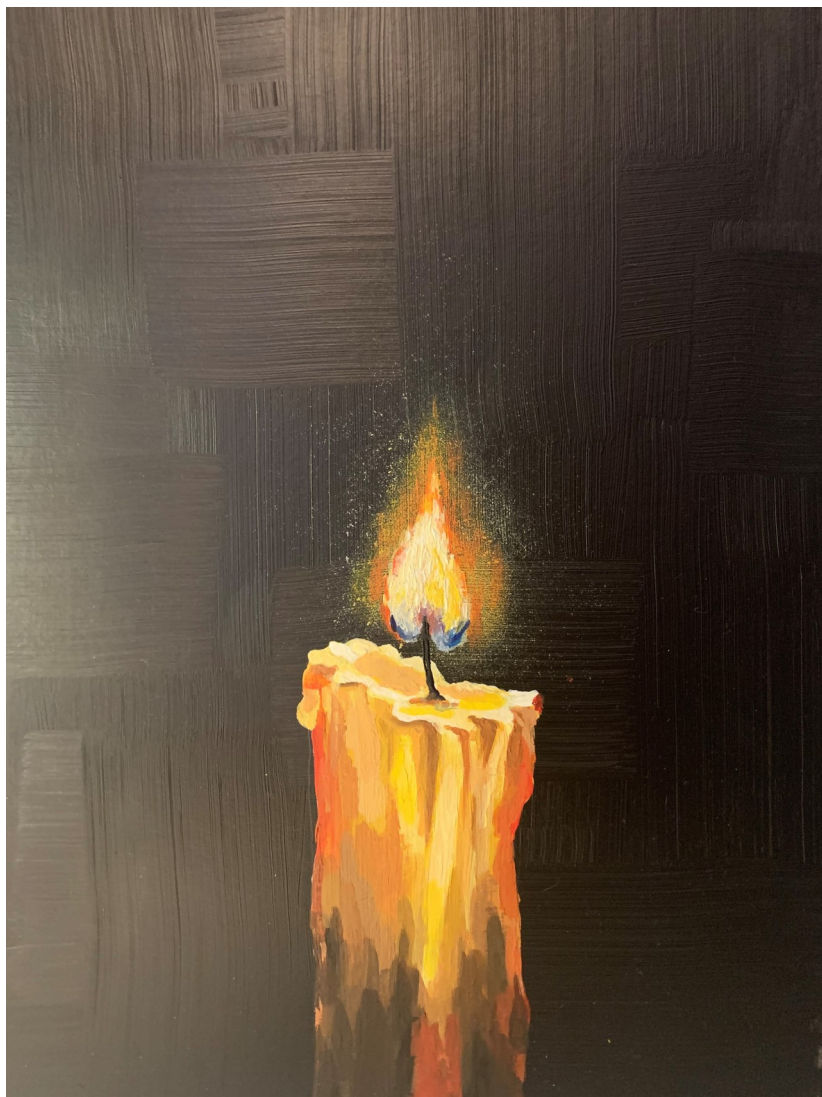




# Yours

Magazine of  
The United Church  
Winchester

February 2023



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## Tim's Letter: 'Don't Forget Christmas'

If I haven't already had the opportunity to do so, may I wish you all a Happy New Year. I pray that amid the ups and downs of the coming months you will feel God's presence beside you and know that you are so tremendously loved and cherished.

So, Christmas. All done and dusted for another year? Well, I suppose so. But in the dash to take down the decorations and put the tree out for collection, I'm minded to pause, if only for a moment, to recall the season we've just been through. After all, it did involve the birth of a child, something which, if I'm not mistaken, has implications for a family far beyond twelve drummers' drumming! In Mary and Joseph's timeline, the whirlwind of life with Jesus is only just beginning. Yet in church we've already sped on to read about his baptism and the beginning of his ministry. Though there are very few details about Jesus' childhood and youth, I sometimes wonder that because of our headlong dash to Lent and Easter, we miss out on something of the personhood of Christ.

Jesus had an earthly mother and adoptive father, brothers and possibly sisters too. Relatives, friends, first steps and coming of age experiences just like many of us are seeing in our own children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, godchildren and so on. How was Jesus during the terrible-twos and tantrum-threes? Quite a handful I expect. Did Jesus spend all of his adolescence at the feet of rabbis surrounded by scrolls without any sign of a group of mates to get up to mischief with? I suspect not. And what swear word did Jesus use when, in those early days of learning the family business, the hammer he held mistook his thumb for a nail? We've all been there ...

