



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON-ON-THAMES

NEWSLETTER

Volume 76 No 7



DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020



*"A Christmas candle is a lovely thing;
It makes no noise at all,
But softly gives itself away;
While quite unselfish, it grows small."*

Eva K. Logue



*From the Manse
December 2019*



Dear friends

I am certain that many of you will be aware of a book, first published in 1928- The Oxford Book of Carols. Edited by Percy Dearmer, Martin Shaw and Ralph Vaughan Williams, the earlier editions had wonderful red covers with an “Arts and Crafts” style decorations pressed into them, very similar to the hymnbook, “The English Hymnal” produced by the same publishers a few years earlier. It soon became “the” carol book although in more recent years it has been rather overshadowed by the “Carols for Choirs” series and “the white book”! (Singers like to keep it simple!)

Thinking about the Christmas music we hear these days made me wonder if, perhaps, the most lasting contributions from the Oxford Book of Carols (OBC) have been the inclusion of (a) the continental carols it introduced to British congregations and choirs, and (b) the traditional English carols which had become neglected. An example of the first would include “Little Jesus, sweetly sleep” and, of the second, “The Holly and the Ivy”.

Every supermarket we go into at the moment is bombarding us with Christmas carols and songs and the pre-1928 hymnbooks contained “the biggies”, that we sing today; things like “‘Ark the ‘erald”, “Once in Royal,” “While Shepherds washed” and “O come all ye faithful”. They included carols from America like “It came upon the midnight clear”, but not a huge amount else. “God rest you merry” is about the only trad English carol of that style in Congregational Hymnary. Today, we’d think the choice extremely limited. Cong Hymnary doesn’t even have “Away in a manger” in it!

The effect of OBC, however, is quickly seen, if, for example, you look at the Methodist Hymn Book published just 5 years later in 1933. Its section of hymns for Advent and Christmas looks much more like we might expect today.



*Cover of the original Arts and
Crafts edition of the Oxford Book of
Carols*

Carols such as “Lo, how a rose is growing” (Es ist ein ‘ Ros’ entsprungen (R&S 175) are so beautiful. It’s a lovely hymn to sing with a fine, German tune but it’s also a wonderful hymn to reflect upon too, drawing richly on a number of Old Testament images. Last year, I wrote about “The poor and the humble” (R&S 165) which was

also in Congregational Praise and Church Hymnary 3. It comes to us via the OBC route, its second verse having been commissioned by its editors. I think that it could be argued that OBC set carol singing, both for congregations and for choirs, on a different path and that subsequent hymn books and carol books have followed its lead and developed it.

Today, it's much more normal for us to draw on carols from the world church as well. If you want to clear away the Bing Crosby and "See amid the winter snow" images, then how about a carol from New Zealand?

*Carol our Christmas, an upside down Christmas;
The snow is not falling and trees are not bare.
Carol the summer, and welcome the Christ Child,
Warm in our sunshine and sweetness of air.*

Or even

*Not on a snowy night by star or candlelight
Nor by an angel band there came to our dear land
Te Harinui Glad tidings of great joy*

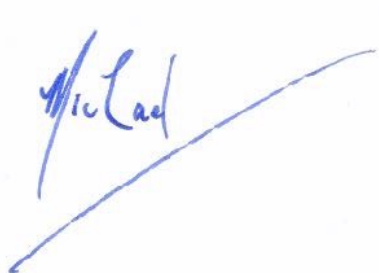
*But on a summer day within a quiet bay
The Maori people heard the great and glorious word
Te Harinui Glad tidings of great joy*

I'm not currently singing in a choir and that seems so strange, but you may bet your bottom dollar that I'll be recording "Carols from Kings" on Christmas Eve. The actual Oxford Book of Carols may now have been rather superseded but the trail it blazed most certainly hasn't and I do wonder if, one day, it might actually make a bit of a comeback. That's because these days we are often bombarded by musical arrangements of carols that are so hyped up and "schmaltzified" that the simple carol is lost under a music-candy coating. There's bound to come a pendulum swing at some point, though, and perhaps the OBC's simple, beautiful carols and settings will be rediscovered.

*Rejoice and be merry in songs and in mirth!
O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth!
For this is the birthday of Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation- his praises we'll sing.*

(Carol from Dorset, probably from the early 18th century)

With my good wishes to you all for a blessed Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.





CHRISTMAS SERVICES WITHIN THE PASTORATE



One of the things the joint pastorate can offer is a wider range of Christmas service types and times and it's been interesting to see that some members have been taking advantage of this: so here's a complete list, from both churches, of what's happening this Christmas. You're welcome to any of them at either church!

Michael

Sunday 8th December

10.30am Weybridge Family Parade and Gift Service, culminating with Nativity tableau

Monday 9th December

7.00pm Weybridge Memorial Carol Service, being organised by Chitty's Funeral Directors but anyone is invited to come. Its focus will be for those recently bereaved and facing their first Christmas without a loved one.
(New initiative this year)

Sunday 15th December

3.00pm St Andrew's Mulled Wine, mince pies and then Candlelit Carol Service

Tuesday 17th December

1.30pm St Andrew's Westwood School Carol Service.
Always packed- always excellent. I'm sure we could squeeze you in if you'd like to come but be prepared to breathe in!

