



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



THE GRAPEVINE



MAY 2022

Volume 1 No 4



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*"It is now May . . . It is the month wherein Nature hath her fill of mirth,
and the senses are filled with delights. I conclude, it is from the Heavens a
grace, and to Earth a gladness."*

Nicholas Breton



From The Manse

May 2022

Dear friends

As you know, I am finally beginning a rather overdue period of sabbatical leave. URC ministers are encouraged to take a period of sabbatical study every 10 years and I should have taken it in 2020 but Covid made it impossible. The same was true for 2021 but they do say, "Third time lucky"! Let me share with you what I'll be working on over the next three months.

I was ordained in 1987 and have been incredibly fortunate to have been called to serve in a wide variety of ministries, always conscious of God's leading, right from the first stages of my candidating process in the late 1970s/early 1980s. Since ordination I've served in rural, suburban and urban pastorates. Concurrent with these appointments I have also served as an industrial chaplain and a hospice chaplain. Additionally, there has been work within the wider URC, plus all sorts of community activities and I am deeply aware that in all of this I've been richly blessed. I have also been asked to support a number of newly-ordained ministers as they have begun their ministries and that has been an incredible source of blessing. They have refreshed my ministry and I have been able to share with them some of my own experience. (I'm quite sure that they've given me more than I've ever given them.) Part of my sabbatical therefore is to reflect on all of this and to start writing some of it down, possibly with a view to producing something to share with others. I'm not intending to write my memoirs (yet?) but I would like to get down on paper a record of a journey which began a long time ago and which still continues. From that I also wonder if I can write something about the practicalities of ministry to help newly-ordained ministers in the future? Some of the funding for my sabbatical is coming from an educational trust which is encouraging me to have a go at doing just that - so that's the major thrust.

I intend to use Barbara quite a bit during the next three months and am revisiting many of the places on my ministry journey. Firstly, I am wanting to use a long journey with a number of different stopping points to reflect upon another long journey with a number of different stopping points on it. It's my way of "walking the way" and reflecting on "living the life" to which God called me. Secondly though, I want to use Barbara for a specific reason. As my ministry journey's progressed I've become increasingly aware of how ministers are normally only in each place for a relatively short time whilst members of the congregation are there before you arrived and will be there after you leave - hopefully for a long time. Using the caravan will sort of replicate this sense of "impermanence" (if there is such a word - if not I've just invented it). When I pull Barbara off the pitch at the end of a stay there should be nothing left to indicate I was ever there and I think that I can use that stark sight of an empty pitch as a reflective tool. I've contacted all my previous pastorates, asking them, "What did my ministry actually leave? How did it empower and how did it enable that church for the future - or did I just leave a blank space?" I am receiving some very interesting and, on occasions, surprising responses. How did those pastorates develop or equip me for the future though? What lessons did I learn? How was I enabled by them?


When I was looking to move here and was filling out the URC's Minister's Profile form in 2016, I found that it now asks for the story of the call to ministry to be included. I really struggled with that question (and in the end "forgot" to fill it in). 40 years on so much of it is rather hazy now. A story I could once tell so easily is becoming forgotten so perhaps it's time to burrow deep into the memory bank to retrieve it and to get it written down on paper too. (Don't worry, I'm not wanting to fill in another Minister's Profile form!) That initial feeling of being called to ministry is still what I rely on, even if I have become hazy about many of the details.

This sabbatical is not only about looking back and reflecting on the past though and the delays in taking it ironically mean that it is falling at an ideal time. The pastorate here is developing in ways that are significantly different from anything I'd thought about or had predicted. With the two churches now united and the initial "coming together" progressing well I'm really grateful for the chance to step aside for a moment and to re-focus and re-prioritise. I'm certain that is highly necessary and will pay big dividends. Some re-assessment would be good.

Finally though when this sabbatical concludes I shall probably have a little over three years before I hope to retire and so I think that it's time to begin asking God "what next?" I hope that I've exercised a faithful, caring pastoral and preaching ministry - but what does God have in mind for me after retirement? I'll be honest and say that I'm not feeling much of a call to "pulpit supply" and certainly have no intention of ever chairing another meeting after I've retired! On the other hand, I don't believe that you can decide to retire from being "called" so what might that mean next? Reflecting on my journey thus far therefore seems like a good place from which to start asking God, "What next?"

So, I'd like to think that over the next three months I can have a go at pulling together all sorts of disparate subjects and thoughts. I'm looking forward to trying to see if I can produce something which might help and support newly-ordained ministers as they begin their ministries, continuing the work the URC has already asked me to do. But I also feel that taking the chance to re-evaluate and re-focus my thoughts here in the light of all that has happened is important too. Do please think of me and remember me in your prayers.

