

THE MESSENGER

THE MAGAZINE OF PETERSFIELD AND LISS
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



April 2021 No 697

From the Minister ...



I've just been re-reading the article I wrote for the Messenger this time a year ago. The pandemic had just forced our hand in closing the doors of our buildings and at that time most of us were convinced by the Government's suggestion that these restrictions would last for around three months before normality resumed. Little did we know! We have missed out on celebrating Easter, Pentecost and Christmas together in our buildings, we have come to understand what it means to 'Worship in the Wilderness' with all our props and usual ways of doing things unavailable to us at this time. Last month however, brought hope. As Boris lay out his roadmap out of lockdown, the sun began to shine once again, resurrection felt possible once again and we eagerly anticipate the day we can come back together in worship free from all of the restrictions we have become accustomed to over the past twelve months.

We've thought a lot about wilderness over Lent, it's an important part of our Christian journey – things can't always be wonderful and as we want them to be. It is true that in order to know great joy, we must go through pain and suffering, and it is these bleak times that make the joyous high points in life, even more amazing. This leads me to think about the Easter story. In just one week, the crowds who had been worshipping Jesus, singing choruses of Hosanna, had turned on him and were now baying for his blood. They were crying out for a criminal to be released in place of Jesus – the prince of peace and they were shouting for him to be crucified. Good Friday is a sombre day in which we remember just how fickle human beings can be. We remember that Christ put all this aside though and he paid the ultimate cost for each and every single one of us to be made right with God. The disciples would have felt as though they were in a pit of despair. Things could not have been any worse, their friend, their rabbi, had been put to death in the most horrific way imaginable. And yet, Sunday was coming.

Can you imagine the joy, the wonder and the feeling of elation felt by that same group of people on Easter Sunday? Not only was their friend alive once again, but this was bigger than that, it meant that he truly was the person he claimed to be – God's Only Begotten Son!

Human beings across the world have experienced great times of trouble and sadness over the past twelve months but the amazing events of Easter have a lot of wisdom to teach us as we move forward. Yes, it may feel like Friday – we may feel full of despair and fear, but Sunday is coming and when it does, we will celebrate, my friends, and we will praise our God for his faithfulness once more. Keep on hoping and we will meet together once again very soon.

Josh



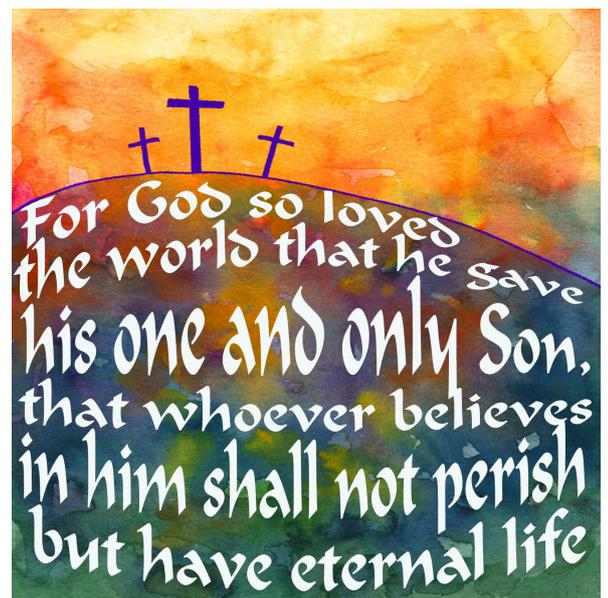
Easter Hope

“So many people right across the country are anxious about employment, anxious about food, isolated from loved ones and feel that the future looks dark.” These are words from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s sermon on Easter Day 2020. Who would have thought that we are experiencing the same uncertainties this Easter!

Yet the Easter story remains one of hope overcoming darkness and despair. The women arrived at the tomb on Easter morning with mixed emotions, as they came to anoint Jesus’ body. *‘But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.’* (Mark 16:4). They were confused, as they tried to make sense of Jesus’ death. Their hopes were dashed with an uncertain future. In the current pandemic, we too are left asking: *Where is God in all this?*

The young man at the tomb reminds them that God is still in control: *“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”* (Mark 16:6).

The women had forgotten Jesus’ promise to the disciples that He would die and rise from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection is also the sure foundation of hope for us in the present crisis. He turns our confusion and fear into joy and wonder! We can trust Jesus’ plan for the future of our world and lives, despite the fact that things can’t return to the way they were: *“There needs to be a resurrection of our common life, a new normal, something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful. We must dream it, build it, make it, grasp it, because it is the gift of God and the call of God.”* (Justin Welby).



Secretary's Snippets!

Hello everyone,

Happy Easter to you all. I'm looking forward to the services on zoom for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and then to meeting some of you in the church garden for services on Easter Sunday. A few prayers for good weather wouldn't go amiss!!! As is our usual practice we will be sharing Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services with the Methodists.

At the moment we don't have news of services beyond those, except in the way we have been holding them for the last few months. We will be talking about the future at our next elders' meeting and looking carefully at the government figures etc. It is wonderful that the vaccine programme is going so well and there are definitely glimmers of hope for the future.

As I told you about my first visit to St Paul's last month, I thought I'd tell you about how I came to Petersfield URC (which it was then). I had lived and taught in Brighton for 2 years after leaving college and had got involved in a local am dram society there. However, I hadn't joined a church and hadn't been worshipping for quite a while. I married Andy in 1975 and we were lucky enough to get a council funded house for key workers in Petersfield. I looked around for the local am dram society and found Petersfield Operatic Society. They were in rehearsal for their next production and I was too late to join in that but, after an audition, they said I could join the society and come along to rehearsals. I did and sat beside the piano and watched (and sang!) The pianist was Ros Double who was also an organist at Petersfield URC. During one of the breaks, she asked me if I went to church and I told her my story. She said why don't you come and join our church choir and I said I really was a Presbyterian. So Ros explained that in 1972 the Presbyterians and Congregationalists had joined and become the URC. And so, in September or October 1975, I came along to join the choir and transferred my membership shortly after! Alan Cassingham was the minister and he and his family were so welcoming, as was the rest of the congregation. Little did I ever think that 45 years later I would still be here and have been church secretary for 8 years!!! Don't worry I'm not going to recount more of my history over the next few months but just thought you might be interested in how a small conversation can change someone's life. Thank you, Ros and thank you God for leading me here.

