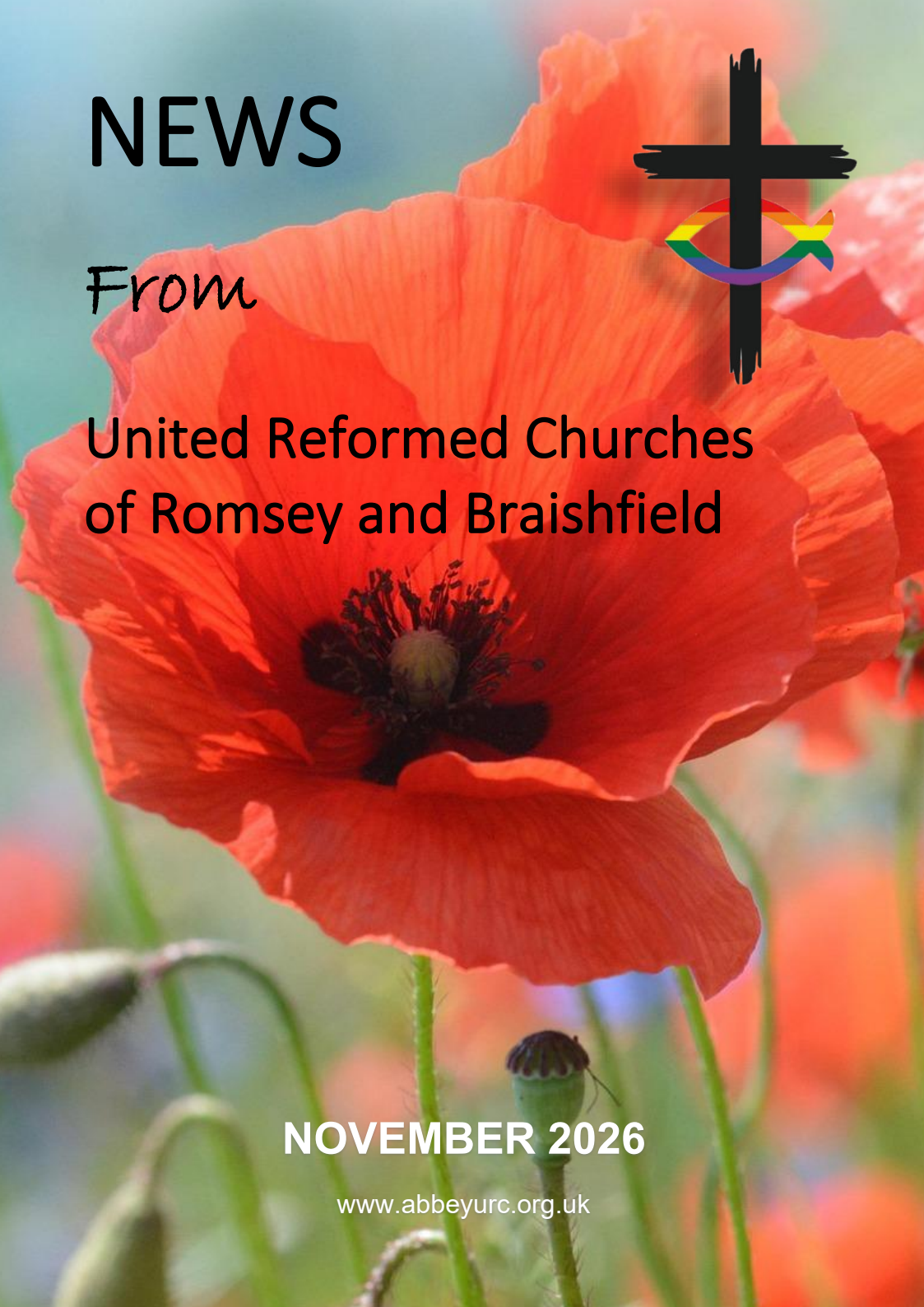
# NEWS

*From*

# United Reformed Churches of Romsey and Braishfield



**NOVEMBER 2026**

www.abbeyurc.org.uk

# Abbey United Reformed Church

**www.abbeyurc.org.uk**
or find us on social media

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Ministers:** | **Revd Mike Perrott MA**<br>email: revd.mike13@gmail.com<br>Day off: Monday | 01794 512163 |
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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Premises Officer** | Caroline Taylor<br>abbeyurcpremisesofficer@gmail.com | 07471 660834 |

## 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 changes can be found on our website or on our weekly service sheet**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Monday (2nd) | BALM (Bereavement) Group | 10.30am |
| Thursday | The Social Cup - refreshments and warm space. Open to all, in Abbey Hall Lounge | 10am - 11.30am |
| Wednesday (1st 3rd) | 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

**November 2026**

November isn't always an easy month to live through. Days go cold (though heaven alone knows what it'll be like this year, given such a warm autumn...); days go dark.

I reckon the poet Thomas Hood got under November's skin when he wrote:

No sun - no moon!
No morn - no noon -
No dawn - no dusk - no proper time of day.
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member -
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds! -
November!

