



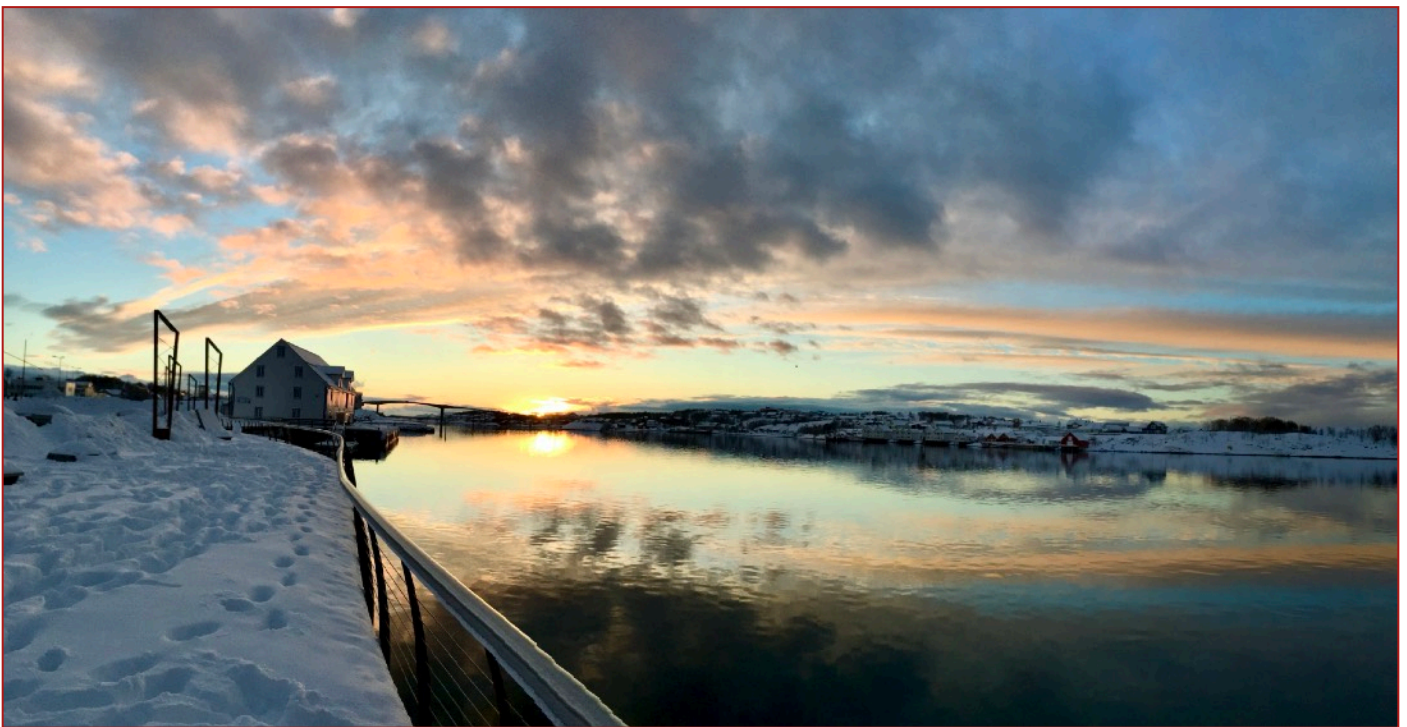
ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



## *THE GRAPEVINE*

*DECEMBER 2022/JANUARY 2023*

*Volume 1 No 10*



*Bronnoysund, Nordland, Norway*

*"The earth has grown old with its burden of care, but at Christmas it  
always is young, the heart of the jewel burns lustrous and fair, and its  
soul full of music breaks the air, when the song of angels is sung."*

*Phillips Brooks*

## SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES DECEMBER 2022 and JANUARY 2023

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

*Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month unless stated otherwise.*

*Coffee/Tea is served in the hall after the service.*

### DECEMBER

*A Happy Christmas to everyone*

<b>Sunday 4 (Zoom)</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Second Sunday in Advent</b> <b>Morning Worship</b> <b>The Minister</b> Last day for Church Christmas Post (see p13)
Monday 5	7.00 pm	Memorial Carol Service (see p13)
Friday 9	12.30 pm	Christmas People Who Lunch (see p18) Church Hall
	8.00 pm	Treble Clef Choir Concert (see p18) St James' Church, Weybridge
Saturday 10	7.30 pm	Genesis Chorale Concert (see p18) St John's Church, West Byfleet
<b>Sunday 11</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Third Sunday in Advent</b> <b>Gift Service &amp; Church Parade (see p13)</b> <b>The Minister</b> Church Christmas Post Distribution (see p13)
Saturday 17	4.00 pm	Ian Engelmann Singers' Concert (see p19) St Andrew's URC, Walton and Weybridge
<b>Sunday 18 (Zoom)</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday in Advent</b> <b>Morning Worship (shorter service)</b> <b>with Holy Communion</b> <b>The Minister</b>
	<b>3.30 pm</b>	<b>Mulled Wine and Mince Pies</b> The Gateway
<b>(No Zoom)</b>	<b>4.00 pm</b>	<b>Carol Service</b> <b>The Minister</b>
Saturday 24	4.00 pm	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> <b>Christingle Service</b> <b>The Minister</b>
Sunday 25	10.30 am	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> <b>All-age Worship</b> <b>The Minister</b>

## JANUARY

*A Happy New Year to everyone and good wishes for 2023*

<b>Sunday 1 (Zoom)</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>New Year's Day Morning Worship with Holy Communion Anna Crawford</b>
Friday 6		Epiphany
<b>Sunday 8</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship The Minister</b>
Tuesday 10	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting
Friday 13	12.30 pm	People Who Lunch (see p21) Church Hall
<b>Sunday 15 (Zoom)</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship The Minister</b>
	3.00 pm	Messy Church 
<b>Sunday 22</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship</b> Exhibition of Communion Silver from Weybridge URC and St Andrew's URC (see p20) The Gateway
Thursday 26	<b>tbc</b>	Induction of the Revd Damian Harrison-Miles as Rector of St James' Church, Weybridge (see p29)
<b>Sunday 29</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship Linda Lambert</b>

***COPY DATE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE:***

***Wednesday 18 January***

***(Publication Date: Sunday 29 January)***

***Items for the magazine are always welcome provided they do not contravene  
copyright regulations.***

***Please send items to the Editor: Norma Reid***

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## Letter from the Minister

### December 2022 and January 2023

Dear Friends,

Christmas is coming (fast) and as I sit down to write the last pastoral letter of this year I find myself thinking about a very well-known verse in Matthew's Gospel:

*Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and his name shall be called "Emmanuel",  
which means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:23)*

So much has happened since I sat down to write the pastoral letter for December 2021. Last November some very important Church Meetings were being held resulting in the union which brought about our local church today. Since then, a lot of very hard work has been going on, much of it behind the scenes, to get things sorted and gradually we are becoming one congregation. We've shared some memorable moments together, not least of all our "baptism" by the Moderator in September, and I can't help but reflect that in all that has been happening it really does feel as if it has been "Emmanuel" – God has been with us – holding our hand as we have taken our first steps. As Christmas approaches and once again we hear that familiar verse from Matthew I'd like to take this opportunity to share more widely some points from my sermon on 7<sup>th</sup> November.



Back before Covid both St Andrew's and Weybridge Elders had agreed that we needed to talk with our Synod Development Officer, Ray Stanyon, about mission and about outreach and about development. During Covid both churches' Elders had initial discussions with Ray and, as a result, St Andrew's drew up a mission audit for the Walton area which highlighted various options and possibilities. Since the union the same task is just being completed for the Weybridge area. When the Elders have had the chance to look at it we shall have a further meeting with Ray or with some other appropriate person as we look to move forward and to grow our church.

A year ago we voted to unite our two churches with a vision for the future – to build a new, united church, to serve both Walton and Weybridge, which honoured its past traditions but which looked ahead and placed outreach at the top of its agenda. That's where we are heading but I think that we are all also realistic enough to realise that most of us are no longer teenagers and that some of us are no longer in our twenties either. Many of us know only too well the truth of the old saying that *"the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak"* and, whereas I know that everyone here will do everything they can in the task that lies ahead of us, realism about what we can do needs to happen. Two points are, therefore, perhaps helpful to make here.