God bless you all,

Carol

Dates for your diaries

April 1st, 7.30pm – Maundy Thursday service on zoom – including Holy Communion

April 2nd – 11.00am – Good Friday service on zoom

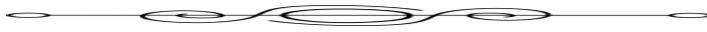
April 4th – 9.30am – Easter Sunday -Holy communion service in the garden

April 4th–10.30am – Easter Sunday – Family service in the garden

All other Sundays – worship at **10.30 am** on zoom and available on our YouTube channel.

Alternate Thursdays at 8.00pm – Prayers for the NHS, our nation and the world, on zoom. Dates and the recurring link will be in the newsletter.

Alternate Saturdays at 8.00pm - Socially Distant Pub Quiz. This will be held on zoom and details of how to join will be in the weekly newsletter.



Prayer for the nation and the world

Urgent prayer is needed for our hospitals, our nation, our government, our society, all the various efforts to mitigate the pandemic and for the wider world which has many difficulties, exacerbated by the pandemic.

Individual prayer is of course important, but praying together can be such an encouragement, and we are taught that praying together is especially powerful.

A couple of the verses that might give inspiration to us would be Matt 18:20 and Psalm 100:4-5.

Do think of joining us in a time of prayer on Zoom (limited to 40 minutes) 8pm on Thursdays, fortnightly, **8th and 22nd April** (interleaving with Keith and Mary's house group).

As Carol says "Prayer is definitely needed more than ever at the moment".

Carol is kindly setting up the Zoom, details as below... Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77047121736?pwd=ZUxqM3YrRm>

owL09IZUtiUkJzMndDQT09

Meeting ID: 770 4712 1736

Passcode: Kk386c

Telephone access by calling any one of these numbers 02034815240, 01314601196, 02030512874, 02034815237.

Thank you!

Fiona and David Darling.

A Message from our Church and Community Worker...



Thought for today

I received a wonderful gift from a dear friend the other day, it was a Guardian Angel bracelet. My friend said to look up the blog of the lady who made it as it's most interesting, which I did. Her signature piece was this bracelet, Annie had come up with the design after her husband was critically injured in a motorcycle accident in Bali. Watching over him was her Guardian Angel charm, the charm symbolises Love, Strength and Wellbeing. Also on the charm are 3 hearts for her 3 children, for me these 3 hearts symbolise the trilogy, The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Interestingly another friend a week before talked to me about my/our Guardian Angels, I had always felt the presents of the Holy Spirit and was open to a Guardian Angel but no more than that. So after this conversation I looked them up. According to Christian tradition every one of us has a Guardian Angel it is given to you when you are born and is with you till the moment we die. Our Angel cannot oblige us to follow the path of goodness. He cannot decide for us, we remain to have free will. But his role precious, important like a silent and trustworthy advisor and friend always by our side. Our Angel is not a plump cherub at our side playing a harp. Our Angel is a warrior, a strong and courageous fighter, who is at our side in every battle of our life and protects us when we are too fragile to do it alone. He is also our personal messenger, charged with bring our messages to God, and vice versa. Their job is to make us understand his word and move us in the right direction towards God. How fitting then to be given this beautiful bracelet to remind me of my Guardian Angel and the support and strength I have been given by God in the dark times.

Jo Hopkins



From the editors ...

A very happy Easter to all our readers! As you will see from articles in this issue, there are a number of events (both live and virtual) planned for us to celebrate this central festival of the Christian year and we look forward to engaging with these with many of you. We have, of course, included some articles on Easter as well as other matters, and we hope you find them helpful.

Keith and Mary

Easter 2021 arrangements.

Sadly we are not quite in a position yet to enjoy a 'normal' Easter this year, however, we do have a couple of exciting things to tell you about!

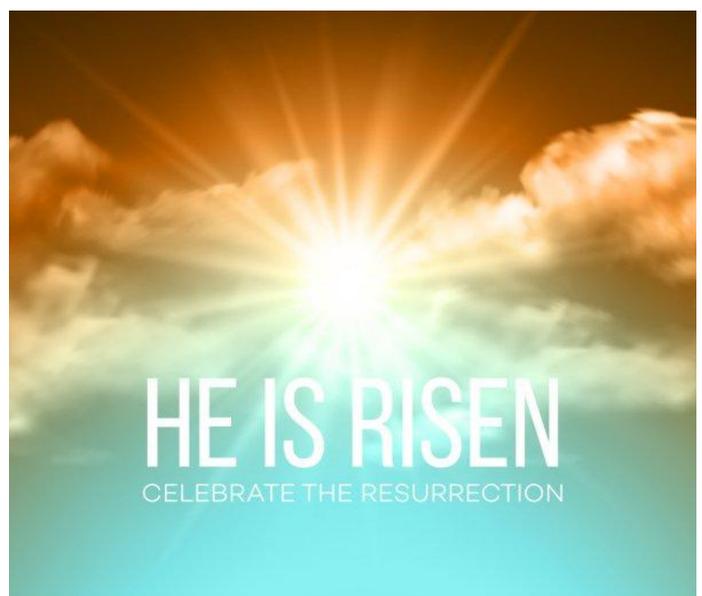
On Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, as has been tradition - we will be joining together with our Brothers and Sisters from the Methodist church to worship together (albeit virtually). We will be leading a short service of Holy Communion at 7.30pm on Maundy Thursday, (details to follow in the coming weeks) and the Methodist's will lead our Good Friday service at 11am on Good Friday itself.

