

NEWS



From

**United Reformed Churches
of Romsey and Braishfield**

JULY/AUGUST 2025

www.abbeyurc.org.uk

Abbey United Reformed Church

www.abbeyurc.org.uk

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Magazine Team contact at: abbeyurcnews@gmail.com

Church Caretaker	Angela Wolfe	01794 517746
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Services

Sunday Family Worship	10.30am
Monthly Bible Study first Sunday evening	6.30pm
On Zoom (ID: 864 1780 6994 Password: learning)	

Weekday Meetings – any updates will be on our worship sheet

Monday (2nd)	BALM (Bereavement) Group	10.30am
Thursday	Refreshments and warm space.	10am -
	Open to all, in Abbey Hall Lounge	11.30am
Wednesday (1st 3rd)	Church Table Tennis	2.30pm

For baptisms, weddings or funerals please contact the Minister

A MESSAGE FROM REVD MIKE

July 2025

Dear friends in Christ,

The month of August traditionally marks the heart of British summertime and brings with it not only a change in the weather (usually!), but also a change in the way we experience the world around us. One of the delights of an English summer lies in being able to shed layers and carry



round fewer protective clothing to protect us from the cold and damp of the external world. Our behaviour can become less guarded: people sit in parks picnicking over lunch breaks, take coffee outside, sit at pavement cafes instead of huddling indoors.

Summer becomes a time for reconnecting with the natural world, the greater opportunities for communal living afforded by being able to sit out of doors for longer, and people talking outside instead of sitting enclosed. There is a sense of a general relaxing into the present, a willingness to linger over meals or encounters, savouring the moment, allowing the time to flow by.



Whether in the country or just passing neighbours' gardens or public parks, summer reminds us of the wonderful generosity of God. Trees and plants flower and fruit in a way that can



seem almost wasteful. Bumble bees amble past, collecting nectar. Neither animals nor humans can eat and use all the fruit that emerges from the trees and bushes.

If a spirituality of summer tells us anything, it is that the fruition of the earth, the fruit of time spent contemplatively going about our daily tasks, is always going to be more than we can calculate and make use of in obvious ways. A sense of the present moment can liberate us from the tyranny of time, dominated by market forces and the idolization of work, of cost effectiveness, of productiveness as value.

Wasting time with the God whose times and seasons are full of generous wastefulness can remind us of what truly matters. The God who is with us always to the end of time, is not limited to any season. God is both within and beyond times and seasons, but invites us in the summer, perhaps more vividly than at other times, to hear an invitation to savour the beauty of creation. This includes ourselves, the other, whether family, friend or stranger and the earth in full flower and fruit as the power of the risen Christ liberates all creation.



(Inspired by a sermon by Dr Gemma Simmonds, 2008)

In Christian love, **Mike**

BIBLE STUDY



Our Bible study and discussion group will take place on 6 July and 3 August at 6.30pm on Zoom (ID 864 1780 6994; PC learning) when we will look more deeply at the Gospel verses we hear at the morning service at Abbey URC. All welcome!

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CELEBRATION SERVICE

On Sunday, 6 July we will be holding a special service when our elders rededicate themselves to serve our church and community, where we will also be thankful for all those who have supported us over the past year.

We are grateful for the support people within the church and the wider community have shown us, and we will be celebrating the difference people have made over the past year. We are blessed and grateful to be at the heart of our community. We look forward to you joining us at this service.

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Material for September 2025 to be submitted by
5pm (latest) on Thursday, 21 August 2025
Please email to 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.**

MORNING PRAYERS

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 readings for the July and August.



July	6	Psalm 66:1-9	Luke 10:1-11 and 16-20
	13	Psalm 25:1-10	Luke 10:25-37
	20	Psalm 15	Luke 10:38-42
	27	Psalm 138	Luke 11:1-13
August	3	Psalm 49:1-12	Luke 12:13-21
	10	Psalm 33:12-22	Luke 12:32-40
	17	Psalm 82	Luke 12:49-56
	24	Psalm 103:1-8	Luke 13:10-17
	31	Psalm 112	Luke 14:1 and 7-14

**LIFE HECTIC?
NO DOWN TIME?**

**JOIN US FOR
CHILL OUT TUESDAY**

**Find some “you” time and
meet some new people.**

**A welcome, safe space
for everyone.**



8pm - 9.30pm

the 2nd Tuesday
of each month

Abbey URC Hall Lounge

Contact: abbeyurc.chillout@gmail.com

BALM

The BALM (Bereavement and Loss Meeting) reached double figures at their last meeting. It was decided that on 8 September we would go out together, so will not meet in the Church Lounge that day. All good wishes,

Christine

PRAYER FOR JULY/AUGUST

July and August are traditionally holiday months – though now, because prices rise so much when the schools are on holiday, many of you may prefer to go away before or afterwards! Either way, ‘holidays’ are also potentially ‘holy days’: time for sabbath rest.

