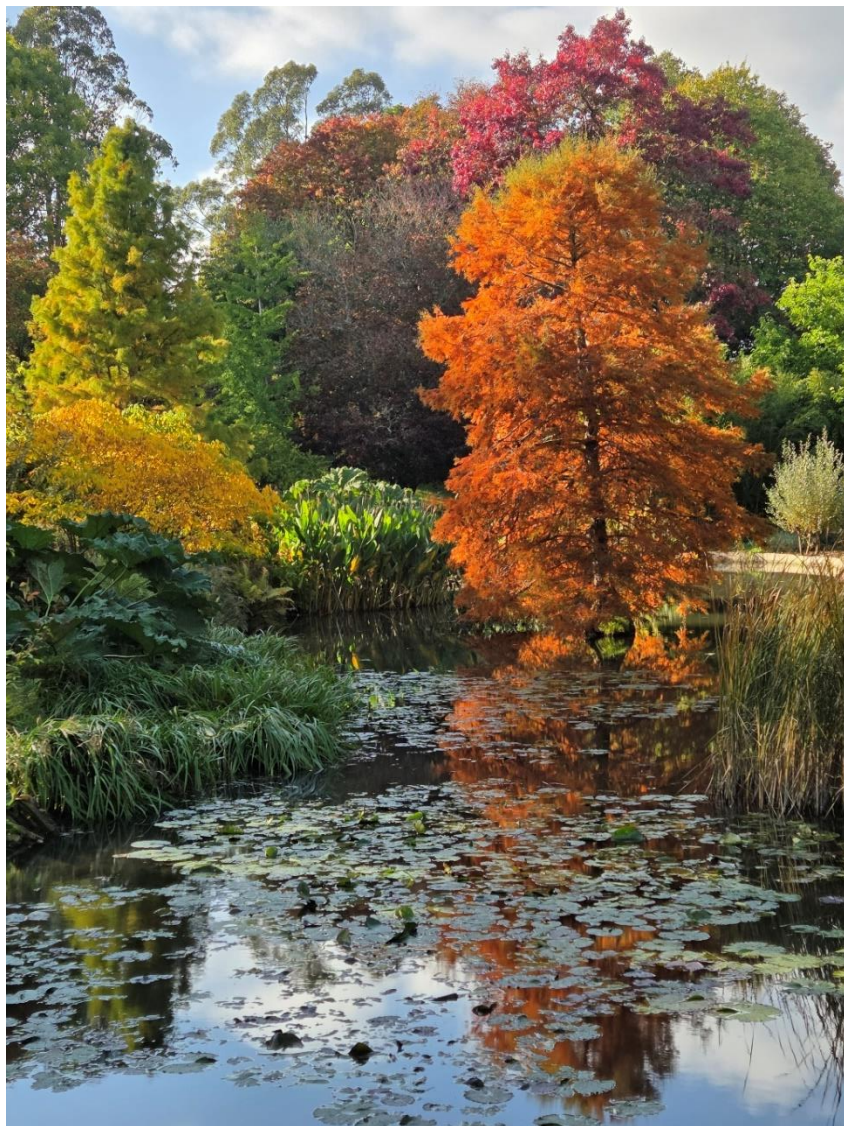




# Yours

## November 2025

Magazine of  
The United  
Church  
Winchester



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## Tim's Letter: More on the Nicene Creed ...

This year marks the 1700-year anniversary of the Nicene Creed. Those of you with long memories may remember that the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity back in January took this as its theme. Later in the year both Pat and Howard led worship that helped us dive deeper into its significance. And when I attended the URC's Wessex Synod meeting last Saturday (as I write), Janet, Jean and I who attended were delighted that the Revd Dr Susan Durber, the President of the World Council of Churches for Europe, led the meeting in a captivating address on her research into the creed.

I'm not going to try and summarise her talk here but if anyone would like the full text, she has provided it, and I can forward it to you on request. I simply want to pause on one of the points she made which was particularly meaningful to me. It relates to the line of the creed that is usually translated as 'the Father, the Almighty'. It reminded me of when Revds Jim and Jean, early on in my ministry at United, challenged me about my use of the word 'Almighty' when used in a blessing, i.e. 'The blessing of Almighty God ...' They wondered if 'Almighty' was the right word to use, or if it conveyed an image of God that was unhelpful, particularly to those unfamiliar with church language. It was an observation that left a mark on me that I still remember to this day, and I'm grateful to them for that.

Susan, in her talk, tells of a conversation she had with a lady from the Greek Orthodox tradition who said that the Greek word *pantocrator*, usually translated in English as 'Almighty', more accurately translates to something like 'the one who holds all things'. So, her rendering of that line of the creed is: 'a Father who holds all creation'. It's a reminder that, whilst we shouldn't be afraid of using traditional church language, we also have a responsibility to examine those words and think about how they might be translated or understood in other languages and cultures. Words are important in our faith, and being prepared to challenge and

expand their meaning is vital in deepening our relationship with God through such formulations as the ancient creeds.