Sunday 22nd December

10.30am Weybridge Carol Service which this year will have a more contemporary feel to it as it draws on material from the Iona Community, off the North West coast of Scotland. But don't worry - the carols will be the trad ones!

Christmas Eve

3.00pm Weybridge Crib Service with real, live donkey.
4.00pm St Andrew's Christingle Service - come and make your very own Christingle!
11.15pm Weybridge Carol Singing followed by Midnight Communion

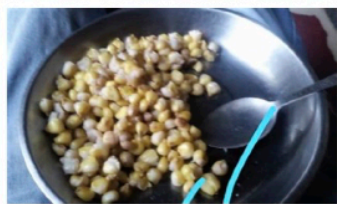
Christmas Day

10.30am St Andrew's Pastorate Christmas Day service
(NB No service at Weybridge - lifts to Walton are available if required - just ask)

Sunday 29th December

10.30am Weybridge Pastorate Service
(NB No service at St Andrew's – lifts to Weybridge are available if required - just ask)

BLEAK CHRISTMAS OUTLOOK FOR ARTPEACE: Members of the congregation who attended the service last Sunday, will have seen the appreciative video from the group thanking St Andrew's for their recent donation. Our money was quickly spent on essentials. Each artist supports anything from 11 to over 20 people in their extended family system. For those who have not been able to donate and would like to, I would be delighted to receive any monies over the next fortnight. A big thank you to those who gave generously at other times of the year - this has been a huge morale booster.



TARGET: As it stands with Christmas a month away, their situation is looking grim, so I am trying to raise money on three fronts although item one is clearly the priority:

1. To provide a decent meal for their extended families over the festive period (the photo above shows what some artists are currently existing on per day so it's no wonder they feel weak).
2. To buy ground nut seeds and bean seeds.
3. To purchase chemicals to treat fields of maize and preserve young crops around February.

Artist Fortune Masiyiwa told me what a big lift his family got last Christmas by being able to buy 3 chickens etc over the festive period as meat was such a luxury. He invited his neighbours to share and said: 'My neighbours are asking me what my situation is this year and all I could tell them was that I hoped St Andrew's could help. You see John, we all respect St Andrew's for their support and so hope and pray they can do something for us again this year.'



There is also a need to supplement their basic diet of maize with ground nuts and beans, so I need to raise funds to buy seed and the rains have now arrived. Marlow URC did a tremendous job in funding maize seed and fertilisers, but these additions would add extra nutritional value.



Finally, some members may recall that the group almost lost their last crops to a pest called Army worm which can destroy a field in a week. We have bought some cans of chemicals as the price keeps escalating but need many more and also money to rent sprayers (see above) The latter 2 items amount to 2200US\$ excluding a Christmas treat but what's life without a challenge! JS

Let's see what we can do to lift ArtPeace and give them a happy Christmas! Ed

COMING TOGETHER AT CHRISTMAS

A family friend, who is a retired Methodist minister in Uruguay, Diego Frisch has sent in this snippet which illustrates so well the spirit of Christmas and of understanding between different faiths.

"A few years ago in Birmingham, I visited a small mosque. There, I was welcomed by the Imam. As a sign of respect and in keeping with the Muslim tradition, we took off our shoes on entering the mosque: there we shared our thoughts about Islam and Christianity. The Imam was part of an Interfaith group, including Methodists and Anglicans. One of their main aims was to create better relationships between Muslims and Christians in order to contribute to a better relationship in that area where there are many Muslims. Before we left the Imam and I prayed together.

In an Anglican Church nearby, when they celebrate Christmas, they invite their Muslim friends from the nearby Mosque to join them. When the Muslims celebrate the end of the month of Ramadan, they, in turn, invite their Anglican friends to join them.

We must continue to work together for a better understanding amongst all the religious groups that we may know.

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES DECEMBER 2019

For complete list of Christmas Services see page 4

Sunday 1 December (Advent 1)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by the Minister
	12.00 noon	Quarterly Church Meeting
Tuesday 3 December	8.00 pm	Elders' Meeting Hersham Room
Sunday 8 December (Advent 2)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by Mrs Anna Crawford
Friday 13 December	10.30 am	Prayer Group Garden Room
	12.30-2.30 pm	Ladies Who Lunch at Weybridge URC (see page 9)
Saturday 14 December	4.00 pm	A Cappella Christmas Concert, Weybridge URC (see page 9)
Sunday 15 December (Advent 3)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by Mrs Anna Crawford
	3.00 pm	Mulled wine and Mince Pies followed by candlelit Service of Nine Lessons and Carols conducted by the Minister
Tuesday 17 December	9.00 am	Westward School rehearsal
	1.30 pm	Westward School Christmas Service at St Andrew's
Friday 20 December	7.30 pm	Treble Clef Choir Christmas Carols at St James's Church Weybridge (see page 10)
Sunday 22 December (Advent 4)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by the Minister
Tuesday 24 December	3.00 pm	Crib Service at Weybridge (with real live donkey!)
	4.00 pm	Christingle Service conducted by the Minister
	11.15 pm	NB: At <u>Weybridge URC</u> Midnight Communion conducted by the Minister
Wednesday 25 December <i>Christmas Day</i>	10.30 am	Christmas Day Joint Family Service with Weybridge at St Andrew's conducted by the Minister
		
Sunday 29 December (Christmas 1)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by the Reverend Roy Bones

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES JANUARY 2020
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A Happy New Year to One and All !

