

NEWS

From



United Reformed Churches



Romsey

of



Braishfield

www.abbeyurc.org.uk

SEPTEMBER 2024

Abbey United Reformed Church

www.abbeyurc.org.uk

Minister	Revd Mike Perrott MA e-mail: revd.mike13@gmail.com Day off: Monday	01794 512163
	Rev Dr Sarah Hall e-mail: sarah.hall.swhg@gmail.com Day off: Thursday	02380 768004
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Braishfield	Shirley Smith	Allison Symes
Magazine Team	contact at: abbeyurcnews@gmail.com	
Church Caretaker	Angela Wolfe 1 Abbey Water, Romsey	01794 517746

Services

Sunday Family Worship	10.30am
Midweek Communion 4 th Thursday in Abbey Hall Lounge	10.30am
Monthly Bible Study first Sunday evening On Zoom (ID: 864 1780 6994 Password: learning)	6.30pm

Weekday Meetings – any updates will be on our worship sheet

Monday (2 nd)	BALM (Bereavement) Group	10.30am
Thursday (not 4 th Thursday)	Refreshments and warm space. Open to all, in Abbey Hall Lounge	10am - 11.30am
Wednesday (1 st 3 rd)	Church Table Tennis	2.30pm

For baptisms, weddings or funerals please contact the Minister

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

September 2024

Dear friends in Christ,

Hopefully, as we continue to enjoy the summer months, the recent riots and violence on the streets of our towns and cities are well over. We have seen the prevalence of ‘untruths’, of misinformation, deliberate incitement of aggression towards others stoking the fires of division. But it is good to see the counter-demonstrations by anti-racism groups far outnumbering the minority of trouble-makers. We’ve seen images of peaceful response to aggression – the peace embraced by people of faith and of none.

“Let us speak the truth to our neighbours” says Paul, “for we are members of one another ... Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building-up”, he continues. “Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger ... together with malice ... Be imitators of God as beloved children and live in love as Christ loved us”, Paul concludes in our epistle reading for 11 August (Ephesians 4:25-5:2). Wise words, the application of which is needed more today in our experience and in the wider world than ever before in recent times.

St Paul invites his readers to imitate God. It might be that they are to imitate God in forgiving others as God in Christ has forgiven them. Or it might be a much bigger demand — Paul encourages the Ephesians to speak the truth, to work hard and honestly for the common good, and to live in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

The letter to the Ephesians contrasts two ways of living, suggesting that new Christians in Ephesus must behave differently from those around them. Their joy is to be filled with the Spirit as they participate in the life of Christ. Their witness is a communal act of prayer. They need to build community and maintain healthy, positive human relations with others. They need to ‘put away’ hurtful language, wrath, anger and malice. Let us pray that, as the weeks ahead of us unfold, peace among people will be restored and maintained. (from a sermon by Revd Mike for 11 August 2024)

Marie and I hope you have the opportunity for rest, recuperation and enjoyment during this holiday time!

In Christian love, **Mike**

A NEW HYMN WRITTEN BY JOHN CAMPBELL

Written in response to social disruption in the UK
Tune: Aurelia (The Church's One Foundation)

Let's pray against the vi'lence,
let's pray against the fear,
let's pray for peace and justice,
that calm may reappear,
that those who seek disruption
rethink, recoil, review,
that sanity and kindness
may soon break out anew.

Let's pray for those who're victims
of vi'lence, hate or fear,
for Southport's dead and injured,
and all left grieving there,
for those who sought asylum,
new hope within our shores,
who've faced new threats and vi'lence
erupting at their doors.

Let's pray for all who're serving
to guard, protect us all,
that they may practice justice
in answer to each call.
Let's pray for politicians
whose words calm or inflame,
that they may lead maturely,
help care and kindness reign.

Let's pray for deep reflection
across society,
that sifts true fears from false ones,
rebuilds what's fair and free.
May we, ourselves, re-question
our own role in the mix,
re-fire our own compassion,
help make a godly fix.

John Campbell has offered this
hymn to be freely available for use

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

This month we use a prayer for peace. The General Assembly for the United Reformed Church has made it clear that it is wrong to blame Jews or Muslims for the violence in the Holy land; this is echoed by Commitment for Life, which guides our prayers likewise.

Father God,
We choose you for a world of peace,
a world of justice,
of love and of joy.
A world where we care for one another,
and not for Arab or Jew, for Palestinian or Israeli;
but pray rather for ourselves,
that we may not divide them in our prayers,
but keep them together in our hearts.
Amen

Geoff

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Material for October 2024 to be submitted
by **5pm** (latest) on **THURSDAY, 19 September 2024**

Please email to abbeyurcnews@gmail.com

**Alternatively, you could call Carole C, pop it
in her letter box, or leave in the pigeon-hole**

MORNING PRAYER

If you would like to take the opportunity to reflect upon God's word and to pray for the needs of the world and the Church in your own time during the week, here are the Psalm and Gospel readings for September:



1	Psalm 15	Mark 7:1-8 and 14-15 and 21-23
8	Psalm 146	Mark 7:24-37
15	Psalm 116:1-9	Mark 8:27-38
22	Psalm 54	Mark 9:30-37
29	Psalm 124	Mark 9:38-50

Come and join **Hand in Hand Puppet Team**

**on Saturday 14 September at 3pm
in Abbey United Reformed Church,
Romsey**



**Join us for a story-
time with fun and
singing for under 8s
and their families!**

All welcome!!

