



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

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2021

Volume 78 No 5



Gorse on the Braid Hills, near Edinburgh

*“Love you not, then, to list and hear
The crackling of the gorse-flower near,
Pouring an orange-scented tide
Of fragrance o'er the desert wide?”*

Alfred William Howell



Dear friends

From The Manse

June 2021

A little more telly viewing- The Repair Shop.

I admit it. I'm a total addict. A TV programme which began as part of BBC 2's daytime schedule in 2017 has now become one of BBC 1 Primetime's most popular shows. For me it's also become an unmissable part of the week - The Repair Shop. As I'm sure you know, people bring battered, well-worn and often broken items to be repaired by a team of experts who do the most incredible jobs. Very often the items have interesting stories behind them and when their owners tell them they can often become emotional, showing just how much that item means to them. When they see their items repaired there are frequently tears again and it's often a programme where sadness is turned to joy, and to delight, and to wonder. It's a programme about items that really matter to people.

I am interested to see the items and to see how they are fixed but for me one of the real joys of the programme are the experts- an incredibly skilled bunch of people who just get on with it and who smile and dismiss the thanks given them, saying something like, "It was a pleasure", or "It was a joy to work on" or even "Thank you so much for bringing it in". The experts are so clever and such super people. If ever you want to have your faith in human nature restored, or to spend an hour in the company of some very talented, kind and modest people, then this is it.

Sometimes the owner's emotions touch the experts too. It's not unknown for them to become a little moist in the eye. Will and Dom have been caught like this - and so too have the teddy bear ladies, Amanda and Julie. Earlier this year a 5-year old was given back his mother's repaired teddy bear which had been "scorched" in a recent house fire, which had completely destroyed the family's home. As that little boy shyly snuggled it to him I defy anyone not to have been moved. It's also not unknown for a story to chime in with the expert's personal life as well, for example when something in the repair of a rocking horse, whose owner had been widowed, moved leather restorer, Suzie to tears, herself recently widowed. There was a very touching moment as Suzie's brother, Steve went to comfort her. Steve is another of the experts.

So, the Repair Shop is programme I really look forward to it each week. Such kind, genuine people. It certainly lifts my spirits and my general mood but there's something else I note as well. Few of the items they restore, and which mean so much to people, are actually of any great commercial value. It may be that the programme doesn't accept things worth over a certain amount but the cost of the repairers' time and skill must normally vastly outweigh any value in terms of £sd. It's what an item means to someone that's important. That's how things are valued and I like that.

I could be a little surprised that the series was ever commissioned in the first place and certainly surprised that it's now shown at a prime evening time. There's no sex, violence or bad language. It's not gritty or hyped-up - quite the reverse. It must be one of the most gentle programmes possible and yet I'm not alone in finding that it's compulsive viewing and extremely popular. If you've never watched it then give it a go - but beware - you may find yourself hooked by the end of the episode.

A pastoral letter about a telly programme may be a little unusual but to me it's all about respect and skill and right-value and kindness and caring - and those are all things which are surely appropriate in this letter.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'The Manse', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

ELDERS' OPENING DEVOTIONS – JUNE 2021

This month's Devotions from Irene Pearson are taken from 'A Book of Inspirations' by Iris Hasselden

WALKING THROUGH THE WORLD

As I go walking through the world
Lord walk along with me,
And through the beauty of the world
Lord help me look and see.
As I go listening through the world
Lord let me hear your voice,
And with the wind, the birds and the sea,
Lord help me to rejoice.
As I go slower through the world
Lord give me quiet peace,
And show me always in my life
Your love will never cease.

PRAYER

Loving Lord

As we go forward into a new world, help us to face the challenges ahead and be helpful and kind to all who need our help.

Guide our minister and elders to make the right decisions as we focus on the opening of our churches in Walton and Weybridge and to welcome all who come to worship, members and strangers alike. Also, guide our Tech Team to continue our Zoom services for those who cannot get to church. Please God also help us to be able to have out Messy Church back again soon.

Dear Lord, as we approach Christian Aid Week please help all those in our country and other countries who are suffering to feel your love and comfort those who are grieving for loved ones who have passed away through illness or injury and let our friends in ArtPeace know. Your love is shining in them too.

Thank you for listening to this prayer.

Amen



We were much saddened to learn of the death of Barbara Rodgers on 3 May. A family funeral was held on 18 May. We send our love and thoughts to her sister, Pat Coaker, and all of her family and friends. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at a later date.

SOME LOCKDOWN REMINISCENCES FROM THE MINISTER

The first Thought for the Day and Prayer went out for 29th March, 2020. There's been one every week since then, plus additional ones for Holy Week and Christmas Services- over 60 in all. Every member and every adherent of both our churches has received something from their church every week. Visiting preachers have written to our "house style" and Liz Grimsey has proof-read them all. I know that some of you have kept many, if not all of them. I know too that some have sent them to friends. Although producing them each week has been a lot of work, they've been such a resource.