So, what's my point? Well, I think I'm minded not to put the coming of Jesus, God with us, out of my mind so quickly this year. We've got three months until Easter, even less until the beginning of Lent. In that time, let's not forget Christmas. Let's

not forget the significance of that moment. And let's afford Mary and Joseph, their friends and relatives, the chance to get to know their child as a person as well as their saviour. And perhaps we too, in pondering this, may once again be awestruck by the immensity of God coming to dwell alongside us, as one of us. To die, yes, but also to live.

## In Christ, Tim

### Editorial

Our cover painting this month is by Amy Crocker. The light of her candle in the darkness gives us new hope for this New Year.

Rosie MacMullen continues her trip to Italy – do any more mishaps await her? Ralph Jessop explains a link between smoke detectors and space travel. Chris Young gives useful advice in choosing plants for our gardens and we enjoy a Brief Encounter with Cathy Blackburn.

We have our usual humour slot and some Words of Wisdom to start the year.

Will you share something with *Yours* readers in 2023? We'd love to hear from you.

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



## News of the United Church Family

Josie Jones died on 5 December after a long period of declining health. Tim led her funeral service on 21 December at Test Valley Crematorium. Josie first came to The United Church in 1997 when she moved to Winchester with her family. We give thanks for her quiet faith and Christian service. We remember her daughter Claire, her son-in-law Steve and all their family at this time.

On a happier note, we celebrate with several church families on the safe arrival of new babies. Many congratulations to all.

Chris and Sarah Richardson (née Morgan) now have a daughter, Amy, who was born in Cambridge on 24 November. A first grandchild for Claire and Steve Morgan (and a great granddaughter for Josie).

Emily, daughter of Richard and Sarah Lane (née Tringham) was born in Winchester on the 14 December. Emily is a little sister for Matthew and a fourth grandchild for Jessica and Martin Tringham.

Jacob, son of Cory and Beth Babb (née Mellor) was also born in Winchester – on 20 December. He is a brother for Joshua and another grandson for Rosie and Howard Mellor.

Nur, daughter of Sam and Farrah Brooks, was born in London on 1 January. A sister for Reya and another granddaughter for Pauline and Roger Brooks.

Pastoral Links – the November edition of *Yours* carried an article on the role of Pastoral Link. Please prayerfully consider whether this is something you could do – especially in the light of Tim's challenge to us all and the launch of enabling groups. Do contact me if you would like to know more. Thanks.

**Helen McTiffin,  
Pastoral Co-ordinator**

## Contributions from the Church Community

### Book Reviews

#### The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse

*The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* was this year's BBC television Christmas book animation. If you thought it was just for young children, you missed a treat. The writer and artist Charlie Mackery describes his book as 'for everyone, whether you are eight or eighty'. It is a picture book; for, to quote the author, 'pictures are like islands, places to get to in a sea of words'.

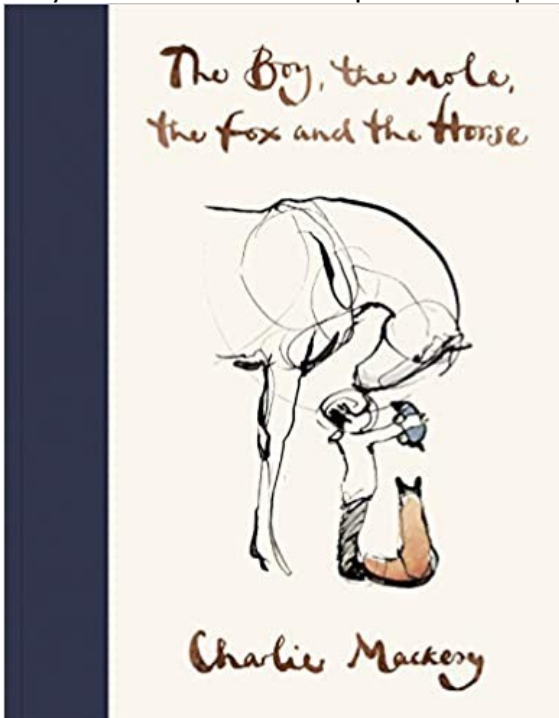
It is the story of a conversation; a conversation between a lost boy and a mole who keeps him company, and then with a fox

and a horse they meet on their travels. It includes gentle humour, profound questions and memorable short, wise comments.

When the boy asks, 'What is the bravest thing you ever said?' The horse replies, 'Help. Asking for help isn't giving up, it's refusing to give up.'

This is a book to dip into and to savour, to brighten a dull, wet day.