FREE ENTRY

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION GROUP

Our next Bible study and discussion group will take place on 1 September at 6.30pm on Zoom; ID 864 1780 6994 PC learning. We will look more deeply at the Gospel verses we hear at our morning service at Abbey URC. All welcome!



ABBAY URC FRIENDS

Welcome to our new members of Abbey URC Friends, it is so lovely to have your support. Everyone is welcome to join Abbey URC Friends; current or past members of our congregation, couples who have been married or people who have been baptised in our church, your friends, people who attend concerts and people who pop in for a quiet 5 minutes on a Saturday morning – or who just love the history of our building. Pass the word – all our welcome to join us. Full details can be found on our website at <https://abbeyurc.org.uk/abbey-urc-friends/>

THURSDAY COMMUNION

Our monthly Thursday Communion continues to take place on the fourth Thursday of the month, at 10.30am. We join together for a 25-minute informal service followed by refreshments and an opportunity to chat, All are welcome to join us on 26 September.

CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

The church history exhibition was held on the weekend of 24 August as this is St Bartholomew's day; on this date in 1662 any Church of England clergy who would not accept the new Book of Common Prayer had to leave their home and position. They had to move at least 5 miles away, which is why Thomas Warren could come to Romsey to set up a 'dissenting' church.

This year, Jennifer P wanted to make this weekend special. She arranged to get various historical items from the archives, including ledgers of accounts from the 18th century, an old cradle roll, as well as plans for the building of the church. Alongside this Alec Morley, from the Romsey History Society, shared his research and knowledge of our buildings.

We were privileged to be allowed to borrow 3 watercolours by Rex Trayhorne, a famous Romsey artist. We displayed photographs showing some history of the church, but also of many of the events and members of the congregation over past years. Chris L dusted off our banners, many made by Joyce Downer - occasionally assisted by young people of the church. She was a founder member of Romsey quilters and an elder of our church for many years.

Over 100 people came in to view the exhibits and enjoy the music of Kirsty and Rod, who played for us. Fran's beautiful flower arrangements provided lots of colour.

On Sunday, 25 August we had lunch in Abbey Hall lounge followed by a visit to the memorial of Thomas Warren in Romsey Abbey. We were greeted by Rev Jill Aussant and Church Warden, David Auger; Rev Jill and Andy Bevan led prayers.

We are grateful to Jennifer, Geoff, Alec, Chris, Carole, Sarah, Fran, Kirsty and Rod and all those who came to set up, dismantle and steward so the church could be open. It was a memorable event, thank you Jennifer.

Roving Reporter



Lunch before visiting Thomas Warren's memorial



Placing a posy on the memorial stone in Romsey Abbey



Below: some items on display at Abbey URC

ABBAY CHAPEL, ROMSEY.

Services in connection with the

OPENING NEW CLASS ROOMS,

ON LORD'S DAY, THE 14TH OF APRIL
A Special Prayer Meeting will be held in the Chapel at 7 a.m.
W. G. PIERCE, Esq., D.D., will preach.

THE REV. WM. CROSSIE, LL.D.,
of the Abbey, will be the officiating Minister.

On the following Sunday, the 21st of April, the
NEW CLASS ROOMS WILL BE OPENED

J. KEMP-WELCH, Esq.,
of the Abbey, will be the officiating Minister.

DEDICATORY SERVICE

A PUBLIC TEA

PUBLIC MEETING

at 4 o'clock on the 22nd of April.

Admission to be had at half-price for by J. Kemp-Welch, Esq.

A Collection will be made after the Dedication & Reading Services.

The Rev. W. G. Pierce, D.D., will preach on the 21st of April, at 7 a.m., in the Chapel, at the Abbey, on the subject of "The Church and the World." The Rev. W. G. Pierce, D.D., will preach on the 22nd of April, at 7 a.m., in the Chapel, at the Abbey, on the subject of "The Church and the World."

Admission to be had at half-price for by J. Kemp-Welch, Esq.