On Easter Sunday there are a couple of options for you. Firstly, we will be holding two services in our Petersfield Church garden. These will be around 45 minutes each and at 9.30am and 10.30am. Each sadly, must be limited in number so if you'd like to come to either, please do book early using our reservio page or by making contact with me or Esmé who can book you a space. The 9.30am will be a quieter service (bearing in mind our neighbours) and this service will include Holy Communion and our 10.30am service will be a more family affair to include an Easter egg hunt for our children and young people (and anyone else young at heart who might like to join in!) We will be asking you if your able, to bring along a few flowers from your garden and we will be thatching our cross during both services before leaving it out the front of our college street campus for the rest of the day so people can see that the church is still thriving and celebrating the glorious resurrection of our King, Jesus Christ. Do book on early if you want to come to either of these services.

Secondly, we will also have a virtual service which Jo and our JFC have put together for us to enjoy, this will be available on our YouTube page all day for you to engage with at your leisure and I'll be giving the same message in this service as I will be at our garden services so you don't miss out.

I hope that these different ways of worshipping together will enable you to celebrate the victory of Christ's resurrection together however you feel comfortable doing so.

With every blessing, **Josh.**



A message from Emsworth ...

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" John 21 verse 7

Many years ago now there was a Rock Festival at the Wembley Stadium in London and many bands had gathered for the concert which lasted very nearly twelve hours! The Festival was brought to a close by that wonderful African American opera singer Jessye Norman. The crowd were in very high spirits and, as you can imagine, by this time were very noisy. Jessye began singing quite slowly and without any accompaniment:

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost and now am found; was blind but now can see.

By the time she had reached the last verse a strange power had descended on the stadium. All was quiet. Non-Christians as well as Christians are amazed by grace. Though we may not realise it all the time, that is what we all thirst for. When grace is seen and not just heard then all the world will fall silent before it. It is amazing, utterly amazing.

The writings of the apostle Paul are full of grace. We often forget that Paul, when he was known as Saul dreadfully persecuted the fledgling Church, In his first letter to Timothy (Chapter 1 verses 15 and 16) Paul writes "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life."

Embarrassingly I remembered the first sermon I ever preached the other day whilst I was preparing for another service at another Church. My very good friend Stan and I, both in the Boys' Brigade, had been asked by the Deacons (yes in the Congregational Church Elders were Deacons) of Bush Hill Park Congregational Church, home of the 2nd, Enfield Company of the Boys' Brigade, to lead worship in the Church. Stan, a number of years my senior had chosen the theme for the service which was John 4 verse 37; "Thus the saying One sows and another reaps is true." My message was that if we truly belonged to the Church then we should put all our heart and soul into the Church working as hard as we could for the good of all. I had even constructed a visual aid which was a poster inscribed with; "What is missing from this CH__CH?" Answer U R (You Are) if you are not working as hard as you can for the Kingdom. This was the core of my part of the Sermon delivered in my late teens and quite, quite wrong. Service for God is not unimportant or that God does not enjoy it.

However, the ground for our acceptance is not what we do for Him but what He does for us. If we never did another hour of service for our Lord He would not love us any less. This seems a dangerous statement to make as it might encourage some to give less to God in terms of their time, talents and treasure. This is certainly not the case for those who have been found by Jesus. Paul sums it up really well in his letter to the Ephesian Church. In Chapter 2 verse 8 Paul writes; “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus **to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

How do you see your relationship with God? In scripture we are called God’s servants and that cannot be denied, but when it comes to describing the relationship as opposed to the role, then the best word to use is “child”. A servant is appreciated on the basis of what they do but a child is appreciated for who they are. The true servant starts out determined to please their Master and is accepted because of their workmanship. A child already knows they have their Father’s love and is accepted because of a relationship. I realise that in some homes the child/father relationship is not ideal but here we are describing our heavenly Father and when we as His children fail or violate the laws of the home, or when we feel grieved or have blundered or have been ineffectual or have been disciplined in some way we know in our hearts that we still belong and are deeply loved.

I always thought that the title “Pastoral Committee Convenor for the South- East Area of the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church” somewhat pretentious, but, and I am sure like many others, I have accumulated several other titles over the years. The Apostle John along with this brother James were, together with Peter, the first disciples chosen by Jesus. John was one of the gospel writers. He also wrote letters and the book of Revelation found in The Bible. John was an evangelist. How did John want to be known? Not for any of the attributes I have mentioned but that first glorious Easter-tide on the beach with the other disciples he describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. You know I would dearly love to be known as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Love, Alan and Cora



Ode of appreciation to the Organ for congregational worship

Congregational worship:
Charles Wesley, Isaac Watts
Hymns to praise Christ Jesus:
The organ has the stops.

Tall pipes, small pipes, fat pipes;
Flutes, reeds and so much more;
The breath to lift the rafters;
Keyboards and pedals galore.

Let's not just listen to others,
Sweet as their song may be.
Let's participate in worship,
Enjoy clear and leading melody;

Contemplative humming;
Twiddles one, two, three;
Thunderous pronouncement;
Amazing versatility!

Whether sitting on your sofa
Or in church, soon we pray,
Enjoy the organ's breath support.
Hallelujah! Praise God! Hurray!

All means of music making
Are welcomed by our Lord:
Hearts lifted, awe and wonder;
Voiced tune with under chord.

Fiona Darling 14032021



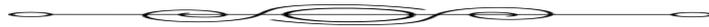
Pandemic Prayer

Each week through the Daily Devotions from the URC they are publishing a “pandemic prayer”. Here is one of them.

Lord,
We give thanks for the scientists tackling the pandemic;
for their curiosity about your world;
for their commitment to finding rigorous answers.
We pray for those who nurture young minds;
for teachers who open up new possibilities;
for those who make it safe to ask hard questions.
May your Church be somewhere where we wonder anew at Creation,
hold out hope for a better world for all your children
and take action to make that world a reality.
Amen.

By Gordon Woods - Elder, St. Columba's URC, Oxford

with thanks to **Carol** for providing this prayer



Thank you



Thank you for all your prayers, cards and gifts that I have received during and after the death of my dear husband, Gordon. His passing has left a large void in my life and he will be so sadly missed by my children and grandchildren. Your support is much appreciated.
With love from **Maureen Gilbert**



Dear Friends,

'You may live alone but you are never alone'

I should like to take a moment to say **thank you** to each and every one of you that has taken the trouble to phone me, to shop for me, and to lend me books. Or when passing by given me a smile and a wave during lockdown. It's lifted my spirits and made me aware how fortunate I am to belong to such a loving and caring church.

