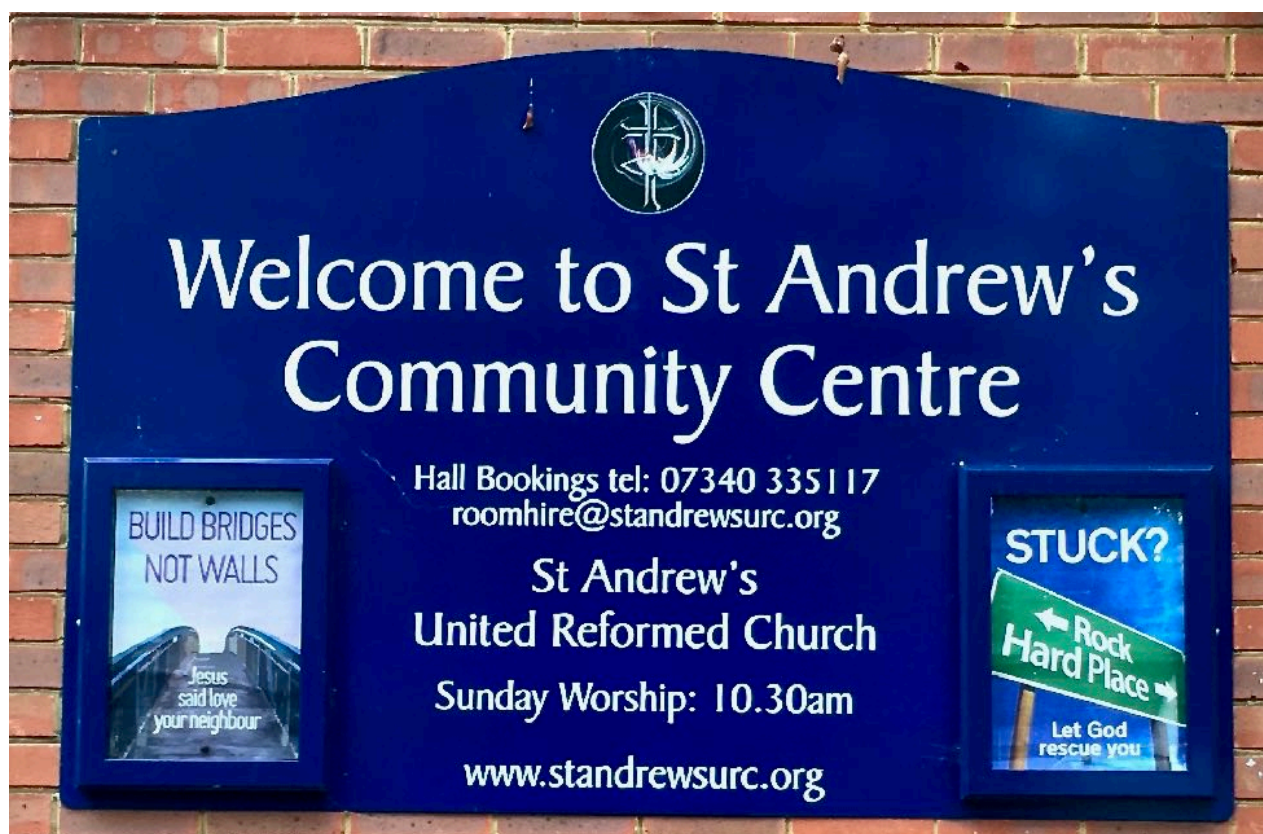
Lent Sunday 5 A
Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45

ST ANDREW'S GARDEN CORNER

Unfortunately, this year many of the congregation will miss our spring flower display which make a grim winter but a distant memory. These photos may brighten your day! **JS**





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**Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.
Be hospitable to one another without complaining.
Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.**

I Peter 4 vv 8-10