Mr Hooper ————— 2 —
Mr Taylor ————— 2 —
Mr J. Smith ————— 2 —
Mr W. Smith ————— 2 —
Re Longland ————— 2 —
3 Bottles Best Port ————— 9 —
Re Longland ————— 2 —
W. Smith ————— 2 —
Mr Hooper ————— 2 —
J. Caron ————— 3 —
W. J. Pitt —————

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Mr Hooper 14
Mr Taylor 14
Mr J. Smith 14
Mr W. Smith 7
Re Longland 12
3 Bottles Best Port 9
Re Longland 12
W. Smith 9
Mr Hooper 4
J. Caron 11
W. J. Pitt 3
Mr Hooper 6
Mr Hooper 10



TABLE TENNIS

There are currently 10 members who meet regularly twice a month, on a Wednesday afternoon, from 2.30pm-4pm. They are a group of mixed ability but always manage to enjoy either a game of singles or doubles. Why not come and join us.

OUR WARM WELCOME COFFEE MORNING

The warm welcome coffee morning has had a well-earned break during August. However, they are looking forward to seeing their regulars when they return in September. It is lovely to report that numbers are growing, and Abbey URC Friends are specifically invited to join on the first Thursday of the month.

ABBHEY UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH

Thursday mornings
10am – 11.30am
Abbey Hall Lounge
(not 4th Thursday of the month)

A warm welcome – and a warm space
to sit and catch up with friends.

Open to all

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Abbey United Reformed Church, Romsey

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The Church is holding a sale in the Abbey Hall on Saturday, 9 November. There will be stalls with gifts, cakes, a Christmas table, tombola and raffle. Further information will be in the next magazine, however if you can help in any way, either by supplying items or helping on the day, please let me know. Please support this event if you can. Thank you.

Gwen



Hello everyone, I had a lovely surprise when I opened the door this morning. Jill Girdlestone was standing there with a bunch of flowers in her hands. Thank you very much for thinking of me and to Jill for delivering the bouquet to my doorstep. Best wishes,

Joan D

Just a short note to say a huge thank you for the gift of beautiful flowers and birthday card you all so very kindly sent me for my 90th birthday! I was blessed to spend time away with family in Devon and Isle of Wight as well as catch up with friends here in my beloved Romsey. Many thanks.

Ann V

THANK YOU FROM THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HEAD OFFICE

Dear Friends,

Firstly, thank you for all your contributions to your local church in 2023. This includes your financial contribution which plays an important part in the life of the whole church through the Ministries & Mission Fund.

As officers of the denomination, it's good for us to be rooted in a local URC (or LEP) congregation and to work out our faith in the local context, as well as across the entire United Reformed Church. On the other hand, it is good for you in local churches to know that those who serve you nationally understand the local church financial issues as well. And there have been some big issues over the last 12-18 months: inflation, a "cost of living crisis" for many, with energy costs rising unprecedented levels

etc. Churches and ministers have had the same challenges as so many others.

The M&M Fund of the URC pays for ministers' stipends, training, Assembly costs and all the central support functions for ministry in the URC across three nations. The M&M Fund's main income is contributions from the churches with some top-up from synods, together with investment income and grants etc.

In 2023 the churches continued to support the M&M Fund to a wonderful level, but there also was significant and generous synod support. Overall, the giving to M&M Fund was slightly ahead of budget at £16.3 million. It was also only 2% down on 2022's result. However, we should note that these figures include the synods' extra contributions this year which amounted to £1.9 million, an increased amount compared to 2022.

The full M&M account for 2023 in summary: Income £18.2m of which 16.3m was from churches and synods contributions; Expenditure £19.3m; Deficit £1.1m .

2024 is not going to be an easy year either and we are again budgeting for a deficit. We have a commitment from synods to continue their support on top of church contributions and a plan for balancing the M&M budget over the next 5-7 years, including budget reductions of central costs of 3 to 5% p.a.

So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2023 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

Stewardship of our resources, personally, as local churches and as a denomination is rarely easy, but it is one of the challenges we are called to in making our faith real. As the Spirit directs and as our means allow, can the churches once more continue to respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God?

Again, thank you all!

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

Yours in Christ,

Alan Yates (Treasurer) and Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)

SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

Will it or won't it rain? This was the big question we were all asking on the 6 July 2024!

Fortunately, we were blessed with a fine day. The sun shone down on Sylvia's delightful garden, highlighting the colourful diversity of planting, ready to receive the many visitors who came to join the party. These included neighbours, friends, members of Abbey URC and Achoiring Voices.

During the afternoon of chatting and enjoying the sunshine, we were invited indoors to select cake from the delicious home-made assortment on display.



After refreshments, there was enthusiastic involvement in the raffle. A table laden with attractive items provided most of us with a prize to take home, having enjoyed a grand time of fellowship and fun.

Thank you, Sylvia, and your helpers, for all your forward planning and hard work on the day – raising over £400 for church funds.

Chris and Stella

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HARVEST AT ABBEY URC



This year we will celebrate the bounty of God's harvest during on Saturday, 5 October and during our morning worship on Sunday, 6 October.