Sunday 5 January (Christmas 2)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion conducted by the The Revd David Netherwood The next Communion service will be at Easter
Tuesday 7 January		NB: NO ELDERS' MEETING!
Friday 10 January	10.30 am	Prayer Group Garden Room
	12.30-2.30 pm	Ladies Who Lunch at Weybridge URC (contact Margaret Faultless 020 8399 3402)
Sunday 12 January (Epiphany 1)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by Mr Graham Pearcey

COPY DATE FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER: WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY

ALL ITEMS TO NORMA REID, 3 GWALIOR ROAD, LONDON SW15 1NP
aristocats.2000@gmail.com Tel: 020 8785 4392

Sunday 19 January (Epiphany 2)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by the Minister
	3.00-5.00 pm	Messy Church
Friday 24 January	10.30 am	Prayer Group Garden Room
Saturday 25 January	7.00 for 7.30 pm	Burns Supper at St Andrew's Church Hall (see page 10)
Sunday 26 January (Epiphany 3)	10.30 am	Sunday Worship conducted by the Mr Sydney Shore



And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown,'
And he replied:

'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better
than light and safer than a known way.'

So I went forth and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And
He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

Minnie Louise Haskins



NEWS OF EMBRACE

St Andrew's supports EMBRACE the Middle East, a charity originally set up in 1854.

EMBRACE has worked with and supported Christian communities doing life-changing works in countries in the Near and Middle East, including Turkey, Syria, Egypt, the Balkans, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Cyprus. Currently Embrace supports projects in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. With over 160 years' experience it helps people of all faiths and none to free themselves from a life of poverty and injustice. Together with local Christian communities EMBRACE is bringing lasting change to the Middle East through healthcare, education and community development projects. Here are a few examples of how EMBRACE has changed young lives for the better.

In Lebanon, the Notre Dame School, which offers mainstream education with a high level of support for those with additional needs, has achieved a lot in 2019, including a 90% success rate in the Lebanese Baccalaureate. Their 20 sheltered employment workshops are thriving. Over the winter, they developed an agriculture workshop and are seeing the fruits of their labour - tomatoes bell peppers, cucumbers, aubergine and melons. The young people also have a lot of activities to help them progress socially. Their activities have included are workshops trips, a summer camp and the thriving 'Stars of Al-Kafaàt' theatre group.

Musa, 20, wanted to be a barber. He lives in a small town in Palestine in the north of the West Bank. Most people his age in the world are working, job-hunting or training for a future career, but Musa has faced obstacles at every turn, having been born with a form of restricted growth (dwarfism). He has experienced prejudice and has not been given the same opportunities available to others. EMBRACE's partners, Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation (BASR) provide training on disability issues and helps organisations to develop inclusion policies, adapt their workplace and provide assistive devices where needed. "My experience at the BASR training centre has been outstanding", says Musa. Now having recently graduated with a degree in barbering, Musa's ultimate aim is to open a barber shop of his own - a dream that would have been denied him without your support.



Musa looks forward to the future

Early detection of hearing problems is vital for children's progress. EMBRACE's partners at the Leaning Centre for the Deaf (LDC) are leading the way so that all deaf children in Lebanon get the support they need, which they currently do not. This means being persistent in lobbying the government to recognise the issue on a national scale - in other words, making the government listen.



Rashad and his dad learning sign language and taking part in speech and language therapy

A library in a town to the west of Cairo provides refuge from a spring heatwave. Temperatures have reached 45° C and even the short walk from nearby streets has left people thirsty and tired. However, there is a meeting in the library that day as part of a new women's rights awareness campaign: some have arrived ready to speak and be heard and men ready to listen. Thanks to you, Egyptian women have the opportunity to gather and talk about the discrimination and abuse they face. EMBRACE's partners at the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS) have started a project to promote the rights of women and girls in a society that has seen a backlash against equality since the uprising of 2011.

With thanks to EMBRACE magazine August 2019

I have given Alan Crawford a cheque for £400 to be forwarded to EMBRACE. This is the amount of profit made from our Sunday morning coffee and biscuits after church.

Thank you to everyone!

Nancy Hampton

! POLITE REMINDER !



**QUARTERLY CHURCH
MEETING
SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER
AT 12 NOON**

(Copies of the last minutes will be
in the Gateway)

Details of items for consideration under Any
Other Business should be passed to the
Church Secretary, Anna Crawford

(Tel: 01932 244466 or email
annacrawford972@btinternet.com)

by the evening of **Monday 25 November**
at the latest

PRAYER GROUP

Friday 13 December
Fridays 10 and 24 January

10.30 am
Garden Room



MESSY CHURCH

Sunday 19 January

3.00 pm
St Andrew's Church Hall

TRAIDCRAFT

Please note that, In future, there will not be
any regular Fairtrade stalls (after 24th
November) but if you require Fairtrade goods
they will be available on demand
by contacting *Sue Groves* 01932 562350



LADIES WHO LUNCH

WEYBRIDGE URC

FRIDAY 13 DECEMBER and

FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2020
(People who Lunch - Men also invited!)

