



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



THE GRAPEVINE



SEPTEMBER 2025

Volume 4 No 7



"Everyone must make time to sit and watch the leaves change."

Elizabeth Lawrence



From The Manse

September 2025

Turning out my mother's house unearthed all sorts of things, kept by Mum, some of which Janet and I knew about and some of which we didn't. Am I allowed to confess that one of the things many ministers find the biggest chore is writing the pastoral letter each month for the church magazine. I found that Mum had kept a copy of the first one I ever wrote, back in October 1986, when I was on my final year's placement in Northwich, Cheshire. Northwich is a small market town built on the Cheshire salt mines and which had a strong connection with ICI. My "digs" at this point were in a village a few miles outside the town. Reading the letter through again I thought that it might be good to "recycle" it, 39 years later! Recycling it is actually quite funny, given one of the points that I made back in 1986, but enjoy a smile at it! (That magazine was on an A5 format so is a little shorter.)

Dear friends

Isn't this a super time of year? Roses, hydrangeas and chrysanthemums bloom in the garden, and fresh vegetables are readily available in the shops or else reward earlier toils. "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" wrote Keats in the poem "To Autumn", and how well that describes these last few weeks. Early morning mists have lifted to allow days of sunshine and warmth – a case of "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world."!

William Cowper wrote that, "Nature is but an effect, the cause of which is God." Those words have gone through my mind a lot recently as I have observed the glories of nature. Driving down lanes where the sun's rays have filtered through the leaves of the trees – out shopping looking at boxes of tempting 'local' tomatoes, and mouth-watering mounds of plump plums – yes, surely the cause of these is God.

Too soon, though, the leaves will turn colour and fall yet that also is God's design. Just imagine if we had gone to the trouble of making all those leaves. I'm sure that we'd have been out with a bag of nails and a hammer re-fixing them, so anxious are we to shore up what we have and what we do. That is not God's way. God doesn't repair, he re-creates. Each evening the daylight dies as darkness falls. God re-creates the next day for us. It's new. When winter comes and has set in, and the first snowdrops come out again, it is not an old, slightly faded bloom that buds, kept in store since last Spring. It's one that is fresh and new – God's re-creation, not his repair.

All around us at the moment we see and smell examples of God's goodness and blessing on us. As we gather and store the crops and the later fruits, let us thank God for his past blessings to us. As we see the land at this particularly beautiful period, let us see it as a pathway to God – a pathway that truly leaves us "Lost in wonder, love and praise."

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "M. Cad", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends across the bottom of the page.

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES SEPTEMBER 2025

"It was a lovely afternoon - such an afternoon as only September can produce when summer has stolen back for one more day of dream and glamour."

from 'Emily Climbs' by L M Montgomery

***Services for the month of September will be held in the Church Hall
while alterations are being made to the front of the Church.***

September Zoom Service

Please note that there will be **NO Zoom Service in September.**

Quite simply, we are not able to run it from the Church Hall because there is no camera there and the hall PA system doesn't have the necessary sound output. Sincere apologies for this. *Michael Hodgson*

Tuesday 2 September	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting Hersham Room
Sunday 7 September	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
Friday 12 September	12.30 - 2.30 pm	People Who Lunch - Church Hall

Everyone is welcome at this monthly get-together held on the second Friday of the month. For just £5 you can have soup, a roll, dessert, cheese and biscuits and coffee/tea. Puddings a speciality!


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

To book your place please contact Elizabeth Scharinger by email:
administrator@standrewsurc.org

Sunday 14 September	10.30 am	Morning Worship
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COPY DATE FOR OCTOBER ISSUE: WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

*All items (provided they do not contravene copyright regulations) to the Editor or Associate Editor
(please see back page for contact details)*

Sunday 21 September	10.30 am	Morning Worship
	3.00 pm	 Messy Church



**26-28 September - Walton Art Club Pop-Up Exhibition at
The Heart, Walton-on-Thames**



Do come along and enjoy the local talent!

Sunday 28 September	10.30 am	Morning Worship
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News of the Church Family

The following two messages are from the Woods family.

Thank You

As a family we would like to thank everyone for their cards, texts and emails following the passing of our much-loved Dad, Grandpa and Pops. Your kind words have meant a lot to us at this difficult time. Also, it was lovely to see so many of you at Dad's Thanksgiving service and special thanks to Liz and Teresa. We realise that it was a bit of a way for you, so your presence was valued even more.

If any of you wish to see the two photo montages that Matt put together where he also uses some of the music that we had at the thanksgiving service, then please see the link below. The montages are on the home page and you need to scroll down to the bottom of the page.

<https://roybones.muchloved.com/>

Angela, Mike, Rachel, Tim, Matt, Gemma, Florence and Willow

Professional Sporting Success

In January Rachel secured her dream job - Sports psychologist for Southampton FC's Boys Academy. The Academy is highly regarded by the FA and a week after Grandpa's funeral Rachel was off with the Under-16 Boys to Northern Ireland to take part in the Super Cup NI.

I don't think we quite appreciated just what a high-profile competition this was. After playing every day for five days, Southampton reached the final, a first for the Club. They were up against Man Utd whose team included the sons of the former Man Utd players Wayne Rooney and Michael Carrick (who were at the match!) The BBC streamed the match live on their sports website and Man Utd were the hot favourites.