At 6pm on Saturday, 5 October, we shall be holding our annual Harvest Supper in Abbey Hall. Supper will be provided and all monetary donations will be given to the Community Pantry. We would welcome your offers of items you would like to perform in the evening's programme of entertainment. This could be a song, poem, duet or even a comedy item, it does not need to be linked to the harvest theme but if you can find something that reflects an aspect of the harvest season, all the better.

Further details and sign-up sheets will be available later in the month, or you can give your offer for the entertainment programme to Andy Bevan at andybevan1@btinternet.com .

FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

Albert Einstein

OUTREACH MEETING 11 SEPTEMBER

Elsewhere in this Magazine are details about some new Christian Aid initiatives. At our September Outreach meeting we shall be looking at these in more detail as well as making the final arrangements for our Harvest Supper.

Other topics for discussion will be sharing the information offered by Louisa Rice of Test Valley at the July Churches Together in Romsey meeting as well as other outreach activities.

Why not join us to add your views to our church's outreach into Romsey and the world, at 7.30pm 11 September on Zoom, ID 851 4528 3637 PW business. For copies of the full agenda please contact me at andybevan1@btinternet.com



Join us for our
**HARVEST
FESTIVAL**

Celebrate harvest with us
at our morning service
Sunday, 6 October 2024
at 10.30am

with guest speaker Danny, from
Romsey Community Pantry

Please bring fresh, tinned or packaged
foods for our harvest display.
All produce will be donated to
Romsey Community Pantry.



CALENDAR

September		
1	10.30am	Morning worship including Holy Communion, led by Revd Wendy White
1	6.30pm	Bible Study on Zoom, ID 864 1780 6994 PW learning, led by Wai Chan
4	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
5	10am-11.30am	Coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge, including Friends coffee morning, open to all
7	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
8	10.30am	Morning worship led by Mrs Andy Bevan
9	10.30am	BALM in Abbey Hall Lounge
10	7.30pm	Youth Forum by Zoom, ID 851 4528 3637 PW business
11	7.30pm	Outreach Group meeting by Zoom, ID 851 4528 3637 PW business
12	10am-11.30am	Warm welcome coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge – open to all
14	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
14	3pm-4pm	Puppet Show for under 8s at Abbey URC
15	10.30am	Battle of Britain service led by Revd Mike
17	7.30pm	Southern Fellowship Secretaries' Meeting
18	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
18	7.30pm	Worship Group by zoom Code 851 4528 3637 PW business
19	10am-11.30am	Warm welcome coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge – open to all
21	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
22	10.30am	Morning worship led by Marion Carter
22	11.45am	Church Meeting
23	2.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey Hope Choir harvest hymn singing at Cedar Lawn SO51 7US
24	2.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey Hope Choir harvest hymn singing at Woodley Grange SO51 7NU
24	7.30pm	Elders Meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge
25	10.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey Hope Choir harvest hymn singing at Friars House SO51 5AD
25	2.30pm	Pastoral Meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge

26	10.30am	Mid-week Communion in Abbey Hall Lounge led by Revd Mike
27	2.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey Hope Choir harvest hymn singing at Durban House SO51 7JL
28	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
29	10.30am	Morning worship led by Sue Brown
30	1.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey Hope Choir harvest hymn singing at Marie Louise House SO51 8GZ
October		
1	2.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey Hope Choir harvest hymn singing at Abbeyfield House SO51 8EW
2	10.30am	Churches Together in Romsey Hope Choir harvest hymn singing at Mottisfont Lodge SO51 8AG
2	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
3	10am-11.30am	Warm welcome coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge – open to all
5	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
5	6pm	Harvest Supper
6	10.30am	Morning worship including Harvest and Holy Communion, led by Revd Mike; guest speaker Daniella from Community Pantry

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- ✓ Shopping
- ✓ Social activities
- ✓ Take-a-Break service



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Unity is CQC registered and able to offer personal care services during our visit, as well as companionship, short walks or drives, or simply spending some quiet time with your loved one.

CONTACT US:

☎ 03304 004 116

✉ info@unityonline.org.uk

www.unityonline.org.uk

Registered Charity no: 1061655



Braishfield United Reformed Church

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e-mail: revd.mike13@gmail.com
Day off: Mondays

The Reverend Doctor Sarah Hall
e-mail: sarah.hall.swhg@gmail.com 02380 768004
Day off – Thursdays

Secretary: Shirley Smith 01794 368447
Treasurer: Sharon Whitfield 01794 521937
Serving Elders: Shirley Smith 01794 368447
Allison Symes 02380 262803

September

1 9.30 am Holy Communion led by Derek Hiscock
8 10.00 am Family Worship led by Margaret Axford
15 10.00 am Family Worship led by Chris Noyce
22 10.00 am Harvest Festival Service and Family Worship led
by Revd Mike Perrott
29 10.00 am Family Worship led by Nick Tustian

October

6 9.30 am Holy Communion led by Revd Mike Perrott
13 10.00 am Family Worship led by Peter White
20 10.00 am Family Worship led by Revd Mike Perrott, Church
Meeting to follow the service
24 10.00 am Family Worship led by David Stone

