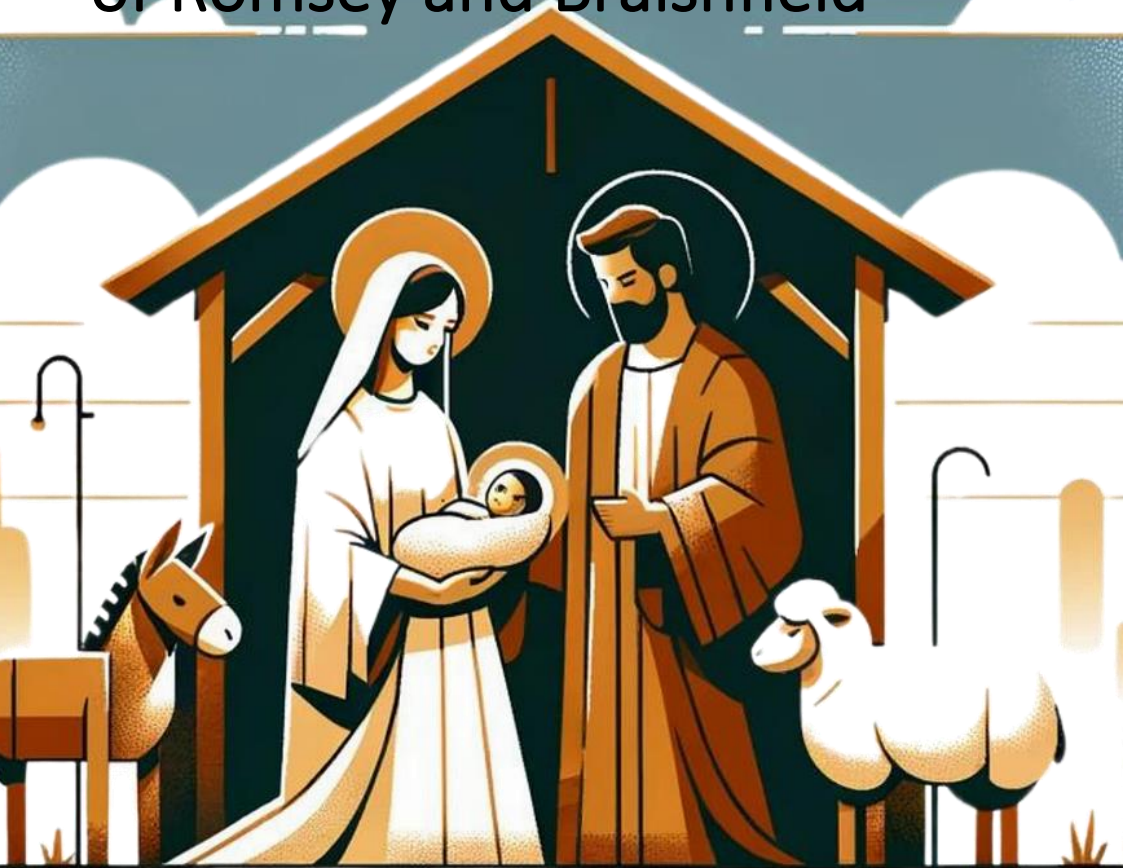


# NEWS



From

United Reformed Churches  
of Romsey and Braishfield



**DECEMBER 2024/JANUARY 2025**

# Abbey United Reformed Church

[www.abbeyurc.org.uk](http://www.abbeyurc.org.uk)

<b>Minister</b>	<b>Revd Mike Perrott MA</b> 01794 512163 e-mail: <a href="mailto:revd.mike13@gmail.com">revd.mike13@gmail.com</a> Day off: Monday
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<b>Magazine Team</b>	contact at: <a href="mailto:abbeyurcnews@gmail.com">abbeyurcnews@gmail.com</a>
<b>Church Caretaker</b>	Angela Wolfe 01794 517746 1 Abbey Water, Romsey

## Services

<b>Sunday Family Worship</b>	10.30am
<b>Monthly Bible Study</b> 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 <sup>nd</sup> )	BALM (Bereavement) Group	10.30am
Thursday	Refreshments and warm space.	10am -
	Open to all, in Abbey Hall Lounge	11.30am
Wednesday (1 <sup>st</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Church Table Tennis	2.30pm

*For baptisms, weddings or funerals please contact the Minister*

## A MESSAGE FROM REVD MIKE



Dear friends in Christ,

It has certainly been an increasingly 'stormy' time in the world over the past twelve months, with continuing de-stability, conflict within and between peoples and nations, and continuing signs of the effects of global warming including places that have not experienced them before.

On the evening of 17 November, we shared in our monthly Zoom Bible study. The Gospel verses we focused on included Jesus' words about the destruction of the Temple, and his saying "Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs." (Mark 13:5-8 NRSV)

It is not for me to comment on the re-election of a certain politician in the US, and his denial of the reality of global warming, leading people astray in this, and so many other ways. There is much fear in the world due to the actions of the Russian President, as he escalates the war in Ukraine and beyond. Nations have been rising against each other. There has been natural disaster upon natural disaster as the effects of global warming make their devastating impact on the lives of so many people. Yet Jesus says to his disciples, and to us, that these are as 'birth pangs', leading the way to new beginnings, to new life.

