



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



THE GRAPEVINE



MARCH 2023

Volume 2 No 2



Wintry beach at Nairn, Moray Firth

*"The stormy March has come at last,
With winds and clouds and changing skies;
I hear the rushing of the blast
That through the snowy valley flies."*

William C. Bryant

From The Manse

March 2023



Dear friends

Do you remember the old mission hymn, “We’ve story to tell to the nation”? Or what about, “Tell me the stories of Jesus” which reminds us of some of the Gospel stories such as Jesus and the disciples in the storm on the Sea of Galilee, and the children gathering around Jesus and him blessing them, and the Palm Sunday procession etc. Everyone likes a good story and, as you know, over the last couple of months I’ve been picking up on the stories that tell of the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry; some well-known, some less so. My hope is that by doing this we can see how things began, get some sort of chronology in our minds and, from there, see how certain foundations were laid by Jesus, upon which he would later build. We’ve been looking at the beginning of the story of Jesus. It’s a story we love to hear and it’s a story to tell to the nations as well.

With that in mind, I write this month wondering if a small group of you might be willing to undertake a much-needed project which will then tell a rather more contemporary story. It could also be an extremely interesting one in which to be involved. Let me tell you what it is.

Both Walton and Weybridge URCs have interesting stories to tell, and both those stories impact on our work and witness today. Both churches have significant archives upon which we draw quite often and which both reveal all sorts of interesting pieces of information. There is a problem, though. The Weybridge archive appears to be organised and catalogued because whenever I ask for anything from it, or ask if there is something in it on a certain subject there seems to be no problem in finding it. Information appears to be easily accessible. We know what’s there and what isn’t. By contrast though, the St Andrew’s archive exists. We’ve got the various papers and minute books and I know that there are lots of interesting things in the archive yet to find. I know, too, of things I want to find in there but haven’t a clue where to look. There’s currently no catalogue of what we’ve got and finding things is often both time-consuming and rather “hit-and-miss”. So, would there be a small group of people who would like to work on the St Andrew’s archive and bring a little order?

Whilst trying to research the provenance of the communion plate for the exhibition at the end of January, I learned/discovered all sorts of things reading through the minute books. Actually, I had a couple of quite late nights where I became so engrossed....and I only got as far as the mid 1960s in the Session (Elders) minutes and only into the late 1950s in the Deacons (Management) minutes. I’ve finally found the artist’s impression of the “church that was never built” from 1930. I also finally found the decision to build the church hall and not a new church in the 1950s. The dream of the 1920s was finally dropped because the way in which the church had developed in the 1930s and 1940s meant that by the 1950s its needs were different from the projections of the 1920s.

So, would a group of you like to get together and have a go at gathering together and indexing the St Andrew’s archive? I think that you could find it quite an interesting task although I wouldn’t recommend wearing clean clothes. We’ve a story to tell - and we’ve also a story yet to uncover.

St Andrew’s marks its centenary in 2029. By then it would be nice to have compiled a booklet that tells and honours both the Walton and the Weybridge stories. By then it would be appropriate to write up the story of how the union came about as well. So, any volunteers to “get down and dirty” in the St Andrew’s archive?

With good wishes,

Phil Lad

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES MARCH 2023

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

Friday 3 March	10.00 am	World Day of Prayer service at St Erconwald's Roman Catholic Church, Walton (<i>see page 5</i>)
Sunday 5 March (Zoom) (Lent 2)	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
Friday 10 March	12.30 - 2.30 pm	People Who Lunch - Church Hall (<i>see page 10</i>)
Sunday 12 March (Lent 3)	10.30 am	Morning Worship
Tuesday 14 March	8.00 pm	Elders' Meeting Bill Topping Room

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ALL ITEMS TO THE EDITOR (provided they do not contravene copyright regulations)
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Sunday 19 March (Zoom) **10.30 am** **Morning Worship**
(Mothering Sunday)

3.00 pm



Messy Church

Saturday 25 March 4.00 pm The Ian Engleman Singers Spring Concert (*see page 5*)
 St Peter's Church, Burwood Road, Hersham KT12 4AA



CLOCKS SPRING FORWARD AT 1.00 AM ON SUNDAY 26 MARCH

Please remember to put your clocks **forward** one hour the previous evening!

Sunday 26 March **10.30 am** **Morning Worship with 4th Sunday Exhibition**
(Lent 5 - Passion Sunday)

The AGM will follow the service.

4th SUNDAY EXHIBITION FOR MARCH

In January we had the chance to look at the Communion Plate we own.
 In February we looked at the various lecterns and commemorative Bibles. What's next?

On the 4th Sunday of March - 26 March - there will be a more general exhibition which will enable us to get out some of the miscellaneous things from the archive. There will be all sorts of different things out on display - and there will also be the rather sad story behind the gift of the Mouseman Table, now in The Gateway.

So - don't forget - 26th March - "Curios from the Cupboards" !

News of the Church Family

GOOD WISHES

We send good wishes to those of you who have succumbed to 'winter bugs' for a speedy return to good health.

