



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



THE GRAPEVINE



FEBRUARY 2023

Volume 2 No 1



A walk in the hills at Garve, Scotland

*"There is always in February some one day, at least,
when one smells the yet distant, but surely coming, summer."*

Gertrude Jekyll

From The Manse

February 2023



Dear friends

The Lectionary (the table of Bible readings) we are currently using is taking most of this year's Gospel readings from Matthew's Gospel. I therefore wondered if you might find it helpful if I wrote a little background information about it this month.

Tradition holds that Matthew the Gospel-writer is Matthew the apostle (also called Levi). We read the story of his call in Chapter 9, beginning at verse 9. The big problem with this is that if Mark was the first Gospel to be physically written (which is what most scholars hold to these days) then, in places, Matthew copies from Mark - and yet wouldn't it be odd for someone who was one of Jesus' disciples to copy from someone who wasn't? Furthermore, some of the linguistic style is highly reminiscent of a Jewish religious teacher. Certainly, the writer had an excellent knowledge of Jewish scripture (more anon) and so I think that another view is that Matthew the tax collector/disciple is the source of some of the information and that someone else actually wrote it up. Personally, I think that this could well be the case.

Dating the writing of the Gospel is rather approximate. Some scholars are saying it's about 40 AD and others say as late as 100 AD. Unsurprisingly, most go for somewhere between 60 and 90AD. What's more certain is that one of Matthew's reasons for writing is to show that Jesus is the fulfilment of the promises made in the Old Testament which suggests that his initial audience was primarily Jewish, probably a group of Jews who had accepted and believed in Jesus. Jesus was their Messiah and God's purposes of old were being carried forward through him. The first chapter traces Jesus' ancestry back to David, Israel's first King, and then back to Abraham, the first of the Patriarchs and renowned for his faith. If we then move on to the "story" of Jesus, then between the start of Matthew's infancy narrative (Matthew 1 verse 18) and the end of the flight to Egypt, (Matthew 2 verse 18) we are told four times (complete with the supporting quotations) how Jesus is fulfilling what scripture had foretold. So, in just those 25 verses alone, we see very clearly a significant reason why Matthew is writing, and we see, too, why it's suspected that the work of a Jewish teacher is underpinning it.

Another feature of Matthew's Gospel is that it includes quite a bit about the disputes with which Jesus became involved and the criticisms made of him. This, it is thought, is because of the likely tensions between his original readers and their Jewish contemporaries who didn't share their faith in Jesus. Initially, this made them a sort of fringe group within Judaism and although all the Gospels show some of this, Matthew includes more, presumably because of its relevance to his situation.

Matthew is also the only one to use the word "church" - that Jesus is gathering together a community - and so he also includes much about appropriate lifestyles and relationships within this community. He believed that faith must show itself in daily life and that that faith which doesn't direct a person's actions and attitudes is hollow. We belong to one another and we must express our faith in love and in action. That's why, for example, at the start of Chapter 23 he is so critical of the scribes and the Pharisees. Their attitude is an anathema.

Our Gospel readings on a Sunday are predominantly taken from Matthew until Advent Sunday (3 December) although we still draw on other Gospels on occasions. I therefore hope that a bit of background information will be of interest and of help to you as we move away from Luke (last year's principal Gospel) and from his perspectives,

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Lad", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES FEBRUARY 2023


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

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 5 February (Zoom) | 10.30 am | Morning Worship with Holy Communion |
| Friday 10 February | 12.30 - 2.30 pm | People Who Lunch - Church Hall (<i>see page 15</i>) |
| Sunday 12 February | 10.30 am | Morning Worship |
| Tuesday 14 February | 8.00 pm | Elders' Meeting Bill Topping Room |

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ALL ITEMS TO THE EDITOR (provided they do not contravene copyright regulations)
NORMA REID, 3 GWALIOR ROAD, LONDON SW15 1NP
Email: aristocats.2000@gmail.com

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

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 19 February (Zoom) | 10.30 am | Morning Worship |
| | 3.00 pm |  Messy Church |

Tuesday 22 February SHROVE TUESDAY

Wednesday 23 February ASH WEDNESDAY

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Sunday 26 February | 10.30 am | Morning Worship |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|

Lent Course 2023

Ash Wednesday this year is on 22 February. For the last three or four years I've written a Lent Course specifically for us. However, this year I thought it would be good to have a change and to use something a bit different. I know that some of you use and value the URC Daily Devotions material, sent out each morning via email. The Commissioning Editor is Revd Andy Braunston and this year he is also producing material for Lent entitled, "Saints on the Edge."

"Saints on the Edge" is going to look at a selection of saints who have been "on the edge" due to their location, their take on God, or their politics and, in one case, for being canonised against the wishes of the Church due to the fact he was, in fact, a dog! Andy is hoping to put five sessions together, with an option for a hymn in each one, with two or three saints to be looked at in each session. Writers include the Revds: Professor Elizabeth Stewart, Dr Jack Dyce, Dr John Scott, and Dave Herbert. The normal format of a reading, reflection, some open-ended discussion questions and prayers will be offered, together with participants sheets and some notes for leaders.

It will probably be necessary to combine the participant sheets and the leaders' notes here but I'll know rather more when I actually see the material (it's not yet available). Nonetheless, I thought that this could be a change and could also be quite challenging. More anon but this will be our Lent Course for 2023. "Saints on the Edge".

Michael Hodgson

ELECTION OF ELDERS - AN IMPORTANT NOTE

At the AGM at the end of March, we shall be holding our first Election of Elders. In January 2022, all serving Elders of Walton and Weybridge automatically became members of the new Eldership and I am sure that we are all extremely grateful for the stability and continuity that brought to our union. However, the time has now come for us to hold an Elders' Election and we'll be going about this in a slightly different way.

We currently have 18 Serving Elders and realistically we probably need to have about 12. Six of our current Elders have said that, for various reasons, they will be stepping down at the AGM. For the next couple of years we are also going to ensure that existing periods of service gradually conclude so that things get evened out and we avoid getting a stack of Elders coming up for re-election at the same time. It would, also, be really good to get some new faces onto the Eldership.

Very shortly, you will receive a letter asking for your nominations for the Eldership. You will also receive a list of all the church members eligible to stand. Not everyone on that list will want to stand for election but it will be a complete list of Church Members eligible to stand: no one will be excluded. You will then be able to "nominate" a specified number of people of people from that list but you do not need to get their consent first. Nominations will need to be submitted by a set date and then they will be counted and sorted. I'll then approach those with the most nominations and ask if they would be willing to stand. The thinking behind this is that when I approach someone to ask them if they would consider standing for election, they will know that they have the support of a number of the congregation - and that may will be influential in their decision.

Those Elders who have come to the end of their term of service are all eligible for re-nomination and re-election. : They do need to be nominated for a further term of service. Again, this is an opportunity to show those individuals that they still have the support of the congregation and so I think that it is important to remember that this process is designed to be both positive and affirming. Those being asked to stand for the first time, as well as those being asked to re-stand do so knowing that they have support from within the membership.