Thank you all so much, Pat (Dyer)

Mission News

For your information and prayers, there will be news from one or more Missions each month. If you support a mission that has any information and prayer updates, please send these to the editors so that they can be included



For such a time as this: how the church faced up to a pandemic

In the 5th century BC, the people of God faced oblivion. The Persian authorities wanted to exterminate the Jews. Yet one courageous woman refused to allow that to happen. Queen Esther was told, 'who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?' (Esther 4:14). A similar call has gone out to churches around the world this year. And it's a call that has been answered.

Shining a light

The last 12 months have been some of the most challenging in living memory. A whole way of life turned upside down. Yet the response has been extraordinary. As the challenge of coronavirus rose, the church rose to meet it. As darkness spread, the church did not shrink back, but instead stepped forward to shine the light of Christ.

From countering misinformation around vaccines, to providing mental health support to people struggling with lockdowns, to helping meet people's most basic needs – the church has been spreading hope and love in practical ways all around the world.

Knowing the need

Tearfund has been working alongside local churches in some of the world's poorest places for more than 50 years. We don't do this simply because we're a Christian organisation, but because we know that this is one the most effective ways to bring about change.

Churches know the needs of their communities. They are able to mobilise groups of passionate volunteers quickly. And they often have a respected and influential voice in the local area. This has been even more crucial when responding to coronavirus.

Here are some headline figures from Tearfund's church-led response across 41 countries:

- 1.9 million people directly supported (not including more than 10 million people reached through radio messaging)
- 3,141 hand-washing stations installed
- 97,520 soap and sanitiser products distributed
- £838,569 in cash vouchers provided for struggling families

But statistics like these don't tell the full story. They don't show the effort of church volunteers in Colombia, who are waking up at 4am every day to make food parcels for refugee families. They don't show the gratitude of people who are blind in Malawi, who have received hygiene guidance in Braille from the church. They don't show the relief of people in India who know that they aren't alone any more, after church mental health support teams have reached out to help.



***A handwashing station in Bangladesh that was installed to help stop the spread of coronavirus
Credit: Tearfund partner***

The human cost of the pandemic has been immeasurable. Yet so has the human generosity, compassion,

and willingness to speak out on behalf of people in need. And we are seeing that exact thing in how the church is addressing issues around vaccinations.

Vaccine equality

The arrival of Covid-19 vaccines at the end of 2020 brought great relief and hope. But not to everyone. Whilst wealthy nations such as the UK bought huge reserves of vaccines, many poorer countries have been left far behind. At present, it is forecast to take several years for everyone to be vaccinated. This inequality is something that the church is campaigning fiercely to change.

For example, Tearfund has signed up to the People's Vaccine – an advocacy group for charities and UN agencies that's fighting to bring greater vaccine equality. While at a local level, church networks are lobbying their governments to ensure that the poorest people don't miss out when it comes to vaccine distribution.

Another vital area that the church is making a difference in is combating the spread of misinformation. Local churches, supported by Tearfund, have been doing this since the beginning of the pandemic – countering fake news and dangerous false rumours about the disease through radio broadcasts, information leaflets and word of mouth.

This work has stepped up again. In many cultures and communities there is suspicion around vaccines, but the church is helping to provide reassurance – ensuring that this important step towards controlling the pandemic can be taken.

A brighter future?

The pandemic has forced the world to reflect on the systems it is built upon. It has further highlighted the inequality that is so deeply entrenched. It has opened many eyes to the broken relationships that are everywhere – between us and ourselves, us and other people, us and creation, and us and God. It doesn't have to be this way.

In the UK, churches are campaigning for the government to build back better. To prioritise people living in poverty and to ensure that the economic recovery is built on fair, sustainable, creation-caring principles. This call is being taken up by churches throughout the world.

Church doors will open again. How sweet will those first songs sung together be? How powerful the moments when once again we can lay our hands on one another in prayer? How beautiful when we can once more share communion? That day is coming. Until then, we can take heart in all that the church has done and is doing during these dark days, and know that, through it all, God has been with us and will never leave us, nor forsake us.

Please pray

God of hope and love,

As we reflect on this last year, we lift to you all that has been lost. We grieve for loved ones taken away too soon. We lament the inequalities that have left vulnerable people alone and have pushed people further into poverty. And we long for the day when we can meet again.

Yet through the difficulty, we give you praise for all the good work that has been done and for the way the church has stepped up to respond in this time of need – both seen and unseen. We thank you for your faithfulness, and for the light that can be found even in the darkest of times.

We pray that you will continue to bless your church, that it will be emboldened to step up and out further and further. And we ask that your kingdom come, and your will be done.

In Jesus' name, amen.

***Further information about Tearfund can be found at
<https://www.tearfund.org/>
Until 30 April, donations will be doubled, having twice the impact –
empowering more people to lift themselves out of poverty.***

Wessex Synod Meeting Saturday 13th March 2021

In many respects not having to journey to the Avenue Saint Andrews Church in Southampton for the Synod meeting was a blessing. Due to current restrictions, the meeting was held virtually using “Zoom”, but paradoxically I found the day exceptionally tiring finishing the meeting at around 3.45pm with a splitting headache!

The number of participants at the meeting was easy to determine using this on-line platform but really there was no opportunity to speak to anybody else except when in a “break-out room” and then you had no choice as to which “room” you would be put in.

There were 145 participants and 22 apologies for absence.

The Moderator opened the meeting at 10am and opening worship was conducted by members of the Synod Executive. I was personally vaguely disappointed with this after the wonderful World Church worship of the last Synod, but I think this emphasised the need for us to get back to worshipping together physically as soon as possible. A video entitled “The way we walk” was shown and the Bible reading was Hebrews Chapter 11.

Patrick from France was welcomed as the only ecumenical visitor speaking of course from his home in France! (the wonders of technology)

There were only three Resolutions to be voted on throughout the day; The adoption of Synod appointments, Agreement on General Assembly Representatives and the Nomination of Lucy Brierley (Minister at the Woking Church) as the Synod’s Representative for General Assembly Moderator 2022-2023. All were passed unanimously.

