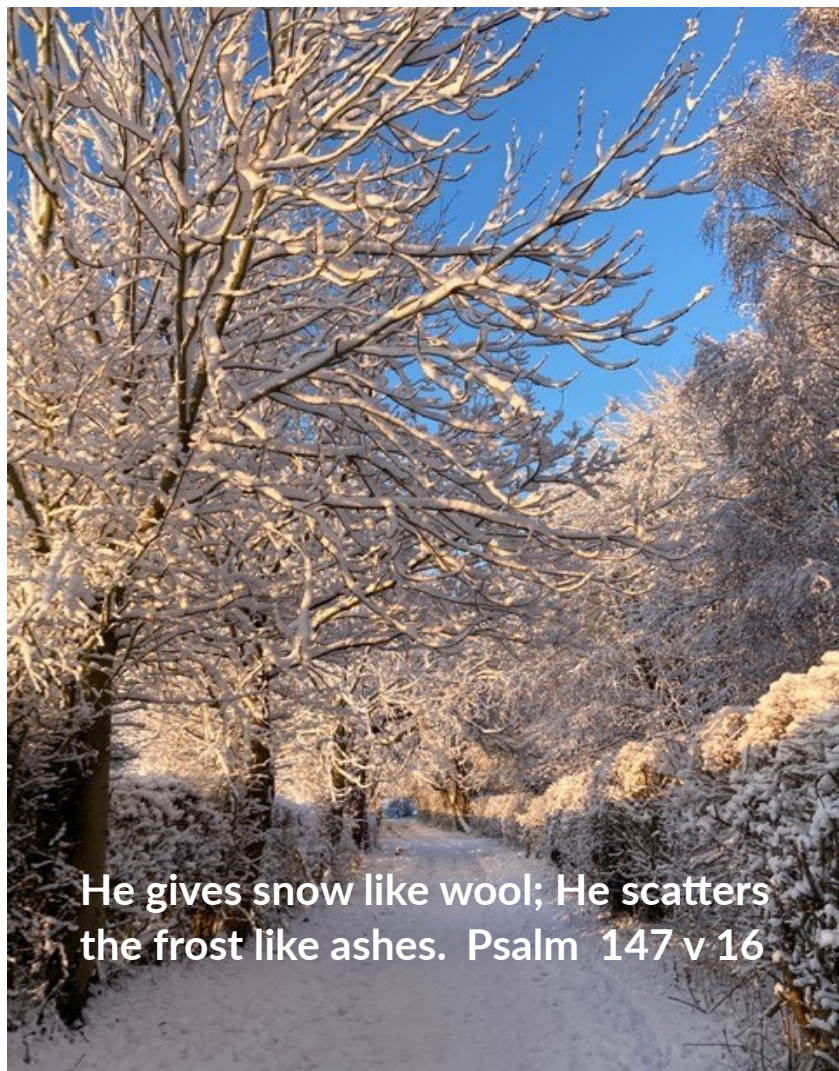




Yours

Magazine of
The United Church
Winchester

December 2021/ January 2022



He gives snow like wool; He scatters
the frost like ashes. Psalm 147 v 16

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Tim's Letter

Isolation

As I write this year's Christmas letter, I do so in isolation. Having contracted Covid-19 I am in lockdown for 10 days. It feels odd, and somewhat disconcerting, to say the least. Even at the height of the restrictions I was able to venture out, perhaps to go to the shops for essentials (wine) or take a walk down to the park. Now I feel guilty if I walk a few paces too far from the house, getting ready to pounce back into the garden in case someone sees me. It's as though I have the word 'infected' written across my forehead. All of a sudden the world seems very unwelcoming, with people pitying our plight yet rather keen to keep a safe distance from it. That's not a criticism; I'd do exactly the same. Gone is the community spirit of the first lockdown where organisations like churches mobilised rapidly to meet the needs of those shut in by the pandemic.

I wonder if Mary and Joseph felt this way as they knocked on the doors of Bethlehem's inns all those years ago. I'm sure many a well-meaning innkeeper was moved by their circumstances, but simply couldn't offer any accommodation because there literally was 'no room'. And when help was offered, the holy family were also in a position of isolation, not by choice, but by necessity. It's a stark reminder that many this Christmas, amid the celebrations of the masses that we hope will be possible, will spend the festive season in isolation.

John Bell and Graham Maule's poignant hymn 'Will You Come and Follow Me' has always been a favourite of mine. It's loaded with challenges about how we respond to the call of Christ to follow him. But the line that is really pertinent for our time is in the third verse: 'Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen'. When I'm better from Covid (God-willing), I'm not sure I'd be prepared to knowingly place myself at risk of contracting it again. And that's not because I'm risk averse, it's because coming down with Covid really has been a big deal for us, having lots of different knock-on effects. As much I want to 'kiss the leper clean', I still have to live in a pandemic-stricken physical world in which people are dying of Covid every day.

There's a balance to be found here. Though we cannot, at present, demonstrate the same physical modes of care like presence and touch, we can still care *spiritually*. We can pray for those who are in 'self'-isolation, and more than that, we can call them, talk to them, remind them that they are not 'unclean', that they are not alone, and that we are present there with them. So if you learn of someone being isolated, for whatever reason, over the Christmas period, pick up the phone and spend some time with them; it may just be the best present they'll receive!