Here's Susan's own translation of the original text that came out of the Council of Nicaea in 325:

We believe in one God,  
a Father who holds all creation,  
maker of all things visible and invisible;  
and in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the Son of God,  
begotten from the Father, only-begotten,  
that is, of one being with the Father,  
God from God, light from light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten not made,  
of one being with the Father,  
through whom all things came into being,  
things in heaven and things on earth,  
who because of us human beings,  
and for our salvation,  
came down,  
and became incarnate  
and became human,  
suffered,  
and rose again on the third day,  
and ascended to the heavens,  
and will come to judge the living and dead,  
And in the Holy Spirit.

May our loving God, who holds us and all creation through our Lord, Jesus Christ, only-begotten of the Father, be with us and remain with us in the power of the Holy Spirit, the life-giver and sustainer of all. Amen

In Christ, Tim

## Editorial

Are you a mystic? Perhaps it's the last thing you would contemplate (apologies for the pun), but Revd Dr Ellen Clark-King (pages 19–20) encourages us to follow Evelyn Underhill's example of 'mysticism in a down to earth form, connecting with the divine mystic depth of reality fleetingly in a moment of silence shared with others, with the fresh scent of spring in a favourite wood, in the depth of loss as we accept our human finitude, or in the thrill of joy when we know ourselves truly loved'. Maybe also in sensing the beauty of the autumn colours as seen on our front cover in a photo taken at Hillier's Gardens by one of the *Yours* team.

This month we learn more about the life of centenarian Jo Perrett, Andrew La Follette has a Message to Share, John Lander previews his new book on The Band of Hope, we look forward with Pat Fry to Advent and Christmas, and we read a tribute to the wonderfully funny Patricia Routledge, who regularly attended Chichester cathedral.

All this and lots more.

Thank you to all our contributors.

Please note the early date for contributions for December/January *Yours* (see page 30). Could this be your time to send something in? If you have some inspiration, your contribution will be very welcome.

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

***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.***

## News of the United Church Family

Our thoughts and prayers are with Veronica Postles, after the unexpected death of her brother Brian.

We remember too, Bronwen, whose husband Mervyn has died. Bronwen attended services regularly at the United Church, for many years.



Several members of the congregation have celebrated birthdays. One or two of us enjoyed visiting Dorothy Fendick who recently celebrated her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We continue to hold in our prayers all those coping with illness and facing bereavement.

Dorothy and Geoffrey Lock recently sent the following message:

*Thank you for the lovely flowers which Helen brought when she kindly visited us. We appreciate the love and prayers which come with the flowers.*

Those who can no longer join us in person remain very much a part of our church family. It's always good to hear from you!

Our flower ministry is an important part of bringing us together as a community and of our pastoral care. Thanks to Lesley Worrall for leading this. Lesley is always pleased to hear from anyone who can offer support.

*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**

## Message from Ian Giles



Jean and I have been worshipping with pleasure in the United Church, Jewry Street, since we moved to Winchester many years ago.

However, changes to one's circumstances and health take place and we have to accommodate those changes. It is for this reason that I find myself unable to

get to Jewry Street very often. Furthermore, I am conscious that in trying to meet my needs other friends have to put themselves out on my behalf and this has become more apparent recently.

Sadly, for this reason I shall not try to get to church in future. This is my loss. 'Thank you' to all friends in Jewry Street. I have appreciated knowing and being with you.

Kind regards and best wishes,

Ian

*We will all miss your presence in church, Ian, but you'll be very much in our thoughts and prayers as we worship. Church members will keep contact with you whenever the opportunity arises. (Ed.)*

## Jo Perrett

My mother, Jo (Johanna) Perrett, recently celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup>

birthday on 10 September 2025. Jo was born in Terneuzen, the Netherlands, the fourth child of eight children. She was the first child in the family allowed to stay on at school after the age of 14, with her three



older sisters having to leave school at that early age to help in the household and the family grocer's shop, with her father growing many vegetables himself in nearby fields. This privilege enabled her to further her education and obtain a position as a shorthand typist on leaving school at 16.



Jo met her husband, Lloyd, at the end of the Second World War, when the Royal Navy ship he was stationed on was in Terneuzen. They became penfriends for many years and married in 1955 with Jo moving to Winchester.

Jo and Lloyd looked for a church to attend in Winchester and decided on the Congregational Church in Jewry Street, finding the members welcoming.



Jo and Lloyd had six children, five boys and a girl. The family has now grown with 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Their eldest son, George, sadly died in 1997, at the age of 41, from motor neurone disease. My father died a week after George, so this was a particularly sad time.