November

3 9.30 am Holy Communion led by Rev. Dr Sarah Hall
10 10.50 am Remembrance Sunday Service at the village War
Memorial with Two Minutes' Silence held at 11 am.
Andy Bevan is to take part.
17 10.00 am Remembering Service - to be led by Revd Mike
Perrott
24 10.00 am Family Worship led by Revd Wendy White

***Please note that the third Sunday of the month is the time to bring
in tinned goods etc for the food bank collection.***

News from Braishfield

It was such a pleasure to see the glorious flowers for the Flower Festival weekend in July. Hope the pictures give you some idea of how lovely the church looked, but I'm afraid you won't get the lovely fragrance of the sweet-peas - which many commented on.



I am also pleased to say donations came in over the Flower Festival weekend and this will be going, in due course, to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Historic Churches Trust. This is Braishfield's charity project for this year. Please do let Shirley know if you would like to hold an event to raise further funds for this worthy cause.

The Harvest Festival service will be on 22 September and will be led by the Revd Mike. There is a change of date for the decorating of the church for this weekend. The church will be open on Friday, 19 September during the afternoon (an exact time to be confirmed later so listen out for the notices!) though the church will be undecorated again on Monday, 23 September as stated in the last magazine.



Alan Smith is going to be walking the Test Way, an event organised by the Rotary Club, on 29 September, for a distance of nine miles. This follows Alan's brain tumour operation in May 2023. He is doing well and invites you to sponsor him if you can. There is a sponsor form at the back of Braishfield URC or gifts can be made through Just Giving. All donations received are for Cancer Research and Alan thanks you for your support.

Another sponsored event coming up is for Chris Balchin who will be taking part in this year's Ride and Stride event on 14 September. This is also in aid of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Historic Churches Trust with Chris sponsoring our church again on this day. Shirley has a sponsor form for this too or donations can be made, again, through Just Giving. Thank you.

We all wish Alan and Chris well with their excellent endeavours for such worthy causes.

Looking a little further ahead, Braishfield will be having a church meeting after the service on 20 October. Please come if you can. We have found the meeting after the service format works well.

Nearer the time, there will be a list put at the back of the church for people to record those names they wish to be remembered in the Remembering Service in November. This is always a most moving service and will be led by the Revd Mike, who will read out the names on that list.

It is with great sadness we have to share the news of the recent, sudden death of Peter Davies. Our sympathies and condolences go to Hazel, Ben, Steve, Greg, and all of Peter's family, also to Trevor and Tony and their families. Peter was a member of our congregation for many years and he led worship services for us since he was aged about 18! His father also led services for us prior to that.

Allison Symes





CHARITY FUNDRAISER COFFEE MORNING



Maggie and Jack Batchelor are holding a coffee morning at their home on Saturday, 28 September 2024, starting at 10.30 am. All are welcome to come along to their home at 2 Common Hill Road, Braishfield. There is a £3 entry fee. The monies raised will be in aid of our church charity, Hampshire and The Islands Historic Churches Trust.

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WALK THE TEST WAY

In appreciation of the support and treatment he has received from the NHS Alan, Shirley's son, has decided to raise funds for Cancer Research by taking part in the Rotary Walk the Test Way on 29 September.

WALK THE TEST WAY

FOR YOUR CHOSEN CHARITY



29TH SEPTEMBER FOR CANCER RESEARCH - ALAN SMITH



THE WALK:

Starting at Horsebridge, I will be walking to Romsey Memorial Park. On the day, people will be starting from 5 different points.



THE CHARITY

On the 29th of September, I will be walking the test way for cancer research after being diagnosed in 2023. 1 in 2 people will be affected by cancer in their lives, and I am one of them. Cancer research is providing groundbreaking treatments to fight this disease and every penny counts, so if you can, please consider donating.

SCAN CODE TO DONATE!

Please scan the QR code if you wish to donate, this will direct you to the 'JustGiving' page.

Or follow this link:
<https://www.justgiving.com/page/alan-smith-1721660186587>





ROUND THE SOUTHERN FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES



Bitterne Outlook

URC's Green Living Challenge

The Green Event (part of the Great Big Green Week) at Avenue St Andrews was a very interesting evening, where we watched a series of short films, had small group discussions and ate lots of tasty food – the chocolate brownies and carrot buns were delicious. There was also a very impressive Fairtrade stall, with a beautiful selection of jewellery from a remote village in Peru. Alongside the films was a series of leaflets with facts and figures about climate change and what we can do to help. They were originally prepared by Dorset Green Living, and have been adapted with information for Southampton. These can be found on the Avenue St Andrew's website and will also be put on all the websites of the Southern Fellowship. Paper copies will also be available from church, upon request. Avenue St Andrews has made a climate declaration, which can also be found on its website, along with a climate prayer diary, pledges, commitments and efforts to make good environmental changes and to support other churches in this.

