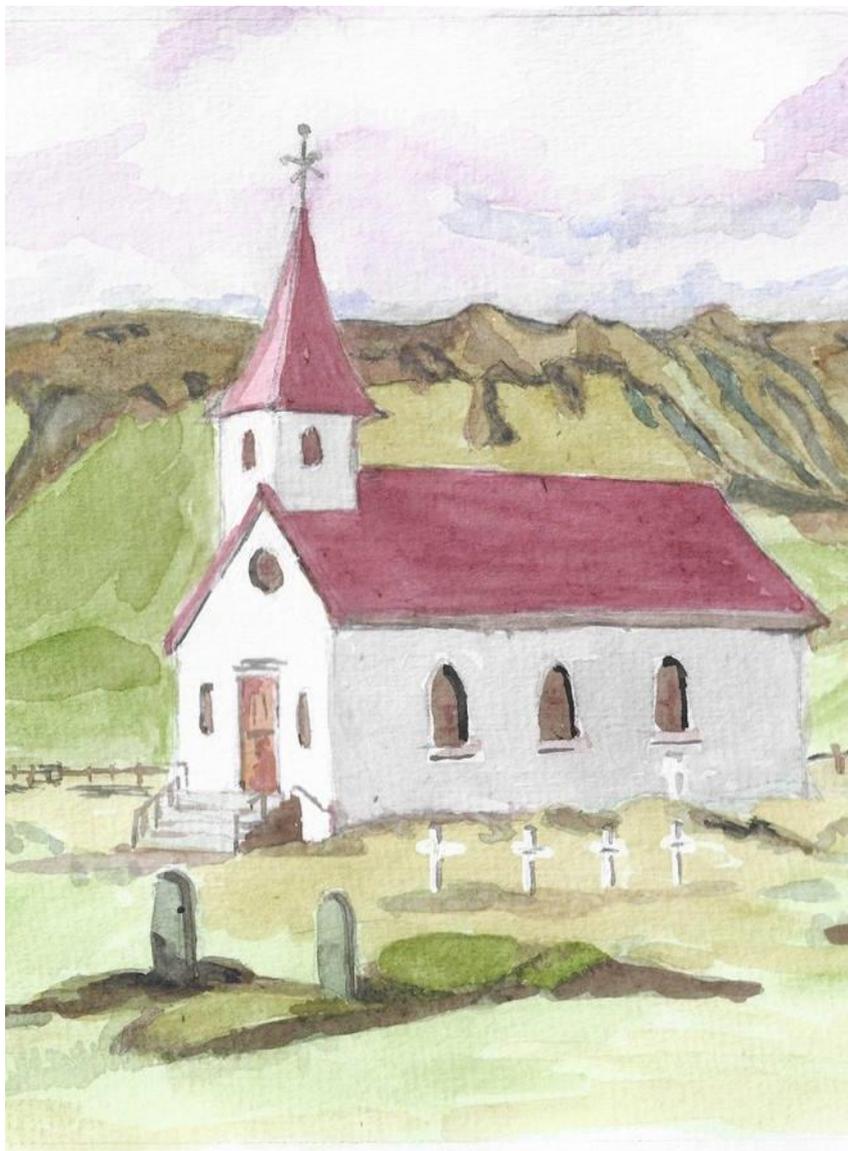




Yours

March 2026

Magazine of
The United
Church
Winchester



The United Church, Jewry St, Winchester, SO23 8RZ 01962 849559
Registered Charity no. 1135083 Website: ucw.org.uk

Minister Revd Tim Searle (day off Fri)
Email address: minister@ucw.org.uk

Worship

Lead Pat Fry

Pastoral

Lead Jane Lawson
Bereavement Sandy Foster
Flowers Distribution Lesley Worrall

Property

Lead Martin Ramsey

Finance

Treasurer Janet Messer
Donations and Gift Aid David Worrall
Payments & Expenses Steve Barber

Administration

Church Secretary Post vacant
admin@ucw.org.uk
Asst Secretary Dorothy Lusmore
Facilities Manager James Daniel
facilities@ucw.org.uk

Mission

Lead Jo Pellatt
mission@ucw.org.uk

Safeguarding

Co-ordinator Tim James 07925 691260
Deputy Co-ordinator Christine Cook 01962 884510

MHA Communities Hannah Shave 01962 890995

Winchester (formerly LAH)

Yours magazine website page: ucw.org.uk/yours/
email address: yours@ucw.org.uk

Tim's Letter: What Next?

The news that I will be moving on from Winchester in July has gone public. I've been both moved and comforted by the messages of support and encouragement I have received as I prepare to take another step in my ministerial journey. As I've said several times, it will be a wrench for me. It wasn't so much a gentle invitation from God to move; more like an abrupt tug from a role and a community that occupies a special place in my heart and which I am reluctant to leave.

