



Yours

Magazine of
The United Church
Winchester

October 2024



United@50 

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Tim's Letter: For the Future Take Us!

Over the course of our anniversary celebrations, I hope you've both seen and heard something of the richness of our church's story. 50 years ago, different streams of our faith heeded the call to form a church community in the image of Christ. Now, that same calling is ours to shape. The baton has been passed on, and with joy and gratitude we receive it. But what will we do with it?

If you only read the omens in the press about the decline of the historic denominations, you could be forgiven for thinking we have a bleak future. Coupled with the rose-tinted yet misguided view that until the 90s all churches were full and the country was 'Christian', we can easily talk ourselves into a narrative of decline. Don't buy into it!

Yes, times have changed, and yes, we do have less people and resources than we had at one point. But this has always been the case throughout our history. There has always been an ebb and flow to church life; times of hardship and times of plenty. It is like a river which twists and turns, a reality as rhythmic as the seasons. And yet, throughout all this, our church has remained at the forefront of community life in Winchester. It has, through the hard work of members both past and present, become a respected and trusted voice and provider.

Our church was born out of innovation, both through its formation in 1974 and its rebirth through the blood, sweat and tears of the refurbishment. At each stage, the people of The United Church innovated to meet the needs of the times and to keep the Gospel relevant. We must do the same. And though change is always scary, it needn't be. Those of you who experienced our amazing Anniversary Dinner saw first hand what we're capable of when we put our minds to it. Let's not lose sight of that innovative spirit!

The final verse of Timothy Dudley-Smith's much-loved hymn, 'Lord for the years' speaks powerfully to me about our story:

*Lord, for ourselves, in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.*

Through Christ's living power, we have remade ourselves before and can remake ourselves again. Through Christ's living power, we celebrate and honour our past giving thanks for the legacy we have received. And through Christ's living power, the story continues.

Loving God, 'for the future take us', in the name of Christ. Amen!

Tim

Editorial

This month we celebrate a special 50th Anniversary weekend with photos (more on the website!)

Margaret Axford pays tribute to the people of the Methodist Chapel and its congregations in Twyford following the closure at the beginning of September.

Ralph Jessop writes of his 'second career' and a memorable visit to Egypt and we hear news of the Christmas Project and Link to Hope.

As we yearn for peace in Ukraine and Gaza we read about a moving evening on Mariupol organised by Elena Popova and her team, and we read the words of a new hymn by Methodist Minister Gareth Hill.

This month's front cover was drawn in coloured pencils by Angus Armstrong from a collage he created for his University choir's concert poster. You can read a helpful and warm introduction to the drawing on page 12.

We are grateful for all our contributors. If you have been hesitating about sending something in, why not prepare something for November *Yours*, we'd love to hear from you.

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

We would like to apologise to Marjory Monro for the misspelling of both her names in September *Yours* (Ed.)



News of the United Church Family

September is often a time for change and for moving on.

We think especially of members of our church community who are going to begin courses in Higher Education. Many congratulations on excellent results and on gaining the qualifications you needed for your chosen paths. We wish you well and send our blessings and prayers with you. We think especially of:



Flora Armstrong going to study at Oxford Brookes University

Amy Crocker going to study at Exeter University

Katie Giffin who will be studying at Winchester University

Elise Grigorian going to Lancaster University

Miranda Roles going to study at Leeds University.

Our best wishes and prayers go too with Luke Grigorian. He will be spending time over the next year in Japan gaining work experience.

All those in school will be starting afresh with new teaching staff and new peers. We send our best wishes that you will have a good start to the school year.

Eddie Searle, Amelie and Jacob Grigorian will all be beginning courses at Peter Symonds College. Congratulations on gaining the exam results required and we hope that this next stage in education goes well.

Some members of our community are celebrating birthdays. Our best wishes go to Jo Perrett who celebrated a birthday recently and to Dorothy Fendick who celebrates a birthday just as this edition of *Yours* goes to press. We send our love and prayers to you both.