With all good wishes,



Michael, we send you, every good wish for your long-delayed sabbatical. May you - and your trusty four-wheeled steed, Barbara - fulfil all you have planned for, enjoy some exciting adventures and take time to rest and re-charge your batteries over the next three months.

We look forward to your re-energised return in mid-August.

As an accomplished pianist you should enjoy this quotation
(albeit you might not have a piano to hand on a regular basis)!

"Some of my favourite music in the world is Haydn. I had a sabbatical one year and made myself one promise: to play a different Haydn piano sonata each day - they are inexhaustible treasures." Simon Rattle

News of the Church Family

Prayers

Please remember these friends in your prayers – Brian & Kate Ashfield, David Cheeseman, Chris Goddard, John Langdon, Lilian Smith and Michael Stevens and Moira de Kok. Please remember, too, the Minister as he begins his sabbatical.

(If you know of any member of the congregation who would like to be included in this list please let the Editors know. We always seek permission of the person involved before any name is added.)

Top Tips and all that Chat – Your comments on life today

I enjoyed reading John Langdon's poem on the Easter story. How nice to have a poem written by one of our own members. Thank you, John, for allowing us to share it.

Traditional Hot Cross Buns had a lot of competition this year with so many other variations both sweet (eg apple and blueberry) and savoury (eg Marmite and various cheeses). One advertisement suggested that a savoury Hot Cross Bun could be served with a fried egg on top which I suppose gets breakfast covered.

Holy Week and Easter seemed to get a wider coverage in the media this year. Some friends said that they thought the tragic situation in Ukraine had somehow emphasised the real importance of Easter. By chance I caught a 'reflection' on radio by an Anglican priest (a mother) whose 17 year-old son had taken his own life a few months ago. Her church is dedicated to St Mary and in her shock and grief she found a comforting link with Mary the mother of Jesus and the Easter story. She also shared her experience with other people in similar circumstances in a process of mutual help and support. It was one of the most moving programmes I have ever heard.

Taking a walk round the roads of Weybridge is a real tonic at this time of the year. There are so many trees covered in beautiful pink and white blossom while flowers are bursting through in the gardens. What a lovely place to live – make the most of it.

Booster vaccination time again. Just as well that I left home early because with roadworks seemingly everywhere much of the journey from Weybridge to Chertsey was spent sitting in traffic jams or being diverted along circuitous routes. On the plus side – I had plenty of time to admire the scenery in roads I didn't know existed and received cheery waves from pedestrians on the footpath as they overtook the cars and trucks. I was a bit worried about being late for my appointment but on arrival discovered there were hardly any other 'customers' and I was whisked through the system in no time. The downside, however, was that the compulsory post-vaccination 15-minute wait before being allowed to drive home was a bit boring because lack of numbers meant there was little opportunity to pursue my usual habit of whiling away the time by imagining the lifestyles of my fellow 'vaccees'.


A minister in his children's talk on Easter Sunday asked the children how big they thought the stone was that was placed in front of Jesus' tomb. All kinds of sizes were suggested. To the boy who suggested that it was the size of the pulpit, the minister said, 'Yes, that would be about the size.' To his next question, 'Who do you think could move a stone that size?' he got the answer, 'The Council.'

Holy Wit, The Revd James A Simpson

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES MAY 2022

The minister is now on Sabbatical until mid-August

On the first and third Sunday of the month, services will also be on Zoom

Sunday 1 May (Zoom)	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion taken by Mrs Anna Crawford
Thursday 5 May	LOCAL ELECTIONS POLLING DAY	
Sunday 8 May	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Mr Sydney Shore
Tuesday 10 May	8.00 pm	Elders' Meeting Bill Topping Room, Walton-on-Thames site
Wednesday 11 May	12.30 pm	Organ Recital with Alan Rapley, organist at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Horsell, Woking (see pages 8 and 9)
Friday 13 May	12.30 - 2.30 pm	People Who Lunch at Weybridge site (see page 7)
Sunday 15 May (Zoom)	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Mr Graham Pearcey
	3.00 pm	 Messy Church

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ALL ITEMS TO THE EDITOR (provided they do not contravene copyright regulations)

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Or ASSOCIATE EDITOR, Mollie Henham Email: 18amh65@gmail.com

Sunday 22 May	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Mrs Anna Crawford
Sunday 29 May	10.30 am	Morning Worship taken by Mrs Linda Lambert



Church flowers in April



We are Shelter. We support millions of people every year facing the housing emergency through our advice, support and legal services.