Firstly, although I'm sure we would love to see the church packed with children and young people that realistically isn't going to happen at this point. Ray Stanyon pointed out that we need to be realistic and to start by aiming for the age and type of person we are likely to be able to reach out to at this point. To pick up the Biblical illustration of the sower and the seed, we need to cast our seeds into the soil in which they have a sporting chance of growing. Casting herbaceous seeds into Mediterranean rock gardens would only lead to disappointment and disillusionment. So, our initial approach needs to be focussed, rather than broadcast sowing.



Secondly, we are very fortunate to have significant financial reserves behind us. That means that when we come to set aims and objectives for the future – and when we run up against the issues of being a congregation in which there's the occasional grey hair and limited, physical energy – Church Meeting is in the fortunate position of being able to pay for some help if it so wishes. This may be for skills and expertise or even for people and energy to do what we simply no longer have the energy to do alone. Synod grants are also available and so, although we can't pay someone to "be church" for us or to do it all for us, Church Meeting can choose to pay for some help. On 7<sup>th</sup> November I linked this to the parable of the talents.

So now, to return to a more Christmassy theme, I am really looking forward to celebrating our first Christmas together as one fellowship. We've some lovely services planned – do invite your friends and family to come – and something strikes me very forcibly this year. Many of us may well be closer to the age of Simeon and Anna, than Mary and Joseph, but don't ever forget the important part that both these characters play in the Christmas story. Don't ever forget the joy that filled their hearts as they encountered the baby Jesus and don't ever forget the important part they play in spreading the Christmas message either – so important so that we still remember them by name.

As I close, I should also like to thank you for all the support and encouragement you have given me in the last year. It's been an odd year and a very demanding one as well, particularly as my mother's health has deteriorated so much and she has been so ill. I do appreciate your kindness and your understanding very much.

I hope that you all have a peaceful and very blessed Christmas. I look forward to seeing you at the various services and to our celebrating Christmas this year.

All good wishes for 2023 as well.

Michael

## News of the Church Family

### Reception into Membership



***Teresa with the Minister on her reception into membership***

It was a great joy to welcome our organist, Teresa Bacon, into membership on 6<sup>th</sup> November. Although Teresa is still involved with Woking URC she spends most Sundays here and wanted to establish a more formal connection with us. Church Organists are in short supply these days and we feel we are very fortunate to have Teresa. The applause which always follows the voluntary at the end of the service is evidence of our appreciation.



***Teresa is presented with her membership certificate by Carol Lee (Church Secretarial Team)***

## In Memoriam

It was with great sadness we heard that **Gill Shaw** died on 25<sup>th</sup> October after coping valiantly with several years of illness. Gill was received into membership at Weybridge URC in 2013 by the Revd Roy Bones. Her funeral service was held at Woking Crematorium on 18<sup>th</sup> November and we extend our sympathy to her family and many friends. An appreciation of Gill's life is on page 28.

Brian Ashfield has forwarded the sad news that his sister, **Barbara Rae**, died on 11<sup>th</sup> November. Barbara grew up in our church at Weybridge and was received into membership there. It was there, too, that she met her future husband, David. Together they were involved in a wide range of church activities with Barbara giving several years of service as a teacher in Junior Church and delighting us all with her acting skills in the drama group. We send our sympathy to David, their two daughters and grandchildren as well as her brothers, Brian and Graham.

## Well Done

Congratulations to our very own beekeepers, Marion and Geoff Cooper, for their successes at the National Honey Show at Sandown Park. Between them they gained a number of awards including the Mather Cup (an award specifically for Surrey beekeepers).

## Move

Alex, Leigh, Olivia and Emily Withers have moved to Chertsey. We wish them all every happiness in their new home.

## Prayers

Please remember all these friends in your prayers – Brian & Kate Ashfield, David Cheeseman, Chris Goddard, John Langdon, Lilian Smith and Michael Stevens.

## Stamps for the 'Save the Children' Fund

Claire Ward's brother, Ian, a keen stamp collector, continues to sort and sell stamps in aid of the 'Save the Children' fund. He has raised approximately £100 this year, partly through your generous donations. He will, once again, be pleased to receive the used stamps from your Christmas cards and other post. However, the changeover, by Royal Mail, to new-style stamps with bar codes on them in January means that he can only make use of commemorative or foreign stamps. (Please leave the overseas stamps on the envelope and send the whole envelope.) If you have any commemorative or foreign stamps, collections, first day covers or postcards that you no longer want, please pass your contributions to Claire or Jem Ward and they will forward them to Ian.

## An Editorial Note

It is hoped that Norma will be able to resume her duties as Editor for the February issue of 'The Grapevine'. I shall then return to being Associate Editor!

Mollie



## A CHRISTMAS THANK-YOU FROM NORMA



The old St Andrew's Newsletter and the former Weybridge News have become 'The Grapevine' and as such it now covers news from our two united churches in one publication, making it something of a bumper issue each month! I would like to say thank you to all our faithful contributors who have ensured that we are kept informed about local events connected with the church, can enjoy reading interesting articles on a wide variety of topics and are in regular touch with church members and friends. Please keep your contributions rolling in!

Special thanks are due to Michael for his constant support through regular, thoughtful – often humorous – contributions that have, at times, given us cause to pause awhile and take stock in a good way, as well as to lift our spirits. More special thanks to Mollie, who seamlessly took up the reins as Editor in June, when my eye problems prevented me from putting things together, and has produced excellent issues ever since.

*"I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks."*

*William Shakespeare 'Twelfth Night'*

## Wessex Synod – Prayer Calendar for December



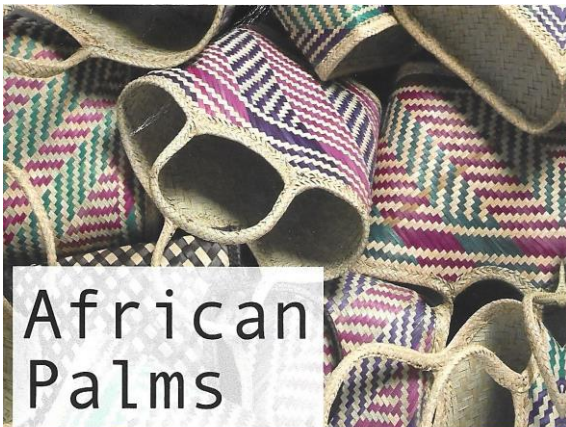
- 4 Collinwood Road, Oxford;  
Mere;  
Christ Church, Chineham, Basingstoke
- 11 United Church, Winchester;  
Marston, Oxford
- 18 Tilehurst, Reading;  
Waterside, Emsworth
- 25 Christchurch, Somerford;  
United Free Church, Bishop's Waltham;  
The Moderator and Synod Staff

## Prayer Calendar for January

- 1 Longham;  
Peachcroft Christian Centre, Abingdon
- 8 Wimborne;  
Christchurch, Thame
- 15 Swanage;  
St Martin's, Bordon;  
United Church, Winchester
- 22 Trinity Church, Abingdon;  
Radipole, Weymouth
- 29 Richmond Hill St Andrew's, Bournemouth;  
Christ Church, Woodley;  
Meeting of Synod

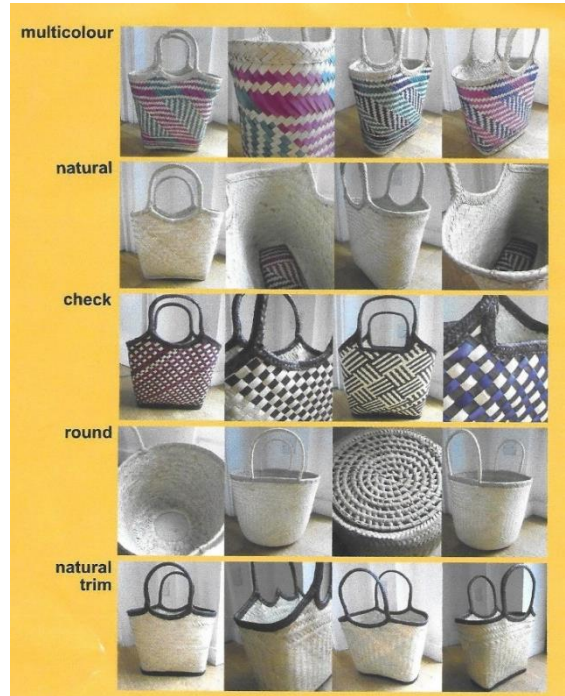
## Tote Bags with a difference

No Palm Sunday service would be complete without the Palm Crosses but, according to John Talbot of African Palms Ltd, over the past three years Covid has really reduced the demand for them. He says "We decided to ask the villagers to handcraft some bags and baskets along with the Palm Crosses they make for us. We saw this as a way to help keep the whole project going. We now have many wonderful bags and thought they might make ideal Christmas presents. They are beautifully made from the same material used to weave the Palm Crosses and are available in five styles. Each bag is unique in colour and design."