12.30-2.30 PM

Soup, rolls, dessert and coffee
along with convivial company £4!
Contact Margaret Faultless

Tel: 020 8399 3402
ladieswholunch@weybridgeurc.org.uk



Christmas Concert in Aid of
Princess Alice Hospice

Featuring 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' by R. Vaughan Williams
and 'A Christmas Mass' by Ronald Corp.

Including Christmas Carols and Seasonal Readings.

Date: Saturday 14th December 2019 at 4:00pm

Venue: United Reformed Church,
Queen's Road, Weybridge, KT13 9UX

Tickets: £10 on the door (*Price includes refreshments*)
Or book in advance by calling (01932) 840578

Joining together to wish you all a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year!



A Cappella Singers rehearse on Tuesdays, from
7:45-9:45pm in St Mary's Church Hall,
Oatlands Avenue, Weybridge

Would you like to sing with us? Please contact us on
07900 907738 or visit our website at:-
<http://acappellaweybridge.org.uk/>

A Cappella Singers is a Registered Charity - 1049088





Treble Clef Choir
Weybridge
 invites you to join us at our
**Christmas
 Carol Concert**
Friday 20th December 2019
7.30pm
 Musical Director: Tim Woodford
 Reading: Nerys Hughes
 Accompanist: Hannah Stanley
 Organist: Lindsay Bridgwater
St. James' Church
Weybridge KT13 SDN

£10.00
 including traditional refreshments
 Accompanied children under 12 free

TICKETS FROM 01252 326514
Paper: Nerys Hughes



Burns Supper

Saturday 25th January 2020

7.00 for 7.30 pm

St Andrew's Church Hall,
 Hersham Road
 Walton on Thames,
 Surrey. KT12 1LG



There is limited parking at the church - On-street parking in Stompond Lane, opposite

3 Course Haggis Dinner

Bring your own wine (glasses [provided])

*The Immortal Memory
 Address to the Haggis
 Toast to the Lassies and Reply
 Piper
 Entertainment & Dancing*

Dress - Highland/Black Tie/Lounge Suit

Tickets £27.00

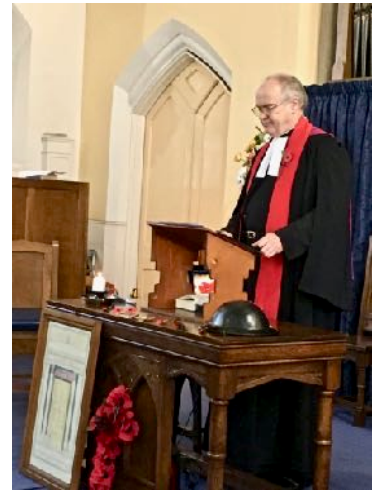
**All enquiries to: Alan Crawford
 Telno: 01932 244466**

Vegetarian meal available if requested at time of booking

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



This year, as last, a joint service was held at Weybridge URC. We had the Cubs and Scouts represented and were delighted to see, in addition, the Beaver and Brownie flags paraded. It was lovely that the Brownies had asked to be included this year. The churches represented were St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Weybridge Congregational church and Hersham Congregational Church, since the URC did not come into being until 1972. This year, in addition to those remembered in the past, we were able to add the name of Pilot Officer Mills, RAFVR, who was from Weybridge Congregational church Sunday School. A memorial had never been put up for him and it was only through research into the war items from the Minute books that brought it to our attention.



Michael asked for memories from those who could remember the Second World War. Among those who contributed was Chris Goddard, who was in church on 3 September 1939. They had a radio in church, as did St Andrew's, where they listened to Neville Chamberlain's broadcast. Margaret Drennan was in Belfast and immediately on coming out of church saw her first barrage balloon. Holms Carlile was in church as a Cub at a parade service. He remembered running out with his friend, scared that they were going to be killed by the Germans. Nan Mercer was fortunate because where she was living at the time was not badly attacked - she felt lucky to be sheltered. Nancy Hampton was living in Clydebank and that area was soon to suffer heavy bombing - she was not evacuated. June Carter was in Gibraltar (her father was in the Army) and they were immediately brought back to England.



The memories basically tell of disruption and of apprehension. Of those remembering where they were when war broke out, for some the impact was immediate, others didn't know what they would soon be seeing and some were to realise that they were very fortunate to live where they did because in the event of attack why would not have been shielded in any way - perhaps all supporting the sheer randomness of war.

If the children of 2019 could hear what the children of 1939 had to say, perhaps it would give them some understanding of what the children of 1939 had gone through and how it had affected them.