At the time of writing, Barbara Fielding should be home again after a long stay in hospital and we wish her well for a good recovery. We are grateful to her daughter, Denise, who has kept us up-to-date with her progress on a weekly basis, at Sunday services.

Liz Grimsey is recovering well from the hip replacement operation she had in January, and would like to thank everyone who has sent good wishes. She also greatly appreciated being given a share of the flowers displayed at a recent service.

It has been worrying time for the Fitzgerald family, but we have positive news from Anne in this message:

"Keith and Anne and family wish to thank everyone for the cards, emails and phone calls sent to us during Keith's time spent in St Peter's. It has meant such a lot to us all during this roller coaster ride. Thanks, too, to the anonymous person who left a beautiful bunch of tulips on the doorstep in an amazingly inventive pot to keep them fresh. Hopefully by the time you read this Keith will be home with a care package in place."

IN MEMORIAM

As we go to press, we have just heard the sad news of the death of Michael, brother of Gwenda Cochrane and Audrey Duncan. We send our love, thoughts and condolences to them and to their families.

PRAYERS

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



JAKE IS 5!

Jake had a wonderful time. Spiderman came to his party. There were 20 children, 4-5 year-olds from his school. We couldn't have afforded Spiderman but for the generosity of the church allowing us free use of the church hall - so thank you all very much. It made Jake's day!

(Grandma) Shirley McGrath

Being 5 is a serious business but I'm well up for it!



FORTHCOMING BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

A little bird tells us that there is a 90th Birthday due to be celebrated on 19 March...

Many congratulations to Roy Bones. We wish you a wonderful day and Many Happy Returns!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT A GLANCE

IMPORTANT!

AGM

SUNDAY 26 MARCH AT 12 NOON
(following the service)



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday 3 March 2023
at 10.30 am

St Erconwald's Roman Catholic Church,
22 Esher Avenue, Walton KT12 2TA

Our sisters in Taiwan are sending us blessings
with the service they have prepared for World Day
of Prayer 2023



PEOPLE WHO LUNCH

Friday 10 March
12.30 - 2.30 pm
in the Church Hall

Advance booking essential!

Reserve your place(s) with Margaret Faultless
either in church or by email:

margaret.faultless@blueyonder.co.uk

"The lift and new windows are installed and the
non-alcoholic bar is already plastered".
(From a church report on renovations at a Youth
Centre in Northants)

"Dear Sir
I have now attended St Mary's Tremlett for 85
years. I am thinking of sitting in a different pew
one day.
Dolores McDonald"

(from *Writes of the Church*, Gary Alderson)

SPRING CONCERT



The Ian Engleman Singers
Musical Director: John Tudhope

4.00 pm Saturday 25 March
St Peter's Church, Burwood Road, Hersham
KT12 4AA

Sacred and secular music from the 16th to the
21st century for unaccompanied voices, with
seasonal readings.

Including works by Tallis, Byrd, Stravinsky, Elgar,
Britten, Weelkes, Monteverdi and Finzi

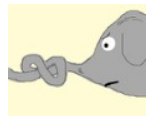
Admission Free
There will be a retiring collection to defray
expenses



British Summer Time begins at **1.00am** on
Sunday 26 March.

Please remember to put your clocks
forward one hour the previous evening.

! SAVE THE DATE !



Sunday 16 April

MENCAP Grand Jumble Sale - from 11.00 am

at Burview Hall, Queens Road
Walton-on-Thames KT12 5AB

Thanks to a member of the Highland
Astronomical Society for providing our
atmospheric cover picture of the beach at Nairn



Turkey and Syria earthquakes: Emergency Appeal launched

We have all been shocked and deeply affected by the terrible outcome of the recent earthquake that has affected Turkey and the north of Syria. The URC has highlighted one of several ways in which we can help with donations. Before the devastating earthquakes, there were over four million people in need of aid in northwest Syria. Three million of those having been displaced by the long conflict in the country. Now extreme weather events and the spiralling costs of food and fuel prices due are making the situation even worse. The people are facing a crisis upon a crisis. It is not too late to save lives.

“The scenes from this disaster are heartbreaking,” said Patrick Watt, CEO of Christian Aid.

“We are hopeful that the British public will show the same spirit of solidarity and compassion that we saw in the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine a year ago.

“Every prayer, every gift, every action brings hope to people hit by disaster. By joining us, you can help people in need rebuild their lives.”

Christian Aid has launched an emergency appeal. If you would like to donate, please do so [here](#).

Prayer

God of time and space, we cry to you for your children – our neighbours – in southern Turkey and northern Syria, following the earthquakes that have devastated thousands of lives. Only they and you know what it is like to experience such trauma in the middle of the night.

We give thanks for the aid that is already being given and for the promises of help that have been made by many nations.

Comfort, we pray,

those who are trapped in collapsed buildings;
those who have lost loved ones;
those who wait for news and
those digging through rubble to save others.

Grant the gift of hope so that those caught between life and death know that you are with them and that others are ready to support them as they seek a future that overshadows the experiences of today.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, who endured so much for love of them.

