



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

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

Volume 78 No 4



“Then you have to remember to be thankful; but in May one simply can't help being thankful . . . that they are alive, if for nothing else. I feel exactly as Eve must have felt in the garden of Eden before the trouble began.”

L M Montgomery - Anne of Avonlea

From The Manse

May 2021



Dear friends

I've passed a little milestone and for which I'll be receiving a little award - a window sticker to commemorate something. It's an award I share with Barbara and it's in her window that the sticker will go. You see, I've been a member of the Caravan Club for 30 years now, which means that I've been caravanning for 31 years and at the risk of saying something a little odd, when I took up caravanning and when I joined the club I never realised what a rich a blessing from God it would prove to be.

I bought my first van, Pearl, in 1990 and Barbara is my fifth. She is also the first I've had since new. Things haven't half changed a lot over the years. No more gas lamps and today vans are well insulated and centrally heated. I put main electricity into Pearl myself and got a friend to check the wiring. No more getting out and manually releasing the brakes when you need to reverse the van either. I remember the joy of my second van (Eccles) which had an onboard water pump – cold water system only. Full hot water systems are standard these days, even supplying the needs of a bathroom. No more making up a bed each night either - Barbara has a fixed bed - next to the bathroom. Arcopal has long since replaced Melamine "crocery" and 13 amp mains electrics allow all the home comforts. I'm still using the spirit level and the compass I bought when I started though - and some of my original levelling blocks too. When I started I was also given a really useful piece of advice. Be really fussy when you arrive on site and spend a few minutes at the start getting the caravan properly level. If it's not right at the start then it isn't going to get any more right as your holiday goes on and you'll just end up with doors that swing open/shut, drains that don't drain and a general feeling of discomfort. That would be my top tip to anyone starting today. Five minutes at the start is really worth it. If you get it wrong it can be a pain to correct later on.

It was really necessity that brought me into caravanning in the first place. We'd had a couple of caravan holidays in statics when I was a child but nothing more than that. No, it was shortly after I was ordained that I realised that taking time off in a manse is impossible. The phone is always ringing, people call and with the study within the house the temptation to do a little job and get it done, even on a day off, is too great. If you live in a manse then the only way to take time off is physically to get away from it. Realising this, I changed the car, bought Pearl and, with great trepidation went away for the first time. I've never looked back.

I'm not a great lover of long tows and always like to find a nice site or two relatively close to where I'm living which I can then regard as being bolt-holes. To be honest, I'm still trying to find those here because another problem is that I don't like towing in heavy traffic very much, which, living within the M25 circle doesn't make like easy. I've never towed abroad and have no intention of ever doing so but as I've lived around England and Wales the caravans and I have been to quite a number of different places. Apart from the South East, I think that I know the UK quite well.

Even Jesus had to have his quiet times. He didn't have a caravan but we do read of him going off in a boat to get away from people. I suspect that my various vans have, on occasions, prevented me running amok with a saw-off chalice, allowing me instead to hear the still, small voice of calm. I can always switch off and relax in the van which is why I see it as being such a blessing.

A few weeks ago I spend a day or two giving the van a good clean, inside and out, getting it ready for the coming season. That's always a day I thoroughly enjoy - a day full of anticipation. In last year's lockdown I even "went away" in Barbara when she couldn't actually leave the drive. It really did help me and from letters in the Caravan Club magazine I discovered that I was far from alone in doing this.

So, 31 years after I began caravanning, and 30 years after I joined the Caravan Club (which changed its name a few years ago but will always be the Caravan club to me) I am thankful for a hobby that has brought me so much pleasure and refreshment. Caravanning has been a great blessing for me. I've met some lovely people; been to some super places and can truthfully say that it has helped me exercise my ministry over the years because it's a hobby that has cared for me and given me a home away from work.

Concluding this letter, however, I do also note that, in the fullness of time the gardens of all manses, vicarages, rectories and presbyteries will become camp sites for angels. Just look at R&S 685 verse 4, lines 1 & 2...

*"The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just..."*

With all good wishes,



CHURCH SECRETARY

For a little time now Anna has been indicating that she'd like to stand down as Church Secretary. According to the URC constitution, the Elders have to nominate someone from amongst their number to this office. Fulfilling that requirement has not been easy but I am delighted to be able to tell you that when we next hold a church meeting you will be asked to accept the Elders' nomination of Carol Lee. Anna has done an incredible job as Church Secretary, suddenly finding herself having to cope with a ministerial vacancy - never an easy task. She has been a tower of strength and knowledge to me as I took up my appointment here and has supported and cared for me and my family following the death of my father in 2018. We all have much to thank Anna for and we look back on a job very well done.

