



Yours

May 2026

Magazine of
The United
Church
Winchester



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Editorial

There is no letter from Tim this month as he was on leave before publication.

This month's front cover is a painting by Tony Wood of St Mark's Cathedral in Korčula, Croatia. Another talented artist in our church community! Let's hope we can see lots of blue sky like that this summer, not least when Alison Wood and Tim Clifford invite us all to Itchen Stoke for a walk and picnic (see page 5).

'Life is short and precious, human connections will forever be important, and love should be at the centre of everything we do.' This was the clear message Mike and Sandy Foster, their son, and teenage grandchildren received in the perhaps surprising context of a loud Diversity Soul concert in Brighton (see page 13).

Chris Young gives advice on controlling weeds and how some weeds are best left to flower beautifully (see page 17). There's a message there somewhere. Rosie MacMullen continues her cruise diary (see page 15) and we have news of local events including our latest piano concert (see page 7).

Many thanks to all our contributors.

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

News of the United Church Family

We were sorry to hear of the death of Mary Belshaw's sister Doris, who died on 15 April aged 103 years. We remember Mary and Tom and Doris' three sons in our prayers.

As Revd Tim Searle prepares to leave the United Church in June, we remember Tim in our prayers.



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

Changes in Denominational Magazines

Last year I wrote a short item for *Yours* about the magazines produced by the parent denominations of the United Church. These were:

Methodist Church: *Connexion* **United Reformed Church:** *Reform*

There has been change for both of these publications. The 38th issue of *Connexion* was published at the end of last year. I am sorry to report that this was the final one. It may be that it was always intended there should be a limited life for this valuable magazine, but it is disappointing, nonetheless. I should point out that (as far as I know) there is still an independently produced weekly newspaper – the *Methodist Recorder*.

As for *Reform*, it still continues publication but on a reduced number of issues per year: 8, compared with the previous 10. But there will be a change of name from the next issue. You may be able to surmise what the problem has been but suffice it to say that there has been considerable mail to the office under the apprehension that the magazine has something to do with a certain political party! Readers were asked to suggest a new name, and this will be revealed when Issue 3 is published soon. Watch this space!

Graham Rolfe

Walking the Labyrinth

The St Cross House Group did something different during Lent. We walked a labyrinth. The labyrinth in question is at St Mary's Church, Itchen Stoke near Alresford. St Mary's was built in the 1860s, inspired by the 13th century Sainte Chapelle in Paris. The floor near the altar is decorated with tiles laid out in the form of a labyrinth, a scale replica of the labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral.

We met for our usual cup of tea and fellowship first and then made our way to the church where we were welcomed by Victoria from the Churches Conservation Trust. She had kindly lit the labyrinth with candles as there is no electricity and therefore no lighting or heating!



The purpose of a labyrinth is to walk slowly and prayerfully to the centre and back out again. Tim C had prepared some Bible passages and points for discussion for us, which were tied in with the Lent material we

were using. We were then asked to reflect upon these in silence and pray for them whilst walking the labyrinth.

Unlike a maze, it's impossible to get lost in a labyrinth. It does take concentration though to follow the pattern of the tiles and it takes much longer than you might expect at first sight.



We decided to walk the labyrinth during Lent but you might like to choose a warmer, sunnier day because when the sun is shining through the stained glass it is the most beautiful sight.

We are hoping to organise a walk and a visit to the church, perhaps combined with a picnic, for anyone interested, during the late Summer. Please watch out for some more news on this later.

Tim Clifford and Alison Wood

Monthly Munch Club

Next date Sunday 17 May 12.30 pm at The Steak House, Jewry Street.

Anyone who would like a change from eating alone please contact Rosemary MacMullen at rosemarymacmullen1@gmail.com



Our Next Piano Recital

Hanna Csermely Saturday 9 May 2026 7.30 pm



21-year-old Hungarian pianist, Hanna Csermely, grew up in Southampton where her passion for music was ignited. From the age of 7, she began having piano lessons and participated in many competitions and music festivals such as Fareham

Music Festival, Gosport Music Festival, Southampton Music Festival and Portsmouth Music Festival with great success, winning many of her classes.