November is also a month for memory and mourning: first there's All Souls, when those we have loved and lost come to mind; then Bonfire Night, when a plot by one set of Christians to kill another set of Christians, in and around Parliament, was defeated, and those responsible executed. Finally, there's Remembrance Sunday, when all those millions who have died in war, past and present, are given their due.



So, Paul sets all Christians, including us, a big challenge when he writes: 'Rejoice in the Lord always!' and - just to make sure his first readers in Philippi didn't overlook it - 'Again I say: rejoice!' That emphasis on joy might seem rather naive, if not callous, if we didn't know so much about Paul's own life, once he had met with Jesus on that famous road to Damascus. In his enthusiasm to share the Gospel, Paul meets with just as much hardship as he had once handed out to those Christians he had persecuted: beating; stoning; being thrown out of synagogue and out of town. On his way to stand trial before the Emperor, he even faces the perils of shipwreck.

So. what has Paul got to be so happy about? Is he one of those fatuously determined optimists who refuse to see any downside to life? No: for in that same letter he's just addressed head-on a problem which still bedevils our churches even today - good Christian people who have great difficulty in seeing one another's point of view - by appealing to them to be of one mind in Christ. Then, if he's not blindly optimistic, how does he cope with all the suffering in the world, and in his own life, too?

For in our conflict-ridden world, that's a question of more than philosophical interest we're still asking ourselves today.



Well, Paul tells God everything that's on his mind. Rather than pretending that, because he follows Jesus, he hasn't a care in the world, he admits his worries to God - all of them, even the little ones; even the embarrassing ones; even the ones that seem to have no possible resolution. He asks for God's help and when he does that, he finds peace, God's peace.

Jesus talked about that sort of peace too. You can't understand it; you can't make yourself feel it. It may come when you've seen something lovely; or learned something new, or met someone kind. Or, weirdly, it may come just at the worst time, when life's a complete and utter nightmare. But whatever's going on in your life right now, that peace is God's gift to you.

Fantastic idea, you may be thinking, but how do we receive it? Well, Paul's got a few tips on that, too. Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, he says, think about these things.

When at All Souls we remember those we have loved and lost, let's think of the good memories we associate with them - their humour; their creativity; their kindness - and give thanks. When we think of wars, past and present, let's call to mind the courage and self-sacrifice shown, by soldiers and civilians alike, in this most destructive mode of disagreement, and give thanks when we find it demonstrated by people on both sides of the argument.

And as we go about our daily November lives, let's actively look out for whatever it is that makes our hearts rejoice. For, let's face it, it's all too easy to see the downside of life, to get into the No- frame of mind Thomas Hood is caricaturing - and to pass it on. But like Paul, we are people to whom God has given light in darkness, hope in sorrow, peace in conflict. So, in defiance of all those Nos, let's ask for God's help to live that way!

***Revd Sarah***

## BIBLE STUDY

Our monthly  Zoom Sunday evening Bible study will take place on 1 November 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!

## PRAYER FOR NOVEMBER

'Rejoice!' Paul tells us. 'Be glad!'
Has he seen the papers, Jesus?
Does he know the bad news from around the world -
Empires making policy on the hoof to benefit their friends?
Prices rising?
Wars going on and on and on?
Our earth buckling under the strain of human greed?
He's having a laugh, isn't he?

On second thoughts, maybe he did know.
The Roman Empire wasn't good news for Christians -
not by a long chalk; not for another four centuries.
Some of the first churches were founded by refugees
from when Jerusalem was sacked by its soldiers.
Paul himself would get caught up in its processes,
executed by the Emperor.

He wasn't daft, Paul.
He wrote 'Rejoice!' from house arrest in Rome.
Yet he could still advise his friends:
'Look out for the goodness in things - it comes from God!'

Why is it such hard advice to follow, Jesus?
Maybe because Paul's not giving us control over our lives,
or promising that bad things won't happen.
He's saying: 'If they do, God will give you what you need to cope.
So tell God your worries! Ask for God's help! Let God's peace in!'
Please, Jesus, give us enough trust in you to give it a go.
**Amen**

***Revd Sarah***

## MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Material for December/January magazine to be submitted by 5pm (latest) **on Thursday, 19 November 2026.**

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.




## FIRE EVACUATION AND HEATING UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who helped when we had an issue with our heating system last Sunday, and to those who moved the service to the hall. We're pleased to confirm that the boiler was quickly shut down, which restricted the issue to smoke rather than a fire; it is believed it was caused by faulty wiring outside the church premises.

We are very grateful to the people of Romsey for their patience whilst SSEB undertook works under the arch – especially as it clashed with the arrival of not one, but two storms in the UK! We need to wait for the SSEB work to be completed before our heating system can be repaired, but we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Darren of Fox HVAC for coming out on a Tuesday evening to meet the SSEB engineer and for prioritising our job as much as possible.

Remember to familiarise yourself with the location of the fire exits. If we need to evacuate the church, please leave by the nearest safe exit and help anyone who may need assistance to leave safely. Our assembly point is at the top of Newton Lane Car Park. Please move away from the church to allow emergency services clear access. **Do not return to the building for any reason until the emergency services have given the all-clear.** Thank you for your help and cooperation in keeping everyone safe.

## CHURCH NEWS

Thank you for all the cards and flowers you sent me to celebrate my birthday.