Our first Zoom service was on 12th April. I couldn't have done it without the incredible support and encouragement of Carol, Hilary and Paula and our tech team has now expanded as well. When the idea was first mooted, I was petrified. Since our first "Zoom Chat", a couple of weeks later, we've learnt how to use it and it's brought us closely together. We've worshipped, shared communion and supported each other, rejoicing with the good news and commiserating when things have been difficult. We've reminisced about VE & VJ Day, remembered Decimal Day and even had Zoom Parade Services. I'll also never forget May Dow's Memorial Service and what a moving occasion that was. For all sorts of reasons we've been joined by visitors from other churches and currently our services are being shared in Zimbabwe as well. Members of our own congregations who are no longer able to get out and about have been with us from their care homes. What a blessing it's been. I also think of how we've cared for one another since March 2020. Thank you to the God of technology for telephones, emails, and social media platforms. Thank you too for the Royal Mail. Jesus has used us to be agents of his shepherding.

Michael



50TH ANNIVERSARY URC CHURCH CALENDAR 2022

Do you have a good photo of St Andrew's church building?

The URC is publishing a calendar of church buildings for 2022 to give a flavour of the length and breadth of the denomination in its 50th anniversary year. From Victorian churches, post-war pre-fabs, to churches opened in the last couple of years - all exterior photos of buildings are welcome.

Landscape for preference, but square and portrait images are also invited, by the end of July. JPG or PNG file format. Please include the name of the church and the photographer. No bigger than around 3 MB.

Please send any good photos you might have to Carol Lee (carol.diane.lee@gmail.com) or Anna Crawford (annacrawford972@btinternet.com), by latest 23 July to give time to decide on which is best. It would be great to have St Andrew's represented on the URC's 50th Anniversary calendar!


Ed

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES JUNE 2021



All our services are also accessible on Zoom



Tuesday 1 June	7.30 pm	St Andrew's Elders' Meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday 2 June	10.00 - 11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
Sunday 6 June	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Jem and Clare Ward (Weybridge)
Wednesday 9 June	10.00 -11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
 Friday 11 June	12.30 - 1.30 pm	People Who Lunch - bring your own picnic - Weybridge URC garden (weather permitting!)
Sunday 13 June	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Anna Crawford
Wednesday 16 June	10.00 -11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer

COPY DATE FOR JULY/AUGUST ISSUE : WEDNESDAY 16 JUNE

*All items to the Editor, Norma Reid, 3 Gwalior Road, London SW15 1NP
Tel: 020 8785 4392 Email: aristocats.2000@gmail.com*

Sunday 20 June	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Mr Sydney Shore
Wednesday 23 June	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
Sunday 27 June	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Mrs Anna Crawford
Wednesday 30 June	10.00 -11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer

REMINDER OF CHURCH MEETING AND AGM

Don't forget that a Church Meeting and Annual General Meeting which will take place on Sunday 4 July 2021. Annual Reports are included with this Newsletter.

Thanks to Heather Macaulay, now living in Edinburgh, for our cover photograph taken when she was walking in the Braid Hills recently.

*"There are two seasons in Scotland - June and winter."
Billy Connolly*

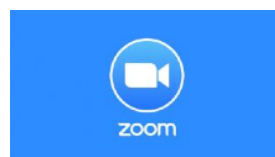
The Walton and Weybridge Pastorate

Thanks to Michael, who has put together this really useful guidance for our future services



As you know, on Sunday 23 May, we re-opened both our churches for worship. Both services included Communion.

From **30th May** services will be at their “old normal” times of **10.30am each week**. There will still be a **Zoom service** but it will move to 10.30am each week and it will be the service from St Andrew’s.



Roadmap out of lockdown

As you are aware, the current COVID restrictions are set to be removed completely when we reach Stage 4 on the government’s roadmap, currently due to happen no earlier than 21st June. At the time of writing though there is considerable confusion as to whether this will include rules on social distancing, the wearing of masks and the ban on singing in church. It could be that all restrictions are removed on 21st June - except for those that aren’t! We just have to wait on that.

From 23rd May:



Face coverings must be worn before entering these premises

You will be able to come to church for services and it will be lovely to see you as well. Services will be a bit different, that’s inevitable with social distancing, the wearing of face masks still mandatory and the singing of congregational hymns not yet allowed. Being positive though, we shall be able to be together and to see each other in reality. The challenge to those leading worship is to come up with ideas for what we *can* do- not rely on what we can’t! It could actually be quite an exciting time, trying new things.