Amen

Taken from the URC official website



ORGAN CORNER

**"My old man said follow the van
And don't dilly dally on the way"**

Last autumn we got the good news that a new home had been found for the fine Willis organ from Weybridge URC. It's now gone to Morecambe and in one of those little quirks, Chris Beechey, who gave two of our Lunchtime organ recitals in 2018 and 2019, used to be organist there when he was at university in Lancaster in the early 1980s.

In December the organ-builders began the task of dismantling it and preparing it for its move. In February they returned to complete the task. The team always knew that it was going to be a physically demanding task – and it was - but they carefully took everything down, packing it away in pipe trays, meticulously labelling each part and organising the contents of every box in readiness for reassembly. Thankfully, all went well and no horrors were discovered. Mind you, getting the blower out of the basement proved to be a job and a half. When it went in, gravity was working in our favour. It certainly wasn't this way round!



Loading up ...

So, with everything ready, on Friday 10th February the removal van pulled up at church and it was loaded up. As the van pulled off in the early afternoon, I found myself humming the old Music-Hall song, "My old man said follow the van". I freely admit that it was a sad and rather emotional moment when the lorry had left and I went inside the building knowing that the organ had now gone and that there is now just a space where it stood for so long. On the other hand, it's good to know that the organ has a future and will continue to lead people in worship. We already have an invitation to attend the opening recital which, hopefully, will be in 2024.



... ready to go



St Barnabas, Morecambe

The Willis organ will now be housed in the parish church of St Barnabas, Morecambe. The church was partially built between 1898 and 1900 to a design by the Lancaster architects Austin and Paley with the addition of a font in 1904 and of the south aisle and organ chamber in 1913. So, whereas you may not be able to "trust the specials like the old-time coppers", hopefully the organ has now found its way home - and to the next chapter in its story.

Michael Hodgson

ELDERS' ELECTIONS



By the time you receive your Grapevine this month, you should also have received a letter regarding the forthcoming Elders' Elections. The way we're going about this is a little different from the way either church did it in the past but hopefully the letter you have explains our process this time. Following a recent "skill audit" just done by the Elders you may find it helpful to know that this time we'd be particularly grateful for Elders with pastoral skills - and anyone with good IT skills would be great as well.

To help you all think about Elders, I wondered if it might be helpful to share with you the "Functions of Elders" from the URC Manual. These were established in 1972 and so they don't always cover things that the Elders have to deal with now. (xii) tends therefore to include things such as Safeguarding and oversight of DBS and GDPR; nonetheless, this is the "official" list of functions to help you think about our Eldership.

Michael Hodgson

(from The URC Manual) Some are called to be Elders. They share with Ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local churches, taking counsel together in the Elders' meeting for the whole church and having severally groups of members particularly entrusted to their pastoral care. They shall be associated with ministers in all the councils of the church. Elders elected by the church meeting are ordained to their office and are inducted to serve for such limited period as the church which elects them shall determine. All Elders are eligible for re-election, and those elected shall enter upon their office by induction. On moving to another local church, an ordained Elder is eligible for election by that church to the Elders' meeting, and, if so elected, is inducted. The ordination and induction of Elders shall be carried out in the course of public worship by a minister of the local church (or, during a pastoral vacancy, by the Interim Moderator) acting with the serving Elders (see Schedule B).

Functions:

- (i) to foster in the congregation concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education, ecumenical action, local inter-church relations and the wider responsibilities of the whole Church;
- (ii) to see that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments are duly administered, and generally to promote the welfare of the congregation;
- (iii) to ensure pastoral care of the congregation, in which the minister is joined by elders having particular responsibility for groups of members;
- (iv) to nominate from among its members a Church secretary (or secretaries), to be elected by the Church Meeting, to serve both the Church Meeting and the Elders' meeting;
- (v) to arrange for pulpit supply in a vacancy;
- (vi) to keep the roll of members (see paragraph 2 (1)) and (as an aid to the discharge of the congregation's pastoral and evangelistic responsibility) lists of names of adherents and children attached to the congregation, and in consultation with the Church Meeting to maintain standards of membership and to advise on the admission of members on profession of faith and by transfer, on the suspension of members, and on the removal of names from the roll;
- (vii) to be responsible for the institution and oversight of work among children and young people and of all organisations within the congregation;
- (viii) to call for the election of Elders and advise on the number required;
- (ix) to consider the suitability of any applicant for recognition as a candidate for the ministry or for service as a CRCW and to advise the Church Meeting about its recommendation to the synod;
- (x) to recommend to the Church Meeting arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the Local Church;
- (xi) to act on behalf of the Church Meeting and bring concerns to the wider councils of the United Reformed Church;
- (xii) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.



A FRIEND REMEMBERED

Sheila Mary Gardner



Sheila Mary Gardner was born in Aberdeen on 16 August 1927. Not many people knew this - Sheila's age was one of her best kept secrets! Sheila was very proud of her Scottish heritage. Even though she had lived "down South" for far longer than she lived in Scotland, she never lost her accent nor her Scottish vocabulary.