And so, we give our holiday preparations into God’s hands, asking for good-enough packing and organisation of transport and lodging, but also for time and willingness to hand over our responsibilities temporarily to others. We entrust to God the safety and wellbeing of our loved ones, human and animal, left behind.

We give God thanks for new things we will see, new people we will meet, new experiences and new appreciation of what we thought we knew. And we give thanks for our return to loved and familiar places, to people and activities we know we will appreciate.

We give thanks for natural beauty and splendour, for human creativity in music or art, drama or architecture or sport, teaching us more of God and of ourselves. And we give thanks too for rest and undemanding fun that helps us relax and take life less seriously.

We give thanks for all those who will be cooking, cleaning, driving, working in many ways so that we can enjoy ourselves. We pray that they will be properly paid, and that their conditions are good. And we give into God’s hands the people, plants and animals living where we will be on holiday. May they and their environment not be worse off because we have visited their home.

We pray that on our holidays, as at home, we will be open to God’s still, small voice. We pray for safety in travel, there and back again. And we pray that on our return, we may be rested and renewed, ready once more to take up Christ’s easy yoke and learn from him. Amen!

Revd Sarah

CARETAKER’S HOLIDAY

Caretaker’s leave: Angela Wolfe will be taking annual leave from 27 June-12 July. If you can offer to help with opening and closing the church daily and the hall for hall hirers, either during this period or for future leave periods, please speak to Carole.



**SING INTO
SUMMER**
*Romsey
Ladies Choir
& the Songbirds*

Supporting Rose Road Assn.

Romsey United Reformed Church
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AFTERNOON TEA

We recently held our afternoon tea on Sunday, 8 June. It was really nice to see everybody again. The helpers had prepared some delicious sandwiches and homemade cakes! The Victoria sandwich sponge cake and apple cake went down well on that sunny and warm afternoon, just what everyone wanted!

Then afterwards, thanks to Andy, we were entertained by Bob Milligan – the Bloom in the Bloom Racket Duo. He brought his guitar and harmonica for music and asked his audience to join in to sing familiar songs, such as She'll be coming round the mountain; it was really great fun.



Our amazing afternoon quickly drew to a close; everyone was given a small vase of tulips with alchemilla, rosemary and sage from the garden to take home.

Jeannine M



ABBEY HALL LIGHTING UPGRADE: PROGRESS UPDATE

We're pleased to report that work is moving quickly on upgrading Abbey Hall's lighting to energy-efficient LED. Our chosen contractor has now been approved by Synod and will be meeting with the Synod property officer this month to check all approvals are obtained.

We are eager to see the removal of the old mercury-filled tube lighting, and to fix the lights which are currently out of use. Most importantly, LED lights use up to 90% less energy than traditional fittings. The sooner they're installed, the sooner we can start to benefit from lower electricity use and costs - helping both the environment and the church's running expenses.

We hope to be able to provide details of further progress on the LED lighting upgrade, and roof repairs, in our next magazine.

BEGGARS FAIR

We would like to serve tea and cakes from 11.30am until about 3pm in the Abbey Hall on Saturday, 12 July during Beggars Fair, which will be happening in many venues around Romsey.



If you would be happy to help on the day, or able to make cakes for the day, please let me know. It's a lovely day, and a good way to meet our wider community as well as a good fund raiser for Church funds. Thank you.

Gwen

THURSDAY MORNING COFFEE

Please note in your diary, the coffee morning will be taking a break during the summer holidays. There will be no Thursday coffee from 31 July until September.

During July, you will still find a warm welcome in Abbey Hall Lounge on a Thursday morning between 10am-11.30am. Everyone is very welcome.



CHURCH NEWS



We celebrate with Daisy May and Esmae-Hope as they were baptised by Revd Wendy on 22 June in our church. It was wonderful to have the church filled with their families and friends - and lots of children who were all very well behaved. It was lovely to welcome your families back to our church and to welcome you both into our church family.

Ruby and John Heron's phone number has changed, please contact Carole for the updated number. Thank you.

Therese Stokes has moved to Lee on Solent. Please contact Carole for her new address if you need it in the near future.

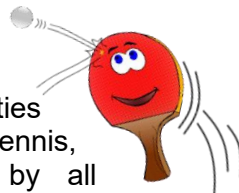
Both changes will be amended within the next Church directory.