**African  
Palms**

handwoven tote bags



**Price:** £29.00 including VAT and postage

**Size:** 19 x 16 x 6 inches

**Order** by email: [enquiries@africanpalms.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@africanpalms.co.uk) or by telephone: 0207 703 0719

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## *Church and Community*

### (Gifts – October and November)



#### **Gifts from Harvest Festival (9 October)**

The large number of gifts you brought to the Harvest Festival service (total weight 108.6kgs) and your donations of £260.00 (including Gift Aid) were all very gratefully received by the Walton and Hershham Foodbank. The certificate below was accompanied by a note of thanks.



### *Link to Hope*

#### **Shoe Box Sunday (30 October)**



We supported a new charity this year on Shoe Box Sunday. 'Link to Hope' is a Christian charity (based in West Sussex) dedicated to re-building lives and communities in Eastern Europe – Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Bulgaria. Donors were asked to designate their shoe boxes either for families or the elderly and details of suggested gifts were made available. Although they were far fewer in number this year (because of late decision to support the charity) our shoe boxes made a colourful display in front of the Communion Table and were later taken to the collection point in New Malden. In addition to the boxes donations amounting to £150.00 (including Gift Aid) were forwarded to the charity. Thank you to everyone who contributed by filling shoe boxes or making monetary gifts. Together you have helped people of all ages, who would otherwise have no presents, to experience the joy and excitement of Christmas and to know they have not been forgotten.





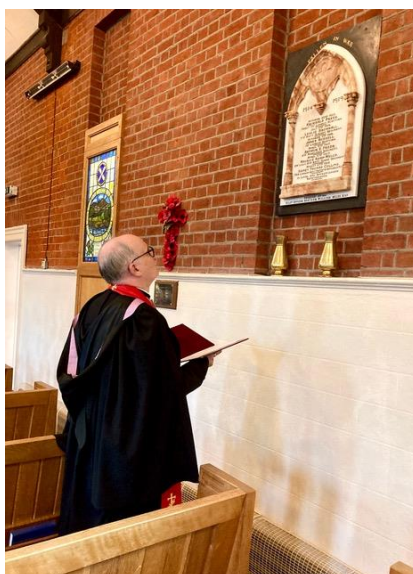
## Remembrance Sunday – Combat Stress (13 November)

Your donations to Combat Stress on Remembrance Sunday together with the loose cash in the offertory plate at the rear of the church amounted to £187.50 (including Gift Aid). Thank you for your support for which Combat Stress is very grateful.

### *Thoughts from some members of the congregation following the Remembrance Sunday Service*



**Weybridge Plaque and the  
engraved Hersham vases**



**The Minister reads out the names  
of those who gave their lives**



**Poppy Cross above  
the St Andrew's  
plaque**

I was given a poppy in the form of a coloured flower on a lollipop stick as I entered the church and wondered why the bottom of the stick was dirty. It was only as I took it up as part of the Act of Remembrance that I realised it was on loan from the Guides, as it had been used as part of their display on Monument Green in Weybridge last year commemorating all of the fallen from the local area. Symbolic in so many ways.....

It was a lovely reflective, thought-provoking service making reference especially to the 40 years since the Falkland Islands War. Well-chosen hymns for the occasion and the organ voluntary, Edward Elgar's 'Nimrod', ended this most poignant service.

It was lovely to see so many people in the congregation for the Remembrance Day Service. The service was taken by our Minister and Teresa Bacon played the organ. At the beginning of the service the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers came in with their flags, whilst we sang "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven". It was a joy to see them all there. Michael's address included a commemoration of the wars and conflicts which had the number 2 included in their dates. For example, the Battle of El Alamein in 1942, the Battle of Bunker Hill in the Korean War in 1952 and, more recently, the Falklands Conflict in 1982. Our thoughts were with the brave service personnel who served in those conflicts. At 10.50 am, precisely, the names of those men from the then Hersham Congregational Church, Weybridge Congregational Church and St Andrew's Presbyterian Church were read out and we responded, "We will remember them". This was a poignant and very personal moment. (The names from Weybridge and Walton are inscribed on the two memorial plaques and

the two names from Hersham are inscribed on the two brass vases standing below the Weybridge plaque.) After the Last Post was sounded we stood for the two minutes' silence. We thought it was a beautiful service, with a different approach, which made us reflect on the two World Wars and subsequent conflicts and those brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. We will remember them.

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I thought that Michael's discovery of the long neglected vase was a lovely story to brighten a sad day. I admired the foresight of Eric's grateful parents engraving on the vase the history of their son's release from a Japanese prisoner of war camp after four years' incarceration. It preserves the story for later generations who had never known Eric. One can only imagine how they felt after years of silence when they were trying to come to terms with the awful realisation that they might never know what had happened to their son; and then to hear of the miracle of his release. It is no wonder that they, as Christians, wanted, in some tangible way, to give thanks. I hope we will always have poppies in Eric's vase on Remembrance Sunday. I was, however, most moved by the tragic story of the two Hersham brothers who lost their lives in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and are commemorated by the two brass vases. I shudder to think how their parents coped with their terrible grief.

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The Remembrance Day service was, as ever, very moving. The verbal and pictorial reminders of the sacrifices so many had made on behalf of us all were greatly enhanced by the beautiful poppies which decorated the church. The wreath that was laid during the service by one of the uniformed organisations, with poppies made out of recycled plastic bottles, was imaginative and so suitable to the occasion. I am sure I was not the only one with tears in my eyes.

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The Remembrance Service featuring all three memorials was moving and informative. It was great that youth organisations were represented again at St Andrew's and encouraging to see fuller pews overall!

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The Remembrance Service had a fresh impact this year as it was my first in St Andrew's and to experience us all together, united in this act of remembrance, was truly significant. The poppy display was beautiful and the presence of memorials from earlier local congregations now united in St Andrew's was very moving. To be joined by the youth organisations who contributed so well to our act of remembrance was simply wonderful. Thank you, Michael, for bringing it all together.

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It was very pleasing to see a good turnout of the young (uniformed) members of the Scouts, Cubs, and Beavers taking part with their respective leaders. I was also impressed by the trumpet playing of the Last Post and Reveille. It was so real that I didn't realise that these parts of the service were being played on the organ by Teresa! (At my previous church in Droxford, Hampshire we were usually fortunate to have the services of a local trumpeter.) As an ex-serviceman (Fleet Air Arm branch of the Royal Navy) and a member of the Royal British Legion (RBL) the Last Post and Reveille are important parts of a Remembrance Day service.

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It was good to have so many from the 4<sup>th</sup> Weybridge Scout Group in church with all ages represented from the smallest Beaver, the Cubs and Scouts, to the Leaders. They deserve our gratitude for being there as they had two other events to attend that afternoon – the parade at the Weybridge War Memorial and the Civic Service at St James' Church. I was especially impressed with the dignified way they dealt with dipping the colours for the Last Post and raising them for Reveille. The Cub who read (without prior warning) so clearly and with feeling the inscription on the commemorative vase was a good example to all of us.

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I felt it was a privilege to be able to share in such a memorable service. It had dignity and respect but also had a personal touch notably when the names from the three churches were read out.

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This thought-provoking service had to speak to a very wide age range – and it did. The dipping and raising of the Colours was so moving just as was the reading of the names of those who died in conflict. I was so pleased to see the Weybridge War Memorial in its new location with the name of Pilot Officer Bertram Miles, who was killed in the Second World War, now added. Its marble structure makes an impressive addition to the wall and, most importantly, along with the Hersham memorial vases and the St Andrew's War Memorial we now have visible reminders that we are a new church with our roots in the history of all three churches as we go forward into the future.



**Arrangement of poppies in front of the Communion Table**

The little Beaver carrying the flag brought tears to my eyes. (She from my seat at the rear of the the wreath produced by the world situation it is important conflict and to pray for peace.

Remembrance Services are not usually my favourite but this year's service, conducted by Michael, was extremely well-planned and researched. It is difficult leading all-age worship but the youngsters present were a credit to their leaders and added to the solemnity of the occasion.