One of the happiest periods in Sheila's life was her late teens/early twenties. She was part of a "gang" of young people who used to hang around together. On Fridays and Saturdays, they would all go dancing and Sheila always had a young man to walk her home! Sheila met her future husband, Alastair, in her early 20s. They married in 1952 on Sheila's 25th birthday. Shortly after the wedding, Alastair went off to Borneo to take up a job as a geologist with Shell. Sheila followed him a few months later. Sheila adapted well to ex-pat life in Borneo. She spent a lot of time playing tennis and threw herself into amateur dramatics. She excelled at both. After three years, she and Alastair decided to return to the UK.

When they first came back to the UK, Sheila and Alastair rented a flat in Kew and then in March 1957 they bought their first house in Saxonbury Avenue in Sunbury. This is when they met Christine and Holms Carlile and started a wonderful friendship that lasted until now. In November 1968, Sheila and Alastair moved to The Avenue and this became Sheila's home for 54 years. Sheila loved living in The Avenue. She and Alastair were blessed with good neighbours and also had a close circle of friends with whom they socialised.

Sheila became a nursery school teacher at a local nursery school. She enjoyed telling the children stories, playing the piano for them and teaching them songs. Music played a big part in Sheila's life. She took singing lessons during her teens and also when she lived in Sunbury. She joined the choir at St Andrew's when she first started going to the church in the 1960s. Thursday evenings were spent at choir practice. She loved singing the anthems at church on Sunday mornings and at special services. But she liked to do that from the balcony and not sitting with the rest of the congregation in the pews downstairs! She was not at all happy about the plans to get rid of the balcony and create the Gateway.

Sheila and Alastair did not have children but they did have six nieces and nephews, three in the UK on Sheila's side of the family - Valerie, Joyce and Wendy - and three in Australia, on Alastair's side of the family - Patricia, Michael and Marjory. They were very fond of all of them and always happy to have them visit or stay. After Alastair died in 2012, these visits became even more important to Sheila as she really enjoyed the company of others. And she was good company. She had a great sense of humour and was a wonderful mimic. She was not bothered about being politically correct and never held back from speaking her mind.

Sheila was a great animal lover. When she and Alastair moved to Sunbury, they got their first of a number of German Shepherd dogs. They were all rescue dogs. When her then dog died in 2014, Sheila initially decided that she was not going to have another dog, but within a few months she had contacted Vigil German Shepherd Dog Rescue and was paired up with Callie. Callie turned out to be the most intelligent and the most sweet natured of all the dogs which Sheila and Alastair had had. Callie was more than a dog to Sheila – she was almost a person. Having lost her much loved Alastair two years before, Callie became Sheila's most faithful and beloved companion. Callie meant everything to Sheila which was why she was so devastated when Callie had to be put to sleep in late September 2022. In the end, Sheila just could not live without Alastair or Callie. She passed away on 21 December 2022. Sheila will be sorely missed by us all.

Valerie Brownridge

TOGETHERNESS IS 'PEOPLE WHO LUNCH'

People Who Lunch (formerly 'Ladies Who Lunch' apart from on special occasions when an exception was made to include our gallant gentlemen) is one of our most popular monthly church events. We all know and appreciate - but in all likelihood not to the full extent - that these things do not just happen, so I asked Margaret Faultless, its dynamic organiser, if she could give us an idea of what goes on behind the scenes. Ed



"I start by trying to establish how many are attending in order to know how many to cater for. I'm very grateful to everyone booking in advance.

I'm a great list-maker to ensure I don't forget anything. My first one lists what I need to buy.

I buy most ingredients during the four days prior to the lunch. The day before, I will make the puddings. I'm very grateful to those who also contribute puddings as this makes life much easier for me. I try to make sure there are no duplications.

My next list is for all I need to bring from home. The evening before, I pack my car with everything I need for the lunch (pots, pans etc). The perishables I pack on the day itself.

On the day, I arrive at the church at 9 am. Lately, Jan has come over to put up all the tables and chairs for 30 people - a fantastic help, as it was something I normally did. It is then time to assemble all the china (kept in the The Gateway - 60 soup/pudding dishes and 30 side plates to trolley back to the kitchen!) and all cutlery needed. I'm very grateful to have a 'sous- chef' to help with some of the preparations. Caroline (Gardner), Jean (Rigden) and Shirley (Morley) have all helped with this role, setting the tables etc. We prepare the soups (always a choice of two). Then it is time to open the doors at about noon. The hall begins to fill up and the chatter begins. We start serving at 12.30. A second helping is offered and then it is time to put out the puddings. There is always an array of at least five or six with a great variety thanks to the culinary skills and imagination of those who have made them. Tea and coffee follow. Then washing up begins! The £5 charge per person is collected. When all is tidied up, I drive back home happy that another lunch has gone well. I've been doing these lunches for 15 years and have loved doing every single one. These lunches, started in Weybridge URC church hall and which have included St Andrew's Walton friends have helped in bringing both churches together in a very friendly way and in getting to know each other better. Now, of course, they take place in St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge church hall, and it's great to see how they appear to be growing in popularity.

If you would like to have a go or to help in any way, just let me know!"