After the service we all enjoyed getting together over coffee and sharing more memories of times past, made all the more poignant after a moving service. *Ed*

HARVEST LUNCH



All the stops were pulled out to provide a wonderful Harvest Lunch on Sunday 29 September. St Andrew's church hall was warm and inviting, with tables beautifully laid and the kitchen buzzing with activity. We had extended invitations to friends of families and to Messy Church. It was lovely to see some of the Messy church regulars there (especially when there is so much in the way of sport and other activity for children on a Sunday morning!). The food was absolutely delicious with a choice of (all I can remember!) shepherd's pie, curried chicken, chicken and mushroom pie and South African Babotie, as well as a vegetarian stew with potatoes and salad and, for pudding, apple crumble with custard and cream, wicked trifle, brownies and fresh fruit salad and to top it off, cheese and biscuits and coffee and tea. A huge amount of work was put in to prepare such a feast. Thank you so much to all of the cooks who provided a spread to remember and ensured we all had the best time! Ed

Behind the Scenes

I think we all enjoyed our Harvest lunch, but I am sure that no one, other than those working to make it happen, was aware of the "quiet beaver" in the background. I am talking about our minister, Michael. In a very quiet way he worked incredibly hard to make sure that everything was in place and that the event would be a good one.

On his day off, weeks before the lunch, Michael came into the church kitchen and put all the plates through the dish washer and then packed them away. He took the grubby salt cellars home, washed them and re-filled them. They were returned in pristine condition.

On the Saturday afternoon before the lunch, Michael joined Jan and me in cleaning the kitchen from top to bottom. Even the ovens were cleaned and what a difference! He then helped put out the tables and chairs and, together with Anna, helped us set all the tables. The cutlery and the glasses were all polished and water jugs were set out. What a difference those new chairs, sourced by Janet, made to the look of the hall.

When we arrived on Sunday morning before church, thinking we were early, Michael had already put all the plates in the warming cupboard and set the trolley for tea and coffee after lunch. He had even found the attractive red coffee cans and put those out. There were two lovely crumbles in the warmer which he had baked and the custard was waiting. He had also brought a lovely selection of cheeses and biscuits with grapes to serve after lunch. These were a gift from him and they were set out beautifully on wooden boards with attractive cheese knives from his home.

Michael helped serve the food and kept an eye on the proceedings, quietly ensuring that there were no hitches. After lunch he was to be seen serving tea and coffee to everyone. I think I can say that his attention to detail made for a pretty seamless event.

I want to say a big thank you to our minister who really mucked in and, without any fuss, joined in to make our Harvest Lunch a happy event.

Moira de Kok

A postscript: I can vouch for Michael's total dedication to task as, at one point, I interrupted him to ask a question through the hatch when he was flat out on kitchen duties. He, as politely as was possible in the circumstances, made it very clear to me that I had chosen the wrong moment to distract him from something considerably more important at that particular point in time! Also, Moira, thank you for going above and beyond with the organisation and preparation of this feast. Ed



GUILD REUNION WITH OLD FRIENDS



In our September issue, we featured news from Sophia and Rob Swanson who now live with their two Labrador puppies, Scout and Kona, in Montgomery Texas. They made a welcome visit to Walton in early November, en route to Krakow, where they met Janet and Jim Sommerville, Nancy and Marigold and Squire's Garden Centre in Walton for a coffee and catch-up chat. It was great to see them again and we look forward to keeping in touch.

FAREWELL TO THE GUILD



Very sadly, the Ladies Guild has now closed down. The reason is lack of members, as the number has fallen to four and at the last meeting only two attended.

The Guild has been active for many years and part of the fabric of St Andrews, but at the current level of interest it is simply not viable.

I wish to thank the remaining members for their support. *Janet Sommerville*

OCTOBER COFFEE MORNING AND BRING AND BUY

Irene and Janet would like to thank all those who supported their coffee morning on Wednesday 23 October in aid of Diabetes Research. A special thank you to Marigold, who arranged the contributions for sale and helped man the the stall. They raised £280 for this excellent cause.



Thelma hopes to use this vintage tablecloth over the Christmas season



Marigold is a professional at manning the stall

Brownies

9th

Walton

Brownies News



We were so very proud of our Brownies who turned out in numbers to attend the Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial in Walton and parade with the other Walton Girlguiding Units in memory of British soldiers those lost to conflict across the world. It is always an honour to take part and to represent 9th Walton Brownies and St Andrew's Church.

It seems like only weeks since we came back to Brownies after our summer break and already we are thinking about Christmas!

This term our wonderful, creative Brownies have been focussing their skills on designing and making an appliqué cushion for one of their friends or family for Christmas. This is no mean feat! Each girl had to come up with a simple but effective design which would translate easily to a fabric pattern, they then had to source the material from items they had at home or from charity shops (we wanted our cushions to be made sustainably and at minimal cost) before drawing and cutting out their own fabric shapes. That was all before we had even started working on our sewing skills!



As we near the end of November, you'll be glad to hear that despite having to learn all these new skills the cushions are coming along very nicely and we are confident that there will be lots of Brownie mums and dads, grannies and grandads who will have a lovely, homemade surprise under the Christmas tree this year!