We learned on Sunday 1 June, with sorrow, of the death of Lettie Tarlton. She was a loyal member of St Swithin's Church, Crampmoor, and was a regular attendee at services and social events at Abbey URC. Her Service of Thanksgiving took place at St Swithin's on the 30 June. Our thoughts and prayers are with Christine and family at this time.

Reminder: Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Willie McKenna at Cadnam Methodist Church at 12 noon on 2 July.

CHURCH TABLE TENNIS

The table tennis group continues to meet every 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month from 2.30pm-4pm. It is regularly attended by up to 11 players of varying abilities from both the church and community. As well as table tennis, refreshments are provided and enjoyed midway by all participants and are always accompanied by lively banter and chat.



As July has five Wednesdays, we will not meet on 30 July but will be back on track meeting on 6 August.

Earlier this year, a vote of thanks was given to Alan G who stood down as the group organiser. In future, Christine T, Angela F and Reg P will share responsibilities.

FINANCE AND FABRIC GROUP

With most of the matters raised at Fabric Group meetings impacting on the church's finances, it has been decided to combine the Finance Group with the Fabric Group. The first meeting of the combined group will be held on 17 July at 7.30 pm in Abbey Hall Lounge. The meeting will look at the maintenance required for our church buildings as well as our church finances. All are welcome to come along and join in our discussion.

Andy

REPORT FROM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 1 JUNE

We are very grateful to our Elders whose terms of office expired at the AGM, both for the service they have given to the church whilst undertaking the duties of being a Church Elder, and also for all agreeing to stand again for a further term.

Re-elected Elders were: Carole Cox and Sylvia Anderson- Lewis for one year; Sarah Beaman and Wai Chan for two years; Howard Coulson for three years.

We are also grateful for all those who agreed to continue with their current roles and responsibilities within the life of the church. People's circumstances change and some vacancies still need to be filled to cover those areas where friends have, relinquished their responsibilities. Our service on 1 July will include special thanks to these people as well as inducting our new elders.

Other decisions taken at the AGM included

- Celebrating our Church Anniversary service on 30 August by holding a Songs of Praise Service as our morning worship
- To explore further with the other churches in the Southern Fellowship Group to host an Advent Carol Service on the afternoon of 30 November
- Agreeing to accept the tender from SGS Heating and Electrical Ltd to update the lighting in Abbey Hall, including Abbey Hall Lounge
- Agreeing to the tender from J Williams Roofing Ltd to undertake the repairs to Abbey Hall Lounge

Our next Church Meeting is scheduled to be held after our Harvest Festival Service on 14 September. Book the date now to join us both for our harvest celebration and the Church Meeting, when you can join in discussions and hear all the latest church news.

CHELSEA AND MORE!



It has been a busy, and very exciting, few months for our very own Darren, of Desculpted. Six of his sculptures, including the moth and blue bug shown here, recently featured at Chelsea Flower show in a garden designed by staff and students at Sparsholt College. As if that wasn't amazing enough – the garden went on to win a Silver Gilt Medal.



He also exhibited at the Little Forest Land Art competition, North Boarhunt where his sculpture, Amplitude (on the right) won the People's Choice Award.

Darren has also been exhibiting at RHS Wisley and Hever Castle during May (the fox, shown below), so it has been a whirlwind these past few months.

If you'd like to see Darren's work up close, he will be exhibiting at Hillier's Arboretum with the Artful Collective on 5 and 6 July. Pop along, and don't forget to say "hi" !



Ever thought of singing in a choir? Why not accept this open invitation and see the benefits it can bring!



“Open Invitation”

to rehearse with Rums Eg Singers

Tuesday July 8th 2025

Romsey Baptist Church, Bell Street,

Romsey

10.30am – 11.20am

DO YOU HAVE BUSY HANDS?

If you have busy hands, and enjoy crafting, why not help us out? At the end of November each year we collect crafted angels to send out into the local community for people to find. Finding these angels, who are looking for a new home, is a small piece of magic for young people, for people struggling, or on their own, it shares some love and shows we care.

Can you (or a friend!) knit, crochet or craft some angels by the end of November? If you would like to help, the more the merrier – why not pop into a Thursday coffee morning in the Abbey Hall to craft with others? If you can't find a pattern, please contact abbeyurcpr@gmail.com and we'll share those we have. Any type of angel is welcome – let your imagination run wild. Thank you!



The Unity Community Team provides support to those in need within the community.



Unity offers a variety of support pathways to help you manage your energy costs and improve your home's efficiency:

Winter Fuel Payment: Financial assistance to help cover your heating bills.

Help to Winter Proof Your Home: Advice and support to make your home more energy efficient.

Energy Saving Support: Tips and resources to reduce your overall energy consumption.

Food support: Vouchers and food boxes available for those in need.