Grandpa would have been so proud to see shots of his granddaughter in the Southampton dug-out. He would have been impressed by the quality of the football from Southampton and thrilled to watch Southampton win 1-0. The commentators both said that Southampton deserved to win (which they did!) and the icing on the cake was to see Rachel go up and collect her medal along with the rest of the coaching staff and the boys. Mum and Dad were very proud too.



Angela Woods

A Challenging Day in Denmark

Recently Alex and Mollie's grandson, Cameron, took part in 'Ironman' in Copenhagen – a triathlon with a 3.8 km bay (open water) swim, followed immediately by 180 km rolling bike ride through North Zealand and a 42.2 km run through the city past its iconic landmarks. Phew!! Well done!! Several family members were there to cheer him on. (Some of you will remember him from Weybridge days.)

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers everyone in the church family who has some special need at this time.

Remember particularly

those who are unwell at home or in hospital;
those no longer able to live an active, independent life;
those living in care homes;
those who feel lonely and isolated;
those for whom daily life is proving difficult.

Visit of Old Friends on 24 August

It was lovely to welcome **Heather** (daughter of Rosemary Topping and her late husband, Brian) and her husband **David Graeme** to the church service on 24 August. We mentioned another visit in the May 2024 issue, when Heather said: *"St Andrew's played a big role in my life and it still feels like coming home to visit the church, although so many familiar faces are gone."*

Another welcome visitor was **Evelyn McCrorie**, staying with her daughter Pauline in Brighton and now living permanently in Spain with her other daughter, Jennifer. She writes:

"Pauline and I made another trip down memory lane on Sunday, 24th August. And what a pleasure it was to be back in St Andrew's Walton and Weybridge. Michael, your minister, welcomed us most warmly, along with long time friends Heather and David Graeme who happened to be visiting family from Canada. During the service we were most interested to learn of the amazing work of Dr Rick Gardner and the healing and Christian hope he gives to families of African children suffering severe disabilities. After catching up with old friends, we had lunch with three of the ladies who brought us up to date with all the news. And the sun shone all day!"
(We hope to be able to include a contribution about Rick Gardner's talk for our next issue. Ed)

Katie and Tom's Wedding



*It was a day of sheer
happiness on 28 June when
Katie and Tom were married
with specially selected music
by Stratus and beautiful
flowers*



A GENTLE REMINDER ... EDITOR FOR THE GRAPEVINE

A reminder that Norma has said she would like to stand down as Editor of 'The Grapevine' and that the February 2026 issue will be her last one. 'The Grapevine' is a much appreciated publication, read by church members, via a mailing list of friends and previous members, via the website and now, also, by people picking up copies from outside the building.

Every magazine editor brings their own ideas and so whoever takes this role on does not need to continue with exactly the same design and format. They are welcome to try out new ideas and layouts, just as Norma has done over the years.

Perhaps a group of people would like to work together on it?

Have a think – we've got a little time – but Norma is standing down and the February 2026 issue will be her last.
Michael Hodgson

A Letter of Gratitude and Hope

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace to you all.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the faithfulness and generosity you have shown to God's work through your local churches. Your contributions—whether through time, talents, or treasure—have been a beautiful expression of discipleship and community.

Celebrating Faithful Stewardship

In these challenging times, when many families have faced difficult decisions about household budgets, rising energy costs, and the ongoing cost of living pressures, your continued commitment to supporting God's work has been truly remarkable. We have witnessed the church at its best: caring for one another, maintaining mission and ministry, and trusting in God's provision.

Your financial contributions through the Ministry & Mission Fund have enabled us to continue our shared calling across England, Scotland, and Wales. Through this Fund, we support ministers' stipends, theological training, Assembly gatherings, and the vital central services that strengthen our witness and ministry in every community we serve.

God's Provision in Action

We rejoice that in 2024, despite significant economic challenges, your collective giving to the M&M Fund reached £16.2 million—slightly behind our budget, but late contributions in early 2025 would have taken us over the budget, had the auditors allowed us to bring them in. This achievement reflects not just financial commitment, but spiritual resilience and trust in God's faithfulness.

We are particularly grateful for the additional support from our synods, who contributed approx. £2.0 million of the amount noted above, demonstrating the interconnectedness of our church family. Total income for 2024, including investment income and grants etc. was £18.5 million.

While our expenditure of £20.0 million resulted in a deficit of £1.5 million for 2024, we remain committed to balancing our budget over the next 4-6 years through difficult, but necessary reductions in central costs and continued partnership between local churches and synods.

Looking Forward with Hope

United Reformed Church Trust is a limited company registered in England and Wales. Charity no. 1133373, Company no. 135934

As we move through 2025, we recognise that challenges remain. Economic pressures continue to affect both individuals and churches. Yet we face the future with confidence, knowing that God's call to faithful stewardship remains constant, and that together we can continue to serve Christ's mission in our communities.

We have a clear plan: synods have committed to maintaining their enhanced support, and we are implementing careful budget reductions of an average of 3-5% annually in our central costs. This balanced approach ensures we remain good stewards while maintaining our essential ministries.

A Call to Continued Faithfulness

In the spirit of 2 Corinthians 9:7, your giving has been a source of joy and strength to the whole church. As we move forward, we invite you to continue this journey of faithful stewardship, giving "as the Spirit directs and as our means allow."

We understand that every church's situation is unique, and we celebrate with those who have been able to meet their full commitments, while also deeply appreciating those who, facing their own challenges, have continued to prioritise the M&M Fund within their means.