Looking forward, we know that Carol will bring different skills and new perspectives to the role and wish her well as, with your agreement, she prepares to take over as Church Secretary in the autumn. St Andrew's has been well served as Church Secretary by Anna and I am absolutely certain that it will be well served in the future by Carol.

Michael

ELDERS' OPENING DEVOTIONS – APRIL 2021

Connect 4 – a classic game where each opponent drops yellow or red discs in the grid and the first to get four in a row is the winner. and is also as a way of connecting and outreaching with our neighbours as mentioned by Ray Stanyon.

So who is our neighbour? At home it's the people who live in the surrounding houses so I did what Ray suggested. New neighbours Alex, Maryann and baby Lottie are on one side then there is Frances on the other side. Opposite we have Bill and next door to him there's Michael, Penny, Charlie & Mollie (the dog!). Of course it goes without saying that fellow Christians in this country and around the world are all our neighbours whatever creed, colour or religion they are. However the neighbour who is always there permanently is God.

The bible tells of many stories about neighbours and probably the most popular is that of the Good Samaritan. In this parable a Teacher of the Law asks Jesus "What must I do to receive eternal life"? Jesus then asks the Teacher of the Law to interpret the scriptures who says. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind"; and "Love your neighbour as you love yourself". The Teacher of the Law then asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbour"? Jesus then told the parable of the Good Samaritan and how he had taken pity on a man who had been attacked by robbers.

Jesus concluded by asking who acted like a neighbour towards the man who had been attacked? "The one who was kind to him" responded the Teacher of the Law. Jesus replied "You go, then and do the same."

We should all be like the Good Samaritan and do our good deed for the day, no matter how small a task it is. Every little helps!

A PRAYER FOR EASTERTIDE

Let us pray

*Lord of Life, we pray for all who bring your word of life
As a light to those in darkness, for those who bring your word of peace
To those enslaved by fear, for those who bring your word of love
To those in need of comfort, Lord of love and Lord of peace
Lord of resurrection life, be known through our lives and through your power.
Amen*

Hilary Netherwood

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY AND PRAYER

Since Lockdown began, a Thought for the Day and a prayer has gone out every week and for all church festivals and holy days. It means that everyone connected with both churches (and beyond) has received something from their church each week, either by email or by post throughout Lockdown, and it has then been the "sermon" in the Zoom service. With the church buildings reopening on 23rd May the last of these sheets will go out for Sunday 16th May. I know that these have been valued and I am glad. I am so grateful to Liz Grimsey for her help and support producing and circulating them. When they began I thought we'd be doing it for a month, 6 weeks at most. How wrong I was! It's been over 60 "issues". They've been a tremendous opportunity though and one I'm glad we took.

Michael Hodgson



We were extremely sorry to learn the sad news about the death of Thelma's husband, Don. He had been unwell for some time but his death, nonetheless, came as something of a shock. We remember Thelma and her family as they mourn and hold them in our prayers.

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES MAY 2021

Sunday 2 May	11.30 am	Morning Worship (Zoom)
Tuesday 4 May	7.30 pm	St Andrew's Elders' Meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday 5 May	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
Sunday 9 May	11.30 am	Morning Worship (Zoom) for Christian Aid Week
Tuesday 11 May	7.30 pm	Weybridge Elders' Meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday 12 May	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
 Friday 14 May	12.30 - 1.30 pm	People Who Lunch (Zoom)
Sunday 16 May	11.30 am	Morning Worship (Zoom)

<i>COPY DATE FOR JUNE ISSUE : <u>WEDNESDAY 19 MAY</u></i>
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<i>All items to the Editor, Norma Reid, 3 Gwalior Road, London SW15 1NP Tel: 020 8785 4392 Email: aristocats.2000@gmail.com</i>
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Wednesday 19 May	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
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! BOTH CHURCH BUILDINGS RE-OPEN FOR SUNDAY SERVICES ON 23 MAY !