In Christ, Tim

Will you come and follow me
If I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
Will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown
In you and you in me?

Editorial

For this edition we introduce two new features. 'Where are they now?' invites past members of Youth United to reflect on their time as young people at The United Church and to let us know what they are up to now. This month's contribution is from Anne Clews (MacKenzie) who we were delighted to see in church recently. Our second new feature is a Young People's Section where they will share creativity, news and views. This month we have artwork from two of the girls, Katie and Amy.

As this is a larger edition we have a double portion of 'Brief Encounter' where we benefit from the wisdom of Yvonne North and Maureen and John Heath.

We have our usual Comedy Corner, news of the wider church and several creative articles including an invitation to dance in worship from Pat Fry. Let us know your reaction to all this by contributing to our letters' page!

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year!

**The Yours Team—Sophie Armstrong, Bob Lord
and Dorothy Lusmore**

Your Letters



As we move deep into Advent whom or what did you remember on Remembrance Sunday?

I remembered:

- My father, 'Perbo', who was an ARP warden on top of the Steyning Church Tower, spotting for incendiaries.
- my uncle Bertie in Jersey, who twice nearly finished a small boat he built on a beach to escape to England, before being caught.
- my colleague, Jean, who was awarded the Legion D'Honneur as a fifteen-year-old cyclist courier for the French Resistance.



What were your thoughts?

Richard Costard

News of the United Church Family

One of our very longstanding church members, Alison Smith, died on 28 October aged 96. Roy and Alison joined Winchester Congregational Church in 1967.

Among many other things, Alison was deeply involved in the re-development plans for the 'new' church. Those who remember the church in the late 1980s, before re-development, will recall how dark and draughty it was! Alison was a member of the group which had the creative vision to choose the striking colour schemes which give the building's 'Wow!' factor. They also commissioned the distinctive font, communion table and lecterns which serve us well to this day.



Alison had a key role in the establishment of Olive Branch, the Christian counselling service. So many Winchester people have been helped by that Christian outreach.

We remember Alison's family at this time.

On a happier note –

Congratulations and all good wishes to Sam Brooks (son of Pauline and Roger) and his new wife, Farrar. They were married in Twickenham on 29 October.

We all hope that this year, unlike 2020, we may be able to celebrate Christmas more normally. A very Happy Christmas to all!

Helen McTiffin
Pastoral Co-ordinator

Brief Encounter with Maureen and John Heath

What is the first news/historical event you can recall from your early life?

Maureen: Rushing to get onto a train at Waterloo Station. We were going to Devon to escape the blitz.

John: The first historical event I recall is going across town to see where a V2 rocket had landed. This must have been in 1945. Several houses had been demolished, leaving a large hole in the ground.



What is your favourite saying or quotation?

Maureen: 'Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us.'

John: 'What does the lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with your god.' Micah

What have you changed your mind about?

Maureen: When old age starts.

John: I changed my mind about being afraid after an event as a young boy. For the rest of my life I have been an optimist.

What is your favourite piece of music?

Maureen: Elgar, *Chanson de Matin*

John : 'Lullaby of Birdland'. George Shearing, piano.

If you could spend a day in one city or place at one moment in history, where and when would that be?

Maureen: London on VE day. (I was there.)



John: In a space suit at the Sea of Tranquillity on 20 July 1969, witnessing Neil Armstrong's small step onto the moon.

Which person (or sort of person) would you most like to spend a day in the shoes of?

Maureen: In the steps of Gilbert White as he observed the Natural History of Selborne.

John: The Duke of Cornwall. He clearly meets many wise and interesting people.

Where do you feel closest to God?

Maureen: Under a bright starlit sky,

John: I am near God under a clear sky on a dark night.



New URC Initiative

A few years ago an online daily reading and prayer was introduced by the United Reformed Church under the title '**Daily Devotions**'. It has proved to be very successful, with increasing numbers of subscribers – and it's free! During the pandemic, this offering has become even more valuable, so at the URC General Assembly in July it was decided that it should become a more permanent feature of the denomination's life.

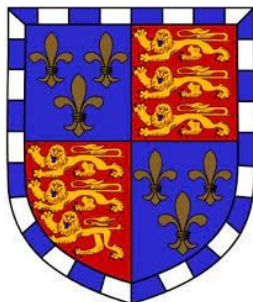
To this end, a new ministerial 7-year post was advertised: a Minister for Digital Worship, with the aim of supporting and extending this aspect of the URC ministry. After the usual application and interview process the Revd Andy Braunston has been appointed to this role. Andy is currently minister of a group of churches in Glasgow, and was instrumental in the introduction of Daily Devotions. He will take up his new role in February 2022.

Graham Rolfe

Cambridge in Bygone Days

In December 1955 a young lad from sunny Jersey travelled 'steerage' on the overnight ferry to Weymouth, caught the steam 'boat train' to Waterloo and then on to Cambridge. It was entrance exam time! The wind was whipping across the Fens all the way from the Urals to Cambridge and the very first thing this young lad did was to go to Boots and buy a hot-water bottle. The little three-bar gas fire in the room was good for toasting crumpets at the end of a toasting fork, but not much else! The exam was in The Senate House, some lads were wearing fingerless mittens and one near me had his teeth chattering.