Partnership in Ministry

As officers of our denomination, we treasure our roots in local URC congregations and LEPS. We understand firsthand the joys and challenges of local church life, including the financial pressures you face. This shared experience strengthens our commitment to wise stewardship of the resources you entrust to us.

Your local church treasurer has received detailed financial information and can answer specific questions about our accounts. If further assistance is needed, our finance team at Church House stands ready to help.

Our Deepest Thanks

To every member who has contributed to their local church, to every congregation that has supported the M&M Fund, and to all who have made this work a priority even in difficult times —thank you. Your faithfulness enables ministry to continue, training to be provided, and the gospel to be proclaimed across our three nations.

May God bless you abundantly as you continue to be faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted to you. Together, we participate in God's wonderful work of transformation, both in our own lives and in the world around us.

In Christ's service,

Alan Yates
Treasurer

Vaughan Griffiths
Deputy Treasurer

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." - 2 Corinthians 9:7

September
2025

Eco Church

Stay up to date with our Eco Church Journey

Issue
#7

Plastic Free July?

Did you take part?

Did you even know it was a thing?

I took part in 'Plastic Free July' a few years ago and found it very difficult so I thought I'd try again this year and see if things have got any easier.

I don't think they have.

The aim of Plastic Free July is to make a pledge to reduce the amount of plastic you use in everyday life. Last time I did this, I found it extremely time consuming trying to source fruit and meat in anything other than plastic. It meant taking my own containers to a butcher rather than buying from Tesco and it meant picking my own fruit from Garson Farm. Nothing has changed and so I wrote to my local supermarket. Please see below for their reply.

I went to Rome for a few nights in July so I thought it would be interesting to see how geared up the Italians are.

On the flight, my drink was served in a plastic cup. However, I did make note of the fact that they bring two bags around when collecting rubbish - one for recycling.

The straws in the restaurants were all paper straws and I ordered a coffee which came in a paper coffee cup but instead of the usual plastic lids we get here, this lid was paper/cardboard.

Rome was full of water fountains to refill water bottles and not only was there cold, still water, there was also the option to get sparkling water!



For tips on how to reduce your plastic, please see the posters on the noticeboards around the building.



Response from Tesco:

Tesco is working to reduce the amount of packaging used, including using lighter materials and redesigning products. They've reduced the packaging on their pre-packed chicken by removing trays. They've explored concentrated products like their quadruple strength cordial to reduce plastic bottle wastage. They've launched refillable cleaning products to further minimize plastic waste. Tesco have removed over 2.3 billion pieces of waste since 2019 and eliminated plastic packaging from their own brand pocket tissue multi packs. They have removed cartons from own brand toothpaste and plastic wrapping from tinned multi packs.

We play our part within store by:

Having cardboard recycling units which get taken away for recycling

We have a recycling unit in store for everyone to use which could be for plastic bags or soft plastic from fruit and vegetable products.

We have recycling for batteries, make up, ink cartridges and vapes in store.

Isaiah 55:12

A vivid picture of earth rejoicing giving us inspiration to care for the planet.

Psalms 24:1

The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness

Deuteronomy 10:14

Behold to the Lord your God the heavens and the earth and everything in it



News from the URC

Prayer Calendar for September

- 7 Winchester
Church of the Holy Family, Blackbird Leys, Oxford
- 14 Christ Church, Milton, Portsmouth
Christ Church, Woodley
- 21 Romsey
Twyford (Berks)
- 28 Peachcroft Christian Centre, Abingdon
Iford, Bournemouth

Visit of Synod Moderator to St Andrew's Walton & Weybridge

A reminder that our Moderator, The Revd Dr Michael Hopkins will be preaching at St Andrew's W&W on Sunday 5th October. Michael is well known to many of us, having been the Interim Moderator before I was appointed. He is known as a good preacher and I know that he is looking forward to coming to us. Do please make a special effort to come along to this service. We are hoping that it will be our first time back in the main worship area after the work has been completed.

Michael Hodgson

We have received this letter from Wessex Synod

Dear friends

I write with the sad news that a decision has been made to cancel the Synod's "Big Day In". Sadly, with the very low number of bookings we had received by the necessary cut-off date, there were not nearly enough people to make an event of this kind viable.

The team realises that those who had booked will be disappointed, and we thank you for your efforts in publicising this event. We will be looking at how we can possibly share the wisdom and experience of the various workshop leaders with us in the Synod in the future.

God bless you

Ray <>

Rev'd Ray Stanyon
Development and Support Officer
United Reformed Church
Wessex Synod (North)



In July, activities included making party drinks and icing cakes to welcome back the Prodigal Son, the theme for this session.



We iced cakes to resemble pigs, thinking of the son realising that the pigs had more to eat than he had.

With Jean, we made leather money bags (*right*) into which she put real coins to represent the inheritance the son claimed.



Making smoothies, and pig biscuits

We were so grateful to Fiona who joined us to show the Lego video and Michael for playing the piano. We finished with tea prepared by Carolyn.

Anne Fitzgerald

"Making your Christmas cake in September is perfect, as too fresh a cake crumbles when cut."
Mary Berry

FLOWER FESTIVAL

A sunny summer August weekend saw St Andrew's once again bedecked with flower arrangements. As last year, this was a joint enterprise between our church and Walton & Weybridge Flower Club, this time interpreting the title *From the Bookshelf*.