Sunday 23 May	10.30 am (NB time!)	Morning Worship with Communion at St Andrew's Zoom Worship with Communion from St Andrew's
	2.30 pm	Afternoon Worship with Communion at Weybridge
Wednesday 26 May	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer (TBC)
Sunday 30 May	10.30 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Morning Worship at St Andrew's Morning Worship at Weybridge URC Zoom Worship

CHURCH MEETING AND AGM

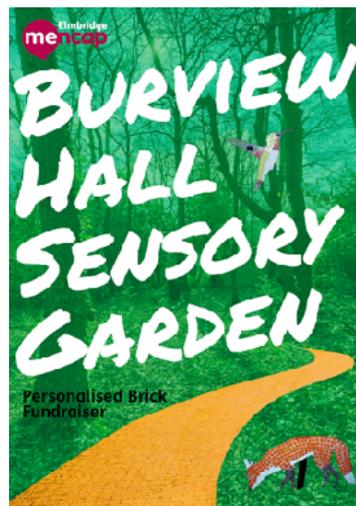
<p>Notice is given of a Church Meeting and the Annual General Meeting which will take place on <u>Sunday 4 July 2021</u>. Those wishing to submit reports for the AGM Booklet can now start thinking about them in order to submit them to the Church Secretary in good time.</p>

Our cover picture was taken in the Isabella Plantation, Richmond Park, May 2019

Who We Are

Elmbridge Mencap, established in 1955, supports children and adults who have learning disabilities together with their parents and carers. We run leisure activities, including social clubs for youth and adults, family fun days, film screenings and we have two purpose built sensory rooms and a games room.

Run primarily by volunteers, we hire out our fantastic facilities to other local groups and charities.



Our Aim

We're excited to announce plans to develop a brand new safe and secure Sensory Garden in an area of our woodland. It will be a place to stimulate the senses calmly and gently; using plants, layout, and specialist equipment to engage the senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. The sensory garden has been specially designed for children and adults with learning disabilities and will be a wonderful inclusive environment for children and adults with Learning Disabilities. People with Alzheimer's, Dementia, people who have had a Stroke and those with other challenges may also benefit from spending time in the garden. We are also extremely proud that Elmbridge Mencap was selected by the Mayor, Mary Sheldon, as her chosen charity for her mayoral year and the Sensory Garden will be an important part of her legacy.



Next Steps - Can you help?

In order to make our sensory garden a reality we really need your help! We're giving you the chance to have your name engraved on our entrance wall of fame. Bricks cost £25 for (2 x 16 characters) or £50 for (4 x 16 characters) and you can buy as many as you wish. Why not have your family's name or a loved one's name engraved? Or have one bought as a gift for someone. Every brick you purchase will help us get closer to making our sensory garden a reality. Help us pave the way to a better future. Currently, there are nearly 2,000 people in Elmbridge who are registered with learning disabilities who stand to immediately benefit from this new facility, but there are also so many others in the Borough who will benefit. We anticipate roughly 20 users every day for 6 days a week (weather dependent), which means that some 3,000 people will benefit from visiting the sensory garden each year.

CHURCH SERVICES IN THE FUTURE

SUNDAY 23 MAY 2021

We are still on track for 23 May being the day on which regular, Sunday services are resumed in BOTH churches. More information will be available nearer the time, but on this special occasion the plan is to have our services at different times so that I can be with both congregations and so that we can go to each other's special services too. St Andrew's will be at 10.30am, as will the Zoom Service. Weybridge, on that day only, will be at 2.30pm. It's also a busy weekend in sporting and social calendars so having two service times may help people attend worship that day, even if it's not in their "normal" church.

Obviously some restrictions, such as social distancing and the mandatory wearing of face masks, will still be in place. It also looks as if we'll be able to sing hymns outside church but not inside at this point. By the Government's current timetable everything will change again in later June, but we have to start at some point and so we're going with the URC's guidance and sticking with Pentecost. Exciting, isn't it?

More information will be distributed nearer the time but we're still on track and planning for 23 May. I think that it's going to be a very special day for us all. As the psalmist says, "I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the House of the Lord."

SERVICES FROM 30 MAY

On 30 May, both St Andrew's and Weybridge URCs will revert to their normal service time. Weekly Sunday services will be held in both buildings at 10.30 am and the preaching plan will be restored as well.