Jo has been an active member of the Congregational Church since the mid-fifties seeing the amalgamation with the Methodist Church in 1974 to become the United Church. She has seen many ministers come and go, liking them all equally. David James was one minister we, as a family, particularly resonated with as his children were similar ages to ours, with the boys in both families playing in the church football team that Lloyd ran.

Each summer, the family would all travel to the Netherlands for two weeks by public transport, quite an adventure in itself, and meet up with Dutch relations who would come to visit at the seaside accommodation where we stayed, one time in a converted wartime bunker.

In 1996, Jo took her first flight to the Falkland Islands to visit me and my husband, subsequently making 16 annual visits, including May 1999 for the birth of her grandson, George (thank you, Mum!) She became well known in the Falklands, attending the Tabernacle Church and Christ Church Cathedral as well as visiting people in the community.

One of Jo's regular visits was to Romsey on the 66 bus to see her daughter-in-law, Shameem, on almost weekly occasions for many years, which she enjoyed. She has shown kindness, love and fairness to all her family, extending to all people she has met.

Jo's faith and membership of the United Church have been, and remain, an integral part of her life. She has enjoyed the fellowship of being active in many areas of church life with visiting people, delivering the church magazine, helping with door-to-door collections, welcoming people to her house, helping in the crèche, attending meetings and much more.

Thank you to all the church members who have been, and are, so kind to Jo.



**Sue Howatt**

## **Asylum and Immigration – Promoting Kindness and Sanctuary**

I've seen hints on Winchester social media sites of far-right misinformation about asylum and immigration. Many who support a compassionate, pragmatic system fear attack or abuse when speaking up, but it's vital such myths are challenged directly.

Here in Winchester, councillors of all parties voted unanimously to work towards becoming a City of Sanctuary. Our community has been enriched by people from across the world – Syrians, Ukrainians, Afghan families and others who have found safety here. A few years ago, a large group of asylum seekers were accommodated locally for eight months. They caused no problems. On the contrary, they joined local volunteer groups, gave their time, shared skills, helped interpret, learned English and sought ways to give back despite not being allowed to work.

Despite such experiences, damaging myths persist. One is that asylum seekers are prioritised over homeless UK nationals. This is untrue. Councils have a legal duty to house homeless people with a local connection; people seeking asylum have no such

protection. In Winchester, our housing team works tirelessly, and almost no local homeless people are left without emergency accommodation.

Another misconception is that asylum seekers pose a disproportionate criminal threat. Isolated cases are amplified online, while the vast majority of those people seeking asylum cause no issues and instead face stigma, racism and discrimination.

Reform UK, Nigel Farage and Tommy Robinson exploit these falsehoods, relying on an old political trick: scapegoating the vulnerable to win votes. They have no answers to unaffordable housing or overstretched public services. They are silent on corporate greed and billions lost to the wealthy avoiding tax, instead blaming a relatively tiny number of refugees fleeing war and persecution. This tactic diverts anger away from those with power and targets those with the least, whose voices rarely reach the press.

Promoting kindness and sanctuary means engaging honestly with concerns, finding common ground and showing what unites us. People voicing worries should not be dismissed as 'racist'; unheard concerns risk becoming silent protest at the ballot box. But where racism is clear, it must be called out. Only by combining respectful debate with firm boundaries can we dispel myths, address fears and maintain our compassionate, united community in Winchester.

**Cllr John Tippet-Cooper City of Sanctuary  
Champion, Winchester City Council**

*(This letter was first published in the Hampshire Chronicle. Our Meet and Greet worked in close collaboration with the City of Sanctuary Group and John when setting up the Saturday morning sessions (Ed.)*



## Our Next Concert

**Volodymyr Vasylenko (Accordion) Saturday 22 November 7.30 pm**

*Free concert. Donations welcome.*



Volodymyr Vasylenko is a Ukrainian musician who came to the UK with his family under the Homes for Ukraine programme. Volodymyr Vasylenko has 30 years of experience playing the instrument and teaching. He was born and raised in Ukraine, where from the age of three he studied music, creativity, received a higher education, a profession, worked and taught.

Volodymyr is a talented musician and one of the few who combines such styles of music as classical and jazz on the accordion and button accordion. He has numerous awards and official qualifications, as well as extensive concert experience.



## Looking forward to Advent and Christmas

It may seem very early to be writing about Advent and Christmas, but preparations need to be made. This year we will follow the Advent scheme offered by the Methodist Church; this year they have taken the theme 'Gifts'. We will begin thinking about this theme on Sunday 23 November to give house groups time to follow up on each service, before we get to Christmas Week.

The scheme includes ideas for symbolic pictures which we hope to display on the blue screens. Marjorie has moved away, and some other regular artists are not available this year, so we are being rather less ambitious than in previous years. Pamela and I would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to be involved, whether taking responsibility for creating a picture, coming to a workshop session, or simply assisting by cutting out lettering; the MHA craft club have already agreed to assist with one of the ideas.