At times of deep uncertainty, of anxiety, it is natural to look to something that is secure, dependable, to renew our sense of peace and stability. For us as Christian people, this comes through our faith, and especially at this time of year, through our travelling through the weeks of Advent.

For Mary and Joseph, travelling from their home to be registered was a very uncomfortable journey, physically (for Mary) and emotionally (for them both). It was a hazardous journey, rough terrain, and very hot by day while very cold by night. Not the best of travelling conditions for a heavily pregnant woman!

Once they had arrived at Bethlehem, the crowded streets must have been somewhat forbidding, and the search for a place to stay extremely difficult. But they found a stable building where, as the Christmas story tells us, Jesus Immanuel, the Chosen One of God, was born.

Yet that was not the end of their journeying. After the visit of the mysterious Magi, they had to leave suddenly, since Herod had ordered the slaying of all infant boys.

The whole story seems full of uncertainty, of chaos, of risk and danger. But Jesus, 'God With Us' was born to bring renewal of relationship with God the Father, which would by faith bring reassurance of an abiding source of security and peace – in a loving and compassionate God who opens up new ways even when things look so bleak.

So let us look to the future – to God's future – with optimism and hope in our God who, from the pain of the 'birth pangs' brings newness of life into the darkness of the world. In the uncertainty and concern for what the future holds, let us think on the message from the Angel who appeared to the shepherds and said "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'"



Marie and I pray that you will all have a wonderful Christmas, and we wish you a very happy new year. God bless you all!

In Christian love, **Mike**

## BIBLE STUDY ADVENT COURSE

We will be holding an Advent Course of Bible studies on Sunday evenings at 6.30pm on Zoom (ID 864 1780 6994, PC learning); when we will look more deeply at the Gospel verses for that Sunday. These will be held on 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 December. We also meet on the Sunday evening of 5 January 2025 for our usual monthly meeting. All welcome!

## COUNTDOWN TO ADVENT – THANK YOU!

A huge thank you from Amber for your kind and generous donations. The Christmas goodies will make all the difference for women selling sex on the street in Southampton. Many of them will not receive gifts and so this gesture of kindness will help show that they are seen and valued by us and also by God who made them and cares for them.



Do pray for our outreach team this Christmas time that they have opportunities to chat and pray with as many women as possible. Thanks so much for your support.

***Nicky Porter, Lead Chaplain for Amber***

Amber is a chaplaincy service for women involved in the sex industry in Southampton. Whilst visiting Abbey URC, Nicky shared updates on two of the women they support; they illustrated the important steps that can be taken when people feel valued and supported. Although it is not always plain sailing, the support and listening ear Amber provide can make a difference to these women's lives, to know they are valued and that others care for them.

Nicky highlighted support from just a few more churches or community groups would make a real difference to the work Amber undertake. If you know of any group who would be interested, why not signpost them to Amber? Our actions can make a difference.

### **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

Material for February 2025 to be submitted  
by **5pm** (latest) on **Thursday, 23 January 2025**  
Please email to [abbeyurcnews@gmail.com](mailto:abbeyurcnews@gmail.com)

**Alternatively, you could call Carole C, pop it  
in her letter box, or leave in the pigeon-hole  
at the back of the church. Thank you.**





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## PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

Every now and then, especially during particular seasons of the Christian year, I re-visit a wonderful collection of prayers and other writings from Gaelic oral tradition, collected from what were often remote rural communities in the highlands and islands of Scotland. Alexander Carmichael compiled the anthology entitled *Carmina Gadelica* in the latter half of the nineteenth century, to preserve a lasting record of a culture and way of life which no longer exists.

It is striking that there are prayers for every occasion, task and season; for every aspect of human and animal life. From morning to night, for protection and healing, for justice, peace and various occupations and work, there are prayers for guidance and to ask God's blessings. The whole of life is surrounded in prayer!

From this collection I would like to share a Nativity prayer called 'The Child of Glory' for our own reflection as we approach Christmas.

The Child of glory,  
The Child of Mary,  
Born in a stable  
The King of all,  
Who came to the wilderness  
And in our stead suffered;  
Happy they are counted  
Who to him are near.

When He Himself saw  
 That we were in travail,  
 Heaven opened graciously  
 Over our head;  
 We beheld Christ,  
 The Spirit of truth,  
 The same drew us in  
 'Neath the shield of His crown.

Strengthen our hope,  
 Enliven our joyance,  
 Keep us valiant,  
 Faithful and near;  
 O light of our lantern,  
 Along with the virgins\*,  
 Singing in glory  
 The anthem new.

\*See Matthew 25:1-13

From: Carmenina Gadelica (ed. C.J. Moore) © Floris Books 1992 (2006), Edinburgh

**Revd Mike**

## 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 Advent, Christmas and into the new year:

December	1	Psalm 25:1-10	Luke 21:25-36
	8	Malachi 3:1-4	Luke 3:1-6
	15	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Luke 3:7-18
	22	Micah 5:2-5a	Luke 1:29-55
	25	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 2:1-20
	29	Psalm 148	Luke 2:41-52
January	5	Psalm 147:12-20	John 1-18
	12	Psalm 29	Luke 3:15-22
	19	Psalm 36:5-10	John 2:1-11
	26	Psalm 19	Luke 4:14-21

## THURSDAY COMMUNION

After many years, and due to the decreasing numbers attending, the Thursday Morning Communion will no longer take place. However, Home Communion is available to you, if you would like this to take place at your home, with either Revd Mike or Carole C - do let us know! As an alternative weekly social gathering, remember the Coffee Morning in the Lounge each Thursday 10–11.30 am.