Visitors were welcomed at the door by two half-barrel planters filled with summer plants, kindly loaned by Squires of Hersham. Once inside the doors, over 180 visitors were able to admire the 28 different arrangements, all depicting a book title. Asked to vote for their favourite, many found it very difficult due to the variety and high standard. Every arrangement received votes but the overall winner was 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat'.

The Saturday viewing experience was enhanced by the Minister alternating between the organ and piano, playing all genres. After or before viewing, all were able to enjoy refreshments in the hall along with Art Peace, ECO, and book stands, perfect for retail therapy.

The Sunday service 'Hymns of Praise' led by the Minister, as well as his playing the musical accompaniment on both piano and organ, was a joy. It was very interesting to hear the history of the hymns chosen, along with the reason for those choices. A highlight was the final voluntary when the organ, echoing The Last Night of the Proms, sounded out at the same time a Hornpipe and Rule Britannia!

A VERY BIG thank to all who helped to make this a memorable occasion.
Anna Crawford



The Owl and the Pussycat

Here are some of the books represented in the collages that follow.

See if you can identify them!

The Clockwork Orange, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, The Little House on the Prairie, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Roots of Happiness, The Jungle Book, Anne of Green Gables, Waterfall, Cider with Rosie, Out of Africa, War and Peace, The Elephant's Child (from The Just So Stories), The Body in the Library, The Sunrise, Charlotte's Web.

Sincere thanks to Anna for organising another Flower Festival this year, to members of the church and of the Walton and Weybridge Flower Club for the wonderful flower arrangements and to those who did such a sterling job in the kitchen with the refreshments and on the stalls in the hall. Like last year, the festival attracted many visitors and it was interesting to learn where some had heard of it. The theme of 'Books' gave vast scope for ideas and played to the strengths of some very talented and creative people.

Anna bore the brunt of the organising, working so hard, but was well assisted by so many who did everything they could. We can certainly put it down as another success. Thank you to everyone who supported in any way. As Bob the Builder would have said, "Working together, we got the job done!".

Michael Hodgson







FRIENDS REMEMBERED

THE REV. ROY PATRICK BONES JP



Dad was born in Faversham, Kent on the 17 March 1933. He said he had a "fine older brother, John, with loving parents and so grew up in a kind and caring home".

From 5 to 13 years old Dad attended Faversham District School. He said that this time was overshadowed by the Second World War with the Battle of Britain being fought overhead in 1940. He had enemy aircraft going to and from London at many other times sometimes dropping their bombs near his home as well as V1 flying bombs ("doodlebugs") and V2 rockets not being far away.

Aged 13 Dad went to Canterbury Technical School for four years. It was only after his death we that we found his school reports and learnt that he had been first in his class every term in every year. He was House Captain, Head Prefect and excelled in Maths and PE. He played football, participated in athletics winning the Victor Ludorum in 1950 and, in the same year, ran a school record of 58.1 secs for the 440 yards. He was awarded both football and athletics colours and was a St John's Ambulance cadet.

Dad then attended Faversham Grammar School, again being awarded a colour for football. However, he only stayed for one year as on 19 September 1951 he was called up for National Service in the RAF. After initial training ("square-bashing") at RAF Melksham he was posted to RAF Manston to train as an Operations Clerk on the Control Tower. It meant training first as an R/T operator which led on to him becoming a Controller's Clerk. Manston was a Master Airfield and was open at all times, so this involved working shifts often up to 15 hours with no sleep. He then trained as a Runway Controller and spent his time sitting in a marked caravan near the end of the runway surrounded by radio loudspeakers, very pistols and other pyrotechnics. He had final control of aircraft that were landing and at times had to fire red very lights at any that tried to land with their undercarriage retracted. When he was demobbed, he had reached the rank of Corporal.

In October 1953 Dad entered New College, London, to train to be a Minister of the Congregational Church. Again, after Dad passed away, we found copies of the two testimonials submitted by Dad's Sunday School Superintendent and the curate and teacher at Canterbury Tech – they make interesting reading. The first describes him as "a fine type of youth with a most engaging personality and a demeanour reflecting his spirituality and sincerity. Reverent and attentive always as a scholar he remained to work in the Sunday school and became a real asset to it, not only by his earnestness but by his gift for organising and his general likeableness". The curate says "He was one of the most outstanding pupils who ever passed through the college". He had definite academic ability together with powers of leadership which was always used for the good. His religion is sincere and practical and his sense of vocation definitely marked". After 4 years, he obtained a Diploma in Theology and on 20 July 1957 was ordained and inducted at St Paul's Congregational Church, Richmond. June 22 1957 was also a very significant date as that's when he married my Mum at Faversham Congregational Church, the church where they met and grew up. At Dad's Thanksgiving Service Professor David Cutler, an Elder at the now renamed Raleigh Road United Church Richmond, said "Roy was very much a team player and his open and welcoming inclusive personality and ever present humour helped him steer us through difficult times and changes. He was fully supportive of our congregation and mission. Even as a young man he skilfully led a team of Deacons, many of whom were older than him and had very diverse occupations and backgrounds. He brought out and encouraged the wide range of talents they possessed to the benefit of the church fellowship and its mission. He was an

excellent preacher and his sermons were always thoughtful and challenging. In the pulpit there, a small plaque reads: "Sir we would see Jesus." Throughout his ministry we certainly saw Jesus through his preaching, pastoral care and service to the community. Roy worked closely with Ministers from other denominations in the Kew community and with them and members of their congregations formed the local Fish Scheme which supported local people in their needs. He developed a close friendship with Ministers in three other local Congregational Churches (East Sheen, Twickenham and Hampton Hill) and with the approval of the church meetings he became part of the team ministry. This arrangement was far ahead of its time. It was not formed because of necessity through small numbers but through real fellowship and sharing."