***Peter W***

From 26 October to 1 November Revd Mike is on study leave, please contact Sarah B with queries.

If you would like to be added to the weekly email, which includes our worship sheet and any updates, please email abbeyurcsec@gmail.com with your name and email address.

Thank you so much for the card and the very generous leaving gift. Once I am able to get on the golf course again, I will enjoy a trip to American Golf without Sue saying "how much"! I have enjoyed my 15 years working for the trust and with you all on the various church projects. I hope that the support that I have given to the churches has enabled and encouraged them to view their buildings in a different way for their future missions.

***Graham Barber, Wessex Synod***

A big hearty thank-you. Leaving this role and retiring from full-time stipendiary ministry has been a long process, underpinned by clearing years of gathered papers, books, furniture and other belongings, supported by colleagues, a pastoral supervisor and spiritual director.

I was really amazed by the generosity shown by those who signed my card and gave money to see me off. I have been able to buy myself a really good laptop as a result – needed as I am giving back the Synod laptop imminently. So, this is just a short note to say how thankful I am for all the comments and the gift. Amazing! Grace and peace,

***Mary***

## CHRISTMAS JUMPERS



Thank you to everyone who donated their Christmas jumpers at the start of this year. Chris L was kind enough to launder them, and they have now been passed to Romsey Methodist Church for their Christmas Jumper Swap on Saturday, 21 November from 4pm-6.30pm.

Pop along and browse their selection of pre-loved festive clothing and enjoy their Christmas café.

## CHRISTMAS CRAFT AT ABBEY URC



Join us at Abbey URC on Saturday, 21 November from 3pm to 7pm, as Romsey celebrates the switching on of its Christmas lights.

Our artist in residence, Elizabeth Hammond, will be leading a fun, family-friendly Christmas craft activity. Come along and make your own stamp to create a unique Christmas card, then write a Christmas wish on a star to hang on our Tree of Angels.

This drop-in activity is suitable for people of all ages, no previous creative experience required. Bring the whole family! Children will need adult supervision. We'll take a short break from 4.40pm to 5pm so everyone can enjoy the Christmas lights switch-on. A big thank you to Romsey Town Council for funding this creative opportunity.

The church will also be open as a warm, welcoming space for anyone enjoying the festivities. Whether you need a seat, a little peace and quiet, or access to the facilities, you're very welcome to pop in. We look forward to welcoming you and sharing a little Christmas creativity and kindness with our community!

## TREE OF ANGELS



This Advent, we will once again have a Tree of Angels in our church, offering a special place to remember loved ones who are no longer with us. The tree will begin simply, with lights, and we invite you to add an angel with their name or a special message.

Our church will be open on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and you are always welcome to pop in during any of our open events. Alternatively, you can find angels beside the Prayer Post Box in our doorway. Simply write your message, post your angel into the box, and we will make sure it finds its place on the tree.

By Christmas morning, the tree will be filled with names, memories and messages, each one a reminder of someone loved and missed. We will remember these loved ones in our prayers throughout the Christmas period.

The tree will remain in place into January, because we know that missing someone doesn't end when Christmas is over. We hope it will bring comfort and reassurance that, even during this difficult time of year, those we love are never forgotten.

## DATE OF NEXT CHURCH MEETING AND NOMINATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS DONATIONS 2026

Our next Church Meeting is at 11.30am on Sunday, 15 November after the service. The meeting will be discussing our Christmas charity donations; if you have a charity you would like the church to support, please let Sarah B know. Thank you.

## FUNDRAISING – EVERY LITTLE HELPS



Fundraising is an important part of supporting our church and helping us care for our buildings, continue our activities and serve our community. There are lots of ways we can raise money together, and it doesn't have to involve a big event or lots of planning! Coffee mornings at home or in the Abbey Hall Lounge are a lovely way to bring people together, enjoy a chat and a cuppa, and raise a little money at the same time. These informal gatherings are enjoyed by everyone who comes along.

If you would be happy to host a coffee morning, help organise an event, or have an idea for something we could do, we would love to hear from you.

Fundraising is not just about raising money; it's also about spending time together, strengthening friendships and enjoying being part of our church family. So, if you have an idea, however simple, please share it. Together, we can make a difference!



If you'd like to join a small Fundraising Group to investigate the possibilities moving forward, please talk to Carole or Sarah. Thank you!

## PRAYING FOR OUR DIRECTION

You are invited to pray each Wednesday evening at 7pm, in your own space, using the prayer below for direction as we look to our future.

God of wisdom,
show us your direction and guide us
as we prepare our Pastorate Profile.
Help us to listen for your voice,
to trust where you are leading us
and to follow the path you set before us.
May all that we do reflect your will,
and the future you have planned for us.
***Amen.***


Romsey Methodist Church
building a community for Christ
invites you to our annual...
CHRISTMAS JUMPER SWAP
SATURDAY 21ST NOVEMBER
4 – 6:30pm
BROWSE OUR PRELOVED FESTIVE CLOTHING, AND ENJOY OUR CHRISTMAS CAFE!
ROMSEY METHODIST CHURCH
THE HUNDRED, ROMSEY
SO51 8BZ
Donate an item of festive clothing by dropping off at Oasis Christian Centre (SO51 8BT), or arrange drop-off or collection by emailing info@romseymethodist.church. You'll receive a token to collect a "new to you" item during the swap (subject to availability!). Clothing will also be available to buy; all proceeds will go to the work of the church.