Like me, it will be a big change for you too, and many of you are no doubt wondering: what next? At times of uncertainty, it's understandable to feel anxious and to fear the future. I am confident however that you as God's people, as servants of Christ, have the gifts, graces and generosity of Spirit to continue the work we have shared these past ten years. Like seasons, ministers come and go, but you – the faithful worshipping community of this church – *are* the United Church. And I have every confidence that you will continue to invite those you meet, greet and serve into that journey we share with Jesus.

There are challenges, of course. We need to discern what pattern of ministry best meets the needs of the church moving forward, whether that's continuing with the alternating pattern of ministers from the Methodist and United Reformed denominations, or whether we move to a shared model with provision from both. What that provision will be, under either model, is key to this debate, and the Leadership Team and Trustees will be meeting with the Synod Moderator and District Chair to further these discussions.

Then there is the process of finding another minister (or ministers), be this is via the stationing process alone, or in concert with a URC call process. Such work is demanding and time consuming but is

also critical in finding the right fit or 'match'. All of us must reflect on what this church really needs from ordained ministry (not just what it would like), what qualities and characteristics are central to that resource, and how lay ministry can be utilised alongside it.

And yet, whilst these conversations go on, the work of church will continue regardless. The hungry will be fed, the thirsty watered, the lonely befriended, the stranger welcomed, the bereaved comforted. Why? Because it's simply who you are, part of your DNA, what God has made you to be. 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.' (Genesis 1.31a (NRSV))
Amen

In Christ,
Tim

Editorial

Ann Bulley likes to visit and paint churches during her travels. Can you guess in which country our cover picture is set? Answer on page 18. We will feature another of her church paintings in a future edition.

Hollie James's beautiful painting, 'A Window Through Time', is featured on page 19.

We include a memorable prayer from the Abbotts Barton House group's service on 8 February on page 16. Janet Messer writes about the church in Iran on page 17, a country close to her heart. We have news of fundraising for our 'People's Piano' and of arrangements for Lent. Rosemary MacMullen entertains us with a cruise diary. All this and much more.

Thank you to all our contributors,

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

News of the United Church Family

We were very sorry to hear of the recent death of John Lander's brother, Frank. We pray for Frank and for Liz, his widow, for John, Pat and all the family. Frank's funeral will take place on 6 March.



Barbara Dunton is now recovering at home following extensive surgery at Southampton hospital. We continue to think of and pray for Barbara, Ken and all the family as Barbara's recovery continues.

We remember Penny and family. Penny's parents are both unwell. We send our love and prayers to the whole family as they care for one another.

We are pleased to hear that Joan Charrett is now out of hospital and wish her well as she convalesces at Flowerdown care home.

It is good to hear that Jim Blackburn is up and 'running' (or perhaps more accurately, cycling!) following a recent hip replacement.

We think of all those who are no longer able to join us in church and who, nevertheless, remain very much a part of this church family. At this time we send good wishes to Val Hillier who celebrated a birthday at the start of February. Also to Isabel Witham who has asked to be remembered to church friends.



We are delighted to hear that Sarah Richardson (née Morgan) gave birth to baby Isaac Anthony on 16 January. Our best wishes to Sarah, her husband Chris and 'big sister' Amy.

We celebrated in the February edition of *Yours*, the 100th birthday of Jenny Allen. Tom Belshaw has shared a photo of Jenny during celebrations.

As always, should you wish something to be included with *news of church family*, please let me know. You can email me on pastoral@ucw.org.uk.

Jane Lawson, Pastoral Lead

Memories of 2016 (and earlier!)

Since our minister Tim told us that he will be moving on from Winchester, some memories have resurfaced in my mind!

In the years around 2008 I was quite involved in the local part of the URC Wessex Synod, so I was present in August 2008 at Chandlers Ford URC for the ordination and induction of Revd Tim Searle to the ministry at that church. I probably came across Tim at various times over the next few years, but my next definite memory involved my new role as the Authorised Person for marriages at the United Church! I noticed that there was to be a training session for this job at the Winchester Register Office, so I attended and (briefly) met Tim on that occasion, 4 December 2015.

At that time I was the Chair of the Vacancy Committee as we searched for a URC minister at the United Church, so I was pleased and surprised when the Moderator told us that Tim was interested in the vacant position. After meeting with Tim on 13 January 2016, the Vacancy Committee asked him to come to 'preach with a view' to becoming our minister. Tim led worship at 9.00 and 10.30 on 28 February, and after the chance to hear some of his ideas (and after he had departed) we held a Church Meeting at which it was agreed to call him to be minister of Winchester United Church and of Medstead URC. We were very pleased when Tim accepted the call. His induction here took place on 6 August 2016 – and the rest is history!