In March 1970 Dad was appointed a magistrate on the Richmond bench. Once again, we have now found newspaper cuttings saying that Dad was the first minister to ever be appointed a magistrate in this area.

He loved his work as a magistrate. He was Deputy Chairman for many years, a member of the Youth Panel (which he eventually chaired) and the Domestic Panel; he trained magistrates and was a Bench Chairmanship appraiser. He retired in 2008 only because magistrates have to when they turn 75. In 1980 he was appointed to the Board of Visitors for Latchmere House inspecting prisons, dealing with prisoners' complaints and requests and he gave initial consideration to parole applications. To list all the other chaplainships and local committees that he sat on (and usually chaired!) – Christian Aid and the Bible Society, for example – would take pages.

In June 1975 he left St Paul's and went to Tolworth URC, where he stayed until his retirement in March 1998.

Alongside Dad's work was his family who meant everything to him. He wrote to his brother every week and they rang each other every Saturday night at 6pm spending at least 30-45 minutes on the phone and none of the family ever knew what they found to talk about. This continued right up to Uncle John's death in 2019. My Mum was his quiet rock in the background. They were devoted to each so her passing in 2011 hit Dad hard, but he carried on and lived independently right up until January of this year when he went to hospital and we never thought that he would not return home again.

Dad always followed everything that we did so closely and supported us – as Matt said he never let us down. He was thrilled when Matt became a Primary school teacher. As a child Matt loved the days spent with Grandma and Grandpa, the races in the garden, making paper airplanes, the trips to the cinema to see the Bond movies and the shared interest in the Second World War, especially the Battle of Britain which resulted in visits to Duxford and Manston on many occasions. Dad loved all Rachel's academic and musical achievements but especially her sporting successes in athletics and football and he was so pleased in January when she got her dream job – Sports Psychologist for Southampton FC's Boys Academy. He was so proud that she was doing her doctorate and would be the first doctor in our family. He formed strong bonds with Tim and Gemma always saying that Gemma reminded him of his beloved Sheila as she is so kind but we were all overshadowed by Florence and Willow, his two great granddaughters, who he simply adored and the rapport between the three of them was very touching to see. With Rachel and Gemma Dad could share his love of Cameron Diaz films but also "Love Island". Yes, "Love Island" – the rest of us despaired over this! With me it was "Strictly" but with all of us he could share his love of sport (and of course Arsenal FC). He was particularly fond of the Tour de France. As a young Minister with no car he did all his pastoral visiting on his racing bike and he had this encyclopaedic knowledge of all things Tour. You never needed to read a write-up about any stage as Dad knew exactly what had happened, who had crashed where, who was in the lead, who was coming through the field, where the Brits were....it was impressive. He even discovered that there was a cyclist called Michael Woods. He is actually a Canadian but Mike would get texts from Dad if Michael Woods was doing anything!

Dad was very down to earth and perhaps this text I received sums him up so well: "Roy was very special to all of us – my Mum was so fond of him too. She always enjoyed his services and he was so kind to her. He always had time for a chat – and laughed at her jokes which, of course, she just loved! I am sure she enjoyed his sermons but it was more often than not the chat and the laugh at the door she talked about afterwards (I probably shouldn't say that!)" Well you should, because that was my Dad, a people person and a servant of God.

Angela Woods



GWEN HALL



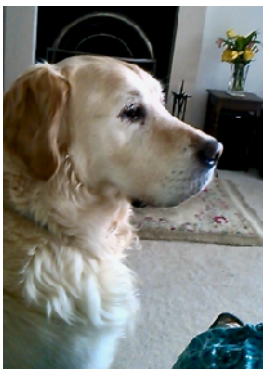
On 12th July Gwen Hall passed away at the age of 99. Gwen may be remembered by some of you because she was a remarkable lay person and was the last Chairman of the Congregational Church before its union with the Presbyterian Church in 1972. A Maths teacher by profession Gwen was a pioneering lay leader and, after the formation of the URC, she became the first Chairman of the URC's Church Life Committee. She later served on the Vocations Committee, Assessment Panel, on the URC Trust and as a Governor of the Milton Mount Foundation as well as being on the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust. Perhaps one of the significant points about Gwen though is that she was a woman in a key leadership role in a major denomination in the late 60s/early 70s and is, therefore, one of those women who showed that they could do more than, in her words, "arrange flowers and bake cakes for church teas"!

Gwen was married to Dick, who was Moderator of the URC General Assembly from 1976-1977 (he was also Moderator of Thames North) but she refused to accept nomination to become Moderator of General Assembly herself. Gwen was widely respected and was the last of our pre-972 leaders. The URC has much for which to give thanks as it remembers and respects her contribution to the denomination.

Michael Hodgson



BRODIE CRAWFORD 19-9-2012 - 22-7-2025



Brodie came into our lives as a rescue at just under 2 years old. Originally named Boysie, he responded to his new name within seconds. Rather over weight and very possessive, he soon settled down and learnt how to behave. Not too keen on the new feeding regime, he did, eventually, get down to the right weight.