Romsey Community Pantry
We're Moving!
Our new home:
Romsey Baptist Church
22 Bell Street,
Romsey,
SO51 8GW
Next to Bradbeers
The Community Pantry will be closed from
26th October to 2nd November.
Reopening on
Tuesday 4th November
at the new premises:
Romsey Baptist Church, 22 Bell Street, Romsey, SO51 8GW
4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
We look forward to welcoming you to our new location!


ROMSEY
TOWN COUNCIL
2027
MAYOR'S AWARDS
NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN
The Mayor's Awards celebrate the people and organisations who make Romsey a kinder, more connected and vibrant place to live, work and visit.
NOMINATE TODAY
NOMINATIONS CLOSE MIDNIGHT, 31 JANUARY 2027
If you know someone who goes above and beyond for our community, we want to hear from you.
Find out more and make your nomination
www.romsey-tc.gov.uk
Romsey Town Council Town Hall 1 Market Place Romsey SO51 8YZ


50s 60s
Music Night
Bitterne United Reformed Church
40 Years
Tickets £5
Join us for a Retro 50s & 60s Night with the band New Tricks featuring Trev, Kevan and Mick bringing the classics to life!
Expect music, memories, dancing, and refreshments as we celebrate 40 years of Bitterne URC in the precinct.
Sat 28th November
5-7pm
Bitterne URC
Please reserve your ticket by emailing:
BURC_CommunityOutreach@outlook.com
For more info, visit our website
https://bitternerc.org.uk/40-years-in-bitterne-precinct/

## COUNTDOWN TO ADVENT

This November, we will again be supporting Amber, a charity working with women involved in street work in Southampton, and also collecting toys to support the Southampton Voluntary Services Toy Appeal.

On the first Sunday of Advent, 29 November, we will be joined by Amber and Southampton Voluntary Services when we pass our donations over to them for distribution before Christmas.

There is no obligation to take part, and anything you can give will be gratefully received.

For **Amber** you are asked to donate some of the items below, please choose as many as you like, or are able:

Handy wipes, body spray, hand cream, pocket tissues, lip salves, foundation, face cream, bars of chocolate, hand gel, small cartons of drink. You're also invited to include an unsealed Christmas card with a message of hope and encouragement.

For the **Toy Appeal** please donate:



new toys or suitable gifts for children and young people; kindly do not wrap the gifts as they can then check they go to the right young person.

Please drop off donations by Saturday, 29 November by 10.30am. The church is open on Saturday mornings between 10am–12:30pm or Sunday, 29 November between 10am and 10.30am before our service. Thank you.

## OPENING OF CHURCH FOR ROMSEY CHRISTMAS EVENTS



We will again have the church open when the town centre is full of people for the switching on of the Christmas lights, the lantern parade and Carols in the Market Place.

To have the church lit up and welcoming in the corner of the Market Place will be witness to our presence in the town centre.

During these events, people may welcome somewhere where they can come in to warm up and be on their own for a few minutes.

If you can help steward during any of these events, please contact Carole. Thank you.

As we journey towards Advent and Christmas, we remember one child who grew into a man and changed the world, despite having so little in comparison with the abundance we often know today.

## ONE SOLITARY LIFE

The child of a peasant girl, living in an obscure village, he grew up in another village where he worked in a carpenter's workshop until he was thirty and then for three years he was an itinerate preacher.

He never wrote a book, never held an office, never owned a home, he never had a family, never went to college and never travelled far from the place where he was born.

He never did any of the things that usually accompany greatness and he held no credentials but himself.

He was still a young man when public opinion turned against him, his friends ran away, his enemies subjected him to a mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between thieves and his executioners gambled for his only property… his garments.

He died and was placed in a borrowed tomb through the compassion of a friend.

Nineteen centuries later and still, today, he is the central figure of the human race, all the parliaments that have ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned – put together – have not affected the life on earth as that

One

Solitary Life.

***Monty Tarlton, 1999***

## ADVENT CAROL SERVICE 30 NOVEMBER



We look forward to you joining us for our Advent Carol Service starting at 3pm on Sunday, 29 November. We have also extended the invitation to the rest of the Southern Fellowship, and to Trinity Totton, to join us.

We are delighted that the Hampshire Teachers' Choir will be sharing in this event helping us to raise our voices in song. The service will be led by Revd Mike, and will be followed by refreshments.

We hope to see you there, together with friends and family.

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICES

We will again be joining in the Civic Remembrance community events for Remembrance Sunday, therefore there will be no service at Abbey URC on 8 November.

The parade, representing military and veteran personnel and local organisations, assembles at Love Lane at 9.15am and parades to Romsey Abbey for the 9.45am service. After the service the parade will continue to the War Memorial Park for a further commemorative service, including the traditional 2 minutes silence at 11am. After this the parade will continue past the Town Hall, where the dignitaries will take the salute. Revd Sarah will be representing us during the service and at the memorial. Please do support this if you are able to do so.

