



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



THE GRAPEVINE

APRIL 2025

Volume 4 No 3



*“And he departed from our sight that we might
return to our heart, and there find him.
For He departed, and behold, He is here. ”*

- St Augustine

From The Manse

April 2025



Dear friends

*“Chase, chase your gloom and grief away
and welcome hope instead”*

So wrote Caryl Micklem in his hymn, *“Too early for the blackbird”*. (R&S 249). A central part of the Easter message is “hope” because effectively a stalemate has been broken and times can move forward. The problem all began back in the Garden of Eden, at the story of “the Fall”, when we used our free will to disobey God. In the first 6½ chapters of Genesis we see things just getting worse, with our drawing further and further away from God and from God’s teachings. Ultimately, we see God deciding to start again with the story of “the flood”. Just one, righteous family would survive and all would be well. Snag is that by Genesis 9:20 we see that it’s not been the fresh start that God had hoped for. Flawed humanity falls again and it all goes downhill quickly.

Throughout the following pages of the Old Testament we see God’s people repeatedly being called to repentance; to turn from their sins and to follow God. To be fair, on various occasions, we also see real efforts being made to do just that; but it becomes increasingly obvious that this simply isn’t possible. God is asking us to do something that we are actually incapable of and so our best efforts always eventually, and inevitably, come to naught. An impasse is reached. So, God sends his Son because, as Mrs Alexander famously wrote,

“there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin”.

As for what ultimately happens, let’s allow Caryl’s hymn to tell the story.

*“Too early for the blackbird,
too early for the lark,
a group of grieving women
set out into the dark.”*

They have seen Jesus being crucified. They have witnessed his death. They are now going to the grave to tidy things up and to give him dignity in death – the only thing they could do. Things do not turn out that way. They reach the tomb but there’s no body for them to clean and embalm. Instead, two angels tell them

“He is not here, he’s living.”

Clearly this news was going to take a little bit of time to take on board but gradually people do begin to realise that the unthinkable, the unbelievable has happened.

*“Chase, chase your gloom and grief away
and welcome hope instead.”*

St John writes of light coming into the world and shining in the darkness when Jesus was born. The Easter story is also one of hope and of life and I can't help thinking that it's a message we desperately need to hear at the moment. You may have seen the pictures of the 'joke' sign that a newsagent put on his paper stand. *"Customers are reminded that these newspapers are merely the opinions of a small group of billionaires who are desperate to influence public opinion."* Reading a paper or listening to the News broadcasts at the moment is really depressing. You have probably seen the suggestion, *"We should just cancel April Fool's Day this year. No prank can top reality right now!"*. But Easter brings hope and life to be centre stage. Before Jesus ascends he is also going to say

"I am with you always, even until the end of the age"

Let's not lose sight of that this Easter. *"Chase, chase your gloom and grief away and welcome hope instead."* The light of Christ is still shining and my faith is absolutely certain that a few billionaires are not going to put it out. Jesus lives!

With all good wishes



Church Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that the AGM, together with the Election of Elders, will take place in church after worship on **Sunday 27th April, 2025**.

Stepping down from the Eldership this time is Carol Lee who has been a serving Elder for some years and who recently has been playing a significant role on the Secretarial Team. As well as her general service as an Elder, Carol has done a lot to bring the Weybridge and St Andrew's administration together and, through her work on a church handbook, has done so much to ensure that we are compliant with our responsibilities and have up-to-date policy documents, all together, in an accessible form and place. In the early days of the union, Carol also used some of her professional skills to help the two Elderships to work together and become one. Going back though, Carol was a key player in starting the Zoom Services during lockdown. What I think many of us will never forget is the hope and encouragement she gave to us all then through her leading of "Zoom Chat". Carol's skills in leading that were simply stunning and Zoom Chat soon became something to which we all looked forward and became a highlight of a lockdown week. So, we wish Carol a good break as she steps down from being a serving Elder and say an enormous thank you for her very varied and extremely valuable contribution to the life of our church.

