



# Yours

Magazine of  
The United Church

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## Tim's Letter: Vision?

As I hinted at our Annual Church Meeting, we now need to continue the conversations begun early last year about where we, as a church community, see ourselves going in the years to come. The 50th anniversary was a time of great joy when we gave thanks for all that has led us to this point. But my clarion call, if you remember, was: '... past put behind us, for the future take us, Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone' taken from Timothy Dudley-Smith's hymn, 'Lord for the years'. With the 50th behind us, it is now for us to discern where God's future takes us.

The word we've been using to hang these conversations on is 'vision', which got me thinking about what the word actually means! Definitions of it are usually along these lines: '1) the faculty or state of being able to see; 2) the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination and wisdom; 3) an experience of being able to see someone or something in a dream or trance; and 4) a person or sight of unusual beauty'. I wonder, with a little reordering, whether these might help us form a structure for how we take our envisioning process forward?

Taking the last first (in true New Testament style!) I wonder whether the vision of beauty for us to behold is Christ, particularly pertinent in this season of Easter. In other words, what we see in the present and imagine for the future must flow from our love of Jesus. Secondly, we take the faculty of sight. Any envisioning requires us to see what is currently the case. If we are to understand what is distinctive about our contribution to the Christian community in Winchester, we must be able to state clearly and with purpose what we do, and why. That done, I wonder if the next part incorporates some dreaming. Do we dare to dream? It's understandable to fear the future. There are indeed many hurdles to overcome and it's entirely right that we

get to grips with the reality. But we must not let fear eclipse our need to dream. Some fear is healthy, but too much leads to paralysis. Finally, we take what we know of the present and what we dream for our future and plan it with imagination and wisdom. Here's the potted version of the above: we behold Christ, we see him in the present, we dream God's dream for our future, and then we plan how to execute that vision with imagination and wisdom.

Already we have done much work towards bringing our vision to fruition, and I'm grateful for your help in what we've achieved at the 2023 Worship Day, last year's Vision Lunches and all we've done since, whether as individuals, in House Groups, or as one. Now it's time to put those pieces together, perhaps as described above, and to hone the final article. So let us behold, see, dream and plan as the Spirit leads: 'Your kingdom come; Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.'

In Christ, Tim

## Editorial

This month's front cover features our new Boston Steinway piano. Read more about why we acquired it and all that is planned to make good use of it on pages 7–9. There are lots of exciting concerts and events to look forward to.

Howard Mellor shares a moving reflection for Ascension Day, Rosie MacMullen's holiday highlights reach Malaga and Chris Young gives his view on troubled times.

Chine Macdonald writes about an encouraging Bible Society report on a quiet revival in the church, notably, but not exclusively, among Gen Z. Read her uplifting article on pages 10–11.

Many thanks, as always, to all our contributors.

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

## **News of the United Church Family**

We were sorry to hear of the recent death of Margaret March, mother of Rosemary Black. Margaret had regularly attended the 9 am service at the United Church until ill health prevented her from doing so. Margaret lived latterly at Winchester Heights care home. We hold Margaret, Rosemary, Greg and family in our thoughts and prayers.



We gave thanks on 16 April for the life of Joan Wood in a service held in celebration of Joan's life. We continue to hold all of Joan's family in our prayers.

It is great to see the return of some of the younger members of our church community from university for the Easter break. Our best wishes to you and those at school and college who will be taking exams in the coming term.

Rosie Blackburn, daughter of Cathy and Jim, is one of those about to take exams. Congratulations Rosie on being offered a place in September at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds. Exciting news!

Congratulations to Howard and Rosie, who celebrated their golden wedding anniversary recently.

*Please do let me know if you would like me to include anything in this space in future editions of Yours. You can email me on [pastoral@ucw.org.uk](mailto:pastoral@ucw.org.uk).*

**Jane Lawson, Pastoral Lead**

## Ascension

Jesus is the One  
who with enabling power,  
imparts confident promise.  
'All authority is given to me.  
I, who am with the Father,  
laid aside all glory for you,  
put on humanity for you,  
came in time and space for you, and so  
all authority known in heaven,  
now extends to earth,  
for you, and you, and you.

