



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

THE GRAPEVINE

MAY 2024

Volume 3 No 4



A May floral fest in St James's Park, London

*Among the changing months, May stands confest
The sweetest, and in fairest colours dressed."*

James Thomson (1700-1748)

From The Manse

May 2024



Dear friends

May this year is a busy month in the church's calendar. 9th May is Ascension Day – the day not always given the prominence in Free Churches that it should have because it always falls on a Thursday and never on a Sunday! It is, however, the day that makes sense of so much as Jesus finally ascends to heaven, where he is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, preparing the way for us and pleading with us. It marks the account of Acts 1:3 that the risen Jesus appeared for 40 days prior to his Ascension and so Ascension Day is traditionally celebrated on a Thursday, the 40th day of Easter. Ascension Day really is a key date in the ecclesiastical calendar and its importance cannot be over-stressed.

Then, on 12th May, Christian Aid Week begins. Both St Andrew's and Weybridge URCs were supporters of Christian Aid in the past and this year we are beefing up our support a bit. This is not to the detriment of Art Peace. Both are important, and our support for both is important, it's just that this year we are raising the profile of Christian Aid because for obvious and practical reasons its profile has slipped a little here. I know that Teresa has plans for how we might mark this at St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge this year and there is more information about this elsewhere in this month's Grapevine. I shall be leading a special "Christian Aid" service on 12th – the start of Christian Aid Week – drawing on the worship resources specially produced for use this year.

On 19th May it's Pentecost. A few weeks ago we looked at the Johannine Pentecost (John 20 vv 22-23) – when it happened and what it means. On 19th we shall be looking at Luke's account and thinking about how he sees Pentecost – which is a little different from John's understanding. We think of Pentecost as being the Church's birthday and I am also reminded that pre-1972 it was a very special day for the Presbyterian Church of England. It was the day when new church members were made and received. There was generally only one membership service in the year and so you may imagine that the old St Andrew's Minute Books make interesting reading on this.

On 26th May it is Trinity Sunday, which is always the first Sunday after Pentecost in the Western Christian liturgical calendar. It celebrates the central Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the three Persons of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and we can see this teaching emerge from the debates and discussions of the early church as a defence against heresy. It reaches maturity in the ecumenical councils of Nicea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD). The doctrine of the Trinity represents an attempt to organise and make sense of the Christian conviction that God created the material world, God sustains it and God is still acting within us and within history.

So, a busy month with important themes each week which we will mark appropriately. It does leave many preachers in despair though. On 26th we enter the interminable "Sundays after Pentecost" which continue until Advent Sunday (1st December) – so no church festivals and "highs" for months on end – just Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday to look forward to – but such is the lot of preachers. It's always a slog but thankfully I have an idea for a rather different "mini-series" of sermons for some point during the summer.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Lad". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES MAY 2024

"May is the month of expectation, the month of wishes, the month of hope."

- Emily Brontë

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

Saturday 4 May **10.00am - 5.00 pm** Wessex Synod Big Day out at Hollycombe, Iron Hill, Liphook, Hants, GU30 7LP (see page 6)

Sunday 5 May (Zoom) 10.30 am Morning Worship with Holy Communion

9 MAY - ASCENSION DAY

Friday 10 May 12.30 - 2.30 pm People Who Lunch - Church Hall (see page 5)

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 12-18 MAY

Sunday 12 May 10.30 am Morning Worship

3.00 pm Churches Together in Weybridge
Prince of Peace Church, Portmore Way, Weybridge,
KT13 8JD (see page 10)

Tuesday 14 May 7.30 pm Elders' Meeting Hersham Room

COPY DATE FOR MAY ISSUE WEDNESDAY 15 MAY

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

3.00 pm  Messy Church

Sunday 26 May (Trinity Sunday) 10.30 am Morning Worship

ELDERS' MEETINGS

As you know, since the union of St Andrew's and Weybridge the Elders' Meetings have been held on the second Tuesday evening of each month. From the start of June this is going to change. From then, we shall be meeting on the first Tuesday of the month. Obviously this makes little difference to most of you but you may like to be aware of this alteration to the timing of the Elders' meetings.

Michael Hodgson

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

Rachel's 'Run'



You may recall that in the February Grapevine I mentioned how Rachel was running in the London Landmarks Half Marathon (her first ever half marathon) for the Alzheimer's Society. On Sunday 7th April she completed the run in two hours nine minutes and to date her Just Giving page has raised £1840, so Rachel wants to say a big 'thank-you' to those who sponsored her.

We are so proud of her. She ran a consistent pace all the way round and we were able to know where she was because she had a tracker in the running number on her top so, armed with this knowledge (using an app) on the day and having looked at the

route and worked out where we might see her, we were able to pop up around the route and cheer her on. The route is really interesting and at one point we were right underneath the ringing Bow Bells in Cheapside. She finished in Whitehall by Downing Street. Unfortunately, because of the high winds the organisers had to take down a lot of the signs, but it was London at its best in glorious sunshine, everyone was really friendly and with a lovely atmosphere. The medal Rachel received is a great reminder, too, as it's heavy and when you open it up there is a copy of the route inside. Rachel has already signed up for next year but the day wouldn't have been complete without a 'Rachel' moment. After finishing the race and meeting up in St James's Park we then did another circuit of London while Rachel tried to remember where Red Bus No 1 was with her belongings in it!!!

