

# NEWS

From



United Reformed Churches  
of Romsey and Braishfield



**MAY 2026**

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

# Abbey United Reformed Church

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## 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
<b>Weekday Meetings – any updates will be on our worship sheet</b>	
Monday (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	BALM (Bereavement) Group 10.30am
Tuesday (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Chill Out Tuesday, The White Horse, Romsey 7.30pm
Thursday	The Social Cup - refreshments and warm space. Open to all, in Abbey Hall Lounge 10am - 11.30am
Wednesday (1 <sup>st</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Church Table Tennis 2.30pm

*For baptisms, weddings or funerals please contact Revd Mike*

*Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Romsey or Braishfield URC, nor the elders nor production team.*

## A MESSAGE FROM REVD SARAH

May 2026

I wonder: how many languages do you speak? I hope English is one of them, or you may have a hard time with this letter! You may have encountered French or German at school; maybe Spanish or Russian, possibly even Mandarin or Latin. You may have used DuoLingo on your phone to refresh school learning, or give you a little holiday vocabulary. And of course, you may come from a family where another language is also spoken, whether Swahili or Scots Gaelic.

I have German family, and my parents both studied foreign languages at university, so I grew up thinking it's normal to make yourself understood in different ways. But these days not nearly so many colleges offer language courses. And in a way, I can see why. When you can use Google Translate on your phone to communicate across language barriers - as I have done, with people at a local refugee drop-in; it feels like magic, as unknown words suddenly make sense - why rack your brains and torture your tongue to say things the weird way somebody else does? And in any case, they can learn English, can't they? They can fit in with us - after all, whoever they are, they've chosen to be here.

That's great for the majority speakers - but not so good if you happen to be the foreigner. When as part of my training for ministry I studied in Switzerland for a year, I was fine while lectures were held in German, but as soon as the bell went, everyone began to speak in Swiss German, which is a very different language. Suddenly, I could understand very little. And that taught me something about how isolating it can feel to be a foreigner.

When people came to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Shavuot - or Pentecost, as it was called in Greek, fifty days after Passover - they would be expecting to use Hebrew for Temple services. The rest of the time, Aramaic was the language people used to communicate with each other, the way Latin used to be used in Europe in the Middle Ages. That was fine if you came from the Middle East. But that long list of regions we hear each year at Pentecost, from the second chapter of Acts, covers a wider area. If you were an African from Cyrene, or a Cretan from Europe, coming to Jerusalem for Pentecost might be a high point of your religious life, but quite stressful in terms of communication. Think back to oral exams at school: listening frantically for familiar words, trying your best to say things right; you'll get my point.

Imagine, then, if you were one of these stressed pilgrims, how you might feel if suddenly, in the middle of all this foreign culture, somebody started talking in your own mother tongue. And not just saying any old thing, either. Talking about God's power to save, heal and make new. You'd listen, all right! And you'd urge them to tell you more.

Some of us are linguists because we've had to be. Some because languages are fun for us. But if you're someone who feels English is more than enough to be getting on with, I have news for you: you too have the ability to communicate in somebody else's mother tongue. Maybe you can speak football, or baking, and can talk for hours about your passion with fellow enthusiasts. Maybe you share a love of music, and can communicate that way without needing to use a word. And maybe it's through a look and a smile that you can put your message across. These days, that's my mother's language. Since her stroke, over a decade ago, her grasp on words is shaky. But when she looks into my eyes and smiles, I'm left in no doubt at all of what she's saying: 'I love you!'

So, I wonder: what languages do you speak? And what ideas do you use them to communicate? How can you, how can I, put across that same message people heard with joy and surprise in the streets of Jerusalem, over 2000 years ago? Because it's a message that still needs to be heard, now more than ever. What is it? Desmond Tutu put it well:

Goodness is stronger than evil;  
Love is stronger than hate;  
Light is stronger than darkness;  
Life is stronger than death;  
Victory is ours through Him who loves us.

That's a message we all need to hear: in the streets of Romsey, in our homes and in our hearts.

Happy Pentecost!

Amen

*Revd Sarah*

## **ST JOSEPH'S AND ABBEY URC DISCUSSION GROUP**

The next St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and Abbey URC discussion group has been arranged for 2.30pm on Wednesday, 13 May in St Joseph's Parish Room, Abbey Water. Please contact Revd Mike for further details.

## A SOCIAL BINGO AFTERNOON FOLLOWED BY BRING AND SHARE TEA

Please join us for a fun and friendly Bingo Afternoon on Saturday, 20 June at 3.30pm in Abbey Hall. It's always a fun afternoon and an opportunity to relax, enjoy some light-hearted competition, and spend time together. Whether you're a seasoned bingo player or trying it for the first time, all are welcome!



After the bingo, we will have a bring-and-share tea, so please bring something to contribute if you are able - sweet or savoury, homemade or shop-bought, everything is appreciated. A sign-up list will be available at the back of the church from mid-May. Please add your name – friends and family are very welcome too. We look forward to seeing you there for an enjoyable afternoon of fellowship and good company.