Our country's housing emergency is spiralling.
Every four minutes another family becomes homeless.

Thousands of people just like you supported us last year. Sadly there's still thousands of people urgently trying to get through without a safe place to call home. With almost 1 in 200 people homeless in England right now, our helpline is needed more than ever.

You're part of a movement that is taking a stand against the housing emergency and fighting for a fairer housing system.

If you have any questions about our work, please don't hesitate to get in touch, email community@shelter.org.uk.

Thank you for your ongoing support,
Lindsay and the Community Fundraising team

PS A gift from you today could help answer the next call to our emergency helpline.

YOU CAN DONATE USING THE LINK BELOW

<https://giving.give-star.com/microsite/shelter/easter-appeal/team/256d8483-cc3e-41d9-b582-1d3bdcd15a68>

Local elections 2022



SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

Thursday 5 May

The church hall at Weybridge will be in use as a Polling Station for **Surrey County Council and Local Elections** on **5th May** from **7.00am to 10.00pm**. Likewise the church hall at St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Walton and Weybridge.

Please note that no other access to the halls will be permitted on that day.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT A GLANCE



PEOPLE WHO LUNCH

Friday 13 May
12.30 - 2.30 pm

At Weybridge URC site
Queens Road, KT13 9UX

Soup, rolls, dessert and coffee,
all for just £4.00.

Even if you have never been before you will be
very welcome and will find yourself in the midst of
a friendly gathering.

Please remember advance booking is essential.

Reserve your place(s) with Margaret Faultless
email: margaret.faultless@blueyonder.co.uk

Remember today is the tomorrow
you worried about yesterday
(Dale Carnegie, quoted in the 'Indian Express')

REMINDER!

THURSDAY 5 MAY

Local elections 2022



A child who was describing the difference
between Jews, Protestants and Catholics said.
'They are all just different ways of voting for
God'. (Holy Wit, The Revd James A Simpson)



LUNCHTIME ORGAN RECITAL

Wednesday 11 May

12.30 pm at Weybridge URC site
Queens Road, KT13 9UX

The May concert features Alan Rapley

Bring your own snacks - enjoy the music
Tea and coffee available

Free entry with retiring collection after costs to
Parkinsons (Walton & Weybridge Branch)

*Details of this concert and the organist on
pages 8 and 9. A full list of concerts is in the
February issue (page 6)*

'If you pass a church and hear the organ being
played, go inside and listen. ... Miss no
opportunity to practise on the organ. No other
instrument takes such an immediate revenge on
sloppiness in composition and playing.'

Robert Schumann

COME AND CELEBRATE THE URC'S 50TH JUBILEE.

A TIME OF CELEBRATION
AS WE WORSHIP TOGETHER.

*Let's all come together to enjoy a
day of worship, fun and activities.*

The United Reformed Church
Wessex Synod

Saturday
7th May 2022

WESSEX SYNOD
BIG
Day Out **2022**

Organ Corner

Organ Recital – given at Weybridge URC on 13 April

From Priests to Daisy

David Oldfield's organ recital at Weybridge on 13th April provided an enjoyable and contrasting programme "with something in it for everyone", as they say. The organ itself was installed in 1865 and at that point transcriptions of orchestral pieces were popular organ repertoire. Our instrument was, therefore, well-suited for David's first piece, taken from Mendelssohn's little-known oratorio, *Athalia*, and often called *The War March of the Priests*. From the chordal richness of the romantic era, however, David's next piece took us to the late baroque era and Handel's Organ Concerto No 12. Beautifully played with crisp registration (choice of stops) and precise articulation (even, controlled finger-work). The two opening pieces really set the tone for an interesting programme.

Healey Willan was next – an Anglo-Canadian composer and organist who is probably best known for his church music. His short organ pieces are amongst the much reached for contents of many a church organist's music case and the three which David played here amply illustrate why that is. They were the preludes on the hymn tunes, *Song 24* (R&S 501), *Melcombe* (New every morning is the love) and *St Columba* (Put peace into each other's hands). Listening to *Melcombe* I couldn't help but think again that it's almost Elgarian in style. I have not heard it for a number of years and am inspired to get my copy out and start playing it again. Willan's prelude on *St Columba* just works so well, and David played the tune on the warm Open Diapason stop on the Great (the lower keyboard). It is a really rounded, warm sound and was well suited to the lilting, Irish melody. David concluded the piece on the Swell (the upper manual) on a quiet stop with a string-like quality – shimmering and absolutely beautiful.