My apologies for any mistakes in this piece. Of course, we all send best wishes to Tim as he takes up a new challenge this summer.

Graham Rolfe

Holy Communion – One Cup Fits All?

The title of an article by our Moderator, Revd Michael Hopkins, in *Reform* set me thinking, and trying to apply his thoughts to our situation. Below are some extracts from his article, and my thoughts from it. Direct quotes from Michael's article are italicised.

'Have you ever tried to buy an article of clothing boldly labelled 'One size fits all'? The truth is one size usually fits no-one particularly well! I wonder whether our approach to Communion in the URC has gone the same way.'

He begins by explaining different views on frequency of Communion within the URC. In the Churches of Christ Holy Communion was considered so important it was the main act of worship every week. In the Presbyterian tradition Holy Communion was so special it was celebrated only once a quarter, with services of preparation and thanksgiving either side. In the Congregational tradition it was usually once a month, mainly for practical reasons

It is a different issue that has concerned us. At our church some of us value coming forward to receive because we are demonstrating a conscious effort to take part. Some of us value remaining seated as at a meal table, with time to reflect, and eating and drinking when all are served. Some complain that using two different ways is confusing, others think we should respect both traditions. Another tradition I deeply miss is the old way of each person serving their neighbour before they receive themselves. But most important for me coming from a background of Liberal Baptist and Congregationalist is the sense of coming together at the Lord's table as an inclusive and welcoming community and time to reflect personally, to be aware of the presence of the Spirit.

Michael continues: *'The URC Basis of Union invites us to think deeply about the significance of Holy Communion:*

'When in obedience to the Lord's command, his people show forth his sacrifice on the Cross by the bread broken and the wine poured for them to eat and drink, He himself, risen and ascended, is present and gives himself to them for their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. United with Him and with the whole Church on Earth and in Heaven, his people, gathered at his table present their sacrifice of thanksgiving and renew their offering of themselves, and rejoice in the promise of his coming in glory.'

Michael explains this further: *'That's powerful. It says that Holy Communion is not just a fond memorial but a living encounter with Christ. We receive spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. We are united with Christ and the whole church in heaven and on earth. We offer ourselves anew in thanksgiving and look forward to Christ's coming in glory.'*

(Similar to ideas in John Wesley's sermon: 'The Means of Grace'?)

Michael suggests some questions we should consider:

'When did you last do anything to cultivate expectancy and gratitude – through prayer, teaching or special seasons?'

'Might we teach the history and symbolism behind our practices?'

'Could we explain Communion more intentionally, especially to newcomers, sharing not only what we do, but why?'

'How much do we consider what feeds our own practice of the presence of God rather than simply what we have always done?'

I want to ask: 'Do our very real struggles with different understandings of the significance of certain words and who says them, and with different liturgical styles, pale into insignificance when we focus on the central truth, or are certain different aspects essential?'

Michael concludes: *'Ultimately Holy Communion is not just something we do, but something God does in us. Christ is truly present nourishing us, shaping and binding us together.'*

Let's pray that this may be true for each of us as we share Communion here at the United Church.

Pat Fry

Coffee Bar – Volunteers needed!

If you're interested in volunteering at the church coffee bar, we'd love to have a chat. Or perhaps you know someone who would



enjoy working with us. A number of our volunteers have joined us through church member contacts. The coffee bar is open from 10.00-12.00 Monday to Friday. Regular or occasional help is very much appreciated.

We're a small team, with some soon reaching retirement age for working in the kitchen (after the age of 85) so we're particularly keen to welcome new helpers.

Pauline Brooks

Volunteers for Stewarding at Sunday Services Needed!

Would anyone who can offer to be on the regular stewarding rota so that we are able to cover all Sunday services, please speak to one of the existing stewards or to Mike Foster or Tim Searle. They can advise what this role entails. Any offers will be most welcome as soon as possible!

Offers to welcome people in to services would also be appreciated.

Mike Foster



Sponsor A Key and Help Fill our Piano with Music



The piano funding group is excited to announce the launch of a new 'Sponsor a Key' initiative in March to help bring us closer to the target of raising £10,000 in total towards the cost of the new Boston Steinway grand piano.

The piano is already being well used by the many music groups rehearsing in the church as well as for our recital series, and any funds raised will help us continue to allow free access for people of all ages and abilities to inspire a love of piano playing. Many thanks to all those who have supported the concerts and other activities to date.

Through the new scheme we hope to find sponsors for all 88 keys on the piano over time and raise around £2,000 through sponsorship donations overall. Your donations will be gratefully received towards achieving this target.

Some may wish to sponsor a key in memory of someone or as a gift. This can be recorded if you wish in a special book of sponsors.

Further details of how the 'Sponsor a Key' scheme will work are set out in the adjacent information. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask me or one of the other members of the piano funding group (see list below).