The very first week's theme is The Gift of Hope, and the symbol we are using comes from the Church of South India. In parts of India the lotus flower is the classic symbol of hope, and of the presence of God, because it blooms in dead stagnant water bringing brightness to a dismal setting; so they combine the symbol of the Lotus Flower with the Empty Cross, the symbol of both God's forgiveness and Christ's resurrection.



Our carol services will be on Sunday morning 21 December at 10.30 and on Christmas Eve afternoon at 4 pm preceded by refreshments.

**Pat Fry**

## A Message to Share

Hello church! Let me start by saying this is not a book or author review. While reading a donated copy of *The Humble Church; Renewing the body of Christ* during a recent business trip, I experienced one of those 'I must share this message with others' moments. Have you ever had a similar feeling about a song at first hearing or hearing again many years on?

I shared these words straight away while awaiting a flight departure at the Warsaw Chopin Airport by text message to an American friend in seminary courses. Once back in Winchester, there was another sharing in person with my local pastor mentors, Pat Fry and Tom Belshaw. The author Martyn Percy published this book in 2021, following the COVID losses and social distancing, while Dean of Christ Church in Oxford. He held this position from 2014 to 2022 with mounting conflicts during his last four years.

This passage below unassumingly starts at the bottom of page 39 and is tucked into the middle of the first major chapter and set deeply into the second sub-chapter title. I hope you will enjoy, as I have, the reading and reflecting on these words.

*Social distance between God and humanity is abolished in the incarnation. God is with us!\* We would be wise to remember that 'perfect love casts out fear' (1 John 4:18) yet also remember that the reverse is also true 'perfect fear drives out love'. Our calling as Christ's followers is not to be fretful and fearful, but rather to become an extension of God's courageous, endlessly expanded love for this world.*

*This does require quiet mettle, resolved courage and compassionate humanitarianism. As a calling, it is inherently costly and sacrificial in orientation. Such love does not seek its own security, or indeed reward. Our calling is to express the continual love and risk revealed in the incarnation; to become like Jesus, who is the body language of God.*

(!\*: exclamation added to the published text for the purpose of personal expression to the reader.)

See also, 1 Corinthians 12:1-27 for a biblical reference to us the many being one in Christ Jesus. No need to wait, rather be willing to become moved by the Holy Spirit as the body language of God.

Andrew La Follette

## **‘Prevention is Better than Cure’: The Rise and Fall of the Band of Hope**

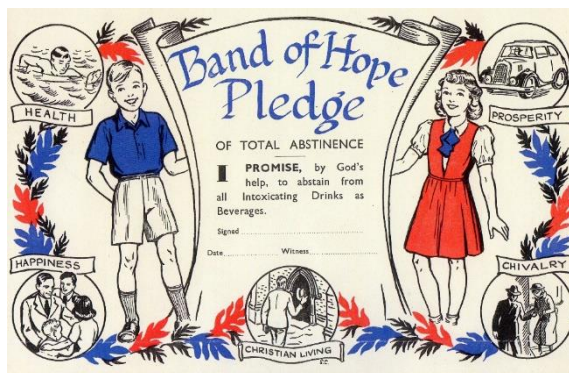
John Lander’s latest book – ***Prevention is Better than Cure: The Rise and Fall of the Band of Hope*** will be published by Austin Macauley in early December. Established in 1847 to urge children not to begin alcohol consumption, the Band of Hope was a nonconformist church led movement that sought to alleviate desperate housing, financial, and, especially, health-related social problems, caused by the adverse impact of excessive alcohol drinking.



Founded by a Baptist minister and the widow of an Irish Presbyterian minister, its first meeting was held in a Leeds Baptist Chapel when several children signed a ‘teetotal’ pledge. From Yorkshire, the movement spread throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and by 1913 there were 3.77 million members. Total abstinence from alcohol became far less acceptable to the public from around the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War in 1914 and the decline in membership accelerated from the 1930s. In 1995, the name was changed to Hope UK Ltd, a charity which still operates from its headquarters in Kettering.

A Band of Hope society met at what was Winchester’s Congregational Church until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One Congregational minister, Revd William Thorn, appointed in 1826 and serving until his death in 1870, was a

leading advocate of teetotalism for adults and children, regularly chairing meetings and leading summer outings for children.

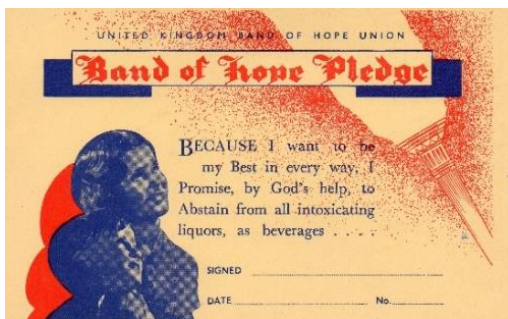


Among many people who helped during the research process, John is grateful to David Worrall who, in his capacity as Registrar of the Musical Box Society of Great Britain, devoted time and experience to discover the words and

tune to a song that was used at the very first Band of Hope service in November 1847. The wording, reflecting contemporary thinking, appears as an appendix to the book.