Booking a place

To help us keep movement within the church to a minimum, to maintain social distancing and to help us complete our mandatory “track and trace” records it would be really helpful if you could let us know when you are coming and book a place in advance. Subject to our capacity you will still be able just to “turn up” on the day and obviously we hope to be able to welcome visitors who haven’t booked but if as many of you as possible could book a place it really would make a lot of things so much easier for us. Remember, in order to keep to the 2 metre social distancing our building capacities are currently significantly reduced (St Andrew’s about 40 - Weybridge about 30). When we meet those limits we are “church full” and cannot allow more in. We have no choice about that.



Booking St Andrew’s? Contact Paula: orangeopalfruit@yahoo.co.uk
Booking Weybridge? Contact Liz or Gwenda:
cgwenda7@ntlworld.com : eldene@sky.com

Telephone numbers are in the church directories.

What will it be like in church?

We are legally obliged to provide a safe and Covid-free environment. Hopefully knowing that will give you some confidence. We also want coming to church to be a positive experience too so a lot of what follows is all about helping us to achieve this. Some of our Non-Serving Elders will be helping the serving Elders and so a big thank you to them for their willingness to support.

1) When you get to church you will find out which seat number you are sitting in. Look for the hymn numbers in the seats. It would be really helpful if you went straight there and didn't walk round - and certainly don't go up and lean over your friend's shoulder for a natter, thus breaking the 2 metre rule.



2) Your number doesn't just indicate pew in which you're sitting: it also tells you where in the pew you are sitting. That's really important because it's all tied up with keeping the 2 metre rule – and you'd be surprised how long 2 metres actually is. So, please sit where your number actually is. Spacing is generous – there'll be plenty between you and the next person.

3) At Weybridge we shall be using a one-way system. Please **enter** via the **Tower** door and **leave** via the **back door**.

4) In both churches, at the end of the services please remain in your seat until you are invited to leave by the duty Elders. They will be ensuring that we don't get any congestion at the door. When you are invited to leave the building please do so immediately.

BUT ... I want to catch up with all my friends!

We all do! Thankfully it's summer-time! This means that you can chat to your friends and put the world right OUTSIDE the building, basking in the glorious, warm sunshine. In line with scientific advice our aim is to have people inside the church for as short a time as possible. It's much safer outside. Just remember to maintain social distancing whilst topping up your sun-tan.

5) One thing we have been instructed by the URC to do is remove soft furnishings wherever possible, including pew cushions for the time being. Sorry but we must have easily sanitizable surfaces. (Not sure there is such a word as "sanitizable" but I'm sure that there ought to be!) Hopefully their removal is only temporary and that they can be returned when we reach Step 4 at the end of June



6) There are no Bibles or hymnbooks in the pews at the moment. We've had to remove them due to the risk of cross-infection. There will be no weekly sheets at this point for the same reason.

7) One thing we're doing is encouraging all worship leaders to make use of projecting worship material and of using recordings in worship. Both churches have the ability to do this easily.

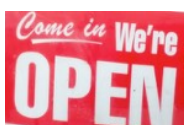
8) There won't be a "collection" taken during the service at the moment. Instead, there will be collecting plates as you come in. Why not consider making your offering by bank transfer because we can't "pass the plate" round at the moment? Yes - you've guessed it - cross contamination risk.



9) When it's Communion you will EITHER find that your communion is already in your place when you arrive OR you'll be asked to collect it on your way in. Elders will not be serving you in your place. Yes - cross contamination and breach of 2 metre rule!

After church coffee

Your delicious cup of coffee is coming - fear not- but we're just prioritising getting the church open for worship again and complying with quite a lot of new regulations and practices first. We can't cope with everything at once.



So, as you can see, it was "all systems go" for re-opening on 23rd May and in the event of a lot of hard work by many people it was a positive, joyous experience even if we couldn't do some things yet. As we progress further out of lockdown more things will be possible but we want our two churches to be safe places to come to - and we want you to feel safe there as well.

Michael



A JOYFUL RETURN TO THE CHURCH BUILDING



At last we were back in church! Pentecost - the perfect Sunday to return to the church building in person. Beautiful flower arrangements in cream and blue, given by the Dow family in memory of May, whose 97th birthday it would have been, greeted us at the entrance and after checking the seating plan, duly masked, we were shown to our places. I was directly behind the Tech Team set-up and was impressed by the cool, calm and collected way Hilary and Paula went about providing the music on the system, as singing, sadly, was not allowed. There was a lovely air of tranquillity about the place and, spaced out as we were, there was time to savour it. Michael, resplendent in his Ordination robes, delivered a joyful address. Beside us in the pew were two communion glasses, one with bread and the other with wine. Afterwards, we were able to meet in the garden (socially distanced of course!) where festive Shloer was provided, enthusiastically served by Carol and Adrienne, and we were able to exchange news, particularly our enjoyment of the occasion.

Ed

Fiona Reardon writes on behalf of the Dow family - Valerie, Katie and herself:

"Sunday 23rd May was a very special Sunday. Not only was it our first time back together in church after so many months but it would also have been mum's 97th birthday. The timing could not have been better and it seemed very appropriate to mark the double celebration with flowers. A big thank you to Anna for choosing the flowers and arranging three wonderful displays for the church and the entrance. It was lovely to celebrate such a special Sunday with everyone both in church and on Zoom."