CONTACT US

☎ 03304 004 116

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CALENDAR

July		
2	12noon	Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Willie McKenna at Cadnam Methodist Church
2	2.30pm	Church table tennis in Abbey Hall
3	10-11.30am	Coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge
4 to 7 July		General Assembly at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick
5	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
5	2.30pm	Summer garden party in aid of church funds at the home of Sylvia A-L. Please bring a garden chair.
6	10.30am	Morning Worship including Holy Communion and thanksgiving service led by Revd Mike
6	6.30pm	Bible Study on Zoom; ID 864 1780 6994; PW learning
8	8-9.30pm	Chill Out Tuesday in Abbey Hall Lounge
10	10-11.30am	Coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge
10	7.30pm	Youth and Outreach Group on Zoom; ID 851 4528 3637; PW business
12		Beggars Fair
13	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Joan Smith
13	2pm	Romsey Ladies Choir and The Songbirds – Sing into Summer
14	10.30am	BALM in Abbey Hall Lounge
15	7.30pm	Group Secretaries' meeting at Isaac Watts Memorial URC
16	2.30 pm	Church table tennis in Abbey Hall
16	7.30pm	Worship Group meeting on Zoom; ID 851 4528 3637; PW business
17	10-11.30am	Coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge
17	7.30pm	Finance and Fabric Group meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge
19	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
20	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Revd Wendy White
21	1pm	Wedding of T Bath and R Marwick.
23	7.30pm	Churches Together in Romsey
24	10-11.30am	Coffee morning in Abbey Hall Lounge
26	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
27	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Andy Bevan

27	6.30pm	Tea at Bitterne URC followed by 7pm Summer Praise service
28	7pm	Board games evening at Bitterne URC (non-fundraising) hosted by members of the Boys' Brigade.
28 July to 10 August		Revd Sarah on annual leave
August		
2	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
3	10.30am	Morning Worship including Holy Communion led by Andy Bevan
3	6.30pm	Bible Study on Zoom; ID 864 1780 6994; PW learning
6	2.30pm	Church table tennis in Abbey Hall
9	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
9	afternoon	Baptism of Isaac Scanlan
10	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Revd Wendy White
11	10.30am	BALM in Abbey Hall Lounge
12	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting, venue to be confirmed
12	8-9.30pm	Chill Out Tuesday in Abbey Hall Lounge
15 August to 7 Sept.		Revd Mike on annual leave
16	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
17	10.30 am	Morning Worship led by Andy Bevan
20	2.30 pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
23	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
23	3.00 pm	Wedding of Alexander Smith and Anna Marie Cornwall
24	10.30 am	Morning Worship led by Nick Tustian
30	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet reflection and prayer
31	10.30 am	Church Anniversary Songs of Praise service
31	11am-4pm	DEM FEST at Sir Harold Hiller Gardens

DEM FEST

We're looking forward to DEM FEST at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens on 31 August 2025. Free entry to everyone, offering information, support and advice for families living with a diagnosis of dementia, or other cognitive issues. Live music throughout the day, and hopefully demonstrations of local groups and organisations who offer ways to keep active.

Braishfield United Reformed Church

Minister:	The Reverend Mike Perrott, MA e-mail: revd.mike13@gmail.com Day off: Mondays	01794 512163
	The Reverend Doctor Sarah Hall e-mail: sarah.hall.swhg@gmail.com Day off: Thursdays	02380 768004
Secretary:	Shirley Smith	01794 368447
Treasurer:	Sharon Whitfield	01794 328853
Serving Elders:	Shirley Smith Allison Symes Sharon Whitfield	01794 368447 02380 262803 01794 328853

July

6	9.30	Holy Communion led by Revd Mike Perrott
13	10.00	Family Worship led by Pam Humphreys
19&20		Flower Festival Weekend; the church will be open from 10 am to 6 pm. Visitors welcome.
20	10.00	Family Worship led by Margaret Axford
27	10.00	Family Worship led by Revd Dr Sarah Hall

August

3	9.30	Holy Communion led by Allison Symes
10	10.00	Family Worship led by Revd Mike Perrott
17	10.00	Family Worship led by Nick Tustian
24	10.00	Family Worship led by Sharon Whitfield
31	10.00	Favourite Hymns Service led by Sharon Whitfield

September

7	9.30	Holy Communion led by Andy Bevan
14	10.00	Family Worship led by Reverend Wendy White
21	10.00	Family Worship led by Chris Noyce
28	10.00	Harvest Festival led by Rev Dr Sarah Hall

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



There is great news to report from the village United Christian Aid Service held on 11 May. This was hosted by us at Braishfield URC this year. It was good to welcome our friends from All Saints Parish Church and visitors. The service was led by Andy Bevan and we are pleased to report a wonderful sum was raised for Christian Aid. From the envelopes and the service collection the sum of £1015.20 was raised but with £130 worth of Gift Aid added on, the village total for 2025 came to a fabulous £1,145. Well done and thank you, everyone.