### 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 readings that would usually be used during morning services.

May	3	Psalm 31:1-5 and 15-16	John 14:1-14
	10	Psalm 66:8-20	John 14:15-21
	17	Psalm 68:1-10 and 32-35	John 17:1-11
	24	Psalm 104:24-34	John 20:19-23
	31	Psalm 8	Matthew 28:16-20

### HOME COMMUNION



If you're not able to make it to church for any reason but would still like to receive Communion, we'd be more than happy to bring it to you at home.

Staying connected to our church family is important, and we want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to share in this special part of our worship, even if you cannot join us in person. Please contact Carole by email at [carole.cox@btinternet.com](mailto:carole.cox@btinternet.com) or call 01794 518184.

## PRAYER FOR MAY

Ascension, Lord?  
What was the point of that?  
Were you finally airlifted by God,  
out of the mess and muddle of human life?  
Was that it?

Were you glad to get out of flesh and bone -  
sweaty, smelly, painful, embarrassing -  
back to divinity, free of limitation?  
Did you get bored with matter?

Making a good exit's not easy,  
especially when you've already done it once.  
Were we getting a bit too dependent on you?  
And even after Thomas, were some of us still doubting?  
That bit's in the official record!

Or maybe I've got it all wrong, ascension.  
Maybe you didn't want to get away from us at all.  
Maybe you wanted to be close to us: close to each of us,  
From them, then and there to us, here and now.  
But one human body can't manage all that.  
And - now I get it! - the Spirit can!

You weren't leaving us in the lurch.  
You're with us still: now and to the end of time.  
Just with a wider view; wider than our astronauts will ever manage.  
You trust us - heaven knows why - to be your presence in the world.  
And you've taken a human viewpoint with you back into heaven.  
On second thoughts, thank you for your ascension, Lord!  
Amen

*Revd Sarah*

### MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Material for June 2026 to be submitted by  
5pm (latest) **on Thursday, 21 May 2026**  
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.

## CHURCH NEWS

After many years of faithful and devoted service, we offer our heartfelt thanks to Andy as she steps down as Elder and Church Secretary. Her commitment, care and efficiency have been at the heart of our church life for so long that it is hard to imagine things without her in this role. From keeping us organised behind the scenes to being the first point of contact for so many, her contribution has been truly invaluable. She has given generously of her time and energy, often going far beyond what was asked. While we will greatly miss her in these roles, we are deeply grateful for all she has given over the years. We pray that this next chapter brings her rest, joy and the opportunity to enjoy time with her family. Wishing her all the best for the future, with love and gratitude from everyone at Abbey URC.



It was a joy to celebrate the baptism of Jacob and Lindsey at Abbey URC on 26 April. We were delighted to welcome your family to mark this special occasion together.



Wishing Margaret C a wonderful 80<sup>th</sup> birthday – we hope you have a lovely day, with love and good wishes from all your friends in the UK at Abbey URC xxx

I had a lovely surprise when I opened the door on the 7 April. A lady was standing on the doorstep with a large bouquet of flowers. Thank you Barbara for the roses, they lifted my spirits. **Joan D**

Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers that Gwen very kindly delivered after Easter. They are still looking lovely and an added bonus was having a chat with Gwen. **Ruby**

### PLEASE NOTE: NO ACCESS TO ABBEY URC ON 9 MAY

Please note that the Royal School of Church Music Choristers' Examinations are being held in the church on Saturday, 9 May between 9am–4pm: no access to the church will be possible during these times. Thank you.

### BIBLE STUDY



Our monthly Zoom Sunday evening Bible study will take place on Sunday, 3 May at 6.30 pm (ID 864 1780 6994 PC learning) when we will look more deeply at the Gospel verses set for that Sunday (see 'morning prayer' readings). All welcome!

## A TIME OF CHANGE

Those of you who were at the service on 19 May, will have heard that I will not be seeking re-election as an Elder at our Annual General Meeting on 7 June. This means that I will also no longer be your Church Secretary after the AGM.

As I explained after the service, my husband Graham finished work at Christmas and I too retired just before Easter. I was first elected Elder in 1992 and have served both as Elder and as Church Secretary since then, except for a few years break during Terry's Ministry. I believe that this coming AGM on 7 June is the time I feel called to stand down as your Church Secretary and Elder to allow for others to hold these important roles within this church. My predecessor and friend, the late Joyce Downer, told me the art of growing old was to know when to give up roles gracefully, and I now feel that time has come for me.

Graham and I are beginning to form plans for our future, which may include moving nearer to our son in Scotland or our daughter in Wokingham, so I would not like to just walk away but fade away gradually.

Over the years I have given much time and energy to this church, sometimes at the detriment of my family or work. Indeed, when our son John was in his teens he dismissed calling Jehovah Witnesses with the words "we do not need you as Mum goes to church and says enough prayers for all of us". They could not answer that one, so left as he shut the door.

With our Ministers changing work patterns, Sarah in taking a well-earned and overdue sabbatical from July to September this year and Mike's retirement next Easter, stepping down now gives my replacement an opportunity to learn some of the ropes before these changes take place, especially the ensuing Ministerial vacancy, which will inevitably place an extra load on all of the church, including the Elders, but especially the Church Secretary.