At the AGM I shall bring to Church Meeting the names of those who have accepted nomination and Church Meeting can then vote in the knowledge that those people genuinely do have support within the fellowship.

The names of those Elders who do not wish continue as Serving Elders after the AGM will be indicated on the list of members you receive, so that you know not to nominate them. It is also probably worth saying at this point that Jem Ward, our Treasurer, does not wish to be considered.

Any questions, do please ask me. Although it is a slightly different system to that used in either church prior to union, it does encourage everyone to take an active part in the process and it also gives significant information to those being asked to stand.

Michael Hodgson

The old lady was deaf. This meant that the question she asked her minister was asked sufficiently loudly for everyone in the room to hear. 'Was entering the ministry your own idea or were you just poorly advised?'

A Robin Reames tells how he once attended a service where the visiting preacher gave a sermon on the symbol of the dove. It was directed mainly at children. At one point he tried to coax from the young people what the dove stood for. 'It is gentle', ventured one child. 'It is pure', suggested another. 'Anything else?' asked the preacher. 'It eats our cabbages!', said another boy.

from 'Holy Wit' by Revd James A Simpson

News of the Church Family

In Memoriam

It is with much sadness that we record the deaths of Grace Farquhar on 15 December, Janet Alexander on 15 December and Sheila Gardner on 21 December. We send our love and condolences to their families and to their wider families and friends. We remember them with tributes as Friends Remembered, page 8 for Grace Farquhar and page 9 for Janet Alexander. A tribute to Sheila Gardner will be included in the March issue.

New Homes

Shortly before Christmas Lilian Smith moved to a care home in East Molesey close to where members of her family live. She has settled in well and is making new friends.

Following two weeks in hospital towards the end of last year Chris Goddard was discharged to a care home in Weybridge where he is very happy and is being well looked after.

We send our good wishes to both of these friends and look forward to receiving further news of them.

Prayers

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

Church and Community (Financial Gifts – December 2022)

NE Surrey Children's and Families' Services - Gift Service (11 December)

In addition to the general gifts brought to the Gift Service monetary donations amounting to £412.50 (including Gift Aid) were received. This was used to provide vouchers for families in need to purchase food and other goods at local stores during the year.

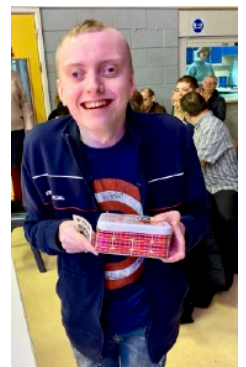
Walton and Hersham Foodbank

Christingle Service (Christmas Eve) and Family Service (Christmas Day)

The Walton and Hersham Foodbank was the charity chosen by the Church Meeting as the church's Christmas Charity with collections made at services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Donations amounting to £175 (including Gift Aid) were received.



Elmbridge Mencap are having a very busy year so far. Pantomime on 12 January - Cinderella at the local Playhouse in Walton. We purchased the whole theatre for the night. We are the greatest audience ... OH YES WE ARE! For Cinema night at Burview Hall (we have a large screen and surround sound) on 14 January we showed 'Night at the Museum'. Then, to cap it all, on Saturday 21 January we had a live band called "What If" for a fantastic night that nearly blew the roof off. Photos show raffle prize winners. Our Three Day A Week day service is up and running. We are looking forward to another year full of fun at our clubs. *Jean Rigden*



Train the next generation - a sustainable solution to medical care in Africa

By Dr Rick Gardner

Imagine your child was born with a correctable but debilitating bone condition. The closest surgeon is in a city hundreds of miles away, maybe thousands, and you have no car. Bus tickets are expensive, so you sell something of value. You buy two tickets and manage the long bus ride with the infant.

After you arrive at the hospital, you are told to wait many days until your child can be treated. You two spend the daytime watching people pass by and the nighttime wherever you can.

On the day of the surgery, you are required to pay up-front for your child's procedure. It's not just expensive — it's more money than you could ever expect to earn in your lifetime. Alternatively, you are told that the hospital lacks the capacity or the expertise to care for your child. You lose hope that anything can be done and come to the realisation that your child will never be able to go to school, find work, or raise a family of their own. In short, they will be left behind.

This is a memory, a current situation, or a future occurrence for hundreds of thousands of parents across Africa. The continent's chronic and severe shortage of hospital capacity and surgical expertise increases costs, travel, and time for treatment beyond what is possible for millions.

The need is enormous and ever-growing as populations swell across the continent. The lack of hospital capacity and specialist surgeons means that children with treatable disabilities or those who desperately need help following injury or infection often do not receive the care they need. In many countries in Africa, there is fewer than one orthopaedic surgeon for every one million people — compared to the United States, where there is one for every 11,000 people.

The solution is not just about providing high-quality care; it is about inspiring and equipping the next generation of talented surgeons to do their utmost for these children.

The Christian nonprofit organisation I serve with, [CURE International](#), operates eight no-cost children's hospitals across Africa and the Philippines. Every year, thousands of children receive excellent surgical care, restoring their hope, dignity, and opportunity. Crucially, we work alongside our colleagues in the public hospitals, offering a dedicated training program for national surgeons where they develop their skills in either paediatric orthopaedic surgery, neurosurgery, or plastic reconstructive surgery. Through these programs, many go on to dedicate their careers to improving the lives of the most vulnerable children in the world. Children with operable disabilities need not be left behind in life — the cycle can be broken.

Earlier this month, three talented Ethiopian surgeons successfully graduated from the paediatric orthopaedic fellowship program at CURE Children's Hospital of Ethiopia. Dr. Bekalu, Dr. Netsanet, and Dr. Wubshet are now working in two of the largest public hospitals in Ethiopia. They, in turn, will train and inspire fellow national surgeons in how to provide the highest standard of paediatric reconstructive surgery. This is essential: there is a huge number of children on our waiting list at CURE Ethiopia. Through intentional, high-quality training programmes, the next generation of children could receive the timely, local, and excellent care that they so desperately need and deserve. Sustainably for generations.



Dr. Bekalu (left), Dr. Netsanet (centre), and Dr. Wubshet (right) passed the Paediatric Orthopaedic Fellowship Examination of the College of Surgeons of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa in Windhoek, Namibia, December 2022.

Why does this matter to Christians in particular?

As Christians, we are disciples of Jesus. Following him, learning from him, and emulating him as he teaches, guides, and instructs us. This model of discipleship changed the world forever! The model in a clinical setting is just as powerful but it requires intentionality and leadership when the demands of day-to-day medical care are already stretching.

Creating dedicated residency and fellowship programs that aligns with the national training structure takes time, effort, and resources. Without these initiatives, an opportunity is missed every time a patient is cared for by a specialist when no trainee is present. As Christians, we should be the very first to recognise this. Such collaborations with our colleagues in the national public hospitals bear great fruit as we work together to train the next generation of talented local surgeons.