I'm glad to say our 207th Church Anniversary service went well. It was lovely the Reverend Sarah was with us, as I believe it was the first time she has led an anniversary service for us.

It was also great to meet the Moderator, the Reverend Michael Hopkins, at our service on 29 June. The teas and coffees after both of these services were much appreciated too.

Our Flower Festival weekend is on Saturday, 19 and Sunday, 20 July. The church will be open for visitors from 10am to 6pm on both days and everyone is welcome to join us for the Sunday service. It is a great opportunity to see the church at its best.



At some point during the year, Braishfield has a Favourite Hymns Service. Our record to date has been to sing nine, yes nine, hymns, have our notices, the collection, prayers and readings, and still finish five minutes early! If you love a good sing and wonderful hymns, do join us on 31 August for this one. A list will be put at the back of the church for people to write down their favourite hymn and the service will be put together from this. Many thanks, in advance, to Sharon for doing this.

With September not that far away, given this is a double issue of the magazine, I will flag up our Harvest Festival service on 28 September. The church will be decorated on Saturday, 27 September and will be undecorated again on Monday, 29 September. Tinned/packet goods will go to the food bank in due course. Help with decorating and undecorating the church (or just one of these if you cannot do both) would be greatly appreciated. All help does make a huge difference.



Allison Symes

WESSEX SYNOD'S



6TH SEPTEMBER 2025 10AM - 4PM
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Stands: 'MyTime' Young Carers Award | Truth be Told Story Telling | Schools Pastors | Time for God | Children's Ministry Essentials | URC Bookshop | Stepwise | Scripture Union | Wessex Synod support

BOOKINGS VIA - URCWESSEX.ORG.UK

DEREK HISCOCKS



The funeral service for our much loved and much missed brother in Christ, Derek Hiscocks, took place at Abbey URC on Tuesday 17 June. The church was filled with family, church members and friends, and many of the organisations Derek was involved with were represented. Many green jackets of Romsey Male Voice Choir were in evidence and swelled the hymn singing,

Granddaughter Orlaigh preceded the coffin carrying a photograph of Derek and his favourite hat, which were both placed on the Communion table. Through the tribute from the family, read by Derek and Ruby's daughter Rachel, we heard about a truly loving family man, dedicated and faithful to his family, the local and wider church alongside his involvement in the local community including choirs, the West Country Association and an amateur art club.

The Gospel reading, John 11:17-27 The raising of Lazarus, and hymns were chosen by Derek, including How great Thou art, Guide me O my great Redeemer and Will your anchor hold in the storms of life; with a beautiful rendition of Psalm 23 sung by Kirsty.

We left the church to a rousing version of The Old Rugged Cross played by Monty Sunshine's Jazz Band, again chosen by Derek himself.

We will all miss Derek greatly. We remember Ruby and the close family in our prayers, and we remember him and his deep faith with thanksgiving to God. We hope to include the tribute in the September issue of our magazine.

REVD MIKE'S PREACHING ROTA FOR JULY AND AUGUST

July	6	9.30 am	Braishfield URC Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Abbey URC Holy Communion
	13	10.30 am	Avenue St Andrew's URC Holy Communion
	20	10.30 am	Isaac Watts Memorial URC
	27	10.30 am	Bitterne Church Meeting
Aug	3	10.30 am	Isaac Watts Memorial URC
	10	10.00 am	Braishfield URC

CHILL OUT TUESDAY

Despite a slow start to our Chill Out zone, with numbers still small, it has proved itself to be a welcome space to sit down and chat with friends over a late evening tea or coffee. Along with friends and helpers from the Church community, we have been joined by a couple of Romsey residents and look forward to them joining us again in coming months.



Continuing the scheduling of second Tuesday of the month, the next sessions will be 8 July and 12 August, from 8pm to 9.30pm in Abbey Hall Lounge. If you are looking for a place to escape to for an hour or so, you are very welcome to join us.

Wendy

MINISTERS' HOLIDAYS

Our Ministers will be enjoying their summer holiday breaks as follows:

Revd Mike from 15 August to 7 September

Revd Sarah from 28 July to 10 August

During their absences, in instances of pastoral necessity, please contact Andy (tel: 07483 319618) if a Minister is not available.

RECRUITMENT OF A NEW GREEN ADVOCATE FOR WESSEX SYNOD

With the retirement of Revd Mike Shrubsole, the Synod needs to recruit a new Green Advocate, to take the lead on green issues, encouraging congregations to become eco-churches, and to work on Wessex becoming an eco-synod.