**Pat Fry**



## A Fortunate Woman

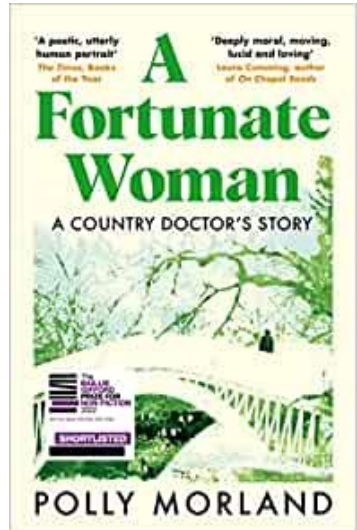
I received this book at Christmas time from my son Simon and his family. The title is *A Fortunate Woman* – which is, it turns out, a ‘follow-on’ from a book published back in 1967 entitled *A Fortunate Man*.

Both books are about the local GP – the man firstly, then the woman secondly after the author, Polly Morland, found her mother’s copy of *A Fortunate Man* recently. On re-reading it again, she suddenly realised that she knew the area described in the book. And she knew the ‘new’ GP incumbent.

The book describes the area, the people, their homes, modes of transport – and the weather! It covers the woman GP’s journey to becoming a doctor and then a GP and how she has come to practise the way she does in the close community where she lives, bringing up her family with her husband, alongside her patients.

It is very up-to-date as it covers the eruption of Covid-19 and how the people of the area and the doctor and her colleagues cope with the virus and lockdown.

You, the reader, never know where the area is or who the doctor is or who her patients are. It is however an intriguing read, showing a way of doctoring that we may be losing.

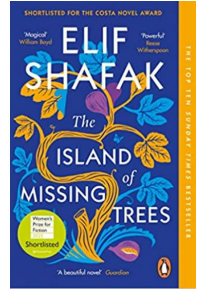


**Moireach Harmer**

## The Island of Missing Trees

I was given a book called *The Island of Missing Trees*, by Elif Shafak. It shows that not long ago there was conflict in Cyprus and that the Greek and Turkish were not allowed to intermarry.

It is a love story, but also a story about how if you are brought up with strict religious views these can be passed on to the next generation with some anxiety issues.

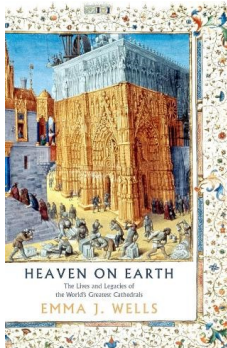


It has a happy ending I am pleased to tell you, as love conquers all!

Cathy Blackburn

## Heaven on Earth

This enthralling book is written by Emma J. Wells, a lecturer in Ecclesiastical and Architectural History at the University of York. The most significant cathedrals are featured, from Hagia Sofia to Santiago de Compostela, Notre-Dame de Paris to Chartres, Canterbury to Wells, Winchester to Salisbury, York Minster to Westminster, Cologne to Prague. She writes in an engaging style to explain how each cathedral came to be built, and then brings out key architectural and religious features of each building.



‘Why ‘Heaven on Earth?’’, she writes in the preface. ‘Because these great, multifaceted buildings were attempts to make the spiritual concrete while also representing symbolic voyages between this world and the next. In cathedrals, almost everything has purpose. Every decorated spandrel, tiled floor, carved misericord, ornamented turret – all were a nod towards God’s Kingdom, though some were



also a nod towards more earth-bound realms... Virtually every single element of a medieval cathedral had a symbolic meaning: from its shape and layout, to the proportions and dazzling displays of colour and glass illustrating the entire spiritual universe (from Heaven to Hell and everything in between).'

My interest in cathedrals began when I visited Chartres on a cycling holiday in my twenties. I followed a tour of the cathedral by Malcolm Miller, who had been guiding visitors twice a day since 1958 and was still doing so two years ago! He helped visitors 'read' the truly wonderful stained-glass windows, a Bible in coloured illustration for the mainly illiterate pilgrims of the Middle Ages. He explained the symbols which identified sculptures with their subtly hewn faces, full of humanity and life. He used our bodies and arms to show a hands-on visualisation of rib vaulting and flying buttresses. Ever since, I have loved visiting these Gothic masterpieces and have enjoyed the expertise of other accomplished guides such as our own Ralph Jessop in Winchester. They reveal features you would otherwise miss.

Floor plans of each building, large photos of frontages, sculptures, stained glass windows and chapels enhance the text. Emma Wells' enthusiasm is such that you want to visit each place she describes. Anne and I booked an enthralling tour of Salisbury Cathedral as a result and we plan to visit Wells in the spring.

Thanks to the internet, even if we are unable to travel to each place, we can go on a virtual tour. Cameras zoom in to show images in sharp detail as experienced guides enthuse about their own favourite place of worship. If you don't have access to the web, why not ask a friend to set a virtual tour up for you? I recommend this as a complement to this wonderful book.

**Bob Lord**

Emma J. Wells features in The Church Times Festival of Literature in Winchester at the end of the month (See page 13).