Angela Woods



Our congratulations go to Rachel on this fantastic result especially as an injury curtailed her training for several weeks before the event. It was good to know that Grandpa Roy was able to join in this important family occasion (albeit from the comfort of his own home) when he put his technological skills to good use in tracking Rachel's progress via an app on his phone.



Decade Busters (we won't say which!)

They are coming thick and fast. Congratulations to Rosemary Topping and Anne Fitzgerald whose April birthdays have promoted them to membership of an elite Club.

Music Matters

Sincere thanks to Teresa for the Widor 'Toccata' she played at the end of the service on Easter Day. A few months ago I listened to and watched online the same piece being played on a four manual and pedal pipe organ as a concluding voluntary from a church in Toronto. Both were brilliant and greatly appreciated.

Roy Bones

Prayers

Please remember all these church friends in your prayers – Brian and Kate Ashfield, David Cheeseman, John Langdon, Lilian Smith and Michael Stevens. Remember, too, those who are in hospital or unwell at home.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT A GLANCE



WESSEX SYNOD BIG DAY OUT

Saturday 4 May
10.00 am - 5.00 pm

Fellowship, fun and worship
Hollycombe, Liphook,
GU30 7LP
(see page 6)



PEOPLE WHO LUNCH
Friday 10 May
12.30 - 2.30 pm 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.

Advance booking recommended and necessary if you are coming in a group!



To book your place please contact Margaret Faultless either in church or by email margaret.faultless@blueyonder.co.uk



Churches Together in Weybridge

A "different" Reflective event

Sunday 12th May at 3.00pm

Christ the Prince of Peace Church,
Portmore Way, KT13 8JD
(see page 10 for more details)

ELDERS' MEETING

Tuesday 14 May
7.30 pm - Hersham Room



MESSY CHURCH

Sunday 19 May
3.00 pm in the Church Hall

All welcome!

ADVANCE NOTICE
! SAVE THE DATE !



Saturday 6 July - 7.30 pm

Treble Clef Choir
St James' Parish Church,
Weybridge

A Grand Night of Singing
featuring special guests
The Weybridge Male Voice Choir



Saturday 16 November

St Barnabas Church,
Morecambe

Opening Recital of the
Father Willis Organ
(see page 7)

Our cover photograph was taken by your Editor. St James's Park 'the most royal of London parks shaped by generations of monarchs and bordered by three royal palaces' is sandwiched between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Buckingham Palace and is a real gem, especially in spring when the grass is carpeted with crocuses and daffodils and the trees are in full blossom. Wildlife abounds, squirrels, pelicans, parakeets, swans and a variety of waterbirds (the mandarins are particularly colourful).

NEWS FROM URC WESSEX SYNOD



Prayer Calendar for May

- | | |
|----|---|
| 5 | St Martin's, West Moors
Petersfield and Liss |
| 12 | Tilehurst, Reading
Immanuel, Southbourne, Bournemouth |
| 19 | Woking
Bitterne, Southampton |
| 26 | United Church, Godalming
Cumnor, Oxford
Skinner Street, Poole |



ALMOST HERE! Wessex Synod invites all churches, church user groups and community groups with links to URCs and LEPs in Wessex Synod to come and enjoy a day of fellowship, fun and worship at Hollycombe, Iron Hill, Liphook, Hants, GU30 7LP.

10.00 am - 5.00 pm

Ticket prices are the same as in 2022 – £8 per adult, £5 per child for up to 10 rides on the attractions.

New this year are tickets for unlimited rides on the attractions: adult £10.50 and child £7.50.

Hollycombe's fabulous new café will be open this time and there will be other food and refreshment outlets.

You are welcome to bring your own picnic.

More information and Booking details are on the Synod Website:
[www. https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/synod-big-day-out/](https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/synod-big-day-out/)



WEYBRIDGE URC ORGAN'S MOVE TO MORECAMBE

We were so pleased to be able to re-home the fine Father Willis organ from Weybridge URC to St Barnabas's Church, Morecambe and it is currently being installed there. You can follow pictures of the work on <https://stbmorecambe.org> and if you are on Facebook then there are more on "Gary Owens Organ Builder". The frame is in, most of the wooden pipes are in, the console is ready to be connected and the metal pipes are due back shortly, having been cleaned and repairs effected. Originally the opening recital was due to take place in early June and I know that some of us were intending to go up and take part in the occasion. Sadly, the scheme is running a little behind and so the June date has been postponed – however, the new date for the opening recital at St Barnabas is Saturday 16th November.

There is a warm invitation to us to go to that and the church people are happy to help us with suggestions for accommodation. The opening recital is, I think, being given by the organist of Blackburn Cathedral.

Michael Hodgson

IT SEEMS there is no end to the versatility of the work of our ArtPeace friends! I already have a burgeoning collection of their sculptures ranging from frogs to rabbits (one very large one), birds, hippos, a feast of fat mamas and even an armadillo, but could not resist the fabulous torso in white opal stone by the up and coming artist Saidi Factor that appeared in the church display as a one-off last month. Shades of Venus de Milo, and unbelievably smooth and tactile, I couldn't afford not to buy it and I suspect it would not look out of place in a top London gallery at multiples the price I paid at St Andrew's. The black, granite base, also from ArtPeace, shows it off to perfection. I just love it! Factor's late father, Luke Saidi, and grandfather, Sabiti Saidi, were distinguished artists. I understand that Factor will use the proceeds to cover his sister's school fees and food.



