



Yours

April 2026

Magazine of
The United
Church
Winchester



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Tim's Letter: The One Certainty in an Uncertain World

As I write, the world, even more so than a month ago, seems a very unpredictable place. I think news presenters and reporters ran out of superlatives to describe the twists and turns in our global geopolitical landscape a long time ago!

In the Middle East, the unilateralism of Israel and the US in their bombardment of Iran and Lebanon appals me. Whilst it's clear that Iran's leadership needed to be confronted about its numerous human rights violations and nuclear aspirations, I can't help but feel that diplomatic endeavours to bring about change were sidelined in favour of bombs, bullets and boots-on-the-ground. Now we have two right-wing despots, both with significant arsenals, talking about 'eliminating' or 'obliterating' with increasing regularity. *Uncertain times.*

And as the Meningitis outbreak in Kent enters its second week, whilst it is far from the 'super-spreader' event that social media feeds are toting, it's a worrying time for all those in the communities affected. It taps into the huge corporate trauma that is Covid and reminds us of how fragile we are when pitted against nature. *Uncertain places.*

And though on a much smaller and more trivial scale, yet still a cause for anxiety, is the question of how ministry at UCW will work in the future. We can say little, with certainty, about how each option (alternating or shared) might pan out in practice. Instead, we try to weigh up the strengths and weaknesses, the potential risks or rewards of each model and the different configurations they invite, whilst trying to be faithful to the vision that God has called us to. *Uncertain futures.*

As he pushed on towards Jerusalem, I don't doubt for one moment that Jesus was filled with uncertainty too. What fear must have

gripped him! What anguish and mental torture he must have suffered! Yet his example to us, at all times and in all places, is to keep our eyes fixed on him who is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Just like the sheep of the fold who look to the shepherd to provide what they need (not what they want) God in Christ through the Holy Spirit is the rock on which we stand, the bread of heaven, the light that will never be extinguished. For me, this is the one certainty I can depend on in an uncertain world.

'I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.'
John 10.14

Thanks be to God. Amen

Tim

Editorial

As we move from Maundy Thursday and Good Friday to Easter, Chine McDonald focuses on Jesus as a man and the contrast with some world leaders (see page 23). We look forward to decorating the cross with spring flowers on Easter morning and all that they represent. A time when we can experience hope and love and overcome fear. Anne Lord's watercolour on the front cover is offered in that spirit.

Pat Fry focuses on Light and Darkness on page 10, we publish some of Adrian Bulley's recent sermon on 'God is in Business' on page 7, Helen Popova's moving speech on the heroism of the people of Ukraine is on page 16 and Rosemary MacMullen continues her entertaining cruise diary on page 13.

All this and much more.

Many thanks 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 death of Penny Roles' Dad, Geoff. Geoff died on 25 February. The funeral took place on 23 March in Romsey. We remember in our prayers, Penny and her Mum, Jen, her brother Dan, all of Geoff's grandchildren and the wider family.



There are several causes for celebration amongst us!

Congratulations to Pierre and Anna Lord on the birth of a baby girl, Olive. Also, to Bob and Anne, the happy grandparents.

Congratulations too to Zach Jones, whose organ playing we enjoy regularly on Sunday mornings, and to Jacob Grigorian. They have both been awarded places at the Royal College of Music.

We celebrate too with Rosie Blackburn, who auditioned successfully for a place on the BA dance programme at Leeds University.

We think of all those not able at present to join us in church. You very much remain part of our church family.

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

**Jane Lawson,
Pastoral Lead**

Making All Things New

In the private house,
in the public place,
in the wedding feast,
in the judgement hall,

Christ is coming to make all things new.

With a gentle touch,
with an angry word,
with a clear conscience,
with burning love,

Christ is coming to make all things new.

That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the hidden might be seen,

Christ is coming to make all things new.

Within us, without us,
behind us, before us,
in this place, in every place,
for this time, for all time,

Christ is coming to make all things new

*This was Revd Adrian Bulley's Call to Worship on 15 March 2026.
(Ed)*

God is in Business

At its best, work provides purpose and values effort and responsibility. But it can also become an end in itself, losing sight of human flourishing, and I fear many companies have forgotten that vital aspect. The vision of the Kingdom is richer, an economy that values dignity, respects rest, insists on fairness, and believes that a fair wage enables flourishing.

Through Jesus we hold on to the promise that injustice does not get the final word. Jesus triumphs over death itself – so our hope is rooted in everything that is life-giving, here and now. And that means we are not passive observers. We are called to participate. To do all we can to usher in God's Kingdom of justice and righteousness.