Michael Hodgson

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES APRIL 2025
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There is a Zoom service on the third Sunday of the month

Tuesday 1 April	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting - Hersham Room
Sunday 6 April	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion



9 - 13 April - Walton Art Club Spring Exhibition at Riverhouse Barn, Walton
(see page 7)

Friday 11 April	12.30 - 2.30 pm	People Who Lunch - Church Hall (<i>see page 10</i>)
Saturday 12 April	7.00 pm	Stratus concert at St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge. (<i>see page 10</i>)



Sunday 13 April **10.30 am** **Morning Worship**
(*Palm Sunday*)

3.00 pm Messy Church

<i>COPY DATE FOR MAY ISSUE: <u>WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL</u></i>
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All items (provided they do not contravene copyright regulations) to both the Editor and Associate Editor
(*please see back page for contact details*)

Thursday 17 April (<i>Maundy Thursday</i>)	7.00 pm	Service in The Gateway with Holy Communion (<i>see page 5</i>)
Friday 18 April (<i>Good Friday</i>)	10.30 am	Service of Reflection in the church (<i>see page 5</i>)



Sunday 20 April (Zoom) **10.30 am** **Morning Worship with Holy Communion**
(*Easter Day*) (**and bring a flower!**) (*see page 5*)

Sunday 27 April **10.30 am** **Morning Worship**

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!

The first impression of St Andrew's is the welcome given to everyone who steps into the church. A warm smile and a friendly comment help to put us all at our ease. The Elders would like to (re)introduce the role of Steward. The main aim of this role is to welcome people into the church and, where needed, help the Duty Elder get the church ready for the service.

Please think about whether this is something you could do and, if you would like to help, speak to any Elder who will tell you more about what would be involved. Thank you.

Carol Lee

HOLY WEEK



Our Holy Week journey begins on **Palm Sunday** (13 April) at 10.30am as we walk with Jesus from the top of the Mount of Olives down to Jerusalem. Our service will include the customary distribution of palm crosses. Messy Church will be meeting in the afternoon of Palm Sunday as well.

Maundy Thursday (17 April), at 7.00pm, we meet in The Gateway to recall the events that took place in the Upper Room, culminating in our making our way to the Garden of Gethsemane. The service will include Holy Communion. Our journey then continues on **Good Friday** (18 April) at 10.30am as we gather at the foot of the cross to reflect again on the events that took place as Jesus “hung and suffered there”.

EASTER DAY



On Easter Day (20 April) we gather in the church garden (weather permitting) to hear again the story of the joyous discover made the first Easter Day, before making our way (singing) into church to celebrate this wonderful news and to share Communion).

“The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

NB Please bring a flower with you to the service on Easter Day.

Last year we made a floral cross during the Easter Morning Service and I know that many of you really enjoyed doing that and being able to see the cross of horror being transformed into a symbol of hope and beauty. Let’s do it again this year. Your flower can be a “posh bought” one, - or one from your garden, - or even a wild flower if you wish. Just bring a flower with you to the service, possibly with the stem wrapped in a wet tissue to stop it wilting in transit! We can then use them during the service to make something beautiful.

Michael Hodgson

"See the land, her Easter keeping,
Rises as her Maker rose.
Seeds, so long in darkness sleeping,
Burst at last from winter snows.
Earth with heaven above rejoices;
Fields and gardens hail the spring;
Shaughths and woodlands ring with voices,
While the wild birds build and sing.

You, to whom your Maker granted
Powers to those sweet birds unknown,
Use the craft by God implanted;
Use the reason not your own.
Here, while heaven and earth rejoices,
Each his Easter tribute bring—
Work of fingers, chant of voices,
Like the birds who build and sing."

The Reverend Charles Kingsley (1819-1875)

News of the Church Family

In Memoriam

Eva Ramage

We were much saddened to hear of the death of Eva Ramage on 11 March. Eva died very peacefully in her room at her care home. There will be a service of celebration for her life at church, following burial at Burview Cemetery, details to be advised. We send our condolences and thoughts to Eva's family and friends.

Valerie Roddan

It was sad, also, to learn of the death of Valerie Roddan on 11 February. Valerie, with her late husband, John, were regular attendees at St Andrew's for many years, until they moved to Wallingford in Oxfordshire some 20 years ago. A Service to commemorate Valerie's life will be held at Aston Tirrold URC, Spring Lane, Aston Tirrold, Didcot OX11 9EJ on Thursday 17 April at 1130 am. The family would welcome anyone who would care to join them. Our condolences and thoughts go to Valerie's family and friends. A tribute to Valerie will be included in the May issue.