Concert Programme

Franz Schubert: 4 Impromptus, Op. 90

Mozart: Fantasy in C minor K. 475

Debussy: Estampes, L. 100

Admission is free. Donations to the Piano Fund are welcome.



Read Hanna's biography and her notes on each piano piece at ucw.org.uk/concerts/



Christian Aid Week: 10–16 May: ‘Seven Days to Make a Difference’



This year the United Church will not be distributing Christian Aid envelopes in Teg Down, as we have done for many years. Instead, we are trying different ways of drawing attention to Christian Aid, as well as raising money. We will be selling **‘Seven Days to Make a Difference’ fun quiz sheets**, and these will be available from 26 April after morning service and in the coffee bar, price £3.

For an evening of fun, and a little challenge, come along to our **Quiz Night** on Saturday 16 May from 7 pm (quiz to start at 7.15pm) when there will be a range of questions for all (these will be different to the above quiz sheet). There will be hot and cold drinks and sweet treats available.

The focus is on fun and helping Christian Aid put hope into action. No entrance fee but donations requested for Christian Aid.

For more information contact Jo Pellatt on mission@ucw.org.uk

A Poem from Gaza

After more than two years of intense bombardment and fighting, children in Gaza have lost so much – family members, homes, schools, places to play.

Children were asked to share their hopes for the future, through drawings, poems, models and conversations, and a clear picture began to emerge. **Again and again, children imagined a Gaza defined not by war, but by safety, dignity and life.**



Here is a poem written by Malak, aged 13, about the Gaza she wants:

The Gaza I Want

It is not a tent pressed against the wind,
Nor a blood counter running night and day.

I want it as a morning
Opening its window to a calm sea,
And a fisherman returning
With nets full of fish,
Not riddled with shell holes.

I want it
Writing its school assignments,
Not the names of the deceased,
Counting stars in the sky,
Not airplanes.

I want it as a mother
Waiting for her children to come home from school,
Not from beneath the rubble,
Baking bread
With the scent of thyme,
Not smoke.

The Gaza I want
Is a city that resembles life,
Walking barefoot on the sand,
Laughing,
Without bowing to the world

Malak, 13-years-old

The Redemption of the Thorn

As sin was planted
 thistles grew.
The peace within the Garden flew.
Tranquil life was in the past
 for angels held the gate shut fast.
Banished souls were forced to learn
 they trod the path of no return:
'The Curse! The Curse!
We have done wrong.'

And thorns grew up both sharp and strong.
And thorns would dominate our way
 every minute of each day.

Was there a way?
Could this reverse?
A secret – hidden in the Curse –
 revealed the only way to bring
 us to the presence of the King.
Sharp thorns were twisted round his head,
 the Crown forced down till blood ran red.

The Curse was lifted as he died –
And Heaven's Gate is opened wide!

God to the serpent: 'He will crush your head and you will strike his heel.' Genesis 3:15

©Marjorie Francis
Easter 2026

Contributed by Tony Hellard

Which Flower do You Associate with Pentecost?



We are used to having our churches decorated with red or flame coloured flowers at Pentecost, but it is the peony that is commonly known as the 'Pentecost Flower' or 'Pfingstrose' (Pentecost Rose) in Germany, because it blooms around 50 days after Easter. In the Acts of the Apostles, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is described as a moment of explosive grace and renewal. This is symbolised through the peony's lush and vibrant blossoms, sometimes resembling a burst of flames.

The term *Pentecost* comes from the Greek, meaning 'fiftieth'. It refers to the festival of Shavuot and is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover according to Deuteronomy 16:10 and in Exodus 34:22, where it is referred to as the 'Festival of Weeks'. As the second most important festival in the Christian year, Pentecost is often seen as the 'birthday' of the Church, since this is when the disciples of Jesus first proclaimed the Gospel after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Because it relies on the date of Easter, the date of Pentecost also changes. The Monday after Pentecost is a legal holiday in many European, African and Caribbean countries and, in England, has now become a fixed date and is referred to as Whitsun, the traditional British name for Pentecost. [*Acts of the Apostles 2:1-13.*](#)

Dorothy Lusmore

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Connections

What's the connection between the longest psalm and a Victorian alphabetical parlour game?