Margaret Faultless

PEOPLE WHO LUNCH - FRIDAY 10 MARCH at 12.30 PM IN THE CHURCH HALL

If you are someone who enjoys having lunch with a group of friends then People Who Lunch is definitely the place for you. Everyone is welcome at this monthly get-together held on the second Friday of the month in the Church Hall. For just £5 you can have soup, a roll, dessert, cheese and biscuits and coffee/tea. To book your place please contact Margaret Faultless either in church or by email margaret.faultless@blueyonder.co.uk

THE STORY OF A UKRAINIAN FAMILY THAT FOUND A TEMPORARY HOME WITH ONE OF OUR CHURCH FAMILIES



The Yankovskyi family arrived late on Sunday 28 August, both parents (Anton and Ilona) plus Alex (12) and Milana (3). There was a small welcoming party to greet them as four members of the Bahin family (our 'first' family) arrived shortly beforehand. Both families knew each other from happier times in Kharkiv in NE Ukraine. This was a real help to us as we didn't have to worry about showing the new family around the house and trying to explain how things worked!

We had a busy few days running through the 'to-do' list for hosts, plus looking for school places for the children and helping the family to settle in. Anton's English was pretty good, and Alex also spoke some English; Google Translate helped fill in the gaps.

In December, Anton managed to find a job at McLaren's in Woking, assembling car bumpers. He had never done this type of work before or had to work shifts, so it was a new experience for him. Alex integrated very well into Fullbrook School and was delighted to make some English friends and to meet up with them after school. We had lots of interesting chats with the family over the kitchen table ranging from an English history lesson on the Suffragettes, through to explaining what we meant when we said that Milana was having a 'bad hair day'! It was very special for us to share Christmas with the family, although unfortunately our plans for a large gathering on New Year's Eve with other Ukrainian families had to be cancelled after Ian and I caught COVID.

Prior to coming to the UK, Ilona had lived in Dortmund for six months with the children while Anton stayed in Ukraine doing some voluntary work. After being allowed to leave, Anton joined his family in Germany. Much to our surprise, just before the end of January, the family decided at very short notice to return to Germany. It was a knife-edge decision for them involving a lot of stress, tears, and worry. The crunch point was about Anton's ability to earn enough money to rent a small house or flat in Woking, something that was very important for him. Anton was a sales director in his previous life, and he took great pride in looking after his family. For him, it was difficult to be living with his family in someone else's home. On top of the limited number of suitable properties to rent in the Woking area, the cost of living was another big concern. Ultimately, Anton and Ilona decided that their prospects would be better in Germany where there is much more financial support for refugees, notably in the provision of accommodation, compared with the UK, and the cost of living is about 25% lower.

So we hope that the family will settle and be content in Germany. If it wasn't for the war, they would all be perfectly happy living in Ukraine. It's such a mess, but at least the family are together and do not have to face the horror of the war. Alex was really upset about leaving as his dream was to go to university in the UK and live in London. As the family packed up the last of their things on the morning of their departure, I noticed Alex carrying a boomerang along with his other prized possessions. I tapped him on the shoulder and said that like a boomerang, he would surely return one day.

Teresa Bacon

A PRAYER FOR UKRAINE (from the URC website)

God of all, with alarm and concern we bring before you
the military intervention in Ukraine. In a world you made for peace and flourishing, we lament the use of armed force.
We mourn every casualty of this conflict, every precious life extinguished by war. We pray comfort for those who
grieve and those who are fearful. Hear our longing that leaders and nations will honour the worth of all people
by having the courage to resolve conflict through dialogue. May all our human failings be transformed
by your wonderful grace and goodness. We ask this in the name of Christ,
the author of peace and sustainer of Creation. Amen.

PRAYER CORNER



A Prayer for Mothering Sunday - 19 March

Lord we pray and give thanks for all mothers past and present,
for those in our own church, community and country
and for those around the world.

We pray for mothers who struggle to look after their children
In the difficult circumstances caused by war, famine and natural disasters
such as heatwaves, floods and earthquakes
and for those who even in prosperous societies are beset by poverty.

We give thanks for all the care and love mothers give to their children
and the stability they provide.

We pray for new mothers
as they take on their new responsibilities.

We remember those whose children are seriously ill,
those whose children have died.

We give thanks for all the 'stand-in' mothers who provide a loving home
for children unable to stay with their own mothers and families.

We remember and give thanks for all mothers, grandmothers, step-mothers,
foster mothers and carers who do their best to provide a safe, loving and stable environment
for the precious young lives entrusted to their care.

Amen

A Church member 2023

A Grown-up Child's Thanks

As I look back on my life
I find myself wondering
Did I remember to thank you
for all that you have done for me?

For all the times you were by my side
to help me celebrate my successes
and accept my defeats.

Or for teaching me the value of hard work,
good judgement, courage and honesty.

I wonder if I have ever thanked you for the simple things:
the laughter, smiles and quiet times
we have shared?

If I have forgotten to express my gratitude
for any of these things I am thanking you now
and I am hoping that you have known all along
how very much you are loved and appreciated. *Author Unknown*

*If you would like to contribute a favourite prayer or one you have written yourself,
please send it to Mollie Henham, the Associate Editor.*



The theme for messy Church this month was Love.

The Bible tells us of the importance of loving our neighbour.

We made love hearts on the old sewing machine, made and decorated hearts out of paper



Jean wouldn't be without her trusty old Singer sewing machine

Margaret oversaw the children icing heart shaped biscuits.