Contrast again, though, as we left the 20th century repertoire for some Bach – the Prelude and Fugue in C major. Again, crisply registered (choice of stops) – which was so different from the thicker texture and the lilt of the preceding Willan preludes – it was refreshing, with the complex sound and mathematical precision of the fugue running happily along like a well-oiled machine. It was a good choice.

As the programme came to an end, though, there was time for a little lollipop to finish with. It took the form of contemporary composer, Christopher Maxim's, *Toccata Nuptiale*. Written in the grand French organ style it was composed for the wedding of one of Maxim's friends who was a keen cyclist. It's not long, therefore, before the flamboyant style incorporates *Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do* – and with the subtlety of a breeze block at ten paces. Great fun – I really must get a copy!

So, a varied and well-thought out programme, showing the versatility of both organist and organ, was enjoyed by the audience. A lunchtime treat indeed. *Michael Hodgson*

(Footnote on Toccata Nuptiale: The wedding mentioned above and thus the first performance of the composition took place in Heswell United Reformed Church, the Wirral.)

Organ Recital
Weybridge site

12.30pm 11 May

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Alan Rapley for a return visit to Weybridge to give the third in the last series of organ recitals in this church.

Alan started learning the organ at the age of 10 as a chorister at his local parish church, giving his first public performance a year later (only a short piece before morning service). He was appointed to his first post as a parish church organist at the age of 14.

On leaving school he went on to study French and Music at Royal Holloway College University of London, where he was taught by the New Zealand organist Betty Black and John Porter from St. George's Chapel Windsor. He also spent a year studying with Gérard Letellier at the Le Mans Conservatoire and was awarded the silver medal in the end of the year competition.

He went on to teach modern languages in two independent schools in Surrey and inevitably became heavily involved in their extra-curricular music.

He has been organist at a number of churches in Surrey, most recently at St. Mary's Church, Horsell, with which he maintains a close association although he has worked as a free-lance organist for a number of years. He is a committee member and trustee of the Woking Music Festival.

Please come along to support the organist at this recital given for church and community. Bring your friends and your lunch (if you wish to do so) – coffee, tea and soft drinks will be provided – and relax whilst listening to what is guaranteed to be an hour of superb music. Admission is free but there will be a retiring collection. After running costs have been deducted the balance will go to the Woking and Weybridge branch of Parkinson's UK.

Brian Ashfield

**Programme for Organ Recital
by Alan Rapley**

**12.30pm 11 May
Weybridge URC**

Prelude and Fugue in E flat BWV 552 (St Anne)	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Unter der Linden Grüne	Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562 - 1621)
Voluntary in D major	John Bennett (1735 - 1784)
Études en forme de Canon, No.1	Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)
Monologues 2 and 3, Op162	Josef Rheinberger (1839 - 1901)
Hymn Prelude on "Rhosymedre"	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)
Humoresque "L'organo primitivo"	Pietro Yon (1886 - 1943)
Toccata	Joseph Callaerts (1830 - 1901)



OUR EASTER SERVICES



PALM SUNDAY



On arriving at church, as well as the customary palm frond along with the service sheet, certainly the majority of us were mystified to receive a clear glass pebble. As the service progressed, the reason for this was revealed. Michael explained that these glass pebbles represented tears. He says: "The tears tie in with Luke's account of the Palm Sunday story where he records that Jesus stopped and wept as he looked over Jerusalem. (Luke 19 v 41). Luke is the only one to record this and today there is a small, simple chapel shaped like a teardrop on the supposed spot where Jesus stopped. I used small, glass pebbles that looked a bit like tears and having thought about the things that bring us to tears we put them in to a bowl of slightly salted water (tears have a slightly salty taste) where the water was only being held by surface tension so that as we put out "tears" in the bowl, the water would flow out." These tears could relate to our own, shed over trials and problems that we experience in our lives.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Liz Grimsey writes:

"Following the pattern of recent years, the congregation gathered at Weybridge for the first service of the Easter weekend, on Maundy Thursday evening. The mood was set by the beautiful opening hymn, "My song is love unknown, my Saviour's love to me" and Shirley's reading from Luke, chapter 22. We shared communion together, and as always, it carried a particular resonance on the eve of Good Friday. Before the final hymn, "Be known to us in breaking bread", the Minister noted that there were people of all voice types in the congregation, and invited those who wished to sing in harmony. I am afraid this proved completely beyond my knowledge and skills, but I very much enjoyed listening to everyone else! This was followed by a further reading about the events of that Thursday night, and then there was no formal end to the service. Instead, the service concluded quietly with, as the service sheet put it, "the atmosphere left hanging, as Jesus left the upper room and made his way to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane and to await his betrayal and arrest. It was very moving."