Margaret Faultless says:

"I was absolutely delighted with the floral arrangement that Anna had done for last Sunday's service. It was so imaginative and meaningful. As it fell to me to do the arrangement for Weybridge (I'm a stick 'em in and hope for the best arranger) I was inspired to try harder next time!"

And a view from Zoomers, **Holms and Christine Carlile**:

"I think our overriding feeling on Sunday, as Zoom Attendees when the Church building was opened for the first time in about fourteen months, was Joy, and a feeling of Celebration. A great deal of work and the inclusion of some new equipment was evident. The quality of picture, especially close up was good. Perhaps the long view of the whole inside could be improved, as it is always nice to see who is there, but this was scarcely possible."

Some text at the conclusion of the service stated that the problem with sound was recognised, the cause was known, and that gives hope for the forthcoming Services. It is not easy to give an appraisal when there was no sound available from speakers microphone at all until close to the end of the service around 10.55 am.

Communion served at the Communion Table was refreshing, and the music we were lucky enough to hear was very good. This is not meant to be a moaning note, because things will undoubtedly get better, and thanks are due to those who take responsibility for producing it. We look forward to next Sunday, when it has to be hoped the problem areas will be rectified.

As two people who are simply having to observe recommendations about not attending due to underlying problems, we look forward so much to attending in person when it is right to do so. On our journey back to normality, this was a major step along the way.



23 MAY 2021 - A VERY AUSPICIOUS DAY!

When the services finished in St Andrew's and in Weybridge on 15th March 2020 I think that many of us suspected that there may not be a service the following week. Most of us probably realised that there could well be a short period when our buildings were closed but what I don't think any of us would ever have believed is that it would turn out to be 14 months before both our church buildings were open again. That's partly legal and partly because we've been cautious, but in that time the church has developed in ways we could never have predicted and has learnt to operate in a vastly different way. Last week, we gave thanks for the way in which the Trinity has been at work in that time, guiding us, caring for us and loving us here in the Walton and Weybridge Pastorate. There's lots to give thanks for but today is Pentecost and in common with many other churches, we are re-opening today. We are celebrating the church's birthday and at long last we are sharing in a family gathering that's "in person", not just on Zoom. You'll forgive my quirky sense of humour if I wryly note that on the Day of Pentecost the disciples ran out into the streets and began preaching to the people outside and yet on Pentecost 2021 the church has run back inside its buildings instead, away from the people outside - but that's just my warped sense of irony! Glad to know that the church bizarre is still alive and kicking.

It is nice to be back! It's nice to be worshipping again within the walls whose stones and bricks have been hallowed by the prayers of many for a long time. It's nice to be back in buildings which are familiar and which mean so much to us. And it's nice to be able to see our friends again. Uncle Boris has even said that we can hug as long as we do it cautiously and responsibly. We're back and I'm quite happy to let the next month or so be a time when we can just enjoy being back, looking forward to when restrictions are lifted still further.

Returning on Pentecost reminds us that the church is founded on the flame of the Spirit - burning and enabling, not a bank of laurels upon which to rest. We do need to move forward and I'm sure that we shall. Last Pentecost, I reflected to you that our church premises felt very strange places to walk through. They were silent where they'd normally be busy. Ear-plugs weren't need to go into the hall at Weybridge and at St Andrew's the cleaner had been working through the place which now gleamed and smelt of polish. A year ago, I reflected that neither of our buildings felt like closed churches. Instead, they felt like places poised in readiness for the day when we could open the doors and let people in again. A year ago I also reflected that that, as the church celebrated its birthday in lockdown, what was inescapable was that the church was very much alive. The closure of buildings didn't mean the closure of the church. The church was adapting and evolving in remarkable ways. A year ago I commented that it felt as if the Holy Spirit had grabbed the church by the scruff of her neck and pulled her forward. Optimistically I even suggested that in years to come we may actually look back on this time as being a pivotal moment of renewal and revival, opening all sorts of new doors, rather than closing them.

A year on, I stand by all of that. Yes, it's been a hard time. Many of us are exhausted. It's been the weirdest journey. It also seems a bit odd wearing trousers this morning instead of smart top and trackie bottoms. This last lockdown period also seems to have been harder than the first but we're moving out of it now, giving thanks for the highly successful vaccination programme which has allowed this. We look forward to picking things up again and to being able to build upon what we've learnt over the last 14 months which is why I want to draw on something from one of the post resurrection stories which seems very relevant this year - which is I deliberately delayed till now.