I have certainly been challenged and continue to be challenged as a member of this church, but I am now looking to serve you in a different way until we move away; as a church member playing my part in different ways within the life of this church. Please do not expect my successor to follow in my footsteps, but continue to support them and the Elders, as you have supported me, in the different skills they will bring to the task.

I thank you for the support you have given to me over the years and ask you all to pray both for my future role in the church, and for yours. Also to pray for Graham and myself as we discern where we are being called.

At our AGM we need to elect a strong Eldership to face the challenges ahead, for this church to grow in its witness for our Lord. We need through our prayers, actions, and words to meet the challenges of the future mission to which our God has called each one of us, both as a church and as individuals.

I ask each church member to pray about who you wish to elect as Elders of Abbey United Reformed Church to support Sarah B, Wai and Howard on the Eldership. The terms of office for Carole, Sylvia and myself all expire at the AGM. Nomination papers are now available at the back of the church and should be completed and returned to any current Elder by Monday, 18 May to enable all names to be included on the AGM agenda to be available for the Sunday.

If you have not been received into Church Membership, you are not eligible to vote at Church Meetings; although your prayers and comments are always welcome. This includes voting not only for Elders but also future Ministers. Please speak to me or a Minister if you would like to know more about being received into Church Membership.

**Andy Bevan**

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## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK



Christian Aid week is from 10–16 May 2026. Our morning service on 10 May will be based on material provided for Christian Aid, telling about the relief and assistance Christian Aid provides throughout the world. If you wish to make a donation to support their

work, envelopes are available at the back of church and can be left with the offertory in the entrance to the church on 10 or 17 May before the service. Please remember to sign the back of the envelope if you are able to Gift Aid your donation, thereby increasing its value by almost 25%.

Between 10am–12.30pm on Saturday, 16 May there will be a Coffee Morning in Abbey Hall Lounge to raise funds for Christian Aid. More information about their work will be on display. Please support this Christian Aid fund raising event if you are able.

There is also the opportunity to test your knowledge about Christian Aid's work by supporting Bitterne United Reformed Church's Christian Aid Quiz at 7.30pm on 16 May if you so wish, details under Southern Fellowship on page 20 of this magazine.

## STEWARDS

An important means of outreach for our Church is the use the different groups within and around Romsey make of the church building for holding concerts and other events, both as a means of their own fundraising and in using their skills and talents to bring pleasure to others. Their donations to the church for such use is also the main way in which the community helps to maintain our witness and buildings.

Over the summer we have a variety of events starting with Romsey Male Voice Choir on 1 May. Romsey Chamber Music Festival will be holding 9 short concerts from 28-31 May; Beggars Fair events will be in the church and hall on 11 July and we are hosting a special quilters display, plus other events, during the Romsey Festival between 4-19 July.

All of these require at least one person from the church to be present as a steward. You will be the welcoming face of the church, something for which we are well known. The tasks are simple; you need to be ready to answer the usual questions about the location of the toilets and light switches, be aware of the procedure to be followed for emergency evacuations, ensure the church furniture is replaced by those hosting the event when they finish and lock up. If you would like to know more about how you can help the church in this way, please speak to Andy or Carole.

## UKRAINE

For our Community Awareness Service on 14 June, we have invited two speakers from the local Ukraine Support Group, one a refugee and the other a host family offering accommodation to Ukrainian refugees. The war in Ukraine has been pushed out of the headlines recently with the shocking events in the Middle East. However, any support we can give to the Ukrainians in their struggle will be most welcome. So, please book 14 June in your diary to come and support our local Ukrainian community.



## ART FROM OLD BOTTLE TOPS

Transition Town Romsey and Romsey Men's Shed are working with local community groups to make mosaics from bottle tops; these will be displayed during the Romsey Festival from 4-19 July. They still need many more to complete the designs, with around 500 tops required for each mosaic! Bottle tops of any size, shape or colour are welcome. They can be dropped off at Romsey Town Hall, the Library, Golden Gecko, Appletree Centre, Royal British Legion and the Community Pantry. Thank you.

# Drawing MUSIC

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**ABBEY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, ROMSEY**

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Sunday Family Worship 10.30am



**ROMSEY  
FESTIVAL  
2026**

## EASTER CELEBRATIONS

Thank you to everyone who celebrated Easter with us at Abbey URC.



Palm Sunday saw Reggie and Ronnie, two local donkeys, visit Abbey URC on their way to the Market Place. A very important part of the Easter story, but not that often-seen walking around Romsey!

On Easter Saturday afternoon it was lovely to hear the excited voices of around 30 children in the church as they took part in our Easter Hunt. Each child was given a chart with 10 pictures on it and a tick list to show that they had found the same picture, displayed somewhere in the church - in the pews, in the prayer corner, in the pulpit, the vestry and rainbow room; they were rewarded with a bag of little chocolate eggs, and the whole family then stayed for a drink and a biscuit or hot cross buns. Thank you to all involved in organising this event, the children loved it. One mum said



“the children really enjoyed this, and the ladies were so lovely and friendly, thank you very much for having us xx”.