The number of quality artists, friends of ArtPeace, continues to grow adding to our family and each with their own distinctive style. Some of the main group are shown below holding palm leaf crosses we managed to get to them over Easter. They feel very much part of our church.

Norma Reid (Ed)





Christian Aid Week 12 – 18 May

Pushing back against poverty

During Christian Aid Week, churches and local fundraisers for Christian Aid work together in their local communities to raise awareness about the effects of extreme poverty and injustice, wherever it is found in the world, and take part in fundraising activities. The money raised helps support community projects all over the world. The first Christian Aid Week was held in 1957 so it has a long history. The work of Christian Aid is highly respected, but if the churches don't support the charity, no-one else will. This is why it is very good news that St Andrew's is taking part in Christian Aid Week this year, while recognising the generous support that the church family gives to other worthy causes during the year e.g. ArtPeace and the Foodbank.

Alina's story

This year, Christian Aid Week focuses on a mother, Aline Nibogora, who lives in Burundi, a small, landlocked country in Central Africa that is densely populated and desperately poor. About 90% of the population relies on subsistence agriculture. Food shortages, poverty, and a lack of clean water contribute to a 60% chronic malnutrition rate among children. Burundi's maternal mortality and fertility rates, which are among the world's highest, remain stubbornly high due to the lack of reproductive health services. In Makamba Province where Aline lives, over 70% of the population live in poverty, and 52% of children are underweight, under-developed and vulnerable to life-threatening diseases.

Extreme poverty pushed Aline to the brink of survival – her early marriage ended in abuse and homelessness; she experienced great cruelty and pain at the hands of her violent husband, forcing her to flee. He prevented her from taking her children with her and turned the community against her. Hungry, scorned, and alone, Aline was forced to live on the streets, and feared for her life.

Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of their dignity and allows injustice to thrive. Coming back from the edge isn't easy when food is scarce, disease is prevalent, and jobs are hard to come by.

There is hope!

Aline was lucky – she joined a community workshop with Christian Aid-funded trainers. Her group learnt how to establish steady incomes, save for the future, and borrow money to kick start small businesses. Aline said, "I came out with amazing knowledge and skills. The trainer restored a sense of hope and energy in me."

Aline set up as a grocery wholesaler and eventually earned enough money to rent a house. Her three eldest sons now live with her in a safe and happy home, and they can afford food, clothes, and essential healthcare. Looking back, Aline said, "I don't want my children to have a painful life like mine. Remembering it makes me weep."



Aline reunited with her three sons Vyukesenge, Fisto and Irumva. Behind them, the new home they're building together, brick by brick, in Makamba Province, Burundi.

Aline set up and now chairs her local Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). She told Christian Aid, “The members thank me for the training and the positive impact it has had on their daily lives. People come to me as they trust me. Here in Burundi, a neighbour is considered a member of the family.”

Aline was able to buy the bicycle with money from the VSLA. This bicycle enables her or her sons to carry crops from the farm and firewood, and to transport goods from the market.



What’s happening at St Andrew’s during Christian Aid Week?

- Special Christian Aid Week service on Sunday 12 May at 10.30 am
- Church collection – gift envelopes will be available on Sunday 5, 12 and 18 May
- Pop-up tea/coffee for passers-by and hirers on Friday 17 May 10 am - 12 noon. Please let Teresa know if you can help. (Teresa.bacon@btinternet.com; 07718 584966)

How to give

Gift envelopes (available in church on 5, 12 & 18 May)

Please put your cheque / cash in the gift envelope (or an envelope marked Christian Aid) and place it in the offertory plate by the door or hand it directly to Jem Ward, our Treasurer. If you are a UK tax payer, he will add Gift Aid to your personal donation (making it worth 25% more to the charity) and your donation will then be included in the total payment made by the church. Please make cheques payable to "St. Andrew's United Reformed Church, Walton and Weybridge".

Bank transfer

Donations for Christian Aid may be made via Bank Transfer to the church bank account. Please indicate that it is for Christian Aid.

Pushing back against poverty

The money we raise this Christian Aid Week will help families facing poverty and injustice in Burundi and around the world.

- £5 could buy the savings book for someone wanting to set up a small business
- £10 could provide one person with the training that supports them to establish a steady income
- £27 could buy the lockable safe that protects a community’s savings
- £250 could pay to train 10 people on how to run a business based on home-grown vegetables.

What else can I do?

This year, there will be a general election and it’s important that we make sure that the people who want to represent us are willing to push back on poverty, both locally and globally. Use your voice to make a difference. Go to www.caweek.org/campaign for more information.

Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities. The charity acts where there is great need, regardless of religion, supporting people to live a full life, free from poverty. Read about the work of Christian Aid using this link: www.christianaid.org.uk.