So let me suggest three ways in which you and I can make our voices heard in this realm of economic justice and business ethics:



Firstly – and perhaps most obviously – I want to talk about **Fairtrade**. Fairtrade is probably the most recognised and trusted sustainability label we know. But it's more than a sticker on your coffee or your bananas.

Fairtrade is about making trade work better for the people behind the products we enjoy every day. It's about **fairness** – fairer prices for growers and producers, fairer wages for those who plant, pick, and pack the things we value. It's about **trust** – creating systems where producers can trust that they will be remunerated appropriately for their work. And it's about **long-term relationships** – relationships between producers and consumers that are built on dignity rather than exploitation.

Yes, Fairtrade products may cost a few pence more. But isn't that worth it if it helps create a more just and equitable system of

trade? So, as a church – and as individuals – we should actively seek out Fairtrade products. Because when we do, we're not just making ethical choices, we're aligning our everyday spending with the values of God's Kingdom – justice, fairness, and care for one another.

Secondly, I want to talk about something I care deeply about: **the Real Living Wage**.



At the time I moved from Cardiff to Hampshire in 2021, I was serving as Secretary of the Living Wage for Wales Steering Group. That was a group bringing together leaders from business, local government, and national government – all committed to one simple idea: that people deserve to be paid **what it actually costs to live**. Not the government's minimum figure, but the **Real Living Wage**, calculated each year by the Living Wage Foundation, and based on the real cost of everyday life. At the moment, that figure is **£13.45 an hour outside London**. The government's figure is just **£12.21 an hour**.

That difference matters. Because it's the difference between getting by and constantly falling behind. The good news is this: more than **16,500 employers across the UK** have already signed up as Living Wage Employers. And that raises some important questions for us:

Wouldn't it be great if we chose to spend our money supporting those organisations? Wouldn't it be great if we used our spending power to encourage other employers to join the movement? And wouldn't it be a powerful witness if this church, if the Wessex Synod, if the Southampton District committed to paying the Real Living Wage and registered as Living Wage Employers? What a statement that would make about the kind of Kingdom we believe in.



Thirdly, and finally, you may have come across the term **BCorp** – perhaps on a website, or in an advert – and not been entirely sure what it means.

BCorp certification is a way of saying that a company is committed to responsible business practices that benefit people and the planet, not just shareholders. In other words, these are businesses that choose to ask a different question: *Who does our success actually serve?*

BCorp companies are required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, suppliers, community, and the environment. It might sound too good to be true. But as of the middle of last year, there were over 10,000 certified BCorporations across more than 100 countries, in over 160 different industries, employing more than a million people worldwide. And these aren't just small, niche organisations. Some well-known global companies are part of this movement too – companies like Danone, Patagonia, The Body Shop, and Nespresso.

So BCorp gives us another lens to use when we're deciding where to shop, who to support, and how to spend our money. It's another way of asking: *Does this business reflect the values of the Kingdom of God – justice, dignity, and care for creation?* **God is in business.** Active and present in the world today. Not distant. Not abstract. But active in our workplaces, our economies, and our everyday decisions. And if God is in business, then so must we be – not just as individuals, but together as a community.

Using the influence we have, however small it may seem, to help shape a world of work and trade that reflects the values of God's Kingdom, a Kingdom marked by justice for all, dignity for every person, and care for God's creation. May we have the courage to live that out.

This is part of Revd Adrian Bulley's sermon on 15 March 2026. (Ed.)

Light in the Darkness

I went to a short Lenten poetry retreat at the Loreto Spiritual Centre in Llandudno, about a collection of poems on the theme 'Who do you say that I am?' collected by the Irish poet John F. Keane. It was very challenging, and on the final day it was a delight to leave words aside for a short time and focus on a seventeenth century picture by Velasquez. For copyright reasons we cannot publish here the poem we then studied.



The painting is in the National Art Collection in Dublin. For many years it was thought the top left-hand corner was just dark wall, but when using modern methods, the years of accumulated dirt were cleaned off, and the view through the hatch from the kitchen was revealed, opening up new understanding.

What struck me about the picture was the way the artist used light.

So here is my reflection on it:

The servant girl stood in the dark kitchen, eyes lowered.
The gloom matched her mood,
reflecting the darkness of the past three days.

She had been walking along the city street
when suddenly Roman soldiers had pushed the people aside
as they dragged their victims to the place of crucifixion.
The people cowered, shrank back against the walls, averting their
eyes.