## NEWS FROM ROMSEY AMNESTY GROUP



The group members have been busy online recently, as no doubt have many people, to make their views known about executions in the USA. As part of a big anti-death penalty campaign, the Romsey group had already elected to target the state of Tennessee, and were shocked by the botched execution there of Christa Pike. Together with a proposal that a member of the military be executed by firing squad, the situation 'across the pond' appears to be taking a turn for the worse. Our group has been campaigning against the death penalty since we started in the 1980s.

This month, the group decided to pay for a livestream of the talk 'Truth under Fire' from the BBC journalist, Jeremy Bowen, on a tour of the UK. The Chair person, Fay Fleming, hosted a group of members to watch this, and it was fascinating to see clips from the many conflicts and trouble spots he has covered over his long career. He was adamant that his commentaries should always be dispassionate and factual, and so trusted were his reports that they were used as evidence in the trials of war criminals in the former Yugoslavia.

Wednesday, 4 November is the birthday of Nasser Zefzafi, our adopted political prisoner, and we continue to write to the Moroccan authorities, who have unfairly jailed him, to ask them to release him.

On a lighter note, the group has once again volunteered to act as marshals at the Southampton marathon next May, and are keeping their fingers crossed that there will be another sunny summer!

***Fay and John***

# CALENDAR

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 10.30am | Morning Worship including Holy Communion led by Revd Bernie Collins |
| 1 | 6.30pm | Bible Study on Zoom; ID 864 1780 6994 PW learning |
| 4 | 2.30 pm | Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall |
| 5 | 10-11.30am | The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge |
| 7 | 10-12.30pm | Church open for quiet reflection and prayer |
| 8 | 9.45am | Remembrance Sunday at Romsey Abbey |
| 9 | 10.30am | BALM in Abbey Hall Lounge |
| 10 | 11am | RomDag Remembering Service |
| 11 | 2pm | Pastoral Group Meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge |
| 12 | 10-11.30am | The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge |
| 14 | 10-12.30pm | Church open for quiet reflection and prayer |
| 15 | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Mrs Andy Bevan |
| 15 | 11.30am | Church Meeting chaired by Howard Coulson |
| 17 | 2.30pm | The Ruth Fellowship in St Joseph's Parish Room (opposite 1 Abbey Water) |
| 18 | 2.30pm | Church Table Tennis in Abbey Hall |
| 18 | 7.30pm | Worship Group on Zoom; ID 851 4528 3637 PW business |
| 19 | 10-11.30am | The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge |
| 19 | 7.30pm | Outreach and Youth Group on Zoom; ID 851 4528 3637 PW business |
| 21 | 10-12.30pm | Church open for quiet reflection and prayer |
| 22 | 10.30am | Morning Worship led by Nick Tustian |
| 24 | 7.30pm | Elders Meeting in Abbey Hall Lounge |
| 26 | 10-11.30am | The Social Cup in Abbey Hall Lounge |
| 28 | 10-12.30pm | Church open for quiet reflection and prayer |
| 29 | 10.30am | 1st Sunday in Advent, Morning Worship led by Howard Coulson including gift donations to Amber and Southampton Social Services |
| 29 | 3pm | Advent Carol Service led by Revd Mike followed by refreshments. |

# Braishfield United Reformed Church

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

**November**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 9.30 | Holy Communion led by Revd Bernie Collins |
| 8 | | No service at Braishfield URC |
| 8 | 10.50 | Remembrance Sunday<br>Meet at the Village War Memorial for 10.50am. There will be the Two Minutes Silence at 11am and the names of the dead will be read out. |
| 15 | 10.00 | Memory Service led by Revd Dr Sarah Hall |
| 22 | 10.00 | Family Worship led by David Stone |
| 29 | 10.00 | Toy Service - First Sunday in Advent led by Revd Mike |

**December**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | 9.30 | Holy Communion led by Andy Bevan |
| 13 | 10.00 | Family Worship led by Daniel Symes |
| 20 | 3.00 | Carols by Candlelight service led by Revd Sarah |
| 25 | 9.30 | Christmas day short joint service here, with Abbey URC, led by Revd Mike |
| 27 | 10.30 | No service at Braishfield URC. Joint service to be held at Abbey URC, Romsey. |

**January**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 9.30 | Holy Communion led by Allison Symes |



***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

We are well into autumn now and I am having plenty of exercise picking up fallen leaves. It does save on going to the gym though! Autumn can be a busy time, and this is confirmed as there is plenty happening during November at our church.



Firstly, we will be joining the village at the War Memorial at 10.50am on Sunday, 8 November for the Remembrance Sunday service. David Webster will be laying the wreath and I will be reading on behalf of Braishfield URC.




Secondly, on Sunday, 15 November, we will be holding our Memory Service led by Revd Sarah. The names of our remembered ones from the list at the back of the church will be read out during the service. It is always a moving occasion. We hope you can join us.

At the end of the month, the first Sunday in Advent, Revd Mike will be with us to lead our Toy Service. As I write this, I can confirm a representative from Southampton Voluntary Services will be joining us to collect the toys we donate and we are hoping they will give us a brief talk about what they do. Please ensure all donated toys are new and in their original boxes etc. Gift bags for them to be in are also greatly appreciated. Many thanks. These toys will mean so much to those who will receive them.