Teresa Bacon

Christian Aid representative



Please join us
for the

Ascension Week

Churches Together in Weybridge Event

on Sunday, 12th May at 3.00pm

Christ the Prince of Peace Church

Portmore Way, KT13 8JD

As a group, we will pray the Stations of Resurrection
in the lovely parish garden.

There is plenty of parking in the car park, and
benches/chairs are also available for those who
need support.

Children are welcome too...hope to see you there!



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WEYBRIDGE

On 12 May at 3.00pm Churches Together in Weybridge is organising a very different sort of “reflective” event. The Roman Catholic Church, Christ the Prince of Peace (in Portmore Way off Portmore Park Road), is hosting a “Stations of the Resurrection” walk around their Resurrection Garden. It’s a guided “walk” through the post-resurrection stories designed to let us think about them in fresh ways and to think about all that happened in those 50 days between Easter Day and Ascension Day,

Obviously it’s outdoors (let’s hope it doesn’t rain) and I, for one, am looking forward to it because it is going to be a bit different. So, do come and take part in this. I have no idea what to expect but something in me feels that it could be really good – and a bit different.

3.00pm on Sunday 12 May – Christ the Prince of Peace (Portmore Way) for about 30 minutes.

Michael Hodgson

FLOWER POWER

"I must have flowers, always, and always."

- Claude Monet

Alex and Mollie write:

"We were delighted to receive some beautiful flowers from the arrangement in the church on 7 April. The flowers had been donated by Liz who delivered them personally. They made a lovely and distinctive 'all-white' display in our home (especially when enhanced with a reflection in a mirror) and filled the air with their scent. We are very grateful to Liz for her thoughtfulness and kindness."

Here is a selection of the lovely floral tributes that we have enjoyed over the past two months.

***If you feel you can help with distribution, please speak to Claire, Irene or Moira.
Your offer would be most welcome!***



31 March - Easter Sunday



*7 April - Liz Grimsey
In memory of Colin*



*14 April - Claire and Jem Ward
for their Wedding Anniversary*



*21 April - Anna Crawford
for Alan's birthday*

EASTER AT ST ANDREW'S WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you."

So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Matthew 28 vv 5-8

MAUNDY THURSDAY



As the service concluded and the cross became inescapable, the congregation in the gateway saw this chilling sight

On a wet and very blustery evening, members family and friends met in the Gateway for our Maundy Evening Communion service. Led by our Minister, we remembered that last year we actually prepared the setting, as the disciples would have on that occasion of the Last Supper. This year we thought more about the actual meal itself, and the part that Jesus played. His humility, his care for others, whilst knowing what the night held for him.

After the Communion and the last hymn, the Gateway lights went out and we turned round to face into the church where under a spotlight three bleak wooden crosses stood on the sanctuary steps. It was a stark reminder of that night, bringing the actuality of it home in a very real way.

An image that I will remember for a long time.

Anna Crawford

GOOD FRIDAY

Our Good Friday service always gives a chance for quiet reflection and contemplation. This year, we were invited to take a post-it note, to write on it our Confession of Sins (Rejoice & Sing 3b) and pin it on the centre Cross. The very effort of doing this brought home to me more forcefully the relevance of the Crucifixion and its true meaning for Christians.

Norma Reid (Ed)



Our Sins

EASTER DAY



We were blessed with a dry Easter Day, allowing us to gather in the garden to hear the story of Easter before making our way into church for the joyous service and to share Communion. This year we experienced something different and rather beautiful. Michael had asked that everyone bring a flower, be it one from our garden, a wild one or a "posh bought" one. I, for one, had no idea as to what was going to happen.

Once in the church and after the first Easter Hymn 'Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!' and the opening prayer, Michael invited us to take our flower and place it in the mesh that was holding the greenery together. One by one a flower was lovingly placed on the frame, a wonderful variety of type and colour. At the end, we saw a cross of beauty, truly a joy to behold. It was a wonderful start to the service that continued with more uplifting Easter hymns and music, ending with a rousing Widor Toccata played beautifully by Teresa. Thanks to everyone who contributed to make our Easter a time to remember.

Norma Reid (Ed)



The Elmbridge Community Eco Hub – KT12 1LH

Did you know this amazing facility existed? It's on our doorstep and I paid a visit and this is what I found:

I walked in to a pretty garden, full of spring flowers and people working on vegetable plots to prepare them for planting. I met the founder of the project, Michael Tumilty who started the work he does after the pandemic to ensure people had outdoor space to work in, to help people socially interact and also to provide food for those who need it and a facility to help the environment.



Michael told me that the garden is there for volunteers to work on if they don't have their own garden or if they simply want some fresh air or to get out and help their mental health. While I was there, a volunteer with dementia was working on one of the vegetable beds. Michael told me that he remembers each Thursday to get up and go to the hub to volunteer in the garden. He gave me a very friendly wave!

I wandered into the old stable block to see what they had to offer and found lots of lovely people chatting. Some were stocking the Community Fridge which is more than a fridge. Local shops, supermarkets, bakeries etc... donate food that is close to sell by date or that they no longer can sell and then anyone from the local community can pop in to take anything that they might need. It is not like the Foodbank because it is open to everyone with the aim being to reduce food waste. I could've taken one item and could've chosen from loaves of bread, frozen fish fingers, lots of fresh vegetables and even doughnuts.