In shock, a gleam of recognition, she had recognised the man
struggling under the weight of the cross bar on his shoulders
held in his bleeding hands.

No ... not him ...,
not the man they had welcomed into the city a few days earlier?

Then she had been caught up in a different crowd,
cheering, waving palms, exuberant
as they welcomed the healer from Galilee.
She had seen the gentle strength in those hands,
as he steadied the donkey guiding it gently as the crowd jostled.
Those hands, people told her, had healed the sick, blessed children,
even raised the dead.

And now, he was dead, and the sky was dark.

The one who had seemed to promise so much,
The one they hoped would free them from their oppressors,
though he spoke only of peace and forgiveness.
Now in her mind all was as dark as the darkness of the Friday sky.

A sudden shaft of sunlight took her by surprise.
The white jug on the table glowed, the brass bowl shone.
As she lifted her head the sunlight seemed to caress her face.

Three travellers had entered, she must stir herself to serve them.
As she took them bread, one took the platter from her,
holding it in deeply scarred hands
that for a moment she thought she recognised,
but knew it was impossible

Returning to her place
she listened as the men talked,

talked of a strange rumour of an empty tomb.
She saw how light shone from him,
And as he raised his hands to bless the bread
she knew he was the healer,
the light that could never be extinguished.

Pat Fry

Patterns of Worship

The United Church is coming into a time of transition. Our Minister Tim will be moving on in June and it will be a while before another person is appointed. In both our denominations, URC and Methodist, we have a decreasing number of clergy in full time ministry so we are fortunate to have amongst our members some retired clergy and several qualified local preachers. However, they will also be stretched more thinly.

What does this mean for our patterns of worship? There may be some weeks when none of these folk are available, and occasionally we will have a different format and type of service. The first of these slightly 'different' services will be on 19 April when Dorothy will be giving us a fresh look at Psalm 119. We hope you will come and enjoy hearing and reflecting on something rather different.

The Worship Enabling Group

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.

Snippets from a Cruise Diary

Sat 9 January

Woke with a feeling of relief as at last, after four days at sea, we were approaching land. Our first port of call, La Coruna in Spain, was cancelled due to rough seas but now Funchal was waiting and it was a clear day. I spent most of it on deck reading, apart from coming inboard for a fascinating Volcanic Underwater Eruption lecture. I must admit that marvelling at the height of island mountains, I had not given a thought to their utter depths.

A special evening excursion to a rural restaurant was laid on, so I had a very light lunch but couldn't resist a teatime pancake with clotted cream. No-one was in the pool, so I donned my swimsuit, goggles and cap and had a reviving half hour doing breaststroke one way and backstroke the other. It was pretty cold salty water so I followed it with a jacuzzi to warm up.

Unfortunately, the steps up to it were slippery and I went a cropper banging my forehead on the rails. As I lay there seeing stars, a couple came to help me get up and tried to make me to see the doc. No way! I couldn't take the risk of him saying I should miss the trip out! I am used to feeling a bit lightheaded and the rising bump would be hidden by my fringe.



If I felt a little dazed, then it was nothing to the effect of Funchal's glittering lighted streets and buildings. Apparently 1.6 million lights are used in their Christmas Festival. Everywhere massive red, white, green, blue and yellow lights shone from trees, buildings and streets. A river of red lights, hanging lanterns, and themed floral displays caught my eye

as we drove through the dark. This creative colourful explosion of light was indeed dazzling.

Another eye-catching display was the nativity scene lining both sides of the foyer of our restaurant. The carved figures were strikingly painted, and realistic little sheep and flowers gave a natural and warm atmosphere.

Inside was also natural and warm with long wooden tables and a large area where the meat was being prepared over glowing flames. The traditional course of Espetada was large chunks of beef, marinated in a mixture of garlic, bay leaves and red wine, skewered on sticks and grilled over fire which imparted a smokey flavour. It was served hanging from a skewered pole which swung gently over our table and spluttered drops of crimson blood, which was a rustic touch which offended some vegetarians amongst us. It was accompanied by Bolo do Caco, the iconic Madeira bread which is flatbread made from wheat flour and sweet potato. The name of this yellowish and fluffy bread means Cake of the Stone, referring to the basalt stones on which it was traditionally baked. A generous helping of garlic butter, fresh salad and a glass of Madeira 'M'Dear!' rounded it off, then a sweet of mouth-watering pineapple Mousse and very strong coffee completed the meal.