He loved people, often ignoring other dogs so as to greet their owners. Always friendly, giving a paw in greeting. He did, though, have a fear of little dogs. In the park he would run and run, investigating every smell and especially litter (it might be edible). He was a great one to steal other dogs' balls, and not give them back. Many is the time we have had to knock on doors to return them to their rightful owner.

He loved going to kennels but was so pleased to come home. Always happy to go on different walks, he was equally delighted on old favourites, when he would lead us.

Well known in the community, he was often at St Andrew's helping us with jobs or enjoying people who lunch. The Flower Club when he came to help put the chairs and tables away, and the Bowls Club where he would watch Dad. Everyone made a fuss of him - even cars stopped to let him cross the road and strangers would smile to see him.

He was so much part of our lives, bringing so much happiness to us and many other people.

Anna and Alan Crawford

A memory from the Pew

A welcome guest and new to the carol service in 2019 was Brodie, who conducted himself with suitable reverence and clearly enjoyed the music as well as the general Christmas fellowship. He is seen on the right, sitting in the pew, mesmerised by the Christmas tree.





The Season of Creation runs from 1st September – 4th October and is an annual celebration of prayer and action for Christians on six continents.

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation. During this month, the world's 2.2 million Christians come together to care for our common home.

The theme for this year's Season of Creation is Peace with Creation and the Biblical text chosen this year to support this theme is Isaiah 32:14-18.

More information can be found at www.seasonofcreation.org

A Day Of Sunshine

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

O gift of God! O perfect day:
Whereon shall no man work, but play;
Whereon it is enough for me,
Not to be doing, but to be!

Through every fibre of my brain,
Through every nerve, through every vein,
I feel the electric thrill, the touch
Of life, that seems almost too much.

I hear the wind among the trees
Playing celestial symphonies;
I see the branches downward bent,
Like keys of some great instrument.

And over me unrolls on high
The splendid scenery of the sky,
Where though a sapphire sea the sun
Sails like a golden galleon,

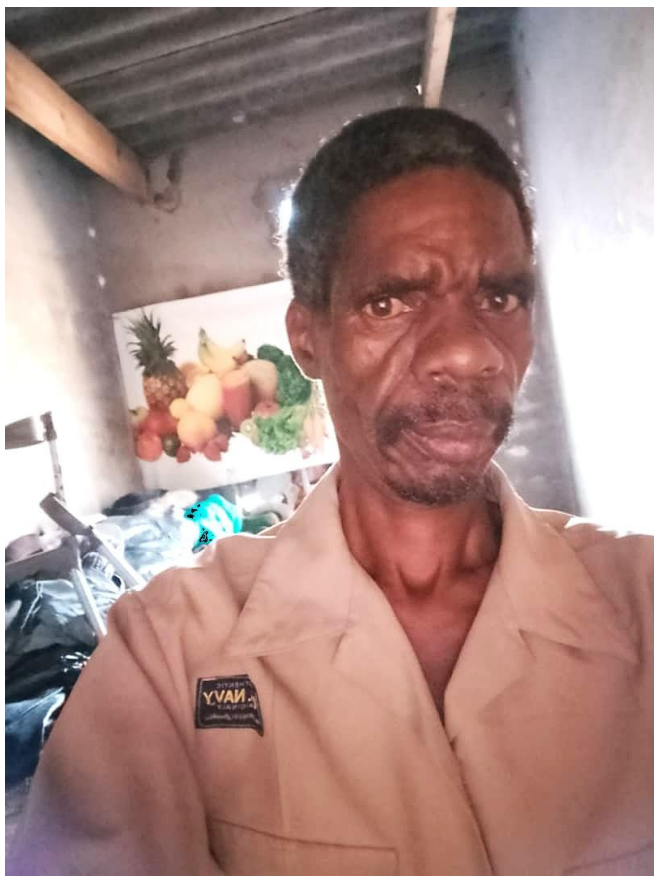
Towards yonder cloud-land in the West,
Towards yonder Islands of the Blest,
Whose steep sierra far uplifts
Its craggy summits white with drifts.

Blow, winds! and waft through all the rooms
The snow-flakes of the cherry-blooms!
Blow, winds! and bend within my reach
The fiery blossoms of the peach!

O Life and Love! O happy throng
Of thoughts, whose only speech is song!
O heart of man! canst thou not be
Blithe as the air is, and as free?

STOP PRESS 24th AUGUST - FORTUNE MASIYIWA'S DILEMMA

The past 20 years have not been kind to artist Fortune. He used to have a good job in 5 star Meikles Hotel in Harare, but when Mugabe came to power everything went pear shaped. He was imprisoned and suffered terribly from torture by Mugabe's thugs which left him crippled and HIV positive. I was introduced to him by Fr David who asked if I could help, whilst Fortune was given refuge in a 'safe house'. He was reunited with his wife and for a few years, life improved with our support. However, owing to failing health and wretched accommodation, his wife left him and his children were farmed out leaving him alone. Trump's decision to drastically cut overseas aid has resulted in problems getting antiretroviral drugs. Fortune informs me his old dilapidated cabin (below) has just collapsed leaving him homeless. Overnight, some of his modest possessions were stolen. A friend has given him a tiny room (right and below) without a lock to sleep amidst his few remaining possessions. So poor Fortune, a decent man and a devout Christian, is back to square one, in tears, with spirits at a very low ebb. Such is life in Zimbabwe - one of many. **JS**



HOLIDAY MEMORIES - A GRAND DAY OUT IN CARCASSONNE

In mid-August, I stayed for a few days with old friends who had rented a historic stone villa in the sleepy village of Blomac in south-west France (population 200-odd, no shops, no restaurants and only an automatic bread machine for that all-important baguette, and an 11th century church accessible only by contacting the Keeper of the Key - of course, on holiday during my stay!).