We remember all those who share in extended communion either regularly or on an occasional basis, including Elaine, Jenny, Valerie, Ted, Val and John, Naomi and Jill.

Sadly, Pam Heathcote died on 31 August. Pam is Jane Lawson's Mum and will be missed by all the family.

Jane Lawson, Pastoral lead

Please do let me know if there is something you would like included in this section of *Yours* in the coming months.

Abraham's Poem

Many people will remember the young men asylum seekers who worshipped with us last year and we are pleased to hear that some of them now have had their refugee status confirmed. Here is a poem reflecting the experiences of those friends.

The Unknown

In a land so foreign, I found my way,
A new beginning, a brand-new day.
A journey embarked, with trepidation,
A path unknown, a new destination.

Leaving behind the familiar and known,
Stepping into the unfamiliar, all alone.
A culture so rich, a language anew,
Adapting, learning, feeling a bit askew.

New faces, new customs, a world so wide,
Excitement and challenges side by side.
A kaleidoscope of colours, sounds, and smells,
A melting pot of stories, a myriad of tales.

Through struggles and triumphs, I've grown,
Learning to navigate the unknown.
Finding my place, building connections,
Embracing the diversity, with new reflections.

New friendships blossomed, bonds so strong,
A sense of belonging, where I belong.
Discovering beauty in every little thing,
A rich tapestry of experiences to bring.

With time, a sense of home emerged,
A new chapter of life, a treasure urged.
The journey continues, with hope and grace,
Embracing life in this new place.

For life is an adventure, a tapestry of dreams,
A canvas to paint with vibrant themes.
And in this new country, I've found my way,
A journey of discovery, day by day.
(by Abraham)

Praying for Peace: How Long Lord?

A new hymn by Gareth Hill inspired by Habakkuk 1: 2–3

How long, O Lord, must shells rain down
And violence scar divided lands?
How long must children know the fear
that hatred breeds and death demands?
Your people cry for lasting peace
and pray for rescue from above.
'How long, O Lord', is all our prayer.
We need the overwhelm of love.

As each day dawns we look to heaven
and cry 'how long? How long, O Lord, how long!'
Breathe grace into our troubled souls,
speak gently to our shattered world.
God in the rubble, hear our cry,
don't let us be abandoned here.
Have you forsaken those you love?
Why must your children know this fear?

Our homes, our families are gone,
the dreams we had are shattered glass.
Must we endure this living hell
and never know a peace that lasts?
You see each sparrow as she falls,
and count the loss and grieve the pain.
Yet as we wait with tear-stained hearts
we ask, 'will flowers bloom again?'

We lift our eyes to Calvary
where Jesus carried evil's curse,
when hope refused to yield to hate
and grace redeemed the universe.
Yet as we ask, 'how long, O Lord?
How long must evil have its way?'
We cling to heaven's unfettered love
but ache for colour through the grey.

Gareth Hill.

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Habukkuk 1: 2–3

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not listen?
Or cry to you 'Violence!'
and you will not save?
Why do you make me see wrongdoing
and look at trouble?
Destruction and violence are before me;
Strife and contention arise.

Calling all Flower Lovers



There are two teams within the flower ministry in The United Church. The first is a small band of members who help on a rota to provide flowers for the Sanctuary on Sundays. It doesn't have to be an elaborate creation. A vase of flowers is most welcome and much more ecologically acceptable for the environment. We could certainly do with

some more helpers on this rota please.

The second is the flower dismantling team who then take the flowers to members of the church who are unwell or in need of a pastoral visit. This ministry is so much appreciated and continues week by week – usually on a Monday morning. At present we have five people on this rota, but it would be much easier if we could call on one or two extra so that we do not have as many turns in a quarter and to cover for people who are unable to carry out the commitment for any unforeseen reason.