We also painted glass jars and placed a battery-operated tea light to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. The large Jenga game was to remind us to think before we act.



In church we sat in a circle and, with the help of Jack my chimpanzee, we passed on a smile round the group and sang "If you're happy and you know it clap your hands".

We talked about the need to show love and to listen to your conscience when it was telling you the right thing to do. Sometimes even your family can annoy you and you may not like them for a while but you still love them.

We sang two little hymns and said a prayer thanking God for keeping us safe when there is so much sadness in some parts of the world. We also said prayers for Anne and Keith.
Jean Rigden



Some of us just aren't into cooking or sewing...

NEWS FROM WESSEX SYNOD

Wessex Synod - Prayer Calendar for March



- | | |
|----|--|
| 5 | Portsmouth Road, Guildford;
Salisbury |
| 12 | Pear Tree Green, Southampton;
St Andrew's , Reading
Wareham |
| 19 | The Spire Church, Farnham;
Christchurch, Burton Green |
| 26 | Petersfield & Liss;
St Martin's, West Moors;
Bitterne Park, Southampton;
The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, as she
moves to pastures new |

NEW BEGINNINGS FOR LE WEEKEND IN FLEET - 31 MARCH-2 APRIL

You are invited to meet our French friends at the United Protestant Church of France for an in-person event over the Palm Sunday weekend.

Together again after 4 years, we will explore how we come together after Brexit and Covid, with economic difficulties, war in Ukraine and climate challenges.

How is God calling us to begin again?

Everything we do will be in both French and English, so no language barriers, just friendly food and worship as we journey together once more.

We welcome newcomers and old friends. We will be based at Fleet URC and there will be an opportunity to attend the farewell service for the Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, on the afternoon of Saturday 1st April at Basingstoke.

For more information and to register an interest email

helen.everard158@gmail.com or call on 07716647288.

Booking form available [here](#)

MODERATOR'S FAREWELL SERVICE - 1 APRIL

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.

URC ANNIVERSARY SERVICE - 15 APRIL

The URC Anniversary Service will take place on Saturday 15 April . Despite the short gap following Easter, 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 10 am-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.

"THE BEST OLD FOLKS' HOME IN THE WORLD - BAR NONE!" A visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea



*Mick wearing his Scarlets
with pride*

Mick, our charming and humorous guide, spoke from the heart as he welcomed our group of 40 to The Royal Hospital Chelsea on a freezing cold February day. Its story began over 300 years ago during the reign of King Charles II, whose vision of a home for veteran soldiers to care for those 'broken by age or war' was brought to life by Sir Christopher Wren who was commissioned to design and erect the building. The design was based on the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris. When construction of the buildings was finished - around a single quadrangle known as Figure Court - it was realised that more space was needed, so two further quadrangles were added to the Wren design, now called Light Horse Court and College Court. The chosen site of 60 acres was in the then countryside of Chelsea and the first group of 99 Chelsea pensioners were admitted on 4 February 1632 to be followed on 28 March by a further 377 residents. Residents now number some 300, and there is currently a waiting list of 18 months. The residents of The Royal Hospital Chelsea have all served as ordinary soldiers in the Armed Forces at some point in their lives. The criteria is the same today as it ever was: you have to be on your own to qualify (the actual word originally used was 'unencumbered'). The grounds are beautifully tended and since 1913 the South Grounds has been home to the Chelsea Flower Show.

Applicants are invited for a four-day stay, during which time they get a taste for what life is like. They are assessed for suitability and, if successful, measured up for uniform (undress 'blues' and dress 'Scarlets'). They then surrender their Army pension. In March 2009, the first women were admitted. Mick warned us of a cardinal sin - to describe the dress uniforms of the Pensioners as 'red'. They are dressed in 'Scarlets'. Their long coats have nine anodised gold buttons (originally

brass but now no need to polish!) and engraved with the symbol of the crown and the letters RCI, the initials of the Royal Corps of Invalids (of which the Chelsea Pensioners were once a part). "Why does a Chelsea Pensioner have nine buttons on his coat?" quizzed Mike. No guesses. "Quite simple really - because there are nine buttonholes!" DUH! Also part of the uniform but only for ceremonial occasions is the tricorne hat "*the most uncomfortable form of headdress known to man*" in Mick's view. All pensioners wear on their uniforms the badge of the rank that they held on discharge from the Army with stripes for non-commissioned ranks and, for Warrant Officer and above, either a crown or a coat of arms badge to define their rank. I liked the story that Mick told us about the Royal Hospital Sailors who used also to live at the Royal Hospital. In Greenwich Maritime Museum, a painting 'The Canary' depicts sailors in their 'blues' (the colour of their coats) but one with a yellow coat. Each coat had a yellow lining. If a sailor misbehaved, he had to turn his coat inside out and consequently became known as a 'canary'.

The pensioners slept on long wards, in small wooden cubicles known as berths. These were originally tiny, only 6' x 6' until the 1960s, when they were increased to 6' x 9'. There was no lighting in the berths until 1900, no central heating until 1928, and no windows. Most of the wooden panelling around the berths is original from captured French ships. We were unable to see modern accommodation but it sounded as though it was far superior, brighter and more comfortable to include access to all that today's technology has to offer.