**Poppy Wreath made from recycled plastic bottles by the 4<sup>th</sup> Weybridge Cubs.**



**The Colour Party proudly displays the flags**

and dipping it during the Silence was the only flag-carrier I could see church.) I was also impressed with Cubs. When faced with the current to remember the awfulness of

## The Bettis Vase – A Thanksgiving Gift



The people who cleared the cupboards when the Weybridge church building was closed discovered a very special vase. This used to be below the War Memorial containing a display of poppies each year on Remembrance Sunday. This vase is unusual because it is not in memory of someone who died but is a thanksgiving by the parents of a young man who remarkably survived having spent most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in Japanese prisoner of war camps. The inscription reads:

*'Presented by Mr & Mrs John Bettis in grateful thanks for the deliverance of their son, Eric, from four years' captivity in Japanese hands 1942-1945.'*

Eric was an Aircraftsman 1<sup>st</sup> class who joined the RAF in 1940 and was captured in Java in March 1942 (aged 28) and held there until September 1942 when he was moved to a POW camp at Changi, known now as the site of the main airport in Singapore. For his last six months in captivity he was moved to another location in Singapore – Blakang Mati – and released in August 1945. His survival is all the more notable because 1714 RAF

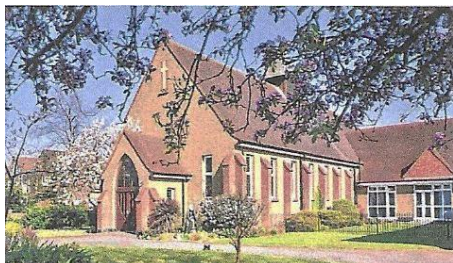
prisoners of war were killed or died in captivity in the Far East. The vase stands, once again, below the Weybridge War Memorial (in its new location) together with the two vases in memory of two brothers from Hersham Congregational Church (Trinity URC) who died in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War.

*Alex Henham*

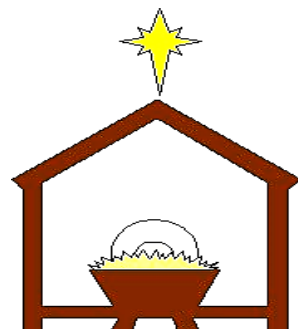


# *Celebrating Christmas*

## YOUR CHRISTMAS – YOUR CHURCH



*Come and celebrate our  
first Christmas together  
as the new church of  
St Andrew's United  
Reformed Church,  
Walton and Weybridge*



### **ADVENT 2**

**Morning Worship (Zoom)**

**10.30 am 4 December**

**Church Christmas Post (p13)**

Last Post Date

**4 December**

Distribution Date

**11 December**

**Memorial Carol Service (p13)**

**7.00 pm 5 December**

A special service for those who have suffered bereavement

**Christmas 'People Who Lunch' (p18)**

**12.30 pm 9 December**

### **ADVENT 3**

**Gift Service and Church Parade (p13)**

**10.30 am 11 December**

A service for all the family

**The Ian Engelmann Singers' Christmas Concert (p19)**

**4.00 pm 17 December**

in aid of the Sam Beare Hospice Charity

### **Advent 4**

**Morning Worship – a shorter service (Zoom)  
with Holy Communion**

**10.30 am 18 December**

**Carol Service by Candelight**

**4.00 pm**

(preceded by Mulled Wine & Mince Pies at 3.30 pm)

**Christmas Eve**

**Christingle Service**

**4.00 pm 24 December**

**Christmas Day**

**A service for all the family**

**10.30 am 25 December**



## *Church Christmas Post*

**4 December** is the last date for posting any cards in the Church Christmas Post Box in The Gateway which you wish to send to other members of the congregation. After that date all the cards will be sorted into 'packs' for the individual recipients.

**11 December** (Gift Service and Church Parade) is the day the cards will be ready for collection from The Gateway. If you are unable to be in church that day it would be helpful if you could arrange for someone else to collect your cards for you.

## *Memorial Carol Service*

**7.00 pm 5 December**

### **St Andrew's URC, Walton and Weybridge**

Dignity Funeral Services (Chitty's) will be holding their annual, memorial Carol Service in our church on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm led by the Minister. Anyone who would like to come and remember a loved one is most welcome – the funeral does not have to have been organised by Dignity, nor does it have to have been taken in this area. The service was previously held at Weybridge URC for a number of years and was much appreciated by those who attended.

## *Gift Service and Church Parade*

**10.30 am 11 December**

The recent Church Meeting decided to continue the practice undertaken by Weybridge URC for very many years of holding a Gift Service and sending the gifts to children in need through the team at NE Surrey Children's and Families' Services. The team will ensure that the gifts you bring are taken to the families in good time for Christmas. The recently appointed Team Leader, Joanne Sullivan, has sent us the following information



*"We would be happy to receive gifts for our families. We would request that items are **new** as any not will be taken to the charity shops, soft toys tend to be the ones that are usually left over. As we cover all ages from 0-18 it would be good to have a mixture of items from this age range.*

**0 – 5:** ***bright-coloured toys, cloth picture books, trucks and cars etc;***  
**5 – 10** ***Lego, colouring-in activity books, craft activities, play figure sets etc;***  
**10 – 18** ***model kits, activity sets for girls and boys etc.***

*These are just a few suggestions but it would be good to have a selection from these age groups. It is very difficult to be so specific but we appreciate people's generosity and wanting to help our families."*

**NB:** We know from our experience of donating gifts in previous years that gifts such as **games, puzzles, books and, for the teenagers, sets of toiletries** were also gratefully received.

***Please do not wrap your gifts as this delays the sorting process  
for the Children's Services Team.***

Some of you may prefer to make a monetary donation through the church (see p21). Any such donations will be used by the church to buy vouchers which the families can use to buy food and clothing at a local store



## *Church Christmas Charity* **Walton and Hersham Foodbank**

This is the charity the October Church Meeting chose to support with financial gifts this Christmas in order to help with the ever increasing demands placed on its services by the current financial crisis. There will be opportunities to support this charity at the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve and at the Christmas Day service. If you would like to make a donation please place it in the collection plate at the rear of the church as you leave the service. If you want to make a donation but are going to be away for Christmas or if you would prefer to make your contribution via bank transfer or by writing a cheque please see page 21 for details.

### *Christmas*



### *Trivia*

***The Associate Editor has compiled this quiz for you to tackle when you want a break from your round of Christmas preparations. Have a go – the answers are on page 24.***

- 1 Which Roman holiday held from 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> December had a large influence on how Christmas is celebrated?
- 2 Which two gospels relate the nativity story?
- 3 Before becoming linked with Christmas what was 'Yule'?
- 4 The French word 'Noel' is used in Christmas greetings but what was its original meaning in Latin?
- 5 If New Year's Day is the first day of the year (non-Leap Year) what number is Christmas Day?
- 6 Who was the Head of State for England, Scotland and Wales responsible for banning Christmas in 1647?
- 7 In which country is the custom of putting up a Christmas tree said to have originated?
- 8 Which word in '*We wish you a Merry Christmas*' means 'family'?
- 9 How many reindeer (including Rudolph) pull Santa's sleigh?
- 10 In which northern European country might you receive gifts from a different Yule Lad each night if you leave your shoes on the window sill on each of the 13 days before Christmas?
- 11 In which country was the carol '*Silent Night*' first sung?
- 12 '*Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents*'. In which children's book is this the opening sentence?
- 13 How many presents are there in the carol '*The 12 Days of Christmas*'?
- 14 In which country might you find money under the table cloth when you sit down to eat the traditional Christmas Eve supper Wigilia?
- 15 How many ghosts are there in Charles Dicken's book '*A Christmas Carol*'?
- 16 Which Anglo-Irish poet wrote the words of '*Once in royal David's city*'?
- 17 Which village near Guildford has a festive name?
- 18 What plant-based Christmas tradition did servants in Victorian England make popular?
- 19 Who created the first electric light Christmas display?
- 20 What was the original title for the carol '*The Little Drummer Boy*'?
- 21 Who wrote the book '*Letters from Father Christmas*'?
- 22 Which fruity sauce might you serve with turkey?



- 23 In which country is the Poinsettia a native plant?
- 24 Which poet wrote about his memories of Christmas as a child?
- 25 What was the main ingredient in the original recipe for mince pies?
- 26 What does mistletoe symbolise?
- 27 How many points are usually seen in the pattern of a snowflake?
- 28 In which children's book is it '*always winter but never Christmas*'?
- 29 In which country are children given gifts by St Basil on 1<sup>st</sup> January instead of Santa on 25<sup>th</sup> December?
- 30 Which saint is commemorated on 26<sup>th</sup> December?