## Science to the Rescue

I have always been keen on chemistry, which I was privileged to study by sandwich course, being employed by Central Electricity Generating Board. I spent six months each year working at their research labs with projects on power generation, batteries and even coal then six months studying chemistry including metallurgy, electro- and nuclear chemistry. I am an enthusiast of nuclear power and I was surprised to recognise the chaplain on the Hinckley Point C project in a TV documentary – Euan Huffman who was minister at City Road Baptist Church!

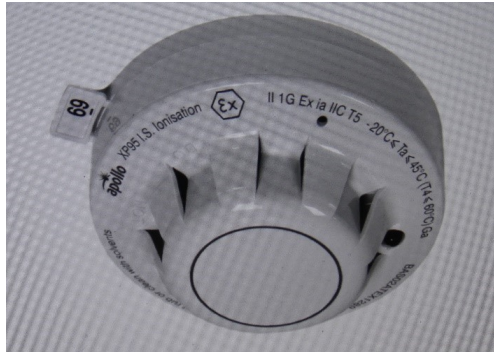
I am drawn to any newspaper article describing some new chemistry related project such as the one in *The Times* on 9 December. This described the UK Space Agency designing a new type of battery for use in spacecraft going into far outer space to provide electrical power where there is insufficient sun for solar panels to work. What is even more interesting to me is that the key ingredient in the batteries is Americium which I know quite a lot about. In the 80s I was sales director of Apollo Fire Detectors, world leading smoke and heat detector manufacturers and based in Havant (look out for the factory on the south side of the A27 before the Hayling Island junction.) Smoke detectors use Americium whether for industrial or domestic locations.

Americium is a radioactive element which is not naturally



occurring but can be made by a nuclear reaction. It is a heavy, shiny metal which emits nuclear radiation but at such a low energy that it is harmless. In a smoke detector there is a tiny piece of Americium and in the absence of smoke the radiation causes electricity to flow. If smoke enters the detector the radiation is attracted to the smoke particles and

the flow of electricity is reduced which causes the detector to go into alarm.



Misuse of the world's environment is something that most people are alarmed about. The emphasis on protecting the planet is mainly on living things but the Earth itself is made of millions of non-living substances. 2.8 billion tons of metals were mined in 2021, 94% of which was iron ore for steel making. In order of decreasing proportions, other mined metals include aluminium, chromium, copper, manganese, titanium, zinc, lead, nickel, zirconium, magnesium, strontium, uranium, all essential for the finished products that are essential to our modern existence. They are all elements which are the building blocks of everything else. The most sought after metal today is lithium used in phone and computer batteries and powering electric road vehicles. The biggest source is found in Chile where it exists in solution with common salt. It is found in Australia and Africa and even Cornwall. It is the lightest metal and has good electrochemical properties. Is there enough and can it be reclaimed from exhausted batteries?

There are the precious metals including tin, vanadium, molybdenum, cobalt, tungsten, niobium, silver, cadmium, gold and tantalum. Then there are the strange 'rare earths' which are not that rare but found almost anywhere in very small concentrations. All of these are increasingly used in today's tech products.

The biggest mine in the world is Bingham Canyon near Salt Lake City which Carol and I visited on our way to Yellowstone (having spent an amazing few days in Salt Lake City). It has been extracting copper ore since 1906, and was first discovered by the two sons of Brigham Young, leader of the Mormon Church, and the crater is so large that it can be seen from space. It produces about 300,000 tons of copper with about 150 tons of gold each year. It is also a source for tiny amounts of molybdenum which is used in hardening steel and tellurium a constituent of solar cells. When will it run out?



I started this article with Americium which is used currently in minute quantities but a lot more would be needed in long-range spacecraft and I finished with the huge natural resource of copper in Utah. All of this stuff and more was created by God even though it was not mentioned specifically in Genesis. I wonder at the plants in my garden but I wonder even more about all the 92 elements that make up the Earth and which are increasingly important to our way of life. When will they run out?

We try to do our best recycling paper, glass, plastics and garden

waste, and industries recycle many of the materials that they can re-use. Returning end of life products to manufacturers particularly electronic ones is becoming vital. How many old phones do you have at home? They are packed with rare metals and semiconductors. What about laptops, washing machines and cars, all of which contain lots of valuable elements which can be extracted. Why do we use batteries which are described as ‘throw away’?

I have a grandson who has studied chemistry and he sent me his Master’s dissertation which I could hardly understand; 60 years of chemistry has moved on. The elements that populate the earth are definitely not finite and we need scientists who can find alternative materials as well as preserving the material that we have if we are going to continue to enjoy modern products that we ‘need’. Or perhaps an Americium powered space craft will locate new accessible sources a few million miles away.