There will still be a Zoom Service each week which will move to 10.30 am and will be the service from St Andrew's. This means that if you're not able to get to church, or else are not yet feeling comfortable with coming to church, you can continue to worship online. The only change will be that it's an hour earlier. I am expecting that the Sunday Zoom code will not change and that I can just alter the current time.

There will probably be a "pause" in Zoom chat sessions after the service. This will be whilst we assess the need and, if necessary, work out the practicalities. As Tilly would say to Miranda [Hart], "Bear with, bear with"! As some medieval French guy said, "*Rome ne fu[t] pas faite toute en un jour*" (Rome wasn't built in a day.)

A FINAL COMMENT ABOUT OUR COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN

Quite obviously, when we do come out of lockdown and people are able to travel, to visit friends and families and to go on holiday again, we may find that in both churches we have a lot of people away at the same time. This is entirely understandable but we could well end up being a bit stretched. Your help and your understanding if we do struggle a little would be really helpful. We may not always have enough people to do everything, every week. Could be another of those Miranda and Tilly moments - bear with - bear with!

Michael

Following the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh the URC has issued the following statement

The United Reformed Church has expressed its sadness at the passing of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, who died on April 9 aged 99.

A constant support to Her Majesty the Queen since their marriage in 1947, the Prince was one of the nation's best-loved and controversial royal figures.

Psalm 107: 23-31

Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the mighty waters;
they saw the deeds of the Lord,
his wondrous works in the deep.

For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.
They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their calamity;
they reeled and staggered like drunkards,
and were at their wits' end.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he brought them out from their distress;
he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.

Then they were glad because they had quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven.
Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

Reflection

The death of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, brings a moment to reflect on an extraordinary life. For many, this death will leave them feeling shaken, as the life of someone who has for so many decades been at the heart of our nation comes to an end.

He was born in Corfu and baptised into the Orthodox church. Later received into the Church of England, many who have known the Duke of Edinburgh bear witness to the depth of his faith and his theological knowledge. A regular visitor to Mount Athos, and a keen questioner of preachers, his faith was much more than nominal.

With a childhood marred by political turmoil and danger, as his family fled from Greece, Philip was, in many ways, often almost alone in the world as he grew up. Gordonstoun school and the British Royal Navy gave him roots and a home, and with marriage to Princess Elizabeth his life's path was set.

She described him, in 2012, as a 'constant strength and guide' and his supportive role as a husband was one he fulfilled over decades of marriage. It is often said that he felt the loss of his own career keenly, but he became a hardworking member of the Royal Family, taking up causes and projects with formidable energy.

Many of us will have been, or will know, someone who learned a love of the outdoors, spurred on by the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Countless young people have learned endurance and survival skills, navigating maps and building fires, walking in the hills and bedding down in tents, achieving things they would not have imagined possible.

Prince Philip has also been a tireless campaigner on behalf of threatened wildlife and for the preservation of the earth.

Known for his blunt and forthright speech, and for being the man who was always one step behind the Queen, he was a determined supporter of his wife, an energetic sportsman, a committed conservationist, with the strength of character to remain steady through changing and difficult times.

Queen Elizabeth often acknowledged her debt to him and encouraged the whole nation to recognise it too.

At this moment of his death we have an opportunity to reflect and to give thanks, for a life of dedicated service to nation and commonwealth. We pray for his family and closest friends, for those who will mourn and miss him most.

And we draw hope from the faith into which he was baptised, declaring that Christ is risen.

Prayer

O God, our rock and our redeemer,
we come to worship you
and to give thanks for your servant Philip.

We thank you for his long life,
for his dedicated support of his wife in her vocation as Queen,
and for his service to commonwealth and nation.

We thank you for the Duke of Edinburgh award,
for the work of the World Wide Fund for Nature
and for so many causes he inspired and supported.

We thank you for what he has meant
to each one of us...
We treasure memories
of meeting him

We rejoice that he lived and shared
the faith we hold,
and that, by your grace,
he survived danger and threat.

We pray for those who will miss him most deeply,
that they may find comfort and hope.
We celebrate and affirm our faith
that death is defeated,
that new life awaits your children,
and that creation is renewed in Christ.

And, in this day and time, we pray,
as we are always glad to pray,
may your Kingdom come. Amen.