GOOD FRIDAY

The Service of Meditation began at 10.30 with 'There is a Green Hill far away' and, after a prayer and introduction, continued starting with the poem 'When Jesus Christ was once a Child' by Plechtchéev and subsequent readings telling the Good Friday story. There was a musical interlude when Zacc played 'The Servant King' and an intriguing short drama 'The Christmas Cast reassembles for Easter' delivered to great effect by Michael, who played the role of the Stage Director with his customary enthusiasm. Mary, for example had to be told that they'd had to break the manger up - the wood was needed, for something else. The star wasn't needed - no stars in this story, only darkness - and the Wise Men were told that they didn't need the gold of the frankincense any more - only the Myrrh was required now. The drama comes to an end as Jesus comes forward, no longer a baby in a manger but a man about to be crucified, and the Director remarks "My, how you've grown!"



EASTER DAY



Our Easter Sunday service with Holy Communion on a glorious sunny day was the happiest of occasions. Anna had decorated the church beautifully with colourful Easter eggs hanging from ribbons on all the pews and the sombre cross of Good Friday in front of the Communion Table was now festooned with flowers.

Those of us who were able walked out for the two readings - 'A song of Resurrection' (No 748 in our Hymn book) and the Easter Morning Discovery, as told by St Luke, in the garden. Led by Michael, we walked back into church singing the hymn 'Christ is alive! let Christians Sing'. After the sermon, we wrote messages of Easter hope on rock shaped pieces of paper in the Ukrainian national colours as a prayer that they too may be able to rejoice in the hope of the Easter message despite being in a time of war. These papers were then brought up to the Communion Table, along with the Bread and Wine. They will be offered to the Ukrainian Embassy in London as a symbol of our support.



At the end of the service, a surprise awaited us when Michael and Zacc joined forces once again - and, sadly for the last time before Zacc leaves us - to play on two pianos, on this occasion the Easter Hymn from Cavalleria Rusticana by Pietro Mascagni 'O Rejoice the Lord has Arisen'. It was an absolute joy and our appreciation was shown with an enthusiastic round of applause. They had already played 'Now the green blade rises' as an organ and piano arrangement. A blessed Easter indeed. *Ed*



An Easter Hymn - in perfect harmony

CONTEMPLATION ON THE SERVICE FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY AT WEYBRIDGE URC

Maundy Thursday is often the over-looked service in Easter celebrations and yet it is so important as the beginning of a momentous few days. The quiet dignity of our church in Weybridge with the organ playing softly in the background as we entered provided the perfect contemplative atmosphere for the commemoration of that so long ago occasion. Although we were few in number (not many more than those gathered around that original table) the singing of the hymns – *My song is love unknown; An upper room did our Lord prepare* and *Be known to us in breaking bread* – was remarkable with the unaccompanied singing of the last one being particularly moving. In his delivery of the *Thought for the Day* the Minister recounted the drama surrounding the Last Supper Jesus shared with his disciples. He recalled the first communion service held on 16th April 1865 by the newly-consecrated Weybridge Congregational Church and at the side of the communion table were the chalice, jug and platens (a gift to the church from its founder, Benjamin Scott) used on that occasion. We were drawn together in the act of communion – each served by the Minister – and then listened to the reading of *It was on the Thursday* There was no formal ending to the service and no ending to the story – there was so much more to come over the next few days. The quietness of the church was tangible – no one seemed to want to leave and for several moments we all sat in our pews in silent contemplation. The last time we would be able to commemorate the occasion in this place.

Mollie Henham

When Jesus Christ Was Yet A Child

(from *The Oxford Book of Carols*, No 197)

Words: From *The Russian*, without named attribution of translation from Hutchins.
Martin Shaw and Percy Dearmer give translation credit to Geoffrey Dearmer

When Jesus Christ was yet a child,
He had a garden small and wild,
Wherein He cherished roses fair,
And wove them into garlands there.

Now once, as summer time drew nigh,
there are a troop of children by,
And seeing roses on the tree,
With shouts they pluck'd them merrily.

"Do you bind roses in your hair?"
They cried, in scorn, to Jesus there.
The Boy said humbly: "Take, I pray,
All but the naked thorns away."

Then of the thorns they made a crown,
And with rough fingers press'd it down,
Till on his forehead fair and young,
Red drops of blood like roses sprung

WESSEX SYNOD - PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MAY



1	Blandford Forum; Fareham
8	High Cross, Camberley; Parkstone
15	Ilford, Bournemouth; Braishfield, Romsey
22	Bridport; South Hayling Island Wonersh
29	Bournemouth International; Salisbury Green

WESSEX SYNOD AREA GATHERINGS

Area Gatherings have moved to an online format.