Prayers

Please remember these friends in your prayers – Kate Ashfield, Roy Bones, Jennifer Bush, Val Cave, Margaret Drennan, Sue Groves, Alex Henham, Moira de Kok, John Langdon, Lilian Smith and Michael Stevens. Remember, too, all those who are unwell in hospital or at home, those living in care homes and those for whom daily life is proving difficult.

*If you know of anyone who would like to be included in this prayer list,
or if you wish to be included yourself, please let the Editors know.*

***The following is an extract from Woking URC Magazine (slightly amended),
with the agreement of the author***

It's not every day that the Vice President of the USA and a major UK political influencer end up debating the finer points of theology – but that's what happened a month ago on the social media platform X. A video of JD Vance defending Trump's international policy caused controversy when he described it as 'very Christian'. He claimed that the Catholic concept of 'Ordo Amoris' – the ordering of our loves firstly towards family, friends, neighbours and countrymen, and only thereafter looking out for foreigners and those beyond our shores – justified their 'America First' approach. Former MP Rory Stewart (who broadcast alongside Alastair Campbell on 'The Rest Is Politics' podcast) weighed in, saying that Trump and Vance's 'America First' policy was precisely opposite to the kind of teaching Jesus gave us in the Gospels. For instance, by placing a Samaritan – a cultural and religious foreigner, despised by first Century Jews – at the centre of the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus taught that those who qualify as our 'neighbour' may be the last people we expect. Vance responded by questioning the IQ level of Rory Stewart... a strategy that is often the sign of someone who is already losing an argument. You can probably tell whose side I was on... But Rory Stewart (who wore his own Christian faith on his sleeve during this encounter) makes a very good point. The teachings of Jesus, especially in the Sermon on The Mount is radically countercultural. It challenges us to look at life very differently from the self-interested way that we naturally do. Many people have tried to water down the words of Jesus about 'loving your enemies', and 'turning the other cheek' etc. They say we need to take a 'practical' and 'commonsense' approach to Jesus' teaching. Surely, he can't have meant it literally? But these words are supposed to challenge us. The way of Jesus is very different to the way of the world. We are very human, and try to 'wriggle off the hook', especially when it challenges our own culture and convenience. But we need to take Jesus' words seriously. When he tells us to take up our cross and follow him, it's not an invitation to an easy life. But it is an invitation to true life. I've been re-reading the sermon on the mount. Nowhere in it can I find the words 'America First' (nor any other country for that matter). In fact, Jesus says something very different: 'The last shall be first, and the first shall be last' (Luke 13:30). Let's allow those words, and the example of the one who said them, shape the way we act, live and think in 2025.

Justin Brierley, Woking URC

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT A GLANCE



EASTER SERVICES

See page 5



PEOPLE WHO LUNCH

Friday 11 April
12.30 - 2.30 pm - Church Hall

Lots of us enjoy the regular People who Lunch get together. We know that these are lovely social occasions but have you've ever thought about asking a friend to come along? The theme for this April's lunch is '**bring a friend to lunch**'. Please ask a friend or neighbour to come along for soup, desserts (particularly scrumptious!) and companionship, all for £5!

To help us make sure we cater for the right number please contact Elizabeth Scharinger by email:

administrator@standrewsurc.org

or Fiona Reardon on
07902 485933 / 01932 247119

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

WALTON Art Club
FREE ENTRY!
www.waltonartclub.com

SPRING EXHIBITION

9th – 13th April 2025
Wednesday to Saturday 10am – 4pm
& Sunday 10am – 3pm

Riverhouse Barn | Manor Road | Walton on Thames | Surrey | KT12 2PF
Paintings by Walton Art Club Members

STRATUS CONCERT

Saturday 12 April at 7.00 pm

St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge

Stratus (as heard on 'Gavin and Stacey') will be giving a concert at church on Saturday 12 April. Don't miss it! (see page 10)



MESSY CHURCH

Sunday 13 April
3.00 pm - Church Hall

Come along, bring your friends and enjoy some down time with Messy fun and games and yummy food!

ADVANCE NOTICE

Rejoice and Sing Live
Saturday 3 May
Coventry Central Hall - 12 noon

A hymn-filled, songful celebration of the URC's hymn book, *Rejoice and Sing*, which is celebrating its 35th anniversary, hosted by the URC and Reform magazine. Hymn singing from 2pm, there will be talks, a panel discussion with those involved an exhibition, the URC Bookshop and various other talks and contributions. A scratch choir is also being created for the event.