Thank you in advance for your support,

Andrea Berriman

Piano funding group: Tony Wood, Sophie Armstrong, Jen and Steve Barber, Andrea Berriman, Jane Lawson, Rosie Mellor, Janet Messer, Chris Young

Piano 'Sponsor a Key' Scheme How the Scheme will Work

- **Visit the 'Sponsor a Key' table at one of our concerts or after our weekly 10.30 am Sunday service.** Members of the piano funding group will be on hand to reserve a key for you and receive your donation. We will work from the bottom of the keyboard upwards, allocating keys to sponsors in that order.
- **Make a sponsorship donation** by card/contactless, cash, cheque or bank transfer to help us meet our target of £2,000 across the 88 piano keys. Full payment details will be available at the 'Sponsor a Key' table, including in respect of Gift Aid donations, with some simple additional advice in that respect for those who would like to donate £30 or over.
- With your permission we would like to add your name to a **special book in recognition of your support.** The book will be displayed in the Sanctuary near the piano as a lasting record of all our Sponsors. If you would like to sponsor a key **as a gift or in memory of someone** let us know. There will be space in the book to add their name and a short message as well. The name of the note sponsored will also be entered in the book.
- On receipt of your donation, we will also add a **Golden Musical Note** to the relevant key on our **Piano Model** (kindly built by Roger Brooks) to show it has found a sponsor. Over time we hope to find sponsors for every key, helping us to fill both the model and the real thing with music!

Other opportunities for sponsorship can also be made available. Please just ask a member of the piano funding group.



United Church House Groups

Being part of a House Group gives us an opportunity to get to know some members of the congregation a little better and to develop and sustain our faith in a supportive atmosphere. Most groups tend to meet once a fortnight for around an hour and a half, to include some time socialising as well as discussing the theme for the evening.

We have a number of groups which meet around the city. Some meet during the day and others in the evening. New members are always welcome!

The **Teg Down House Group** no longer meets in Teg Down, it still has some members who live or used to live there, but we are not constrained by geography. Our members span a wide age range, and our timetable is flexible to fit around the work and family commitments of members. Our discussions are also flexible – we go where the conversation takes us. We meet usually on a Tuesday from 8 to 9.30 pm.

The **Abbotts Barton House Group** meets every Thursday afternoon from 4.15 (for a cuppa/cake) with our discussions from 4.30 to 5.30 pm.

We discuss a wide range of topics.

We led the worship at United on 8 February.

St Cross House Group:

We are a group of ten people who meet together for fellowship, discipleship, and Bible study, in the centre of Winchester. We meet on Mondays on the 2nd week of the month (2.30–4 pm), and weekly during Lent, Advent, and Bible Month (normally June). We usually take a couple of Bible passages and analyse them in depth, which results in a healthy and very lively discussion! We pray together and also use artworks and music that is relevant to bring to life our discussions. Hospitality is important to our fellowship, so

we meet in someone's home and enjoy refreshments (we also have a picnic in the Summer and an Xmas meal outing) and a chat about life. We are a friendly lot and believe that all are called by God.

God bless.

The **South Wonston Group** meet at 7 pm on alternate Wednesday's, and every Wednesday during Advent and Lent.

We have a chat over a hot drink and biscuits before a discussion linked to a video, Bible readings or a book. We have members from South Wonston, Weeke and Central Winchester. Newcomers always welcome!

If you would like to join one of these house groups contact yours@ucw.org.uk.

Opportunities for Lent

This year Lent began on Wednesday 18 February. Traditionally it was a time of fasting; now it is a season when the church encourages us to engage in some serious study and thinking.

Last year we engaged in some thoughtful Bible Study about the events of Holy Week. This year in our Sunday services we will use material prepared by 'Green Christian' to focus our thoughts on how Christians might respond some of the difficult global issues confronting us, in the light of biblical teaching. Abbots Barton and Teg Down house groups intend to use the discussion material from the scheme, and would welcome others to join them, South Wonston group will follow it up after Easter, linking with the circuit special event on 19 April.

If you would prefer to watch some sessions from *The Chosen*, a film dramatising the events of Holy Week, South Wonston House group offers an opportunity and we hope to offer a series of mid-week daytime showings at the church during Lent.

We are considering a Good Friday prayer walk again, possibly a repeat of last year, possibly staying around the top of town and praying about community issues Please give Pat your thoughts on this.

Please speak to Pat Fry or Dorothy Lusmore for more information about house groups or *The Chosen*. Pat Fry for Worship Enabling Group.

Pat Fry

Winchester Churches Christmas Project 2025

This is an update on 2025's Christmas Project.

First, some statistics: we helped 42 adults and 54 children (24 families and 6 single people) – a total of 96. Our 53 volunteers from 10 different Winchester churches (together with some volunteers from Home-Start) have been key to the whole exercise and we are so grateful to them for their efforts. Thank you all!