The story of the Remarkable Catch of Fish is a very well-known one. Jesus has risen from the dead and the disciples all realise and accept this, even Thomas. It's good news - but they are listless. They can't settle and John the Gospel writer tells of Simon deciding to go back fishing again. At least four of the disciples were experienced fishermen and John tells us of seven of them

all piling into a boat and going out fishing - just like they always used to. Now, normally we'd focus on ultimate catch, but this year I want to focus on the bit before that. I want to reflect on the fact that for a long time these experienced fishermen caught nothing. The trip was a total failure. In fact, they were just abandoning the trip as being a waste of time until Jesus told them to cast the net one final time but in different waters. My point is that when some of the disciples went back to what they'd always done in the past, and which presumably had work for them in the past, it didn't work. It was a total disaster. They caught nothing. I can't help thinking that John is actually giving us a very important tip this year.

We've learnt new ways of being church during lockdown – and they've been remarkably successful ways as well. We've learnt how to sing the Lord's song in a strange land. Today is a pivotal day for us as both our buildings reopen on a Sunday and Luke is clearly speaking to us about how Pentecost is all about going forward, filled with the Holy Spirit, excited and wanting to share the story of Jesus with others. John's on the same track and what strikes me this year about the story of the miraculous catch of fish is that when the disciples tried going back to do what they'd always done, they found that it didn't work any more. It was only when they lowered their nets in the fresh place that Jesus directed them to, that they met with success. I've a feeling that's going to be our next challenge.

So, let's enjoy our family reunion today. As John Donne famously, "No man is an Island, entire of itself." Let's give ourselves a moment catch up and let's give ourselves a moment to enjoy being together again in reality. Then, just the like Jews who returned to Jerusalem after the Exile, we know that we have some rebuilding to do. Excitingly, we've got all the things that we've learnt over the last 14 months in our tool-box now which surely must mean that we're in a much stronger position to go forward - so, let's also heed what Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John and the two whom John doesn't name discovered. It's the old adage that the future's ahead, not behind. Let's go forward from this Pentecost in the power of the Holy Spirit, know that that Spirit has placed all sorts of contemporary tools in our tool kit now - and taught us how to use them.

Music. We are glad to be back in church. Today is a lovely day but we also know what a hard 14 months it's been. So many people have lost their lives during the pandemic, so many families have been split up, so many occasions have been missed. We've all missed a great many things and some are now suffering from the effects of what's become known as long covid. So, let's take a moment, back in church, to remember all this and to have a moment with our own thoughts on this special occasion. It's an orchestral version of Cesar Frank's much loved work, Paris Angelicus.

Michael



FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

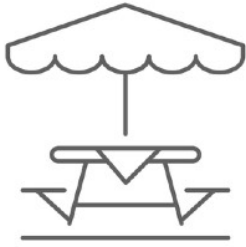
As our church building reopens on a Sunday there is one rather important person who will be missing for a bit - Zacc. Like all teachers, he's under a lot of pressure at work at the moment. He's exhausted and with increased demands on him at school he doesn't feel that he can play for us every week now and must step back a bit.

This is perfectly understandable but I'm truly delighted to say that after a break he will be back again in the autumn playing once or twice a month. Details are still to be worked out but I am just so pleased that we've not lost him totally. As we all know, Zacc is a fine musician who adds a lot to our services. We totally understand his position and just give thanks for the contribution he can still make.

Have a good rest, Zacc and know that we shall look genuinely forward to hearing you play whenever you can.

Michael

PEOPLE WHO LUNCH FRIDAY 11 JUNE



We had hoped to start People Who Lunch as normal again but, due to continued social distancing, we plan to meet - weather permitting! - in the back garden at Weybridge URC at 12.30 pm and bring our own picnic lunch. Hopefully in July we will be able to return to normal! Looking forward to seeing you there!

Margaret Faultless

TIME CAPSULE FROM 1886 DISCOVERED AT URC PRIMARY SCHOOL



A 145-year-old time capsule, containing ten coins and a rolled-up newspaper, has been discovered in the foundations of a United Reformed Church (URC) primary school.

As reported on BBC News, the glass jar was found "by complete accident" while workers renovated the chapel at Barrow URC Primary School in Clitheroe, Lancashire, built in 1876. The artefact had been placed inside one of the chapel's foundation stones.

Speaking to the BBC, Head teacher Sue Taylor said the "incredible find" had brought "history of the school alive for the children." "It was obvious it was a time capsule when I picked it up. I could hear the coins jangling at the bottom," she said.

A conservation team is now examining the time capsule and will unroll the newspaper and research the coins' history. Building work was carried out at the school in April. The demolition team lifted up the foundation stones in the chapel and found the glass jar.



During the first coronavirus lockdown some of the school children buried a time capsule from 2020. Ms Taylor said finding this capsule meant "history has come full circle".