Following on from the well-received session in February, 'making the most of your online presence', Dan Morrell has been invited back to run further sessions as follows:

How can we disciple others online? (tools and tips for using technology to disciple others)

Wednesday 4th May, 7pm – 8.30pm, repeated Thursday 5th May, 10am – 11.30am.

Information can also be found on the Wessex Synod website.

The Workshops are open to anyone who might be interested.

Join Zoom Meeting – please join 10 minutes before the start of the session

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82435443259?pwd=SWFrVXZwTVUzWmhsQ05YbEgzcThsQT09>

Meeting ID: 824 3544 3259

Passcode: 750776

Prayer Corner

Deeper Love Still

So what is new

About the command to love?
Surely it goes without saying
for have we not known this
since we were children?

Yet, as we hear it
once again
it comes with fresh insistence.
“It’s not about the words”,
you say,
it’s about the change,
the healing and
the difference you can make
within another’s life.”

Teach us, dear Lord,
to dig deeper still
into the vein
of true discipleship
your way of love.
Amen

Ian Fosten

*Taken from Gathered to the heart of God.
Used in the URC Prayer Handbook 2010.*

True Discipleship

Lord, so fill our minds with the thought
and our imaginations with the picture of thy love
that there may be in us
no room for any desire that is discordant with thy holy will.
Cleanse us, we pray thee,
from all that may make us deaf to thy call
or slow to obey it.
Amen

*William Temple (1881-1944)
Archbishop of York (1929-42)
Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-44)*



WESSEX SYNOD EVENTS

BIG DAY OUT AT HOLLYCOMBE STEAM IN THE COUNTRY

SATURDAY 7 MAY

Tickets are on sale and can be purchased on [Eventbrite](#). Tickets purchased in advance are subsidised by Wessex Synod. Non subsidised tickets are available on the day from Hollycombe.

We invite everyone in all churches to come along and we encourage churches to extend the invitation to all groups (toddler groups, uniformed groups, children's and youth groups, Messy Churches and ecumenical partners, dementia cafés, house groups, craft groups, lunch groups etc).

Travel & Parking. All vehicles will require a parking pass which you can request from me once you have purchased your tickets. Please note that I will require the car registration number and the number ticket holders (adult/child) travelling in the car. This is to help speed up the process on arrival. Tickets will be checked at the entrance to the car park. Minibuses and coaches will also require a vehicle pass.

To celebrate the URCs 50th Jubilee, we would like to show pictures of events at your church over the last 50 years at the Bioscope on site. To be included, please email your pictures, along with the name of the event and the name of your church to Ray Stanyon dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk by the 2nd May.

We look forward to sharing a great day out together.

Ruth Heine (contact details as below)

Stepwise

This is not a course, it is a way of deepening discipleship.

New online group starting May 2022

Please get in touch to register your interest

Faith Filled Life stream journeys through exploring your own faith, your own calling, and what mission, outreach and discipleship means.

To book or show your interest
email: bookings@urcwessex.org.uk
Or call: 023 8067 4513

The United Reformed Church Wessex Synod

We are very pleased to be offering another opportunity to join the first of the Stepwise Streams – Faith Filled Life. We hope to start a new online group towards the end of May.

The day and time of the group meetings will be arranged to suit those who sign up. There will be eight online sessions in this stream, usually about 3 weeks apart.

I look forward to receiving bookings.

Ruth Heine

Development Team Administrator

United Reformed Church - Wessex Synod

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Tel: 023 8067 4513

ACQUIRE A NEW HOBBY - POTTERY

With the success of the TV programme The Big Pottery Throw Down interest in pottery blossomed with over two million viewers. There was a surge of 40% in orders for pottery wheels! The talent of the contestants inspired so many people.



I have been working in clay for many years. I go to a Clay Modelling Class at the Adult Education section of the Blagdon Centre in New Malden. It is a class of very talented people which is inspiring. Whilst we do hand building we are at liberty to use the pottery wheels if we so desire. The studio is well equipped and has a number of tutors who teach as well as a technician. The latter is a South Korean lady who has a degree in ceramics and who manages the three kilns. Our class is taught by a very accomplished young man who has a gift for teaching and problem solving

Working in clay is something which has been done for aeons. It is a very absorbing and tactile craft which can be taught to anyone. Of course, there will always be those who will produce more artistic and pleasing work than others. The process is a long one as the start of preparation is wedging the clay. This is a skilled way of kneading the clay to mix it well but mainly to remove any air bubbles. Air trapped in the clay will expand into steam with the heat of the kiln and cause the pot to explode. This will damage that pot but also cause damage to surrounding pots.