Isaac Watts 350th Anniversary

Janet, Ian, Celia and I attended the special anniversary ceremony to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Isaac Watts on 25 June. This was held by his statue, in Southampton's Watts Park named after him.



His statue had been freshly cleaned and looked stunning in the bright sunlight. It had also been given new fingers as the original ones had been eroded by the weather and perching birds! The service was led by Chris

Noyce of Isaac Watts Church, and attended by the Lord Mayor, several Ministers, including Revd Sarah Hall, Southampton Councillors and quite a few members of the public. We sang several of his famous hymns, including "Joy to the World" and "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", accompanied by a small brass band from King Edward VI School.

We were also treated to several short plays which gave more insight into his life. He was born near Above Bar street, on 17 July 1674 and his father (also Isaac) was one of 60,000 spending time in prison for being a Nonconformist or Dissenter who refused to acknowledge the Book of Common Prayer.

Isaac was very intelligent and had an excellent education, learning Latin from the age of 4, originally taught to him by his father. As his family were Dissenters, he was unable to attend Oxford or Cambridge Universities. He spent many years as a tutor, and wrote many text books which were still being used in schools 100 years later. He also wrote many famous poems – see "Divine and Moral songs for Children" (1715) of which 7 million copies have been published. A fascinating life, unfortunately not enough space for it all here.

Maria B



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HUGH LEWIS

15 December 1926 – 27 May 2024

written by Hugh's family, edited by Revd Mike

Dad grew up in Barry, South Wales, the younger of 2 sons born to Ted and Sarah Lewis. He had quite a strict upbringing: his father was a stoker on the coal boats and his mother came from a Welsh-speaking farming family in mid Wales, and she had ambitions for her boys. Education therefore was very important, as was speaking Welsh and attendance at the Welsh Tabernacle every Sunday. However, Dad said summer holidays were a joyous time, spent helping out on his Uncle's farm near Carmarthen. He always said he would have loved to have been a farmer.

He attended Barry Boys Grammar School, and as a teenager met Mum who was a pupil at the Girls Grammar. Dad studied Civil Engineering in Cardiff and gained his Masters at Imperial College in London. After Mum completed her Teacher Training they married in 1952. His first job was in Structural Research at the Cement and Concrete Association; a couple of years later he joined E W H Gifford Consulting Engineers in Southampton, working on the deck design project for the Narrows Bridge being built across the Swan River in Perth, Australia. In 1958 this project took them to Perth on a year's contract to supervise the deck design build. This year was a real high point in their lives – one where they made many new lifelong friends and enjoyed the easy-going outdoor life. On returning to the UK, they settled in Highfield, Southampton.

This was a busy time in Dad's working life, but he encouraged us in anything we showed an interest in. He had been quite sporty in his youth and good at rugby, tennis and swimming; he encouraged Elinor and me at school sports, and taught us both to play tennis. We had many "needle" matches with him but never beat him, he would always jokingly say when we were close to beating him that if we did, he'd hang up his tennis shoes above the fireplace, crossed, like old wooden skis, and give up! He also, unfortunately for me, demonstrated a keen interest on my behalf for things I did not demonstrate any interest in, like Maths. My lack of ability completely baffled him. "It's only common sense¹" would be his mantra, until finally Mum intervened and he gave up his fruitless attempts. When I delivered the astounding news that I'd actually passed my Ö level, he said with a grin "Well that destroys any faith I had in the examiners marking capabilities".

Dad was keen on camping and fresh air, so we spent many family caravan holidays in France; always in some remote field and away from

any child entertainment. He would set up and then look about him with satisfaction at being away at last from the 'madding crowd', and then plan the days ahead sight-seeing in beautiful old villages, eating - often not quite sure what, in local restaurants and meeting locals and hoping we would join in with his schoolboy French and get some practice ourselves. Some hope! There was only so much French culture even he could take, and at the end of the afternoon he would always end up in the car, twiddling the radio knobs to "make contact with England", as Mum would say, to hear the news.

Dad had a wonderfully wicked, quiet sense of humour, often coming out with some pithy comment on some ridiculous situation or behaviour. I have lovely memories of being allowed to watch Monty Python with him when it first came out on TV, and both of us just falling about laughing. However, he also liked his family to behave in public; there was the squirty Wimpy tomato sauce bottle incident on an outing, after Eli and I had been told off for quarrelling. We'd been on a long walk and were in a pub waiting quietly for fish and chips. Eli picked up the bottle and squeezed it whereupon it made an awful splattery noise and Mum, Eli and I burst out laughing. Dad just about managed to rein us all in again, before the table next to us was taken, and shortly after he received a request to please pass the tomato sauce. The anticipation was awful and as we girls wrestled to control ourselves of course the bottle was duly squeezed, and unable to hold back we let the side down again. Poor Dad.