I have always enjoyed word puzzles and riddles. One of my early memories is of a game completing the alphabet beginning 'apple pie, B bit it, C cut it' etc. always hoping I would not be landed with q or x!

Psalm 119 – which most of us have probably never read until Dorothy led the service on 19 April – was just such an alphabetical challenge. The Psalmist set out to write a psalm in praise of 'God's Law', going through the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet with each line of each 8-line stanza beginning with the same letter. Scholars think it was written in the period after the Jewish people returned from Exile in Babylon, but long before the birth of Christ. Whether by 'God's Law' he simply meant the laws given in Deuteronomy or whether he meant the broader range of the Ancient Jewish scriptures is not known. Clearly some of the ideas in the psalm are timeless, but others are very much of their time.

If you missed it, why not look at it online. Or even better, challenge yourself to find a word to describe God beginning with each letter of the alphabet:

Awesome or Amazing? Breathtaking or Bewildering? Challenging or Comforting, etc ... what words would you choose? This could open up an interesting conversation.

Worship Enabling Group would welcome comments on this different style of service, and suggestions for other 'different' services.

Pat Fry

Diversity Soul

Easter Saturday and tickets for the Diversity Soul Tour at the Brighton Centre, along with son and teenage grandchildren. We expected dance, flashing lights and loud music. Little did we expect there would be a philosophical message.

Ashley Banjo, leader of the group which won *Britain's Got Talent* 17 years ago and set new trends in popular dance, welcomed the 4,000 strong all-age audience and set the underlying message behind the whole performance:

SOUL comes from questioning the future of humanity in a world filled with artificial intelligence. But somewhere along the way that question shifted. I stopped thinking about machines ... and started thinking about us.

What makes us human?

The way we move? The way we look?

Or is it something deeper – our souls?

Ashley gave thanks to the fans, to Diversity ... and to God – *'None of this exists without you. I pray in gratitude every day for the blessings and gifts you have bestowed on my life.'*

[Quotes from the programme]



There followed emotional storytelling, fantastic dancing, slick routines, incredible aerial stunts, acrobatics, backward somersaults, head spins, break dancing, all synchronised, visually breath-taking

and to the accompaniment of loud music (no need for hearing aids) and flashing lights so that all ages enjoyed the experience.

The message was clear – our world might look very different to how it did when people of our age and beyond were growing up, but some things will always hold true. The essence of humanity over machines is Love.

Life is short and precious, human connections will forever be important, and love should be at the centre of everything we do.

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' Philippians 4:6-7

Mike & Sandy Foster

Collage



This collage depicts the journey we take through our Christian lives; finding Faith to give us strength, Hope to give us endurance to see us through difficult times. Above all, the greatest on our journey is Love which shines through, bringing care, kindness, warmth and joy to our lives.

Designed and made by Hilary Holt and Pauline Brooks

Snippets from a Cruise Diary

Sunday 10th. Lovely sunny warm day, so spent morning reading up on the Observation Deck. After lunch I decided to see Funchal in daylight and climbed up 112 stone steps to a serene green garden with walkways round a pond with swans and a mesmeric waterfall. So relaxing I only moved to find a café where I could get Wi-Fi and catch up with e-mails.



Back on board I had a swim and jacuzzi before dinner. Annoyingly, the only changing area was the shower room which was saturated so there was nowhere to put dry clothes. Wrapping my towel round myself I headed for the lift and by some miracle reached my cabin unseen. Still, it made for a jokey dinner chat. Went to the Entertainment but oh dear entertaining it was not to me. A ukelele player who fancied himself as an Elvis Presley singer, without the charisma or the voice, interspersed each number with feeble dated jokes. I crept out half-way and came to bed.