'Therefore,  
as you are going,  
disciple all the people,  
teach, baptise,  
model all I have shared with you  
and have humble confidence,  
for I am with you all of the days  
to the end of the age.  
My signature is under your life.'

**G. Howard Mellor**

## Our New Piano

*The following text was sent, along with suitable photos, to the Hampshire Chronicle with a view to readers finding out more about our church and plans for the new piano. Thanks to Jane Lawson for the text on this page (Ed.)*

**The United Church Winchester** sits in Jewry Street in the heart of Winchester and is very much part of the local community. We celebrated its 50th Anniversary in the Autumn.

There is much that goes on in the church building as well as our Sunday and Wednesday services. There are activities with older people, with parents and young children, many visit the coffee bar which opens every weekday morning. There is a weekly welcome for refugees and people seeking asylum who want to meet with one another and with us. Alongside these activities, our church building is hired out to groups including choirs and music groups.

We are pleased to have recently purchased a Boston Steinway piano and want this to be a '*people's piano*' played as much as possible by as many as possible! Individuals and groups are most welcome. We are putting on a range of events and hope that people will enjoy an ongoing programme of concerts, some of which will help us raise funds for the new piano. More on concerts that we have planned in the interview below.

In promoting our piano as a 'People's Piano', one event we have planned will take place as part of the *2025 Winchester Hat Fair*. It will be a fun opportunity for anyone who loves to play the piano (but may not often get the chance to play on a Boston Steinway) to come and have a go! Please do come along and join the fun, whether you are young, old or somewhere in between and whatever kind of music you like to play. Then, in September, to coincide with Winchester Open Weekend, we hope some of those people who joined us on the 5 July might agree to help us put on a concert, to have a great afternoon/evening with a range

of music. Come and join us on Saturday 5 July, have a go on the piano and enjoy a coffee/tea and a piece of cake whilst you are with us.

We aim to create a welcoming place for all. We hope that the new piano will help us in that endeavour.

### **Interview with Tony Wood, organist at the United Church**

#### **What makes the United Church a special concert venue?**



The United Church, Jewry Street, Winchester makes a special concert venue for several reasons. The beautiful spacious sanctuary on the first floor of the church is very good acoustically for piano recitals, chamber and choir concerts. The

church can accommodate 150 plus people in comfort.

Additionally, refreshments can be served from a coffee bar on the ground floor and a kitchen in the hall. Its central location in Winchester makes it easily accessible by train (5minutes from the station), by bus (a park and ride bus stop right outside the church), and several carparks nearby.

#### **Tell us about the new piano.**

The 1998 Boston Steinway grand piano has been recently acquired. At 7'1" long, it can be classified as a small concert grand piano. This is proving to be a great asset to the church, providing the clear tone and power associated with Steinway pianos. The piano is manufactured by Kawai, the Japanese piano maker, under the trading name of Boston. The design is by Steinway incorporating the shape (the wider rounded end allows for more resonance), inner moulding and all-important soundboard. The key action design is also by Steinway.

#### **Have you been able to attract any special pianists to play the new instrument?**



We have already had one recital on the piano by the young Russian pianist, Nikita Lukinov. This was very well received. **We are pleased to welcome Roger Owens to give a recital on 10 May.** Roger is Professor of Piano at The Royal Welsh College of Music, and was formerly based in Winchester. He has given many recitals at prestigious venues, both in this country and internationally.

This will be the first of the United Church Concert Series 2025/26. **A jazz piano recital will take place on 12 July to be given by Robert Carter.** On 3 September a concert will be given by Southampton University Choir and pianists. An organ recital will be given in the church by Gerard Brooks on 18 October. Hanna Csermely, currently at The Royal Northern College of Music, will give a piano recital on 9 May next year.