The third aspect of the Flower Ministry is the Flower Fund. Members can donate for a special occasion or an anniversary or in memory of a loved one. We are very grateful to some members who also donate to the fund on a regular basis. They can also make a general donation, either regularly per Standing

Order or by Single Donations by cheque or Bank Transfer.
Please contact me if there is a way, however small, that you can assist these faithful teams.

Lesley Worrall

Link to Hope Shoe Box Appeal

Once again, we are supporting this worthwhile project of sending shoe boxes to Eastern European countries, including the Ukraine. Donation of goods and money are welcomed as well as filled shoe boxes.

Leaflets will soon be available in the church. Please can all filled shoe boxes be in by the end of October.

Our thanks to all those who have been busy making various articles throughout the year.

A team of about 6 or 7 people will be needed for sorting and filling boxes during October and for getting the boxes ready for dispatch in November.

If you have any queries, please contact either of us. Thanks, in anticipation.

Lesley Worrall and Yvonne North



This Month's Front Cover

I was commissioned to create artwork for the posters promoting Durham University Chamber Choir's final concert of the year, titled 'The Oaks'. The concert explored themes of the British countryside, memory, and the divine. To evoke a sense of nostalgia for the pastoral landscape, I began by assembling a collage of elements like a small parish church, oak trees symbolising Gurney's choral work 'The Oaks' (which was performed), and classic billowing spring clouds. Using this collage as a reference, I crafted the piece with layered coloured pencils on brown paper, enhancing the sense of warmth and history. This project was especially meaningful to me, as I had sung with the choir for three years, and it felt rewarding to contribute creatively to a such an amazing group of singers.

Angus Armstrong

Winchester Churches Christmas Project 2024

It may be only early autumn but **Winchester Churches Christmas Project** needs to start early! As I have said before, each year we launch the Project with three big unknowns – the number of people referred to us, how many volunteers will come forward and how much money will be available. It really is a big leap of faith and your prayers for the Project would be very welcome.

The Project has a remarkable history of over 30 years now, helping people in the Winchester area at Christmas. We cannot emphasise enough how different this project is to many other schemes. It is **not** a 'one size fits all' offering – each case is 'tailor made'. Families can choose for themselves what would help them most and this can be amazingly diverse! It might well be exciting stuff like Christmas food and presents or a special treat. However, it might be something much more prosaic such

as the payment of a worrying bill or the topping up of the gas or electricity.

Last Christmas we were pleased to help a total of 102 people. Some families could not quite believe that anyone would take the time and trouble – that they really mattered. More detail appeared in the February edition of *Yours*. Our help comes with absolutely no strings attached: we demonstrate our Christian faith and witness in our help and care for those we visit.

Our amazing volunteers come from many churches throughout Winchester – in 2023 it was 54 from 15 different churches. A truly ecumenical mix. They are key to the Project. As usual, we will be contacting volunteers from previous years directly to ask if they are able to help again this year. However, we are always welcome new volunteers (who would be paired with someone experienced). For more information, please contact me via email deanacre@talktalk.net. We do need to know volunteer numbers by **5 November**, please.

Our funding relies on support from congregations and individuals. We know that life is getting even more challenging each year and we would be extremely grateful for donations. We fund our volunteers upfront so early donations are particularly welcome.

If you would like to give by bank transfer, our bank account is **'Winchester Churches Christmas Project.'** **Sort code: 30-98-97. Account number: 80782363.** For those who wish to give by cheque or cash, there will be donation envelopes and boxes available in church from early October. Please make cheques payable to 'Winchester Churches Christmas Project'. Individuals who would like to Gift Aid their donation should use the special envelope, or provide their name and address and specify that it is to be Gift Aided, please

Thank you to everyone for your prayerful and practical support.

Helen McTiffin (Joint Co-ordinator with Janet Stewart)

Golden Anniversary Weekend

We would like to thank everyone at The United Church for a wonderful weekend.

We know how much planning goes on behind the scenes to organise such an event. Planning takes several months. So many people were involved in organising equipment and tables. Rosie and Howard and Janet and Rowan did an amazing job. Lydia (Rosie's daughter) and her husband Dan oversaw the management of the meal. We could not have done it without their professional help. Thank you both so much and having to organise childcare too.