EASTER AT ST ANDREW'S

A MOMENT LOOKING BACK

None of us wanted or expected a second Holy Week or Easter with no services in our buildings but ... so what to do? Simple answer - think differently. On Maundy Thursday, we read the Passover story, remembering that the Jewish festival is a family festival, celebrated in the home, not the Synagogue, just as we were in our homes, not in church. Jesus and the disciples formed a family since they were not able to be with their actual families. We too formed a family using Zoom; many of us being unable to be with our families as well. From the Passover story, we moved to Mark's Gospel to make the connection with The Last Supper and the events of that evening.

Good Friday we took the idea of a "Lessons and Carols" service, this time reading the Passion Narrative rather than the nativity story and interspersed it with music. The scene was set by a reflection arising from the well-loved choral classic "All in the April evening". Like a Christmas carol service, we concluded with the opening of John's Gospel but this time set against the Passion story and the service closed with that... no final hymn... no blessing... instead, the message of hope- that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never been able to put it out.



On Easter Sunday, as a year or two ago, Easter Bonnets were sported to further lift the spirits. This year some of us also decorated windows or Easter trees (see left Paula's Easter Tree and right Beryl's window). *Michael*



RECIPE CORNER

Thanks to Anna Crawford for this delicious-sounding contribution

FLAPJACKS WITH A TWIST

Following an after Service chat about porridge, I purchased a box of Quaker Velvety Chocolate Porridge. Using and adapted Mary Berry recipe I made some flapjacks. They turned out rather well.

Ingredients

6oz/175g butter or cooking fat

3oz/95g sugar

6 tablespoons of golden syrup

9oz/270g of the porridge oats

4oz/100g self-raising flour.

In a large saucepan melt the fat, sugar and syrup.

Mix the oats and flour and stir into the saucepan.

Spoon mixture into a 18 X 26 cm / 7 X 10 inch cake tray.

Cook in a moderate oven Gas 4/180c/160fan till well risen about 25 – 40minutes.

Leave in the tray to cool, after 10 mins cut into required pieces. Leave in the tray till completely cool. Enjoy!



All through lockdown we have kept in touch with Messy Church families by sending emails with activities attached from Messy Church at home. At Easter we delivered bags to families with colouring activities, crafts, crayons and booklets purchased from Scripture Union, telling the Easter story plus an Easter egg. I ordered the latter in my Sainsbury's shop and was horrified at the size of Cadbury cream eggs now, but it was all I had. I received a couple of emails thanking us, and it was lovely to see young Jake waving his palm cross and hearing on Zoom that he is enjoying the story book.
Anne Fitzgerald



Just before Easter, when she had sent out suggested activities for Lent, Anne received a letter from one of our Messy Church families. Here are some extracts.

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for sending a Christmas Messy Church pack in the post! It was very unexpected and we totally loved looking through it and doing the various activities! My child was very happy to hear from Messy Church and it definitely was a very loving and wonderful surprise. Thank you!

"For Lent - a few mums here are looking at ways to introduce kindness following last week's kindness week at school. So far one mum baked scones and a local take away cafe that is open donated pots of jam and cream to make up cream teas to be delivered to people on their own and I've baked some banana cakes (2 per day so far) which I'm cutting up and sharing out with families along with a little note and a kind message.

"I like the idea you suggested - to do more bible study for Lent. That's a great idea - I'll talk to some people here...

"Thank you so much for all the amazing fun of Messy Church on so many Sundays. I know a lot of love and hard work went in to those Sunday afternoons. We still have the pencil cases made with Jean's sewing machine and the cushion too! We will definitely check out Messy Church goes Cyber!

"God sees everything, he will help and we are praying lots here for protection, guidance and wisdom and for people to stand up for what is right. May God bless you and keep you strong in health and positive in mind over the next few weeks/months until the church opens once again.

"Anne - we miss seeing you all, but you are in our hearts. Please send our best wishes, love and prayers to everyone at Messy Church!"