A group of traditionally dressed dancers and musicians threaded their way around the tables, then performed a set of dances which portrayed their history of farming, weaving, handicraft and dairy skills. A family of grandfather, daughter and grandson of nine years old were striking. The energy of this elderly skinny man was outstanding. The steps were fast and relentless, and he was beaded in sweat by the time they reached the final. This was planned to involve their customers, and we were swept into the fray. Twisting, turning and being twirled, it involved a lot of cheek kissing. This was sweet with the charming little boy but rather a trial with his grandfather who was a bit too enthusiastic and a bit unfragrant. They were all so friendly and it was great fun.

Driving back down to the ship through those magically lit streets, colourful decorations reflected in the water as we climbed aboard, I was wondering how any future expedition could match our Madeiran one.

Rosemary MacMullen

Fasting and Feasting

The Fast Life

Fast from judging others: feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from discontent: Feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger: Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism: Feast on hope.

Fast from negatives: Feast on encouragement. Fast from bitterness:
Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self concern: Feast on compassion. Fast from suspicion:
Feast on truth.

Fast from gossip: Feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm: Feast on prayer that
sustains.

Fast from anxiety: Feast on faith.

Howard and Rosie Mellor spotted the above in a church in Northumberland (Ed.)

Speech by Helen Popova at the Vigil for Ukraine



Howard and Rosie Mellor and many others were moved by the following speech by Elena on 24 February 2026 in Abbey Grounds. They asked if it could be shared with readers of Yours. (Ed.)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We know, remember and speak a lot about the heroism of soldiers on the battlefield.

On this day, I want to speak about the heroism of common people.

1. Where does heroism lie?
2. Let's remember everyday life and civilians – is there any room for heroism here?
3. Does everyday heroism exist?

War does not take place only at the front line. It enters kitchens, stairwells, hospital corridors, classrooms, and bedrooms. Let us try to imagine the daily routine of civilians.

Children attend lessons not in classrooms, but in shelters. They learn mathematics to the sound of sirens. They memorise poems while listening for explosions. At night, sleep is interrupted. Fear becomes familiar.

Their pets tremble beside them. Families share limited food, water, and space – not only with one another, but with the small creatures who bring comfort in frightening hours.

What picture of the world or mindset will they grow up with? Will they believe in justice, liberty and human rights? Or will these words feel distant and abstract to them?

Toddlers have to climb to the 9th floor or the 20th floor every day because the lift doesn't work without electricity.

Elderly people continue to live in half-destroyed homes and carry water miles away. Because leaving would mean abandoning memory itself, they repair what can be repaired. They endure what cannot.

Across the country, doctors operate in unstable conditions. Rescue workers respond before the dust has settled. Electricians restore power knowing it may be cut again in an hour. Teachers continue lessons. Volunteers organise supplies. Farmers harvest under threat. Journalists document. Couriers deliver. Parents reassure.

The whole nation is collecting donations of food, medical supplies, money, ammunition, and equipment.

It is not one profession. It is not one generation. It is not one region.

There is not a single family that was not affected or hit by the pain of the war.

A whole society adjusts itself around disruption.

Giving becomes part of daily life. Supporting one another becomes instinct.

And gradually, something shifts!!!

War does not only destroy buildings. It tests the moral structure of a people. They do not expect any rewards and seldom get any. We don't know their names or where they live. Because they are so many, and we can say every Ukrainian now is a hero.

Every day of life has turned into a heroic deed. Heroism is not about saving or protecting, but also a daily manifestation of fortitude, compassion, and caring. Heroism becomes not just an act but also a part of a person's worldview or mindset, their spiritual core.

We can say proudly that in future we are to discover all these names and add them to the modern history of Ukraine!!!

Recently, I learned about a group of six individuals who have spent four years documenting war crimes committed in Mariupol. Day after day, they collect photographs, videos, testimonies. On the Google Map all destroyed buildings are fixed with addresses, names and photos or videos. They transform the chaos of war into documents. Their work is meticulous and emotionally demanding. But it lays the groundwork for future trials. It safeguards memory. It protects the possibility of justice. This, too, is heroism.

Because heroism is not only about defending territory. It is about defending truth.

It is about ensuring that suffering is neither denied nor forgotten. The people who do this work do not expect recognition. Many of their names will remain unknown. Yet their quiet persistence shapes the country's moral future.

Heroism, in times like these, is not exceptional. It becomes woven into daily life. And perhaps that is the most profound transformation of all.

In this way, heroism moves from the battlefield into the fabric of society. It becomes not only an action, but a principle. Not only a moment, but a stance. And that is why, today, when we speak of heroism, we must speak of an entire nation – not as a slogan, but as a lived reality.