He was an incredibly supportive man, especially to Mum in her long illness, and was always there to listen and help the family and his friends if he could. In retirement he often went to help Jon and Eli on their farm, once more getting his chance to do something he really loved. Helping to hedge-lay or mucking out the cattle, it was all a wonderful experience for him.

Dad had a great curiosity and interest in people, and things in general. He loved to visit a museum, and would trail behind the family reading every notice to winkle out the last nugget of information. After Mum passed away, he found a new surge of energy and took himself off on various trips –a Jazz festival in Wales, an advanced course in Welsh speaking at Lampeter College, and several trips to visit Ken and me when we were living in Oman. It was a huge frustration for him when in his mid-80's he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and so sad for us to witness the slow decline in someone with such an enquiring mind, and who had possessed such a wonderful memory and bright brain.



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SYLVIA THOMPSON

7 August 1935 – 27 June 2024

Written by Sylvia's family, edited by Revd Mike

Sylvia was born in Camberwell just five years before war broke out. In those days, the neighbourhood was a far cry from its modern-day affluence – there were no eateries serving latte and avocado on toast back then. She lived in a small dwelling on Linnell Road with a concrete backyard just big enough for a washing line and little else. Small wonder then, that having been introduced by her parents (David and Lillian) to some of the lovelier parks and gardens in London, she dreamed of one-day having a garden of her own – a dream which did indeed come to fruition and blossomed into her life-long passion for gardening, nature and wildlife conservation.

Although not born into a wealthy background, Sylvia's life was enriched by having a wide extended family living in and around London which gave her ample opportunity to develop close bonds with her aunties, uncles and cousins, a few of whom she was thankfully in communication with right up until the last few weeks of her life. Her parents saw to it that she was introduced to many of the pleasures in life that became enduring passions. She often recalled conversations with her father during which a journey to or from home would be described in terms of the favourite cats they passed along the way. As well as an enduring love of cats, Jennifer remembers, "I loved the stories of her father who taught her so much of Gilbert and Sullivan on their walk from home to their church (Crossway) near Elephant and Castle". Years later, she was delighted to

take part in a G&S performance at the Plaza theatre in Romsey during her time as a member of RAO DS. From both parents, but particularly her mother Lilian, Sylvia was influenced by a very strong moral code which led to her becoming very involved with humanitarian groups like Amnesty and Fellowship of Reconciliation and it was through mutual friends at FOR that she later went on to meet Don. The legacy of human rights work and a strong belief in equality has continued to pass down through the generations.

Despite the trauma and privations of the previous five [war] years of her life, Sylvia successfully won a scholarship to her beloved Mary Dachelor Grammar School. Her gratitude and pride at having attended this school never left her and she continued to be a member of Dachelor Old Girls club for the rest of her life. After leaving the music 6th form at Mary Dachelor, Sylvia went on to college where she trained to become an infant schoolteacher. She loved teaching and would recount many stories of the children's shenanigans, remembering many of their names for decades. Her early days as a teacher around the Elephant and Castle were particularly rewarding and she went on to teach in Adelaide, Wallington and here in Romsey both at schools and in the Sunday school group, "Pilots" in Abbey URC.

As a young teacher, Sylvia was involved in another humanitarian group, the 'Fellowship of Reconciliation'. On Christmas Eve 1961 two of the other members, John and Gwen Crabbe, were holding a party at their home and happened to also invite a young man, their friend Don who was visiting from Australia. In fact, they had decided that 'she looks nice' and 'she'll do for Don'. Don had some challenges finding their home, but when he did arrive late to be introduced to Sylvia, he claimed he 'was led there by instinct'.

It turned out she wouldn't just 'do' for Don, she was perfect for him. On a typically miserable English rainy day, Don promised Sylvia that 'one day we will be under sunnier skies', clinching their engagement; they married on 30 March 1963 at Bromley URC with John Crabbe as best man.

Sylvia and Don did find sunnier skies in Adelaide, Australia, where they lived for four years and developed many great friendships. They have carried fond memories with them ever since. After Melanie's birth they resettled in the outskirts of London where the family grew with the births of Nancy and Michael. Together they made the most wonderful parents and all the children remember many days out into the countryside, the seaside or the short train journey into London, with an annual pilgrimage to see the Christmas lights. They were as welcoming to their children's

friends as they were to their own – one of whom fondly remembers even having her own mug in the kitchen cupboard. Don and Sylvia were delighted to become grandparents, with Millie and Darcey being born in quick succession, followed by Leo two years later. Only recently they became grandparents again with the births of Isaac and Aaliyah who they were able to meet just months before Don's death.

Sylvia had so many interests and passions in her life that it is hard to capture and do justice to them all. She loved music, singing in church choirs, playing the cello in orchestras, playing the piano as part of her teacher training and beyond, as well as attending concerts and listening to her father perform under Sir Malcolm Sargent in the Royal Choral Society. As a young woman she had a season ticket for the Proms and would attend virtually every night.