It was a wonderful team to be part of. The Ukrainian ladies did a superb job waiting at table and all those who were downstairs washing up – what a mammoth task! The dishwasher could not go fast enough.



Thanks to Tim for a lovely service on Sunday. Also to all in the music group led by Andrea –it was very special as it reminded us of when our girls played at services. It was a delight to see the two Howard's together.

Thank you to EVERYONE (many I have not mentioned). So many happy memories.

This was The United Church at its best.

Ann and Richard Coleman

Golden Anniversary Weekend Photos







These and lots more photos (in full size) on the website ucw.org.uk/gallery/

Mariupol

On 14 September Elena Popova and her team presented a celebration of the city and people of Mariupol, her home city.

With a mixture of dance, singing, art, photos, history, personal accounts and expressions of solidarity we experienced, with our Ukrainian friends, what Mariupol means to those who have lived there, how the spirit of the city lives on. Each of those present were able to recreate an artwork made up of brightly coloured handprints.



We also were shown a 1:160 model of the Mariupol Drama Theatre, where around 500 people lost their lives. This remains a symbol of Mariupol as it was with the hope that it, its city and

its life, will be rebuilt in the future.

Elena and her team were thanked for a well rounded, emotional, inspiring, ultimately hopeful evening when the Ukrainians present expressed their wish to make the most of the opportunities they have as part of their new found community in Winchester.

See Mike Holt's video of the evening at bit.ly/3TweQA4

Near the end of the evening, Maryna Dabło, who is from Mariupol, read out the following poignant poem.

For My Children

I look around. How can this be?

Destruction, as far as the eye can see,

Bits of building, like Lego bricks,

My business in ruins, my stomach it kicks.
Where once was children's laughter, joy and hope,
Evil has struck. I fear I cannot cope.
But for my children, I know I must,
Although I feel that my heart will bust.
I must get them out, I must get them away,
To a place of love, where it's safe to stay.
But I must leave my parents behind,
To such a choice I must be resigned.
My heart is as shattered as Mariupol,
It is not just on buildings that the war takes its toll.
But my children, they will have the best again,
When finally, my tears, I'll shed them then.

Maryna Dablo April 2024

In February I read one day from my diary in front of a Ukrainian and British audience. David Gibson, a British poet was there and asked if he could write a poem about a day in the war. He presented my emotions so closely to what I really felt. In my damaged city with buildings that looked like pieces of Lego bricks; my destroyed business, that I ran for more than 5 years; a difficult choice I needed to make; a big treasure – my kids; the word 'must' used as repetition that was in my mind all the time I have been there. One day perhaps you will hear the whole story...

Maryna Dablo, September 2024

A Second Career

After 40 years working in high tech industry I retired when I was 58. I cannot in any way regret my career choice and the freedom for us both to open new doors was inviting. To celebrate this change of life style we booked a holiday in America which was a tour of New England. The start date was 18 September 2001 and we had to fly to Boston which appeared unlikely, given events. British Airways kept in contact with us and advised us that they planned to restart trans-Atlantic flights a week after 9/11 and they did. No American planes were flying by then and Boston was a ghost town. We did the planned trip but with few American tourists. That is another exciting story...

I saw an article in the *Hampshire Chronicle* about Winchester Cathedral guides. Their knowledge and skills seemed alien to me as my training was in electro-chemistry and I hated history at school. After a gruelling interview I was surprised to be invited to do the guides' training. I found the training inspirational and I was told that they wanted guides to inspire and interest the visitors (rather than bore the pants off them!) I passed the exam at the 6 month point. I must have done well because I received enthusiastic applause after my first tour.

In due course I was asked to be Guides' Chairman, a role just as demanding as any senior role in industry. With 120 guides to manage and motivate and a highly competent committee to bring in new things it was a memorable time. Satisfying cathedral clergy and management in their quest to continually improve the cathedral's offering to congregation and visitors was the key. I did this for 4 years and I am writing this as I have now retired as a cathedral guide.