Once again one of the highlights of the day was the Synod Youth Executive Report and the Children’s and Youth work committee. Emily Meachin powerfully described the impact of this year of the pandemic on children in relation to their association with Churches. For a 4 year old it was a quarter of their life whereas for someone in their eighties it was only an eightieth of their lives.

Two very young children (Alice and Alex) from Salisbury Church then recited an original poem on the importance of looking after God’s World and a personal statement of faith with a similar theme. The Advent Boxes had proved very successful and had sold out twice! It was hoped the Lent Boxes would be just as successful.

Another highlight was a presentation by Mike Shrubsole (the Green Apostle) who reported that 29 Churches (23%) had registered as EcoChurches. There were nine Bronze and two Silver Awards but as yet no Gold. He also gave notice

of Climate Change Sunday and appealed to Churches to get more involved with everything surrounding this important subject.

A lot of time was spent on the Minister's Pension Fund which is in deficit. Many reassurances were given to Ministers that their personal pension would be safe but nevertheless it was a worrying situation. Wessex, being a more wealthy Synod would make a contribution Nationally of £10 million over the next 10years but conditional to the existing Pension Scheme being overhauled. (the extent of the deficit was £45 million)

A topic that I felt deserved more attention was Ministerial deployment throughout the Synod. The meeting was told that Ministries and Learning were actively considering the matter.

Peter Pay confirmed that despite all the difficulties over the last year Ministry and Mission payments had kept up surprisingly well.

Other written reports on Silence and Retreats, Mission and outreach, Mission Development, World Church and Church and Society, were received with very little input from the attendees

The Synod Day would be at the Hollycombe Steam Centre on May 7th. 2022 but the Children's Day had been postponed.

It was a very full day which I feel this report does not really give justice to. Karen Bell was praised for her first Synod as Clerk.

I found the Closing Worship most strange with meeting attendees going into "breakout rooms" to discuss "Heroes and Villains" in the life of Moses?

Alan



Wisdom from CS Lewis in 1942 with resonance for today

Satan: 'I will cause anxiety, fear and panic. I will shut down businesses, schools, places of worship and sports events. I will cause economic turmoil.' Jesus: 'I will bring together neighbours, restore the family unit, I will bring dinner back to the kitchen table. I will help people slow down their lives and appreciate what really matters. I will teach my children to rely on me and not the world. I will teach my children to trust me and not their money and material resources.' Colossians 2:15: 'Having disarmed the powers and authorities he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross'.

submitted by **Fiona Darling**

Walking and talking



During the pandemic, I have enjoyed walking. In many ways, getting out daily for a good walk has not only helped me physically, but also bolstered my mental well-being. Often, I have arranged to walk with a friend, and we have enjoyed good conversation and fellowship.

Today I was walking alone, and I noticed it seemed further and to take longer. When you are walking and talking, you hardly notice the distance or the time. I am not usually able to think much when I am walking alone, but today the reminder came into my head of a saying: 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'

It made me thankful for all the friends who have encouraged me this year and helped me to keep going. We can walk alone, and sometimes that's a good thing; but it is easier to be able to walk through life with others.

Who has walked with you this year? Do they know that you appreciate their companionship on the journey?



Books of the Bible

This is a series outlining all the books of the Bible, the word of God, which is central to our Christian faith. This month we are focusing on ... **1 and 2 Thessalonians**



- *What type of books are they?* Teaching
- *Who wrote them?* Paul
- *When were they written?* 51-52 AD

The letters of Paul to the people of Thessalonica are two of the first that he wrote. This was a young church that Paul had only recently established during one of his missionary journeys, and the letters were written to encourage and teach them to help them in their Christian journey, especially during the persecution they were facing. The first letter focuses on being faithful to the Lord and watching for His second coming. The second letter contains more teaching on Christ's return and some teaching on Christian living.

St George's Day

The film *How to Train your Dragon* is set in a Viking village under attack by dragons, who steal livestock and burn down houses. Hiccup, the village Chief's son, invents a machine to capture them. However, when he catches the most dangerous one, Night Fury, he cannot kill it. This is because when he looks into the dragon's eyes, he sees that he is just as frightened as himself. Through their friendship, the people and dragons eventually come to live in harmony.



It's appropriate to think about dragons this month, when we remember St. George, England's patron saint, famed for slaying a dragon. Whether he actually killed a dragon is open to question! We do know that the original George was a Roman soldier at the time of Emperor Diocletian. He refused to renounce his faith, as commanded by the Emperor, resulting in his death on 23 April 303 AD.

So, we have here St George who slayed a dragon, while Hiccup refused to kill one. They seem like opposites: one a brave soldier and the other a weak boy! However, both acted according to their conscience, going against what people expected and not worrying about the cost to themselves. St George was martyred for standing up for his faith in Jesus, while Hiccup risked rejection by his father and village because of his compassion.

Today, we are still called to stand for Christ against wrongs and injustice in a daily life, despite the personal cost. We need to look into the eyes of apparent enemies and meet their hostility with love and compassion. And for all of us the most important place where we need to slay evil is in our own hearts. Don't forget that we have the power of the Resurrection at our disposal!



True story

Several years ago, a notice appeared on the vestry noticeboard of a church in Hampshire, after a Holy Week performance of Stainer's 'Crucifixion'. The choirmaster wrote "The Crucifixion – well done, everyone!" Later that day, someone had added, 'The Resurrection – well done, God!'

The coming Judgement Day

As the Nicene Creed puts it, “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.” This phrase echoes numerous passages in the Bible. Here’s one: “I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.” We get one go at this.

In the British legal system, there is an unusual provision for the Court itself to appoint a Counsel to represent a defendant who doesn’t have one and is facing serious charges.

Something like that is implied in some of the biblical descriptions of Christ’s intervention on behalf of humanity: Jesus Himself is described as our Advocate: “But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

The late Lord Hailsham, a distinguished lawyer who became Lord Chancellor, was asked how he would face God when he died. “I will throw myself on the mercy of the Court,” he said.