Monday 11th. Today I had chosen the tour: La Gomera, Traditions and Flavours. First we headed to the Hermigua Botanical Gardens. It was fascinating to see banana trees and Palmeras Guaraperas palm trees which are known for their sweet palm honey. As well as being guided around the diverse flora we were admiring the skill of an elderly lady making traditional baskets with banana leaves, vines and reeds. Sitting at tables outside in the sunshine, we sampled the local specialities such as gofio, artisan cheese and regional wine, such a treat!



Then we drove to Mirado Hermiga Valleheroso Viewpoint, and Agando where basalt formations rise dramatically from the landscape. Truly amazing these are!

We had also gone to La Laguna Grande where little round paintings showed Christopher Columbus who sailed from La Gomera, a little bit of history. This was a day of huge contrast in areas of forest and farmland.



Rosemary MacMullen

'Weeds': The Good, The Bad and The Potential Garden Nightmares

The dictionary defines a weed as a plant growing in the wrong place; thus, if a plant (even a 'wild' or 'volunteer' plant) is growing 'in the right place' – it is not a weed. However, there are weeds and weeds – botanically speaking. For example, chickweed, having an ephemeral growth cycle and thus a shallow fibrous root system is much easier to remove than, for example bindweed or creeping thistle.

Spring gives rise to many joys in the garden, but one of the less welcome aspects is the reinvigoration of the weed population.

There are, of course, many 'weeds' which fall between the two extremes cited above; one such (to many) is celandine. I have one patch of this in my garden, it gives a cheery cover of bright yellow flowers set off by dark green shiny leaves in the spring, furthermore the top of the plant dies away in May, as it is dormant in the summer and thus you can then 'forget about it'. However, it is notorious for spreading, partly by mini (semi 'micro') tubers, which can easily be carried in small deposits of soil on your footwear, and thus transplanted around your garden unintentionally, i.e. you, the gardener, becomes the weeds vector.

Another wild or native plant which I actively encourage in the garden is forget-me-not; these biennial plants reappear each year without fail and are typically giving their best with a sea of light blue (and occasional white and pink) flowers around mid-April. Just leave them long enough to reseed before you pull them up in late spring.

Moving on to more difficult weeds, bindweed is the weed I must give the most consideration to, as, given its freedom it will soon start to dominate. It presents a particular difficulty where it establishes itself under permanent plantings such as hedging or established shrubs. It is in such a situation that a case can be made

for the careful use of an appropriate garden chemical weedkiller carefully applied following the manufacturer's instructions.

I was toiling with some bindweed in a Brighton park early in my career, when a passer-by said 'you'll never get rid of it'; he was right, I noticed it was still there this year, that's 50 years on! I might even proffer that it was probably there 50 years before the gentleman made his disheartening comment, i.e. at the time of the General Strike 100 years ago – or, indeed, come to that, 500 years ago. On a positive note, I have used 'harvested' and dried bindweed as 'raffia'; thus, perhaps I have found a silver lining for this notorious weed.

It could be worse. Think of horsetail. The agglomeration of fact mingled with lore and fable is testimony that mankind has been preoccupied with this plant for millennia. Some claim it to be of benefit when suffering from this, that, and the other ailment; meanwhile some maintain that it has a 10, 20, even 30 foot (!), deep root system.

However, Japanese knotweed is surely, due to its size and aggression, of an even more threatening nature, not only to the garden – but to the home.

In the case of Japanese knotweed, qualified professional specialised assistance is the appropriate course of action. As always, do double check the potential firm / partnership / sole trader that are being considered for engagement. Recently the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has uprated its warnings about rogue traders in all spheres of appointment. Two potential sources of reassurance for the domestic customer being:

Trading Standards Approved Business; administered locally by Hampshire County Council: www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/

The consumers organisation Which? who also run a 'Trusted Trader' scheme: trustedtraders.which.co.uk/

It must be emphasised that in the specific case of Japanese knotweed, its elimination is an extremely specialised operation necessitating highly trained staff, equipment and chemicals; such requirements are quite separate from day to day horticultural landscaping and maintenance operations.

Wild 'volunteer' forget-me-nots, reproducing for free, year after year, from the seed reservoir in the soil.