An original berth

Every year on Founder's Day (or 'Oak Apple Day'), held on a date close to 29 May (the birthday of Charles II and the date of his restoration as King in 1660), there is a parade in Figure Court, where stands a gilded statue of King Charles II. This gives pensioners the chance to invite family and friends. On this day, pensioners wear an oak leaf on their famous scarlet uniforms, a nod to the King's escape from the Parliamentarians when he hid in an oak tree. A member of the Royal Family attends the ceremony each year.



The magnificent Great Hall (*left*), designed as a Dining-Room and still fulfilling that purpose, was restored in 1955. The wall panels are inscribed with battle Honours. In 1852, the Great Hall was used for the Lying in State of the Duke of Wellington. The tempting menu included healthy options. The chairs had a shelf underneath for the tricorne hats. Originally the only heating was an open fire.

Finally, in the Wren chapel, consecrated in August 1691, enhanced by the strains of the organ, we were able to admire a beautiful painting of the Resurrection in the half dome of the apse by Sebastian Ricci, assisted by his nephew Marco, which dates from 1714.

Norma Reid (with thanks to Mick and the Royal Hospital official website)

THE 23RD PSALM FOR BUSY PEOPLE

(with thanks to Toki Miyashina of Fleet URC)

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush.
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.
He provides me with images of stillness,
which restore my serenity.
He leads me in ways of efficiency, through calmness of mind,
And His guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day
I will not fret, for His presence is here,
His timelessness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity.
By anointing my mind with His oils of tranquillity,
My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours.
For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord,
and dwell in His House for ever.

LENT COURSE - SAINTS ON THE EDGE

This year's Lent course has now been circulated by email. Apologies that it is on email only. When I opted to use it, I didn't realise that it was going to run to 74 pages - in full colour - and would therefore cost a small fortune to print out! It is quite "different" and there's lots in it so it's probably best to regard each "session" as being an entire week. There are some quite thought-provoking stories and arising questions, though, and so although it's not what we might normally expect, I do hope that you will enjoy it and find it of value.

There is additional material which take the form of Leader's Notes for those churches in the URC running it as a house group. If you'd like a copy, do please just ask me. I can easily send one to you, but having already sent 74 pages, I thought that I'd better not send any more unless you want it. Any feedback you'd like to give then I am sure that The Revd Andy Braunston will be pleased to receive it.

Michael Hodgson.



ADVANCE NOTICE - GRAND SPRING JUMBLE SALE SUNDAY 16 APRIL

Elmbridge Mencap are having the first of this year's Jumble sales on Sunday April 16. They usually make about £1000 at these sales and hope you will be able to come along.

More information in the April issue.

If you have any items you wish to donate - but, sorry, no electrical items - please speak to Jean Rigden.

FLOWER POWER

"Dear March, come in!
How glad I am!
I looked for you before.
Put down your hat —
You must have walked —
How out of breath you are!
Dear March, how are you?
And the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me,
I have so much to tell!"
— *Emily Dickinson*



Jean Rigden recently visited **David Edney** with some of the church flowers. She reports that he was delighted and said the house was always full of flowers when Dorothy was there. He had a lovely surprise as he had thought only the ladies got them!

Ghislaine Stevenson says:

"As the cold and grey winter dragged on it was a lovely surprise to be given a charming bunch of spring daffodils in bud after Church on 19 February. Once brought indoors, they lost no time in opening into full bloom and lighting up the whole room. My thanks to all at St Andrew's."

Here is a selection of the lovely floral tributes that we were able to enjoy over the past two months. If anyone would like to donate flowers, please sign in for the relevant date on the chart in The Gateway.



29 January, provided by the family of
the late Sheila Gardner



12 February, donated by Val Cave in
memory of her late daughter-in-law



5 February, donated by Anne Fitzgerald



19 February, provided by Flower Fund

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

TESTING TIMES: Last month, I described how the artists' crops were thriving but since then damaging heavy rainfall has been incessant. Once verdant green leaves are turning yellow as



expensive fertilisers are leached from the soil. Many artists are worried as maize is their main source of food each year. A few artists with chicken manure can stop the rot – the alternative being Urea. Urea fertiliser presents a good option for effective top-dressing. This is due to the fact that the conventional nitrogen source Ammonium Nitrate generally leaches under incessant rainfall which is not the case



with Urea. However, at an inflated price of 100\$ per 50kg bag, this is well beyond their means.

JANUARY SALES by the Southwark Cathedral shop were modest given the time of year and a particularly cold spell. Donations, (apart from three kind folk who donate monthly) had also



collapsed. However, Toller URC, Kettering came to the rescue with a donation of £315 – the result of various events held over the festive period. Artpeace were overjoyed and Lovemore James sent a short video (clip below right) on behalf of the group thanking the church for their timely generous gesture. The video can be viewed on Toller's Facebook page.