Because in the midst of destruction, people have chosen not only to survive, but to remain human. And that choice, repeated day after day, is what sustains the future.

Elena Popova, 24 February 2026

Coffee Bar Playtime – Volunteers Needed

Help is needed with Coffee Bar Playtime on Thursday mornings between 10 am and 12 noon.

Yvonne North attends every week with Beth Sharratt and I on alternate weeks.

We set up at 9.50 am then clear away at 12 noon. We are not responsible for the care of the children, but we oversee the safety of the area.

If you can help please contact Yvonne, Beth or myself.

Chris Trimmings



Austria

Mozart - Sound of Music



Norway - Grieg

ENCHANTED MUSICAL JOURNEYS

Audio Visuals - Mike Holt

Piano - Annie Shi & Liliya Solomonova

Vocals - Ava Solomonova



in support of

Boston Steinway Grand Piano Fund

Free Entry with Donations



Italy - Puccini



Dance around World

United Church, Jewry St. Winchester

Sat. April 25th at 7:30pm

Lifelong Learning

The Oxford University Maths Essay Competition with some Thoughts about Lifelong Learning more Widely

I have recently been on a sharp learning curve as, almost by necessity, I had to rapidly adapt my driving style to a car with an automatic gearbox, the likes of which I had not driven before. Of course, this process takes place, if somewhat less drastically, each time we drive a new vehicle; although in recent times, with the advent of electrically powered vehicles, the process is perhaps more to the forefront of drivers minds than has been the norm.

Thinking more widely, in recent years there has been a growing focus on lifelong learning especially in post compulsory seats of learning; literally encouraging people to continue learning in one form or another for as long as they are able.

In close parallel to this has been an emphasis on 'widening' participation.

In truth there has always been a modicum of this type of activity going right back to Victorian days, the University of London commencing its external degree programmes in 1858; I knew someone of my grandparent's generation quite well who had gained a degree in Chemical Engineering via a University of London External Degree.

Obviously, the whole process is much easier with the advent of the internet.

For their part the universities have responded to this movement to the new technology, uprating their efforts into lifelong learning; the likes of Professor Magnus Pyke, who was a 'Public Engagement Lead' of yesteryear now being more numerous, together with a wide range of events open to part-time attendance, from day courses to (for those with suitable entry qualifications) consideration given to doctoral level work. Many lectures are

available online free of charge whilst for those seeking something more structured specialist offerings have emerged, 'Future Learn' being just one such provision:

www.futurelearn.com/courses

But to come back to Oxford University, which has been my route of learning in recent years. The Oxford University Maths Essay Competition was launched in 2020:

tomrocksmaths.com/trm-essay-competition/

It is run by Dr Tom Crawford as part of his Tom Rocks Maths Provision, which has the subtitle 'Maths, but not as you Know it!':

tomrocksmaths.com/

lifelong-learning.ox.ac.uk/about/tom-rocks-maths-essay-competition

Note that there are separate entry levels for under 18s and 18+ while the closing date is Monday 13 April 2026.

Even if pitching in a maths essay 'is not your thing', the website itself would probably interest many.

But to conclude on more 'practical' matters; I will unpack my thoughts and efforts on developing our lifelong learning in relation to driving at a later date; after all, the road to Oxford, the A34, is one of the more demanding roads in the south of England so the two aspects of my thoughts presented here do have a connection – in more ways than one.



The iconic Radcliffe Camera Building, University of Oxford. But what is to be found at its feet?



Getting this mowing outturn to such perfection is the work of a top-rate crafts wo/man. Thus, it is not just the academics who are world class, such achievement reaching also to the manual

operatives at Oxford University. The picture was taken late November 2025. On sharing the picture with a non-Oxford academic, he postulated that the mowing pattern might be a representation supporting Fibonacci Sequence Day which was 23 November. Thus, now our thoughts are connecting maths with plant science and horticulture (among other things); indeed, one year the Sparsholt College entry for Chelsea Flower Show was based on the Fibonacci Sequence.