[CURE International](#) is not alone in this effort. Many organisations, including the [Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons](#), [Mercy Ships](#), [AO Alliance](#) and [MedSend](#), are doing transformative work to solve immediate and long-term medical shortages.

This Christmas season, let us recognise that we could put our resources and God-given gifts into supporting organisations that invest in medical training. Long-term, these investments will reap a return for generations to come.

[Dr. Rick Gardner](#) is the Chief Medical Officer at CURE International and an orthopaedic surgeon at CURE Children's Hospital of Zimbabwe.



FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Grace Farquhar



Born on 18 July 1929 in Edinburgh to William and Grace Fairweather Young, “wee” Grace was to be the only child in the family. Her parents belonged to the deaf community and communicated through hand-sign language but thankfully Grace suffered no speech or hearing impairment. Naturally though, Grace learned to use hand sign language to communicate with her parents and de facto, she became the voice and ears for the family.

Her father, a shoe-maker, produced bespoke shoes for gentry clients of Loakes of London. Even from the very young age of six, it fell to Grace to talk with Loakes' Head Office in London via public telephone whenever her father needed work-related discussion. Equally, on Sunday 3 September 1939 it was the role for Grace, then aged 10, to listen on the radio set to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and in turn inform her mother and father that Britain was, once again, at war with Germany. The decision was made to send wee Grace to join family in the distant safety of Australia. Her father's brother had emigrated as a coal miner to Newcastle, NSW, when the Lothian pits had closed. So, aged 11, Grace set sail to join her cousins in Australia. Her story almost ended at this point because the very next evacuee ship behind Grace's was torpedoed and sunk by enemy naval action. After then, no more evacuee ships left the UK. Grace went to school in Australia and after war ended, in 1946 aged 16, she returned to Scotland.

Back in Edinburgh, Grace trained as a short-hand typist and joined the office of a prominent legal advocate in the Law Courts of Edinburgh before moving into the office of Scottish Motor Transport. Grace joined Lockhart Memorial Presbyterian Church, near to her parents flat in Easter Road, Leith and famously adjacent to Hibs football ground. She signed up to the church youth club and it was here that she met a young Laurie Farquhar, also living with his parents close by. Grace and Laurie became part of a group of young couples at the church youth club and enjoyed socialising with them, especially youth hostel cycling holidays. Laurie was working through his apprenticeship at Leith Docks while studying nights at Herriot Watt University. He graduated in Marine Engineering, joined the British Merchant Navy and set off to sea. They married on 22 October 1954 at Lockhart Memorial Church and honeymooned in Nice, the first time that Grace was to fly. Laurie worked his way up to Chief Engineer, was away at sea for a year at a time then home leave for six weeks. Despite that obvious challenge, son Grahame arrived in 1957, followed shortly after by Brian in 1959. The really big break came in 1961 when Laurie's employer, Mobil Oil, offered him a major promotion into a shore-based job based out of London. Laurie went south first on a scouting mission and found a suitable property in a new housing development by Hersham railway station. The family relocated to Walton Park Lane in late 1961 and in that year their third son, Stuart, arrived. While shore-based, Laurie was still often away from home and Grace was pretty much left on her own in Walton to bring up her three boys. Grace again turned to the church in setting herself up in her new location and, with Laurie, joined St Andrew's church in Walton. She signed up for Young Wives and Scottish Country dancing. She taught at Sunday School and befriended many fellow parishioners. Her boys attended Sunday School, were enthusiastic participants in the Church Cub pack and supported the church jumble sales and annual Christmas Bazaar.

Grace and Laurie continued their Edinburgh friendship group their entire lives, in the early years returning with the family to Edinburgh each Easter, to meet up with relatives and friends. Laurie's death in 2001 was sorely felt, but he had retired sufficiently early to allow the two of them to enjoy some lovely years together. Grace used her sign language skills throughout her time in Surrey to support local deaf societies. She read books, enjoyed TV, attended her embroidery club for many years and always kept up her subscription for the Scottish Sunday Post newspaper.

Grace was proud of her sons, each of whom married wonderful girls from lovely families. The eldest, Grahame, was married at St Andrew's in September 1984 by Revd Bill McCrorie. Prouder still to see grandchildren arrive, three boys and one girl and so happy to see history repeat when her grandsons also made happy marriages. Grace relocated to a new apartment in New Zealand Avenue in 2016 and, ultimately to a Care Home in Worthing as dementia set in. She passed away, peacefully in her sleep, on 15 December, 2022. Throughout her life, Grace was a devoted daughter, an adoring wife, a loving mum and, of course, a doting Grandma. She was a strong woman contemporary of her time and will be much missed by all of us who knew and loved her.

Grahame Farquhar



FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Janet Yule Alexander

"Etta"



Janet was a Scot, born in Hawick, an historic town in the Scottish borders. She was one of two, having a brother, Jim, and she enjoyed a happy childhood. She went to the High School there where she was a bright and hard-working pupil where she became the school Dux or Head Girl. Away from school, she was a keen cyclist and also a tennis player, being a member of Wilton Tennis Club in Hawick – and her love of tennis was something that continued after she moved down South because she used to play on the courts which used to be on Stompond Lane.

School days over, Janet began her working life at the Food Office in Edinburgh but then moved down to London for work, still with the Civil Service, in the late 50s, initially taking lodgings before sharing a flat and ultimately a house with her friend from Edinburgh, Ella Turbert. Sadly Ella died in 2000.

Janet never married but she did have a very close friend, John, and they spend some wonderful times together, particularly at John's holiday cottage in the Lake District where they enjoyed hill-walking, gardening and socialising. Her niece, Kay and her nephew Gary remember their Aunt fondly. She was a loving aunt, kind and generous, happy for them to come and stay with her in London and happy to feed healthy appetites as well. When they became adults the Christmas and Birthday presents morphed into cases of wine which were received with great appreciation.

Sadness hit the whole family when Janet's father died two days before her 35th birthday and just five days before her brother's wedding to Margot. It was a bitter blow but her mother insisted that everything went ahead as planned. Margot and Jim's happy wedding photos must bely the underlying grief they must all have been feeling - but which also makes those photographs a wonderful tribute to a family pulling together at so difficult a time.

Janet was never a regular member of the St Andrew's congregation but she was a member of the Women's Fellowship and used to come along to its meetings when she was able.

Janet had travelled extensively in her life, visiting many different countries and places. She went many times to Europe but, perhaps a little more unusually, had been to Moscow and to the Great Wall of China. She visited New York for the first time to celebrate her 80th birthday. As well as sport, particularly tennis and rugby, Janet was a great lover of opera and the ballet, attending Covent Garden and enjoying visits to the theatre. She was extremely knowledgeable on the subject and her love of opera was acknowledged in the closing music of her funeral which came from Puccini's opera, 'Tosca'. Pursued by the police after her murder of Scarpia, Tosca threw herself from the parapet of the Castel Sant' Angelo. Thankfully, Janet's own death was rather more peaceful and rather less dramatic than that of Tosca!