The role description and person specification are available from Andy or, for more details, please contact Philip Bonnier, the Secretary of the Synod Mission and Outreach Committee, at philip@bonnier.org.uk.

A LIMERICK

$$\frac{12 + 144 + 20 + 3 \times \sqrt{4}}{7} + (5 \times 11) = 9^2 + 0$$

Doesn't look like a limerick to you? Check out page 27!

Young people in our communities are facing homelessness. Some are leaving care with nowhere to go, others are in unsafe or unstable housing. It's a hidden crisis, but one local charity is offering a solution - and inviting local people to be part of it.

Step by Step supports young people who are at risk of homelessness, offering not just accommodation, but the guidance and life skills needed to thrive. One of their newest projects is nearby in Totton: a supported accommodation service known as Foyer, where young people live in a homely, family-style setting with round-the-clock support.

Alongside this, Step by Step also runs a Supported Lodgings programme, which matches young people aged 16–21 with hosts in the community who can offer a safe room and a bit of day-to-day support. Hosts receive full training, ongoing guidance and a weekly allowance. They come from all walks of life - single people, couples, families, and retirees.



“These young people are heroes in their own right,” says Debbie Moreton, CEO of Step by Step and a New Forest resident.

“Like Superman had the Kents or Batman had Alfred, behind every hero is someone who cares, Step by Step hosts provide that belief and care.”

The charity is always looking for more hosts across the region, including in Romsey and Totton. With the right match, the results can be life-changing. Last year, eight young people moved from Supported Lodgings into university accommodation - a huge step made possible because someone offered them a safe place to grow.

Kaye, a local host, says: “The best part is seeing someone grow in confidence and take the next step in life.”



If you think you might be able to help, or just want to learn more, please visit www.stepbystep.org.uk/open-your-home or call 01252 346100.

Be the hero a young person needs.

COMMUNION IS CENTRAL AT HOWMORE CHURCH ON SOUTH UIST



While on a tour of the Outer Hebrides, I visited Howmore Church on South Uist. I was intrigued because down the centre of the church was an enclosed area housing the communion table, one of a small handful of churches in Scotland still to do so.

Wondering how it was used, I contacted the church and was given the following information by Isabel, who is happy for me to share it.

“We believe that when the church was built it was not unusual throughout Scotland to include a central communion table, it is one of the reasons the church is now a listed building. We think we are the only congregation still celebrating communion round the central table. It was part of the original building.

On communion days the table is dressed in white linen. At a communion service the congregation sits in the side pews as usual at the beginning of the worship. When we reach the hymn before communion, those who wish to participate leave the pews and move to sit within the enclosed area. The Minister sits at the top of the table and conducts the communion service from there, distributing the bread and wine to the communicants. On some occasions the Elders serve the people.

Many of us who participate in communion at Howmore find it a very special and spiritual experience.

We have tended to hold two Communion Service a year in Howmore, one on Maundy Thursday evening and one later in the year. In January 2025, the South Uist Congregation was united with three other congregations in the area and our practices are undergoing change. We hope that we will still celebrate communion twice a year in our church.”

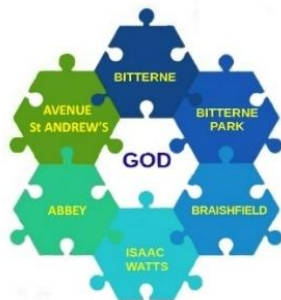
They have five churches, spread across four islands, currently served by an Interim Moderator employed for two days per week to preach two services.

Carole

ROUND THE SOUTHERN FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES

Southern Fellowship First Anniversary
Service 10 May 2025

Bitterne



Please note change of date: Bitterne United Reformed Church wishes to invite you to their Summer Praise evening service to be held on **Sunday 27 JULY**. Starting with tea and cake at 6.30pm, to give some time to meet friends from the other churches within the Southern Fellowship, the service starts at 7pm led by Ian Abrahams. They would welcome one hymn from each of the Southern Fellowship Churches, so everyone can enjoy a favourite hymn on the evening. If you can give us a hymn once you have decided and give us a rough idea of how many people might be coming that will be great. Please inform Andy Bevan if you are interested in going, and your hymn suggestions, by 17 July. Thank you.

The Southern Fellowship of United Reformed Churches celebrated their first anniversary of the joining together of the six URC churches – Avenue St Andrews, Bitterne, Bitterne Park, Braishfield, Isaac Watts and Romsey. We had a service in Bitterne church with the Moderator Rev Michael Hopkins preaching the sermon, followed by tea and cakes. A good time of fellowship was shared by all who attended.