Thus it was that in September 1956, courtesy of British Rail, my bike and my Steamer Trunk with my worldly possessions went ahead to Cambridge. I arrived to a monastic world, for Colleges like Christ's had originally expanded from student houses run by clergy, teaching novices in Latin (what else?) mainly for a life in the Medieval Church. At 11 pm the College Gates were locked, and visitors nowadays might still see the long revolving rods on top of the walls, equipped with spikes to stop anyone getting in or indeed getting out.



It was a very male environment and only the College Servants or scouts who made up the lads' rooms each day were 'feminine'. They were usually of indeterminate age, though they did take good care of their young gentlemen. Young ladies in college were a rare sight for there were only two women's colleges and one of them, Girton, was two miles Northwest of the City. In any case Girton's 'bluestockings' were the elite of the elite, and often intimidating, so that whipper-snappers like me left the field open to those undergrads who had already matured in their two years National Service.

In College we plotted how we could at least meet some of those teacher training at Homerton and decided to play them at Lacrosse! My 'talent' as a goalkeeper was spotted and I ended up with a Half Blue, though pride in this was somewhat diminished when a friend of mine tried, and failed, to get a half blue for tiddlywinks after playing

the 'Goon' in the Corn Exchange. As for the Homerton team they quickly went back to 'purdah'. Thus we did not even manage to alter for a moment the Cambridge ratio of nine men to every one young lady, 'bluestockings', teachers in training or nurses.

History tutoring was usually one on one. WOW ! I remember going to a tutorial, a voice said come in and then Walter Ullman popped up from behind a desk laden with papers and we began. He was an Austrian refugee whose lectures on the Medieval Papacy were so popular that he literally had to step over student's bodies on the steps down to the lecture dais. In contrast was Dom David Knowles on the Medieval Church, a saintly man, whose front row was filled with Nuns, with their wimples, watching him intently and drinking in every word he pronounced. Zoom lectures??

For me college life otherwise was mainly centred on music and college chapel choir. I will always remember the dinner the choir had where we ingénues all looked to the young Chaplain to take up the right cutlery for the starter. When we finally reached the savoury, dear old Bill, the Buttery Manager, relayed discreetly for each young gentleman 'as what had got it wrong'. Afterwards we all went for a swim in the Fellows' Garden in the moonlight and in the 'noddy'. Greek athletes exercised in the same way centuries before so why should not we? But NOW!!!



Looking back, it was for me a time of immense privilege and freedom, and I left, set up for a great job, with no student debt, thanks to state scholarships and an Exhibition. So on to the end. I met Val at a hop in the Corn Exchange after she had just laid out three dead bodies at Addenbrookes, so she found a flesh and blood one refreshing. We performed the ritual – punting up to Grantchester, cold chicken salad on the meadow and wondering why the church clock was still, as Rupert Brooke had observed, always standing at ten to three. We married in College Chapel in June 1956 and so began our own Forsythe Saga.

P.S. Never did know why the stockings were blue.

Richard Costard

Link to Hope



Thank you to everyone who packed a shoebox, knitted, sewed or contributed or donated. We managed to fill 129 boxes. These were collected by a volunteer, Dave. A few years ago he went to Eastern Europe with boxes and he told us that nothing had prepared him for how poor these communities are. Many people live in extremely poor shacks not as good as our garden sheds. Our boxes will be so appreciated and this is what makes Yvonne and I so passionate about collecting.

Please do remember that this is our Mission Project, not just for Christmas but all year for possibly two more years.

Fundraising has been very difficult over the last year. We had two very successful tea afternoons and a bacon roll morning, and thanks to your generosity we raised a great amount. Everyone who came really enjoyed being able to get together again. It would be really good if some of you could hold a small coffee or tea get together in January/February. It is a great way to keep connected.

Our next Fundraising events

Richard and Ann are holding a 'Pre Christmas' get together on Sunday 5 December 2-4 pm with sheltered outside, and inside space at 10a Edgar Road. Stollen, mince pies tea/wine. Please RSVP [here](#).

Toy Sale

Yvonne and I will be holding another toy sale on Thursday 9 December during Baby Playtime. Please let us have any toys. The last ones we had were very successful.

Please do check out 'Link to Hope'. website for up-to-date news. If you would like to donate or set up a standing order it is very easy now on our Church website.

Thank you all so much for bringing some joy to this very poor community as they struggle to get through each day.

Ann Coleman and Yvonne North

What Matters Most.

Many of you appreciated Brian Draper's videos filmed in Winchester during lockdown, which were available on the church website. They helped us spiritually and soulfully.

If you have a favourite walk that lasts an hour or are able to imagine yourself walking your favourite paths, why not download his free audio walking retreat: **'What Matters Most (Now)?'** from his website www.briandraper.org/new-audio.