Looking forward to the new year we are sad to announce that both Golden Owl and I (Jazzy Owl) will be stepping down as leaders of 9th Walton Brownies at the end of the summer term. As you will I'm sure remember we only "stepped in to help out temporarily" and now, five years later, feel it really is time to move on. We remain hopeful that a new leader can be found to take over the running of the unit. It would be a real shame if 9th Walton had to close due to lack of effective leadership. However, finding volunteers who are willing to commit their time and energy on a regular and ongoing basis is a struggle, not only for us but for Girlguiding nationally and for all volunteer-led organisations.

If you or anyone you know would like to speak to us about what it means to be a Brownie Leader with a view to keeping 9th Walton open, please contact us on:

9thwaltonbrownies@gmail.com

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from 9th Walton Brownies!

KEEPING THE FAMILY ALIVE : WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO ?

As you are aware a large part - about 50% - of our annual expense is our contribution to the central

Mission and Ministry Fund. I am sure that we all understand the need for this expense but it is nice to have received a letter of thanks and some further information as to where the money goes from the Central Finance Committee.

It is published below for your perusal and if you have any questions don't hesitate to ask me.

Jan de Kok

Treasurer - St Andrew's URC

From: The United Reformed Church Finance Committee

Date: August 2019

To: The members and friends of each local URC congregation

'THANK YOU' for what you help us achieve together in God's name

The purpose of this letter is to say **'Thank you'** to each and every one of you for all that you do for the Church and, especially, for your help in **raising over £19 million in 2018 for the URC Ministry and Mission Fund**. For Christians, any giving of ours is in response to the amazing generosity of God in pouring out his love through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and through his risen life in the world and the church today, through the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is important to say 'thank you'.

The United Reformed Church is like a big family - about 46,000 members in 1,400 churches served by just under 400 ministers. In any thriving family, the members support each other and want the best for each other. In the URC, we are all seeking to *'Walk the way: live the life of Jesus today'* - and to enable others to do so as well.

For most of us, this idea of the church as family is most easily seen in the life of our own local church. That is where we regularly worship God and also seek to serve our own community and share God's love with them. There are 1,400 different ways in which this is happening and a colossal amount of worshipping and witnessing and working for the kingdom happening in URC congregations across our three nations. **'THANK YOU' for all you do for the kingdom in your local churches.**

A crucial part of what your local church does, like any family, is support you in all that you do in your daily lives. That is where we all *'Walk the way'*. **'THANK YOU' for all you do for the kingdom in your daily discipleship.**

But the wider family of the United Reformed Church is more than the sum of its parts. We belong to each other under God and through our sharing of resources as well as burdens, opportunities as well as challenges, we achieve more together. You can get a flavour of this from the reports of the last Mission Council on the URC website - from new resources for Pilots and children to disinvesting in fossil fuels; from the challenge to be better at safeguarding to the need for a new General Secretary. **'THANK YOU' for all you do for the kingdom through the wider Church, including your giving which enables your church to give to the Ministry and Mission Fund.**

You might ask 'how much should I give?' That is a matter for you. The Church has sometimes suggested 5% off after tax income, but that is only a guide. If your church is looking at 'Holy habits' then one of those covers giving. If not, there are other resources on the stewardship pages of the URC website.

The URC Finance Committee is responsible for the oversight of the finances of the central United Reformed Church. Each year, our local churches raise more than £19 million for the Ministry and Mission Fund. Over 80% of this money is used to pay for stipendiary ministers and church related community workers and their training.

For a long time, the number of ministers in the United Reformed Church has been falling at roughly the same rate as the number of church members. What has fallen more dramatically over the years has been the average size of URC congregations - now around 35. So, the challenge which is exercising people across the Church is not so much a shortage of ministers, but how to make the best use of the ministers we have got in the context of small, often widely dispersed, congregations.

It is an extraordinary demonstration of commitment and generosity that the average giving per member to the Ministry and Mission Fund continues to go up each year. Although the number of URC members has been going down by a few percent each year, the total amount raised has been going down much more slowly. The total raised in 2018 was less than 0.5% lower than the total for 2017. These contributions are voluntary but they are not optional. They are an expression of our commitment to each other. The United Reformed Church could not function without them.

'THANK YOU' for your church's contribution to the Ministry and Mission Fund.

NB: the contribution to the Ministry and Mission Fund requested from each local church is a matter for its Synod. The central Church is not directly involved.

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter then please speak to your church treasurer, who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help then they will get in touch with the Finance team at Church House.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Hardie
Treasurer

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD - SHOEBOXES



Operation Christmas Child has been in operation since 1993, the world's largest Christmas project of its kind. This year, St Andrew's made up 24 shoeboxes and there was also a box for donations. Once again, we combined with Weybridge for collection of our shoeboxes, 53 in total for distribution to some of the world's most needy children, for some the first gift they will ever have received.



Adrienne, our coordinator at St Andrew's, would like to thank everyone for their kindness and generosity and also Brian in Weybridge for coordinating them. Brian delivered a total of 53 shoe boxes to the distribution centre, Heather Vale Church in New Haw, who were very appreciative of such a good response.

Ed



CHRISTMAS FAIR



We made £1,791 at our Christmas Fair on Sunday - a great result! Thelma Roberts made us a beautiful cake for the fair. We decided to put it in our raffle. A young gentleman won a voucher for a meal for four at Red Pepper in Esher but insisted he wanted the cake. He was visiting his brother during the week and wanted to share the cake with him. Needless to say a swap was made!