## ABBAY URC CHURCH SALE

Our church sale on 9 November in the hall was a great success. The total raised was an amazing £604.70. I wish to thank all the stall holders, especially Val who baked the cakes and was unable to serve on the day. Wendy Stewart offered to help at the last minute, sending her a big thank you. Also, thanks to everyone who donated to the stalls, donated money and the wonderful hamper for the raffle. A great effort by everyone! Thank you.

*Gwen*

## 29 DECEMBER 2025 - FAVOURITE CAROLS SERVICE

Following the pattern begun earlier this year, when we do something a bit different on the fifth Sunday of the month, our morning service on 29 December will be a Favourite Carols service. Please let Revd Mike have any favourite carols, seasonal poems or readings (from the Bible or more contemporary ones) to include, with a few words explaining why these are special to you. Thank you.

## WARM WELCOME WEEK 20 - 26 JANUARY 2025



For too many people, January is the coldest, loneliest and most challenging time of the year – in recent years the phrase ‘Blue Monday’ has been adopted to describe the month’s lowest point. As well as taking its toll on mental health, this long, dark month can be financially difficult and many households face the stark choice between heating and eating. Between 20-26 January Warm Welcome are asking everyone to wear warm colours and get creative with pinks, oranges, reds and purples to chase the blues away this January. Don’t forget, each week on a Thursday morning we welcome anyone to join us for a coffee morning in our warm space from 10am-11.30am. Pop in and say hello – and chase away the January blues!



## OUR NEWS



To all at Abbey United Reformed Church, a big thank you for the beautiful flowers I received from the Church for my birthday. It was such a lovely surprise - the flowers just the colour I would have chosen myself. God Bless to all.

***Kathleen C***

The final figure raised at the recent concert, held by Marion Maxey's choirs in aid of church funds, is £1446.18. We are very grateful to Marion, Chris, Th rese and the choirs for raising so much money to help us with our roof repairs. We really appreciate it. Thank you.

Revd Mike and the elders of Abbey URC wish the congregation, our community and all Abbey URC Friends peace at Christmas and through the coming year.

A blessed Advent and a peaceful Christmas to you and those you love; I'm looking forward to working more closely with you in the coming year.

***Sarah Hall***



Dear friends at Romsey and Braishfield, we wish everyone a very happy Christmas and peace-filled New Year. 2025 will be an important and exciting year for us as Terry is retiring at the end of March and we will be moving to the Cotswolds to be near Stephanie and family (not too far from Tom and family too). We are very much looking forward to settling into our new home, exploring the area and having more time for family and friends.

***Terry and Elizabeth H***

Thank you for the magazine this year, a lovely read and it is good to hear all that goes on in Braishfield and Romsey, and now the other churches also. I have fond memories of the churches in the 1970s when I preached or visited each one. My love to you all, and hope you have a happy Christmas with lovely and meaningful worship. May God richly bless you all. In Christian love,

***Audrey S***



From the entire Unity team, we would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy 2025!

## REVD MIKE'S PREACHING ROTA

### December 2024

- 1 9.30am Braishfield URC Communion including the Ordination and Induction of Sharon W, as a serving elder  
10.30am Abbey URC Communion and Toy Service, Colin McPherson of Southampton SVS attending
- 8 Revd Mike on pre-Christmas annual leave
- 15 11.00am Isaac Watts URC
- 22 10.30am Bitterne URC  
3.00pm Braishfield URC, Carols by candlelight
- 24 11.30pm Abbey URC, Midnight Communion
- 25 9.30am Braishfield URC  
10.30am Abbey URC
- 29 10.30am Abbey URC, Favourite Carols 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday service

### January 2025

- 5 10.30am Bitterne Park URC
- 12 10.30am Avenue St Andrews URC Communion including the Ordination & Induction of elders
- 19 10.30am Bitterne URC Communion
- 26 11.00am Isaac Watts URC Communion including the Ordination and Induction of elders



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## PAUSE TO REMEMBER....

It has been lovely to see people's reaction to the 'poppy field' in our garden. Many have come in to have a closer look and Revd Mike has received lots of positive comments. We will leave the poppies there until the end of November when it will be time to prepare for advent and replace the poppies with the Christmas tree.



## PRAYER POST BOX

Our prayer post box can be found in the front garden outside Abbey URC. It stays out day and night, as the need to pray does not always come at a convenient time. Anyone who feels the need is invited to write a prayer, pop it into the box - we include these prayers in our Sunday service. Sometimes it helps to know someone is thinking about you.



## ANNUAL CHURCH RETURNS

This year the annual church return includes a question asking the number of people in the church who either a) require training as part of their church responsibilities, or b) have undertaken training in the past two years. If you fall into either of these categories please let me know your name and the training required or undertaken plus the date attended. Thank you.

**Andy B**

## CHRISTMAS CARD ARRANGEMENTS

The church post box will be available on 1 and 8 December. Cards will be sorted in the church from 9.30am on Saturday 14 December – all welcome to come and help. Please do not leave cards for anyone not going to be in church before Christmas to collect their cards. Alternatively, last date for posting by Royal Mail is 18 December.