Chris Young

We Don't Need Hypermasculine World Leaders: We Need Ones who Lead like Jesus

We seem to have returned to an age where might is right, where military strength and domination are perceived to be the ways in which global leadership is asserted. Within much of the discussions and actions taken by leaders over the past few years – from [Putin's war in Ukraine](#) to the [Israel-Gaza war](#) to [strikes on Iran](#) and the subsequent war in the Middle East – we see a pointing towards forms of power that are hypermasculine. Or at least that point towards the dominant perceptions of what it is to

be masculine. The person of Jesus offers us all a completely new and different way of being human

The Americans named their intervention in Iran 'Operation Epic Fury', with Pete Hegseth, the US secretary of war, declaring 'death and destruction from the skies all day long' and boasting that the Iranian regime 'are toast'. For Hegseth and his colleagues, many of whom express a faith in Jesus Christ, I wonder what image they have of what it means to be a man like Jesus.

Jesus meek and mild



I have long been fascinated with the fact that Warner Sallman's 1940 painting *Head of Christ* is one of the most popular images of Jesus there is. The image depicts a soft and contemplative, blue-eyed, white-skinned Jesus in the style of an American high school yearbook photo. Reproduced more than half a billion times worldwide by the end of the 20th century, one of the things I find most fascinating is that it was distributed by organisations like the Salvation Army and the

YMCA during the second world war. For writer Lynn Neal, *Head of Christ* was one of the popular evangelical images and highlighted 'the salvific power of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, as well as how he experienced the sufferings of humanity while remaining without sin'.

I have critiqued the dominance of this image because of its portrayal of Jesus as white (when [He wasn't](#)), but what I appreciate about it in this moment of militarism, overt displays of brute strength and dominance, is that it is a gracious and humble depiction of Christ. This is not the Jesus of Operation Epic Fury, but gentle Jesus, meek and mild. And in this context, I don't mind it.

A different type of man

The truth, of course, is that Jesus does not fit into any of these boxes. The person of [Jesus offers us all a completely new and different way of being human](#). This Easter, many of us will read again the stories of the Passion, including the moment in which Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate and the crowds. In this crucial moment, we see Pilate saying the famous words: 'Behold the man' (John 19:5, ESV).

This is not the Jesus of Operation Epic Fury, but gentle Jesus, meek and mild

This bruised and vulnerable Jesus is the one who offers us [a vision of manhood and humanity that runs counter to the dominant narratives](#) we have in our society. Instead of brute strength and dominance, we find sacrificial servanthood. Instead of violence, we find gentleness. Instead of hatred, we find a love that's poured out for all.

As the mother of two boys, I want to raise men that know they are so indescribably loved. So loved that they are secure in who they are, and who God has created them to be. So loved that they break down barriers between people, rather than build walls. So loved that they choose to love others, just as Christ loved them.

Chine McDonald from *Premier Christianity*

News of the Wider Church



Faith leaders oppose UKIP rally in Liverpool as 'Walk with Jesus' raises concerns about Christian nationalism. Church leaders in Liverpool have distanced from the event arranged by the far-Right UK Independence Party (UKIP). 'Our

calling is not to sow discord, but to build bridges,' they said in a joint statement.

The rally was arranged as a march, gathering on the piazza of the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral. UKIP invited its supporters to 'Stand for Christ in Liverpool during Lent'. The leaders, who also include Revd Geoff Felton, Moderator of the United Reformed Church Mersey Synod and Revd Phil Jump, Baptist Regional Minister for Merseyside, North Wales & North West, said they stand with 'the many voices of concern' surrounding the event, including Monsignor Anthony O'Brien, the Dean of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral 'in strongly opposing the use of the piazza at the Metropolitan Cathedral'. They said they 'will continue to stand firm against hatred, prejudice, racism and bigotry in all their forms, confident that these forces will not define who we are as a society'.



Iranian Christians argue war is a means of rescue. The US-Israeli strikes on Iran constitute 'an operation aimed at the liberation of the Iranian people', a group of Iranian Christians wrote in a letter made public on 14 March. 'As Christians, we do not support war easily and continue to value peace above all. Yet, in this context, we regard this operation as a means of rescuing the Iranian nation from a repressive regime. This step may ultimately pave the way for lasting peace in the Middle East, a region that has long suffered from conflict.'

The letter, signed by 40 Iranian Christians living in the UK, was sent to the Bishop of Chelmsford, Guli Francis-Dehqani in response to her recent letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, which described the war as 'unjust and illegal'.

'This is a war of choice rather than necessity,' she wrote. 'The Iranian regime is odious and repugnant, but it did not pose an imminent threat that justified pre-emptive self-defence.'

Diplomacy might have been working frustratingly slowly, but it was working. It certainly hadn't been exhausted.

'The lack of clarity as to the war's aims, and the absence of any forethought about what comes next, belie the notion that this is either a moral war or a just one. International law exists precisely to prevent the use of force in such circumstances. Without it, force prevails, the strong prey on the weak, and states routinely act with impunity to resolve their disputes with might. It is a world that invites fear rather than hope.'