Tickets are free and are available from www.bit.ly/reform-live. The café at the hall will be open for lunch, which can be pre-ordered.



OPENING RECITAL FOR FORMER WEYBRIDGE ORGAN

Saturday 10 May at 7.00pm

St Barnabas Church, Morecambe
Free Admission

The recital will be given by Mr John Robinson FRCO, who is Director of Music at Blackburn Cathedral, and will be followed by refreshments.

Stay up to date with our Eco Church Journey

In this month's Eco Church article, the Green Team, which consists of Elizabeth Scharinger, Teresa Bacon and Paula Walsh, are continuing to support your Eco journey by focusing on food.

Don't forget, if you want more information, please ask the Green Team. We will be happy to help.

Food choices

When we choose what groceries to put in our baskets, we might be thinking:

- Will it be tasty?
- Is it good for me?
- How much does it cost?

But perhaps...

- What impact does this food item have on the environment?

More people are making food choices that are kinder for the planet – eating foods with a lower carbon footprint e.g. chicken rather than beef, beans rather than meat or fish and choosing seasonal fruit and vegetables.



Here are some ideas you could try to lower the environmental impact of your diet. They will save you some money too.

- Plan your meals, and aim to use everything up. If you find food items in your cupboards or fridge that are getting close to their expiry date, look on the internet for recipes to use them rather than bin them.
- Move away from meat (particularly beef) and dairy-based foods (these come with a high-carbon footprint) towards plant-based foods. You can do this whether you cook from scratch or buy frozen meals.
- Aim to skip meat and fish a couple of days every week. A vegetable chilli with rice is easy to make and with lots of beans, veg and seasoning you won't miss the meat.
- Cook in batches – freeze portions. Could you eat leftovers for lunch the next day?
- Eat with the seasons. Don't buy strawberries in December or cabbages in July!
- Try growing your own, whether it's a few herbs or salad leaves on a sunny window sill or setting up an area of your garden for growing vegetables or fruit.

What a waste!

Did you know that about a third of all food produced globally goes to waste?

The UK produces 9.5 million tonnes of food waste every year. Households are responsible for 70% of this waste, with each person in a household wasting around 70 kg annually. About half of this waste is still edible.

Reduce your food waste by planning what you're going to buy and composting or recycling leftover food.

Tackling food waste is a triple win. It saves food for human consumption, lowers the environmental impact of food production and consumption, and helps you to save money.

Psalm 24:1

The earth is the Lord's
and all that is in it, the
world, and those who
live in it

John 1:3

All things were made
through him, and without
him was not any thing made
that was made

Philippians 2:4

Let each of you look
not only to his own
interests, but also to
the interests of others

FLOWER POWER

There is so much in the world for us all if we only have the eyes to see it and the heart to love it, and the hand to gather it to ourselves - so much in men and women, so much in art and literature, so much everywhere in which to delight, and for which to be thankful.

- Lucy Maud Montgomery

Here is a selection of the lovely floral tributes that we have enjoyed over the past month.
The flower provision board is available in The Gateway.

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



*23 February - Norma Reid
for her parents with love*



*2 March - Caroline
in memory of her father*



9 March - Teresa Bacon



*16 March - Jane Bryant
in memory of Malcolm*



*23 March - Paula Walsh
in memory of her Dad*

STRATUS CONCERT



Stratus (as heard on Gavin and Stacey) will be giving a concert for us on Saturday 12th April at 7.00pm. They play a varied programme of popular music and light classical, arranged for violin, cello and piano. If you've been to one of their concerts before then you will know just what an enjoyable combination this is and just how talented Nat, Sam and Zacc are.

Do come and do bring your friends. It really will be a super evening and you never know, you may hear "the" piece again!

Saturday 12th April

7.00pm

Stratus@StAndrew's

PEOPLE WHO LUNCH



People who Lunch took place on Friday 14 March. Twenty people sat down to enjoy soup and puddings. The choice of soups this time was French onion or bacon and potato, both of which were delicious. There was a large number of sweets on offer: fruit salad, rhubarb crumble, apple tart, chocolate and orange tart, tiramisu, brioche, bread and butter pudding, eclairs and, of course, cream, as well as melt-in-the-mouth Brie and crackers to follow.

It is well worth the £5.00 and an excellent opportunity to catch up with friends. Everyone is welcome at this monthly get-together held on the second Friday of the month in the Church Hall. Your £5 covers soup, a roll, dessert, cheese and biscuits and coffee/tea.