If you wish to send one card to the congregation, and donate towards Commitment for Life/Christian Aid Gaza appeal, from 1 December you can pin your card on the board in church. Please place your donation in an envelope clearly marked Commitment for Life/Christian Aid Gaza and your name and put it in the offertory basket by the front door any Sunday in December. Alternatively, make a payment directly into the church Charities Aid Foundation Bank Account, details of which can be obtained from Andy or Reg. Again, please clearly reference this C4L – C Aid Donation and your name.

## MINISTER'S LEAVE

Revd Mike will be on annual leave from 2 – 8 December. Whilst Revd Mike is away, please contact Andy Bevan tel 07483 319618, email [andybevan1@btinternet.com](mailto:andybevan1@btinternet.com)

## SHARE YOUR CHRISTMAS JUMPERS



Do you have a Christmas jumper you no longer wear or one you are going to replace next year? Why not donate it to Abbey URC? Chris L is collecting Christmas jumpers, t-shirt, hats, etc which we will have ready to share next year, when we will offer people the opportunity to pick up a "new to them" Christmas jumper as a straight swap or for a donation.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 Christmas jumpers are thrown away each year, or never worn more than once. So, this year instead of throwing that jumper away, why not give it a new lease of life with someone else? Drop your unwanted Christmas jumpers to Abbey URC on a Saturday morning, we'll wash them and look after them ready to pass to a new home next year.

## SKITTLES EVENING



On Thursday, 9 November we gathered for our annual skittles evening at Wellow Golf Club. As always, the food was excellent and we thoroughly enjoyed catching up with friends. It was a hard-fought competition, but in the end Jill G and Richard B came top of the leaderboard. Well done everyone who took part. There was an amazing raffle, which raised £90 for church funds. A big thank you to Carole for organising this fun evening, it's always a highlight of our church calendar.

**Thursday mornings  
10am – 11.30am  
in the Abbey Hall Lounge**



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

**Open to all.**



## ADDITION TO ABBEY HALL

We have long enjoyed the blue cross in the Abbey Hall lounge which, if you examine it closely, is framed by small pieces of wood. Originally made by Monty Tarlton, these pieces of wood are very clever as they trick the eye as there is not an actual cross there at all. A larger version in black will be added to the wall in Abbey Hall during December.

## BLESSING OUR HEAVENLY HOST

On 1 December, the angels that have been made and donated to our church will be blessed by Revd Mike. Later in December they will fly out onto the railings outside the church, to take our love to their new forever homes. If you have some to donate, please leave at the back of the church. If you can't get them to church before 1 December – don't worry, just pop them in before and leave at the back before 15 December.

Thank you to everyone who has crafted angels for us. It brings joy to all those who stop and look at them, and for young people, it is a small piece of Christmas love, for people struggling or on their own it shows someone cares.



## SUMMARY OF 17 NOVEMBER CHURCH MEETING

It was agreed that our Christmas charity donations should go to Carers Together, Romsey Family Support Group and Wessex Synod Benevolent Fund, who will each receive £200.

Updates on church activities included details about the launch of Chill Out Tuesday on 10 December, church dates and the church's participation in the Romsey Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival from 13–14 December. Entries need to be linked to film names and the film chosen by Abbey URC is Nightmare before Christmas. Instead of the traditional fir tree, Jennifer and Geoff are making their olive tree available which will be undecorated except for one candle of hope, the tree demonstrating the nightmare being lived by the Palestinians in Gaza this Christmas. Donations are being requested for the joint Commitment for Life/Christian Aid appeal for Palestine. Pop along and look at the trees on display.

The meeting was informed that the leak in the tower roof has been temporarily sealed, allowing this area to dry out over the winter before a more permanent solution is undertaken in Spring. The Abbey Hall Lounge roof repairs are still awaiting approval from the Synod Trust listed Building Advisory Council.

Finally, it was suggested approaching members of the congregation to ask if they would consider volunteering to steward the church on a Saturday morning so that this could be open for townsfolk to call in and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the church.



## CHILL OUT TUESDAY

We are excited that the regular social evening, suggested to Church meeting by Wendy S, will start in December. The first Chill Out Tuesday will happen on Tuesday, 10 December in Abbey Hall Lounge. This is a new social event launched by Abbey United Reformed Church for anyone and everyone; it provides a simple social opportunity for people to take time out of their busy timetables to sit back, relax and socialise.

Moving forwards, Chill Out Tuesday will take place on the second Tuesday of each month, from 8pm - 9.30pm in the Abbey Hall Lounge. It offers a chance to chill out, chat and make new acquaintances in a welcoming, warm space with refreshments. More information can be found on the Abbey URC Facebook site or email [abbeyurc.chillout@gmail.com](mailto:abbeyurc.chillout@gmail.com)



LIFE HECTIC? NO DOWN TIME?

# JOIN US AT THE CHILL OUT TUESDAY

Find some “you” time, chill out and meet some new people in the comfort of Abbey URC Hall Lounge.

A welcoming, warm, safe space for everyone.

Join us on Tuesday,  
10 December 2024

8pm-9.30pm  
the 2nd TUESDAY of each month

Warm Welcome Spaces

## TOY SERVICE ON SUNDAY, 1 DECEMBER

We will be holding our annual toy service on Advent Sunday. Colin McPherson of Southampton Voluntary Services toy appeal will be attending the service to receive gifts from the congregation for distribution to children in the Southampton area, who would otherwise not receive any gifts on Christmas morning.