Current plants will be allowed to reseed, thus replenishing the seed stock before removal in late May. The summer display, in addition to the roses in the background, the delphinium (towards the bottom right), and the small Michaelmas daisy (just discernible at the bottom centre), has in recent years been enhanced by sweet peas, which is the intention for this summer.



In the eyes of some, a slightly more questionable native volunteer wild plant, celandine. The plants grow under a nectarine tree, both existing quite happily with each other. For potential 'dangers', please refer to the main text.

Happy gardening.

Chris Young

Artemis II Astronaut Expresses Gratitude to God



One of the astronauts on the Artemis II space mission, Victor Glover, thanked God after the crew touched down safely on 18 April. Mr Glover, who was the pilot of the mission's Orion spacecraft, which the crew

named *Integrity*, said that, when the mission began, he had 'wanted to thank God in public, and I want to thank God again, because, even bigger than my challenge trying to describe what we went through, the gratitude of seeing what we saw, doing what we did, and being with who I was with – it's too big to just be in one body.'

During his communications to Mission Control during the ten-day mission, he read passages from St Matthew's Gospel as the crew were just moments away from losing communication as they passed behind the moon.



He said: 'As we continue to unlock the mystery of the cosmos, I'd like to remind you of one of the most important mysteries there on earth, and that's love. Christ said ... the greatest command is to love God with all that you are ... and the second is equal to it: to love your neighbour as yourself.' Mr Glover and his wife, Dionne, and four daughters attend a Churches of Christ congregation in Friendswood, Texas, at which he is Sunday school teacher.

'When we talk about creation care, we tend to only focus on what's happening on earth. But there's so much beyond our galaxy that we have yet to explore, and there is evidence that the universe appears to be fine-tuned for life to exist. All the incredible things we already know that are going on in the amazing universe, and all the incredible things we have yet to explore, to me, are all kinds of pointers to God.'

Article from The Church Times 15 April

What do You Know of the Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches Trust?

We are a charity formed in 1988 to support historic churches within Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Channel Islands with grants to help maintain and repair their buildings. We can award grants to churches of any Christian denomination, but they must be members of 'Churches Together in England'. In this way we help to support our ancient building heritage and the local communities they serve.

Since foundation we have helped 319 churches throughout the area of benefit contributing 1 million pounds to essential repairs and refurbishment. We support churches who have struggled to find enough financial support to carry out the necessary works.

We have been donated over 1.1 million pounds in a large part by the incredible support of local church communities taking part in the National Ride and Stride day (R&S), held on the second Saturday in September. We are also fortunate to have benefitted from some significant legacies.

We aim to spend the majority of our annual income each year through our grant giving; our expenses are minimal because we are all volunteers.

From this year the cost of church repairs are likely to increase even further due to Government changes to the Listed Places of Worship scheme, its replacement – the Places of Worship Renewal fund – is widely predicted to be inadequate

This change means listed churches will now have to pay VAT on repairs (prior to this year they could claim VAT back); there is some provision by the government to offset this but for many churches it will increase the need to raise further funds. It is a competitive grant rather than an automatic refund and churches will likely need to prove their repairs are urgent and provide high community value.

We reached our zenith of R&S donations in 2022 but since then our income has fallen. We are not sure why, but since 2019 the number of churches taking part in R&S has fallen each year from 136 in 2019 to 70 in 2025, although the total donation per sponsored church has remained unchanged.

In the past Ride and Stride has involved groups or individuals from a church getting sponsored to cycle or walk to as many churches as possible. However, it has become a misnomer; sponsorship of any challenge on that day is perfectly permissible. Other examples are vintage car rallies and church bell ringing. Anyone can take part – you just need a modicum of imagination! Sponsorship money is divided equally between our charity and the church organising the event – a win/win for everyone.

We have an ‘easy-to-use’ online fundraising platform, which can be accessed through our website: hihct.org.uk/

We are passionate about our ancient church heritage – we want to continue to give grants to churches in need, but to do this we need you to support our sponsorship campaign.

We will be sending out further information about Ride and Stride nearer to the September event and encouraging churches of every denomination to take part.

We also need more help to support our voluntary team, especially anyone with social media/communication skills – and of course a love of our ancient church buildings!