Wessex Synod Moderator
Revd Dr Michael Hopkins,
Revd Dr Sarah Hall and
Jill Abrahams



The Anniversary cake made
by Jill Abrahams

ROMSEY FOODBANK

Demand upon the Romsey Foodbank is high at present, especially with the long summer holidays coming, when access is not available to breakfast clubs or school meals. If you would like to donate some items for Romsey Foodbank over the next few weeks, they are in particular need of the following:

Bags in which food packs can be given
Tinned Meat
Sugar 1kg and 500g
Tinned Spaghetti

Tinned Tomatoes
UHT Milk
Long Life Fruit Juice
Chocolate
Sweets

They have plenty of Pasta, soup, incontinence pads, baked beans and pet food. Items can be left in the basket in the foyer of our church; alternatively you can donate at Romsey Abbey, Waitrose, Botley Road Co-op, Abbotswood Co-op, The Hundred Co-op, Ganger Farm, Henshaw Fox and Romsey Library, or the two Foodbank locations in Budds Lane Romsey on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10.30am or 12.30pm, or in the North Baddesley location on Friday mornings between 10am to 12 noon. Thank you.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Do you help with pastoral visiting, delivering flowers or helping at church events which involve potential contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. If so, the United Reformed Church, as with all denominations and organisations, ask that you undertake regular Safeguarding Training. This training is also required if you are an Elder, Minister or Treasurer. The training is provided free of charge by the URC and can be undertaken either in person or via a zoom training session.

Details of all the online training courses can be found on the Wessex Synod website at <https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/safeguarding> where you can also book your place for all Synod training courses. Alternatively, Ruth White will be leading a Safeguarding Course on Saturday 4 October 2025 from 10am-4pm at Bitterne United Reformed Church. This course is for everyone who needs Safeguarding training, be it refresher training as well as those who have not previously undertaken Safeguarding Training. Please can you let Andy know by 10 July if you wish to attend this course. You will need to bring your own lunch although drinks will be available on the day.

BEGGARS FAIR, ROMSEY 11AM TO 5PM SATURDAY, 12 JULY



Once again, we open our church and hall for local artistes to display their talent at the Beggars Fair.

Performers in the church are:

11.00 – 11.45	South Hants Accordion Band
12.15 – 13.00	Sing Now Choir
13.30 - 14.15	KSJM Trio
14.45 - 15.30	Nina Rideout
15.45 – 17.00	Saxophony

Performers in Abbey Hall

12.00 – 12.45	Romsey Shanty Crew
13.00 – 13.20	Honeybadgers
13.30 - 14.00	Devils Jump Clog
14.15 – 14.30	Wickham Baggies
14.45 – 15.30	Angling for Farthings
15.45 – 16.30	Lounge Room Lizards

More details about these performers can be found in the Beggars Fair programme, available from many shops around the town.



If you can help with stewarding in the church or hall, please contact Andy as soon as possible or sign the list at the back of church; if you can help serve refreshments in the hall, please let Gwen know.

A LIMERICK

$$\frac{12 + 144 + 20 + 3 \times \sqrt{4}}{7} + (5 \times 11) = 9^2 + 0$$

Doesn't look like a limerick to you? Try this:

A dozen, a gross and a score
Plus three times the square root of four
Divided by seven
Plus five times 11
Is nine squared and not a bit more!

ARTSEEN ART EXHIBITION 16-25 AUGUST 2025 IN ABBEY HALL

ARTSEEN will once again return to Abbey Hall in August with an Art Exhibition as part of Hampshire Open Studios 2025.

Framed and unframed paintings & textiles as well as cards will be available to view and purchase from ARTSEEN members. They will be joined by guest makers, two jewellery makers and a ceramicist.

The exhibition will be open between 10am–5pm daily from Saturday, 16 August to Monday, 25 August. A Preview of the exhibition will take place on Friday, 15 August 5pm–7pm. Please put the dates in your diary. Entry is free and all are welcome.

The Hampshire Open Studios booklet (the pink book!) giving details of all artists' Open Studios will be available locally nearer the time so please do look out for it.





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AVAILABLE 24 HOURS

STEP INTO NATURE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE: JOIN WALK THE TEST WAY 2025

On Sunday, 28 September 2025, lace up your walking boots and be part of something truly special—Walk the Test Way organised by the Rotary Club of Romsey Test. This annual event invites participants of all ages and abilities to walk the scenic Test Way in Hampshire, all while raising funds for their chosen charities.

Choose Your Challenge: whether you're a seasoned hiker or a casual stroller, there's a distance to suit everyone:

- 25.5 miles from St Mary Bourne
- 16 miles from Wherwell
- 11 miles from Stockbridge
- 8 miles from Horsebridge
- 5 miles from Mottisfont



Participants will be transported by private coach from Romsey to their selected starting points. The journey concludes at Romsey's Memorial Park, where walkers are greeted with a warm welcome and a commemorative medal. The route is well-signposted and fully marshalled, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Dogs on short leads are also welcome to join the adventure.