On Good Friday, the most sacred day of the year, when God’s justice and mercy are intertwined, I take heart for myself and the whole human race by meditating on this text: “There is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all people”. [1 Timothy 2]

On Easter Day when church bells ring out to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from death, we do not forget the immense cost of God’s perseverance with us, for Christ’s body continues to bear the scars of Crucifixion. Nor is this the end of the matter.



For our younger readers ...

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 26:20-25, 31-35, Mark 14:17-21, 27-31
Luke 22:22, 31-34, John 13:21-30, 36-38

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus.
One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, had
accepted money from them to betray him.

As Jesus and his disciples ate the
Passover meal, Jesus said



One of you
will betray me.

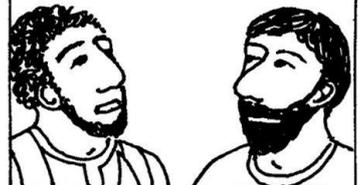
What do
you mean?

John was sitting
next to Jesus, so
Peter said



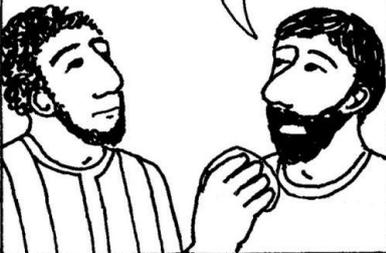
Ask him who it is.

So John asked Jesus



Which one of us are
you talking about?

It is the person I give
this piece of bread to.



Jesus dipped a piece
of bread in sauce, and
gave it to Judas.



What you are about to do
you must do quickly.



Judas took the
bread, and left.

Why has Judas gone out?



He's the money-keeper.
He's probably gone to get
something for our meal

They continued
the Passover meal



Jesus then told the rest of the
disciples

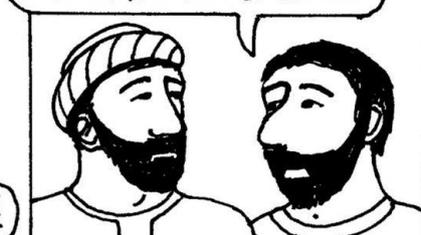
When the time
comes, you will
all run away.
'When the shepherd is struck,
the sheep scatter.'* * Zech 13:7

Peter said

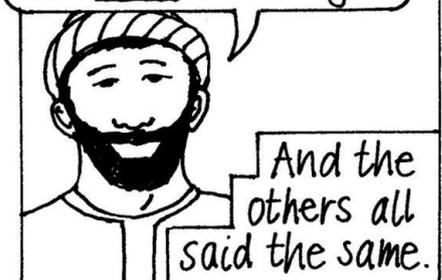


No! Even if
everyone
else does that, I'll go
to prison or die for you!

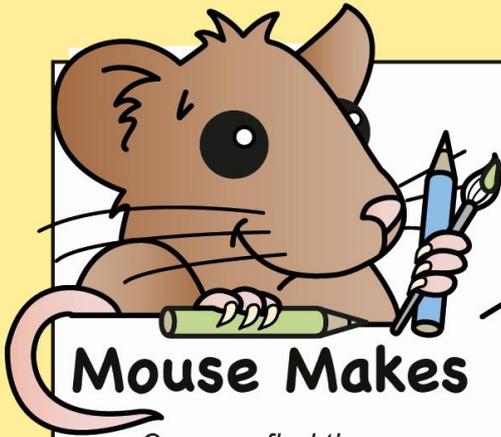
Before tomorrow morning
you will have denied you
even know me 3 times.



Even if I have to die, I
will never disown you!



And the
others all
said the same.



Mouse Makes

Can you find these names of **Jesus** in the word search?

SON OF GOD

Matthew 3:16-17



KING OF KINGS

Revelation 17:14

PROPHET

Luke 24:19



PRIEST

1 Timothy 2:5

ROCK

1 Corinthians 10: 4

LORD

1 Corinthians 1:9

AMEN

Revelation 3:14

LIFE

John 11:25-27

MESSIAH

John 1:41

SHEPHERD

John 10:11

LIGHT

John 8:12



WORD

John 1:1-50



BREAD

John 6:35

CREATOR

1 John 1:3



V	L	I	F	E	W	D					
D	I	A	L	A	R	O	C	K			
C	M	H	M	O	M	S	R	E	H	C	
H	E	O	B	R	E	A	D	O	O	R	
R	S	L	W	D	N	V	I	N	E	E	
I	S	Y	A	P	R	I	E	S	T	A	
S	I	O	Y	P	R	O	P	H	E	T	
T	A	N	J	E	S	U	S	T	D	O	
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	E	D	B	R
K	I	N	G	O	F	K	I	N	G	S	
D	S	O	S	O	N	O	F	G	O	D	
				L	I	G	H	T			

CHRIST
Matthew 16:16

SAVIOUR
John 3:16-17

HOLY ONE
Mark 1:24

VINE
John 15:5

DOOR
John 10:9

THE WAY
WAY

John 14:6

LAMB
John 1:29



Crossword

Across

1 Relating to the whole universe (6)

4 The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)

8 'Unless I see the nail marks — — hands, I will not believe it' (John 20:25) (2,3)

9 He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)

10 Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)

11 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36) (5)

12 Repossessed (Gen 14:16) (9)

17 Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3–4) (5)