## CALENDAR

<b>December</b>		
1	10.30am	1st Sunday in Advent Toy Service, including Holy Communion, led by Revd Mike
1	6.30pm	Advent Bible Study on Zoom ID 864 1780 6994, PW learning
2-8		Revd Mike on Annual leave
4	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
5	10am-11.30am	Friends coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge, everyone welcome to our warm space
7	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
8	10.30am	Morning worship led by Revd Mary Thomas.
8	2.30pm	Romsey Ladies Choir Christmas concert
8	6.30pm	Advent Bible Study on Zoom ID 864 1780 6994, PW learning
9	10.30am	BALM in Abbey Hall Lounge
9	2.30pm	Hope Choir carol singing at Cedar Lawn
10	12.30pm	Rum's EG Carol Concert
11	11am	Hope Choir carol singing at Fryers House
10	8-9.30pm	Chill Out Tuesday in Abbey Hall Lounge – everyone is welcome to come and meet new people
12	10-11.30am	Warm welcome coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge – open to all
13	2.30pm	Hope Choir carol singing at Durban House
14	9am	Sorting of church Christmas cards
14	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
15	10.30am	Morning worship led by Derek Hiscocks
15	6.30pm	Advent Bible Study on Zoom ID 864 1780 6994, PW learning
16	1.30pm	Hope Choir carol singing at Marie Louise House
17	2.30pm	Hope Choir carol singing at Abbeyfield House
18	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
19	10-11.30am	Warm welcome coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge – open to all
21	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
21	6.30pm	Candlelight Carol Service led by Revd Mike
22	10.30am	Morning worship led by Howard Coulson
24	11.30pm	Midnight Communion led by Revd Mike

25	10.30am	Christmas Day service led by Revd Mike
28	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
29	10.30am	Morning worship featuring favourite hymns, carols and readings led by Revd Mike
<b>January</b>		
4	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
5	10.30am	Rededication Service including Holy Communion led by Revd Sarah Hall
9	7.30pm	Fabric Group Meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge
11	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
12	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Gabby North from Leprosy Mission
13	10.30am	BALM in Abbey Hall Lounge
14	8-9.30pm	Chill Out Tuesday in Abbey Hall Lounge
15	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
16	7.30pm	Outreach Group on Zoom ID 851 4528 3637, PW business
18	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
19	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Derek Hiscocks
21	7.30pm	Finance Group meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge
22	7.30pm	Worship Group meeting on Zoom, Meeting ID: 851 4528 3637, PW business
25	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
26	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Revd Wendy White
28	7.30pm	Elders Meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge
29	7.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey
<b>February</b>		
1	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
2	10.30am	Morning Worship including Holy Communion led by Revd Mike

## CHRISTIAN AID



You are invited to join in the Christmas spirit at their Christian Aid Carol Service 2024, at New Town Church, Edinburgh, on Wednesday 11 December at 6.30pm. A long way to go you may think, but to receive the livestream link nearer the time, sign up using the link [Christian Aid Carol Service 2024 - Christian Aid](#). With a theme of peace, this special service will include numerous carols led by [Siskin Green](#) and [Fischy Music](#).

# Braishfield United Reformed Church

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	The Reverend Doctor Sarah Hall e-mail: <a href="mailto:sarah.hall.swhg@gmail.com">sarah.hall.swhg@gmail.com</a> Day off: Thursdays	02380 768004
<b>Secretary:</b>	Shirley Smith	01794 368447
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Sharon Whitfield	01794 521937
<b>Serving Elders:</b>	Shirley Smith Allison Symes	01794 368447 02380 262803

## December

1	9.30 am	Holy Communion led by Rev Mike Perrott
8	10.00 am	<b>Toy Service:</b> Family Worship led by Andy Bevan
15	10.00 am	Family Worship led by Rev Dr Sarah Hall; <b>jars of coins to be brought to church</b>
22	3.00 pm	Afternoon Carols by Candlelight service led by Revd Mike Perrott. Refreshments to follow.
25	9.30 am	Christmas Day short service led by Revd Mike Perrott
29	10.00 am	Family Worship led by Pam Humphreys

## January 2025

5	9.30 am	Holy Communion led by the Revd Sarah Hall
12	10.00 am	Family Worship led by Derek Hiscocks
19	10.00 am	Family Worship led by Sharon Whitfield. <b>Presentation of charity cheque to Hampshire and the Islands Historic Churches Trust.</b>
26	10.00 am	Family Worship led by David Stone

## February

2	9.30 am	Holy Communion led by the Rev Mike Perrott
9	10.00 am	Family Worship led by Chris Noyce
16	10.00 am	Family Worship led by Nick Tustian
23	10.00 am	Family Worship led by Peter 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

First and foremost, all of us at Braishfield wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Secondly, and as a last-minute reminder, please donate toys for our Toy Service on 8 December. The toys (which need to be new and in boxes) will be collected by Colin Macpherson from Southampton City Council. The toys will be given to those most in need.



Our Jars of Coins (and notes) are due to be brought back to church on 15 December. Let us (a) fill that bucket and (b) enjoy watching the coins being poured in and appreciating the splendid noise they make! Useful tip to the wise: don't stand behind our treasurer when she banks this

lot, but let's do all we can to make it worth her while! The money this year will be going to the Hampshire and the Islands Historic Churches Trust.