Once wedged, the clay is used to throw on the wheel or to form into pots or sculptures by hand building. This can be done by joining rolled coils of clay or joining rolled out slabs of clay. The joins have to be secured to avoid any air and sealed by using a mixture of clay and water called slip. This is the enjoyable but sometimes frustrating part of building a piece of work. The clay has to be kept moist during the process and works are covered in plastic and stored in a drying room awaiting completion.

Once the completed work is leather hard it is placed on a shelf to await loading into the kiln. There are two firings and the first is known as the bisque firing which will fire the pieces to a chalky, pale state. Once the bisque has been fired, the piece gets glazed. At this stage a liquid, chalky substance made up of chemicals which are coloured by oxides is applied. The glaze does not present the colour it will be and so many tester tiles have to be made to indicate the colour. It is applied either by dipping the piece in the glaze bucket or by spraying it with a spray gun using the extractor booth to remove the harmful mist of glaze generated by the gun.

There are earthenware glazes for earthen ware goods which are fired to a lower temperature than the alternative stone ware glazes on stone ware clay. Earthenware is fired to about 1,150° C whereas stoneware is fired to 1,300° C. The glaze is, in fact, liquid glass which forms around the fired piece. The bottom of the pot has to be free of any glaze or it will fuse onto the kiln shelf. I always work in stoneware as the glazes are more subtle. That said, opening the kiln is always a surprise as the results are never quite predictable. There is sometimes elation and other times deep disappointment. Glazes can be painted on to create designs and patterns.



I hope this has given the reader an idea of the long process involved in creating a piece of work. The domestic wares are called pottery but the decorative wares are termed ceramics. It is a hobby or profession which is multi-faceted and which offers a wonderful outlet for artistic expression and talent.

Moir de Kok



We send our love and congratulations to Margrit Doust (10 April) and Alan Crawford (25 April). In customary fashion, we all joined in to sing 'Happy Birthday' during the respective services, with Michael at the piano.

As Alan's birthday was a 'significant' one, Anna had thoughtfully provided birthday cake for us all to enjoy with coffee after the service on 24 April.



RECENT SALE: I would like to thank everyone who either bought an Artpeace sculpture or made a donation which raised a sum in excess of £700! Many of the beautiful pieces on display were brought over by Caroline and Richard Gardner from their recent holiday in Zimbabwe – a tremendous effort! The artists will be thrilled to receive the proceeds in full and direct shortly. Prior to the sale, a video (link in main article) of some of the artists at work was shown. Others could not afford the bus fare to their workplace. Artpeace are so appreciative of this support. **JS**



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF GARSONS

Most of you will, I am sure, be familiar with the wonderful Garsons Farm at the West End, Esher. Growing since 1871, last year Garsons celebrated 150 years in business.

1871, HOW IT ALL BEGAN...



George Henry Thompson (*left*), son of Mary Thompson who farmed in Hersham, Surrey took the opportunity to move to West End Village, Esher in 1871. George started the business we now know as Garsons, farming on Garson Farm, which is the historical-geographical name of parts of the land in West End, Esher.

The mixed farm gradually began to specialise in vegetable production, selling to greengrocers at the renowned Borough Market by London Bridge. Garson Farm was one

of the furthest farms supplying London with vegetables at that time, horses and wagons made the return journey from Esher to Borough Market in less than 24 hours. George died in 1905 aged 65, and three of his sons, George, William and Edwin entered into a partnership to continue the business. By 1939 Edwin was the sole remaining partner – with his sons joining him, Eddie to manage sales and Roy the production.



Garson's original farm shop



Harvesting by hand

The onset of war gave fresh impetus to increase the production of food as imports were curtailed. Extra land was ploughed up including the adjacent West End Common. Land army girls and prisoners of war were recruited to help with the harvest. After the war, food shortages continued so the business improved production with the aid of modern technologies in irrigation, agrochemicals, and greenhouse production. A fleet of Bedford lorries reduced the journey time to the London markets as the spread of suburbia now made Garson Farm one of the closest to the markets. In 1955 the company became Thompson Bros (Esher) Ltd.