"It was found by complete accident," she said, adding: "It's so interesting and has sparked so much interest for the children." The time capsule is now in the hands of Lancashire County Council's conservation team which will involve the children as much as possible in the process of conserving it. When the capsule is returned to the school it will be placed in the new main entrance which is roughly where it was planted many years ago

MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM HELD ON 1 MARCH 2020

Apologies for Absence: Carol Lee, Sheila Gardner, Johnston Simpson, Barbara Rodgers, Jean Rigden, Mary Taylor, Nan Mercer, Anne Fitzgerald, Patricia Coaker

Members and Friends

Pastoral issues of St Andrew's members and friends were discussed and prayers were said for all. A minute's silence³ as held for Hector Coulter and May Dow and prayers of thanks were said for them.

Minutes from Previous Meeting held on 1st December 2019

These were signed as a true and accurate record.

Church Roll

Rev Roy Bones has expressed a wish to leave Weybridge URC and asked to transfer his membership to St Andrew's. The was approved by the Meeting and he will be accepted into membership at the service on Easter Sunday.

Outreach & Mission

- The Elders have held conversations relating to the decreasing pool of people who are able to take on voluntary positions in the church. They are looking to employ a person, in a part-time capacity, to do administrative duties. In this way, Elders will be able to focus their efforts on outreach activities.
- Further use of the Gateway – The Gateway was designed so that people are able to see into the church. However, the heat curtain is not stopping draughts in the way that it was meant to do. Also, leaving the external doors open during a service means too much noise comes in from outside. To overcome these issues, there is a plan to place glass doors on the inner frame of the porch.
- To make more use of the Garden Room, the window will be replaced with a door to give access to the garden.

Treasurer's Report – Jan de Kok

2019 – Key Points

- Voluntary income has reduced, due to variations in Gift Aid tax rebates.
- Hall Lettings income has increase and is holding up well.
- M&M is our largest expense.
- Less capital was spent in 2019.

Budget for 2020

- We are budgeting for less voluntary income and increased Hall Letting.
- Overall, we are looking to reduce our total costs by around £1000.
- We agreed to a 4% increase in our M&M contribution for this year.

The Treasurer thanked everyone who volunteer to get things done in the church. He then went into more detail around the need to use our human resources in different ways to what we are used to. Our focus has to be on outreach. Anna Crawford is stepping down from the post of Church Secretary and we do not have the resources for a replacement, without the option of delegating. This also applies to the Hall Lettings, which is organised by Jan and Moira de Kok, who are likely to be spending a lot of their time outside of the UK. With all this in mind there is a plan to set up an Administration function. The Elders believe that, if this is not set up, we will not have the resources to do what we need to do – which is outreach. Aligned with this are the plans to expand the Garden Room and the Gateway to make these into spaces for outreach. These are simple jobs to do and the total cost is £2,975 (inc VAT). We would normally take the proposals to the Elders meeting first. However, with Jan and the Minister being away for a significant period of time over the next few months they prefer to put these to the Church Meeting today, to prevent delays. Beryl Brown proposed, Anna Crawford seconded and the Meeting agreed to give authorisation, in principle, for the Elders to approve this spend at the next meeting on Tuesday (3rd March).

Thanks were express to Jan and Moira from the Meeting.

Annual Reports – Anna Crawford

Johnston Simpson has expressed a wish to step down as a serving Elder and the Minister will write him a letter of thanks for his 20+ years of service. James Zhang has put himself forward to serve as an Elder. He was elected unanimously, along with all Elders standing for re-election this year.

Ministers Matters

- The Minister informed the Meeting that he will be taking a three-month sabbatical, starting on 1st May. During this time, he will attend the Passion Play in Oberammergau and will be going on a week's retreat.
- A series of concerts is being planned and the Minister is working with Zacc to put together a programme.

ST ANDREW'S URC

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2020 - 2021

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS (ZIMBABWE)

Like the UK, ArtPeace have faced draconian measures to try and contain the pandemic – their government's efforts appear to have been far more successful with comparatively few deaths. However, as you can imagine, the artists faced an even tougher existence than usual. The good news is that our support has proved even more beneficial in numerous ways for which the group are so grateful. Their Harvest yield this year, compared to last when there was a chronic drought, was excellent and again, they were blessed with contributions covering seed, fertilisers and chemicals to treat pests.

Like us, they have been unable to attend their various churches, so I had the idea of trying to make live recordings at home of our Zoom services via WhatsApp using my mobile phone. The results were surprisingly good and mostly arrived loud and clear. The size of our joint congregation doubled if not trebled overnight with family groups gathered round one mobile! They sent appreciative comments throughout the services which I conveyed on our Zoom chatline. A few of the congregation responded by sending greetings to the artists which made them feel part of St. Andrew's. They were equally thrilled by a message on Easter Sunday from Andrew Nunn, the Dean of Southwark Cathedral whose video was played on Zoom – as the minister commented, surely a first for the URC. We have a strong connection with the Cathedral courtesy of all the small sculptures we supply to their shop which has only recently reopened. The artists lost well over a year's sales proceeds – no furlough payments for them! I would like to thank those members of the congregation who have sent donations and encouragement over the past year.