All vegetables grown in the community garden are given away in the Community Fridge.

They have a little area where they have toilet rolls and toothbrushes for those who need them. All have been donated by people not wishing to throw them away and contribute further to landfill.



Community fridge



Toilet rolls and toothbrushes



I turned around to find shelves of books – adult reading books are on a swap basis but children's books are available to take for a small donation.



Cards etc

They have a selection of greetings cards that shops have donated, gift wrap, balls of wool and a few other items.

There is also a refill station where you can take a container from home and fill it up with soap, dishwashing liquid, cleaning products, bubble bath, shower gel, shampoo.....the list goes on.



The Refill station

They have areas where you can recycle items that can't be recycled at home – a full list is available on their website.

They run litter pick schemes, they run a repair café and also a Library of Things so if you need a drill or a carpet cleaner and don't want to buy one, you can borrow one in the same way that you would a book from the library.

It's an amazing facility on our doorstep and one that everyone should visit. This is now on our Community Notice Board.



How to find them:

They are based in the former bowling green for the blind and visually impaired in Walton on Thames.

Their site is directly opposite the former Elm Grove Hall, Behind Stagecoach/Montessori school, in the single story former stable block.

You access via the green metal door. Our flag is positioned outside the Hub when we are open.

Elizabeth Scharinger

A MEMORABLE ITV EXPERIENCE - 'THIS MORNING' WITH THE SILVER SWANS



Brian, Raquel, Hetty, Norma and Chris

Ping. It's mid-March and an e-mail pops in from the Royal Academy of Dance. I check it quickly and see that they are excited to have had an approach from ITV 'This Morning' programme about featuring Silver Swans. When I read it more carefully, it looks as though they are asking if I might be up for it. First instinct is why not? I love anything different. On second reading, I think no way - it sounds far too scary, and anyhow, I'm not good enough. So I do nothing about replying. Later that week at the end of my ballet class, I try to find out more from our teacher Sarah, who is joined by Gia. Gia seems determined to get me on board and I am persuaded to feel the fear and do it anyway. Turns out I am one of four Silver Swans taking part in the programme, with one of our teachers, Raquel leading the way. I mustn't talk about it meantime and rather enjoy hugging my secret!

ITV have generously agreed to send a taxi to collect me from home and to take me back again after the event. That sounds good. There are more emails to follow about what to wear (black skirt (that I don't have) and plain black top or one with the Silver Swans logo (I don't have that either) and black leggings. No need to worry as the required clothes will be provided. We will be doing some barre work - pliés - and then will be asked about our ballet journey, and why we enjoy dancing so much. I send in a brief account of my 'ballet journey' that started at age 6 when my mother promised me a kitten if I got honours in my first ballet exam: the kitten duly arrived in the pocket of my then piano teacher. It was the best day of my life to date! I hadn't done any ballet since the age of 12, until 2017, when I read an article in SAGA magazine about a new project piloted by the Royal Academy of Dance - ballet for older learners 'Silver Swans'. I immediately signed up and here I am today.

So, back to 'This Morning'. The date changes a few times along the way and ends up as 9 April. Disaster strikes. Three days before, I lose my voice and nothing is going to restore it in time for my TV debut. I can dance but I can't talk and we are going to be interviewed, albeit briefly. Help! I check that they would still like me to take part and they say yes. The big day dawns and I am still barely able to croak. The taxi arrives at 7.30 am, an hour earlier than I had been told, which isn't the best start, but I tumble in - the rushing has acted to calm my nerves. The studios are behind Westfield in Shepherd's Bush and we are there in no time. I am checked in to an area that looks a bit like a warehouse. Raquel arrives and we are both escorted by Georgie past the famous Green Room to a dressing room, apparently one used by well-known stars. I am beginning to feel a little bit excited. Georgie is chatty, bursting with enthusiasm and at pains to put me at my ease. It will be a great experience, she assures me. This place is a rabbit warren and positively buzzing with activity. Everyone seems to be chatting and cheerful. Brian and Chris are already in the dressing room, properly dressed in black Silver Swans T-shirts and black leggings. I notice that Brian is wearing sturdy-looking shoes, not ballet shoes. He tells me they are 'Jazz Boots', light flexible and amazingly comfortable and recommended to him a few years ago by a dance shoes supplier. Fresh croissants and pastries sit enticingly on a plate on the table and coffee is on offer. I am ravenous, not having had time for breakfast, and gratefully tuck in. As if that isn't enough, someone has felt sorry enough for me to bring me a hot lemon and honey drink. I am really touched. The dressing room is bright and modern with theatre lights around the large mirror. There is a spacious en suite in which to change. The wonderful Gia and Katie from the Royal Academy of Dance are on hand to calm our nerves and make sure that we lack for nothing. All my clothes, apart from my shoes and socks, prove not to be suitable but Gia has brought a selection of the new Silver Swan wear and soon I am more or less looking the part, albeit the lovely peacock blue t-shirt is too big and has to be pinned up around me. Hetty has joined us and looks incredibly elegant, as she always does. Off to Make-up. I am nervous that I might end up looking like a painted doll but I have no cause to worry. Make-up just want me to be whatever I wish. A little more lipstick and blusher suffice - apparently my hair is lovely!