Trip to Egypt with James Atwell

Soon after I became Guides' chairman in 2008, I was walking into the inner close after a late tour when James Atwell, then Dean, stopped to have a few words. He asked me whether I would like to go to Egypt on a trip that he and Lorna were organising for January 2009. He said that he would like to meet me for a chat, which we had in his office the next week, and that became a monthly event. He often said that he appreciated my non-conformist slant on things.

Carol and I went to Egypt as part of a group of 30. We flew to Cairo on 1 January and stayed in the Meridian Hotel. The next day we went to Giza to see the pyramids and the Sphinx.



We had been invited to conduct a service in the Coptic church which was led by Dean James with help from our very musical group. There were so many local Egyptian people who recognised James from his previous visits. He was known as James Last because he was always last to arrive at any meeting point. He was very good at stopping the coaches when he saw someone he knew and he would leap out to say hello.

We flew to Aswan to board MS *Eugenie* which we were taking across Lake Nasser to go to Abu Simbel, about 200 miles. We had two guides, Ahmed (a Christian) and Ahmed (a Moslem). They introduced 007 who had a very impressive silver gun under

his very smart suit jacket and he was there to protect us. There were so many sites to visit on Lake Nasser which we approached by tenders from *Eugenie*.



The young men who served our meals in smart waiter clothes and looked after our cabins doubled as police on these short hops by donning blue baseball caps and polo necks with POLICE on the front and they carried ancient 303 rifles (which may have been loaded!). There were temples and tombs on these sites and camel rides were available on one site and James was first to bag one (in blue)



Abu Simbel is actually two temples, 3,000 years old, which had to be raised when Lake Nasser was created in the 1960s. They are dedicated to King Ramses II and his Queen, Nefertari. We sailed back towards Aswan and arrived on 9 January.

Next it was Luxor and the Valley of the Kings by ancient coach with lots of police stops along the way.

Karnak could be seen as the predecessor to a European cathedral except that its dimensions can be measured in units of ladies. But there is no roof.



We had daily prayers and James gave some enthralling talks on the ship. We were all invited to lead a short worship time in the morning or evening and the range of topics just showed how different we all were but shared the same faith. Meal times were very social occasions especially on the ship and I didn't know that Deans could be so raucous.

A fantastic experience. I was pleased to have bumped in to James in the Inner Close and I was saddened that he didn't have many years of retirement.

Ralph Jessop

A Farewell to Twyford Methodist Chapel

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a small group of Methodists in Twyford who met in a cobbler's cottage for worship and Bible study. By the middle of the century this small congregation had outgrown the cottage and a chapel was built in the village, opening in January 1851. The following year a Sunday School started and was soon thriving. The chapel clearly made a significant contribution to the social life of the village, with its tea parties for the children, its carol singing at Christmas and its summer outings to far flung places like Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Hayling Island!