Michael Hodgson

*Remembrance is a light that never fades
It is a candle in a darkened room
It is a kiss upon Life's fevered brow*

NEWS FROM WESSEX SYNOD

Wessex Synod - Prayer Calendar for February



- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 | Trinity Church, Ringwood; Warsash; Wheatley, Oxford |
| 12 | Godalming United Church Lymington |
| 19 | Christ Church, Milton, Portsmouth; Christ Church, Marlow |
| 26 | St Francis, Valley Park, Chandler's Ford Cumnor, Oxford |

MODERATOR'S FAREWELL SERVICE - SAVE THE DATE

There will be a Farewell Service for Clare Downing on Saturday 1 April at London Street, Basingstoke, followed by tea and cake.

All are welcome. However, we would be grateful if you could let Deborah (office@urcwessex.org.uk) know if you will be attending so we have an idea of numbers for catering purposes.

NEW DATE FOR URC ANNIVERSARY SERVICE - 15 APRIL 2023

We're delighted to announce that the new date is Saturday 15 April 2023. In an ideal world, we would have opted for a longer gap after Easter, but we hope that as many members and friends of the URC will be able to join us for our delayed anniversary celebrations.

The Open Church House event at 86 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9RT, will also take place on April 15 from 10am-12 noon.

Tickets : If you have a ticket and are able to come to the event on April 15, please do nothing - your ticket is still valid. Please bring it/them on the day. If you would like more tickets, please visit <https://bit.ly/urc50> and amend your order. If you are no longer able to attend, please <https://bit.ly/urc50> and select Cancel Order. This will free up your tickets for others. Or email 50@urc.org.uk and we can cancel the order for you.

A Gaelic Rune

*Be thou a bright flame before me,
Be though guiding star above me,
Be thou a smooth path below me,
And be a kindly shepherd behind me,
Today, tonight and for ever.*



GIFT SERVICE



The annual Gift Service was something of a tradition at Weybridge URC. In fact it dates back to the late 1800s when children and adults sent gifts to a church in a poor part of London. In recent times, shortly before Christmas, the young people in the uniformed organisations, and other members of the congregation, would bring gifts to be distributed by the NE Surrey Children and Family team to local children and teenagers who might not otherwise have much to look forward to in the way of Christmas presents. Gifts of money could also be given via the Church Treasurer and used to buy vouchers for those in need.

Oh what a lot of toys there were!

In 2022, the Gift Service continued in the united church at St Andrew's. The young people of the uniformed organisations paraded into church, some of them already dressed for the Christmas tableau which would form an important part of the service. It is always so good to welcome them. The colours were presented during the first hymn, 'Once in Royal David's City' and then the gifts were brought forward during the second hymn, 'O Little Town of Bethlehem', and laid under the Christmas tree at the front of the church. What a splendid array of toys and books etc there were!



The young people continued to play an important part throughout the service, leading our thinking about light, and eagerly answering questions posed by the Minister, before setting out the scene of the nativity for us at the front of the church. The Minister made sure that there were moments of light-heartedness interspersed with more serious moments. It was a really lovely and thoroughly enjoyable service, as well as providing an opportunity to help others. At the end of the service, the colours were returned during 'See Him Lying on a Bed of Straw' and the young people and their leaders paraded out of church.



Gwenda and Alistair Cochrane gathered the gifts after the service, and the next day the NE Surrey Children and Family team were delighted to collect them for distribution before Christmas. In addition £412.50 (including Gift Aid) was collected to be converted into vouchers which can be exchanged for essential goods in a local supermarket. These will be distributed to those most in need during the year ahead.

Liz Grimsey

CHRISTINGLE

The Christingle service that always takes place on Christmas Eve and initiated by David Netherwood during his tenure as minister at St Andrew's, is now a firm and popular fixture in our church's Christmas calendar.



This year, Michael resplendent in his Christmas jumper and Santa hat, was ably aided and abetted by his Meerkat accomplice, a Christmas present to Michael from his parents a good few years ago. The service was light-hearted and well attended with the children sitting at the front, well placed to play their part. "Where have all our stable characters gone?" Meerkat whispered in Michael's ear that the Nativity stable was sitting empty on the Communion Table and that the children should help find them by looking around the church. Some earnest searching ensued and soon the Holy Family, surrounded by the Three Wise Men, a shepherd and his sheep and a donkey were in place.



Finding the Nativity characters

Where have all our stable characters gone?

The four Advent candles were then lit by young volunteers, the smallest of whom needed a bit of help in order to reach!



On tiptoes to light the Advent Candle



Teresa on the organ



A perfect Christingle

Small, brown paper bags each containing a Christingle-making kit were handed out as the highlight of the service: an orange with a red ribbon around it, a candle, four toothpicks and a packet of Haribos. The children came up with the answers to Michael's questions as to what each item represented: an orange the World; the red ribbon the blood of Christ; the candle, pushed into the top of the orange, the light of the world, the toothpicks, stuck into the orange one on each side (if you can say that a circle has sides!) for the four compass corners of the Earth and the Haribo on each stick, the people. After a gentle warning from Michael as to how we should hold our lighted candles with care, he started us off with a spill lit from the

Peace Candle and then turned out the church lights. There was a minute of silence after which Michael said a prayer and we were lost in the magic of the moment, our Christingles flickering quietly in the dark with the Christmas Tree the only other source of light.



With a mixture of carols old and new, starting with 'See him lying on a bed of straw and including 'Away in a manger', 'The Christingle begins with an orange', 'Silent Night' and ending with 'O Come all ye Faithful', Teresa made sure we kept in tune, seamlessly alternating between organ and piano.

I suspect that some of us had not realised we could track Santa's journey on the Santa Tracker App which, fortunately, one of the parents had to hand. It was fascinating to see that, during the course of the service, Santa had travelled from Indonesia, to Vietnam and then Mongolia. Those reindeer must have been super-fit and have had a good few marathons under their harnesses with many more to come over the next few hours. As we learned at intervals where Santa was at any given minute, the children joined in enthusiastically to answer Michael's questions relating to the journeys of the Wise Men and Shepherds as well as that of Santa and his reindeer. Whilst the Wise Men were travelling, they fancied a coffee so - of course - they stopped off at Starbuck's! Some children were concerned that too many fattening treats were being left out for Father Christmas in case he was at risk of being unable to get up and down the chimney. This particular concern prompted Michael to give us an enthusiastic rendering on the piano of 'When Santa got stuck up the Chimney...'. At the other end of the scale, one child thought that just leaving out a carrot for Rudolph was a bit mean.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to make Christingle such a success.

Norma Reid



*Kona and Scout killing time
before Santa's visit*

CHRISTMAS IN TEXAS

Christmas in Texas included extra loved ones joining our family, not least the two labradors Kona and Scout. This resulted in the need for extra stockings to be hung on the mantle. I made three extra stockings in time for Santa's visit! Santa always visits Christmas Eve to fill the stockings with sweets and other goodies. One of the items in each stocking every year, is a new pair of snuggly socks!