Bob Lord

Young People's Section

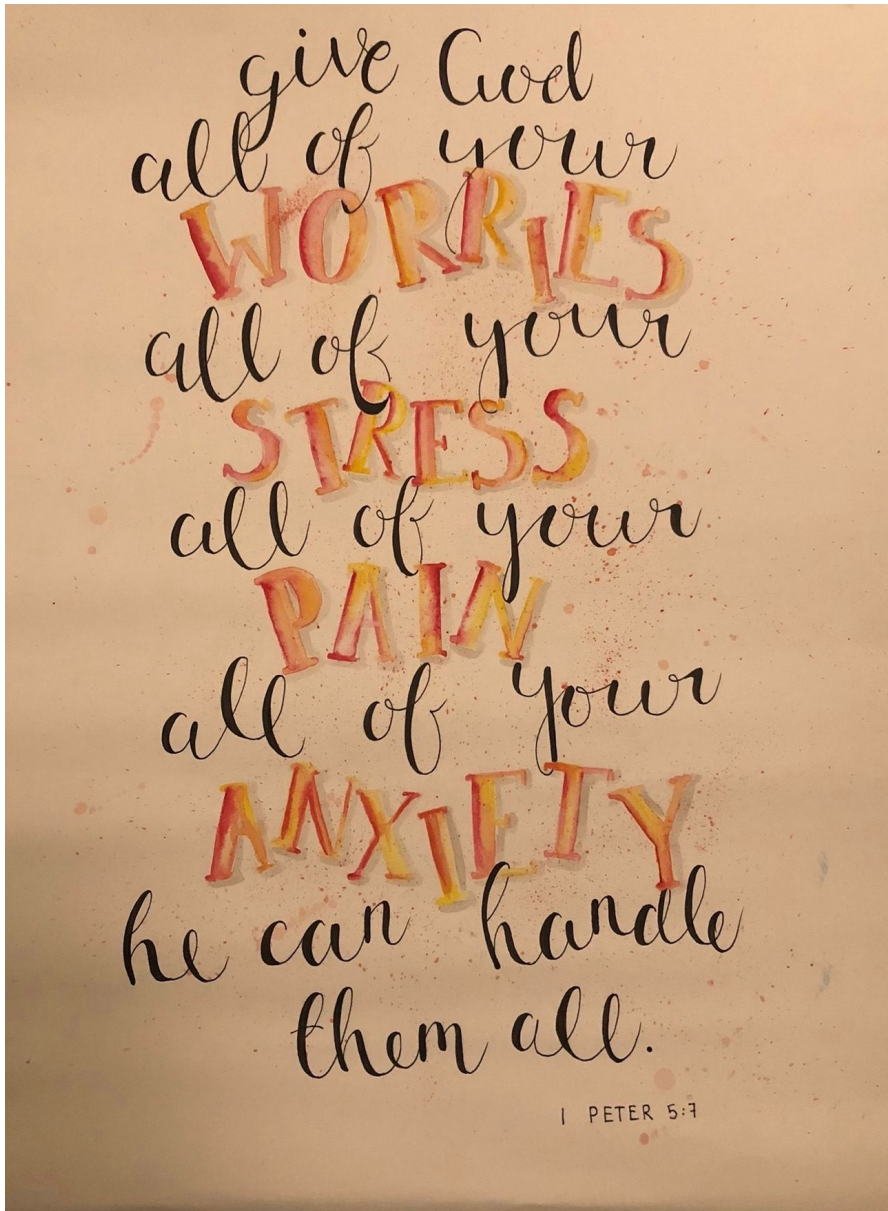
This month we have artwork from two of our multi-talented group of young people.

First, here is artwork specially created by Katie Giffin for our Christmas flyers and cards.



Secondly, here is 1 Peter 5:7 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you' illustrated by Amy Crocker.

If you feel inspired why not illustrate one of your favourite verses as well and share it with us all?



November News

Dan Walker dresses as a lobster. Christian Strictly Come Dancing participant Dan Walker opted out of dressing up in typical Halloween costume as an example to his children that it is not necessary to fit in with other people's expectations. The BBC presenter explained his decision to not wear a Halloween costume in the competition simply reflects his long-held view about how Halloween is celebrated. He had asked to be exempt from wearing a themed costume because he and his family do not celebrate Halloween. 'We don't celebrate Halloween in our house and I've got to say a huge thank you to Strictly because they enabled me to be a part of that programme without sort of doing Halloween. And our kids, they would normally go to a light party on Halloween weekend and I couldn't go on that programme and be a disingenuous dad.'



Conservation charity A Rocha, announced a new project planning to regenerate 15 per cent of the UK's church land in a bid to cut carbon emissions. Approximately 500,000 acres of land across the UK is owned by churches in the form of churchyards and conference centre grounds, urban community farms and agricultural estates. The charity's new initiative aims to transform 75,000 acres of this land into wild-flower meadows, native woodlands, and food forests over the next five years.

Christians are being urged to pray for people in Myanmar as violence against believers continues to intensify. Christian charity Open Doors is warning that people in the Christian-majority Chin State are being constantly targeted following an attack by Myanmar's military which burned more than 160 homes and two churches to the ground. In their advances, Myanmar's military has ransacked, shelled, and occupied churches, killing one pastor, and reportedly paralysing entire villages with fear.