Make sure you book your seat for the next one on Friday 11 April - and think about bringing a friend!

News from the URC



News from the URC

Prayer Calendar for April

- 6 Cheap Street, Sherborne
Twyford (Bucks)
- 13 Pear Tree Green, Southampton
Windsor
Trinity, Lower Earley, Reading
- 20 Richmond Hill St Andrew's, Bournemouth
Wheatley, Oxford
- 27 Avenue St Andrew's, Southampton
Wonersh

The poem below, read by Claire at one of the Christmas services and which should have appeared in an earlier issue (apologies!) is still relevant. We include it by popular request.

The Work of Christmas Begins

*When the carols have been stilled,
When the star-topped tree is taken down,
When family and friends are gone home,
When we are back to our schedules
The work of Christmas begins:
To welcome the refugee,
To heal a broken planet,
To feed the hungry,
To build bridges of trust, not walls of fear,
To share our gifts,
To seek justice and peace for all people,
To bring Christ's light to the world.*

- by Michael Dougherty, a variation on Howard Thurman's 'When the Song of the Angels is Stilled'

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

On Friday 7 March, the service for World Day of Prayer took place in Walton Methodist Church. This year, the service was prepared by the women of the Cook Islands and Jean Rigden and Sue Groves joined members from the Methodist, Anglican and Roman Catholics churches to lead the worship. As always it was a very moving service, attended by people from the various Walton Churches. We greeted each other with a Maori chant and the words Kia orana, a Māori greeting. Kia orana means more than just 'hello'. It means : "May you live long and may you shine like the sun. May you dance with the waves". A song beginning "I am fearfully and wonderfully made", which had been written especially for the occasion, was repeated several times. We were given very pretty flowers to wear, made from pipe cleaners. Next year it is the turn of St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge to host the service, which will be prepared by ladies from Nigeria.

Anne Fitzgerald



Sue Groves is third from left and Jean Rigden second in from the right

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED (*Anon*)

I've noticed just how different
The whole world seems to me
My stairs have got much steeper now
than they once used to be!

Now, people speak more quietly, so
I can't hear what they say,
And I have found that newspapers
use smaller print today!

The local shop is twice as far,
and now it's up a slope!
The bus leaves so much faster now
I find it hard to cope!

The clothes I used to buy were nice.
Why don't they still sell those?
Because the ones they're selling now
don't let me touch my toes!

Friends, I have spotted nowadays,
some folk seem hardly born,
yet all the ones I used to know
are really old and worn!

Of course, they don't make mirrors now
like once they used to do!
When I bought my one, years ago,
it was quite fun to view!

Still, there we are. The world has changed.
It's there for all to see.
I sometimes think the only thing
that hasn't changed is me!

We took Mothering Sunday as our theme for this month's Messy Church. We talked about different Mothers mentioned in the Bible. The children were able to come up with a few and I went on to explain the origins of Mothering Sunday. During the activities the children were asked to add their word describing their own Mother to fit into a popular song we sing and they each sang to the Mums, with help from Michael on the piano. I wish I had taken photos of the blushing Mums.



The words were in Polish so we were glad of a translator!

We made Mother's Day cards, covers for tissues from felt with Jean using the beloved sewing machine and we iced and decorated cakes. We put hand prints on a tree to be used by Elizabeth in a Eco Church project, and - the favourite - made stress aids, filling bottles with flour then filling balloons. The latter lived up to the name 'Messy Church'. As usual we finished with a meal prepared by Carolyn Pickles. *Anne Fitzgerald*



Preparing stress aids - everyone wanted to do this!

Science activity - what can we flush down the toilet?

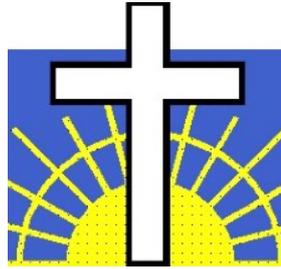


Pipe cleaners make great flowers!



Hand prints on a tree trunk painted by our In House artist, Susan Simpson

Prayer Corner



A Prayer for Easter

When everything was dark
and it seemed that the sun would never shine again,
your love broke through.

Your love was too strong,
too wide,
too deep
for death to hold.

The sparks cast by your love
dance and spread
and burst forth
with resurrection light.