I had long wanted to visit the 13th century stronghold of Carcassonne, accessible by local bus (infrequent and unreliable) from a neighbouring village or half an hour away by taxi, the latter being the obvious choice. The Cathar fortress seen from afar is truly majestic, its massive double walls towering over the town and with distant views to the Pyrenees. Its origins go back to the Roman city of Carcaso in the 1st century BCE. The Cathars' understanding of the truth of the Gospels led them into beliefs that opposed them to the Roman Catholic Church: they established their own church with its bishops and religious communities and symbols such as the Cross and imagery were rejected.

Once through the main gate, the way curves steeply upwards, a narrow cobbled street lined by hole-in-the-wall shops full of tempting goodies, edible, wearable and decorative. I was sorely tempted by wind chimes of all sizes, the larger ones the most beguiling with their melodic,

sonorous tones. Upwards and onwards

to a square packed with restaurants on all sides, people of all ages enjoying a coffee and croissant (oh, those delicious French croissants!) or a light bite washed down with a glass of local wine. I stopped for a breather on the shady terrace of a small eatery for my own coffee and croissant. Then to the ramparts for a guided audio tour before it got too hot (it was already 30°C+, positively cool after the previous two days when it had been a sweltering 40°C. An hour later, I emerged to wend my way back to the entrance, via the Basilica of St Nazaire in Romanesque and Gothic styles, austere from the outside but softened and brightened



inside by its stunning 14th century stained

glass windows, a Rose window and those of the choir. Outside the walls, I hopped on a little train that snaked its way around the outside of the fortress giving more of an idea as to just how huge and impenetrable those walls are. No two towers are alike and the interesting commentary, amongst other things, highlighted the differences in stonework of the fortifications erected in the late Roman Empire (late 3rd or early 5th century). On the 'wrong' side of the train for photos, a fellow passenger came to my aid. Back into the walled town centre for more meandering around the narrow streets and soaking up the atmosphere with great views at various points along the ramparts.

Finally, with my eye on the clock as I had booked a taxi for the return journey to Blomac, I returned to the first port of coffee-break call, this time for a scrumptious crêpe au citron washed down by a generous glass of local vin blanc and some serious people-watching. Six hours had gone all too fast!

It's a long way to go for a Grand Day Out but, if you are already in the Aude region of France, Carcassonne should not be missed!

Norma Reid



FLOWER POWER

"There are flowers everywhere for those who want to see them."
Henri Matisse

Many thanks from **Christine Carlile** who was delighted to receive a lovely bunch of church flowers after the service one Sunday in July.

Norma has also been the fortunate recipient of flowers over the past two months. She likes to put them in the hall so that they can smile in welcome at her whenever she opens the front door to go into the house.

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***

Our flowers on 28 June were Wedding flowers and those on 10 August from the Flower Festival, both featured separately.



6 July - Rosemary Topping
in memory of her mother



13 July - Jean Rigden
for John with love



20 July - Anne Fitzgerald
for Keith's birthday



27 July - Paula Walsh
for her Mum's birthday



3 August - Liz Grimsey
for those who are no longer
with us



24 August - Val Cave
in memory of her husband, Freddy Cave

Prayer Corner



This month we share the prayers and thoughts of some early Christians.

God is invisible, though he is seen; incomprehensible, though manifested by grace; inconceivable, though conceived by human senses.

Tertullian (c150-212) North African Church Father

Christ has turned all our sunsets into dawns.

Clement of Alexandria (c150-c215) Theologian

You can set up an altar to God in your minds by means of prayer. And so it is fitting to pray at your trade, on a journey, standing at a counter or sitting at your handicraft.

John Chrysostom (c347-407) Archbishop of Constantinople

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

Columba (c521-597) Irish monk and missionary in Scotland

If I could live in a tiny dwelling on a rock in the ocean, surrounded by the waves of the sea and cut off from the sight and sound of everything else, I would still not be free of the cares of this passing world, or from the fear that somehow the love of money might still come and snatch me away.

Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (d687) Monk in Scotland, later he was Bishop of Lindisfarne

May God the Father bless us;
may Christ take care of us;
the Holy Ghost enlighten us all the days of our life.
The Lord be our defender and keeper of body and soul,
both now and for ever, to the ages of ages.