'COP26 failed' say Church leaders. The Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church,

joins with leaders from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Methodist Church in Great Britain in responding to the conclusion of the COP26 summit held in Glasgow. 'Significant new statements have been made at the summit in Glasgow. Most government delegations accept that the sense of urgency is greater than it was six years ago at Paris. But ultimately, the summit has not delivered. All governments must agree on the necessary actions to avoid 1.5 degrees of warming. The failure of all parties at COP26 to unequivocally support this higher ambition with funding and emission reductions is an injustice towards those whose livelihoods have already been devastated by climate change.'

The Bishop of Norwich ,who is the lead bishop on the environment and attended the Glasgow talks, said later 'There was a powerful sense of solidarity across the faith groups and denominations at COP26 ... it was disappointing to see no space for faith groups at the summit. It was a great shame the British Government didn't put more emphasis on the role of faith communities.'

The Bible Society is celebrating after winning gold at the Chelsea Flower Show. The garden, entitled 'Psalm 23', took top prize in the 'best sanctuary garden' category. The garden includes areas that reflect green pastures, still waters and the valley of the shadow of death. It now has a permanent home at **Winchester Hospice**. See videos on the church website. ucw.org.uk/yours/



Where are They Now? – Anne Clews (MacKenzie)

My name is Anne Clews, you might remember me as Anne Mackenzie, attending The United Church from the end of 1981 (after being adopted through the Church of England Children's Society by Graham and Jenny Mackenzie) through to 1999 when I moved up to Yorkshire to study for my Theology degree in Leeds.

The United Church was certainly more than just a Church family to me, particularly as my parents asked all members of the congregation present at my Baptism in July 1982 (officiated by the Revd. Derek Wales) to act as my Godparents – I wonder how many of the current congregation remember this? I loved being part of the Junior Church – my first teachers were the amazing Evelyn Penny and Janet Hatt. My first memory was a little tin birthday cake that we



used to used to light a candle on and sing to anyone who had a birthday, although I always remember wishing it was real cake! I also remember various Junior Church parties in the old hall – getting splinters in my bottom from playing Musical Bumps! The Church musicals were always great fun, as was taking part in the music group, masterminded by Anne Bray, first on my tenor recorder then oboe and occasionally trumpet. My most favourite memories are of all were going to youth weekends with Bob Lord, Duncan Ramsay and Rob and Mel Grigorian – they were SO much fun, it really was the best time! I have no idea how they were brave enough to take us, but it really was a fantastic experience.

As time went on I grew more curious about the Bible and became interested in preaching, which I was allowed to do occasionally under

the watchful eye of Revd Howard Sharp from the age of about 16. I decided to study Theology at University as I felt called to some kind of ministry. This feeling inspired me to study Theology and see where that took me.

I was very much drawn to Trinity and All Saints University of Leeds because of it's small, friendly feel and the Christian basis that I felt would be supportive over the three years I would attend.

I quickly settled into Uni life, although the lifestyle itself was not really me – I didn't drink, didn't club, didn't party, but I found some like-minded people through the college Chaplaincy. I realised quickly that I wasn't the extrovert I thought I was and occasionally found myself coming home on the train for a few days to recharge and enjoy the peace of home, either that or heading off to the Lake District with my tent on my back!

In terms of Church, I initially went to a Methodist Church in the village and was looked after by the Minister and his wife, until sadly they were both killed in a car accident towards the end of my first year. I then went to a little Baptist Church which I loved and became a part of for a few years. Meanwhile I was also attending the college chapel on a Sunday evening and joined the



Music group there. There was something about the Catholic faith that stirred me inside; I experienced a real pull towards the rich tradition and Sacraments, something deeper and more meaningful than I'd experienced elsewhere. So I was kind of everywhere really!

In the second year of my degree, I had to carry out a work placement, something vaguely related to Theology. I decided to contact a Funeral Directors as I hadn't had much experience with death and figured

that this would be important in any form of ministry. Within half an hour of being in the building I was in the walk-in refrigerator putting a necklace on the first dead body I had ever seen... it was fine! To me the lady looked like a shell, her soul was gone – to a better place. During my time there I learnt all aspects of the funeral trade, embalming, presentation of the deceased, coffin-fitting, talking to family members, removing bodies from houses and hospitals, all sorts!

As I was coming to the end of my final year of study I was given the opportunity to apply for my first full time job – Lay Chaplain of the University, working alongside the Priest. To my surprise I got it! I had a wonderful year supporting the students, preparing for Mass, taking care of the chapel and serving lots of tea and cake and offering a listening ear and hospitality as well as learning more about Catholicism.

I decided to apply for work in the Funeral Service. I planned to stay up north as I had met my (now ex) husband and hoped to settle down with him. I got a job as a Funeral Arranger and also took part in the on-call rota, which gave me a wealth of experience, especially as my company did all the Coroner's removals. The most important thing I learnt from this was how good Vicks is as a barrier to bad smells – just rub a bit around the edge of your nostrils!

By this time I had firmly found my home in the Catholic Church, Kevin proposed to me and we got married in April. Soon after we began IVF treatment to have a child and I gave birth to Kaitlin on 8 September 2007. She was perfect in every way, and being her Mummy was everything I hoped for and more.