Gracious God,
we praise you for the light of new life
made possible through Jesus;
we praise you for the light of new life
that shone on the first witnesses of the resurrection;
we praise you for the light of new life
that continues to shine in our hearts today.

We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy
will live in us each day
and that we will be bearers of that light
into the lives of others.

Amen

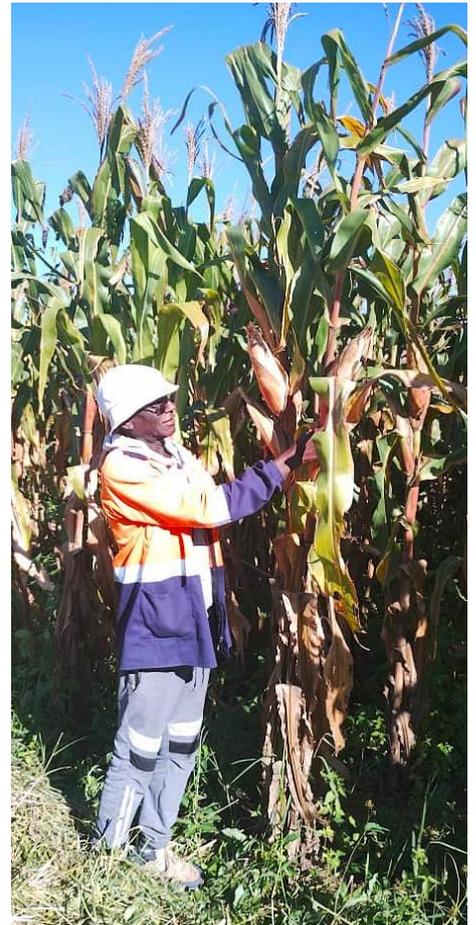
Revd Michaela Youngson
'Prayers for Lent and Easter'
methodist.org.uk

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

COMMUNICATIONS FADING: There is scant news this month as most artists cannot afford to top up their mobiles and keep them going for a few days at a time. Last month they only received 5 US\$ as the few donations from the usual stalwarts will continue to go towards the



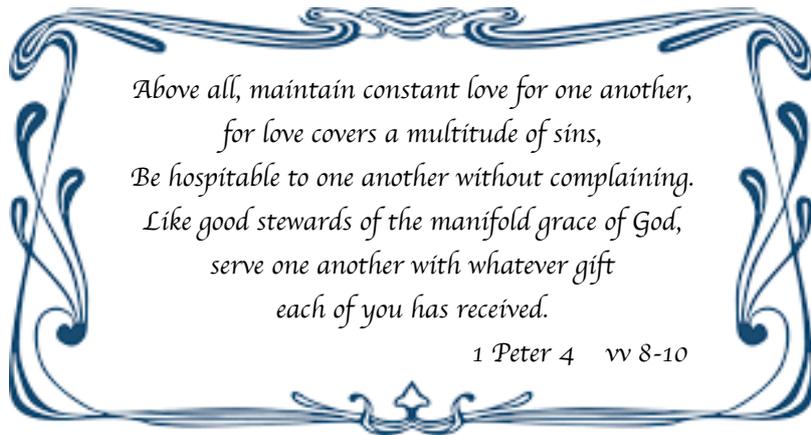
cost of the three days 'Foundations for Farming' course outlined in the March article. So, our friends are in for several tough months trying to scrape together money to cover rents, food, medicines and the next lot of school fees. Also sadly, they will be unable to receive St Andrew's services which they enjoy until the situation improves. The Southwark Cathedral shop sales situation is rather poor which does not help matters. The good news is that barring a disaster, their fields look healthy and they anticipate a good harvest in April. Right: Godfrey admiring his crop. Thanks to above average rainfall, brightly coloured mushrooms are



springing up, some as big as dinner plates with all the colours of the rainbow. Artist Dickson gathered some orange World mushrooms (name in Shona – Mukumbwe) to supplement his family's meagre diet. Relations of Verity, my CAFOD Harare contact will visit Zimbabwe in April and hopefully return with some of the pieces shown below planned for sale in May. However, it is proving increasingly difficult to keep the good ship ArtPeace afloat so the time may be approaching to review the situation but 25 years' support is not a bad innings. Let's see how it goes.

Johnston Simpson





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Services start at 10.30 am.
Services are currently accessible on Zoom on the 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!