Back to the dressing-room and Raquel goes through what we expect to be doing, a simple routine mainly pliés with arm movements at the barre. She says she is nervous at having to introduce us with the story of how the Silver Swans came about. Everyone reassures her that she will be brilliant. Georgie comes to collect us for the first 'teaser'. This is shown before the actual performance, to whet the audience's appetite for what is to come.

In our case, it is filmed in a narrow corridor, two of us on either side of a barre, so that our arms hit the walls as we do some stretches. The camera is huge and as it zooms in on us seems rather menacing but we carry on, trying to look as though we do this every day.

Once again, back to the dressing-room and, before long, out once more for the second teaser which is longer so time for more moves. Is that Nick Ferrari, larger than life? It is! Finally it's time to be ushered to the scene of the crime and to meet Alison and Dermot. Alison is resplendent in a pink tutu and gives an impressive twirl as does Dermot. They say they are delighted to be honorary Silver Swans for the morning.

Raquel gives a flawless and polished performance with her introduction sounding as though she does this on a regular basis, which we know she absolutely doesn't. The Silver Swans is a ballet programme for older learners launched in 2017 and now there are classes all over the country. Raquel says the Silver Swans are her favourite people. Now it's our turn to say what we think of being Silver Swans. Brian (very nearly 85) is first to speak. He loves everything about it, trying to be graceful and keeping fit to beautiful music, the camaraderie of his fellow swans and the lovely staff at the Royal Academy of Dance. My turn next. Alison asks 'Norma, what do you love about the Silver Swans?' I apologise that my croaky voice makes it difficult to get the words out, but manage to squeak 'I love the joy of it - it's a joyful experience...'. Alison interjects, asking me if I had a late night last night and causes much hilarity. I am slightly frustrated that Alison's next question to me is answered by Brian but I am sure he is being kind (it isn't often that I can't hold my own in the talking department!) and it's all good fun. Chris (84 the previous week) and Hetty have their own stories. Chris was originally enthused by an article he read in SAGA magazine about the benefits of ballet for the older person. Hetty has taken it up recently for health reasons, having in the distant past trained with a prestigious ballet school (as is very evident from her polished performance in class!). We all agree that the classes have given us confidence, improved our fitness both physically and mentally, and brought us joy while making new friends.

Time for our display. We take up positions at the barre, joined by Alison and Dermot and, guided by Raquel, go through a few simple moves - demi pliés followed by stretches - Alison gets all the way down but needs a bit of help to get up again. The whole live recording takes only 10 minutes. At the end, Dermot thanks us all and throws in a remark designating me the trouble-maker. I am fine with that! The icing on the cake and completely unexpected is four of the best seats in the house for us to see Swan Lake at the Royal Opera House in the summer.

There will more than likely be a Silver Swans class near you - do give it a go! *Norma Reid (Ed)*



L-R Dermot, Norma, Brian, Alison, Raquel, Gía, Chris, Hetty, Katie

M25 Weekend Closure in May

The Highways Authority has announced details of the second weekend closure for the M25. It will be from 9pm on Friday 10th May until 6am on Monday 13th May when the seven-mile stretch between Junctions 9 and 10 will be shut in both directions. It has also been announced that the third planned closure will NOT take place in June but its new date has not yet been released.

Thankfully the predicted chaos from the first closure didn't happen but who knows what will happen this time. You may, therefore, just want to allow a little extra travel time to get to church on 12th May though – just in case. What's more, if you do allow that extra time then everything will be running really smoothly and with much less traffic about than normal. It's only if you cut it fine that the traffic will gridlock! I am sure there's a law to dictate that but I couldn't possibly mention it in the church magazine!

Michael Hodgson

WALTON & WEYBRIDGE FLOWER CLUB

WITH

ST ANDREW'S URC WALTON & WEYBRIDGE



A flower festival interpreting the title 'A Post Card From' will be held in the church 10/11 August.

On the Saturday in the hall there will be refreshments, retail therapy including silver jewellery, clothes and accessories, books, CDs and our wonderful ArtPeace sculptures.

We are involving a local Junior Flower Club, and our own Cubs and Beavers.

BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP AS WELL.

Please can you consider if you can help in any way. We will need people to serve the refreshments on the Saturday. Help in manning a couple of stalls, and people just to be there to welcome visitors presents a wonderful opportunity for outreach; to make them feel at home in our building. Ideally if one person could take on the role of co-ordinating helpers, that would be wonderful.

If you feel like doing an arrangement we would welcome it. If you feel you need some help with this then do, please, ask me. If enough people are interested, the Flower Club will run a short workshop to give you ideas and hints on arranging. Please get in touch with me if you have any questions.

Donations of Cakes, Books and CDs would be most welcome as well.

We hope to see many of you there either helping or just viewing - bring your friends and family!

Look out for more info in the coming months.

Anna Crawford
President Walton & Weybridge Flower Club



Despite the fact that our jumble sale was not as well attended as it usually is, we still managed to raise nearly £800. Although this was a little disappointing, I have to say an old post card album bought in an extra £100 and a camera donated by Norma raised a further £155 sold on eBay. Only one more jumble sale in September and that's my last one. The Christmas Fair will still take place - they are not such hard work (unfortunately all the helpers at the jumble sales are clocking on a bit just like me!). *Jean Rigden*

CAPTION COMPETITION ...?