**Ralph Jessop**

### ‘Mapping the Landscape’

The Church Times Festival of Faith and Literature comes to Winchester this month. Events will be held in the University, the Cathedral and St John’s church. The wide range of speakers includes Suzannah Lipscomb, Mark Oakley, Brian Draper, Rowan Williams and James Runcie. Dates: Friday 24–Sunday 26 February.

To find full details and to book tickets, see the website:

[faithandliterature.hymnsam.co.uk](http://faithandliterature.hymnsam.co.uk)



**Graham Rolfe**

## Tax Justice

In a recent issue of the *Church Times* there was an interview with Cat Jenkins who is the Programme Manager of Church Action for Tax Justice (CATJ).

CATJ developed out of the Methodist Tax Justice Network, and launched in 2018. Its aim is to inspire all churches to think about the urgent need for fairer and more effective tax systems in the UK and internationally.

Cat's role has been to provide churches with resources to help them to engage with tax justice. She writes newsletters and delivers workshops to help people to improve their tax literacy and speak out for tax justice. She says that it is really important that people do engage with one of the most powerful ways to make the system fairer and to stop long term poverty and inequality.

Her faith has made her more mindful of the need to challenge systemic injustices. As Christians, we support food banks and warm spaces, and help at homeless shelters, and that is really important. But it would be better to fix the system so that people do not fall into poverty in the first place.

It is possible to design a tax system that does not disincentivise work and investment – other countries do this better than the UK. Don't describe tax as a burden but as a privilege. Asking the super-rich to contribute more might not be universally popular, but many recognise that we all do better when inequality is reduced. We then have a healthier, happier, safer country for everyone, rich and poor alike.

This important issue is worth serious thought. More information can be found via the [CATJ website](#).

**Graham Rolfe**

## Summary on Scripture and Readings

Revd Tim Searle and Tim Clifford directed me to share a summary writing from Remembrance Day for your attention. My practice is to write a summary each week on scripture and devotional reading, so let me know if you need content.

Inspired by the scripture readings<sup>1</sup> and song<sup>2</sup>, along with my preparations to share in reading Psalm 46, I was moved to make a summary message.

*God is our refuge, a very present help in all times ... though earthly monuments shall tumble into a dead sea.*

*We should pause, without fear of night or tomorrow's dawn, seeking in worship to increase our love and understanding that makes for peace.*

---pause---

*For there is a flowing river of giving water, shining like crystal and making glad the holy community of God.*

*The Lord of heavenly forces is in the very heart of us and will give us deep faith to comfort those who mourn and hope to share with those re-born.*

---pause---

*So Jesus, Prince of Peace, disarm our trust in human power, only beholding us in Your living works.*

*That's enough! Come, be still, and know that I am God!*

---pause---

<sup>1</sup> Scripture readings: Psalm 46 and Revelation 22:1-7

<sup>2</sup> Song: 'God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind', written by Fred Kaan.

**Andy Lafolette**

## Rosie's Trip to Italy

### Part 2: Montecassino and Pompeii

**Monday:** I sat down happily with my fellow travellers anticipating a convivial getting to know you chat over croissant and coffee. It was soon apparent there may be a problem. The eggs had been prepared in advance, possibly the night before and were so hard-boiled we could have bowled them down the road without them cracking. The coffee was lukewarm and in short supply. Service was restricted to one elderly Italian who emerged from the kitchen at a snail's pace. It was a perfect 'Two Soups - Victoria Woods scenario'. I escaped from the grumbles of those who had mistakenly thought they would get bacon and eggs and headed to the coach. As we drove up into the mountains the area was shrouded in mist, lending an atmosphere of mystery. 1,710 feet high, the ancient Benedictine Monastery must have been a struggle to reach. Our coach dropped us conveniently near and we were soon immersed in the splendour of the rebuilt abbey which was re-consecrated in 1964.

Below is an 18<sup>th</sup> Century drawing. Sadly my new camera refused to save my own photos but here are some from online sources.



The peace of the inner courtyards and the serenity of the





landscape contrasted with the magnificence of the treasures stored within. A visual interpretation of the glory of God and the strength of faith of those responsible for the restoration, it seemed overwhelming.

Among the superb paintings I noticed a rather odd scene. Mary is serenely cradling the infant Jesus sitting on His mother's knee. In the forefront is another baby crawling into the mouth of a wolf-like creature which looked as if it would eat it alive. I have been unable to find anything about this but would love to have some explanation.

The abbey was a world away from our bustling city, and filled with the feelings inspired by such beauty I was glad to enjoy a quiet drive back to Fuggia.

As we drove towards the Campania region of Italy I had mixed feelings about Pompeii. It seemed a bit voyeuristic to stare at the remains of people who had been so tragically buried by the Volcano in AD79. As it happened, our guide showed us only one and behind glass at that. Seeing the many horrific pictures online as I was researching for this article I am thankful.