## *Christmas Preparations*

### **Are you ready yet?**

I've bought the presents, stirred puddings  
and fretted a lot about other people's needs and expectations.  
Does that mean I'm ready or just, for once, well-prepared?  
When the children were young they'd say  
"Are we there yet?" as soon as we'd left home.  
It was a wind-up. A family joke.  
But travelling has its own agenda, it was part of the day out,  
The shopping trip or the journey to Granny's.  
We devised quizzes and competitions  
to keep them interested and stop them fighting  
and played 'I Spy' until the three-year old won with 'H' for horizon  
and we were finally outclassed.

Where's my horizon for this Christmas?  
Is it effortlessly producing a stunning meal,  
singing the right carols in church,  
giving presents that match the recipient to tasteful perfection?  
Or is it the unexpected arrival of a friend in tears,  
or a Christmas card telling of another divorce in the family,  
or more asylum seekers put on a train with nothing more than the fare  
and sent off to be someone else's problem?

Did Mary ask, "Are we there yet?" as they made their way to Bethlehem  
and she so very pregnant?  
Did anyone ask Joseph, 'Are you ready yet?  
as the greatest birth of all time came closer?  
Could anyone have been ready, however prepared they were?

If Bede is venerably right  
and if "an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight"  
then my plea for this season is to see further than my own horizon,  
to gain a wider perspective, a more just approach  
and a more open acceptance of whatever crops up  
on that journey towards Christmas.  
But, please God, may the turkey be cooked to perfection, too!

*Carole Elphick (URC Prayer Handbook 2008)*



**Michael** sends warmest greetings for Christmas and New Year to everyone on this happy occasion, our first Christmas as St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge.

**Jan and I** wish all our friends and church members a blessed, healthy and peaceful Christmas. May you know the Light of the Christ Child shining in your lives.

**Moira and Jan de Kok**

Greetings and good wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year.

**Alex and Mollie Henham**

**Eva Ramage** sends her very best wishes to her friends for a Happy Christmas and for the New Year ahead.

Seasonal greetings from **Susan and Johnston Simpson** to all at St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge. We pray that 2023 will prove a more peaceful year!

Wishing you all peace and joy through this Christmas Season.  
**Gwenda and Alistair**

Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas!  
**Margaret Faultless**

**Liz Grimsey** wishes everyone a happy Christmas, blessed by God's love.

**Ghislaine Stevenson** would like to send warmest wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all her friends at church.

Tiny Tim couldn't have put it better:  
"A merry Christmas to us all;  
God bless us every one."  
Wishing you all good health, happiness and a peaceful heart in the New Year ahead!

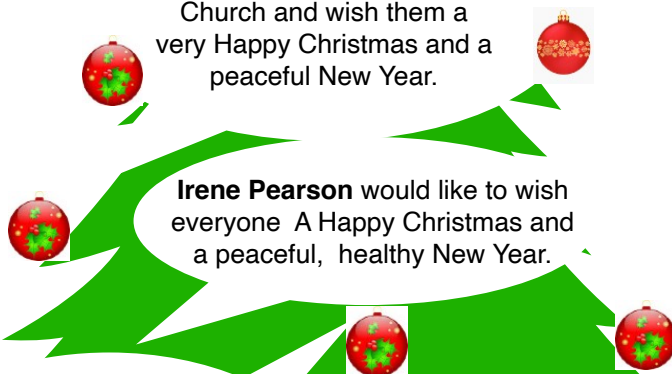
**Norma**



**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**



**Zacc and Jackie Rodwell**  
send love to everyone at  
Church and wish them a  
very Happy Christmas and a  
peaceful New Year.



**Irene Pearson** would like to wish  
everyone A Happy Christmas and  
a peaceful, healthy New Year.

With our good wishes to  
all members and friends of  
St Andrew's URC Walton  
and Weybridge for a joyful  
Christmas and  
may we all find peace  
in the New Year.

**Jane and Malcolm  
Bryant**

**Alan and Anna** wish you  
all a joyous and  
peaceful Christmas. A  
healthy and happy  
New Year.

I would like to wish everyone A Very  
Happy and peaceful Christmas  
and a Good New Year.  
Best wishes, **Nancy Hampton**

**Valerie Dow and Fiona, Vic  
and Katie Reardon** would  
like to wish everyone a very  
Merry Christmas and a  
healthy and happy New Year.

I wish everyone a wonderful Christmas  
and blessings in the New Year!  
**Sophia Swanson** (in Texas)

**Keith and  
Anne**  
wish everyone a very  
happy Christmas and a  
peaceful New Year.

We wish you all a very Happy  
Christmas and best wishes for  
the coming year.  
**Mike and Rachel Snaith**





## Christmas People Who Lunch

12.30 pm 9 December



Why not make this festive 'People Who Lunch' a part of your Christmas celebrations? Everyone is welcome – regulars and newcomers – to join in this friendly gathering. Note the date and come along. Please remember that advance booking is essential. To reserve your place (£4.00 for soup, roll, dessert, cheese and biscuits and coffee) contact Margaret Faultless by emailing her at [margaretfaultless@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:margaretfaultless@blueyonder.co.uk) or see her in church.

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## Treble Clef Christmas Carol Concert

9 December 8.00 pm

St James' Church, Church Street,  
Weybridge KT13 8DE

Treble Clef Ladies' Choir's Christmas Concert is an established part of the local Christmas scene. The programme contains the ever popular format of carols for choir and audience in the impressive setting of St James' Parish Church.

Tickets £12.50 (including refreshments) with free entry for accompanied children under 12 years old may be obtained from [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) or from members of the Treble Clef Choir. Hilary Netherwood and Gwenda Cochrane are members of the choir. There will also be a retiring collection in aid of the St James' Church 'Access for All' appeal.

Parking (free in the evening) is available in the Churchfields Car Park (immediately behind

Treble Clef Choir Weybridge

Invite you to our

**Christmas Carol Concert**

Musical Director: Emily Leather  
Accompanist: Hannah Stanley  
Organist: Lindsay Bridgwater

**FRIDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2022**  
**8.00PM**

**St James' Parish Church**  
**Weybridge KT13 8DE**

**Tickets £12.50 including refreshments**  
Accompanied children under 12 free  
From [www.ticketsource.co.uk/trebleclef](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/trebleclef)  
or Treble Clef Choir members

There will be a retiring collection for  
St James' 'Access For All' appeal

[www.trebleclefchoir.org](http://www.trebleclefchoir.org)

GENESIS CHORALE

**RUTTER**

**GLORIA**

and

FOLLOW THAT STAR - SEASONAL SONGS

AUDIENCE CAROLS

Musical Director

YVETTE MURPHY

ST JOHN'S CHURCH - WEST BYFLEET

10 DECEMBER 2022 19.30

Adults £15 Children and students £8  
From Brittens, Choir members, website, on door  
Registered charity 1048381 www.genesischorale.org.uk

Weybridge Library). The church may be accessed from the car park via the Parish Centre entrance and side footpath or the footpath alongside the library leading to Church Street.

## Genesis Chorale Christmas Concert

10 December 7.30 pm

St John's Church, Camphill Road,  
West Byfleet KT14 6EH

[www.genesischorale.org.uk](http://www.genesischorale.org.uk)

Brian Ashfield is a member of Genesis Chorale. As well as John Rutter's 'Gloria' the programme will include 'Follow that Star (seasonal songs) and carols with audience participation.

Tickets (£15.00 adults/£8.00 students) may be purchased in advance through the website and from members. Tickets are also available on the door using cash or credit card.

**The Ian Engelmann Singers  
Christmas Concert  
St Andrew's United Reformed Church,  
Walton & Weybridge  
17 December 4.00 pm**

This year the Ian Engelmann Singers' Christmas Concert takes place in the familiar surroundings of our own church.

The programme is in the usual format of music and readings with carols for choir and audience. There is no charge for admission but a collection will be taken from which a contribution will be made to the Sam Beare Hospice charity.

Shirley Morley is a member of this locally well-known and long-established choir and she will be pleased to give you any further information.