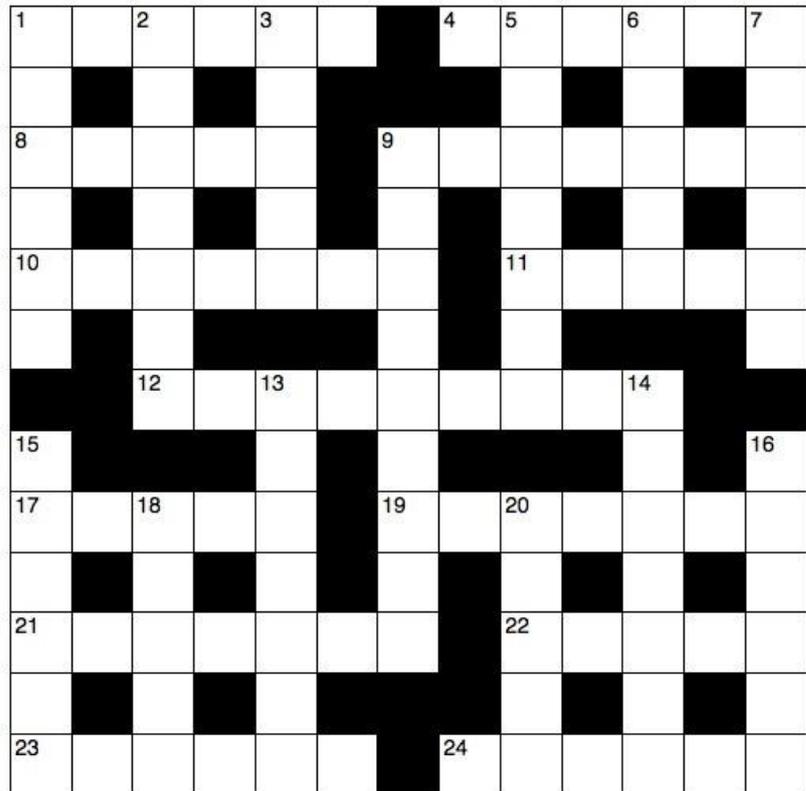
19 'Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Ex 34:29) (7)

21 Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)

22 Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)

23 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)

24 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)



Down

1 Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)

2 Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)

3 Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)

5 For example, the Crusades (4,3)

6 11 Across is certainly this (5)

7 He reps (anag.) (6)

9 Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)

13 Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)

14 They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)

15 The human mind or soul (6)

16 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)

18 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — '(Matthew 11:17) (5)

20 Bared (anag.) (5)

Answers on page 27

Sudoku

	5	7		8	9	2	1	
3			7			9		6
	4	9	2					
	6		1				3	
	1						8	
	9				3		5	
					1	8	2	
9		1			4			5
	3	4	5	6		7	9	

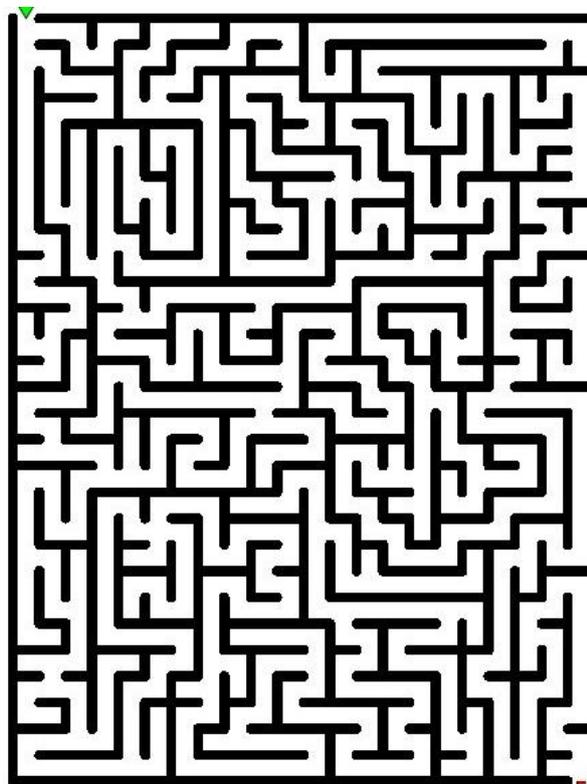
				5	7		3	
3			2					
	8	5						
1				6	2	3		7
		3				5		
6		7	5	3				4
						7	4	
					8			3
	4		6	1				

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Easy

Medium

Maze



News from the United Reformed Church items from the March edition of the Synod Newsletter



Just Vaccine Appeal

We wonder how many of us have been fortunate enough to be offered the COVID vaccine - whether or not we have decided to accept. Many voices have been highlighting the inequalities exposed by COVID. The COVID vaccine rollout is one latest example, with many poorer nations and vulnerable communities having no access to the vaccine or being charged up to four times the price paid by European countries. Christian Aid has invited the URC to partner with them in addressing this disparity. The just vaccine appeal encourages us to appreciate our own opportunity to receive the vaccine by making a donation enabling others to receive the vaccine too. Please see the link below. Support if you can... and encourage others to do the same.

<https://events.tapsimple.org/page/christian-aid/united-reformed-church-supporting-a-just-vaccine-rollout>

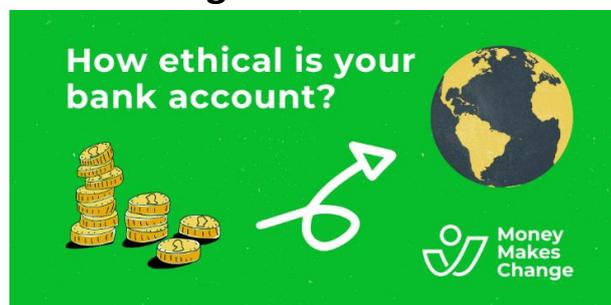
Global & Intercultural Ministries

Covid19 Impact and Beyond

Covid-19 has caused a huge loss of life in the UK and globally. The economic impact has crippled some businesses affecting loss of income to many people. The worst affected people are those marginalised in our communities. Similarly poor countries were affected the most. The impact on physical and mental health is set to last longer due to the effect of long Covid. The government, some communities and most people reacted generously by offering support to those who were negatively impacted by Covid-19. Park United Reformed Church set up a Covid-19 assistance Fund, the church members contributed generously to the scheme. Those needing financial help were being offered a maximum of £1000. There has been offers of a laptop, ipad and or broadband subscriptions and £100 Tesco vouchers. Are you able to share your stories on the impact and support of Covid-19? Enala Bhebhe shed more light on the impact of Covid-19 in this article: [Covid-19 Impact and Beyond](#)

Connecting your faith and your finances: Ethical Banking

Is it possible to love our neighbour and care for creation through our choice of bank account? It might not be the first thing that springs to mind, but who we bank with has an impact on the world.



What do you know about your bank's values and practices? Who does it lend to? It's possible that your money is being invested in things you view as harmful. For example, most of our big high street banks continue to finance the fossil fuel industry, despite the threat of climate change. The good news is that there are banks out there that are helping shape a fairer, greener world, and some of the bigger banks are taking positive steps due to pressure from their customers.