I had scoffed at those who advised me to take a collapsible walking stick on this trip. What fit as a fiddle me? I soon ate my words. Pompeii is VAST and these stone streets are not easy to hurry over when you have a guide who spends the whole time talking non-stop and urging us ever onwards. I was thankful for a sit-down at the amphitheatre which is older than the Colosseum. Seating 20,000 it must have been a wonderful venue with



amazing acoustics.

I wonder whether the wealthy vacationing Romans felt the prices of admission were extortionate. Those who weren't too keen on the plays could also watch gladiators or chariot races. Walking well paved streets with high sidewalks and

steppingstones to keep them mud-free, they could soak in public baths. After a return to their private gardens filled with statues, fountains and vine-covered pergolas, they could retreat to the outside dining area to lounge on cushioned benches. Ten lucky villa owners had a system of small canals running between them so they could take advantage of small delicacies floating past.



Roman wives could take a night off from slaving over a hot oven and visit a thermopolium. This fast-food joint served hot food and drinks to the locals. Remnants of duck bones, pigs, goats, fish and snails have been discovered.

Disappointingly we saw nothing of the colourful frescoes and mosaics I was hoping for and one stone villa with its stone beds seemed very like the next.

By the time we reached the magnificent civic areas at the top I was relieved to be in a wide spacious area. Its well-planned buildings and grandiose statues made me



realise what a thriving place Pompeii must have been. The calamity that destroyed it was shockingly unexpected and drives home how appalling it is that mankind can contemplate destroying whole countries now.

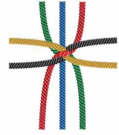


After a day so packed with experience I returned to the hotel for a little sleep before dinner. Drooping with exhaustion, I reluctantly followed some of our group to a restaurant some way from the hotel. Food was excellent, service was excellent, but the company was not. Suffice it to say that although I wanted to pay by card, the consensus was cash. I had enough to pay for my meal but only one euro left for tip. This provoked one rather odd bloke who stood up and swore at me and then marched aggressively behind me continuing his tirade. As no-one reprimanded him or spoke to me I went to bed very shaken. I have never, in all my years of travelling felt so vulnerable. Not sure I could face that crowd in the morning I wondered if I'd have the nerve to join them on the road to Rome. As the sun broke through my curtains next day I was still in two minds. Would I make it?

**Rosemary MacMullen**

# Churches Together in Winchester

## January 2023 Update



### Thank You

To everyone who supported 'Looking for a Star' in any way in December, Thank You. We had a wonderful cast, a fabulous script, terrific technical support and committed prayers/sharers/singers. Our aim was to bring the wonder and mystery of the nativity into the vibrant colour of the Cathedral Christmas Market and that was certainly achieved. On each of the Sunday afternoon performances people flooded into the special carol service prepared by the Cathedral team. Thank you so much and Praise God!

### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

As one small sign of our being One in Christ with a shared commitment to mission, in many of our churches on Sunday 22 January, we had a pulpit exchange with a preacher from a different denomination sharing in the worship. This is just one way of getting to know each other better and realising how much we have in common.

### Easter 2023

We are consulting about the way we celebrate Good Friday and Easter in the public space. Significant changes in the High Street mean we are considering a number of options.

### Pentecost 2023

We are beginning to plan for a special celebration on Pentecost this year, Sunday 28 May. Put the date in your diary and we will be sharing plans as soon as they are confirmed.

Blessings to you all, Howard

**Revd Dr Howard Mellor (Chair – CTWin)**

## Advent – Original Artwork



Marjory Monro



Carol and Ralph Jessop



Hilary Holt, Pamela Gilbert and Pauline Brooks



Amy Crocker

Thank you to all who gave of their time and talent in contributing to the Artwork display for The Advent Series: of Shepherds, Sages and Singers. Grateful thanks to Tim James, for the installation of the display.

**Pamela Gilbert**

## News of the Wider Church

### Blue Monday Soup

A priest in Cardiff is using food to combat loneliness and isolation in his community.

The Day of the Soup is part of the Jo Cox's Foundation's Great Winter Get Together, which launched on Blue Monday, 16 January, also known as the most depressing day of the year.



Fr Dean Atkins from St Mary's Church, Butetown has organised an event serving free soup as a simple way of extending a welcome to all who live in the local area, regardless of race, religion, or background. Fr Dean said, 'Day of the Soup is about tackling seasonal isolation and loneliness and giving people the opportunity to get together and socialise.' It offers people a way of finding out about each other's history and heritage in a welcoming space. Soup is a cheap and nutritious food, so it speaks to the cost-of-living crisis and helps provide a warm safe space for anyone in need of company. St Mary's Church will be contributing Spicy Carrot and Lentil Soup, which it says has been a favourite at past events.