Sophia Swanson



THE CAROL SERVICE



On a dark and wet afternoon, St Andrew's was like a welcome beacon in the dreary weather. The glow of the candles alight on the window sills and pews gave a warmth and welcome embrace to all who entered to the smell of mulled wine and happy chatter while mince pies were consumed with relish!

When all had taken their seats, familiar friends, some with their extended families, and new faces, friends yet to meet. In the silence, we heard the lone voice of our Minister, Michael, singing the first verse of the Welsh hymn (in English).

*The poor and the humble
and all those who stumble
come hastening, and feel not afraid;
for Jesus, our treasure
with love past all measure,
in lonely poor manger was laid.
Though wise men who found him
laid rich gifts around him,
yet oxen they gave him their hay;
and Jesus in beauty
accepted their duty;
Contented in manger he lay.*

And so, our service started, with familiar carols from 'Once in Royal David's City' to 'O Come All Ye Faithful', with the regular and treasured readings depicting the why, the how and the where came about the birth of our Lord in a stable. It was lovely to have Michael Masedza from Art Peace in Zimbabwe doing one of the readings, bringing the wider church family together.

Interspersed with the familiar, there were readings and poems from more contemporary authors: Rowan Williams, Charles Causley and Teresa Lola. Musical duets, both organ and piano and two pianos from Michael and our organist, Teresa, added a new and welcome dimension. It was a moving and enjoyable service, recalling memories of past services and treasuring this one too. Our thanks to Michael for all the work he put in to bring it all together, to Teresa for expertise on the keyboards and to our readers. You all made it a special occasion.

Sitting in the church at the end of the service in the candlelight with the Christmas tree and decorations, the musical rendition of two pianos playing 'We wish you a merry Christmas' made the trials of this world disappear and the joy of the true meaning of Christmas come alive.

A member of the Congregation



CHRISTMAS DAY



It was lovely to have a few visiting families, all older children or else adults. Few of the congregation had opened any presents so we weren't able to share much on that score! It being Matthew's Gospel set this year, in the sermon I focussed on Emmanuel and some of the ways in which God had been with us. Teresa and I played a piano duet - a slow rock version of 'O little town of Bethlehem' - and we all duly made our way home to our sprouts and pigs in blankets with 'Joy to the World' ringing in our ears. We all sang 'We wish you a merry Christmas' to one another at the end of the service.

Michael

VISITORS TO ST ANDREW'S FROM ACROSS THE SEAS

We were delighted to welcome two overseas visitors to church in January.

Andrew Walker, came along on 15 January with Norma, an old family friend. His parents Tom and Stella Walker and grandmother, Maima McGregor, were for many years regular attenders at St Andrew's, as were Andrew and his sister, Valerie until they married and left the area. Andrew has lived for the past 40 years in Indonesia, having married Lily there. Lily sadly died two years ago and their two children, Mary and James, are both living on opposite sides of the globe, Mary in Boston and James in Hong Kong. Andrew came over for Mary's graduation in London and took the opportunity to spend some time with Valerie, who lives in St Andrew's.

Tricia Genant, who was in church on 22 January, has made the long journey from Australia in sad circumstances, so as to be here for the funeral of her aunt, Sheila Gardner, on 30 January. Tricia, the eldest of three, was born in Malaysia where her father, brother of Sheila's husband, was working at the time. The family emigrated to Australia when Tricia was still very young, and have lived there ever since.

Michael gave both a warm welcome at their respective services and made them feel part of the family.

NEW RECTOR FOR ST JAMES'S WEYBRIDGE



We are so pleased that on Thursday 26th January our friends at St James's Church, Weybridge were able to welcome their new Rector, Fr Damian Harrison-Miles. Fr Damian and his partner, Jason, have moved into the Rectory with their two children, Sofia and Theo, and are busily trying to unpack a million packing cases. Damian comes to Weybridge from Thorpe where he had been Vicar for nearly 12 years. We look forward to getting to know him and to the ministry that he will exercise.

KINDNESS IS EVERYTHING

Well done to Jake Houlihan (pictured enjoying a cake in the Messy Church article on page 18) who has been given an award for Kindness by his school. Not only that, but he has another one for 100% attendance! We have been keeping up with Jake's progress since his christening at St Andrew's in June 2018 and have enjoyed seeing him develop into a lively, thoughtful and cheeky (in the nicest way) little boy. Tall for his age, he seems older than the five years which he will celebrate in mid-February. Happy Birthday Jake! We always enjoy catching up with you when you are in church with Grandma Shirley.

PEOPLE WHO LUNCH

Friday 10 February at 12.30 pm - Church Hall



Everyone is welcome at 'People Who Lunch' which is held on the second Friday of the month in the church hall. It continues to be a popular fixture in many people's diaries and advance booking is essential. For just £4.00 you will have a menu covering soup, roll, dessert, cheese and biscuits and coffee. You will also have the bonus of enjoying this lunch in very friendly company. To book your place please contact Margaret Faultless either in church or by email margaret.faultless@blueyonder.co.uk

GATEWAY EXHIBITION

We have just enjoyed the splendid show of Church Silver that was displayed in our first "4th Sunday Gateway Exhibition" on 22 January. Just to remind you that our second "4th Sunday Gateway Exhibition" will be on February 26 and will provide a chance to see the various commemorative Bibles we have, including the one given for the opening of the Weybridge building in 1864.

As we go to press, we are still looking for the one given for the opening of St Andrew's!

Holiday Memories

This column has proved popular with several people. If you have been away on holiday or a short break or had an enjoyable day out to an interesting destination, please share your experiences with us. Not everyone is able to get out and about and reading your travellers' tales brings a good deal of pleasure, so please send them in. MH

A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE



Twenty-four hours to take-off and I have a migraine. It's just the stress of realising that, finally, I have to close my case with no going back on anything I may have forgotten. The holiday is about to begin. I've waited three years for this week-long Mediterranean cruise (four if you count 2019, when I paid for it) and in that time ships and itineraries have changed three times. Thanks to my lovely friend, Liana, I am still up for it as you would not believe the energy it has taken to keep on top of all the company's emails notifying us of yet another change and ours to them asking for clarification of yet another apparently important notification that we could not quite fathom.

We fly to Athens on a Saturday for a night there before boarding the ship, SS Explorer, on the Sunday morning. It's hot. Together with fellow travellers we fall out of the coach at our four-star hotel and, after the tedious procedure of checking in, set out to explore. The Royal Palace is right on the doorstep. We do a little gift shopping and I am persuaded to buy a brass mask of Agamemnon which will end up as my special memento of the holiday. The gift shop is family run with three generations involved and all so sweet without being openly persuasive that you want to keep buying! We find the perfect local eatery in a back street in the Plaka area. My simple dish of fish with vegetables tastes like the food of the gods and the local white wine exceeds expectations. Sunday morning we join the crowds to watch what we can of the Changing of the Guard (oh, to be taller!) and then back on the coach to Piraeus and the ship. The company has been meticulous in its insistence for complete and up-to-date Covid vaccinations and evidence of an official Covid antigen test taken not more than 72 hours before boarding. The smiles from the staff and crew make all the hassle worthwhile and we are warmly welcomed on board and shown to our suite where a bottle of champagne is chilling in an ice bucket. Liana has left no stone unturned to make sure that everything will be perfect and this includes our suite being on the port side of the ship which will enable us to get a great view of the volcano, Stromboli, from our balcony. Mary-Joy from the Philippines will look after us throughout the voyage and we will want for nothing.