GARDEN TALK



I must be getting old as I struggled to summon up the energy to tackle our large church garden where weeds of every description have grown and flourished over the past five months – it was bad enough getting to grips with my own garden! However, a photo of Rosemary (left), the sister of Shingi one of our artists in her garden full of Zinnias which she grows and sells to support her family and orphans somewhat enthused me. Also, as James, Annie and Susan had offered their support and the weather had improved, I had run out of excuses. Two days of hard work ensued with more lined up. Grateful thanks again to the 'A' or should it be the 'G' team! The congregation only catch a glimpse of our garden once a week on attending church, but I know passers-by appreciate same when in bloom. Few churches in Walton enjoy such a large open area but our garden is under-utilised apart by Contact and a few hall users. Many folk have downsized so don't have a garden – it's a pity our lovely garden could not be put to better use. **JS**





Christian Aid week this year is 10-16 May and our Zoom Service on 9 May will draw on some of the material prepared for this year. Due to the pandemic there is no "house-to-house" collecting again and it's not possible to bring a gift to church either at the moment but it is possible to send a donation, either on line or using the telephone number 020

7620 4444. The Christian Aid website www.christianaid.org.uk has lots of information and a number of activities you may be interested in. Do visit it.

'The first-ever Christian Aid Week in 1957 raised a staggering £26,000 from 316 towns and areas! 10. Christian Aid Week has been running for over 60 years, making it the UK's longest-running fundraising week! The focus of Christian Aid week this year is the Climate Emergency - one of the greatest injustices we face. Together we can stop this climate crisis that hurts us all. But people living in poverty fight the worst of it every day. From drought to flooding, climate change robs people of control over their lives. People are struggling to survive without a reliable source of water. Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. A reliable source of water will help families withstand long drought or relentless rainstorms.'

Please don't forget the important work that Christian Aid does around the world. As their slogan of a few years ago said, "We believe in live before death". There are many ways in which you can support their work, even if you haven't got a little envelope this year.

Michael

SPONSORED PSALMATHON FOR CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Johnston Simpson received the information below from Martin Ashford, Marlow URC Church Secretary, who he knows well through that church's support for ArtPeace. It is an original idea to raise money for Christian Aid and we thought some of you might be interested in taking part.

Christ Church URC in Marlow coordinates the local response to Christian Aid Week. This year the Marlow team are planning an online **Sponsored Psalmathon** - reading our way through the entire book of Psalms, on Zoom. As you may guess, this is going to need a lot of readers, so we are casting the net well beyond our town and inviting any church or individual to join in.

The Great Christian Aid Psalmathon takes place on Sunday May 16th from 12 pm to approximately 7 pm. **There are three ways you could help us, if you are willing to take up the challenge:**

- You can join us personally as a reader, and get your friends to sponsor you. To register, go to <https://tinyurl.com/psalmathon> and pick your preferred one-hour slot. There is a £5 sign-up fee which also goes to Christian Aid. Once you have registered, all further details will be sent to you.
- You can pass this message on - to others in your church or Christian Aid group, to your friends or family - and ask them to do the same. Some of you receiving this are church secretaries - please help by letting your congregation know about it!
- And, if you can't do either of those or are really desperate, you could sponsor me! Blatant self-interest, obviously... You can find my fundraising page at [Martin Ashford is fundraising for Christian Aid \(justgiving.com\)](https://www.justgiving.com/Martin-Ashford).

Thank you for reading this message and for any way you can help us and, much more importantly, the work of Christian Aid with some of the world's most disadvantaged people.

*Martin Ashford
Christ Church URC, Marlow*

CATCHING UP

JOHN HUTSON

Just before Easter, John moved from Walton to be nearer his daughter, Lorna. We are pleased to learn from Lorna that he seems to be entering fully into all the activities on offer, to the point that he is seldom around to answer the phone! Lorna has been sent photos of John taking part in a French meal, ball games, and a murder mystery event (we understand that he was first to solve the murder). Sadly, he hasn't yet been able to join our Zoom services as there are difficulties connecting the KOMP (one-button computer) which we were using.

Anne Fitzgerald



John's address is: Room 44, Penhurst Gardens, New Street, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5ED.
His telephone number is: 01608 598144. He would love to hear from you!



HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY HILARY!

Hilary has kindly shared her Special Day - 7 April - with us. It got off to a good, musical start at the Elders' meeting the day before, followed by a message from the minister:

"A very happy "zero" birthday. Have a great day and remember the joy of the Elders singing to you yesterday evening."

Hilary writes:

"I can't believe I'm 50 years old! I had the day off work so relaxed in the morning opening my cards and presents. I then visited my parents for a socially distanced lunch - Lamb Chops with vegetables, mint sauce and gravy. This was followed by fresh fruit salad and cream plus a slice of Viennetta ice cream - all very decadent and yummy! More presents and cards were opened. In the afternoon I returned home to find a bouquet of flowers waiting for me from my twin nieces Danielle and Kayleigh who live in Morecambe. The evening was spent putting out the bins (how exciting!) and watching TV. I thoroughly enjoyed my special birthday and even the weather obliged!"