Johnston Simpson

Child Contact Centre Walton on Thames

It was considered necessary to close the Contact Centre at the start of Lockdown in March 2020. In response to a recent enquiry from the Management Committee about the possibility of letting out the hall commercially on Saturday afternoons, our chairman canvassed all previous volunteers in order to establish who would be able and willing to serve if and/or when the Centre were to re-open. Nearly half - including the co-ordinator - indicated that, due to changed circumstances, they would be unable to return, so we have, sadly, decided that the Contact Centre will need to cease operations permanently with immediate effect.

The Centre opened on 18 May 1991: an initiative by the late Joan Davis. Since that time we have helped nearly 800 families, staffed by members from all the local churches. We are grateful for the many years of service given by so many, willingly and lovingly, to the Centre. Also, we owe much to St Andrew's that has selflessly provided the premises over the past 30 years. This has made a huge difference to the lives of many children and their families, a wonderful outreach on its part.

Anne Fitzgerald

Maintenance Report

The annual maintenance of the premises has continued.

Covid requirements were put in place to allow the premises to be open when permitted.

The following works were carried out.

- Replacement of the fence at the back of the premises.
- The Robina tree in the car park was taken down as it proved be rotten.
- Glass doors were put in between the porch and the Gateway to cut draughts and noise.
- French doors were put in in the Garden Room to allow access to the grass area.

The Management Team

Messy Church

Messy Church was unable to meet due to the covid restrictions, but Anne has done a wonderful job, keeping in touch with the families, producing parcels of books, activities etc, for them to enjoy as the various seasons passed. Thank you Anne for your thoughtful care of this part of our church family.

Anna Crawford

Newsletter

What a year it has been for all of us! I had reduced the issues of the Newsletter by three a year (from 10 to seven) by doing double issues for March/April, May/June and October/November in addition to the normal double issues in July/August and December/January. With the onset of Lockdown starting in late March 2020, I decided to go back to a monthly issue and put together a special April 'Lockdown' Extra' issue which contained lots of information about how we should keep safe as well as a most thoughtful Pastoral letter from the minister, thanking us all for going the extra mile in order to keep our ship afloat. Diary dates ceased and your contributions were more important than ever to enable me to produce spirits-lifting issues month after month. There was a Questionnaire in the October 2020 issue to try to gauge your preferences and, although only eight people responded, it was helpful to indicate what sort of variety you like included. Broadly speaking, however, it appeared that you were on the whole happy with the Newsletter in its present form. Unsurprisingly, the Minister's Pastoral letter was considered key and also items that brought a smile or gave us strength in difficult times. The church garden has featured and reminded us how fortunate we are to have it, as well as the small team of dedicated gardeners who tend it. It would be great to encourage contributions from Hall users once they are back on track and able to use it once again on a regular basis as this would provide a different perspective.

Please remember you don't need to be prompted to send in articles and/or photographs! Our website has been further developed and I have had some extra tuition as to how to upload the Newsletter which I try to do a day or two before the last Sunday of the month, traditionally the day of issue as a hard copy in the church. We now have only a handful of hard copies that Anna kindly distributes either by hand or post, with 71 going out by email. I also send about 20 copies to my own friends, thereby boosting our very modest readership! Feedback - positive or otherwise - is always appreciated. Thank you for all your support.

Norma Reid, Editor

Secretary's Report

Since my last report we have as a nation, church family and individually experienced something that none of us could have predicted. Covid 19 has dominated our lives over the past months, and is still very much part of everyday life, upsetting plans and our way of life completely.

As Church Secretary I could say very little of normal activity has happened within the church but also a lot has happened. Ways of doing things has changed dramatically and I need immediately to pay tribute to our minister, Michael, who has given up much time and effort to keep us all together, via zoom, weekly sheets, phone calls and door stop visits. His pastoral care has been exemplary. We owe him a great deal of gratitude. Like us all, technology was not a strong ability but he has guided us all to zoom, upgrading the church equipment so that worship can still be shared by all. Our church services via zoom have been a joy, being able to share worship together with our sister church Weybridge. Friendships have been forged across the ether, worshipping truly as one church. We were able to open for a short time, in the autumn, now we are open again, with social distancing in place, worshipping without singing is strange, but we are back together.

I feel the lesson that we have learnt is that church is not a building but the fellowship of the people who meet together to give praise and thanks to our God. So that togetherness is the important thing not the place.

Sadly we have lost two members. May Dow and Barbara Rodgers. Both are remembered fondly and are missed. John Hutson has moved nearer his family and we wish him well in his new home: he too will be missed.

The Elders have met via zoom, a bonus of not having to travel, safe in the comforts of our own homes. At all times, the Elders have considered the situation, Government guidelines and advice and the URC recommendations, to ensure the safety of all.