We are continuing to support the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance as our charity project. Please continue to collect coins in your Jars of Coins (though notes are also welcome!). A date to bring the jars back into church for collecting and counting will be confirmed later in our notices. But it is amazing how much we can raise just through giving these coins so please keep going with it!

And, of course, we are rapidly heading into the festive season.

Our wonderful light-hearted Carols by Candlelight service will be held at 3pm on Sunday, 20 December. This is a fun service with plenty of



singing so I hope you will be in good voice for it (I hope to be too!). Refreshments will follow this, which we will be glad of after the singing. The church does look lovely with the tealights in situ though I am very grateful to Sharon for setting these up and taking them down again later. But do come and check this service out for yourself. Christmas jumpers are welcome, but not obligatory.

We will be holding our usual short joint service on Christmas Day, when we will be joined by members of the congregation from Abbey URC. On Sunday, 27 December there will be no service at our church, but I hope as many of us as possible can join our dear friends at Abbey URC, Romsey, for a joint service on that day. More on this next month.

Meantime, I hope you stay cosy and warm so autumn can be enjoyed in comfort!

***Allison S***



## MORNING PRAYER

If you would like to take the opportunity to reflect upon the weekly bible readings and to pray for the needs of the world, and the Church, in your own time during the week, below are the relevant passages.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| November | 1 | Psalm 34:1-10 and 22 | Matthew 5:1-12 |
| | 8 | Psalm 78:1-7 | Matthew 25:1-13 |
| | 15 | Psalm 123 | Matthew 25.14-30 |
| | 22 | Psalm 100 | Matthew 25.31-46 |
| | 29 | Psalm 80:1-7 and 17-19 | Mark 13:24-37 (Advent 1) |

## THE RUTH FELLOWSHIP

(formerly the Roman Catholic/United Reformed Church Dialogue Group)

We will meet next on Tuesday November 17 at St Joseph's Parish Rooms (opposite 1 Abbey Water), at 2.30pm. Please contact Revd Mike for further details. Refreshments will be available - all welcome!

Abbey United Reformed Church, Romsey

# COUNTDOWN TO ADVENT

Bringing some light and love this Christmas

We have two collections on the Countdown to Advent. We invite you to donate small, thoughtful items for Amber to distribute to the women they support or items for the Southampton Toy Appeal.

Suggested items for Amber:

- handy wipes
- body spray
- hand cream
- pocket tissues
- lip salves
- foundation
- face cream
- hand gel
- bars of chocolate
- drinks cartons

Items for the Toy Appeal: new toys or suitable gifts for children and young people; kindly do not wrap the gifts as they can then check they go to the right young person.

Please drop off donations by Saturday, 28 November.
The church is open on Saturday mornings between 10am–12:30pm
Please place your donations in the box at the back of the church.

Thank you for your generosity and kindness!

## AMBER CHAPLAINS
## BRINGING HOPE TO WOMEN ON THE STREETS

Amber Chaplains, part of City Life Church Southampton, is a specialist outreach project supporting women involved in selling sex on the streets of Southampton.

Our chaplains go out regularly in our outreach van to build trusted, non-judgemental relationships with women who face significant vulnerability, exploitation, isolation, poverty, addiction, poor mental health and violence. We give out gift bags containing toiletries and small treats, alongside being able to offer practical support, friendship, prayer and a listening ear, while helping women access appropriate services and explore opportunities for change.

A growing part of Amber's work is our daytime multi-agency outreach. We are now working in partnership with organisations across Southampton, including specialist support services, health and mental health teams, housing providers, substance misuse services, the police and other charities. By working together, we are aiming to respond more effectively and holistically to individual needs and help women navigate services that can otherwise feel difficult to access.

Our current van is nearing the end of its usable life and we are currently raising funds to replace it to ensure we can continue to provide an accessible, practical and welcoming base for our street outreach. It will enable us to carry essential supplies, offer women a safe space to talk, and strengthen our ability to work alongside partner agencies.




You can find out more about our work, how to get involved, and how to make a donation on our website: amberchaplains.org.uk

Every gift will help Amber Chaplains continue bringing compassion, dignity, practical support and hope to women on the streets of Southampton.



## SOUTHMPTON TOY APPEAL

In January 2026, Southampton City Council recognised the extraordinary generosity of businesses, voluntary organisations and individuals who supported vulnerable children across the city through the 2025 Southampton Toy Appeal.

Thanks to the extraordinary kindness of so many people a record number of donations were received. 52,000 new toys and gifts were donated, ensuring children supported by Southampton's Children's Services had something joyful to open at Christmas, as the cost of living continues to challenge many families.

Colin McPherson, Toy Appeal Coordinator, said: "I've been involved with the Toy Appeal now for over 30 years. It's amazing to be part of something this special…, we put our children at the heart of everything we do. Working alongside council colleagues, partners and community groups to help young children to enjoy the magic of Christmas and teenagers to know that someone cared enough to think of them too."

Braishfield and Abbey URC, plus the people of Romsey, have supported this charity for so many years. Thank you for helping to bringing joy to so many young people each Christmas.