We are holding a Christmas Hamper raffle. The money raised from that will also go to our charity project. Many thanks to Margaret Batchelor and Joan Glister for organising this. The tickets for this will be drawn during our Carols by Candlelight service at 3.00pm on Sunday, 22 December, which will be followed by refreshments. All are welcome. Hope to see you there! Tickets for the raffle are available at church in the meantime so do come and join us and ensure you get yours in good time! Gifts for the hamper would also be welcome. Thank you to those who have already donated gifts.

Our Christmas Day service is at 9.30 am and will be led by the Reverend Mike. It is a short service but it would be lovely to see you with us for this.

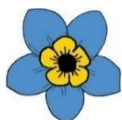
We are pleased to share the news that Sharon will become an Elder for Braishfield. Her ordination as an Elder will take place during the communion service on 1 December. All are welcome to come.

It is hard to believe but when I get to write the next letter for the magazine, I will be looking ahead to Spring, Easter etc. Time is, indeed, like an ever-rolling stream!

But from us all here, do have a lovely Christmas and New Year. Celebrating Jesus's birth is timeless.



**Allison Symes**



## ROMSEY DEMENTIA ACTION GROUP SERVICE TO REMEMBER



Just to say a very big Thank You to Rev Mike, his team at Abbey United Reformed Church, Romsey and everyone who came to our Service to Remember. We had a wonderful morning remembering things from our childhood - treats, what we wore, tv shows and much more.

***The ROMDAG Team***

# Home Support Service



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## WRITE FOR RIGHTS: MONDAY, 9 DECEMBER

You may not be aware but the local group of Amnesty International meets in Abbey Hall Lounge once a month (usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, but not always) to write campaigning letters on behalf of people who are facing human rights abuses across the world.

We would like to invite all of you to our annual Write for Rights event when we send cards of solidarity to those imprisoned, tortured or otherwise abused and their families to give them hope that they have not been forgotten. There will be refreshments and social company!

Please join us in the Abbey Hall Lounge at 7:30pm on Monday, 9 December.

***Sharon W and Fay F***



## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



The group has started working on the 'Anti-Death Penalty Project', where we will join other groups around the world campaigning for abolishment; this action is particularly relevant when Trump is soon regaining presidency.

On Monday 9 December we have our 'Write for Rights' evening, where we write cards and messages of support to individuals or groups around the world who have suffered injustice or persecution, to give them hope and let them know they haven't been forgotten.

As well as the 'Write for Rights' evening in the article above, there will be details of two persecuted individuals at the back of the church in December, and anyone can sign the cards for them to show their support. The cards will be sent to them.

***John H***

ABBEY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

# CHRISTMAS HAMPER Raffle

TICKETS ON SALE  
DURING DECEMBER

Tickets: £1 per strip

In aid of Church funds

TO BE DRAWN BEFORE THE  
CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE  
SATURDAY, 21 DECEMBER  
AT 6.30PM

# ROUND THE SOUTHERN FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES



## A prayer for Wessex Synod by Cara Heafey, Oxford

Beloved family

Faithful God,

We know that you long to gather us close to you as a hen shelters her chicks beneath her wings. We pray for the churches and people of Wessex Synod and the communities we serve. Help us to honour and celebrate our diversity. Make us one family, complex and imperfect (as all families are), held together by a shared story, bound together by love. May we recognise our interdependence with all you have created. May we offer a warm, sheltering place; secure in your grace, close to your heart.

**Amen**

Date	Avenue St Andrews	Bitterne	Bitterne Park	Isaac Watts
07-Dec		10am-12noon Christmas Tree Festival		10.30am-12noon Christmas Tree Festival
08-Dec		10.30 am Mosaic Service - gifts and talents	10.30am Carols and Readings	
11-Dec		10am-12noon Christmas Tree Festival		
14-Dec	10.30am-12noon Coffee & Cake	10am-12noon Christmas Tree Festival		10.30am-12noon Christmas Tree Festival
15-Dec		10.30am Nativity Service		6.30pm Lessons & Carols by Candlelight
18-Dec		10am-12noon Christmas Tree Festival		
21-Dec		10am-12noon Christmas Tree Festival		
22-Dec	4.30pm Carol Service	10.30am Carol Service		
24-Dec	11.30pm Zoom Christmas Eve service	4pm Christingle Service 11.30pm Midnight Communion	4pm Communion, with refreshments and mince pies from 3.15pm	4.30pm Carols around the Christmas Tree
25-Dec	10am Service	10.30am Service	10am Service	
29-Dec			10.30am Carols & Coffee	10.30am Favourite Carols
04-Jan			6pm Supper & Games	

## 2025 MAGAZINE CHARGES

We hope you have enjoyed our 2024 magazines. The subscription for 2025 is due in January. If you collect a printed version from church, or if you have it delivered by hand, the cost for the year will be £10. Please let Jill Girdlestone know if you want your name added to the list.

Payment can be made:

- by bank transfer/BACS to: Abbey United Reformed Church Romsey, Sort Code 40-52-40, Account Number 00033457 (please use the reference MAG and your name; also let Reg know)
- by post with a cheque to Jill Girdlestone and a note stating MAG and your name/address. Cheques to be made payable to “Abbey United Reformed Church”.