Congratulations to those lucky enough to win an Easter egg in our raffle, we hope you enjoyed your prizes; this raised £107 for church funds; thank you for supporting it.

Easter breakfast is always a very special time, as we join together to welcome the joy of Easter morning into our lives. It is a lovely start to our Easter celebration, thank you to everyone who prepared the breakfast and joined us.

Revd Sarah led our Easter service, and she deserves a special mention for carrying on when she forgot her hammer... the spoon wasn't quite up to the challenge of cracking the chocolate egg! Thank you for carrying on regardless!

The flowers in church were beautiful and the cross in our front garden was laden with flowers. It was a joyful weekend indeed; thank you to everyone who helped over the Easter period.



## CALENDAR

<b>May</b>		
1	7.30pm	Romsey Male Voice Choir with special guests Mansfield & District Male Voice Choir
2	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet prayer and reflection
3	10.30am	Morning Worship, including Holy Communion, led by Revd Mike
3	6.30am	Bible Study on Zoom; ID 864 1780 6994 PW learning
6	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
7	10-11.30am	The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge
8	6.30pm	Beetle Drive with Bangers and Mash at Bitterne Park URC
9	9am-4pm	Church in use for Royal School of Church Music Choristers' Exams; <b>PLEASE NOTE: no access to the church during these times.</b>
9	2pm	Southern Fellowship Group Anniversary Service at Braishfield URC led by Revd Mike with guest speaker Revd Stephen Thornton. Followed by refreshments.
10-16		Christian Aid Week
10	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Andy Bevan
11	10.30am	BALM in Abbey Hall Lounge
12	7.30pm	Chill Out Tuesday at White Horse Hotel
14	10-11.30am	The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge
16	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet prayer and reflection
16	10am-12.30pm	Christian Aid coffee morning Abbey Hall Lounge
16	7pm	Christian Aid Quiz at Bitterne URC
17	10.30am	Morning Worship led by Gwen Collins
18		Closing date for submission of Elders' nomination forms
20	2.30pm	Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall
20	7.30pm	Worship Group on Zoom; ID 851 4528 3637 PW business
21	10-11.30am	The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge
21	7.30pm	Youth and Outreach Group on Zoom; ID 851 4528 3637 PW business
23	10am-12.30pm	Church open for quiet prayer and reflection
23	10am-12.30pm	Coffee and Cake at Avenue St Andrews URC

24	10.30am	Pentecost Sunday Worship led by Revd Sarah Hall
26	7.30pm	Elders Meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge
28	10-11.30am	The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge
28	7-8.45pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Between Tides
29	6-7.30pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Fire and Ice
29	9-10pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - A Winter's Journey
30	10-11.30am	Church open for quiet prayer and reflection – <b>PLEASE NOTE: amended timings</b>
30	11.30am-12.15pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Family Concert
30	4-5.45pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Fiery Red
30	7-8pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Goethe Quartet play Schubert
31	10.30am	Trinity Sunday Songs of Praise Service led by Howard Coulson
31	1.30-2.20pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Flute Recital
31	5-5.30pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Composer Interview with Robert Peate and Laura Rickard in Abbey Hall
31	6.30-8.30pm	Romsey Chamber Music Festival - Water Drops

## CHRISTIAN AID COFFEE MORNING

Thank you to Andy for organising the Christian Aid coffee morning in our Abbey Hall Lounge on Saturday, 16 May from 10am-12.30pm. We hope you can join her to support this worthy cause. Thank you.



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# Braishfield United Reformed Church

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	Allison Symes	02380 262803
	Sharon Whitfield	01794 328853

## May

3	9.30	Holy Communion led by Rev Mike Perrott
9	2.00	Saturday: Southern Fellowship Anniversary Service at Braishfield URC led by Revd Mike Perrott, Preacher: Reverend Stephen Thornton. Refreshments to follow at the Community Room in the Village Hall. All welcome. Parking now allowed at the Village Hall car park.
10		No service at Braishfield URC
10	9.30	Christian Aid Service at All Saints Parish Church
17	10.00	Family Worship led by David Stone
24	10.00	Favourite Hymns Service led by Sharon Whitfield
31	10.00	Family Worship led by Revd Mary Thomas

## June

7		NO SERVICE – RUNNERS
14	10.00	Church Anniversary Service
14	10.00	Family Worship led by Rev Mike Perrott
21	10.00	Favourite Bible Readings led by Allison Symes
28	10.00	Family Worship led by Chris Noyce

## July

5	9.30	Holy Communion led by Rev Mike Perrott
12	10.00	Family Worship led by Nick Tustian
19	10.00	Flower Festival
19	10.00	Family Worship led by Andy Bevan

***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

I hope all had a happy Easter. The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed!



Congratulations to all who won Easter eggs from the raffle organised by Margaret Batchelor and Joan Glister. The excellent (eggcellent perhaps?) sum of £40 was raised for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, our charity again for this year.