Now, some feedback from families –

'It helped us massively and really what we found really great was the couple who were assigned to our family, they really got how hard it was for us to accept the gift and how we struggled to 'spend' the money. They kept saying not to worry and just pretend they weren't there. Also, they offered to pick us up and take us to the shop which was really helpful. They understood I needed breaks and to sit down.'

'Thank you so much for putting us forward [to the Project]. Not only was the help they gave us invaluable, they were such lovely people. I can't thank you and the Churches enough. It helped at a very tough time for us. Thank you'

'Just wanted to say thank you ... Especially [our volunteers] from the Winchester Churches Christmas Project. You have been so kind and

supportive at a really difficult time. Thank you for everything you have done for my family this Christmas. I really appreciate it.'

'It was brilliant, the ladies I met were fantastic and I was so grateful for being referred. The whole process was easy and they were so helpful. I will forever be grateful for making Christmas less stressful.'

A huge 'thank you' to everyone who supported the Project through prayers, donations and practical action.

**Helen McTiffin (Joint Co-ordinator with
Janet Stewart)**

Forthcoming Updated United Church Fellowship List

Due to popular demand, we are making arrangements to produce a new version of the printable/paper *Fellowship List*. To be included on this list, you must have given your consent for your details to be stored in *ChurchSuite*. Those who haven't done so yet will receive a reminder email in the next week. Please don't ignore this!

We will also be providing an opportunity for people to opt out of the paper Fellowship List. Please note that you can also access people's contact information using the *ChurchSuite* app on your smartphone or tablet. If you'd like to explore this, please contact Rob Grigorian, Tim Searle, Bob Lord, or Steve Barber who would be happy to help you with this.

You may wish to check that your information on *Churchsuite* is correct. Perhaps for example, you no longer have a telephone landline and prefer to be contacted on your mobile phone number? If a change is needed, please let one of us know.

Thank you.

Jane Lawson pastoral@ucw.org.uk

The Joy of my God Nearby

Dear God, I long to feel the joy of your all-encompassing love. How do I feel it, where do I seek it?

Surely you are God nearby, not far away?

You do not hide in secret places so that I cannot find you.

You fill heaven and earth, you surround me.

If only I open my senses, my reason, my emotions,
I will find you

in the rocks of the greatest mountain,
the flowers in our valleys and woodlands,
the stars of the night sky,
the waves of the rolling sea.

And so, I come to praise and worship you, the God of this wonderful creation.

But more than this,

I can also find you in the cloud of witnesses of all faiths and none,
who show me the presence of your Spirit at work in their lives:

the martyrs who kept faith in the hardest of circumstances,
the creators who share happiness and sorrow in their works,
the inventiveness of human intelligence that harnesses the power
of nature to power light, heat, transport and all the gadgets that
make our lives easier,

the carers who live out your love in active compassion, some in
unseen and isolated drudgery, some in dramatic theatres of war or
natural disaster.

And I praise you for your amazing transforming presence though
your Spirit.

God who is everywhere, nearby, not just far off,
Help me to open my senses, my reason and my emotions to let
your Spirit enter my being.

Amen

The Church in Iran today

I was prompted by Chris Young's memories and reflections about Iran in last month's *Yours*, and our service drawing from the Armenian church to share a bit more about Iran.

Perhaps the most surprising bit is that the church in Iran is the fastest growing church in the world! Despite persecution that results in imprisonment, torture and even death, Muslims in Iran are turning to Christ.

This has happened because so many people in Iran are disillusioned with the regime that has been in place since 1979. Those who become Christians are so amazed by what they learn and experience that they are finding ways to share their good news with family, friends and even strangers. An organisation called Elam Ministries provides discipleship apps, online worship, and training for leaders.

All of this has built up from a tiny church that has been in Iran for many years. Acts of the Apostles mentions Persians among the first converts at Pentecost. The Armenian and Assyrian ethnic groups in Iran were Christians from the earliest days of Christianity. But they, and other small Christian groups, have faced persecution from different sources across the centuries.

Protestant missionaries began arriving in the 1800s. They translated the New Testament and then the whole Bible into Persian, and established schools, hospitals and churches across the country. My parents were among those missionaries – in the 1960s–70s. They served several small churches, working amongst Muslims and Jews (there used to be a sizeable population). We left in 1978. It is the Iranian Christians from that time who kept the faith and found ways to not just hang on, but to grow.

Although Armenians and Assyrians are theoretically still allowed to practice, they are monitored carefully. However, conversion from

Islam is what the regime does not accept. The church in Iran needs our prayers. Find out more at bit.ly/4anofBt.