You can have a paper copy posted to you at a cost of £19.50 per year, to cover the printing, envelopes and postage for 10 issues. If you wish the magazine posted to you, please tell Jill Girdlestone, and ensure payment is received by 15 January 2025.

It will continue to be available as an e-magazine, delivered by email. Although this is free, a donation would be much appreciated. The magazine can also be viewed on the church website at [www.abbeyurc.org.uk](http://www.abbeyurc.org.uk), Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Thank you.

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## AN UPDATE FROM KATHLEEN

Hello all - it's been a while! My work is all going well and I've set up my business, Faye's Farrier Services – or Farrier Faye! I have some nice, consistent customers on the books. More excitingly, I've just been offered a fabulous opportunity by the British Farriers and Blacksmiths Association (BFBA).



In March I'll be heading off to America for three months to learn more about farriery! I'll be going to different areas of America, and staying with the families of those I'm working with. I'm so excited for this opportunity and the new knowledge it will bring - as well as getting to see new parts of America along the way!

I'll keep you all posted as I go along, and I'm sure there will be a lot to tell you when I get back!

*Kathleen x*

An advertisement for A.H. Cheater Ltd Funeral Directors. The background is a light yellow with a large red circular graphic on the left. Inside the circle is a photo of two men in suits. To the right of the circle is a dark red box with white text. Below the circle is a circular logo for the National Association of Funeral Directors. At the bottom right, there is a dark red banner with white text.

**A.H. Cheater Ltd**  
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**The Family Owned Funeral Directors**  
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**AVAILABLE 24 HOURS**



## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Are you looking to make a New Year's Resolution. If so, why not accept the challenge offered by Pat Oliver at our service on 17 November when she asked whether there was one little action we could each take to show some-one we cared.



**Romsey  
Ladies Choir  
with Sunnenday**

**CHRISTMAS  
CONCERT**

2.30 p.m. Sunday December 8th  
Romsey United Reformed Church

Admission £5 ~ Children free  
Proceeds to Mayor's Charities

Refreshments available

Grand Raffle



## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ROMSEY

### Late Night Christmas Shopping Stall



At their recent meeting, Churches Together in Romsey agreed to request a stall in the Market Place for the Romsey late-night Christmas shopping and Saving Santa event on 13 December. The stall would offer Christmas present-wrapping facilities to the general public. If you would like to donate a

roll of wrapping paper for the stall or could help on the stall at the event, please let me know.

### Hope Choir singing around the Nursing Homes



As has been the custom for many years, the Hope Choir will be visiting local Nursing Homes to sing Christmas Carols to the resident. Everyone is welcome to join them, even if you are only able to

attend one of the dates: just arrive 15 minutes before the singing is due to start. The homes being visited are

#### Monday 9 December

2.30 pm - Cedar Lawn, off Braishfield Road SO51 7PA

#### Wednesday 11 December

11.00 am - Fryers House, Oakleigh Gardens SO51 5AD

#### Thursday 12 December

2.30 pm - Woodley Grange, Winchester Rd SO51 7NU

#### Friday 13 December

11.00 am - Marie Louise, Newton Lane SO51 8GZ

#### Friday 13 December

2.30 pm - Durban House, Woodley Lane SO51 7JL

#### Tuesday 17 December

2.30 pm - Abbeyfield House, Mill Lane SO51 8EW

#### Wednesday 18 December

10.30 am - Mottisfont Lodge, Alma Road SO51 8AG

**Andy B**

## PETER LLOYD DAVIES 1939 - 2024

It is with great sadness that we lost our dear brother Peter Davies, a former Managing Director and owner of Bradbeers. He is survived by his devoted wife of 62 years, Hazel, and he leaves behind three children, nine grandchildren and many dear friends.

Peter passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on Tuesday afternoon, 30 July, after collapsing at Meon Shore beach on the Solent – a place where he loved to be. Family and friends were quickly on hand.

Peter followed his father into the family business, Bradbeers, in 1957 pursuing a successful career in retail, with his two brothers Trevor and Anthony. He started working at Bradbeers Eastleigh, experiencing a number of departments including removals and the upholstery workshop. He spent most of his working life at Bradbeers Romsey where he oversaw the rebuilding of the store after the devastating fire of 1963 and then doubling the size of the store 9 years later in 1972. These were the foundation stones laid to what it was to become and what it is today a thriving retail destination in Romsey. He remained a company director right up to his death, always interested in the Bradbeers group strategy's with openings in Hedge End, and Salisbury last year.

The proud traditions of 187 years of service, honesty and attention to detail enabled this family-owned business to continue to prosper. It is these very qualities Peter has passed onto his sons Ben, Steve and Greg, who will continue to take the business forward as a local, independent retailer.

Integral to his business acumen, Peter's defining qualities were kindness and philanthropy. A devoted husband to Hazel, father and grandfather, committed Christian and an inspirational lay-preacher at the United Reformed Church, he delivered sermons at venues around the county. Peter's faith was paramount in his life and started at a young age through devoted Christian parents, Gwilym and Marjorie-Rose. Gwilym himself was also a lay preacher as well as a businessman and an active member of the community.

Peter read his Bible every day without fail and often prepared sermons with some personal funny stories included. He never disappointed in the pulpit, although by nature was a very quiet, reserved gentleman. His

wish would be a silent one that all his family would follow Jesus and be saved; that would be his prayer. He faithfully attended church every Sunday, supporting both the United Reformed Church and the parish church at Braishfield, where he and Hazel resided for over 10 years before moving to Crampmoor. Peter's favourite hymn was 'Guide me O thou Great Jehovah'.