Talking of fundraising, Margaret Stewart and David Webster have been giving out lovely pens with Scripture verses on them. Donations for these are also going to the charity. I am pleased to report £110 has been raised from these. As a writer and editor, I appreciate good pens and these are lovely.



If you would like to hold an event to raise funds for the charity, do let Shirley Smith know so it can go in the church diary. Thanks.

Now for more good news, and an update to what I shared last time about the Southern Fellowship Anniversary Service. This will be hosted by Braishfield on Saturday, 9 May at 2pm and led by Reverend Mike with retired minister, Stephen Thornton preaching.

The good news is Sharon Whitfield has booked the Community Room at the Village Hall on this day. The tea and refreshments will be served over there after the service but it does mean, because we've booked the room, we can use their car park. At the time of the last magazine coming out, Sharon was looking into the possibility of doing this and it wasn't clear whether it would be possible or not. So, a huge thanks to her and Joan Glister for organising this; we are very glad the room is available for us to use on that afternoon as it will make life simpler.



I am only sorry I won't be there because I'll be on my way to Scotland at that time though Daniel Symes will be there and organising the music. Many thanks, Daniel, in advance for that.



Don't forget Braishfield will be joining All Saints Parish Church for the United Christian Aid Service this year the next day on Sunday, 10 May. Please note the service will start at 9.30am. All are welcome.

Looking a little further ahead, the 208<sup>th</sup> church anniversary service will be on Sunday, 14 June 2026. We hope as many as possible can come to join us for that. It would be lovely to see you.

Also coming up later in June will be a Favourite Bible Readings service. I will, in due course, be putting out a list at the back of the church for people to write down their favourite reading. There will also be a space for people to write a line only about why it is their favourite reading, if folk decide they would like to do that.

Once I have the list back, I will compile a service from this. Volunteers to read some of the lessons would be appreciated but more on that nearer the time.

*Allison S*



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## LUMOS PRESENT A CLASSICAL HANS ZIMMER TRIBUTE



Abbey URC are excited to welcome Lumos for the first time to our church. On Friday, 5 June Lumos Live presents an immersive concert by candlelight, where a string trio perform magical adaptations of iconic Hans Zimmer compositions including Gladiator, Kung Fu Panda, Sherlock Holmes, Madagascar, Cornfield, The Holiday, Interstellar, Eptescious, Lion King and Pirates of the Caribbean. There will be two performances, 7pm-8pm and 9pm-10pm; entry for first performance doors open at 6.15pm and for the second performance at 8.30pm. Seating is first come first serve to your allocated zones. Please note, this event is for eight-year-olds & above.

Lumos believe music should be more than just heard, it should be felt. These candlelit concerts transform timeless classics and modern favourites into unforgettable live experiences. Each show is designed to move hearts, spark memories, and create moments you'll never forget.

Every venue is handpicked for its character, charm, and atmosphere. Whether it's a grand theatre, a hidden gem, or a historic church, the glow of thousands of candles turns it into a place where music feels truly magical.

Music should do more than just fill a room; it should leave the world a little better than it was found. Lumos choose to support organisations that tackle the world's most pressing challenges; protecting animals, supporting mental health, funding life-saving research.

Lumos' aim is to remind people of the power of live music, to connect, to heal, to bring joy. Because in the glow of candlelight, every note feels just a little more special.

For further information, or to purchase tickets, please visit <https://www.lumos-experiences.com/event/a-hans-zimmer-candlelight-experience-in-romsey-friday-5th-june/> or should you have any queries please email them [customerservice@lumos-experiences.com](mailto:customerservice@lumos-experiences.com)

## WISDOM CENTRE PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

The Wisdom Centre run a varied in-house programme of workshops, quiet days and retreats. With wellbeing of mind, body and spirit at the heart of Wisdom Spirituality, their days include reflection on themes within Christian and World Spirituality. More info can be found on their website [www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk](http://www.wisdomhouseromsey.org.uk)

**Unity in Difference: Exploring a Shared Spiritual Journey Towards a Greater 'WE'** on Saturday, 16 May from 10am-4pm facilitated by Sr Marie Turner. This day of reflection aims to help us become aware that in our troubled world:

- we are all at the same time “equal and different”.
- we all carry stereotypes and prejudices that require a conversion;
- we have a freedom and a responsibility to commit ourselves to live our differences as a richness and journey towards a greater “WE” that expresses the beauty of God’s plan for humanity.

**Silent Retreat Day** with the Breathing Space Team on Saturday, 20 June from 10am-4pm. Facilitated by Debbie Waldron and Pauline Yong. People often feel called to silence in response to God. When we find it hard to fully articulate what we wish to express, silence can often liberate us from feeling bound by words, especially for those who feel over busy, or have recently experienced change.

A silent retreat is a good opportunity to press the pause button in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, and to reflect on changing circumstances in our lives. Above all else, a silent retreat can give us the opportunity to encounter God’s compassionate and unfailing Presence more deeply.

**Transformative Journey: The Spiritual Writings of St John of the Cross** on Saturday, 4 July from 10am-4pm. Facilitated by Martin Handy. a transformative journey as we explore the spiritual writings of St. John of the Cross, focusing on his two most moving and contemplative works.