Janet Messer

This Month's Front Cover



This month's cover painting is by Ann Bulley. Reyniskirkja Church stands among the desolate and dazzling landscape of Iceland's southern coast. Surrounded by an astonishing landscape of a volcano, cliffs, black beaches and glaciers, the church overlooks the tiny coastal community of Vik.

A Window Through Time



This painting was completed by Hollie James (daughter of Tim) who is studying Fine Art at Winchester University. This was one of her coursework pieces.

How many sites in Winchester can you recognise?

Tim James

Snippets from a Cruise Diary

Wednesday 7 January

Had breakfast in my cabin thinking it wise to avoid fattening bacon and eggs. A basket of three varied and delicious rolls proved my undoing. I scoffed the lot.

A turn around the deck freshened me up and got my legs loosened up for Line Dancing on deck 8. We were a game group of elderly swinging our dodgy hips and rather breathlessly calling out 'Yee, Ha!' as instructed. We were awarded 10 out of 10 for effort.

After half an hour my knees were complaining so I headed for the chairs at the library on deck 7. While there, a tall Scotsman was heard asking for Scrabble players so I agreed a time to play. He then proceeded to boast of his 400 points and three bingo's a game and laid down his rules. Then he started declaiming that there had never been any intelligent Scots, the country was lousy and he was trapped there. As I had said I was Edinburgh born and bred, this was a red rag to a bull but none of my rejoinders were paid any attention to. When he strolled off I wondered if I had made a mistake but I do love Scrabble and was determined I could give him a decent match.

Next was a climb to deck 11 for Singing for Fun which was indeed fun with Abba's 'Dancing Queen' and 'Summer Nights' from *Grease* being belted out by an enthusiastic mixed crowd of carollers. I was in a good mood when I went down to play Scrabble, but my partner did not appear. Being stood up at my age was funny but the loss of the Scrabble was annoying. Later I met two ladies who had found him very objectionable so guess I had a lucky escape!

My ruffled feathers were soothed by the trio playing easy listening music till it was time for dinner. My table companions were four people who had met before and tended to keep the conversation to topics I could not break into, but the ice was broken by my being unable to cope with the tagliatelle I had ordered. The prongs of my

fork were too small and narrow to retain the strips and my struggles made for merriment. Discussion on the best way of eating tagliatelle broke the ice and I ended up being given a spoon. It then turned out that one man at our table had a birthday so we became the focus of the waiter's jolly Happy Birthday approach. The cake they brought was sliced up and served with rum and raisin ice cream – yummy! In my cruising trips I have watched so many of these celebrations and groaned at the repetitious song but it was great fun to be part of it.

Then the conversation turned to Brexit, so I slipped away to see the evening entertainer, Rob McVeigh. As a young builder with no singing lessons, he had been a finalist on *Any Dream Will Do*, the TV auditions run by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Now with years of worldwide experience he had real stage presence and a powerful voice. I only wished occasionally he would soften his voice as the numbers were all belted out as if he were on the West End.

Having dined at six, it was still too early to sleep so I switched on the TV and watched *The Great Escaper*. Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson moved me to tears. I cheered up by reading tomorrow's list of what's on, hung my breakfast request on the door and let myself be lulled with the rocking motion a slightly rough night at sea produces.

Rosemary MacMullen

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 Wider Church



Carlisle Cathedral's East Window has been named the nation's favourite stained-glass window. The Association of English Cathedrals invited thousands of people to vote for their favourite stained-glass panes, from Advent until the New Year. An estimated 2.1 million people took part.

Of England's 42 cathedrals, the top-rated panes included York Minister's Great East Window, which ranked second, followed by St Albans' Rose Window, Wells Cathedral's Jesse

Window and Gloucester's Great East Window.

The wonderful Curvilinear East Window of Carlisle Cathedral remains one of the largest and most complex examples of Flowing Decorated Gothic tracery in England. Its origins can be traced to the lengthy rebuilding works of the fourteenth century that followed a fire which took place in 1292 – lengthy because of frequent raids on the city by the Scots and because of recurrent outbreaks of the Black Death that killed at least a third of Carlisle's population. In 1359 John de Salkeld, a yeoman from Little Salkeld,

near Penrith, donated 40 shillings 'to make a window anew in the chancel'. The upper, medieval section of the surviving window is attributed to Ivo de Raughton and depicts the Last Judgement, a popular subject in the Middle Ages.



Most of the lower glass of the window had disappeared by the mid-eighteenth century and been replaced by plain glass with a coloured border and by the mid-nineteenth century restoration work was urgently required. In 1861

Hardman & Co. of Birmingham were commissioned to refill the lower panes in memory of Hugh Percy, Bishop of Carlisle (1784–1856). The glass imagery depicts the life of Jesus.