Sadly in 2009 Kevin and I separated. Kaitlin and I moved out of our home, and I began life as a single parent. Kevin and I have remained good friends, we still are today – he and his wife attended my 40th birthday celebrations in August and we continue to parent Kaitlin together but apart. Shortly before Kevin and I separated I began a 10-



year dance with the Church of England. I couldn't shake off the feeling that I was called to Ordination, and with the blessing of the Catholic Church I went exploring. Here began the most painful chapter of my life, which left me completely broken but I am now back in the Catholic Church after two and a half years of weekly counselling to get over the 'discernment process'.

I met Richard in 2010 and we married on New Year's Eve 2011. Again we sought help to have a baby and we were so lucky to welcome James (Jamie) on 4 October 2012. I went back into the funeral service while Jamie was small, then I took a job as an assistant manager of a Christian Bookshop in Skipton. Unfortunately it had to close as a result of the pandemic and I was made redundant last September. However, I was already running my own graphic design and stationery business with a friend, so I have taken that forward and that is now my full time job. Health issues as a result of the IVF treatment have left me with many bone and joint issues, so I would be unable to be employed by anyone other than myself anyway so it works perfectly!



So what does life look like now? I live in beautiful North Yorkshire, surrounded by hills and fields. I am married to Richard who is a Judge; he enjoys riding his motorbikes and going to football matches. I have a 14-year-old who loves playing her accordion and doing karate, she also loves all things space and currently wants to study something physics related later on. I have a 9-year-old boy who lives, eats, sleeps and dreams football; he also loves cricket and playing video games. They are both lovely, well-adjusted, intelligent, happy, content human beings – so I must've done something right! We try to get down to Winchester as often as possible to see mum and dad. I came down at October half term and it was wonderful to come to Church and have a look at Evelyn Penny's Book – lots of precious memories in there!

Strictly No Dancing? or Dancing Through Life

When Abbots Barton house group discussed music in worship, we talked a lot about different styles of singing, and different musical instruments. But dance was not mentioned. Both the Wesleys and the Salvation Army used popular music and song of their day in their worship, but dance was not included. Christian people in England have often frowned on dancing, whereas in some African cultures dance is an accepted expression of Christian worship. And the Old Testament approved of dance, see Exodus 15:20 and 2 Samuel 6:14.

Dance is an ancient art; the earliest evidence of dance comes from India 3,000 years ago, and is believed to have been associated with religious worship. In many cultures dance was important, and often used to celebrate community events including planting, harvesting, and the arrival of summer. In Britain that community element seems to have been largely lost, and its history is less well documented. It seems many English people associate dance primarily with courtship and showing off, something Strictly come Dancing seems to confirm. Some associate it with ancient pagan tradition, even with witchcraft, and so feel it inappropriate in worship. But the same could be said of some singing. Many people are self-conscious about moving, but that's how I feel about singing.

I am no singer; for me dance has been my natural response to music as long as I can remember. I have a pre-school memory of getting a long skirt out of the dressing up box, and dancing to the music on the radio. Like lots of seven-year-old girls I went to the Saturday morning ballet class for a while, but that did not last. My interest in dancing really developed at Secondary school. Our head teacher was a dance enthusiast; she combined being head of an academically successful grammar school with being a governor of the Royal Ballet School. Dance had a place in the curriculum in its own right, not just something to do when it was too wet to play hockey. Mostly it was what was then called modern creative dance, but also some ballroom and some Scottish country dancing, and I opted to continue it in the sixth form.

Doing a practical primary teacher training I learnt to teach dance, and later, in a team-teaching situation, I would always opt to teach dance

and drama, rather than art or music.

Later David and I enjoyed both ballroom and folk-dancing. I remember coming out of a concert of Viennese music, the tunes still ringing in David's head, so he whirled me into a Viennese waltz along the high street to the amazement of the other theatregoers.

During the 1990s when lots of churches put on Christian musicals I had the chance to work with a young dance teacher who taught our Guides and Brownies to dance with flags and ribbons.

Nowadays, I have to accept the limitations of age. But I can enjoy circle dancing, not usually to perform to an audience, but simply for the enjoyment of dancing with others.

During lockdown my dance teacher sent out music and instructions, and I learnt new dances dancing around the island worktop in my kitchen/diner. Excellent exercise for both muscles and brain when we could not mix, and it was too wet to go out for a walk. Circle dancing



draws on traditions from many cultures, and we dance to a great variety of musical styles. I have loved dancing a series of dances to meditate on Holy Week, taught by Miggy Scott. Dance can be prayer. Perhaps the most memorable was dancing The Creation on the circular patterned tiled floor below the dome of St Paul's Cathedral as part of an evening Eucharist.

Stop Press :

I will be introducing the Sunday morning service on 12 December. It will be extra special as our Sunday morning Young people's group will be leading the service, with the theme 'Looking for Jesus'. They are putting a lot in to preparing something really good, looking forward to Christmas, that people of all ages can enjoy. We do hope you will be able to join us, in person or on line.