She loved the great outdoors in all its forms, including camping with the Crossway Girls' Brigade, canal-boat holidays, walking in the Hampshire countryside with 'The Old Gits', swimming in the sea or the pool.

Throughout Sylvia's many interests and passions, the theme of friendship comes up over and over again. It is sometimes said that most people can count their true friends on the fingers of one hand; this was definitely not the case with Sylvia for, with every interest or passion she pursued, there came a strong link with lasting friendships that followed. She had very few acquaintances and very many real friends. One glance at her carefully maintained address book demonstrates just how many precious names are listed on its pages. Sylvia valued her friendships deeply and she nurtured them in much the same way as she nurtured and loved her stunning garden.

Sylvia's grandson Leo once said "I like Nana's wrinkles, because they are all smiles"... the window cleaner said "I can't imagine your Mum without her smiling"; her cousin Tony said "I always loved that beautiful smile". She was still smiling that evening, singing hymns in the garden – and she kept the whole family smiling too.

MINISTER'S LEAVE

Please note that Revd Mike will be on annual leave from 18 August to 8 September. During his absence please contact:

Braishfield Shirley Smith tel: 01794 368447
Romsey Andy Bevan tel: 07483 319618
Email: andybevan1@btinternet.com

REFORM: THE URC's MONTHLY MAGAZINE

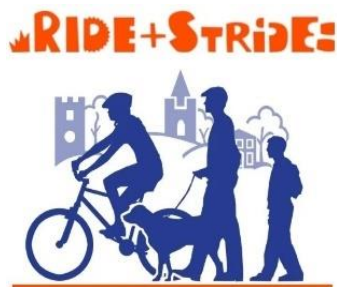
As Revd Mike wrote in our July/August edition, the URC's own denominational magazine carries a host of interesting articles. Their July/August edition even carried a review of the recent Doctor Who series.

Free copies of the September edition of Reform have been issued to each church and these can be found at the back of the church with other earlier editions. This edition carries an article detailing the next stage of the Church Life Review work being undertaken across the denomination looking at all aspects of life within the United Reformed Church. Please do take a copy. If you wish a copy but all have been taken from the back of church, please let me know and I can order further copies.

Andy Bevan

RIDE AND STRIDE: 14 SEPTEMBER

Hampshire & the Islands Historic Churches Trust is a national charity which offers grants to historic churches for repairs and improvements to their premises. On the second Saturday in September each year, Hampshire & the Islands Historic Churches holds its annual "Ride and Stride" event. This is an important part of their annual income and churches are invited to participate in two ways;



- 1) Opening the church for participants to visit
- 2) Encouraging people to participate by obtaining sponsors for their visits to local churches. All money raised is then divided equally between the Trust and the nominated church of the person sponsored.

Abbey URC will be open for this event as it coincides both with our weekly morning opening and the children's puppet show being held on this day.

There is no set route to follow, no restrictions on the number of churches visited or how you visit them. You could cycle to a cluster of nearby villages, take a bus ride to a nearby town or city and see how many churches they have, or just visit churches in and around Romsey. Details of churches taking part in this event can be found at rideandstride@hict.org.uk

CHRISTIAN AID



Christian Aid has recently introduced a monthly “drop in” webinar, entitled 'Faith Into Action', to explore how we can explore ways in which our Christian faith can help us change the world. The next session is on Monday, 2 September from 7pm–8pm. For further information click direct on [Faith into Action Session - Christian Aid](#).

Christian Aid is also offering a new ACT on Poverty Course. This course is designed to help church communities gain a deeper understanding of local and global poverty and be equipped to talk to political representatives about it. The course explores the issues of poverty and how engaging with local politicians can be an effective way to bring about change. There are both a 6-week and 2-hour option, details of which can be found at caid.org.uk/actonpoverty

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ROMSEY HARVEST HOPE CHOIR

Churches Together in Romsey Harvest Hope Choir invite you to join in singing some harvest hymns and songs at some of the local Care Homes. If you wish to help swell the numbers on any of the dates shown below, please let the organisers know on b8cha@yahoo.com and arrive about 15 minutes before the time shown.



Monday, 23 September	2.30 pm	Cedar Lawn SO51 7US
Tuesday, 24 September	2.30 pm	Woodley Grange SO51 7NU
Wednesday, 25 September	10.30 am	Friars House SO51 5AD
Friday, 27 September	2.30 pm	Durban House SO51 7JL
Monday, 30 September	1.30 pm	Marie Louise House SO51 8GZ
Tuesday, 1 October	2.30 pm	Abbeyfield House SO51 8EW
Wednesday, 2 October	10.30 am	Mottisfont Lodge SO51 8AG

OASIS



Oasis Trust will be holding a thanksgiving service for the 40th anniversary of Oasis Bookshop and Angie's work there. This will take place at Romsey Methodist Church on 20 October 2024. They look forward to you joining them.

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