The Venerable Michael Everitt, Interim Dean of Carlisle, expressed his delight at their top spot. 'It has played a central part in our lives: whether through concerts, services or visits,' he said of the Great East Window. 'The combination of the ancient glass at the top and the wonderful Victorian depictions of Jesus' life, all set beneath our starry ceiling means you truly get a glimpse of heaven inside the Cathedral.'

To celebrate the win, Carlisle Cathedral is launching a new guided tour, Sacred Light: The Stained Glass of Carlisle Cathedral, beginning on Saturday 21 February.



A scientist known for his pioneering research into human genetics has been named as the recipient of one of the United States' most prestigious awards. Francis S. Collins, who is a Christian, will be presented with the National Academy of Sciences 2026 Public Welfare Medal for his

contributions to public welfare as the leader of the international Human Genome Project.

Dr Collins is a physician-geneticist noted for his landmark discoveries of disease genes and he is a former director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). His research laboratory has discovered a number of important genes, including those responsible for cystic fibrosis, neurofibromatosis, Huntington's disease, a familial endocrine cancer syndrome, and most recently, genes for type 2 diabetes, and the gene that causes Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome, a rare condition that causes premature aging.

Announcing Dr Collins' award, a statement from the National Academy of Sciences said his 'scientific and public service career has advanced understanding of human disease, strengthened ethical frameworks in genetics, fostered public trust in science, and guided national and global responses to health crises'. It added: 'The medal is the Academy's most prestigious award, established in 1914 and presented annually to honour extraordinary use of science for the public good.'

Dr Collins converted to Christianity from atheism when he was 27 after witnessing the role of faith in his parents' lives and reading C. S. Lewis. He identifies as an evangelical Christian and advocates for the compatibility of science and faith. In 2006 he wrote the book *The Language of God*. He will be presented with The Public Welfare Medal on 26 April.



A group of senior Church of England bishops has encouraged people in England to rediscover the Cross of St George as a symbol of unity, rooted in the nation's Christian heritage.

In a joint statement published on 8 February, Racial Justice Sunday, bishops from across the country, including Rt Revd Martyn Snow, Bishop of Leicester, and other members of the Church of England's Working Group for Promoting Unity in Our Nation, said the flag of St George should be embraced as a unifying emblem rather than one that excludes or intimidates. 'We rejoice that the flag of St George is the national flag of England and contains a cross as a sign of our Christian heritage,' the bishops said. 'This heritage should be celebrated. However, the flag cannot be owned by any one group or cause. Rather it is a symbol of unity, inclusion and our common life around which we all gather.'

The bishops, appointed late last year at the request of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, were responding to ongoing discussions about the display and interpretation of flags and Christian symbols in communities across England.

Their statement follows last summer's Operation Raise Your Colours online campaign, which mobilised widespread flying of St George's Cross flags across the country. The campaign coincided with anti-immigration protests outside asylum hotels and Tommy Robinson's Unite the Kingdom rally, where the flag was displayed in large numbers.

The bishops warned that when Christian symbols such as the cross or the national flag are used to intimidate others, it damages community relationships and contradicts the Christian call to love one's neighbour. 'Sadly, in recent months, we have seen these symbols used by people who, far from working for unity in the nation, are seeking to sow division and misunderstanding,' the statement reads. 'This leaves many in our society feeling anxious and afraid and is a long way from loving our neighbour in the way that Jesus taught.'

The statement invites people of all backgrounds to explore the 'true significance of the cross of Jesus Christ' through their local churches.



The actor Tim Allen shared a deeply personal faith milestone on 6 February after completing a full reading of the Bible. He revealed in a post on X that he'd finished reading the entire Bible 'word by word' with 'no skimming', in a journey that took 13 months.

Allen, who is known for his role in *Santa Claus* and voicing Buzz Lightyear in the *Toy Story* series, revealed that he was 'humbled, enlightened and amazed at what I read and what I learned'. He has previously spoken publicly about his Christian faith and how it was shaped by hardship earlier in his life. In a 2011 interview with Elizabeth Vargas, the actor said he surrendered his life to Jesus after being arrested and spending time in prison in his mid-twenties. He said his faith continued to guide his decisions, explaining at the time: 'I always do ask ... The Builder, what did you want me to do?'



The Archbishop of York has raised urgent humanitarian concerns in the House of Lords over the situation in Iran, calling on the UK Government to press for the restoration of internet access in the country. Speaking during questions in the Upper Chamber, the Most Revd and Rt

Hon Stephen Cottrell said there was deep uncertainty over the true human cost of the crackdown in Iran.

‘We don’t know how many people have died. We don’t know how many people are injured. We don’t know how many people are missing,’ he said. ‘What we do know is the internet has been brought down in Iran.’ The archbishop stressed that restoring internet access would allow families to contact one another, and gain a clearer understanding of events unfolding on the ground.