## ROUND THE SOUTHERN FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES




### Bitterne

A heads up for some dates at Bitterne URC for the upcoming busy Christmas period:

Bitterne Light Switch on event will be Saturday, 14 November from 4pm. It includes a fun fair, concert with local bands and choirs, plus guest star Matt Le Tissier will switch on the Christmas lights.

Our Christmas Fair will be on 5 December from 10am-2pm with community stalls, craft and market stalls, family fun!

Christmas Tree Festival from 5-23 December on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10-11:30am. alongside our coffee morning. This is our annual event where local community groups decorate one of our many trees and lets our church sparkle!

### Avenue St Andrews



Join us on Saturday, 14 November at 2pm for Indoor Kurling with cream tea and raffle at Avenue St Andrew's Church. Admission by ticket, £10 per person. Please contact Suzanne Dawson, secretary at Avenue St Andres, via email at asachsec@gmail.com. For catering purposes we need numbers in advance, although you can pay on the door.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SOUTHERN FELLOWSHIP INTERIM MODERATOR

Hello everyone

I believe that you have all been informed that I have been appointed by the relevant Synod Pastoral Committee to be the Interim Moderator for the Southern Fellowship churches. Some of you know me better than others but as a good joint baseline here is some background information about me.

I am a retired stipendary URC Community Minister (CRCW) and have worked in Bolton and Southampton. In Bolton we set up the first Church

with Childrens' Centre partnership in the URC, working to improve the very impoverished lives of the local community, and I also had a role within the North Western Synod and Church House in London.

After 7 years I was called to Southampton so began here in December 2013 mainly to work with Avenue St Andrews and Freemantle. Later I also did some work with Chandlers Ford and Isaac Watts and again also had Wessex Synod and Church House roles. A lot of the work at ASA revolved around The Avenue Children's Centre and the Multicultural Centre whilst at Freemantle we had a partnership with Transition Southampton and set up the first Repair Café in the city. I was also the Community Governor at the school beside the church, St Marks.

Whilst still working I only had a little time with Bitterne Park and Bitterne URCs so I have more to learn about you but since retiring in 2019 and moving to Calmore, on the edge of Totton, I have got to know both Braishfield and Abbey, Romsey URCs better.

I am now an Elder at Trinity Totton LEP, Methodist/URC and the church hopes to join the Southern Fellowship as soon as the official processes of both denominations allow.

This is just the briefest of information about me so please feel free to ask any further questions as we go along and I look forward to working with you all.

***Pat Oliver***

## 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***.

## LIVING WELL WITH DEMENTIA IN ROMSEY

Romsey Dementia Action Group (ROMDAG) is dedicated to supporting people living with dementia and their families in Romsey and the surrounding areas. We believe that a dementia diagnosis doesn't mean life stops - it simply calls for new ways to connect, create, and enjoy life. Each week, ROMDAG offers a variety of activities designed to stimulate, engage, and uplift. Music, singing, pub quiz and memory sessions spark conversation and laughter. These social gatherings provide peer-support and a safe, welcoming space for people to share experiences, make friends, and feel less isolated.

We look forward to returning to Abbey URC for our annual Remembering Service on Tuesday, 17 November 2026 arrival 10.45am for 11am start. It will include content from the National Remembrance Service and also memories from some of our group members on the theme of 'My Childhood'. All are welcome to attend the service whether or not they are affected by dementia. We look forward to you joining us.

We warmly welcome anyone affected by dementia, carers and family members. Refreshments are included and we only ask for a donation of £2.50 per session.

ROMDAG is more than just activities - it's a community. A place to feel supported, empowered, and connected. We encourage anyone interested to join us, volunteer, or simply learn more. Visit www.romdag.co.uk, email romseydementiaactiongroup@gmail.com. Together, we can make each week meaningful, joyful, and full of connection.

## HOPE CHOIR SINGERS – CHRISTMAS DATES

The Hope Choir look forward to visiting various homes through advent, if you would like to join us simply turn up at the venue below 15 minutes before the advertised start time. We look forward to you joining us.



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Friday 27 November | 10.30am | Plaza Green Room dementia group |
| Monday 30 November | 2.30pm | Cedar Lawn SO517 US |
| Tuesday 1 December | 2.30pm | Woodley Grange SO51 7NU |
| Thursday 3 December | 11.00am | Friars House SO51 5AD |
| Tuesday 8 December | 2.30pm | Abbeyfield House SO51 8EW |
| Wednesday 9 December | 2.30pm | Dunwood Manor SO51 6ED |
| Thursday 10 December | 11.00am | Durban House SO51 7JL |
| Monday 14 December | 1.30pm | Marie Louise HSE SO51 8GZ |
| Wednesday 16 December | 11.30am | Mottisfont Lodge SO51 8AG |

## WAITING WITH HOPE

The season of Advent points to the central message of the Christian faith; God came into the world, as the person of Jesus, to bring light, peace, love and salvation. It's because of this that believers celebrate each year as we remember God's gift to a world walking in darkness and we look forward with anticipation and confidence to Christ's return. It's more than just counting down the days until Christmas, we want to share the hope we have with those we love, close by and far away, this wonderful gift is one to be shared!