HAPPY BABY NEWS

Congratulations to Nancy Hampton on her new Great Granny status! Henry Michael James was born on 15 April to Nancy's granddaughter, Kathryn, and her husband Bruce Tasker. Nancy is looking forward to meeting Henry in person in the very near future.

*If you should need an Angel, don't sigh and search the skies,
In truth, they're all around you, though often in disguise.
For knowing that life's burdens are sometimes hard to bear,
And seeing too, that we might need a hand, just here and there.
Some Providence took pity, and as though to make amends,
Scattered Angels on the earth and simply called them 'Friends'.*

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

OUR EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE is always special no more so than a few weeks ago when, during our Zoom service, we were able to play an Easter Greetings video recording taken in



Southwark Cathedral for St Andrew's and ArtPeace (audio only) from Andrew Nunn, the Dean. Andrew said: 'We feel very close to you because of our work together for the people of Zimbabwe, the diocese of Southwark being linked with four dioceses of Zimbabwe.' From a meeting at the old Windermere URC centre many years ago Andrew chanced to pick up one of my ArtPeace flyers and saw their small display of sculptures. This resonated with him so much so that he quickly contacted me inviting Susan and I to hold a sale at the Cathedral after the main morning service. This was so successful that

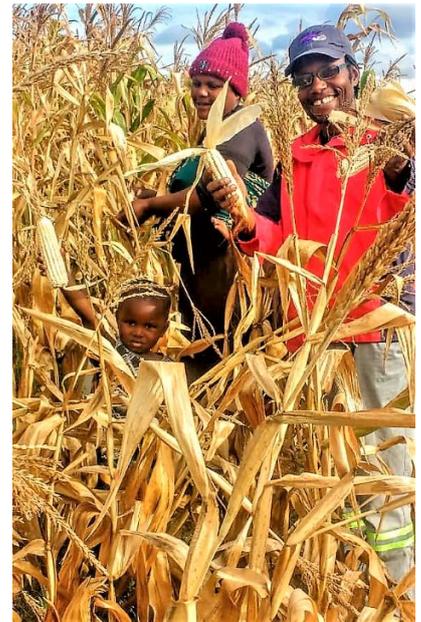
other sales followed, culminating in an invitation to mount a display in the Cathedral shop. The rest is history as they say. Dean Andrew and Christopher Chessun, the Bishop of Southwark, made time from a busy schedule to call on the group in 2014 whilst visiting their diocese in Masvingo. Andrew's personal support since and that of the shop's manager Jon Dollin over the years, has been tremendous and one of many fortunate 'coincidences' I have encountered running this project. Their shop is now open after a long closure due to the Covid pandemic.



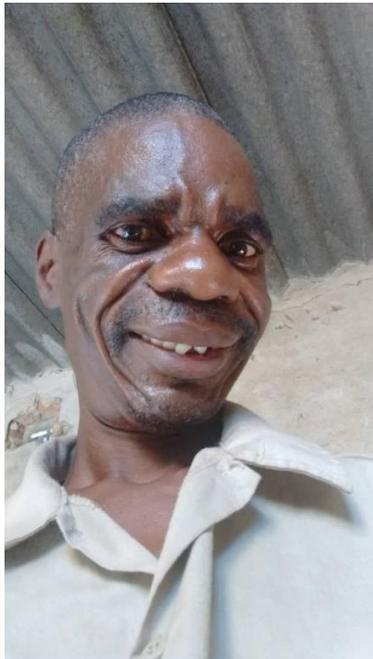
THANKS TO SEVERAL DONATIONS including one from Marco, a long-lost friend in Italy, Hazel, a minister friend in Cardiff and others, artist Coster managed to settle his backlog of rent arrears to the council in the nick of time. He is incredibly grateful as his family had nowhere to go. Some of the money also helped to cover his son Alabu's 'O' level examination fees and extra tuition as he had spent much time off school unable to pay fees. Photo above left of a relieved Coster with his family and their chums. Above centre, Alabu with his mother enjoying a recent Zoom service with St. Andrew's. Above right: despite all the trauma, Coster still manages to occasionally sculpt and used some donations to start breeding rabbits as protein for the family.