He was a life-long member of Hampshire County Cricket Club, past season ticket holder for Southampton Football Club, an ardent supporter of Romsey Bowling Club, a former treasurer of the Kingsgate Tennis Club, Romsey Rotary Club and Cheltenham Caravan Association. And then there was gardening...he loved his garden!

Peter will be sadly missed by all the family and his friends, but we are all reassured that we will meet again in the heavenly realms with our Lord Jesus.

## FIRST AID TRAINING



Bitterne Park have arranged a First Aid training day for Saturday, 22 February, 2025, with coffee and registration from 10am for a 10.30am start, finishing at 3pm, including a 30 minute lunch break. Coffee/tea will be provided but those attending will need to bring their own lunch or buy from the Tesco store next door.

The training is being delivered by 'First Aid for Life' on behalf of the URC Wessex Synod, who are covering the costs, so there will be no charge. It is a bespoke course for the URC providing a good basic knowledge of first aid. Participants will gain confidence and an HSE 'Appointed Person' level qualification which is valid for 3 years.

This is a practical course involving floor work so participants should wear suitable clothing to retain their modesty when rolling into the recovery position. Inform the trainer in advance if anyone has any pre-existing injuries or conditions they should be aware of.

We are required to have First Aid trained people appointed for church activities. If you are interested in being one of our First Aiders and attending this course, please let Andy know.

## LEPROSY MISSION



Recently Gabby North, Community Partnerships Manager for The Leprosy Mission, wrote the following to churches:

*Dear Friend*

*God has led us to a new place – Odisha, in India. Persecution of Christians here is more severe than anywhere else in India. Leprosy rates are three times higher than the national average. Two decades ago, a man and his two children were killed for sharing Jesus with people affected by leprosy. Many charities left the state. And since then, the communities they served have been forgotten.*

*Earlier this year, we saw the terrible conditions that people were living in. Families have no food, no safe shelter, and no clean water. With no healthcare either, leprosy is spreading to the next generation. People's hopelessness was clear to see. God was calling us to act.*

***Like you, we believe that Jesus is the hope of the nations. And together, in His name, we can revive Odisha. We can show His love to people, ending suffering and restoring futures.***

We are delighted to welcome Gabby, to take our service on 12 January. Gabby will be sharing with us some more details about the great work undertaken by the Leprosy Mission and the difference this has made to so many lives.

If you would like to offer a donation for their work all cash and sum-up donations made at that service will be given to the Leprosy Mission.

Their latest catalogue is also available on the Charity Table in the church foyer if you are looking for a Christmas gift with a difference. Alternatively, the full range of goods available from their shop can be viewed at [www.theleprosymissionshop.com](http://www.theleprosymissionshop.com) – have a look you may be surprised with the range of goods available.

This poem was shared with us by a member of our congregation, who fondly remembers their father reciting it every Christmas when they were young. It's about making the seemingly impossible, possible.

## SANTA CLAUS AND THE MOUSE

One Christmas Eve, when Santa Claus came to a certain house,  
To fill the children's stockings there, he found a little mouse.  
"Merry Christmas, little friend", said Santa good and kind.  
"The same to you, sir", said the mouse, "I thought you wouldn't mind  
If I should stay awake tonight and watch you for a while".  
"You're very welcome, little friend", said Santa with a smile.  
And then he filled the stockings up before the mouse could wink  
from top to toe, from toe to top he never left a chink.  
"There, they won't hold one more thing", said Santa Claus with pride.  
A twinkle came in mouseie's eye as humbly he replied,  
"It's not polite to contradict, your pardon I implore,  
But in that fullest stocking there I could put one thing more".  
"Ho, ho" laughed Santa, "Silly mouse, don't I know how to pack?;  
From filling stockings all these years I should have learned the knack!"  
But then he took the stocking down from where it hung so high  
And said, "all right, put in one thing more, I give you leave to try".  
Mouseie chuckled to himself and then he softly stole  
Right up to that stocking's crowded toe and he gnawed a little hole.  
"There, kind sir, I've put in one thing more,  
For you must own that little hole was not in there before".  
How Santa Claus did laugh and laugh and then he gaily spoke,  
"Why you shall have a Christmas cheese for that nice little joke".



by Emile Poulsson from "The Christmas Book"  
Published in 1954 by the Whitman publishing company

## URC GAZA APPEAL

The URC is relaunching its Gaza Appeal to support urgent humanitarian work in the region, with an expanded scope to include Lebanon. We are pleased to announce that this effort is being undertaken in partnership with the Methodist Church in Britain, under the name Gaza/Lebanon Justice Appeal. By collaborating with our partners on the ground, we aim to provide critical aid and pursue a shared mission of relief and justice for the people of Gaza and Lebanon. For more information, or to donate, please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/page/mcbworldmissionfundgazaappeal>

We're excited to introduce a new, easy way to donate to Abbey United Reformed Church. The QR code can be scanned to donate to the work, and upkeep, of Abbey URC. It will be displayed in all church locations, and on the glass front door, to allow people to easily donate.

# SCAN HERE

## TO DONATE



By scanning this QR code  
you will be able to make  
a donation towards the  
upkeep and work of  
Abbey United Reformed Church.

All donations welcome. Thank you.