Whatever your spiritual understanding, or experience, this day has much to offer. St. John of the Cross writings on the growth of the soul are considered the summit of Christian mystical literature and offer profound insights into the spiritual journey of the soul and relationship with God.

# ELEMENTS

23 - 31 MAY 2026

in Abbey United Reformed Church



**28** May 19:00 | **Between Tides**

**29** May 18:00 | **Fire and Ice**

**29** May 21:00 | **A Winter's Journey**

**30** May 11:30 | **Family Concert**

Our relaxed concert is back for people of all ages to enjoy story-telling and music from our festival programme.

**30** May 16:00 | **Fiery Red**

**30** May 17:00 | **Goethe Quartet**

**31** May 13:30 | **Flute Recital**

**31** May 17:00 | **Composer Interview**

Composer Robert Peate joins Artistic Director Laura Rickard to discuss his new string quartet inspired by a series of paintings by Charles MacCarthy based on grasses. Followed by a Q+A session. In Abbey Hall.

**31** May 18:30 | **Water Drops**

[www.romseychambermusic.com](http://www.romseychambermusic.com)

# ROUND THE SOUTHERN FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES

## Southern Fellowship Anniversary Service 2pm Saturday, 9 May 2026

Please do join with members of the other five churches in the Group at 2pm on Saturday, 9 May for the Southern Fellowship Anniversary Service. This is being held at Braishfield URC, led by Revd Mike with the guest speaker Revd Stephen Thornton giving the address. The service will be followed by refreshments in Braishfield Hall Community Room.

Address: Braishfield Road, Braishfield, Romsey SO51 0PX

Please park in the Braishfield Village Hall car park nearly opposite the church. If the car park is full, please park on the main road on the church side of the road.

This offers both a good opportunity to hear Revd Stephen Thornton as well as meeting long standing friends, and new, for a chat and exchange of views after the service. We hope to see you there.

### Bitterne

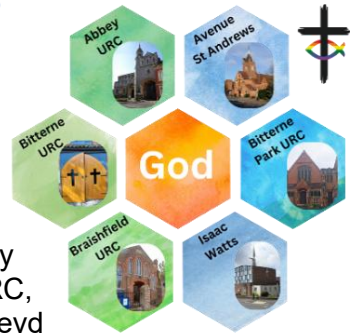
It's been a full and encouraging start to the year, with lots happening across our church, our community partnerships, and our celebrations for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our church building in Bitterne Precinct.

A real highlight was our inclusive service on 1 March. This was followed by our Christian Musicals sing along - a joyful way to begin our anniversary events. Community connections have been growing too. With Churches Together in Bitterne we held Great Bitterne Bake Off on 4 April, all 17 entries brought something special to the table.



We're looking forward to our Christian Aid Charity Quiz Night on Saturday, 16 May at 7pm - complete with a tasty Ploughman's supper. Entry is free, and donations on the night will support the life-changing work of Christian Aid.

Teams can have up to 6 quizzers, but you're very welcome to come solo. Just pop your name down and we'll match you with a friendly team. Reserve your space by emailing [ianbitterne@gmail.com](mailto:ianbitterne@gmail.com). For more info visit: <https://bitterneurc.org.uk/40-years-in-bitterne-precinct/>



## REVD MIKE'S PREACHING ROTA

May	3	9.30	Braishfield URC 10.30 Abbey URC
	10	10.30	Bitterne Park URC
	17	10.30	Isaac Watts URC
	24	10.30	Bitterne URC
	31	10.30	Avenue St Andrew's URC

## DRAWING MUSIC – FREE WORKSHOP

We are really excited to host this free workshop at Abbey URC. Drop in to any of the sessions throughout the day, our artist in residence Elizabeth Hammond will be on hand to provide guidance and demonstrations. There will also be an opportunity to create and collaborate on a large-scale drawing.

On Saturday, 4 July between 11am and 3pm there is the opportunity to explore the intersection of sound and drawing in this hands-on workshop at the Abbey United Reformed Church. Experiment with mark-making, and discover how to translate music into visuals in this fun and interactive drop-in workshop! Throughout the day the church will play host to a variety of sounds from musicians and choirs to birdsong and creating our own through our percussive abilities.

All ages and stages welcome, all materials provided, no previous musical or art experience necessary!

If you would like further information about this event, please visit <https://www.romseyfestival.org/events/drawing-music/>



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SUPPORT THE WORK OF ABBEY URC ONLINE

As cash becomes a thing of the past, dropping a penny in the pot isn't always easy. You can still support Abbey URC - simply and securely - from the comfort of your home.

Through your bank or by BACS: you can select a regular direct debit from your bank account or make a one-off donation by card or digital wallet. Bank details: Abbey United Reformed Church Romsey, Sort Code 40-52-40, Account Number 00033457, Bank CAFS.

SumUp card machine: the machine is in Abbey URC; it works the same as a card machine in a shop - except you can choose the amount to donate. Please ask an elder, or the person on duty, if you are unsure how to use it.