The ship accommodates some 700 passengers and has over 500 crew so the ratio to ensure great service is impressive. We are in a particularly strong position as most of the officers, including the Captain, appear to be Italian and they all love Liana who, being Italian (although born and brought up in London) charms them in their own language. The crew have clearly all graduated with Honours at Smile School! I sometimes wonder how they can keep it up but it does wonders for our morale to feel so valued.

Monday is the day of the State Funeral for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and I had been feeling sad that I was away from home for the occasion. I am over the moon that, unexpectedly, we are free and able to watch all of the magnificent proceedings in our suite.

It takes a while to find our way around the ship and we are often 'aft' when we should be 'fore' and the reverse. The majority of the passengers are American, with a much smaller sprinkling of fellow compatriots. One such we nickname 'Onslow' for his uncanny resemblance in every way to Hyacinth Bouquet's brother-in-law. The first afternoon, we need to do some ironing so we hunt out the Laundry Room and discover a very chatty Kevin. Kevin is keeping an eye on his washing in the machine whilst ironing shirts. He is English, lives in Florida and is the choreographer for the two very professional shows that we subsequently enjoy. The crew entertain us on the last night showing some surprising talent and it's fun to recognise some of those who have looked after us so well. I put off having a swim because the pool always seems to be over-populated but, not wanting to miss out, I decide to try my luck one afternoon. The pool is empty but with a sprinkling of sunbathers at its edge. Feeling a little self-conscious, I lower myself into the water and immediately realise why there is no-one swimming. The first stroke takes my breath away. Twenty lengths later I emerge, teeth chattering, invigorated and proud of myself. That is the first and last swim I have!

We enjoy breakfast in the suite so as to have a calm start to the day. Otherwise we eat in one of the restaurants. The food is outstanding in all of them and we enjoy special attention in the Italian 'Sette Mari'. There are two 'Cordon Bleu' restaurants for which we have to book and we eat there on three occasions. My stand-out meal begins with 'Steak Tartare et Caviar' (Black Angus beef, hazelnut oil, sturgeon caviar and Dijon mustard dressing), followed by 'Sole Grenobloise', (Dover Sole with capers, beurre meunière and parsley potatoes) and for dessert 'Opera Maison' (almond chocolate cake with coffee-chocolate ganache). I cannot believe that I only gained one kilo over the week and put it down to the quality of the food!

We gather in the ship's 'theatre' between 7.30 and 8 am for our daily excursion to check in and file out in orderly fashion to the waiting coaches. In Greece we call in at Mykonos, Chania (Crete), Argostoli (Kefalonia), in Italy at Salerno (for Pompeii), Messina (Sicily) and in Malta at Valletta. We miss out on Crotona in Italy due to 'rough' seas that preclude berthing in its shallow harbour. However, to me the sea was like a millpond throughout with only the most gentle of rolling on the very odd occasion. All our excursions have been carefully chosen and pre-arranged. There is only one problem: people overload. Cruising has taken off now that we are all able to travel again and the favourite ports of call are simply not geared to cater for the thousands of holidaymakers being disgorged for organised excursions. That said, there is still much to be savoured with a different outing every day each with its own unique experience.

Mykonos, a favourite with the young, is picturesque with its windmills, white houses and waterside restaurants but definitely better visited off season. In Crete I treasure my two hours spent in the small town of Chania on the north-west coast. I sip a freshly-squeezed orange juice in the old town overlooking the Venetian harbour, then a self-guided walk around and about and a browse in a local jewellery shop ending with the purchase of a pair of silver earrings with a coral drop. I am impressed by the beautiful island of Kefalonia, known to me only through the book 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' that was filmed there. We visit the 16th century monastery of St Andrew with its beautiful frescoes uncovered by earthquake damage in 1953, when plaster fell off the walls to reveal the wall paintings. In that earthquake, entire villages were flattened and caused over 100,000 Kefalonians to leave the island. An unusual attraction is a holy relic, said to be the right foot sole of the Apostle Andrew, encased in an elaborate silver casket. We make for Italy. One morning we rise before dawn and witness the most wonderful sunrise. At the other end of the same day, Stromboli at sunset is awesome, a perfect, gently smoking cone rising out of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Maybe another day it will show us its fire. I cannot wait to see the Roman-Greco theatre in Taormina in its stunning setting, overlooking the Bay with Mount Etna behind. Mount Etna is not cloud-covered as it appears but gently smoking. Taormina is buzzing, its shops incredibly colourful and tempting (the place to buy that bottle of Limoncello) but I keep going, tagging along with our group, until I reach the theatre entrance. After the turnstile, I fight my way uphill through the crowds and then try to find that perfect spot on which to perch and imagine how it was in the third century BC when I might have been attending a performance. This proves impossible. Today, they are setting up for a different type of performance. With stage crew everywhere treading their way among thick, black cables and speakers and the first few rows of the amphitheatre covered by white, plastic chairs, I admit to being disappointed. Something of the magic has been lost. I plan to return off-season as it clearly is a magical place in the right circumstances. I lose precious shopping time to the most delicious two-scoop coffee and pistachio flavoured ice-cream cone. Pompeii has always held deep fascination for me and this is my fourth visit, the others some 30 years ago. Its ancient stones are awash with thousands of tourists from at least three cruise ships - another promise to myself to return out of season. Malta GC is our last stop. It holds special memories for me with many holidays spent in Malta between the ages of 16 and 25 when my godmother's husband was based there with the Royal Navy. Doing things on our own steam in Malta works a treat. There is a folk festival going on along the main street, with dancers from many European countries. A rather rickety, local bus to the lovely medieval walled town of Mdina takes just half an hour. We find La Fontanella, overlooking the plain, the best place in town for lunch. A friendly sparrow-like bird hops eagerly around, hoping for a share of our pizzas. A bottle of local Maltese wine, Medina Vermentino, is the perfect accompaniment. Next day, our last, we spend time in the overwhelming St John's Co-Cathedral, built by the Knights of St John who arrived in Malta in 1530. No part of its interior remains undecorated, including the 405 marble tombstones that cover the entire floor of the church, each commemorating the life of an illustrious member of the Order. The church is perhaps now most famous for its Caravaggio masterpiece 'The Beheading of St John the Baptist'. Thankfully, it is possible to view it without the pressure of the madding crowd.