*Carols for Choir & Audience  
A Christmas Concert*

*of Music and Readings by  
The Ian Engelmann Singers  
Musical Director: John Tudhope  
Organist: James West*

*Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
at 4:00 pm*

*St Andrew's United Reformed Church  
Kersham Road, Walton-on-Thames  
KT12 1LG  
Parking is available at the Church.*

*Admission free  
A collection will be taken and a contribution will be  
made to the local Sam Beare Hospice Charity.*

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**A Christmas Tale of Two Rabbits ..... and its Sequel**



*Several years ago an elderly lady in the congregation recounted this story from earlier years and we got her to write it down. The two 'events' took place more than 30 years apart but were closely linked. She was a nurse (a former Ward Sister) who, even after she retired, simply could not give up caring for others in the church and community. She was known affectionately by many people as the 'Mother Teresa of Weybridge'.  
Mollie Henham*

**1960** This Christmas was exactly the same as all others – here we were on 24<sup>th</sup> December as far behind with preparations as we were on all the previous Christmas Eves.

My husband called out from the lounge (from which the light shone onto the garden). He had seen something white apparently fluttering across the grass and thought I had dropped something when I went out there earlier. Incredibly we discovered it was a dainty little rabbit with light brown patches. It was 10.00 pm and thinking that our little visitor had come from the field at the bottom of the garden and as there were two empty hutches, in what I called our 'block of luxury flats for rabbits', we popped him into one of them, fed him and bade him "Goodnight". And we called him Noel. The next day we included him at feeding time with his brethren. All seemed well and we felt quite honoured that our lodger had chosen our land to settle on.

Christmas Day passed with the usual happy hilarity, gift-exchanging and feasting. In the evening as I closed the lounge curtains I could not believe my eyes! Yes, again a little white form was darting to and fro on the grass. So the process was repeated. This time the name we bestowed was Christine.

We put a notice on the front gate saying that two rabbits had been found and soon the relieved owner called. The rabbits had escaped from her garden which also backed onto the field. We chatted briefly and then parted – she glad to have found them and we quite sorry to lose them.

**1992** Many children pass up and down the road on their way to the new school and families on their way to the new church. Most of the field has gone to make way for those buildings and no rabbits frolic there now. Many children have been born over the years and it gives me great pleasure to see them. I smile and say 'Hello' to which I nearly always get a happy response. In the autumn of 1991, a pair of lovely brown eyes attracted me and the usual exchange of smiles and hand-waving took place. One day I met the brown-eyed boy in the town with his Daddy; he stumbled slightly but made no complaint and I said "You are a brave little chap". His Daddy said "He's used to it – he's got a slight balancing difficulty". Other times I met him with his Mummy and we got to chatting a little. One day when I met her she said "You don't remember me, do you?" I had to tell the truth and apologise that I didn't. "Do you remember", she said, "finding two of our rabbits one Christmas?" I answered instantly "Oh yes!" We continued talking and she told me that she and her husband had adopted the little boy, Ben. When he was born he had a mild cerebral fault and he had to stay in hospital a little longer. Soon he was pronounced fit enough to leave and go home, though he was not 100% perfect, but his parents didn't want him. Twice more this happened with the same result. But by now God had picked out one of his earth-angels to come forward with her husband and take this little innocent into their care and eventually to adopt him. And now he is my little friend, Ben, and how privileged I am that he regards me as his friend. He is a bright, intelligent little boy; a little under-sized for his nine years but a rapid absorber of things and knowledge, expressing himself perhaps slowly but more and more accurately as the days pass.

The next day I was not exactly feeling "full of the joys of Spring". However, off I went with my shopping trolley, bound for the supermarket. Advancing towards me were two familiar figures. "Ben has something for you" called out his Mummy, and Ben placed into my hand an envelope he was carefully holding. I waited until I was home before I opened it. It contained a bookmark with "A Grandmother's Prayer" printed on it:

*Let me give my grandchild gifts,  
Not just toys but other things  
Like treasured dreams and memories  
That give a child both roots and wings.*

*Let me show that what is old  
A child might find completely new;  
And know what once delighted me  
Makes my grandchild happy too.*

*Let me help with little things,  
To teach someone to tie a shoe,  
To answer funny questions now  
And always know just what to do.*

*Let me use this special time  
Feeling blessed by circumstance;  
For sometimes being a grandma is  
A mother's second happy chance.*

I think it is a lovely prayer. But what to me was even lovelier were the words on the back: "To Iris from Ben" and four kisses; written so carefully in Ben's own hand. Even had I come home penniless after shopping I was now one of the richest women in the world. So, to "A Grandmother's Prayer" I now add one of a Grandmother's Thanks:

*Thank you God for rabbits that sometimes stray.  
Thank you God for loving people who take little ones into their care.  
And thank you God for my friend Ben."*

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### **A note from the Minister From the cupboards!**

Now that the contents of both St Andrew's and Weybridge churches have been brought together and sorted out it would be rather nice to run a short series of exhibitions in The Gateway which let you see, close up, some things which may be of interest to you. Some are in regular use – but this is a chance to see them in detail – and some would normally be locked away for all sorts of reasons. So, for the first part of 2023 there will be a different exhibition on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month of things you might be interested to see. The first will be on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be a chance to see the Communion silver. The second exhibition will be on February 26<sup>th</sup> and will be a chance to see the commemorative Bibles, including the one given for the opening of the Weybridge building in 1865. I hope you will find these small "4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Month" exhibitions of interest and that you will enjoy being able to see the items and to read the inscriptions etc.



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## New Year People Who Lunch Church Hall

12.30 pm 13 January



**2023**

Why not make a New Year Resolution to come to the monthly (second Friday) 'People Who Lunch'? The first session for 2023 is at 12.30 pm on 13<sup>th</sup> January. Even if you have never been before you will be very welcome to join in this friendly get-together. The cost is £4.00 for soup, roll, dessert, cheese and biscuits and coffee.

Please note that for catering purposes advance booking is essential and remember to reserve your place with Margaret Faultless by emailing her at [margaretfaultless@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:margaretfaultless@blueyonder.co.uk) or by speaking to her in church.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Financial Contributions to NE Surrey Children's Services and the Walton & Hersham Foodbank

### How to make your donation through the church.

If you decide to do this, please either pay by:

- a) Bank Transfer  
Details of the church's bank account may be found on page 24 of this issue of The Grapevine.  
Please indicate whether your donation is for NE Surrey Children's Services or the Walton and Hersham Foodbank.

or by

- b) a cheque made out to 'St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Walton and Weybridge'. Please put this in an envelope marked 'NE Surrey Children's Services' or 'Walton and Hersham Foodbank' (as appropriate) and address it to the Treasurer (Jem Ward). It may be placed on the offertory plate at the rear of the church as you leave. If you are not going to be at the Christmas services this may be done in advance on any Sunday in December.

or by

- c) cash  
Please put this in an envelope marked NE Surrey Children's Services or Walton and Hersham Foodbank (as appropriate) and address it to the Treasurer (Jem Ward). It may be placed on the offertory plate at the rear of the church as you leave. If you are not going to be at the Christmas services this may be done in advance on any Sunday in December.

The Treasurer will add Gift Aid (where appropriate) to your personal donation (making it worth 25% more to the charity) and your gift will then be included in the total payment made by the church to the nominated charity.

## ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

**LOOKING BACK** at what has been an even tougher year for the artists, we managed to keep their heads above water and will end the year on a positive note. We have enjoyed considerable success with various modest projects. For example, donations and art sales proceeds enabled Fortune to build and stock his chicken run. He in turn gave a few chickens to Ignatious who has finished building his chicken run. He said:



'My family are so happy; may God bless all who helped us. We now have eight chickens - some have started laying eggs.' Once his chickens multiply he, like Fortune, will sell any surplus eggs or give chickens to needy friends. The above photos from left show, Ignatious, his wife Talent and family, Mary, Faith, Abel and Samuel. Extreme right, the children holding the day's 'production'. Peter Kananji is all set up as a street vendor selling sweets. Artists are now into multi-tasking. Mike Masedza's family have at last been able to move out of their miserable one room hovel without any facilities but more on this life changing development next time. Shingirai was able to buy a school uniform for his son Takudzwa - doesn't he look smart!



**THE RAINS** have arrived much to the group's relief.



Thanks to another generous donation from Marlow URC, the cooperative has seed and various compound fertilisers plus chemicals. The photo (left) was taken after the group had loaded up and shows their delight – this means so much to them. As Lovemore said: 'With a good harvest, my field of maize could provide enough to support 14 to 20 people including church friends with

basic mealie meal for most of the year, so as a group we support hundreds'. A short video of the artists in fields was recently shown to St Andrew's congregation so please ask if you would like a copy.