Thank you to everyone who so kindly donated and helped make this year's Christmas Fair such a success

Jean Rigden



James in Santa's Grotto



With the chilly winter days here, these are always a hit

FLOWER POWER



Each Sunday we are able to enjoy beautiful flower displays on the Communion Table. Thank you to all those who donate the flowers, usually in memory of a loved family member or friend. We are particularly grateful to Anna Crawford and Moira de Kok who regularly give their time to provide us with such original and innovative arrangements. The flowers are distributed to our friends who are unwell or who could do with a little boost, and, sometimes even for a happy reason.

If anyone is able to help deliver flowers, usually on a Monday morning, please let me know. I can promise you that these visits are very rewarding, not only for the appreciation shown by the recipients for the flowers but for the chat that goes with them, as a reminder that the church family cares. *Irene Pearson*

Nancy Hampton says:

"Thank you for the lovely bouquet of roses received from Irene recently. They were really beautiful and lasted more than two weeks."

Sheila Gardner and **Pat Sims** were delighted to receive some of the really lovely flowers given by Jan and Moira de Kok and were equally delighted with Irene's visit when she delivered them.

Mary Taylor has had a lot of pleasure out of the flowers she recently received from the Communion Table. She so misses being able to be in church but greatly appreciates our thoughts and welcomes visits.

Fiona Reardon says:

"I was delighted to receive some beautiful flowers from Moira after the service last Sunday. It was a very kind thought and the flowers have brought some lovely colour to the house. Thank you to everyone at St. Andrew's."



We were very sad to learn of the death of Michael Rodgers on 18 November and send our condolences, love and thoughts to Barbara and extended family and friends.
We remember them especially in our prayers at this time.

The funeral will be at Randalls Park on 10 December at 10.15 am followed by a Service of Thanksgiving at St Andrew's at 11.30 am.
An appreciation of Michael's life will be included in our February Newsletter.



As we do not have a Messy Church in December we talked about Christmas this time. Activities included making Christmas cards, decorating gift bags and icing gingerbread men to make shepherds and babe in the manger cakes. Jim Sommerville was helping the children make colourful wax star creations. It took a long time, and needed the microwave and fridge but the results were lovely. In the celebration we told the story of the journey to Bethlehem. It didn't go quite as planned but the children all joined in. As usual we ended with a buffet type tea. *Anne Fitzgerald*



Messy Church is All Age Worship



I love my bauble!



Decorating gift bags



Jim's stars and explaining how they are made





CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government will be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6



Mary Taylor would like to wish all her friends at St Andrew's a Happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year.

I would like to extend a very warm thank you to Michael and to all my friends at St Andrew's for their concern and kindness throughout this year. I wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and the best of health and happiness in the New Year and beyond.

May Dow



Ghislaine Stevenson would like to wish all her friends at St Andrew's a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year

I would like to wish everyone in St Andrew's a very Happy Christmas!

Netta Philips



Nancy Hampton wishes everyone at St Andrew's a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year!

From your Editor, **Norma**, the very best of Christmas Wishes to you all and a big thank you for supporting the Newsletter throughout the past year.

Please keep the contributions coming in 2020.

May your New Year be full of hope, good health and happiness
with a generous sprinkling of fun!

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

ARTPEACE were overjoyed when I broke the news that at their recent church meeting, Marlow URC's congregation had again agreed to cover the cost of seed and bags of compound fertilizers for the whole cooperative. Their generous donation arrived in Harare 2 days later enabling the group to meet and purchase these essentials which, nature permitting, will hopefully provide their extended families with basic food for most of next year. The following Sunday, the good folk of Marlow saw these joyful photos as the exorbitant prices of these agricultural products were normally well beyond their reach!



RAIN AT LAST! After the worst regional drought in almost 40 years left almost half of Zimbabwe's 14 million people without reliable access to food, prices rose by 48.4% bringing the nation



closer to a new bout of hyperinflation, the rainy season has finally arrived! The artists rushed to sow maize seed, their staple diet. (photo left: Lizeni taking great care sowing her seed).



ARTPEACE like countless other Zimbabweans, do not have any regular income and are largely dependent on our UK sculpture sales plus donations. Sadly, sales at Southwark Cathedral have fallen away hopefully temporarily and little is sold at St Andrew's nowadays. However, I had a welcome visitor from Toller URC, Kettering recently in the form of Eleanor

Patrick a church elder, who travelled down by train with her suitcase which I packed with lots of lovely stone carvings. Eleanor will endeavour to sell the contents at her church in the run up to Christmas. It was lovely to see her



again as she and her congregation are tremendous supporters of ArtPeace who on hearing the news replied: 'Big thanks



to our lovely kind friend Eleanor. May God bless her and her church.' Unusual exquisite carvings in the form of whale tails in semi-precious Lepidolite

stone by Arthur Fata an internationally known artist are now on sale in St Andrew's Gateway along with other exciting pieces. They would all make unique Christmas gifts whilst giving the artists a boost.