For those interested in learning more about the history of this important movement, and its contribution in seeking to improve the lot of millions of families, *Prevention is Better than Cure: The Rise and Fall of the Band of Hope*, will be available in December at a price of £10.99 when John will be able to provide details of how to obtain a copy.

**John Lander**



## Loss of a 'National Treasure'



Dame Patricia Routledge died on 3 October this year in Chichester where she lived for the last 25 years of her life. Born in Birkenhead in 1929, she attended the University of Liverpool, gaining a degree in English Language and Literature. She was involved in the university's dramatic society where she was persuaded to pursue an acting career and went on to train at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, returning to Liverpool in 1952 to perform at the Playhouse.

She had a long career in theatre, particularly musical theatre, in the United Kingdom and the United States. Her vocal range was labelled as a mezzo-soprano and a contralto, performing in several musical theatre productions in New York, including the groundbreaking production of *The Pirates of Penzance* in Central Park theatre in 1980, playing the role of Ruth alongside Kevin Kline and introducing the patter song from *Ruddigore* which has since become a tradition.



She was a long-standing member of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), appearing in such acclaimed productions as the 1984 *Richard III*. In 1999, she starred in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Chichester Festival Theatre, followed by West End runs in 1999 and 2001.

However, she was not widely known until she began to appear on television in the later 1980s.

Patricia was a devout Anglican, encouraged in her faith by her elder brother Graham, a clergyman and canon of St Paul's Cathedral, and

regularly attended worship at Chichester Cathedral. In 2020, she helped raise £10,000 towards the restoration of the cathedral roof. She was a close friend of Betty Boothroyd, the former Speaker of the House of Commons and her recording of 'Climb Ev'ry Mountain' was played at Boothroyd's funeral in March 2023. BBC's director of comedy, Jon Petrie, described her as an actor of 'remarkable range' and her portrayal of Hyacinth Bucket in *Keeping Up Appearances* as 'one of the most iconic performances in British comedy', adding that she 'made millions laugh and left a legacy that will always be remembered with gratitude and admiration'. She was an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music and an honorary president of the Association of English Singers &



Speakers (which exists to 'encourage communication of English words in speech and song with clarity, understanding and imagination'). Having such a distinctive voice, she also recorded and released a variety of audiobooks including unabridged readings of *Wuthering Heights* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

In 1966, she sang the role of Mad Margaret in *Ruddigore*, the title role in *Iolanthe* and Melissa in *Princess Ida* in a series of BBC Radio Gilbert and Sullivan recordings.

Patricia won several awards, including two for Best Actress in a Musical; Outstanding Musical Performance; Best Comedy Actress; and Personality of the Year.

Listen to Patricia reading St John 's account of the Resurrection from the King James Bible. [bit.ly/4qhzimP](https://bit.ly/4qhzimP)

'When I approach the pearly gates, I'd like to hear a champagne cork popping, an orchestra tuning up and the sound of my mother laughing.'

Her funeral is due to take place at Chichester Cathedral on 5 November 2025

## An Inspiring Snippet of Stone



Jo Crocker gave a superb introduction to Green Fair Week and several of us found brown paper bags on the seats containing relevant objects to remind us of creation.

We were asked to consider justice in relation to those.

I held this beautiful stone in my hands and became aware of the dark and light patches. It seemed that the darker patches represented injustice and if this stone represented our planet, it brought home how aware we should be of how injustice stains our world and endeavour to fight it.

I keep this stone to remind me that even what may seem a small injustice needs to be righted.

**Rosemary MacMullen**

## Evelyn Underhill: Mysticism Unmystified

Mysticism can be a marmite sort of word – deeply attractive to some people and, in some ways, deeply alienating to others. It can make you think of the depths of meaning and of life, of profundity and wisdom and holiness. It can also feel airy-fairy and insubstantial, and something that is only relevant to hyper-pious weird, and likely medieval, saints.



Evelyn Underhill, the 20<sup>th</sup> century English writer, was one who was deeply attracted to mysticism and who also wanted to make it accessible and comprehensible to all of us ordinary people. Her definition of it was rooted in our relationship with God.

Mysticism for her was: 'the direct intuition or experience of God', making a mystic 'a person who has, to a greater or less degree, such a direct experience'. Nothing to do with ecstatic visions or altered consciousness but simply and profoundly to do with our awareness of God's presence with us.