Spotted one Sunday morning following after-church coffee. Looks like Margaret and Jean were so involved in discussing Matters of State they didn't appear to notice that all the tables and had been cleared away after coffee!





We were few in numbers but those who were there enjoyed the activities. It was lovely to welcome Ellie Simpson, Johnson and Susan's granddaughter, back taking charge of an activity. Our theme was "Breakfast on the shore" - one of my favourite Bible stories. Along with the usual colouring pictures, the children explored making sunrise pictures on coffee filters by dropping drips of food colouring from a pipette. We had some beautiful results.

A beautiful sunrise



We also used pipettes to make fizzing heart prayers. We asked the children to write something they were sorry about on a heart shaped card. We then added a mixture of food coloured vinegar from the pipette to the prayers covered in bicarbonate of soda and when the fizzing stopped we explained God has forgiven them. The children were fascinated by the fizzing. "Wow!" they exclaimed and continued to experiment.



More fizzy heart prayers

I'm adding vinegar to my heart-shaped prayer - the fizzing is awesome!

We ordered some sea globes which they filled with water and coloured in sea creatures. When these shaken it created a storm at sea. They enjoyed completing Discipleship diaries that included pages headed 'Help others', 'Care for the planet', 'Prayer'. They decorated their booklets and thought about how they could contribute. We had hidden lots of cut-out fish which even the youngest were able to find both in the hall and church. After a brief celebration we finished, as always, with a meal.

Anne Fitzgerald



Sea globes and cut-out fish with Jean



Huge concentration on the diaries



It says 'Pick up litter' on this page ...

PRAYER CORNER



A Prayer for Christian Aid

Christian Aid Week 12 – 18 May

Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

End of Christian Aid Week

Here is a jumble of coins and notes,
dirty and wrinkled,
noisy and shiny
taken from pockets or purses,
placed in the bright red envelope
or dropped in the collector's tin.

Each has arrived by a different route,
earned by hard work,
given as pocket money,
drawn as benefit.

Each bears the image of a monarch.

Here is a world full of women and men,
old and tired,
noisy and hopeful,
born in wealth and poverty,
finding a place in home and work
or dropped into debt and violence.

Each travels a different route,
earning a living through hard labour,
learning to handle resources,
needing the help of society,
resourceful in poverty and worldly in wealth.

Each bears the image of God.

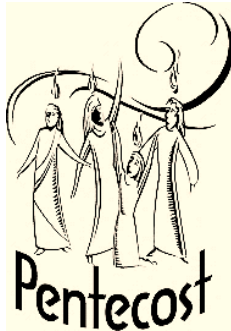
God, whose image we bear,
may the resources that pass through our hands
bear into your world
the image and imprint of the God of love.
Amen

*Janet Wootten
(URC Prayer Handbook 2008)*

Christian Aid's ground-breaking work began in 1945, when it was founded by British and Irish churches to help refugees following the Second World War. Since then it has provided humanitarian relief and long-term development support for poor communities worldwide, while highlighting suffering, tackling injustice and championing people's rights.

Pray this Christian Aid Week that people pushed to the brink by poverty find the strength and opportunity to push back harder and fulfil their hopes and ambitions.

(Please see the article by our Christian Aid Representative, Teresa Bacon, on pp 8 & 9)



19 May

Meditations on Pentecost

The Spirit came
and your Church was born
in wind and fire
and words of power.

The Spirit came
blowing fear aside
and in its place
weak hearts were stronger.

The Spirit came
as your word foretold
with dreams and signs,
visions and wonders.

The Spirit came
and is here today
to feed the hearts
of a world that hungers.

John Birch (faithandworship.com)

The Holy Spirit comes when great musicians
set down in notes the glorious sounds they hear,
communicating joy or haunting sadness,
connecting heart and mind through hand and ear.
Channels are they of some great theme of heaven,
giving a message that each but dimly feels;
and hearts are strengthened, comforted or chastened.
The Spirit heals.

The Holy Spirit comes when gifted artists
put brush to paint and capture with their skill
a precious moment in time's restless passing
in softest tints or splashes bright that thrill.
They work until their vision is presented
for all to share the riches of their gifts;
and hearts are blessed with peace, release or challenge.
The Spirit lifts.

The Holy Spirit comes when thoughtful writers
find words they need for poem, prose or speech;
a deeper truth than that they thought to teach.
Behind all words and works of truth and beauty
the First Creator's inspiration hides.
With God's eternal light and love and wisdom –
The Spirit guides.