Pat Fry



Winchester Street Pastors

Prayer Diary

December 2021

Give thanks for:

- 10 years of Street Pastors in Winchester
- Ministry of early evening teams over the summer
- The work of the retiring chair of Street Pastors in Winchester, Ed Dines

Please pray for:

- New volunteers as they join our teams
- Peace and goodwill in our city
- Visitors to Winchester during the Christmas season

January 2022

Give thanks for:

- New Volunteers training across Hampshire
- Faithful giving by churches, BID and individuals
- The opportunity the dark nights give to wonder at God's creation of the universe

Please pray for:

- Those vulnerable on the streets, those lost, frightened or in difficulty
- Students as their new term begins
- The Street Pastor new chair Revd Marcus Dickinson and the management team

The Dying of the Light

Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas

If you regard death as the enemy and something to put up a fight against this quotation might appeal. However, to label death as evil, not even softening it by calling it a 'necessary evil' seems unhelpful and unrealistic to me.

Every individual's attitude will be coloured by their experience. How many of us watching a loved one struggle for breath have prayed for a speedy end to their suffering? 'A blessed relief' we say in order to find some comfort in our loss. As a 'telephone link' for Live at Home it took a long time for me to realise that far from urging people to find things to live for, they really just wanted me to start by saying 'of course you do' and letting them weep. Often, unable to express their thoughts to relatives it was a relief to share the burden with me. Usually it was enough to give them strength to carry on but for them death was viewed as a longed for escape, both by the sufferer and their next-of-kin.

However, the urge to live can surface unexpectedly. I was called to say goodbye to a lady who had arranged to fly to Switzerland and had made plans to end it all with seeming determination. A few days later I heard she had changed her mind and had gone into a Care Home. A brush with death brings an enhanced love for life.

The cycle of life includes death and in a natural way after a long life can be viewed as just an inevitable passing to a better life for the believer or nature's way of replenishing the earth.

I would recommend catching up with the 'Something Understood' Broadcast on BBC Sunday 31 October. The topic of Mortality was

sensitively discussed as the last of life's events. Quotations and music illustrated different approaches to handling the experience. The conclusion came to was that we need to find language that we can share to help people come to terms with their mortality in a loving way that takes into consideration the effect our words might have.

Rosemary MacMullen

My Favourite Christmas Carol

Have you ever thought how old some of our favourite Christmas carols are? My favourite is probably the most beautiful as well as the oldest of all that we still sing in our churches today. 'Of the Father's Love Begotten' was written in the fourth century by a Roman Christian called Aurelius Prudentius, who lived in a province of Northern Spain. Prudentius practiced law and was twice provincial governor, but towards the end of his life he retired from public activity and spent his time writing poems, hymns, and controversial works in defence of Christianity. He became a vegetarian and ate only in the evenings. He later collected the Christian poems written during this period and added a preface, which he himself dated 405.

In 1851 'Corde natus ex Parentis' was translated from Latin into English by John M. Neale and set to a medieval plainchant melody called *Divinum mysterium* from the 13th century. There was another translation in the early 20th century.

I never get tired of listening to this – it is a carol that places Jesus at the centre of Creation and focuses on his redemption of the World. *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son* :John 3:16. See a video of this on the church website ucw.org.uk/yours/

Of the Father's love begotten
Ere the world began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,

He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are and have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;
He commanded; it was done!
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.

This is He whom they in old time
Chanted of with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word;
Now He shines, the long-expected;
Let creation praise its Lord,
Evermore and evermore.

Dorothy Lusmore

Coffee Bar at Christmas

In addition to the usual opening hours, the Coffee Bar will be open on Saturdays from 20 November to 18 December inclusive, from 11 am to 1 pm. There will be mince pies and filled rolls!

The Coffee Bar will be closed from 23 December, reopening on Tuesday 4 January 2022.



Graham Rolfe

Two Sculptures and a Tree

On a recent visit to Hillier Gardens, I was especially impressed by two of the pieces of Art in the Garden, *Lepidendron* and *Lost Comrades*, both by Glen Morris, an exhibition that continues into January, and by a tree I had not noticed before.

There were a group of three sculptures, with explanations near Jermyns House.

The one that first caught my attention was a block of black marble, carved in a pattern that reminded me of Celtic knotwork. In fact, it was a block of a very special limestone, known as black marble, though it isn't geologically marble. It contains interesting fossils left from the forests that flourished in the carboniferous period. Buried and compressed over centuries, the remains of this particular tree is a prime component of our modern fossil fuels. Ironically the pattern of the bark is said to resemble tyre treads.



The second, next to it was a solid white



plinth supporting an oval, almost egg-shaped sculpture. On the sides of the block were lead butterflies, in formal rows. The block represented the brutal side of industrialised society, each butterfly was made from a bullet collected from the battlefields of the Somme, and represents one million people killed in war since 1918. It was said that in times of silence between shelling butterflies fluttered over the trenches, and soldiers thought they were the souls of their lost comrades. And the egg? An enlargement of a

butterfly egg, a symbol of hope

The tree that caught my attention is tucked away, just to the right of Centenary Border. Normally it's the flowers in the border that draw the eye, but in November there were only a few still blooming. To find this tree, take the first sharp right-hand path off the border, that goes under a green archway, and then look to your left. The bark looks almost pleated, the leaves very delicate fronds. It was the name that aroused my curiosity: metasequoia, as I had been fortunate enough to stay in the Sequoia National Park in California some years ago. So I looked it up. I found out that this species was discovered in fossil form, and thought to be extinct, until in 1948 a few living examples were found in a remote valley in China, where they were regarded as sacred. Seeds were sent to arboretums around the world, and some are growing well at Hillier Gardens. Its so special it is the now the symbol for the gardens.