How do you like to commemorate this poignant season? It's a joy to come together with your church family each Sunday and remember together but there are also many ways we can walk with hope in our daily lives. Why not pick up a book of Advent readings and prayers, or an advent candle to light each evening and for those with a sweet tooth, there's always the anticipation of opening a little calendar door each day and finding a chocolate!

***Lauryn, Oasis Deputy Manager***




## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God gave us memories so that we might have roses in December.

***J M Barrie 1860-1937***

## CAN YOU KNIT, CROCHET OR CRAFT?




Can you knit, crochet or craft some angels by the end of November? People in Romsey have started crafting – but the more the merrier! Any type of angel is welcome – let your imagination run wild.

Please return your crafted angels at the end of November, then we will bless them and send them out into the local community for people to find in early December. Finding these angels is a small piece of magic for all who find them. Thank you!

Pattern ideas can be found on the links below:

https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/news-events/latest-news/angels-of-hope/
https://www.livingstones.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/christmas-angels-knitting-pattern.pdf
https://www.5littlemonsters.com/2019/07/lacy-crocheted-angel-ornament.html
https://atty-s.com/2019/11/free-crochet-angel-pattern.html

## REVD MIKE'S PREACHING ROTA

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| November | 1 | | Revd Mike on annual study leave |
| | 8 | 10.30 | Bitterne Park URC |
| | 15 | 10.30 | Bitterne URC |
| | 22 | 10.30 | Isaac Watts URC |
| | 29 | 10.00 | Braishfield URC - Toy Service |
| | | 3.00 | Abbey URC – Advent Carol Service |

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CHRISTMAS FAIRYTALE
A festive piano concert performed by
VIACHESLAV PUSTYNTSEV
featuring guest guitarist Alex Pustyntsev
FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER | 7:30 PM | DOORS 7:00
ABBEY URC, ROMSEY | SO51 8EL
Feat. music by
Blake, Elgar,
Hisaishi, Metheny,
Nyman, Sakamoto
and others
Tickets: £ 18 - Standard/ £14 - Concession/ £10 - Under 16
Online www.ticketsource.com/pustyntsev-music and on the door

## CHURCH IS AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITIES - THE RESEARCH SAYS SO

A recent national mapping report by The Gather Movement highlights "the scale, breadth and consistency of essential community services delivered by churches". The report is titled Heart of the Neighbourhood: How the Church is providing essential services in every part of the country. The Revd Geoff Felton, Moderator of the URC's Mersey Synod, was one of several URC representatives at the report's launch in September. He says: "The report highlights the significant impact churches have in our communities." Of the 1,632 churches that participated in the research, "there was a staggering 12,840 initiatives covering mental health, food security, children and families and housing and homelessness being run by local churches". However, it should be noted that the report has no specific denominational focus and draws on a wide range of ecclesial traditions.

## URC PUBLICATIONS

***A larger belonging* – the 2027 URC Prayer Handbook** is now in stock. The handbook features prayers of many kinds: for corporate worship and private devotion, of praise and thanksgiving, or confession and intercession, for ordinary days and difficult seasons. Together they reflect the richness and diversity of the Church's prayer life. £6.99 +p&p.

**2027 URC Pocket Diary** available for pre-order (delivery from mid-October). Includes calendars and year planners to 2029, notable dates for the URC and the wider Church, Assembly officers and URC staff, useful addresses, Assembly committee details, Synod information. 2026 diary one week to a page (from September), 2027 diary one week over two pages, 2028 diary one week to a page (to June). Year planner 2027-2029. £9.00 +p&p.

A range of books, charity Christmas cards, resources and other gifts available at **urcshop.co.uk**

## URC TRAINING

Advanced safeguarding course In-person at Fareham URC on 14 November 2026 from 10am–3.30pm.

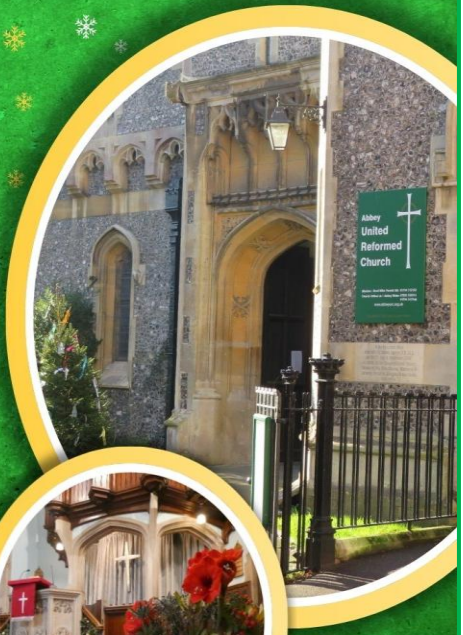
Foundation & Intermediate course on Saturday 9 January 2027 at Cornerstone Hythe URC. 10am – 4pm.

Bookings: via email bookings@urcwessex.org.uk or via the synod website https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/safeguarding/

# Christmas

AT ABBEY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,
ROMSEY, the church by the arch

# ADVENT CAROL SERVICE




Join us as we begin
our Advent journey,
let God's light into our
hearts and into our lives.



**29 NOVEMBER 2026**
**AT 3:00PM**

**EVERYONE WELCOME**




Member of the URC Southern Fellowship