This is mysticism in a more down-to-earth form, mysticism unmystified perhaps. It reminds us that experiences of God are not limited to saints, let alone to medieval saints. All of us are invited to know the love and presence of God in our own lives, however imperfect our faith and erratic our prayer.

That connection with the divine mystic depth of reality can come fleetingly in a moment of silence shared with others, it can come with the fresh scent of spring in a favourite wood, it can come in the depth of loss as we accept our human finitude, or it can come in the thrill of joy when we know ourselves truly loved.

Be open to the possibility that you may have already felt, or may yet discover, that sense of union with the divine that marks a mystic experience. The profundity of our deepest reality, God's divine loving presence, is there for each one of us to discover and to love.



**The Revd Dr Ellen Clark-King** is Dean of King's College London. She has written and worked on the theme of spirituality in the US and Canada as well as in the UK.

From St Paul's Cathedral Learning

[www.stpauls.co.uk/our-digital-resources](http://www.stpauls.co.uk/our-digital-resources)

## 500 Years of the Bible in Print



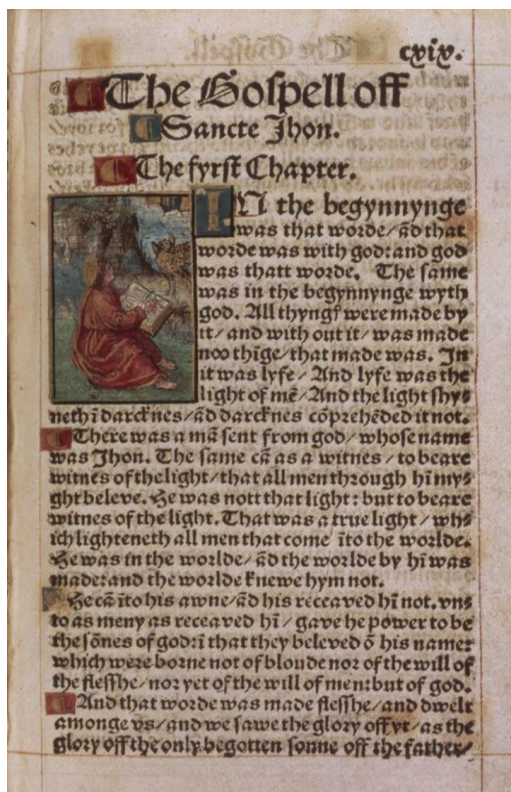
**6 October 2025** marked the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of William Tyndale's first printed New Testament in English. The first English translation of the Bible was instigated by John Wycliffe in the fourteen century – translated from the existing Latin version.

However, it was **William Tyndale** who produced the first printed translation from the original Greek and Hebrew texts. The New Testament from Greek was followed by parts of the Old Testament from the Hebrew before his death. His New Testament was the first ever printed Bible. The milestone was celebrated by Anglicans worldwide and North American Lutherans, recognising Tyndale's pivotal role in making scripture accessible to ordinary people.

Tyndale introduced his work by saying, 'I Haue translated (brethern and susters moost dere and tenderly beloued in Christ) the newe Testament for youre spirituall edyfyinge, consolacion, and solas'.

Born in the early 1490s in south Gloucestershire, Tyndale was educated at Oxford and ordained as a priest. After being refused permission by the Bishop of London to translate the Bible from the original Greek into everyday English, Tyndale fled to mainland Europe. In 1525, he printed the first fragment of his New Testament in Cologne, which was smuggled into England, giving people their first chance to read the gospel in their own language. This 'Cologne Fragment' contained the first 22 chapters of Matthew. By 1526, Tyndale completed the full New Testament in Antwerp.

His translation introduced theological terms and many powerful phrases that are still used today. His use of the archery term for missing the mark, 'to sin', was masterful as was his invention 'at-one-ment'. His translation of specific verses has had a lasting impact, such as:



**Genesis 1:1-3:** 'In the begynnyng God created heaven and erth...Than God sayd: let there be lyghte and there was lyghte'.

**John 3:16:** 'For God so loveth the worlde yt he hath geven his only sonne that none that beleve in him shuld perisshe: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe'.

Many other phrases, such as 'land of the living', 'the parting of the ways', 'apple of my eye', 'salt of the earth', 'eat, drink and be merry', 'a nest of vipers' are from his 1526 Bible. He made some translation

choices that were controversial at the time and remain so until today, such as translating ecclesia as 'congregation' instead of 'church' and agape as 'love' instead of 'charity'. These choices aimed to provoke thought and challenge the established authority of the church.

Tyndale was betrayed in 1536, arrested, tried for heresy, and executed by burning at the stake in Vilvoorde (Belgium) in 1536. Tradition recorded his final words as, 'open the King of England's

eyes'. Just one year later, Henry VIII would permit the Bible to be translated into English into the 'Matthews Bible,' virtually entirely the work of William Tyndale. Eighty-four per cent of the New Testament of the King James Version published in 1611 is from William Tyndale.