**Do you have any other events planned to raise funds for the piano?**

Other events are planned, including an 'in house' concert by resident young musicians from our church, an Eisteddfod type day and a Ukrainian concert.

The proceeds from these events will go towards the funding of our piano, but, equally importantly, help to publicise the free access to our piano for people of all ages and abilities. It has been a particular joy to see children 'having a go' on what amounts to a concert grand piano.

**How long have you been an organist at the United Church?**

I have been playing the organ at the United Church for about fifty years, and my involvement with promoting the new piano provides a great opportunity to give back some of the pleasure I have had from providing music for the church.

**All concerts can be booked at [ucw.org.uk/concerts/](http://ucw.org.uk/concerts/). £15 (£10 for students and children.)**

## A Quiet Revival

I thought revival would look a little different. Church services full to bursting, people being slain in the Spirit in queues at the supermarket, and others knocking on their Christian neighbours' doors asking how they can be saved.

We have of course seen glimmers of these types of mass revivals in the UK in my lifetime. Like the Cwmbran outpouring in Wales in 2013, when revival meetings were put on every night because demand was so great, after reports of healings and hundreds of people becoming Christians. Thousands of people from all over the world had visited the church at the centre of the revival – Victory Church –to see for themselves.

But the shift in the spiritual atmosphere described in Bible Society's new research suggests a quieter revival; a very British one – not showy, not loud, but steady and understated. The findings conducted by YouGov are significant, however. It suggests that the decline in church attendance in England and Wales has now stopped – there were around two million more people attending church in 2024 than there had been in 2018.

The Church is now in a period of growth, with Gen Z leading the charge. The report – titled *The Quiet Revival* – shows that the most dramatic church growth is among young adults, particularly young men. In 2018, around four per cent of 18–24 year-olds said that they attended church at least monthly. Now this has gone up to 16 per cent, with young men increasing from 4 per cent to 21 per cent, and young women from 3 to 12 per cent.

They say that change happens slowly then all at once; and this feels to me to ring true when it comes to the seeming 'vibe shift' in perceptions and positivity about Christianity in our culture. Before the pandemic, we heard a lot about declining church

attendance, then Covid-19 seemed to be the death-knell as congregations dwindled even further. Then after the pandemic recovery came the 2021 Census figures, which showed that the number of those that ticked the Christian box was at its lowest level.

But something seems to have shifted over the past two years, in particular. We hear of young people queuing to enter Catholic mass, we hear of teenagers turning up to church unannounced, then dragging their parents along, we hear of Bible sales going up, we hear of online meetings run by the Orthodox Church being attended by hundreds, we hear of university mission organisations seeing sparks in interest among students. A drip-drip of change.

The numbers reported in *The Quiet Revival* will not necessary look like people queuing round the corner to get into local churches; but they may look a little like many churches having a few more congregants. I've noticed this in my own church when on Sunday mornings in recent months, I've looked around and wondered who these new people are that are joining us, and where they have come from.

Over the past couple of years we at Theos have noticed an openness to Christian ideas in the public square; a place that felt much more hostile to Christianity and religion in general in the early 2000s when atheism was presumed to be the default, and Richard Dawkins and friends were comparing religious belief to the smallpox.

It's an exciting time to be a Christian in the UK, and the Church needs to be ready to be the community of believers that truly represents the wonder of the kingdom of God people are reading and hearing about in scripture – a wonder and an encounter that compels them to turn up at church one Sunday morning.

**Chine McDonald in *Christianity Today***

## Highlights of a Holiday in Spain and North Africa: 3

It was a lovely sunny day when we came to Malaga and I decided to wander into the city.



I found a café and enjoyed a chat with a lady at the next table who called the manager to show me his code so I could email family. Cappuccino swallowed down, I ambled off without knowing where I was but found myself at the cathedral. We had to wait half an hour to go in so I sat in the peaceful nearby garden and read up about this stunning

example of Spanish ecclesiastical architecture blending Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles. Begun in the 1530s on the former site of an Almohad Mosque, it is still unfinished and lacking its south tower leading it to be known as 'la Manquita' the One-Armed.