My thanks go to the Elders who have also had to adapt. Jan with the Treasurer's responsibilities along with maintenance **AND** hall hire. Paula and Hilary who have been stalwarts on the technology side. Anne for her continued support of our Messy Church people. We are sad to see the closing of the Contact Centre, but pray that the efforts of the Elders to identify new areas of outreach will bear fruit. Johnston, with the able assistance of Sue, James and Annie who have kept the garden looking wonderful. The church building may have been closed but the life of the garden was a beacon of hope to all who saw it. Norma too has beavered away monthly to keep us all in touch with the Newsletter, no small job, we thank you too.

This will be my last Annual Report, as the Elders have nominated a new Secretary, a nomination which the church meeting will, I hope, endorse. I have had the privilege of serving under two ministers over 11 years. Both have brought different gifts and skills to our congregation. My thanks to them and the Elders who have been such a support to me.

I pray that the Lord will continue to bless all and those connected with St Andrew's and take us forward in his way.

Anna Crawford

Perfect Prayer

You cannot say the Lord's prayer, and even once say "I"
You cannot pray the Lord's prayer, and even once say "My".
Nor can you pray the Lord's prayer and not pray for another.
For when you ask for daily bread, you must include your brother!
For others are included in each and every plea.
From the beginning to the end of it, it does not once say "me".

2020-2021 TREASURER'S UPDATE

A Treasurer's Report was given in the April Newsletter (page 10). This is an update to end year.

Update on Financial Position up to March 2021

INCOME	2020	2021
	£	£
Voluntary (Giving etc)	7,685	8,180
Hall Hire	4,896	0
<u>Total</u>	<u>£12,581</u>	<u>£8,108 (£4,473)</u>

EXPENSES

	£	£
Ministry & Mission	5,952	5,952
All Other	5,553	5,100
<u>Total</u>	<u>£ 11,545</u>	<u>£11,052 (£493)</u>

Note

The income vs expense picture reflects a "Loss" of £2,944

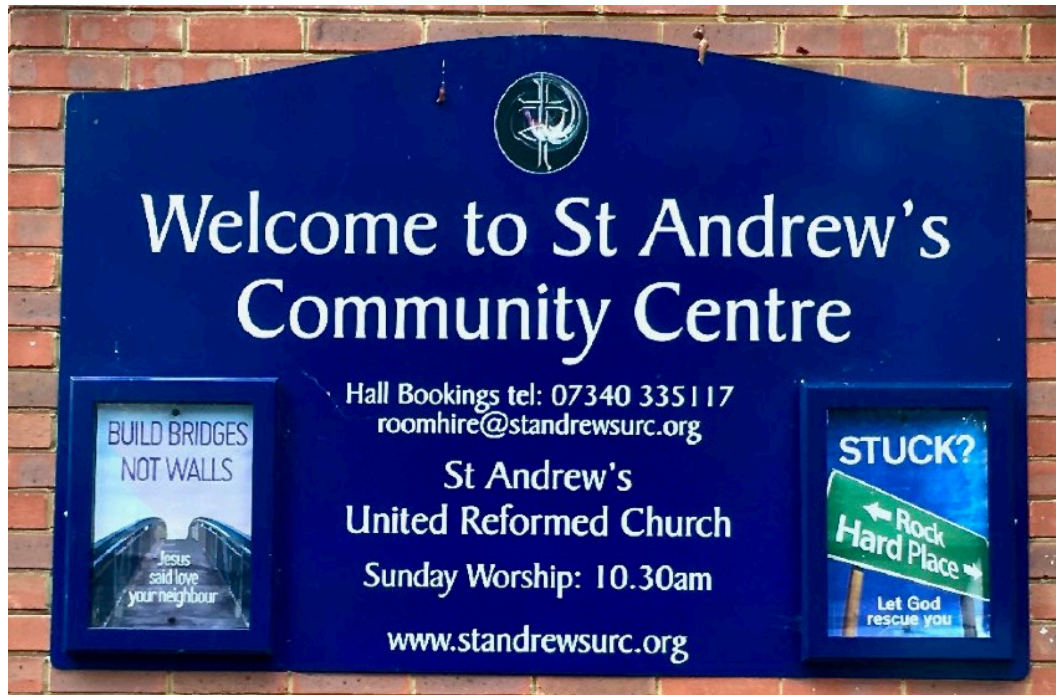
For the second quarter our hiring activities will slowly start to recover, but full income will not happen until September (i.e. after the summer holidays.)

Our income vs expense will therefore remain negative for most of this year and will be covered by our reserves.

Your continued financial goodwill towards your church therefore remains very, very important in 2021.

Thank you and God bless.

Jan De Kok



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

We re-opened our church building on 23 May and Covid-safe services will now start at the original time of 10.30 am. Services are also accessible on Zoom. 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