*'If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy who drives a plough to know more of the scriptures than you do.'*

— William Tyndale



Dorothy Lusmore

## November Updates

### ***Christmas Campaign 2025***

This year we will be collecting chocolate bars, packs of biscuits and hand-made gifts for our member Christmas gift bags. If you would like to contribute please contact the team in the office. Below are some of the amazing hand-made gifts we have already collected.



### ***MHA Carol Service***

In December we are very lucky to be hosting our annual Carol Service lead by Revd Tim Seale. Our Singing For Wellbeing members will be performing some Christmas Classics along with time to join us for carols. Mince pies and hot drinks afterward in the main hall. Open to all MHA members and supporters.

***Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December, United Church 10.30-11.30***

***Find Us: United Church, Room 2***

***Call Hannah on 07568612044***

***Email: [hampshirecentral@mha.org.uk](mailto:hampshirecentral@mha.org.uk)***

## News of the Wider Church



**Church leaders are welcoming the Gaza peace deal**, praying that it will 'bring immediate relief and comfort'. The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem was among the first to give his reaction. Describing it as 'good news', Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa said: 'Obviously, we are very happy. It is first step, first phase. Of course,

there are many others. For sure, there will be other obstacles, but now we have to rejoice about this important step that will bring a little more trust for the future and also bring a new hope for both Israelis and Palestinians.'

Greeting it as 'good news', The Bishop of Southwark, Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, the Church of England's lead bishop for the Middle East, together with the Bishop of Chelmsford Rt Revd Guli Francis-Dehqani, the Bishop of Gloucester Rt Revd Rachel Treweek and the Bishop of Norwich, Rt Revd Graham Usher, said there now needs to be a 'fundamental shift in attitudes and behaviour' to secure long-term peace. They said that what had happened in Israel and Gaza 'must never be allowed to happen again, anywhere' and pledged to continue to stand in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land: 'A lasting peace is not one that that is imposed by outside powers, but one that is built and owned by the affected communities themselves. Palestinian Christians have an important part to play in that process and we will support them in their efforts to be peacemakers.'



## Manchester United's Patrick Chinazaekpere Dorgu has said his



Christian faith guides him both on and off the pitch, describing it as a central part of his life and family. In an interview with Mark Sullivan, the Danish defender said: 'It means a lot to me. It's always been a big part of my life, and for my family. Always, always been praying ever since I

was young, and I still keep praying.' Dorgu joined the club in January, and has increasingly chosen to use his full Igbo name, Chinazaekpere, to honour his Nigerian heritage and religious roots.

[bit.ly/48MCtNh](https://bit.ly/48MCtNh)

He explained that his middle name means 'God answers prayers'. Speaking to Sullivan, Dorgu said he attends Sunday prayer as much as his football schedule allows. 'I always try to be here as much as I can,' he said, adding that faith helps him remain balanced in both triumph and challenge. Reflecting on his move to Old Trafford, Dorgu said he viewed it as part of God's plan.



**The United Reformed Church** is hoping to spark one million conversations about faith by distributing drinks coasters across the UK. The coasters, made from eco-friendly materials, will feature prompts about the big questions of life, such as: 'When did you last feel a sense of wonder?' Launched in partnership with evangelism organisation Ugly Duckling, they are designed for use in homes, cafés, churches, universities, workplaces, or to be left for someone to pick up from train tables. Questions proposed include: 'What do you complain about most?' and 'What's the best advice you've been given?'

The URC hopes the coasters can 'be simply left for someone to ponder on their own, or used in a more intentionally missional way – for example, by volunteers at coffee mornings'. 'Anyone can grab a coaster and use it', says Nathan Jones, CEO of the Ugly

Duckling Charity. 'These coasters are more than just a place to put a drink. They're a tool designed to spark real conversations – a low-barrier resource that offers a gentle, inviting entry point to talk about life, hope, and faith.'

**The Bishop of Chelmsford** says she is 'devastated' that a Palestinian Christian woman, previously held by Israeli forces for eight months and released, has now been sentenced to another eight months in prison by an Israeli court.



**Layan Nasir**, who is a member of St Peter's Anglican Church in Birzeit, was first imprisoned in 2021 and then taken back into detention after a dawn raid in April 2024. She was held under a system known as 'administrative detention' in which people can be taken into custody without evidence

being presented against them. She was eventually released in December. It's believed the charges relate to alleged 'student activism' that was designated unlawful by Israeli authorities.

Rt Revd Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford, spent time with Layan's family during a visit to the Holy Land last year. Since then, she has kept a candle burning in her chapel and pledged to pray for her every day until her release.

Responding to news of Layan's prison sentence, Bishop Guli said: 'This is devastating news for Layan and her family. I invite everyone in Chelmsford Diocese to join me in praying for her release and for an end to this injustice, which is all the more bitter against the backdrop of the encouraging news about the new Gaza peace deal.'