QR code: scan this QR code on your phone to make a donation via SumUp to Abbey URC. Simply follow the instructions and add your payment details. Any donation under £30 automatically qualifies for Gift Aid, so there is no need to put in your personal details. Any card or digital wallet will work and simply add your email address for a receipt.



Thank you for supporting the work of our church and upkeep of our buildings.

## SAFEGUARDING TRAINING DATES IN WESSEX SYNOD

Thank you to everyone who has a position within our church requiring this training, who has already attended a safeguarding course .. This isn't just a box-ticking exercise, it's important we are able to recognize when someone might be at risk and we know what to do about it.

For those who still need to attend a course, below is the full list of safeguarding training dates in Wessex Synod. Please note: people wanting to book onto a Refresher course must have completed the combined Foundation & Intermediate training within the last 3-4 years. If not, then the combined Foundation & Intermediate safeguarding training course should be repeated.

### Full Foundation & Intermediate courses:

9 May from 10am–4pm in person at High Cross Church, Camberley

16 May from 10am–4pm in person at Tadley URC

17 October in person at Havant URC

### Refresher courses:

26 September from 1.30pm–5.30pm in person at Westborough URC

26 September from 10am–3pm in person at Bournemouth International Church

Online safeguarding Refresher course: Thursday evenings on 24 September and 1 October from 6.30pm–8pm. Delivered across 2 online sessions, participants must attend both sessions to complete the course and gain a certificate.

Online Advanced safeguarding course: Thursday evenings on 15 October and 22 October from 6.30pm–8.30pm. Delivered across 2 online sessions, participants must attend both sessions to complete the course and gain a certificate.

Please book via email [bookings@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:bookings@urcwessex.org.uk) or the synod website <https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/safeguarding/>. If you have any queries or questions, please don't hesitate to chat with me. Thank you.

***Ruth P***

## RECYCLING AT ABBEY URC

Thank you to all who brought in your empty sweet plastic tubs for recycling. These are no longer being collected, although it will restart again next Christmas. Your donations of foreign coins, printer cartridges and used stamps can still be left in the appropriate receptacles under the notice board in the church foyer along with your donations for the Community Pantry and Romsey Foodbank.

## ROMSEY EVENT LAUNCHES DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK WITH COMMUNITY INFORMATION DAY



Romsey Dementia Action Group (Romdag) is inviting local residents, carers, and families to attend its upcoming Dementia Information Day at Crosfield Hall on Sunday 17 May 2026, from 10am to 4pm, marking the start of Dementia Action Week, a nationwide campaign to raise awareness and improve support for people living with dementia.

The free community event will bring together a wide range of local organisations and professionals who provide services to people living with dementia and those who care for them. Visitors will have the opportunity to speak directly with experts, discover available resources, and learn more about the support networks available in the local area. The Dementia Information Day is free to attend and everyone is welcome.

Dementia affects thousands of families across the UK, and events like this aim to ensure no one feels they have to face it alone. Whether someone has recently received a diagnosis, is caring for a loved one, or simply wants to learn more about dementia-friendly support in the community, the event offers a welcoming space to ask questions and connect with others.

Romdag Chair Janet Pratley said: “Our Dementia Information Day is all about helping people understand what support is available and making sure families know they are not alone. We want people to feel confident that help, advice, and friendly faces are available right here in the community.”

Last year’s event was warmly received by attendees, who valued the opportunity to access information and speak directly with organisations that understand the challenges families face.

Organisations expected to attend include well-known charities and local service providers offering advice on care, wellbeing, legal matters, transport, and everyday living with dementia. Please keep an eye on our website for stallholder information.

Dementia Action week runs from the 17–22 May so please keep an eye on our website to find out what other events we are organising in this week, in particularly the Dementia Bus which will be in the Town Square on Wednesday, 20 May. [www.romdag.co.uk](http://www.romdag.co.uk)

## STEP INTO NATURE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE: WALK THE TEST WAY RETURNS

Walkers across Hampshire and beyond are being invited to lace up their boots and take part in the much-loved “Walk the Test Way”, a unique charity walking event organised by the Rotary Club of Romsey Test.

Taking place along the beautiful Test Way in Hampshire, the annual event gives participants the chance to enjoy stunning countryside while raising money for a charity of their choice.

With routes ranging from 5 miles to over 25 miles, the event is designed for everyone - from families looking for a scenic day out to seasoned walkers seeking a rewarding challenge. Participants are transported to their chosen starting point and walk back to Romsey, where a warm welcome, refreshments and a medal await.

Since its launch in 2003, Walk the Test Way has raised more than £1.3 million for charities across the UK. In recent years alone, tens of thousands of pounds have been distributed annually to causes including health charities, youth organisations, disability support groups and local community initiatives.

What makes Walk the Test Way special is its flexibility - participants can raise funds for any registered charity close to their heart. Every step taken directly benefits causes that matter most to the walkers themselves.

Beyond fundraising, the event is a celebration of community spirit. Families, schools, businesses and local groups walk side by side, sharing stories, encouragement and a shared sense of achievement as they cross the finish line together.

A spokesperson for the organisers said “Walk the Test Way is about bringing people together to enjoy the Hampshire countryside while making a real difference. Whether you walk five miles or twenty-five, every step helps someone in need.”