All well worth spending time to reflect on if you visit the Gardens.

Pat Fry

Ride and Stride Vacancy

HIHCT (Hampshire and the Islands Historic Churches Trust) has a vacancy for a volunteer as an Area Coordinator. This is not an onerous task – the main role is as a link person with churches in the area to encourage participation in the annual Ride and Stride fundraising event on the second Saturday in September. The only qualification is basic computer skills – and an enthusiasm for the maintenance of our historic church buildings of all denominations. Please contact me for full details if you are interested.

Graham Rolfe

Coffee Drinking – a Misadventure

All POSH hotels (Port out and Starboard home) have coffee and tea trays for your delight and delectation. To gain the best cup one follows the instructions to the very letter, and I did as I was bidden.



The Brew Guide

Add coffee bag to the mug	Done
Pour fresh boiled water and stir	Done
Brew for two or three minutes	Done
Squeeze bag, remove and enjoy	Done

Result – only hot water in the mug as the directions did not say first open your coffee packet and **THEN put the ENCLOSED bag in the mug.**

And so we tried again with another seemingly identical packet. Out came the nail scissors, snip and luxury chocolate drink powder was sprinkled liberally all over the table top. Once again no drink.

We have decided not to sail Port out and Starboard home ever again.

Richard and Pauline

Think of all the amazing things Paul
accomplished for the Kingdom.
He did it all without coffee.



WE HAVE COFFEE.
Just imagine what we're capable of.

Adapted

Brief Encounter with Yvonne North

What is the first news/historical event you can recall from your early life?

A siren going off at the beginning of the Second World War (I thought it was the Hoover!)

What is your favourite saying or quotation?

'Don't worry, it may never happen.'

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Keep hopeful. Show respect to people and creation.

Who was your first hero?

My mum. She would always be there for everyone, always ready to help and support everyone.

What is your favourite piece of music?

'Guide me O thou Great Jehovah.' It brings back so many happy memories when I sing it.

Where is your favourite place to be?

North Wales – Snowdonia, Llandudno.

Which person (or sort of person) would you most like to spend a day in the shoes of?

Anyone exploring the countryside, e.g. Simon Reeve or Kate Humble.

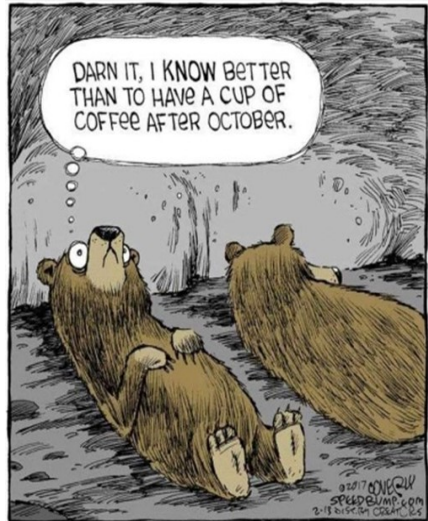
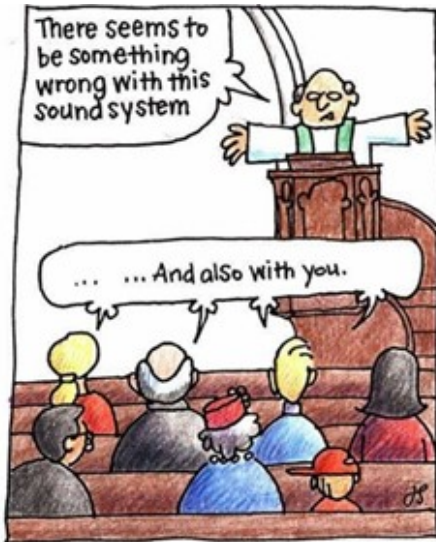
Where do you feel closest to God?

Up a mountain or hill looking over God's wonderful creation.

What is the most helpful text at the moment (during the pandemic)?

'Be Joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, share with God's people who are in need, practise hospitality . Romans 12: 12-13

Comedy Corner



But remember –
wearing a mask while
driving alone in a car is
pointless unless you
stole the car!



The deadline for February *Yours* is **Monday 17 January.**

All contributions welcome. Send to
yours@ucw.org.uk.



Services for December 2021

In-person and Live-streamed

5 DECEMBER

10.30 am **Morning Worship (HC)** Revd Tim Searle

12 DECEMBER

10.30 am **Morning Worship (AA)** Mrs Pat Fry

14 DECEMBER

2.45 pm **Toddler & Preschool Nativity** Revd Tim Searle

19 DECEMBER

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

5.00 pm **Carols by Candlelight** Revd Tim Searle

25 DECEMBER

10.00 am **Christmas Worship** Revd Tim Searle

26 DECEMBER

No service

HC: Holy Communion. AA: All Age Worship



Services for January 2022

In-person and Live-streamed

2 JANUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Mrs Pat Fry

9 JANUARY

10.30 am **Covenant Service (HC)** Revd Tim Searle

16 JANUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

23 JANUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Mr Tom Belshaw

30 JANUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** House groups

This Preaching Plan is subject to change in response to changes in Covid-19 Restrictions.

HC: Holy Communion.