Agamemnon, now beautifully framed, looks out at me from his own special place on the wall at home. There have been many fun, along with a few unexpected and certainly very 'different', moments over the past week. An assortment of amazing dining and other experiences and some great photographs (still to be sorted and edited) will help us remember the story as it happened.

Cruising, anyone?

Norma Reid



We took as theme this month "Samson - Messy Hero". We can all make mistakes but God can turn any weakness into strength if we ask for His help. Activities included testing strength with weighty objects. I had brought cans, bottles and dumbbells, but the children spurned the former as too easy and wanted the kilogram dumbbells.



Easy Peasy



Who is stronger?



Making a mirror

They made Samson's hair with brown paper stuck on a headband, beautiful lion collages as Samson was stronger than a lion and edible Samson cakes, plus mirrors with a caption to remind them they can do all things through Christ who gives them strength.



Cake-making



Jake says this cake is very yummy!



I can tie a knot blindfold!



Samson was stronger than a lion 🦁

After much searching, Hilary managed to produce an action video of the song 'My God is a great big God' which was enjoyed by adults and children alike. Perhaps she could show it one Sunday and get us all dancing in the aisle? Many thanks to all the volunteers. We would love to see more people join us and try out some of the activities.

Anne Fitzgerald

PAWS FOR THOUGHT - A HEART-WARMING TAIL OF A BOY AND HIS DOG

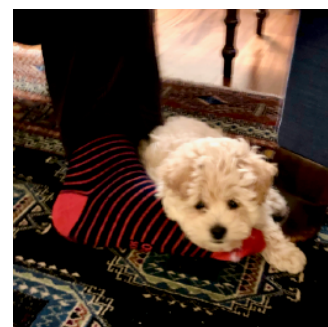


Our niece's little boy, 9-year old Luke (*left*), has long been desperate to own a dog. The problem with this has been that both he and his sister have Cystic Fibrosis and need to go to Great Ormond Street Hospital every three months for a minimum of a week to have their lungs cleared with heavy intravenous infusions. A parent has to be with the child 24/7 so it becomes very stressful for the family. If there were to be a pet dog, who would care for it during these times? We came up with an idea: we would offer to buy a dog and share it with Luke so that we could all help out with the caring. We would train the dog for the first six months. Well, this brought great excitement and joy to Luke. Fortunately, his parents were happy with this suggestion!

We duly went about trying to find a dog which did not shed, as the doggy hair would not be good for the children's lungs. Jan embarrassed me by constantly interviewing people whom we saw with potentially suitable dogs. Finally, in the new coffee shop in Walton, we saw a delightful five-months old puppy. Jan spoke to the owner who said her puppy was a Maltipoo (mixture of poodle and Maltese). She gave us the details of the breeder with whom we subsequently made contact. We duly arranged with the family to go to see the latest litter of pups which resulted in a jaunt to Portsmouth. There were three four-week old puppies from which to choose. The kids decided on the champagne coloured pup in preference to a white and a tan one. We were all smitten with these little teddy bears and left knowing that within a month we could return to fetch our little fellow. It was decided he should be called Benji and the breeder sent us weekly updates and photos whilst we waited.

Benji has brought a great deal of happiness but, being a very lively puppy, needs constant attention. Luke and his Dad have joined us at the dog training school at Apps Farm where Benji has undergone puppy training. Father and son have stayed the night after training so that Luke could have "puppy time." We have always trained our own dogs, having had nine in all. This seemed to have worked well, but today the training is all about commands being encouraged with treats. The purpose-built barn at Apps farm where we go for training separates the puppies by screens as they carry out their allotted tasks. Initially, they learned to sit and stay, followed, of course, by a treat. They progress to walking on a lead and returning when called, lying down when commanded and learning obedience when it is their turn to demonstrate their new task. We will progress to walks in the fields when the weather permits. We have found Benji's favourite treat is beef "pate" which is in sausage form! So different from dogs learning from voice commands and being happy to earn praise! I must add that after all our dogs we are enchanted with this puppy who is such a character and clearly very intelligent. So far, he seems to be quite happy to move between two houses. Benji went with us to spend Christmas Day with the family and their delightful visitors from Ireland. The kids played with him and paid him an enormous amount of attention, which he loved.

Finally, the family asked to have Benji for a week during school holidays and, needless to say, he was spoiled rotten. The kids played with him on the muddy lawn and he became a keen soccer player. After the games, he was bathed with special puppy shampoo: Emily loved blow drying him. He is a very amenable little fellow and clearly very happy with the baths. He plays with his ever-growing assortment of toys (thanks to Luke and Emily's generosity) racing around after balls and tossing soft toys around, often growling at them and vigorously shaking them from side to side. When he finally settles down it is normally on Jan's (*right*) or my feet - his favourite sleeping place.



Benji is not allowed on the bed but, whilst Jan has been in bed with a severe chest infection, he has taught himself to go up the stairs and visit. I have to report that a certain Mr de Kok has been caught sleeping with the puppy in his arms. Luckily, Benji sleeps quite happily in his cage in the kitchen at night. He will steal washing as I try to load the machine and feels that he must attack the mop or broom when I am trying to clean. Shoes are fair game and waste paper baskets in our study have to be kept on the desks or the house is littered with their contents. Full of mischief - even naughty at times - we forgive him as he is so loveable and is doing really well with his training. When he spends a few days with the family, the house seems so quiet and he loves people, greeting anyone who comes to the door with visible joy.

Maira de Kok

FLOWER POWER

Anne Fitzgerald writes:

"After a very difficult and frustrating week, I was presented with the most beautiful bunch of flowers from the communion table. Thank you to Christine who had donated them and Margaret who made them into a lovely arrangement which fitted well into my vase (right). They are so colourful and already have filled the room with sweet perfume. They have really bucked me up."



A message from **Ghislaine Stevenson**:

"I was surprised and delighted to be given a lovely bouquet of flowers from the communion table on 8th January after my recent absence due to illness. Not only a harmonious blend of blooms, but it also included some of my favourite flame coloured roses. The arrangement has lasted well into its second week and brightened up my living room until now. Thank you very much."

Norma says;

"I, too, have been the happy recipient of some beautiful flowers from the Communion Table recently and was delighted to be able to enjoy them in the comfort of my home."

Here is a selection of the lovely floral tributes that we were able to enjoy over the past two months.



*27 November donated by
David Edney*



4 December



Christmas



*1 January donated by
Norma for her mother's
New Year's Day birthday*



*15 January donated by Val Cave
in memory of her mother*



*22 January (donated by Christine
Coulter for Hector's birthday)*

PRAYER CORNER

Daily Life

The world I live in,
this town I live in,
this street I live in,
may each be the focus of my prayer.

Those I live with,
those I rub shoulders with,
those I work with,
those I don't get on with,
may each be the focus of my prayer.

Those who laugh,
those who cry,
those who hurt,
those who hide,
may each be the focus of my prayer.

Prayers centred less on self
and more on others,
less on my circumstances,
more on the needs of others.