PETER KANANJI hopes for some sales money soon to enable him to repair his old bicycle. He said: 'John, I depend on my bicycle to travel distances to go fishing and add protein to my children's



diet. I also search for mushrooms and wild fruits. We live largely on vegetables. My wife has prepared this evening's meal of pumpkin leaves, peppers and tomatoes which I grow to serve it with sadza. It's not enough for my growing family. Please reduce prices of my work to hopefully cover cost of replacement bicycle parts.



MEDIA: Zimbabwe gets little coverage nowadays despite the never-ending hardship. The artists help others when they can. Coster wrote recently. 'John - these kids (left) are called Tendai and Vanessa. Their mom disappeared about two weeks ago. She abandoned them after fetching a little food for them to eat and disappeared. She just left them at my house with my old mother-in-law. She has not been reachable for the past few weeks. I notified the police, but they said I must safeguard these kids until their parents return. Their father went to Zambia looking for greener pastures two years ago leaving his wife three months pregnant. Vanessa is now ten and has not been able to go to school since. These kids live a miserable life. I don't have much hope the parents will return. The last I heard was she mother was prostituting herself at a nearby



town. I am left with a big problem regarding putting enough food on the table for them and my own family. I am also caring for my 83-year-old mother-in-law who is not in good health.' I was surprised to see a photo of Coster (right) clad in a shirt emblazoned with a slogan showing their president as an election is forthcoming. Artpeace oppose the Zanu PF government but must tread warily. Coster said he was given the shirt and does not have many clothes to wear. He said it's also useful when travelling around as it offers him some protection when he encounters Government Zanu PF supporters.



BIG SALES PUSH: I recently spent a day in the Southwark Cathedral shop adding new pieces to the display cabinet and slashing prices of old stock to tempt customers. Despite our plunging economy and other priority causes like Turkey and Ukraine, I still plan to go ahead with other sales and am hopeful of support from Churches in Guildford and Hersham not forgetting an Easter sale at St Andrew's. Also, Eleanor from Toller URC plans to come down by train to fill her case with pieces to sell at her church over Easter. Some recent arrivals by Godwin Nasho are superb. Left - one of his 'Thinkers' and right, a tremendous large elephant carved from Unakite a new (to me) beautiful stone.

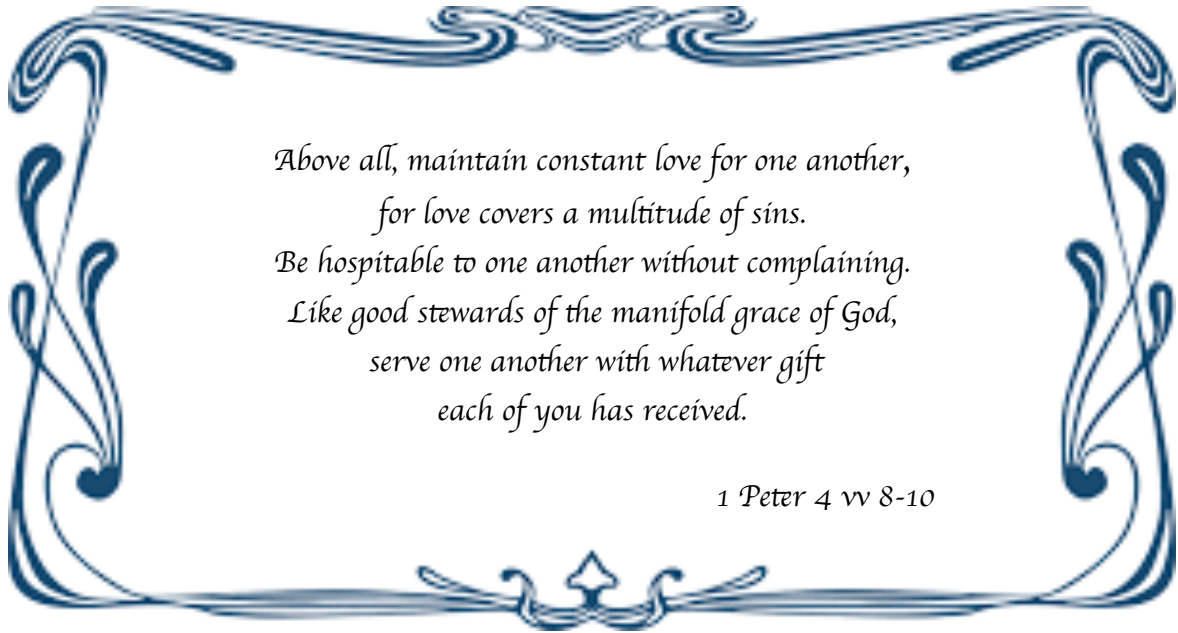


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OMINOUS: As the election looms, schools have become the latest hunting ground for votes for the ruling ZANU PF party after it emerged that party fanatics are invading learning institutions to force pupils and teachers to attend their campaign meetings. Under the "Virgin Voters for ED" (President Mnangagwa) campaign, invasions are occurring mainly in rural areas, instilling fear among learners and teachers. Election rigging is widely expected again. The cards always seem so heavily stacked against poor decent Zimbabweans.

Johnston Simpson



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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 be able to send them a link to enable easy participation.

You are all most welcome to join us!