Dr Tim Goulder
Chairman

For further information visit: hihct.org.uk/

To contact H&IHCT please email: gouldertj@gmail.com

News of the Wider Church



The Home Office has announced an extra £5m to increase policing around places of worship in London and Manchester. It comes after recent antisemitic attacks in both cities and is part of a wider plan to protect all faith sites. Security Minister Dan Jarvis said the money will be used to

‘back the police with the resources they need to step up patrols, protect communities, and keep people safe in the places where they live, work and worship’.

Bishop Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy, who is the Church of England’s lead bishop for Interfaith Engagement, told *Premier Christian News* he welcomes the extra investment in security but is disappointed it’s necessary: ‘It’s an acknowledgement that there’s a real risk that many of our faith communities are exposed, particularly the Jewish community. Many of our places of worship want to pride themselves in being hospitable spaces, places where all are invited in and places where hospitality is both given and received. And I lament the fact that we as society have come down to a place where places of worship need to be protected by armed guards.’

NASA has released the list of songs astronauts have been listening to during their Artemis II mission. Among the tracks played during the mission is



‘Good Morning’ by Christian artists Mandisa and TobyMac, used as part of the spacecraft’s wake-up playlist. The wake-up music tradition, used across

NASA missions, is intended to help structure astronauts’ days in space and support morale during long-duration flights. Christianity has been mentioned several times during the mission, with astronaut Victor Glover, who is a Christian, delivering an impromptu Easter message from the spacecraft, reflecting on

humanity's place in the universe and the significance of the holiday period.

'You guys are talking to us because we're in a spaceship really far from Earth, but you're on a spaceship called Earth that was created to give us a place to live in the universe ... Maybe the distance we are from you makes you think what we're doing is special, but we're the same distance from you. And I'm trying to tell you – just trust me – you are special,' he said. Glover mentioned God and the Bible in his address, while also speaking to both religious and non-religious audiences. 'In all of this emptiness – this is a whole bunch of nothing, this thing we call the universe, you have this oasis, this beautiful place that we get to exist together,' he said of Earth. 'I think, as we go into Easter Sunday, thinking about all the cultures all around the world, whether you celebrate it or not, whether you believe in God or not, this is an opportunity for us to remember where we are, who we are, and that we are the same thing, and that we've gotta get through this together.'

The Artemis II crew splashed down back on Earth just after 1 am on Saturday 11 April, UK time. (*From Premier Christian News*)

Expanding congregations and engaging young people are the biggest challenges faced by church leaders in the UK, according to the Church Resources Exhibition. A survey of 147 church workers, including leaders, youth workers and administrators, found that community outreach and mission, financial sustainability, leadership development and burnout, and the upkeep of church buildings are areas of 'significant pressure'. Growing attendance and discipling congregations topped the list of key challenges, tied with boosting youth engagement. Both were ranked a key concern by 62% of church workers.



Trump slams Pope Leo as ‘weak’ and posts a picture of himself as Jesus healing the sick. President Donald Trump forcefully criticised Pope Leo on Sunday 12 April in an unusual, direct attack on the leader of the 1.4-billion-member



Catholic Church. The president, in an apparent response to the pope’s growing criticisms of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran and the Trump administration’s hard-line immigration policies, said Leo was ‘terrible’. ‘Pope Leo is WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy,’ Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social.

‘There is no ambiguity about the situation now,’ Massimo Faggioli, an expert on the papacy, told Reuters. He compared the comments to efforts by the leaders of Germany and Italy during World War Two to draw the late Pope Pius XII to support their causes. ‘Not even Hitler or Mussolini attacked the pope so directly and publicly,’ said Faggioli. Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said he was disheartened by Trump’s comments. ‘Pope Leo is not his rival; nor is the Pope a politician. He is the Vicar of Christ who speaks from the truth of the Gospel and for the care of souls,’ he said in a statement. Leo, originally from Chicago, is the first U.S. pope. Known for choosing his words carefully, he has emerged as an outspoken critic of the Iran war in recent weeks and decried the ‘madness of war’ in a peace appeal on 11 April. Earlier Pope Leo said Trump’s warning that an ‘entire civilisation will die tonight,’ in reference to Iran, was ‘unacceptable.’ The pope has also suggested that a ‘delusion of omnipotence’ is fuelling the war between the United States and Iran. Pope Leo has said, ‘I have no fear of the Trump administration or of speaking out loudly of the message of the gospel, which is what I believe I am here to do, what the church is here to do’ as tensions between the pontiff and the US president continue to escalate. bit.ly/48BbDGL