Registration opens in May 2026. For full details and to register, visit: [www.walkthetestway.org.uk](http://www.walkthetestway.org.uk)





**DEMENTIA INFORMATION DAY**  
*providing information, support and possibilities!*

Take time to chat with many local organisations who provide engaging activities, social connection, and essential resources for living well with dementia

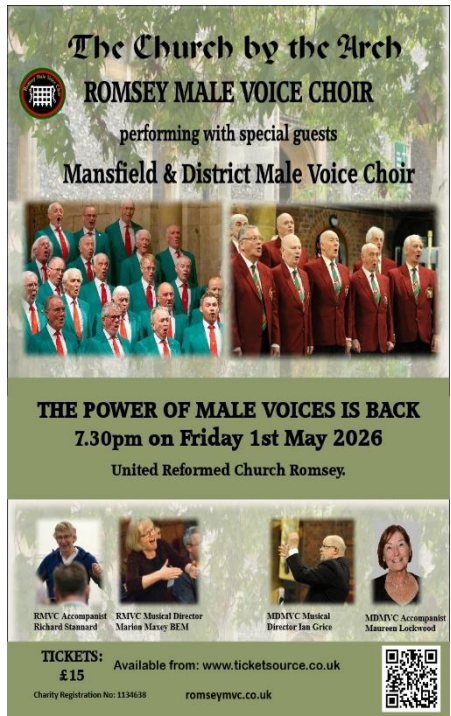
**SUNDAY CROSFIELD HALL**  
**17TH MAY 2026 BROADWATER RD,**  
**10AM - 3PM ROMSEY**

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE  
 CASH ONLY

**FREE ENTRY**

[www.romdag.co.uk](http://www.romdag.co.uk)  
[romseydementiaactiongroup@gmail.com](mailto:romseydementiaactiongroup@gmail.com)  
 FB@Romdag

**ROMDAG**  
 Romsey Dementia Action Group




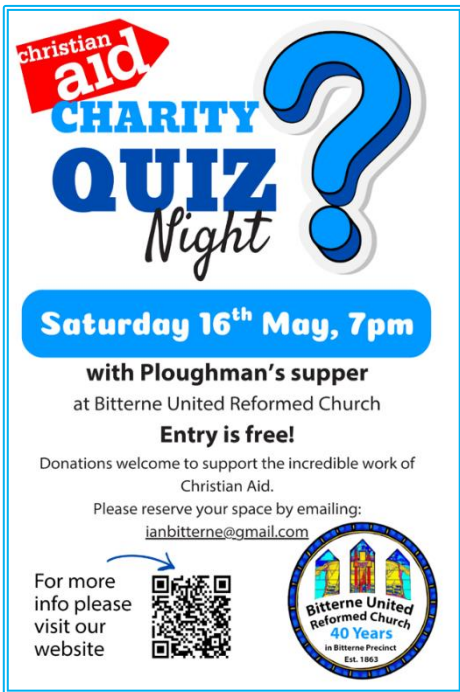
**The Church by the Arch**  
**ROMSEY MALE VOICE CHOIR**  
 performing with special guests  
**Mansfield & District Male Voice Choir**

**THE POWER OF MALE VOICES IS BACK**  
**7.30pm on Friday 1st May 2026**  
 United Reformed Church Romsey.

**TICKETS: £15** Available from: [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk)

Charity Registration No: 1134638 [romseymvc.co.uk](http://romseymvc.co.uk)


ROMVC Accompanist: Richard Steward  
 ROMVC Musical Director: Martin Macey BEM  
 MD/MVC Musical Director: Ian Greig  
 MD/MVC Accompanist: Matthew Lockwood

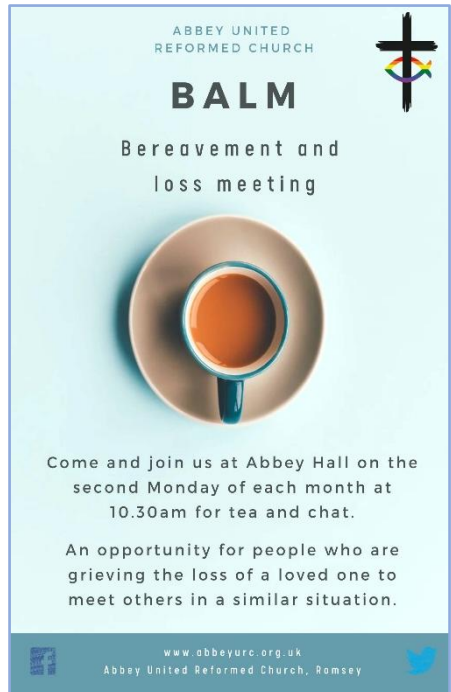
**christian aid**  
**CHARITY QUIZ Night**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 7pm**  
 with Ploughman's supper  
 at Bitterne United Reformed Church  
**Entry is free!**

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**BALM**  
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[www.abbeyurc.org.uk](http://www.abbeyurc.org.uk)  
 Abbey United Reformed Church, Romsey