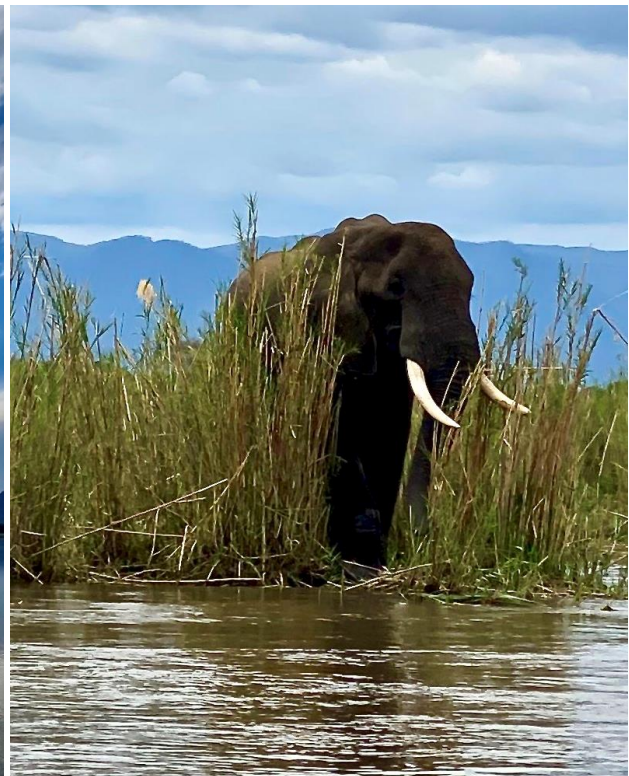


**SALES:** Two recent sculpture sales at St Andrew's raised the sum of £1140. Despite the gloomy economy, Southwark Cathedral's Shop continues to prove a valuable sales outlet. Remember, via Artpeace, we also



indirectly support many other artists through sales of their work. None of this of course would be possible without help from travellers - the latest being Robert and Cristina Purcell who not only took over lots of our surplus clothes, coloured pencils and used mobiles for the artists, but tons of mince pies for their son's school trip which they were joining. They visited Mana Pools a stunning wildlife conservation area in Northern Zimbabwe

and will return home loaded with 15 to 20 kg parcels of stone pieces. Without support like this, our project would soon grind to a halt. Lizeni right, sent a photo of herself laughingly 'modelling' her share of clothes. She said: **'They fit me well! I now have lovely clothes for Christmas and feel so happy'**. Robert took the tremendous photos shown below. A highlight was the rare scene of a leopard kill. Sadly, few of our artists have seen animals in the wild in their own beautiful country owing to the expense involved but they live in hope – one day!



**AMIDST ALL THIS BEAUTY**, storm clouds are gathering as Zimbabwe elections are due next year. Intimidation is likely to escalate. Fear grows as attacks on opposition increase and people get thrown into jail in the most awful of conditions. We, good readers, can act as a sort of buffer to this nastiness so your continued support would be appreciated.

**Johnston Simpson**

## St Andrew's URC, Walton and Weybridge – Update on Bank Standing Orders

As advised last month, it has not been possible for banks to change Standing Orders over between the different church bank accounts.

I must say a very big “thank you” to those who have struggled manfully/womanfully against the bureaucratic hurdles put in your way and have managed to change your Standing Orders so far.

If you make your offertory to the church via Standing Order, please can I ask you to get in touch with your bank and cancel your current Standing Order? You will then need to set up a new one, using the following details:

Account Name: St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Walton and Weybridge

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account Number: 00035141

This can also be done on-line, if you are confident in doing so. Experience now tells us that your bank's on-line systems may not recognise the name of the church when it does its “Verification Check”. (It is a Business Account.) Nevertheless, when you get to this point, please press “Continue” or “Confirm”, having ensured that you have put in the Sort Code and Account Number above correctly. (Both Jan and I had to do this to get our respective Standing Orders set up.)

If you are able to get to a branch of your own bank in person (*you will see that I am not holding my breath at this point, given the high closure rate of bank branches*), please take your bank card and a copy of The Grapevine with you. Tell the staff member that you want to cancel your old Standing Order and set up a new one using the details given above. They should be able to do this for you very easily.

Despite its reserves, the church mainly runs on income from hall hires and the money that you generously give, so, if you have any queries about this matter or need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Jem Ward*

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### Answers to Christmas Quiz on pp 14 & 15

- |    |                             |    |                                      |
|----|-----------------------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1  | Saturnalia                  | 16 | Cecil Frances Alexander              |
| 2  | Matthew and Luke            | 17 | Christmas Pie                        |
| 3  | A pagan mid-winter festival | 18 | Kissing under the mistletoe          |
| 4  | Birth                       | 19 | Thomas Edison                        |
| 5  | 359                         | 20 | Carol of the Drum                    |
| 6  | Oliver Cromwell             | 21 | JRR Tolkien                          |
| 7  | Germany                     | 22 | Cranberry                            |
| 8  | Kin                         | 23 | Mexico                               |
| 9  | 9                           | 24 | Dylan Thomas                         |
| 10 | Iceland                     | 25 | Meat                                 |
| 11 | Austria                     | 26 | Love, Laughter and Compassion        |
| 12 | Little Women                | 27 | 6                                    |
| 13 | 364                         | 28 | The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe |
| 14 | Poland                      | 29 | Greece                               |
| 15 | 4                           | 30 | St Stephen                           |

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## MESSY CHURCH

The November Messy Church is always our Christmas session as the Carol service is the third Sunday in December.

We had lots of activities on offer. Margaret helped the children make tissue covers. Some of the boys were very proud of their sewing. Ghislaine was making lavender bags with them and Sue led the cooking group making 'baby in the manger' cookies – well some included Mary, Joseph and the shepherds in the manger! I guess it was to have more jelly babies! Some covered heart-shaped boxes with sequins while others decorated them using felt tips. A very popular and restful craft with the Mums was scratch art. Observing how active the children were I am not surprised they enjoyed this.

In the Celebration I read the story *"The Christmas Party"* and then attempted to get the children to re-enact it with limited success.

When they left after a meal each child was given an envelope with lots of Advent activities in it, prepared by the URC, as well as taking their precious work home. *Anne Fitzgerald*



***A star for my Christmas Tree***



***Making a lavender bag for Grandma's Christmas present***



***Sewing a tissue cover***



***Colouring***



***Boys can sew too***



***Perhaps it would be quicker with two***



***This is good***





***This looks yummy***



***It is yummy***



***I made two lavender bags***



***Big sister helping***



***Can you do this?***



***I like this***



***These stickers make lovely cards***



***This is so relaxing!***

---

***We look forward to reading more about Messy Church in 2023.***



## *Floral Art*

Some of the recent beautiful displays of flowers in the church.



**30 October**

*Flowers provided by the Flower Fund*



**6 November**

*Flowers donated by Val Cave  
in memory of her brother*



**13 November**

**Remembrance Sunday**

*Flowers donated by Claire Ward*



**20 November**

*Flowers donated by Jane Bryant*

***If you would like to provide the flowers for  
one Sunday please sign on the Flower Rota  
in The Gateway.***

## *A Friend Remembered*

**Gillian Torbet Shaw**

**“Gill”**

I remember meeting Gill when she and her father, John (known to us as Ian), came to their first service at Weybridge URC in, I think, 2012. . Much to her delight he had moved from Scotland to live with her and we were soon to discover they were both great characters. One strong memory concerns Remembrance Sunday when Ian came to church wearing his RAF officer's uniform and medals (he flew Spitfires in the Second World War) with Gill walking proudly at his side. Her devotion to her Dad was evident in the way she cared for him (whilst also having a full-time job) as his health failed and she missed him so much when he died.

In her working life Gill had held some very high profile positions but when she took on responsibility for her father's care it became obvious that she would have to adopt a less demanding professional role. This decision led to her involvement in the general area of marketing and she brought the experience and skill she gained there to her role as the church's webmaster. The previous webmaster had moved away and the website was ailing. Gill set about re-designing it and reviving it with enormous energy and enthusiasm and also put the church on Facebook. It was a job she loved and she took her responsibilities seriously. She could always be found camera in hand (or fixed to her famous tripod) filming the church's life – special services, organ recitals, social events, weddings and so on.

Enthusiasm was a hallmark of Gill's character. She had wide interests and seemed to do everything at 'full tilt'. When we had a service celebrating the 2012 Olympics a quick poll of the congregation revealed that she had played far more sports than anyone else! Later it was revealed, too, that she had also participated in 'banger racing' which I am told is a highly dangerous activity.