The splendour of this huge temple is breathtaking.

It felt awe-inspiring and well worth the wait.

Once outside I just loved the atmosphere of Malaga's crowded little streets and just went up a steep path that went on and on up and up beside a huge wall with higher levels with stops to view the city below. I think this was the Castle of Gibralfaro but I decided not to go right to the top as I was worried about getting back to my ship. As you can see from this photo I had gone pretty far up above.



This was an absolutely brilliant day and someone was obviously looking after me as I didn't actually know where these wonderful places were and just came across them.

That's what made it so magical really.



**Rosemary MacMullen**

## Reflections and Activities of a Church Member on Politics

### *Searching for 'political triangulation' during a period being presented as posing a 'Change in World Order'*

Many would recognise that we live in tumultuous times. Many would argue that in the UK we are fortunate to have institutions such as the BBC who seek to give an unbiased reporting of the news together with seeking to give a balanced presentation of comments from a party-political standpoint.

In contrast to this neutral position, the internet is awash with very opinionated comment focusing in on one political standpoint, which, in the extreme, perhaps gives rise to opinions that many would feel to be on the bounds of acceptability.

Having an interest in politics I tend towards favouring an all-embracing political perspective with which to be guided through my 'political discernment' by a process of hearing perspectives that embrace the two ends of the 'political spectrum' together with the centre.

There are a number of podcasts which do just this, and one which I have found particularly engaging goes under the name of *Not Another One*: [bit.ly/3G8mkFD](https://bit.ly/3G8mkFD)

Hosted by four political journalists, two from a 'conservative' perspective, and two from a 'progressive' viewpoint, being Miranda Green, Iain Martin, Tim Montgomerie and Steve Richards; a considered, nuanced debate can be heard, now twice weekly, on the political issues of the day, focusing both on the UK and worldwide.

It is perhaps worth noting that the name of the podcast was inspired by the now, world famous pensioner, 'Brenda' from Bristol, who unsuspectingly commenced her world-famous persona in an instant by her comment, on the (then) up and

coming 2017 general election being broadcast.

Her comment being: 'Not another one'.

This being recorded, broadcast and subsequently 'went viral'. It is interesting to consider how the life of an ordinary individual can be transformed just by being in a certain place at a certain time.

Ukraine, Russia, the Middle East, and more recently the turn of events in the USA have troubled many.

By convention, as I understand the custom, former Presidents of the US do not comment on the activities of the existing incumbents, however, as one citizen of the USA commented to me when attending the Westminster Parliament recently, (below), 'that convention has kinda "gone out the window" now'.

I can testify as such as my internet tailored feed recently offered up the following of President Barack Obama speaking at Hamilton College; initially talking about his Obama Foundation and his views of communication skills, if you want to 'fast forward' to the critique of the current situation, such starts at 16.55: [bit.ly/3RkRTyc](https://bit.ly/3RkRTyc).

In personal reflection, I find it poignant to consider that being presented with a manifestation of the recent past, in this case President Obama, it offers, at least to me, a past that we perhaps view as somehow representing something 'lost' or no longer in being.

Practising politics or even pursuing an interest in politics can often mean dealing with the unanticipated and/or having a fleet of foot at the turn of events.

This was such with myself on Saturday 12 April, the day parliament was sitting at short notice, moreover, a rare Saturday sitting due to concerns relating to the Scunthorpe Steel Works.

I had had a long-standing diary entry listing my inclusion in a small group with a parliamentary guide. With the turn of events,

he changed the anticipated itinerary for the second half of the engagement and, at short notice, arranged for us to have a place in The Strangers Gallery in the House of Lords.

Thus, I was present in person to hear and see the Lords react to the proposed legislation as being 'Content' (meaning they agreed with it) unanimously, (there were no 'Not Contents'). The legislation was then going direct to the King for Royal Assent. I believe he had put himself on standby for such a purpose. This then, for me, was what I might describe as a 'punctuation mark in my life'. A sort of 'where were you when such and such happened' time.