Dr Francis-Dehqani was born in Iran and came to the UK as a teenage refugee in 1980, in the wake of the Islamic Revolution. Her letter was written in response to an article in the *Telegraph* by the theologian Lord Biggar which mentioned the killing of her brother, Bahram Dehqani-Tafti. His killing had prompted the family to flee the region. Lord Biggar, like the Iranian Christians, argued that wars not upheld by international law could 'still be morally right'.



Great British Bake Off winner

Jasmine Mitchell has presented a cake to the Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally at Lambeth Palace as a housewarming gift. The fig, honey and almond cake was made with honey produced by bees in the

palace garden, and figs reflecting the fig tree that was planted in the grounds of Lambeth Palace in 1556.

Jasmine, who won The Great British Bake Off in November, decorated the cake with olive branches to symbolise peace and healing, with the shape of a scallop shell piped on the side to reflect Archbishop Sarah's love of walking and pilgrimage. Scallop shells are traditionally a symbol of many pilgrimage routes. Jasmine said, 'It was such a joy to meet Archbishop Sarah today and to give this cake as a housewarming gift. I loved the process of designing

and baking the cake for her. I'm praying that Archbishop Sarah would feel God with her as she begins her new role.'

Dame Sarah, who will be installed as archbishop at a ceremony at Canterbury Cathedral in March said: 'Jasmine has created a really thoughtful and inspired cake that artfully weaves biblical imagery with references to Lambeth Palace and my Installation. I am so grateful to Jasmine for the time and creativity she has put into making this lovely cake. We are often characterised by tea and cake in the Church of England, and I think this might be some of the best I've had!'

During the presentation, Archbishop Sarah and Jasmine, who is training to be a doctor, talked about their experiences working in the NHS and their shared Christian faith. Afterwards, the cake was donated to The Passage, a local charity that aims to end homelessness, and to staff in the paediatric intensive care unit at Evelina London Children's Hospital.



The First Lady of Nigeria has told a gathering at Lambeth Palace that God's mercy brings 'fresh benefits' to her each morning. Senator Oluremi Tinubu, First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, delivered the sermon as part of the Nigerian official state visit to the United Kingdom. Mrs

Tinubu is a Christian, whilst her husband, President Bola Tinubu, identifies as a Muslim.

'I love the King James Version of the Bible,' she said, before reading from Ephesians 2:4-6: 'For God, who is so rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'

‘This is the only time God is referred to as being “rich” in anything at all: mercy,’ she declared. ‘There are things I dwell on – fresh manna in the morning. God doesn’t give us anything stale, he always gives us things that are fresh. The mercy I have today is different from the mercy I had yesterday. God gives us benefits, fresh benefits, fresh mercy and fresh bread every day.’

For many Christians, the state visit has been deeply controversial due to ongoing persecution in Nigeria. Dr Richard Ikiebe, president of Peace Building and Social Justice UK (PBSJUK), told *Premier Christian News* he worried the Nigerian government ‘would rather focus on “optics” and public relations’ than attacks on Christians.



A consultation on updated guidance detailing how doctors can practice in line with their own personal religious beliefs and values, while maintaining good and safe care of their patients, was recently by the General Medical Council (GMC).

The guidance covers doctors, physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs) in the UK talking about their own beliefs with patients. It says they must not impose their own beliefs and values on patients and that discussions should remain relevant to the patient’s care and treatment and should not breach professional boundaries.

Personal beliefs can cover religious, moral or ethical concerns that might influence the way doctors, practice. If doctors, PAs or AAs have a conscientious objection, for example, around abortion or gender identity, the proposed guidance makes clear the patient must be prioritised. It says that such an objection must not prevent someone being able to access the care or service they need. If a patient refuses a procedure or treatment because of

their beliefs, the guidance says their decision must be respected, even if the person treating them disagrees with it.



Entrepreneur and popular TV ‘dragon’

Steven Bartlett has described evidence for Jesus being the son of God as ‘persuasive’. On his *Diary of a CEO* podcast, which is the second most-listened to in the UK, the *Dragons’ Den* star sat down with evangelist Wesley Huff to explore ‘the truth about Christianity’.

The two-and-a-half-hour episode saw Barlett open up about his own Christian upbringing, what led him to ‘new wave atheism’, and now to explore the case for the ‘Quiet Revival’.