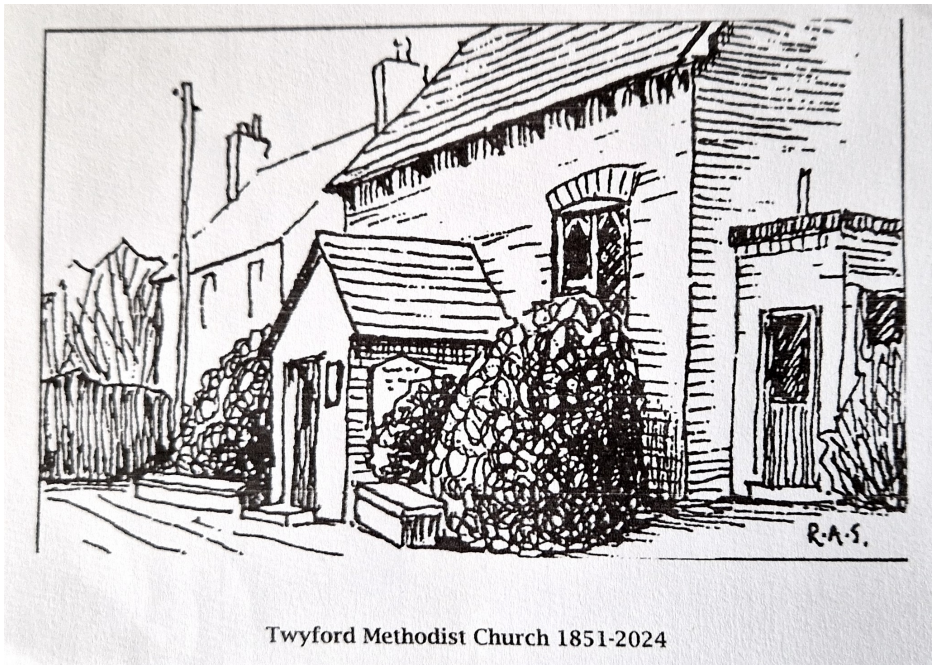
The chapel celebrated its centenary at the beginning of January 1951. By this time numbers were declining, partly due to the effects of the Second World War, but also because many long-standing members of the congregation had died and there were fewer people coming forward to take their place. However, commitment to the chapel remained strong and in the late 1960s the building was given some very necessary modernisation. Electric lighting replaced gas and a piped water supply was finally laid on.

In recent years the congregation has continued to dwindle, so this year the hard decision was taken that the chapel should close. For the final service on Wednesday 4 September, the building was transformed by those who have continued to love and care for it. The chairs were back in rows, facing the very high pulpit; there were garden flowers on the table and all the window sills; and all those who'd been invited to the service were warmly welcomed. Once again, the chapel was full. It was very much a celebration as well as a farewell.

Although buildings can close, congregations continue and those who have very faithfully worshipped in the chapel over the last few years will now continue to meet as the Twyford House

Fellowship, gathering together in someone's house on a Wednesday morning, supported by a small group of ministers and local preachers. They will also continue to reach out to their local community through the monthly coffee morning, a carol service and pastoral care towards their neighbours.

The wheel has come full circle, from a cobbler's cottage in the early 1800s to someone's house today, but through it all the work of Christ continues. Let's pray for the Twyford House Fellowship as they look towards the future.



Margaret Axford

The picture of Twyford Church was drawn by the late Revd Ray Short. (Ed.)

Our National Magazines

Both of the national denominations which make up The United Church publish a magazine, but the two publications are rather different from each other.

The Methodist Church produces **THE CONNEXION** three times a year. It is described as ‘highlighting inspiring stories from the Methodist Church.’ The Summer 2024 edition includes articles about a small urban church in Hull, a community hub at a Northamptonshire church, and a parent and toddler group in St Ives, Cornwall. It also brought reports of this summer’s Methodist Conference, and a visit to Kenya and Uganda by the President of the Conference, the Revd Helen Cameron.

The United Reformed Church continues to publish **REFORM** as it has done since its formation in 1972, monthly except January and August. This year’s General Assembly decided that the URC will no longer fund it after 2025, so the magazine’s future is uncertain. But meanwhile there has been a major redesign of the magazine to include a number of new features. The September 2024 issue includes a substantial report of the progress which has been made on the Church Life Review set up by General Assembly.

Copies of both magazines can usually be found in the rack in the church coffee bar.

The Connexion can be downloaded for free at www.methodist.org.uk/about/the-connexion-magazine/

Read selected articles from the latest edition of **Reform** for free at www.reform-magazine.co.uk/latest-issue/

Order a free sample copy of **Reform** at urcshop.co.uk/reform-magazine/

Graham Rolfe

News of the Wider Church

Elizabeth Jewkes, director of the Christian Forum, has told *Premier Christian Radio* that she does not 'recognise' the description of her party suggested by former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, earlier in the month when he told the *Telegraph* he thinks 'it is impossible' for a Christian to represent the Liberal Democratic party. Elizabeth Jewkes, who holds the same views, says that her faith is not in contradiction with the party she represents: 'I've never found a problem with being a Christian and a Lib Dem – in fact I've found the opposite. It's very easy to be a Christian and a Lib Dem, because the Lib Dems are so focussed on social justice. We have so many Catholics, whose views on abortion are much stricter than mine, and they find a home in the Lib Dems.'