The Great Winter Get Together is inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, who was killed on 16 June 2016. In her first speech in Parliament, Cox said, 'We have more in common than that which divides us.' Events in Jo's name, like the Day of Soup, now take place annually across the UK with the aim of building bridges.

## Chaplains Ask for Prayer as they Support Exhausted NHS Staff

NHS workers are turning to hospital chaplains to support them as they struggle with the impact of staff shortages, winter illnesses and the cost-of-living crisis.

The mental health charity Doctors in Distress says health workers are facing an 'unimaginable crisis' and the President of the College of Health Care Chaplains, Dr Simon Harrison says hospital chaplains are witnessing acute stresses and strains among staff in the NHS.

Sarah Chaplin works as a chaplain in a team of five at the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro which is the only acute hospital in the county and serves a population of 750,000. She says: 'We are finding our role as a chaplain in supporting staff very much at the forefront. A chaplain is always there for patients and their families, and for staff, but I think especially over the last couple of years, and this last 12 months, we are very much supporting staff here on the ground – in some very difficult circumstances. A prevalent thing is exhaustion, absolute exhaustion, having worked through COVID, and now through the current NHS crisis and bed shortages. Sometimes staff feel undervalued. I think at the root of some of their angst is that they don't feel listened to. This is also a huge role of a chaplain, we listen.'

Sarah says that prayer is particularly important at this time: 'Please pray for us as we roll out our daily work. Our role is really unique, but what a privilege to stand alone alongside colleagues who are really going through tough things.'



## Winchester Churches Christmas Project 2022

This year we have offered help to 34 families (53 adults and 57 children) plus 2 single people – a total of 112. This includes a refugee family we helped through Churches Together in Winchester. Our 69 volunteers from 14 different Winchester churches have been brilliant. Thank you all!

At the time of writing (mid-January) some of our volunteers have been in touch to tell us of their experiences but there is still more feedback to come – including some from the referring agencies. Some missions went really well and others have proved much trickier. One can never know in advance as we work with individuals – each with their own particular situations and issues.

The items provided have been many and various – for example, Christmas presents, Christmas food, a child's car seat, cinema tickets, children's shoes, a child's buggy, petrol and also payments for gas and electricity.

Some feedback from volunteers:

*'Thank you! We really enjoyed helping [...] and her partner use their Christmas money. They were delighted and made very sensible choices.'*

*'Clearly our lady really appreciated the coffees and chats we had. She was delighted to have some spending power.'*

*'We paid for their shop and their petrol. They were very grateful for the Project's help.'*

*'She was very grateful for the support and couldn't quite believe that something was being done for her.'*

From a new volunteer: *'I enjoyed it and would love to be involved again in 2023. We were able to complete the task in plenty of time and the family were lovely. No problems from our end at all.'*



*'As always, I really enjoyed participating in the Christmas Project. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to play a small part in this wonderful [project].'*

And this is what a mum wrote to her volunteers:

*'We would like to say THANK YOU to everyone involved in giving our family such an amazing gift. We are incredibly grateful and absolutely touched by the generosity.'*

Thank you to everyone for your prayerful and practical support.

**Helen McTiffin**  
**(Joint Co-ordinator)**

## **Garden Plant Selection**

In many respects February heralds the start of the gardening year with perceptibly longer days and the earliest plants already at their best, such as snowdrops.

Meanwhile many gardening books will encourage us, if not to start sowing seeds, then at least to prepare to do so by washing the glasshouse down, procuring stocks of seed sowing and potting compost and ordering our plants and/or seeds.

Most people who view their garden with at least a modicum of seriousness have an aspiration to improve it by their activities rather than degrade it. Central to this are the very plants grown.

The choice is, of course, yours; trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, bedding plants et al.

What is known as Garden Design is well catered for in gardening literature; for that and other reasons we will not be looking 'at the big picture' here; no, I want to direct your thoughts to the question 'how do I choose the best cultivar, (cultivated variety), of a plant'?

For some perhaps this is to introduce a level of complexity that they would rather do without. After all, is not life complex enough without going to all the trouble of finding 'the best' plants? Were some who studied 'management' (at least yesteryear) reminded of the aphorism that 'perfect is the enemy of good'; i.e., that the 'pursuit of "perfection"' is the enemy of general good practice?

What is wrong with just going down to the garden centre or even the supermarket and buying what is on display? In short, nothing is 'wrong' with that course of action. However, their priorities may not be yours. In some circumstances a rather more focused approach may bring a greater reward.