ZOOM SERVICES: From Artpeace to St Andrew's - Thank you for sharing the Word with us and warming our souls and being ever mindful of us. God bless and embrace you and your families.

BUMPER HARVEST: Most artists are enjoying one of their best harvests thanks to our support with inputs. They are all busy harvesting their fields and these stunning photos capturing the



essence of harvest time taken by Fortune shows artist Peter with his wife plus a little helping

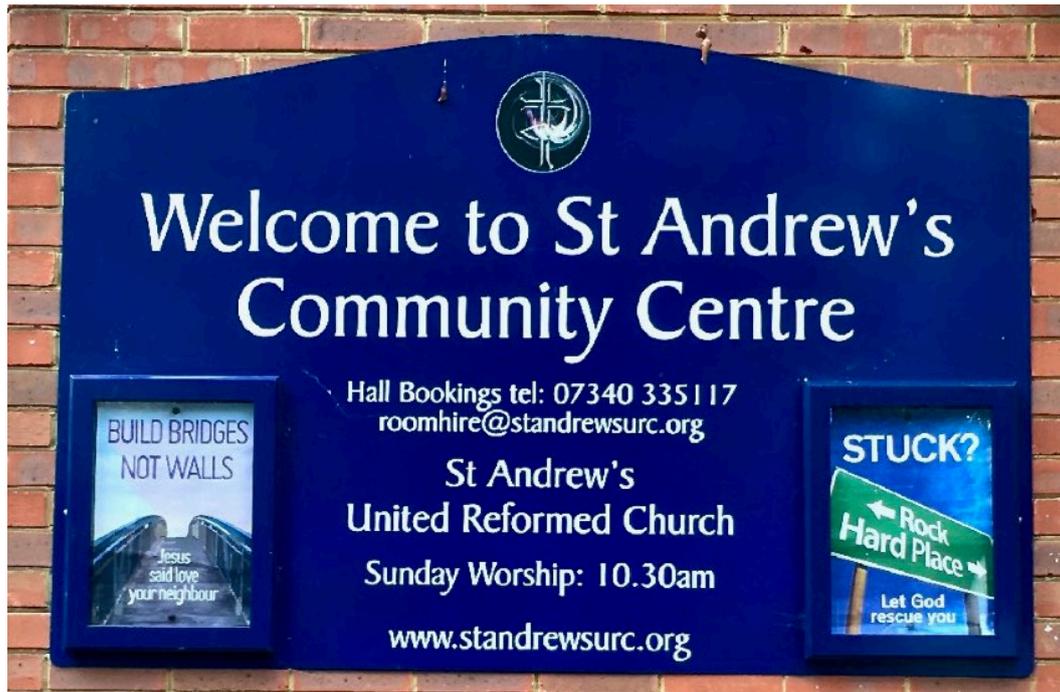


hand from one of the younger members of the family. The two photos above left show Fortune gathering his harvest of maize cobs. He said it will take several days to harvest the whole crop. He is a happy man.



MORE SUPPORT from an anonymous donor from Kettering URC helped in other ways. For example: artist Shingi supports his sister Rosemary (above) who grows flowers from seed and sells them to support her family and some orphans she looks after. Also, Edinah (left) who makes crafts at Silveira House pleaded for help to buy blood pressure tablets. Life is tough in Zimbabwe not helped by a largely corrupt government. It is therefore nice to be able to share this cheerful news and photos with readers to show the difference donations make to numerous lives.

Johnston Simpson



MINISTER

The Reverend Michael Hodgson
The Manse
3 Elgin Road
Weybridge
KT13 8SN

Tel: 01932 841382

Email: michael.mah@btinternet.com

CHURCH SECRETARY

Mrs Anna Crawford
23 Shaldon Way
Walton-on-Thames
KT12 3DJ

Tel: 01932 244466

Email: secretary@standrewsurc.org

Website: www.standrewsurc.org

Services are continuing with Zoom until Sunday 23 May, when we plan to re-open the church building and when services will start at the original time of 10.30 am. Until then our Zoom services begin at 11.30 am and a weekly "Thought for the Day" and a prayer are available by post or email. Please contact the Minister for inclusion.

Anyone who wishes to take part in the Zoom service should contact the minister, who will be able to send them a link to enable easy participation.
You are all most welcome to join us!

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