For those readers who may wish to consider more fully the interplay between Christian faith and politics, from the 'trying to save the number 61 bus Eastleigh-Boyatt Wood-Winchester route type of activity' to being the leader of a major UK political party, I can recommend Tim Farron's book:

*A Mucky Business: Why Christians Should Get Involved in Politics*, published by IVP, 2022.

Tim Farron is a practicing Christian and a former leader of the Liberal Democrats.

These thoughts have been brought to you by someone who does not resilé from the descriptor:

'A Labour supporting Conservative, who would not necessarily deny voting Liberal Democrat who is very supportive of the aims and objectives of the Green Party who was equally pleased to respond in the positive to an invitation received to attend an address given by Nigel Farage in the writer's constituency, albeit some years back when Mr Farage was heading up one of his former parties'.



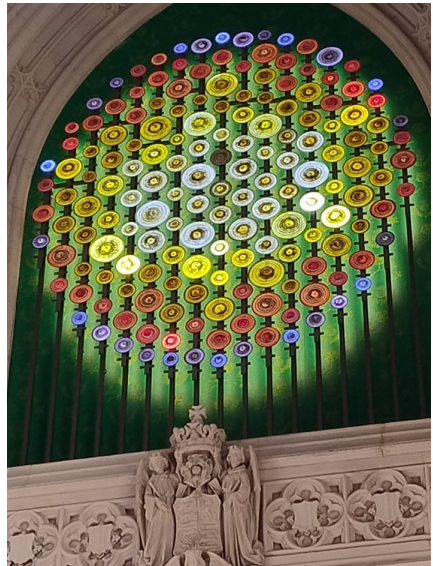
## Two Pictures from Chris's Visit to Parliament



Having passed stage one security and heading on foot to stage two, which proved to be more 'intense', I was reminded that whatever view we may have of current events, our country has seen traumatic events of a greater order; one such time, as represented here by Oliver Cromwell, was the 1640s.

Whatever memories of the past may be engendered by a visit to Parliament; the building is not without its contemporaneous manifestations.

A large, electrically illuminated piece of art can be found above the entrance to Westminster Hall, in tribute to the struggle for women's vote. You can find more details of the work at [bit.ly/42fyZz4](https://bit.ly/42fyZz4)



Chris Young

## Good Friday Prayer Walk

After a movingly reflective Good Friday service in church, 22 of us, including two visitors from Christ Church, took part in a prayerful walk around the city.



*A stop at a war memorial by the Cathedral, where we held before God places where war is waging today.*

Pat Fry had prepared a booklet adapted from the Churches Together in Winchester Walking Trail. We had 10 stops, when we heard a little about each location and listened to a Bible verse linked to the setting and Good Friday. We remembered Jesus and those around him and prayed for the people in Winchester and the wider world going through similar types of suffering.

As an example we stopped by the cathedral, remembering it was in danger of collapse in 1906. William Walker worked alone in

the dark for five years to instal supports. We remembered Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross for Jesus and prayed for people with demanding jobs as they care for others.

This was part praying through the suffering of Jesus on Good Friday, part praying for the city and part enjoyable church walk.

Many thanks to Pat Fry and Margaret Axford for their part in this.

**Bob Lord**

## **News of the Wider Church**



**Papua New Guinea's first Saint.** Pope Francis approved the canonisation of Peter ToRot as PNG's first saint, not long after being released from hospital last month. Peter ToRot was a Papua New Guinea Catholic who served as catechist in his village in East New Britain Province and was entrusted with responsibility for the local parish during World War II when Imperial Japanese forces occupied the region and expatriate priests and missionaries had been imprisoned. During the Japanese occupation of PNG, Peter continued to stand up for religious values in the face of Japanese oppression.