THE 4TH AND 5TH GENERATIONS OF THE THOMPSON FAMILY

Following 100 years of successful crop production, the 1970s heralded the rise of the Supermarket changing how food was sold and marketed. Garson Farm was left out in the rush to procure cheap food from international suppliers. The Thompson family's response was to farm and produce a broader range of fruit and vegetables to sell direct to the customer. Esher Farm Shop was born. In 1981, the Thompson family developed the horticultural business further, opening the farm to the public to become one of the biggest Pick Your Own Farms in the country, which remains today.

Retail proved a big success, the family then in its 4th generation opted to expand into selling plants and opened, alongside the Farm Shop and PYO, a Garden Centre – collectively named Garson's Farm. And in 1999 the business expanded with the purchase of a second site in Titchfield, Hampshire.

2021, TODAY...

Esher and Titchfield, now branded Garsons, have both developed and innovated through the years resulting today in a comprehensive award-winning retail business. The current directors now in their 5th generation are all descendants of George Henry Thompson.

Taken from the website

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

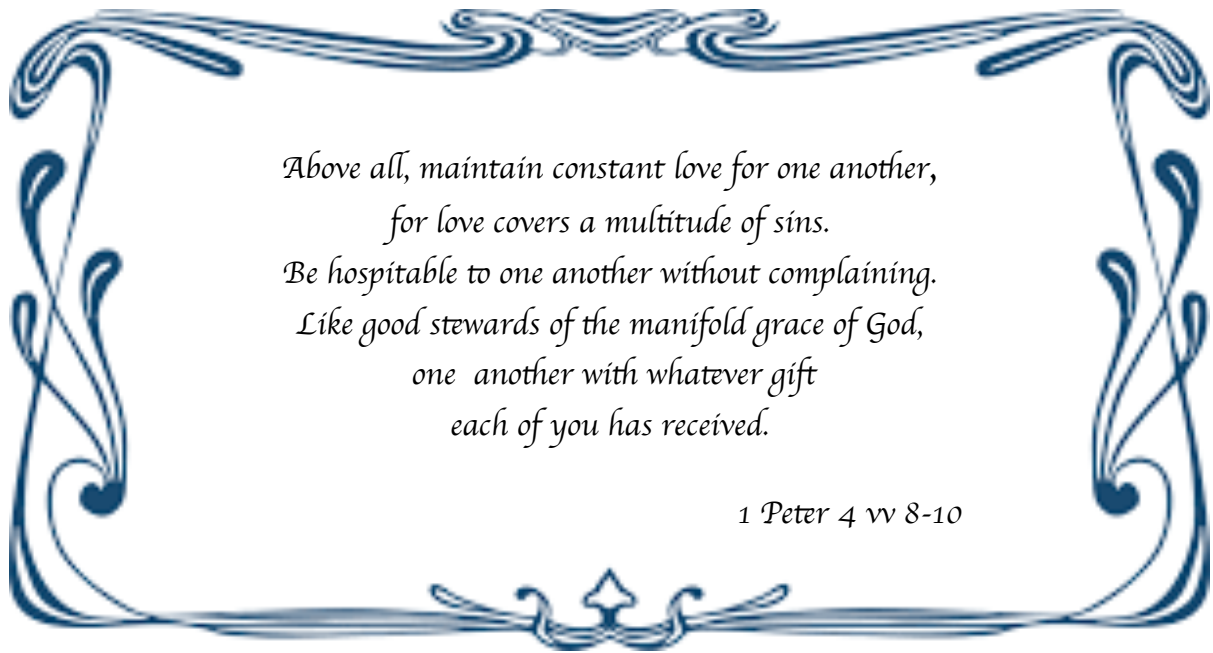
THE DEPRESSING NEWS that Zimbabwe was one of the countries who abstained in the first UN vote on Russian aggression against Ukraine has since been followed by news that they voted NO to the UN General Assembly resolution to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council. Perhaps not surprising as Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party continues to silence dissenting voices through arbitrary arrests of opposition leaders, human rights activists and journalists.

EASTER: ArtPeace families listened to St Andrew's service courtesy of WhatsApp and saw photos of our lovely, decorated church. Earlier, they had attended their own packed Easter services.



THE ART SCENE: We have recently enjoyed a glut of travellers bringing back lots of lovely sculptures, enabling us to mount several displays in St Andrew's church. Prior to the sales a video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yr0jTiw6kes> showing the artists at work at Silveira House was shown. This was created from three short videos taken by artist Mike, using his old mobile. With the tremendous support of Marlow URC's Martin Beck's these were knocked into a worthwhile video showing the hardship of this important aspect of their lives. **Johnston Simpson**





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Covid-safe services start at 10.30 am.
Services are currently accessible on Zoom on the first and third Sunday of the month.

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!