**Town planners should better embrace faith** and belief perspectives in order to build community resilience for the future according to a new report by researchers at Goldsmiths University of London and the University of Cambridge. It's calling for a New Towns Taskforce to incorporate

contributions from faith traditions into secular planning frameworks.

Housing with Values: Faith and Belief perspectives on Housing and Community Planning, comes as the government has pledged to build 1.5 million new homes. The report says that treating faith and belief as partners in planning can accelerate social cohesion from day one, reduce loneliness and social isolation, and provide governance and voluntary capacity that complements statutory services. It says that 'ignoring these dimensions risks creating settlements that are physically complete but socially fragile.' The demography of the UK and the diversity of faiths and beliefs has changed significantly over past decades and the report says this poses new challenges for planners and developers. It wants to ensure important voices from the faith and belief sector aren't missed in efforts to make New Towns work for everybody.



More than two decades after ***The Passion of the Christ*** became a global phenomenon, director Mel Gibson is moving forward with its long-awaited sequel — but without two of its most iconic stars. Film industry magazine *Deadline* has reported that Jim Caviezel, who portrayed Jesus, and Monica Bellucci, who played Mary Magdalene, will not return for sequel, *The Resurrection of the Christ*.

*The Passion of the Christ* was a huge box office success when it was released and remains one of the highest-grossing independent films ever made. Its sequel has been in development for nearly 20 years. Filming began this summer at Rome's famed Cinecittà

Studios, where the original was also shot. The film will explore the three days between Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection; a period Gibson has described as 'the most transformative story ever told'. It will be released in two parts: the first scheduled for 26 March, 2027 (Good Friday), and the second for 6 May, 2027 (Ascension Day).



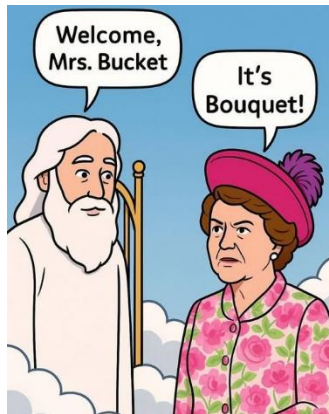
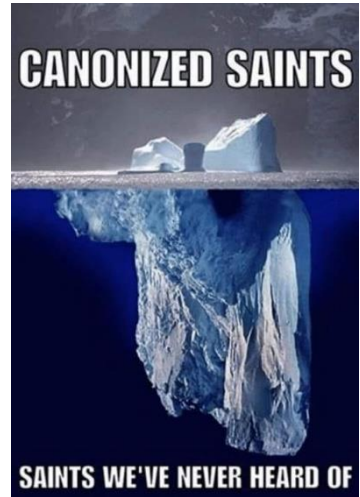
**A bursary to encourage new teachers of Religious Education** has been scrapped, despite the subject facing a staff shortage. The Chair of the Religious Education Council has told *Premier Christian News* she is

'disappointed' at the move and urged the government to take faith studies seriously. Sarah Lane Cawte, who is a Christian, said 'What is the rationale for this subject, where it's crucial to our society, it's crucial to our children and young people, but it's not prioritised?' The bursary had been available to those in teacher training, who chose to specialise in Religious Education. It will no longer be available to those starting their training post September 2026.

The scrapping comes as a huge blow to the understaffed subject. In the last year, it only secured 53.6 per cent of its total target number of teachers. Lane-Cawte said she is 'baffled' that other subjects have retained a bursary, despite having an excess of specialised staff.

Those who teach faith studies say that this is another symptom of a government that does not prioritise spiritual learning. They fear that losing access to faith education risks worsening divisions in an already fragmented society. 'Apart from the academic benefits of RE, it can help our young people to understand more about the people they live alongside, and to develop a more cohesive community.'

## Comedy Corner



The deadline for December/January *Yours* is **Monday 3 November**. (Our printer is on holiday from 11 November)  
All contributions welcome. Send to [yours@ucw.org.uk](mailto:yours@ucw.org.uk).



## AUTUMN PASTIMES

**Monday 10th November**

**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 November 2025

In-person and live-streamed

### 2 NOVEMBER

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

### 9 NOVEMBER      REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

10.30 am      **Morning Worship**      Revd Tim Searle

### 16 NOVEMBER

9.00 am      **Holy Communion**      Revd Howard Mellor

10.30 am      **Morning Worship**      Revd Howard Mellor

### 23 NOVEMBER      'GIFTS OF HOPE'

10.30 am      **Morning Worship**      Revd Tim Searle

### 30 NOVEMBER      ADVENT – 'YOU ARE A GIFT'

10.30 am      **Morning Worship**      Tom Belshaw and  
Andrew La Follette

*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)