Barlett described the evidence for Jesus’ death and resurrection as ‘persuasive’, adding that he considers himself a sceptic who requires a ‘high bar’ of evidence to trust something. The conversation has received positive feedback, with listeners in its comments opening up about their own ‘Quiet Revival’ experiences.

Full interview bit.ly/4bZ1SUM

Dorothy Lusmore

Monthly Munch Club

Delighted to welcome three new members, Michelle, Rosemary and Carol to our group, which now numbers eleven members. Anyone who would like a change from eating alone please contact Rosemary MacMullen at rosemarymacmullen1@gmail.com



Next date Sunday 12 April 12.30 pm at The Steak House, Jewry Street.

MHA COMMUNITIES GROUPS AT UNITED CHURCH

Day	Activity
Monday Weekly 10.00-11.30am	Singing for Wellbeing
Tuesday Weekly 9:00-10:00am	Dance Fit
Tuesday Weekly 10:20-11:20am & 11:45am-12:45pm	Winchester Exercise Plus 1 & 2
Tuesday Weekly 1pm - 2.30pm	Seated Exercise
Friday Fortnightly 11am-1pm	Activity Day
Friday Fortnightly 11am-1.30pm	Lunch Club

Pop by and talk to the team in room 2

Call: 07732823248

Email: Hampshirecentral@mha.org.uk

Caring for our Planet



Morning: Seminars
on Caring for our planet

Why? Ruth Valerio

*Programmes, Partnerships and
Advocacy Director, (Embrace
the Middle East)*

How? Steve Collins

*Net Zero Carbon (NZC)
team, The Church of England*

**Afternoon:
Panel discussion**

A free community event

with much to explore

All zones are accessible

View movies in the **Science Dome**

Creative fun **Craft Zone for children**

Poems, photos, posters **Exhibition Space**

Expand your thought? **Seminar Room**

Reflect in the **Quiet Room**

Drinks and snacks **Refreshment zone**

Local action groups **Market zone**

Something for everyone

When: **18 April 2026**

Where: Chandler's Ford Methodist
Church, SO53 2GJ

Time: 10 am to 4 pm

Updates will be published on:

<http://www.wermethodistcircuit.org.uk>



Chandler's Ford
Methodist Church

Saturday April 18

10 am to 4 pm



Free community event

Something for
everyone.

Video dome :

Kids crafts: Bees and bugs

Seminars (am):

Ruth Valerio: Embrace the Middle East

Steve Collins: Net Zero Carbon (C of E)

Forum (pm): Ruth & Steve and

Helen Stephens (A Rocha UK) &

Jo Crocker (WinACC)

Market Stalls: Spinney Refillery

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

WinACC A Rocha UK

Eastleigh Borough Council recycling

My Home Made Better RSPB

Repair Cafe Southern Water

Refreshments

Quiet room



Plastics in the sea

Exhibition:

Poems, photos and posters
invited. Send to:

[caringforourplanetapril26@
gmail.com](mailto:caringforourplanetapril26@gmail.com)

Organisers:

www.wermethodistcircuit.org.uk

Bus: Bluestar 1;

Train: Chandler's Ford
Limited parking on site.



Anna
Chaplaincy
for older people



Vintage Fun

All welcome!



Music Quiz

Monday 13th April

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.

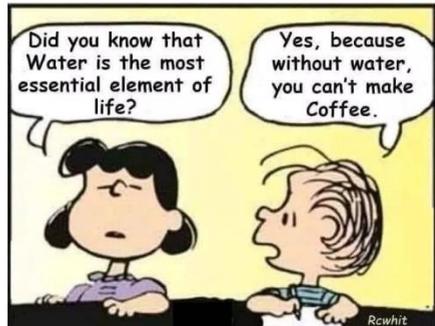
Caraway
Cakes

Comedy Corner

How to determine wind direction....



**When Someone Touches
Your Neck With Cold Hands**



The deadline for May Yours is **Monday 13 April**. All contributions welcome. Send to yours@ucw.org.uk.



Services for April 2026

In-person and live-streamed

2 APRIL MAUNDY THURSDAY

7.30 pm **Tenebrae Service** Revd Tim Searle

3 APRIL GOOD FRIDAY

10.00 am **Good Friday Service** Revd Tim Searle

5 APRIL EASTER SUNDAY

8.30 am **Easter Breakfast** Revd Tim Searle

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

12 APRIL

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Elizabeth Britton

19 APRIL

10.30 am **Morning Worship** South Wonston HG

26 APRIL

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

followed by an **Extraordinary Church Meeting**

HC: Holy Communion HG: House Group

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