Support Causes Close to Your Heart: Walk the Test Way isn't just about the walk it's about making a difference. Over the years, the event has raised over £1.2 million for various charities across the UK. In 2024 alone, £85,000 was distributed among 86 charities. Whether you're passionate about healthcare, education, or community services, this is your chance to support the causes that matter most to you.

Registration Details: early bird registration is open until 31st July 2025, Adults: £13 and Under 18s £7. After this date, fees will increase to £16 for adults and £9 for under 18s. All participants are encouraged to raise a minimum of £50 in sponsorship.

Join the Community: Walk the Test Way is more than just a fundraising event; it's a celebration of community spirit, personal achievement and the beauty of the Hampshire countryside. Whether you're walking solo, or as part of a team, your steps will contribute to meaningful change.

Ready to Take the First Step? Join us in making 2025 the most impactful year yet, for more information www.walkthetestway.org.uk.

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE AND CHRISTIAN AID

Statement From Wessex Synod Commitment For Life Representative



Christian Aid has been working with the poorest and most vulnerable people in the Middle East since the early 1950s, when they started to provide humanitarian relief to Palestinian refugees. All their work aims to support the foundations for a just, lasting peace for all.

Israel's war on Gaza has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions of people. Palestinians in the West Bank are being killed in their hundreds.

By continuing to allow arms sales to Israel and failing to hold it accountable, the UK government is complicit.

Christian Aid is calling on the UK Foreign Secretary to

- Stop all arms sales to Israel
- Demand an immediate ceasefire
- Secure access to aid
- Halt UK trade with Israeli settlements.

The UK must act now to uphold international law and protect civilian life.

Britain is an active participant in Israel's genocide in Palestine, including through its arms trade and military collaboration with Israel. One example is Britain's contribution to Israel's F-35 fighter jets, used to drop 2,000lb bombs on the Gaza Strip.

The F-35 fighter jet programme is international, led by the United States. Research by Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) has identified that crucial components for F-35 fighter jets used by Israel to bomb Gaza are manufactured at dozens of sites in Britain. At least 15% of the value of each of Israel's F-35 fighter jet is produced in the UK.

Christian Aid are asking for your support by signing their petition which calls on the UK Government to work for a just peace. The petition can be found on the Christian Aid web site by clicking on [Middle East Crisis Action - Christian Aid](#).

WISDOM CENTRE PROGRAMME 2025



Are you looking to include more meditation and inspiration in your life? Do you know about the weekly meditation meetings at the Wisdom Centre? There are free meditation meetings every Wednesday evening, from 7.30-8.30pm, in their Prayer Room.

Each week there is a different theme for the evening, with themes being drawn from many different spiritual, religious and secular teachings to ensure a wide appeal. It's a lovely way to be introduced to new ideas. The group is friendly and welcoming and the Prayer Room itself has a beautiful energy – it's very comfortable with soft carpet and plenty of seating and space. There's lift access available, should you require it, and help is always on hand. Water is provided or you may wish to bring your own bottle of water.

Meetings are free to attend but there is a small donation box, should you wish to make an offering. If you would like to find out more, feel free to drop in to the Centre to chat to one of the Team or email your details to: reception@wisdomhouseromsey.co.uk

If you are unable to join us, may we recommend Richard Rohr's reflections - these are delivered free of charge daily, by email, if you sign-up on his website: <https://cac.org/daily-meditations/>

To catch up on some of our written meditations, please click on the link below [Wisdom House Wellbeing and Spirituality](#)

For all their archived videos of talks and online meditations, please visit their YouTube page where, you can also subscribe for future uploads: [Click here](#)

Other options at the Wisdom Centre include:

Rediscovering the Bible for the First Time on Saturday, 13 September from 10am-4pm facilitated by Chris Scott.

Women in Scripture on Saturday, 11 October from 10am-4pm facilitated by Sr Marie Turner DW.

St Hilda of Whitby: Celtic Saint & Advisor to Kings on Saturday, 8 November from 10am-4pm facilitated by David Cole.

Lino Printing Day on Friday, 21 November from 10.30am-4pm facilitated by Sue Hofman..

ABBHEY UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH



BALM

Bereavement and loss meeting



Come and join us at Abbey Hall on the
second Monday of each month at
10.30am for tea and chat.

An opportunity for people who are
grieving the loss of a loved one to
meet others in a similar situation.



www.abbeyurc.org.uk
Abbey United Reformed Church, Romsey