After her father died Gill decided on a complete change of direction and developed her craft skills. She rented a unit tucked away in mews in Oatlands Village and set-up a furniture restoration business. She had prepared for this by doing various courses around the country relating to the many aspects of furniture restoration including upholstery and cushion-making. Sadly, Gill's illness struck just as the business was becoming established.

It was at this time that my friendship with Gill became closer although we already had shared interests through our Scottish backgrounds. I remember very clearly wending my way into Gill's flat avoiding her many cats! She always had at least four and adored them all. I didn't! Then there was her devotion to Scottish country dancing. I remember her preparing for a week away to spend every day dancing. She was desperate to 'look the part' and set about making several different dance dresses – one for each day. This love of country dancing was core to her life and was reinforced at her funeral when all her 'dancing' friends wore full highland dress (kilts etc) and many women wore tartan scarves. A piper walked in front of the hearse to bring her coffin into the crematorium. It was quite moving.

Despite her own long and serious illness Gill did not forget others in the congregation who were having a tough time health-wise or were feeling lonely. In her 'up' periods she would visit them (often accompanied by a chocolate cake) and do her best to brighten their day.

Gill will be missed by so many friends. I admired her determination to keep going through all those years of illness – operations, chemotherapy, innumerable hospital visits – and to enjoy life as much as possible. On visiting her the evening before she died I was happy to know she was at peace.

*Margaret Faultless*



## **A note from the Minister**

### **News from St James's Church, Weybridge**

Last autumn the Rector, Brian Prothero, retired and the search for his successor began. St James' Church is pleased to announce that the Revd Damian Harrison-Miles has been appointed as the next Rector. He is currently Vicar of Thorpe, where his last Sunday will be the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The hope is that Damian and his family will move during January, in readiness for his Induction Service on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January. This is lovely news and we look forward to being able to welcome the new Rector and his family to Weybridge in the New Year.

## **JUMPING FOR JOY!**

As a keen photographer, I thought to share this marvellous photograph taken by a teacher on a school trip to Mana Pools, Zimbabwe (covered in latest Artpeace article). The party of schoolboys were cooling down late afternoon after a very hot exciting day in temperatures of 33 °C.

*Johnston Simpson*



## **A note from the Minister**

### **Looking ahead to Lent**

As you know, for a number of years a Lent Course has been available here and that's been organized and provided in various ways as well. Learning from "what seems to work for us", most recently I have written a course specifically for us, which has been available on line and in an easily produced format as well, and which could be used in a number of different ways. This is because the commercially produced ones don't seem to suit our requirements terribly well.

I am still very happy to do this but before I put pen to any paper (or finger to keyboard!) there are two questions I'd like to ask.

- 1 Do you want a Lent course? Is it helpful? Does it serve a purpose?
- 2 What theme would you like it to take in 2023? What would you most like to learn about? What do you want from a course? What would you like it to cover/target?

Over the last few years we have looked at the Holy Habits material and, in 2022, a more detailed exploration of the themes set by the lectionary for that Lent. What do you want for 2023 – or don't you actually want anything? I am very happy to do the necessary work but am wanting to make sure that it's what you want and if there is a particular theme you would like. Do please let me know

## PRAYER CORNER



### *A Prayer for Christmas Day*

Lord, our God, on this happy morning we acknowledge once again that you gave yourself completely to the world.

In the bleakness of that stable, impoverished and bare as it was love was born that day; pure love – rich in blessing and abundant in hope.

Yours, was a love poured out for all; surprising to some, unsurprising to others for your ancient story had revealed already how much you loved the world if only we had been prepared to see it.

This gift of love deserves a response:

a response in the form of the life that we lead,

a response not just for today,

not just in the words of celebration and greeting that we exchange,

but each and every day through our actions,

as we show you and our neighbour how much we care.

Amen

*URC Daily Devotions*

### *A Mid-Winter Meditation*

**The Light Shines in the Darkness**

**The darkness has not overcome it**

Sometimes it comes close.

At those moments you'd give anything

for a seven-branched candlestick,

an over-zealous security light,

or the twinkling stuff on the neighbour's house.

Who is still awake at the house across the road?

Where have those car headlights come from?

God of darkness,

Deep mid-winter One,

Keep vigil with us

Who hold on to your promises.

Amen

*Janet Lees*

*URC Prayer Handbook 2008*

*(based on John 1:5)*

2023

### ***Welcoming a New Year and Continuing the Journey***

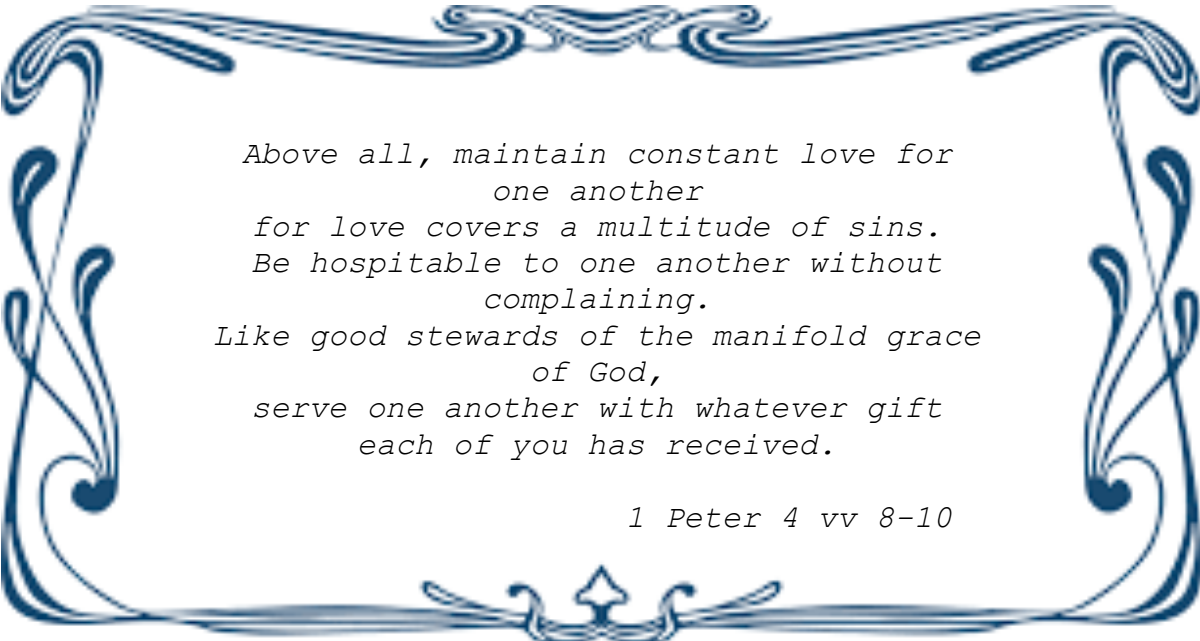
Many years ago in our small village the local baker was named Mr Christmas. There were always queues outside his little shop, where the tantalizing smell of freshly-baked bread drifted through from the bake-house with its red-hot ovens. He and his assistant worked long hours and baked the most wonderful loaves of all shapes and sizes but gradually there were other things, too. At Christmas chocolate logs and iced cakes appeared and then as Easter approached there were Hot Cross Buns on Good Friday, Simnel Cakes and Easter Eggs. Everyone was sad when the shop closed down – the bread we bought in other places just didn't taste the same. When I read the poem below I thought about Mr Christmas and how with his name and with his work he somehow inadvertently covered the journey from Christmas to Easter.

*Alex Henham*

### ***The Christmas Tree becomes an Easter Cross***

After we have sung the last carols  
and stumbled into the jazz of January,  
December decoded,  
the Christmas tree is hidden in the manse garden,  
at the back, where the tennis court used to be;  
these easy transformations,  
these small tokens.  
Rain, light snows, mostly wind and nettle stench,  
the Boy Jesus learning about territory and soldiers,  
the politics of belief and the grain of wood.  
Still green the Christmas tree is cut in two  
To make the cross.  
You need gloves, a sharp blade,  
a good eye to avoid small wounds,  
the sap still there  
and a story in the heart telling you what you know  
about crucifixion and denials  
and when you enter the church to erect the cross  
you are alone  
yet surrounded by voices, crowds, this other light.

*DHW Grubb (URC 'Reform' 2010)*



*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.*

*1 Peter 4 vv 8-10*

#### **MINISTER**

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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 send a link to enable easy participation.

You are all most welcome to join us!