He continued to hold secret services when the Japanese restricted him from active pastoral service. He was an outspoken critic of polygamy, upholding the sanctity of marriage, and prepared couples for Christian marriage. Towards late 1943 the Japanese authorities restricted religious services, and a few months later forbade them in full. But ToRot continued to hold services in secret and did not fear the implications for his life despite the fear of those around him. The

destruction of his church saw him build a 'bush church' outside the village to hold secret services; he kept records of baptisms and weddings there. His life was characterised by charity, humility, and dedication to the poor and orphans.

He was eventually betrayed and sentenced to prison where he was killed by lethal injection in July 1945. His beatification was celebrated in Papua New Guinea in 1995 and his canonisation as saint was approved last month. One of his grandsons says he'd like to see his grandfather become the patron saint of matrimony. News release [bit.ly/3RrE8Of](https://bit.ly/3RrE8Of).




**This year, all Christians** celebrated Easter on the same day – a rare alignment between the Julian and Gregorian calendars. Easter is a multi-day festival based on days of the week rather than fixed dates, so its timing depends on the Earth and Moon's movements. Both Western and Orthodox churches celebrate Easter on the Sunday after the first full moon following the Northern Hemisphere's Spring equinox – also known as the vernal equinox, and the autumn equinox in the Southern Hemisphere. This method of calculating Easter was set by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

**Palm Sunday Bombings. A Christian Hospital in Gaza** was bombed on Palm Sunday. The UK Foreign Minister and the Archbishop of York have condemned an Israeli airstrike on Gaza's Al Ahli Hospital, calling for an end to attacks on medical facilities. The Anglican-run hospital, located in Gaza City, was hit on Palm Sunday, damaging its surgical units and A&E department.

A church service livestream in the northern **Ukrainian city of Sumy** captured the moment Russian ballistic missiles struck the city on Palm Sunday, with explosions echoing through the

sanctuary mid-sermon. In the footage, the pastor can be heard urging worshippers to 'calm down' as members of the congregation peer through the windows, trying to assess the situation outside. Moments later, he tells everyone to take shelter in the basement as another blast hits nearby. The missiles struck central Sumy, killing 35 people and injuring 117 more, according to local officials. It marks the deadliest single attack on Ukraine so far this year.

 **The Methodist Church in Britain is issuing a formal apology to anyone who has been hurt or abused in any of the Mother and Baby homes that it was responsible for in the past.** It says that the mission of the Methodist Church in the 20th century was to work with single mothers who did not have others to support them and the aim was to offer compassion and care, but that it is saddened and ashamed at the treatment of some women:

The Church has been made aware of several women who were sent to Mother and Baby homes in the 1950s and 1960s. The Church, which no longer runs any homes, commends the bravery of those who have come forward to share their experiences and appeals for anyone who may have been affected to come forward to share their story or for support.

Full report [bit.ly/4jDgryr](https://bit.ly/4jDgryr)

**Churches in Britain are experiencing a 'Quiet Revival'**, according to new [research by the Bible Society](#). New data reverses held beliefs that Christianity is declining in Britain. Under the previous survey, the largest churchgoing demographic was the over-65s. Now, a similar number of young adults are attending church, as pensioners were in 2018. See Chine McDonald's article on page 10.

## On the Death of His Holiness, Pope Francis

The United Reformed Church, with Christians everywhere, mourns the death of His Holiness Pope Francis, and extends its sympathy to Catholics who will grieve this loss most keenly.



Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope in March 2013 taking office after the abdication of Benedict XVI.

Within the limitations and expectations of the Papal office Francis was an agent of change who sat lightly on inherited traditions and pomp.

Rejecting an ermine lined red cape before being presented to the crowds in St Peter's, Francis said to an aide 'no thank you Monsignor ... the carnival is over!'

Living a simple lifestyle meant, for Francis, rejecting a move into the Papal apartments and remaining in a small suite in the Vatican guesthouse, taking his meals with other guests.

Francis saw his ministry, primarily, as being one who called the Church to be missionary. He wanted every element of the Church's life to reflect missionary discipleship and the building of the Kingdom.