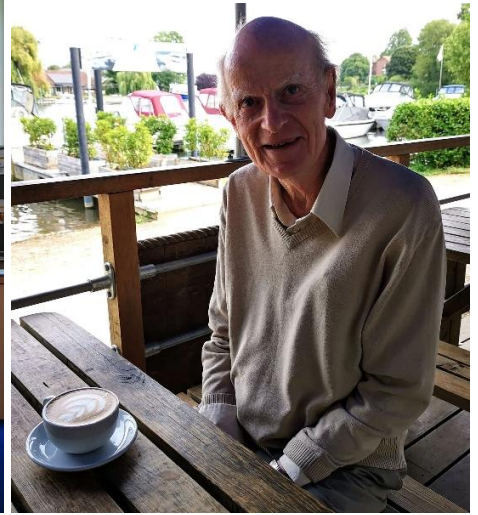
*Æthelwold of Winchester (c908-984) Bishop of Winchester
and leader of the 10th century Monastic Reform Movement*

Some of you may have a prayer which you would like to include in our Prayer Corner. Perhaps you have a favourite prayer written many centuries ago, or it may be that you have come across a modern prayer which has a special resonance with you, or you may like to write a prayer of your own. Whatever you decide to do please send your prayer to associateeditor@standrewsurc.org

If you would prefer not to have your name mentioned please let the Editor and Associate Editor know so that your prayer can be listed as being contributed by a Church Member.

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

VISITOR FROM ZIMBABWE: Fr David Harold Barry SJ whom I first met when visiting Silveira House, Chishawasha, over 20 years ago, recently spent the day in Walton. David was the Director then but now, although in his mid-eighties, is still active having had his latest book published titled 'A Mission Undecided (The Jesuit presence in South Africa 1875 – 2021)'.



We had our usual stroll along the Thames putting the world to rights, stopping for a coffee at the Marina, a visit to St Andrew's followed by lunch at home. David said the situation in Zimbabwe has not improved and the articles published in 'The Grapevine' were sadly very representative.

LIFE CHANGER FOR MIKE: The resilience of Zimbabweans knows no bounds. After the tremendous ArtPeace exhibitions in 2010 which raised a substantial sum of money, artist Mike Masedza managed to buy a small stand (plot). Over the years he has painfully scraped together enough money from sales and donations to gradually build a home. Recently, on hearing his plight, a



member donated enough to have Mike's windows and doors glazed with some cement to finish off flooring. Mike had an impoverished childhood. His first wife died in her early twenties which hit him badly. He has never had any formal employment and lived in a few rented wretched rooms but never gave up the dream of owning his own home to accommodate seven members of his family. His wife helped by selling potatoes from a roadside stall. Now the family have moved in! Mike said: 'My wife is the happiest woman on earth and the stress I have had for so long has lifted'. Photo shows Mike's wife with some grandchildren. The house has a metal corrugated roof with no ceilings, running water or electricity so the family will use water from a neighbour's borehole.

THE JULY ARTICLE covered the plight of Sipwe whose husband had abandoned her with three children. Fortune had mentioned her going from door to door begging for food for her young family. I allocated some of our donations to help which Fortune, despite his mobility problems, hobbled a long distance to give her. Fortune, in photo left with Sipwe said: *'She was so grateful and shed tears of joy. The children were not there as they had gone to fetch firewood. Sipwe bought food and two second hand blankets for the children as it is still very cold this end and the children had difficulty sleeping at night'*.



ZIMBABWE'S INFLATION RATE surged to 95.8% in July 2025, 76% of people work in the informal sector. (Zimstats). The World Bank says Zimbabwe is home to one of the

world's largest informal economies where three quarters of employment is informal with the sale of second-hand clothes being the most common trade. The Zimbabwe government's unbelievable response to this situation has



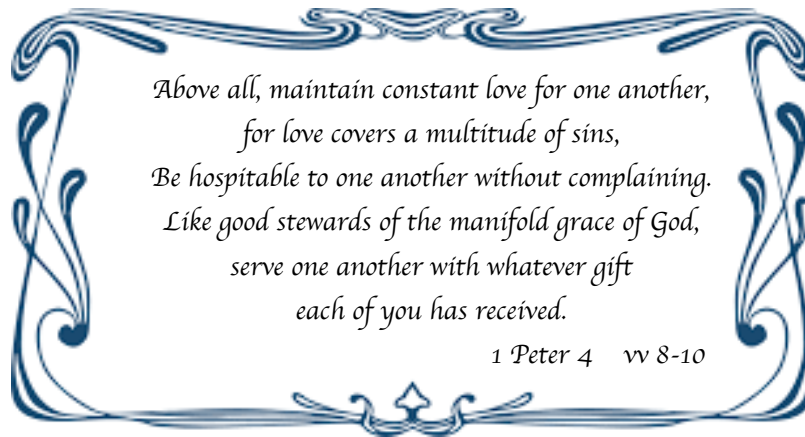
been to begin a new crackdown on street vendors. A few months ago, they chased vendors off the streets saying they were not paying tax or licences, this despite the fact Vendors pay vending fees to local councils

each day. They then announced that with immediate effect the importation and selling of second-hand clothing is banned as is street and night vending. Incredibly, a local government minister has removed the ability of 76% of the people to buy food for their families, keep their children in school and pay rent at the end of each month. Humanity and empathy from the State no

longer exists in this beleaguered country.

THE ARTPEACE SCULPTURE SALE at the recent Flower Festival at St Andrew's (right), raised £1029 which the group were overjoyed to receive a few days later. Our editor has sent a lovely video from the group with her covering email showing their heartwarming response – do have a look as it shows how your support lifts morale amongst our friends. **Johnston Simpson**





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Instagram: Insta: [standrewsurcww](https://www.instagram.com/standrewsurcww)

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 Church Administrator, who will be able to send them a link to enable easy participation.

You are all most welcome to join us!