May my life be likewise centred
less on self and more on You.
and through You to the world
in which I live and move.
Amen

John Birch
faithandworship.com

Kind words to those you daily meet,
Kind words and actions right,
Will make this life of ours more sweet,
Turn darkness into light.

Isaac Watts
1674-1748

*(John Birch is a Methodist Local Preacher and writer based in South Wales.
Isaac Watts was a Congregational Minister, hymn writer, poet and logician who is sometimes referred to as the 'Father of English Hymnody'. There is a national monument to Isaac Watts in Westminster Abbey but we were more familiar with his stone image carved into the base of the Chancel Arch at Weybridge URC.)*

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

CHRISTMAS JOY: Thanks to those who donated plus sculpture sales money, the festive period for our friends proved more enjoyable than usual. This joy was reflected in a short video I received of some of the artists' children singing 'We wish you a merry Christmas'.



2023 promises to be a difficult and sensitive time owing to imminent elections. A friend informs me that two opposition MP's have been in jail as political prisoners for over four months. Others are arrested arbitrarily and harassed constantly. There have also been some appalling murders of members of the opposition, one a female activist whose severely mutilated body was thrust into a well. Fear is on the rise and intimidation is likely to worsen. The good news is that churches are gaining the support of key

people - both nationally and from around the world - to help to achieve an election where the churches become involved in trying to ensure that violence is minimised and that the results of the election are less dishonest.

MEANWHILE, Artpeace continue to busy themselves in their fields. Photo shows Lizeni applying



fertiliser to her maize plants and right, artist Godfrey proudly sent this photo of his thriving field. Barring drought and the dreaded army worm, we are on target for yet another good harvest.



DECEMBER SALES by the Southwark Cathedral shop were encouraging despite the freezing weather and rail strikes! Artpeace were saddened by the deaths



of two famous artist friends: Left, Sylvester Mubayi and right, Locadia Ndandarika seen with artist Mike Masedza a few weeks before she died. Sylvester, one of the last surviving First Generation artists, was named in the top ten sculptors in the world by The Guardian in 1991. His best works were shown in several world museums. He had become a fountain of wisdom and the leading light in mentoring other visual artists.



WORLD - RENOWNED sculptor Locadia Ndandarika and mother of seven lived a remarkable



life for a woman who started her career poor and illiterate. She became interested in carving stone through her late husband Joseph Ndandarika, a prominent First-Generation sculptor and an important figure of a local art renaissance in the 1960s. However, he frowned on women sculpting so Locadia sculpted secretly when he was away fishing and buried her work in a maize field before he returned. One of the first women to start sculpting in stone in modern Zimbabwe, she can rightly be called one of the mothers of stone sculpture. Photo: Locadia with two of her sculptures: 'Saluting Bird' and '(Baby Eagles) Waiting in Vain'.



Mike Masedza commented: 'Her husband Joseph was my mentor, Locadia liked me as did everyone in the family. Joseph would tell people that I was his first born. His daughters would call me their brother and that bonding still lives on. Locadia was a mother to me and always gave me strength to soldier on.' Our artist Lizeni Nasho (left) is following in Locadia's footsteps and can more than hold her own with the best Artpeace male artists. Her birds literally fly off the shelves at the Southwark Cathedral shop and I hope to have some of her

Hornbills for sale in St Andrew' Gateway around Easter.

A FEW ARTICLES AGO, I mentioned artist Mike Masedza's plight – stuck in a rented one roomed hovel (below) with his family without electricity or running water. He had sunk to a new



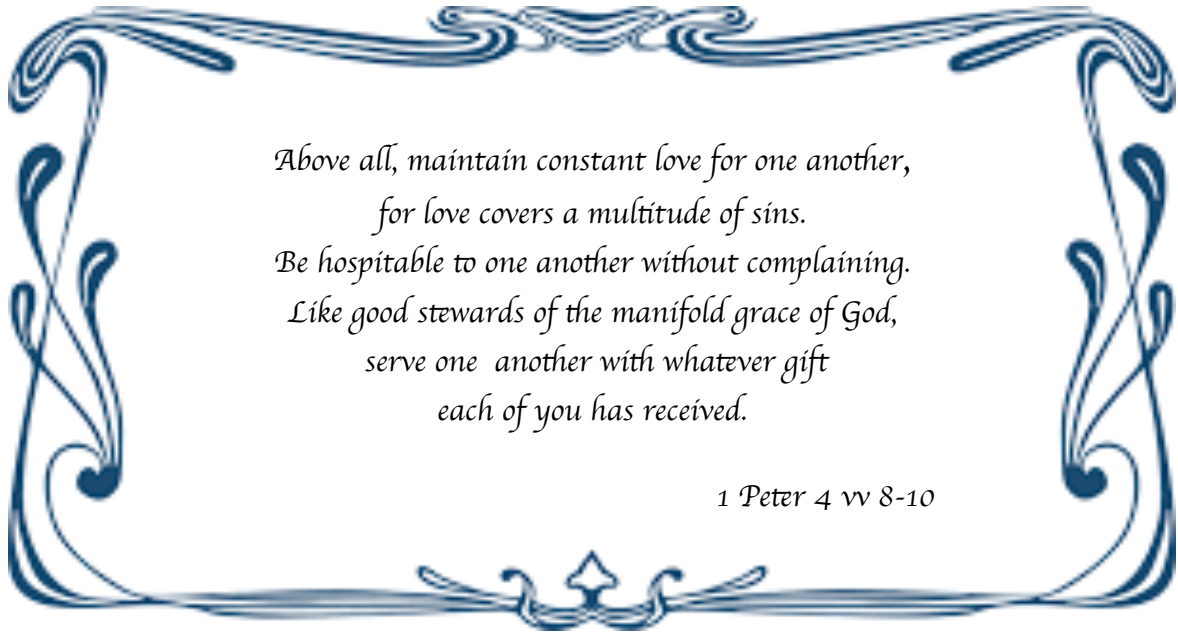
low and was depressed. Donations from a few readers have enabled him to continue building his dream

home he had started building years ago before hard times struck. He managed to buy enough bricks etc. to build two rooms plus labour costs. **MORE JOY:**



On hearing about our support, a Zimbabwean church friend was so moved that he decided to match our contribution, so Mike is now working on four rooms as you can see! However, he has run out of bricks again so hopes for more sales, but his life has turned round for sure! He is over the moon as he can see a brighter future with security and dignity for his family – something he has yearned for all his life. It's nice to end on a happy note in these troubled times.

Johnston Simpson



MINISTER

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

Tel: 01932 841382
Email: michael.mah@btinternet.com

THE SECRETARIAL TEAM

Mrs Carol Lee
Email: secretary@standrewsurc.com

Mrs Gwenda Cochrane
Mrs Liz Grimsey
Mrs Shirley Morley

Hall Hire at St Andrew's URC Walton and Weybridge: roomhire@standrewsurc.org

Website: www.standrewsurc.org

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!