He oversaw the updating of the constitution for the Roman Curia (the Vatican civil service) so that it was orientated towards service and mission. In a speech before his election Francis stated: 'when the Church does not come out of herself to evangelise, she becomes self-referential and sick'. A maxim all denominations should take to heart.



He also spoke of Jesus knocking on the door, from within the Church, seeking to be let out into the world. Yet Francis was no liberal. He would speak of the reality of the Devil – no doubt the behaviour of some of his bishops led him to become ever more convinced of the reality of evil. He remained traditional over some of the hot button topics of the age – gender and sexuality.

Francis also saw his call to involve a return to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. After that Council, which changed so much within Catholicism, Paul VI established a Synod of Bishops to keep alive the spirit of conciliar government which reasserted itself at the Council.

Francis' vision would be familiar to Reformed Christians with an emphasis on the Holy Spirit working within synodical process. He yearned for a shared discernment process which included laity (both men and women).

However, the dilemma for any reformer is to let the process happen and not try to influence its outcome. Francis' calls for local dioceses to follow this Synodical way has led to some difficult issues in Germany where calls to bless same sex unions and ordain women to the diaconate proved uncomfortable for the Roman Curia, and Francis himself, to manage.

When asked about gay priests he, famously, shrugged his shoulders and said: 'Who am I to judge?' which begged the response – 'if not you, then who?'. Admittedly at a tiny pace, Francis appointed more women to the higher rungs of the Roman Curia but not anything like the speed needed to ensure balance between the sexes. He did, however, include more women than ever before in Synods and ensured they had prominent positions within them.

Francis was, in many ways, a radical when it came to the status quo. He created cardinals from far flung places that would not normally expect to have a man in the College.

Francis was determined to see the strong relational bonds between religious traditions and between humanity itself. He referred to Muslims as 'our siblings' and went to great lengths to improve Christian-Muslim relations visiting the United Arab Emirates in 2019 and Iraq in 2021.

His pilgrimage to South Sudan with the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Archbishop of Canterbury was groundbreaking in its ecumenical nature and in its efforts to bring warring factions together.

The global significance of Francis' ministry was seen most clearly in his two environmental encyclicals. In these he repurposed the centuries-long sidelined heritage of Christianity as a faith seeking profound and nourishing interaction with fellow creatures.

Many readers of *Laudato si* have tried, and failed, to evade its radicalism summed up in its opening quote from St Francis: 'our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us'.

In Francis, liberation theology became not only mainstream, but intellectually accessible. The divorce of faith and created reality is set aside, liberating the value of a creative and resilient spiritual tradition for justice, and for joy. *Laudato si* is informed by both activism and science.

With Francis, big broad-stroke arguments for environmental justice belong with the simple appreciation of accessible beauty: encouraging grace at meals, and wildflowers in churches 'that those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty.'

Following the election of Messers Trump and Vance as President and Vice President of the United States of America, Pope Francis became more and more alarmed at the rhetoric



and actions against migrants.

In February 2025 he wrote to the US Catholic Bishops reminding them of the migration of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt in search of a better future, the Holy Family's flight into Egypt to escape terror, and condemning the mass deportations from America.

Criticising Mr Vance's notion that Christian love ripples out in concentric circles, Francis noted Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan where love is demanded for all without exception. Edgily commending migrants to Our Lady of Guadalupe left the American bishops in no doubt as to where they must stand in opposition to the actions of President Trump.

Above all, Francis was a pastoral pope emphasising the mercy of God and the need to change our ways to save the planet. The selfless love embodied in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, however, sometimes led to some key mistakes in Francis' pontificate. He was, sometimes, too slow to see the reality of abuse allegations against some of his friends. His desire to unify worship in the Catholic Church led him to rescind Benedict's tolerance of the celebration of the older Latin Mass meaning many traditionalists found him intolerant.

Francis came to an agreement with the Chinese government to regularise the situation of Catholic bishops not recognised, nor controlled, by the Chinese state. Many feel the agreement gave too much to the Chinese government and not enough to the Church. Time will tell.