STRUGGLE: Many artists are struggling big time, unable to afford basic food and rents. Artist Herbert sent these photos of his neighbour's family who were evicted from their modest home through rent arrears and now live or rather exist outside under a tree. Another scrounges for food from a bin.



JOY FOR ENVIOLATA! Artist Lovemore James's 14-year-old daughter Enviolata was stuck at home with



toddlers (photo extreme left) unable to attend school as the family could not afford fees. However, a fairy godmother from St. Andrew's stepped in again with a donation covering a term's education - look at the transformation in Enviolata – she

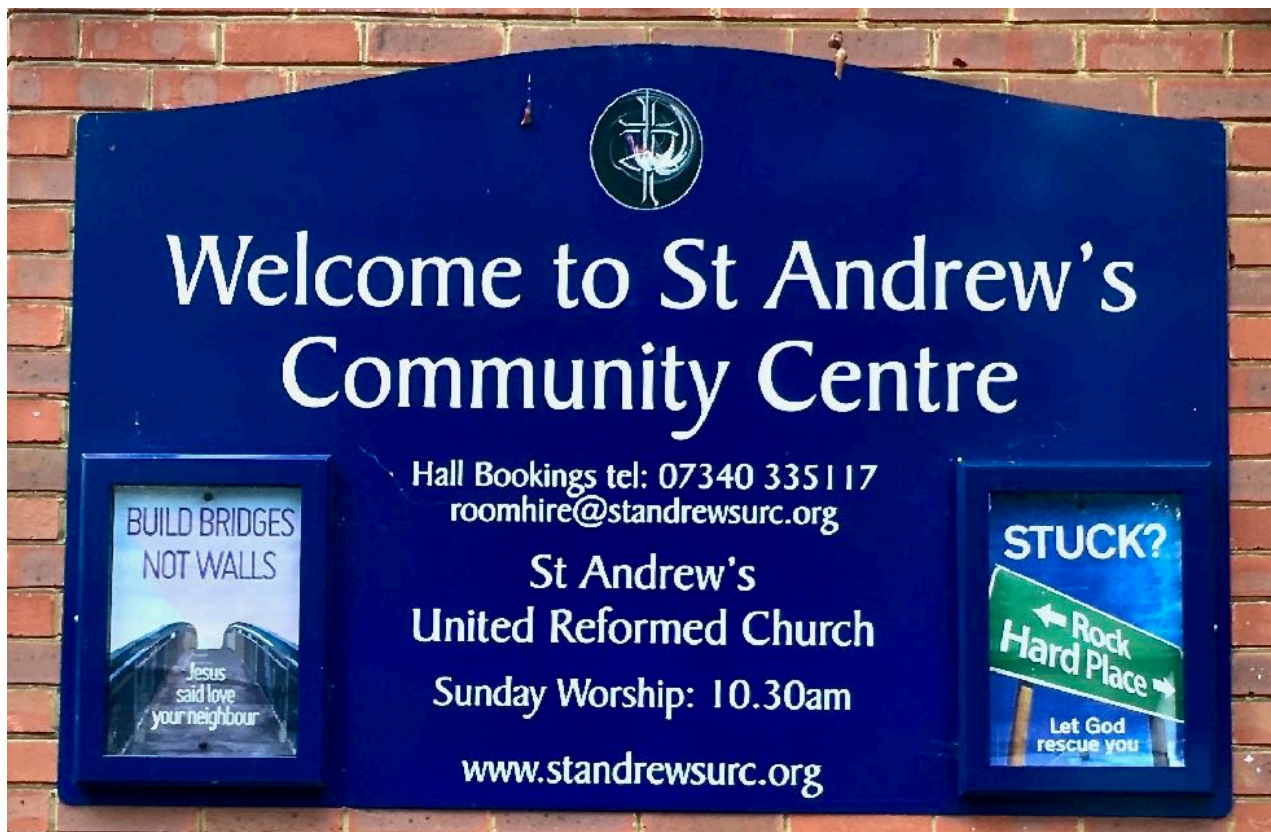
is one very happy schoolgirl clad in her uniform and with new leisure clothes - back with her school chums!

ZIMBABWEANS still have a sense of humour virtue this cartoon sent by artist Mike. However, it's no joking matter. Queues are everywhere - for bread, fuel, money or water. Most businesses have collapsed. People try to cope with eighteen hours a day power cuts with electricity only coming on in the middle of the night for a few hours. Desperate shoppers stalk the supermarket food aisles looking for anything affordable to buy to feed their families. People are nearing the end of their tether and shake their heads in disbelief at the massive price increases often forcing them to leave empty handed. This is the face of a nation whose livelihoods, salaries, life savings and pensions have been virtually rendered worthless in just eight months after their US dollars were converted to Zimbabwe dollars.



UNBELIEVEABLE: Beitbridge District Hospital had suspended mortuary services "as a result of lengthy power cuts and high temperatures rendering mortuary equipment non-functional." In response to this appalling situation the President's spokesman George Charamba caused a storm on social media after he wrote on Twitter: "Keep your corpse at your house... Don't burden the state with corpses."

Johnston Simpson



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**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.**

I Peter 4 vv 8-10