‘Simply the restoration of the internet would allow family members to be in touch, to seek those who are missing, to know more of what is happening,’ he told peers. ‘That would bring some solace to so many deeply hurting families in this appalling situation.’

Responding on behalf of the Government, Baroness Chapman, Minister of State for Development, acknowledged the lack of reliable information and warned that the full scale of the violence may yet emerge. She said estimates of the death toll ranged from around 3,000 to ‘many, many more’, adding: ‘As information does emerge, we will be horrified at what is revealed.’

Baroness Chapman agreed with the archbishop on the importance of communications, describing access to the internet as ‘vital’ in moments of crisis.

(We remember the young men from Iran who attended the United Church as Asylum Seekers and continue to pray for them and their families.)



A senior Catholic bishop in the Philippines has called on Christians and Muslims to deepen cooperation for peace as Lent and Ramadan are set to begin on the same day (18 February 2026). Bishop José Colin Bagaforo of Kidapawan City said, 'In these

sacred seasons, both Muslims and Christians enter a time of prayer, fasting, repentance, and generosity and the overlapping observance was an invitation for the two faith communities to "walk together in faith". He has urged for prayer, fasting and concrete action for peace. He called on Christian and Muslim communities, and civil society, to work together to care for the poor, protect creation and respond to the 'wounds' of the world.

Christianity has remained the majority faith in the Philippines, with 92.7 million recorded in 2025, according to World Population Review.

Monthly Munch Club



This is a chance for those members who normally eat alone to come together one Sunday a month. At that meal the next date and venue are agreed.

The Steak House in Jewry Street has been booked for Sunday 8 March at 12.30.

Anyone interested please contact Rosemary MacMullen
rosemarymacmullen1@gmail.com



Vintage Fun

All welcome!



Stretch into Spring

Monday 9th March

2 - 4 pm

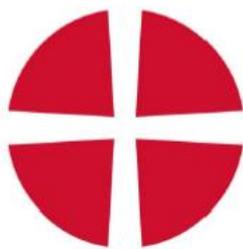
At the

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.





Celebration Service

Third Anniversary of the re-opening of Canada Common Chapel

When: Sunday 29th March

Time: 2.30pm

Where: Canada Common Chapel,
Canada Common, West Wellow,
SO51 6DH

Everyone is welcome to this
interdenominational Service

Speaker Revd Dr Howard Mellor
Ex-Principal and Director of Evangelism at
Cliff College.

Worship leader Pastor Peter Castle

Musician Ann Friend

Please stay for Refreshments after
the Service.

For more details contact Pastor Peter
Castle on pandccastle@hotmail.co.uk





SPRING CRAFT FAIR



At St Andrew's Methodist Church,
Blenheim Road, Eastleigh



Craft
stalls

Free
children's
craft zone

Free
entry

Refreshments



Saturday 7th March 2026
10am - 3pm

Crafters!

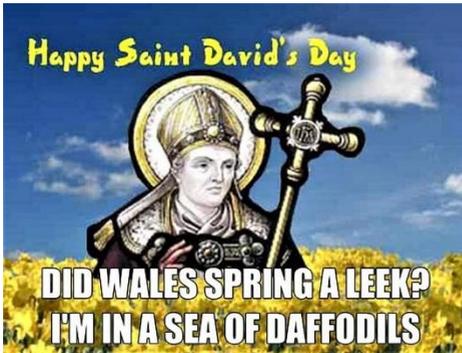
If you'd like a stall, please email us
at standrews2.0@yahoo.com



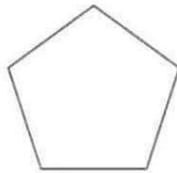
standrewsmethodisteastleigh.com



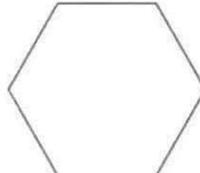
Comedy Corner



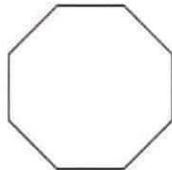
My teacher told me not to worry about spelling because in the future there will be autocorrect And for that I am eternally grapefruit.



Pentagon



Hexagon



Octagon



The deadline for April Yours is **Monday 16 March**. All contributions welcome. Send to yours@ucw.org.uk.



UNITED CHURCH
WINCHESTER

Services for March 2026

In-person and live-streamed

1 MARCH **LENT 2**

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

8 MARCH **LENT 3**

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Pat Fry

15 MARCH **LENT 4**

9.00 am **Holy Communion** Revd Tim Searle

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Adrian Bulley

22 MARCH **LENT 5**

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

followed by the **Annual Church Meeting**

29 MARCH **PALM SUNDAY**

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Tom Belshaw

followed by an **Extraordinary Church Meeting**

HC: Holy Communion

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

YouTube: tinyurl.com/ucw-services