Francis' ministry as Pope was remarkable. From his simple 'good evening' to the crowds on the evening of his election to the warmth that radiated from him, he caught the imagination of the world. Not since John XXIII has the non-Catholic world felt such warmth towards a Pope.

## Piano Concerts

The first of an exciting series of concerts  
to be held during 2025



### Roger Owens (Classical concert)

Saturday 10 May 7.30 pm

Works by Scarlatti, Beethoven, Debussy, Rachmaninov, Chopin

Roger has played at the Barbican Centre with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia and at Usher Hall, Edinburgh with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.



### Robert Carter (Jazz Piano Concert)

Saturday 12 July 7.30 pm

Robert's influences are wide-ranging ... among them are Olivier Messiaen, Robert Schumann, South African township music, Glenn Gould, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor.

## Piano Concerts

1998 Boston Steinway Grand Piano

Tickets £15 student concessions £10  
on the door or at [ucw.org.uk/concerts](http://ucw.org.uk/concerts)

**The United Church, Jewry St,  
Winchester. SO23 8RZ**



A quiet, safe wellbeing space  
where it's

*okay to not be okay*

coffee • crafts • cake • chat • contemplation

*A Renew Wellbeing café  
Right in the heart of Winchester - and it's FREE!*

*Tuesdays & Thursdays*  
between 2pm and 4pm

We exist to connect, give, be active, keep learning, and take notice.



Renew Wellbeing

Find us at:

Salvation Army Hall on Parchment Street  
Winchester, SO23 8AZ

[wellbeingcafeandhub@gmail.com](mailto:wellbeingcafeandhub@gmail.com)



Supported by



Churches Together in Winchester  
Working Together for the City



**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.**

# Sing Now

CHOIR

## Charity Fundraiser



Sunday 22nd June 2025  
6pm  
United Church, Jewry Street,  
Winchester

**£10**



Special performance from the  
Sing Now Choir  
Raising funds to support MHA  
Communities Hampshire Central.  
Money raised going towards local  
services and activities to help those  
over 60 to live later life well.

To book your ticket please email  
[Hampshirecentral@mha.org.uk](mailto:Hampshirecentral@mha.org.uk)  
or contact Hannah on 07568612044



## QUIZ & CURRY NIGHT

Come and test your knowledge whilst raising vital  
funds for MHA Hampshire Central. All profits go to  
run local groups and services for the over 60s and  
to support them to live later live well.



Thursday 22nd May 2025  
United Church, Jewry Street, Winchester  
Arrival 6.30 for 7pm start - 9pm

**£25 per person**

including entrance to quiz and buffet style dinner

To buy tickets please email  
[Hampshirecentral@mha.org.uk](mailto:Hampshirecentral@mha.org.uk)  
or contact Hannah on 07568612044

Please let us know if there are any dietary requirements.

# Space in the City

## Four talks **The Wessex Way** *a Spirituality for all*

reflecting on:

**Serving**  
*with Richard Carter*

**Loving**  
*with Angela Tilby*

**Learning**  
*with William Howard*  
&

**Growing**  
*with Peter Lippiett*

Wednesdays 30 April, 7, 14 & 21 May  
12.30 - 1pm at St Lawrence Church,  
Winchester

*No charge but donations very welcome*

*Further details, & our archive of talks at [www.spaceinthecity.org.uk](http://www.spaceinthecity.org.uk)*



## Comedy Corner

May the Fourth is Star Wars Day



The deadline for June Yours is **Monday 12 May**. All contributions welcome. Send to [yours@ucw.org.uk](mailto:yours@ucw.org.uk).





# Vintage Fun

All welcome!



## Spring Time

### Monday 19th May

### 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.





## Services for May 2025

In-person and live-streamed

### 4 MAY

10.30 am **Morning Worship (HC)** Revd Peter Rayson

### 11 MAY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Howard Mellor

### 18 MAY

9.30 am **Holy Communion** Revd Tim Searle

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Pat Fry

### 25 MAY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Margaret Axford

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)