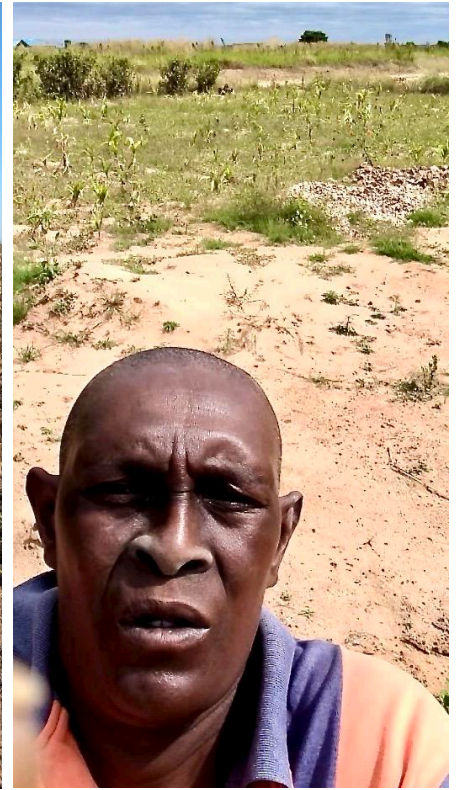
Beryl Chatfield

John Birch is an author and Methodist Lay Preacher.

Beryl Chatfield, who died in 2019, was a URC Minister. She studied at Northern College, Manchester in the 1980s as did a former Minister of Weybridge URC, Phillip Jones, and our present Minister. Four other former Ministers also studied there – David Hallas (Weybridge), David Netherwood (St Andrew's) and much further back BW (Billy) Rowlands (Weybridge) and Sydney Morgan (Weybridge). History!!

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

DISASTER! Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa has declared a national disaster to tackle the prolonged drought crisis which has wiped out about half of the country's maize crop. An estimated 2.7 million people will face hunger. Some fear that the drought sweeping southern Africa will be one of the worst in decades. The World Food Programme said 13.6 million people are currently experiencing crisis level of food insecurity in the region. Zimbabwe is



already grappling with high inflation driven by food prices and now joins the regional scramble to find enough maize on the international market. More than 60% of Zimbabwe's 15 million people live in rural areas, growing the food they eat, so essential for survival. ArtPeace are no exception and appear worse hit than most, with some artists losing up to 80% of their crops - see above examples of **Shingi** in his field and right - a dismayed **Coster**. Their worry is the Government appear to have instructed Zanu PF, the ruling political party, to distribute any relief food but experience shows that only those in rural areas will benefit in exchange for their votes in any election. ArtPeace live in high density suburbs and vote against their corrupt government so tend to suffer the consequences. Their harvest normally provides food for ten months of the year with any surplus food sold to cover school and medical fees but sadly, not this year! Following two recent days of rain a few artists rushed to plant seed potatoes and sowed peas. Artist **Dickson** (left) said: [I'm worried as only a little remains of last year's 1.3 tonnes crop but this year we sadly only harvested around 250 to 300 kgs.](#)(right).



DONATIONS: ArtPeace are extremely grateful to all those who made a generous donation or bought a sculpture providing funds to buy maize and other much needed food for hungry families. Thanks also to Elizabeth, for selling their art in her own church at Wimbledon URC.



TOUGH LIVES: Many children lead hard lives and are obliged to help with family chores as their parents cannot afford school fees – note the two youngsters managing oxen below! Artist Dickson said: 'Just talked to these three boys (below right) as my family walked home from church and their story touched me. They are school dropouts as their parents could not afford school fees. They worked in the fields and saved up 40\$. Instead of sharing this money, they decided to start a small business selling snacks by the roadside to try and hopefully earn enough to cover school fees and proceed with their education - good luck to them!'



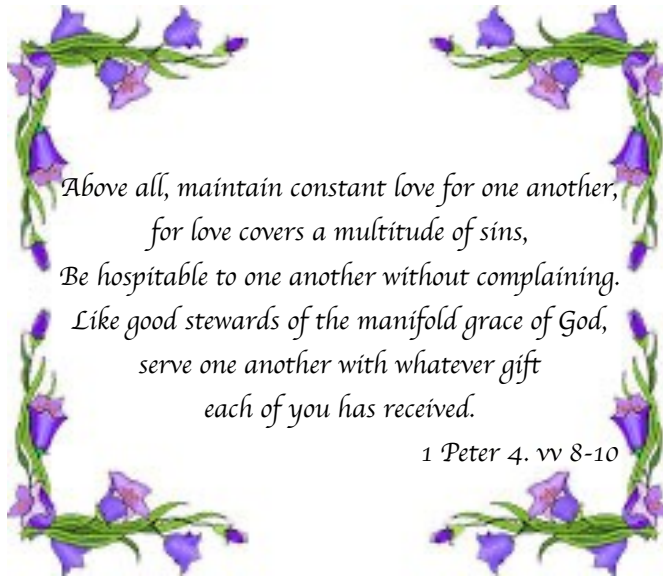
ON A BRIGHTER NOTE: Dickson once mentioned he would love a bible, so when I mentioned this in passing to our Editor, she rushed out and bought a 'Good News Bible' adding a nice



message. Dickson, (with Bible extreme left) and his family, were overjoyed and take it to their church every Sunday. He took a leading role in his church's Good Friday service this year and is a member of St Joseph's Guild. His family and some ArtPeace members listened

intently to our recent 'Good Shepherd Service' via WhatsApp and said: 'Thanks St Andrews and to the Reverend Michael for the great service, nice piano duet and to all those making this accessible to us. We really appreciate your efforts'. Thank you'. 🙏🙏🙏

Johnston Simpson



*Above all, maintain constant love for one another,
for love covers a multitude of sins,
Be hospitable to one another without complaining.
Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift
each of you has received.*

1 Peter 4. vv 8-10

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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!