Thousands of people in one of the world's most remote Catholic communities in **Papua New Guinea (PNG)** turned out to see Pope Francis on 8 September. Travelling 1,000 km (620 miles) in a C-130 cargo aircraft provided by the Royal Australian Air Force, Pope Francis arrived with a small entourage in Vanimo, a township of some 12,000 people in the north-western corner of PNG's main island, with no running water and scarce electricity.

Pope Francis was greeted in the field outside the cathedral with a traditional dance from a group wearing feathered headdresses and grass skirts. He was presented with a headdress of bird of paradise feathers.

Dorothy Lusmore

Jonathan Veira



Jonathan is a celebrated Bass Baritone. He studied music at London University, Trinity College of Music and the National Opera Studio. His vocal talents have brought him critical acclaim as a professional singer and entertainer for over thirty years and his distinguished career in opera, performing internationally, has been

matched by his many years as a one-man entertainer, filling some of the UK's largest auditoriums. Jonathan and his wife, Sue, are passionate about bringing people together in supportive community.

Come and join Jonathan at The United Church Winchester as he plays and sings a variety of beautiful songs across many musical styles and shares his faith in God in his own relaxed manner.

19 October 2024 at 7 pm. Tickets £10 adults, £5 under sixteen, available through the website <https://ucw.org.uk/50th-anniversary/> or from the Coffee Bar Monday–Friday mornings.

Dorothy Lusmore





Harvest Celebration

Monday 14th October

2 - 4 pm

At the

United Church

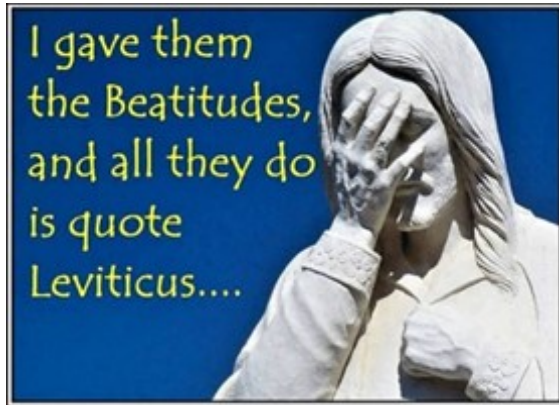
Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RZ

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



Comedy Corner

- A - She's punished
- B - She's counting while the others are hiding
- C - She's a new breed of plug-in hybrid cow

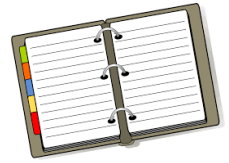


The deadline for November *Yours* is **Wednesday 9 October**. All contributions welcome. Send to yours@ucw.org.uk.





Dates for Your Diary



Sunday 6 October 12.00–2.00 pm
Church Meeting

Monday 14 October 2.00–4.00 pm
Vintage Fun Harvest Celebration.

Saturday 19 October 7.00–9.30 pm
Concert with Jonathan Viera. (See page 28) Book [here](#).



Any views or opinions expressed in Yours are the views and opinions of the individual contributors and do not represent the views or opinions of The United Church unless clearly stated.



Services for October 2024

In-person and live-streamed

6 OCTOBER

10.30 am **Morning Worship (HC)** Revd Tim Searle
followed by Church Meeting

13 OCTOBER

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Peter Rayson

20 OCTOBER

9.00 am **Holy Communion** Revd Tim Searle

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

27 OCTOBER

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

HC: Holy Communion

UCW website: ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/

YouTube: tinyurl.com/ucw-services