5 ways to take action

- Use the [Switch It](#) tool to check whether your bank invests in fossil fuels.
- Find out if your bank is investing in [nuclear weapons](#).
- If you switch your bank, do let them know why! Ethical Consumer has a [helpful template](#).
- Support your local [Credit Union](#) – could you raise awareness of them in your church?
- Explore [ECCR's website](#) for more resources, including an [analysis of ethical bank accounts for churches](#).

Pray: *Creator God, guide us to be wise, just and generous stewards of the resources entrusted to us, so that together we may help shape a fairer world for all. Amen*

Imagine if every Christian banked with an ethical bank! What a difference that could make.

Children's and Youth Events and Training

New Training – *Leading Small Groups online*

Thursday 29 April 2021 at 10.30am. This course is suitable for anyone leading small groups online (children's and youth leaders, Ministers).

Lessons learnt from the Lent for Youth online course.

Children's Day April 24th Forest Church – POSTPONED

It is with regret that we need to announce that this event has been **postponed**.

We looked at the Government roadmap alongside the advice to churches from the Synod Moderators regarding regathering in Pentecost; and we didn't feel in all good conscience that we could host this event and encourage people to travel to it. ***Watch this space for more information***

Open Youth Event – *save the date*

21 - 23 May 2021. For young people 14 - 25 years. Watch this space for further information.

Wessex Summer Camps – save the date

16 – 18 July 2021 at Oakwood Activity Centre, Wokingham.

‘Heroes and Villains’ theme. For ages 8-11 years and 11-17 years.

A time for young people to have fun with others through a varied programme of activities, discussion and worship.

Further information coming soon – watch this space!

Safeguarding Training

The basic safeguarding training course is delivered online across 3 sessions. Participants must attend each of the 3 sessions to complete the training and gain a certificate.

Safeguarding Training on Mondays in May 2021, 4pm – 5.30pm

Session 1 – 10th May 2021

Session 2 – 17th May 2021

Session 3 – 24th May 2021

Safeguarding Training on Thursdays, 7pm – 8.30pm

Session 1 – 24th June 2021

Session 2 – 1st July 2021

Session 3 – 8th July 2021

Booking is essential and places are limited.

To enable us to put you in the right breakout group, please say whether you are a children’s and youth worker, a worker with adults at risk or in church leadership (Safeguarding Officer, Elder) If you are wearing more than one hat, then please rank them into your priorities for the training. You might like to consider which one you are less experienced in, or which one you have more questions about.

Triologue – online YouTube broadcast for 16 to 25 year olds

Fortnightly on Thursdays at 7pm. URC Youth offer a fortnightly online live YouTube broadcast called ‘Triologue’. Aimed at 16 to 25 year olds, each session explores a theme alongside a Bible passage, providing a spring board for further discussion and reflection. 3 Panellists, 3 Questions, 3 Values. All past episodes are available on YouTube for viewing at any time, plus all episodes (Sept onwards) are now available as podcasts.

Follow the URC Youth Triologue Facebook page to engage and receive up to date information - <https://www.facebook.com/urcYouthTriologue/>

URC Website for information - <https://urc.org.uk/events-and-opportunities>

URC Children & Youth YouTube channel (Triologue link) – <http://bit.ly/urctriologue>



Lectionary Bible Readings for April

April 4	Acts 10:34-43; Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18; Mark 16:1-8
April 11	Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31;
April 18	Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48
April 25	Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

Important - Sensitive issues

As the Messenger is included in the Church Website, it is important that all the content is suitable for public exposure. When composing an article, if there is anything at all that you consider should be removed before publishing on the website, please inform the editors, Keith and Mary Evans.

The articles contained in this magazine do not necessarily represent the views of Petersfield and Liss URC leadership.

The deadline for the **May Messenger** is **Sunday 11 April 2021**. Please send articles to Messenger Editors, Keith & Mary Evans, tel 01730 235922 e-mail keithnmary@talktalk.net

Wessex Synod Prayer Calendar April

4	Poole, Longfleet; Reading: Lower Earley
11	Windsor; Havant
18	Thatcham; Poole: Skinner Street; Gosport St Columba
25	Reading: St Andrew's; Guildford: Normandy; Wimborne

Answers to Crossword on page 22

ACROSS: 1, Cosmic. 4, Thomas. 8, In his. 9, Delilah. 10, Falwell. 11, Water. 12, Recovered. 17, Sidon. 19, Radiant. 21, Centaur. 22, Broil. 23, Eleven. 24, Prison.

DOWN: 1, Cliffs. 2, Scholar. 3, Issue. 5, Holy war. 6, Moist. 7, Sphere. 9, Deliverer. 13, Candace. 14, Deacons. 15, Psyche. 16, Stolen. 18, Dance. 20, Debar.

Church Contact Details

Church	Petersfield : College Street, Petersfield GU31 4AG 01730 266475	Liss : Hillbrow Road, Liss GU33 7PX
Minister	Rev Joshua Thomas Tel 07734 254983 minister@petersfieldurc.com	
Church Office	Administrator Mrs Esme Kelly Office Hours 9am-12noon Tuesdays to Fridays	
Church & Community Worker	Mrs Jo Hopkins 01730 266475 communityworker@petersfieldurc.com	
Telephone	Church Family Centre 01730 266475	
Website	www.petersfieldurc.com	
E-mail	admin@petersfieldurc.com	
Sunday Services	Mornings at 10.30 am Services are relayed by Zoom during lockdown. They are also available on Youtube, but see also planned arrangements for Easter on pages 5 & 7	
Secretary	Mrs Carol Tubbs 39 Rotherbank Farm Lane Liss Forest GU33 7BJ Tel 01730 893489 Mobile 07766 412160.	
Treasurer	Mr Jim Cleverly, 4 Crundles, Petersfield GU31 4PJ Tel 01730 300558	

Petersfield United Reformed Church Mission Statement

“As a congregation worshipping God: we seek to reach out with the love of Jesus; to worship God in our daily lives; to draw others into the knowledge and love of Christ; and to make disciples”