If deciding to look beyond the garden centre (at least the non-specialised one), and the supermarket, for plants, what cultivar to choose is a pertinent question as there are potentially hundreds to choose from. Thus, how do we choose; well, if not the 'wheat from the tares', the outstanding from the 'ordinary'?

A good starting point is to select a plant of the species you require which has achieved the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Award of Garden Merit (AGM).

In short for a plant to be awarded AGM status it must succeed on four points by way of a plant trial.

Seeing plants growing in situ in the garden is invaluable. In order to be able to compare and contrast it is worthwhile finding where the National Collection is held and making a visit. For example, I was interested in buying some Michaelmas Daisies, thus I spent a day travelling to and from the Plant Heritage National Collection held at Picton Gardens and associated Old Court Nursery, Herefordshire, where purchases can be made on the spot or orders taken.

Some gardens will be worth visiting if desiring to visualise plants on a 'slightly wider canvas'; for example, if wishing to narrow

down the choice for a part of the garden you wish to excel in the winter, The Winter Garden at Cambridge University Botanic Garden is a destination I can highly recommend.

Most plants have their own specialist learned society, for example The National Chrysanthemum Society, The National Dahlia Society and The National Sweet Pea Society. These societies are the last word in sources of information about the classification and growing of the plants in their oversight; for example, The National Dahlia Society's Classified Directory is now in its 35<sup>th</sup> edition.

A further good point of reference are quality reference books such as *The Hillier Manual of Trees and Shrubs*, which give detailed descriptions of individual cultivars.

To start the garden year, why not consider visiting a garden in Hampshire renowned for their Snowdrop Collections; by the time this edition of *Yours* is published the first blooms will be showing themselves. I find it a great uplift to the spirit to see these hardy plants heralding that spring is just round the corner. In addition to garden settings there are often to be found carpets of these in such places as rural church yards, such a sight (in contrast to the snow so often seen on a Christmas card) is almost like an 'end of Christmas season' card, proclaiming the fact that the new year is underway.



**Chris Young**

A Peace Rose from Chris' Garden.

## Brief Encounter with Cathy Blackburn

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

Lulu got to number 1 with her song, 'Boom bang-a-bang'!

**What is your favourite saying or quotation?**

'Don't worry, be happy', by Bob Marley

**What have you changed your mind about?**

Leaving Winchester to move to Reading when I was 24 years old. I changed my mind last minute and took up a job there as community midwife. But lost the special house I was allocated in Pangbourne due to my indecision.

**What is your favourite piece of music?**

Boomtown Rats: 'It's a rat trap'.

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

Rome as I just spent half term there (October 2022). It was so warm, with so much to see by just walking. The best part was seeing the Colosseum, but I also had mixed emotions as many Gladiators lost their lives.

**What would people be surprised to know about you?**

I have run 3 Marathons starting when I was 54, after my true sister took her own life. I am running another marathon in April, 2023.

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

To be a part of Buckingham Palace staff for a day, whether in the kitchen, or making beds, or greeting special people with

King Charles. (Dream on, I think!)

**Where do you feel closest to God?**

By the sea in every season; summer with the greatest of waves or winter being swept across a promenade and fighting the elements to keep walking in a straight line!!

Also in Micheldever woods and seeing deer rush across your path!



**Selection from Words of Wisdom you would like to tell  
Your Younger Self (From the Christmas Tree Trail)**

Keep smiling. Be kind to everyone. Take one day at a time.

Think before you speak. Don't worry about tomorrow.

Make your foresight as good as your hindsight.

Start each day with 'What can I do today to make a  
difference?'

Don't panic over trivia, take our time. Be more patient.

Seize the moment. Try your best.

It's no good saying 'If only...' Get on and **Do it**.

God gave you two ears and one mouth, use them in that  
proportion.

## Comedy Corner

### New Year Message?



IF THIS CAN  
BECOME VODKA



YOU CAN  
BECOME A SAINT



The deadline for *March Yours* is **Monday 14 February**. All contributions welcome. Send to [yours@ucw.org.uk](mailto:yours@ucw.org.uk).

\* Anna  
Chaplaincy  
for older people



# Vintage Fun

All welcome!



**Monday 13th February**

**2 - 4 pm**

at the

**United Church**

Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RZ

**Vintage Fun** is a monthly afternoon of friendship over a cup of tea. Each afternoon will offer a variety of activities,





UNITED CHURCH  
WINCHESTER

## Services for February 2023

In-person and live-streamed

### 5 FEBRUARY

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

### 12 FEBRUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Abbots Barton House  
Group

### 19 FEBRUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

### 26 FEBRUARY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle  
HC: Holy Communion.

UCW website: [ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/](https://ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/)

YouTube: [tinyurl.com/ucw-services](https://tinyurl.com/ucw-services)