British boxer Conor Benn chose Hillsongs 'Oceans' as his walk-out music, when taking on Regis Prograis on the undercard of Tyson Fury. The fight took place at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, as Fury made a major comeback after a year out of the boxing ring. At his weigh-in, Benn donned a gold crucifix necklace. He has previously opened up about a turbulent faith journey, yet, as an adult, Benn has found his own relationship with the Lord, saying: 'I wouldn't be where I am today without [my Christian] foundation.' 'Religion instils morals that used to exist, but the world now tends to forget,' he said. 'Kindness, goodness, patience, self-control, respecting your elders and thinking about the future, which many people don't seem to do. Things like that, which are quite basic, really, but are forsaken.' (From Premier Christian News)



instils morals that used to exist, but the world now tends to forget,' he said. 'Kindness, goodness, patience, self-control, respecting your elders and thinking about the future, which many people don't seem to do. Things like that, which are quite basic, really, but are forsaken.' (From Premier Christian News)

Wessex Synod welcomes legal notice on flags. The United Reformed Church (URC) Wessex Synod has welcomed a formal legal notice issued by Oxfordshire County Council addressing the repeated installation of flags on or near highways without consent. Since last summer, thousands of flags have appeared on lampposts across the UK. The council said the installations were not an act of patriotism but 'an act of intimidation and division that is having a real and damaging impact on our communities'.



Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council said 'We are proud of our diverse communities in Oxfordshire and of being the first county council to be awarded Local Authority of Sanctuary status. We proudly fly the Union Jack and St George's flags, which are visible symbols of democracy and unity.'

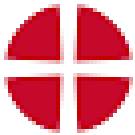
In a statement, the Revd Dr Michael Hopkins, Moderator of the URC Wessex Synod expressed praise for the council's action and commitment to social cohesion, saying: 'Churches are called to be people of hope, not fear. We welcome any step that helps ensure our streets and public spaces are places of safety, dignity, and

our streets and public spaces are places of safety, dignity, and

our streets and public spaces are places of safety, dignity, and

neighbourliness for all. As A Million Acts of Hope approaches, we want to affirm all that brings communities together, and to bear witness to the God who calls us away from division into compassion, justice, and a shared common life.'

The URC is joining faith groups and other organisations in supporting the national 'A Million Acts of Hope' week of action, taking place 13-20 May. The initiative is designed to show that there is more that connects us than divides us.



Responding to Israel's New Death Penalty – The Methodist Church in Great Britain expresses its deep alarm and profound concern at the passage of Israel's new death penalty law, which will apply to Palestinians tried in military courts. We note with concern that some members of the Knesset appeared to glorify death by arriving for the debate wearing gold noose-shaped pins and that several lawmakers celebrated the bill's passage with champagne inside the chamber. We applaud those members who voted against this horrific bill. Human life is sacred. It must be protected without exception.

B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organisation, has warned that this law entrenches the dehumanisation of Palestinians and 'normalises the killing and injury of human beings,' as Executive Director Yuli Novak stated in response to the legislation. 'Israel is reaching a new low in the dehumanisation of Palestinians, enshrining their cruel treatment in state law. It already kills Palestinians systematically and faces no demands for accountability. Under the leadership of top ministers, the Israeli system is day by day becoming a system that normalises the killing and injury of human beings.'

This law has been widely condemned by international bodies, including the Foreign Ministers of the UK, France, Germany, and Italy, who issued a rare joint statement calling the law 'de facto discriminatory' and the European Union, which called it a 'clear

step backwards' and urged Israel to uphold its obligations under international law. (*Statement from President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference*).

Dorothy Lusmore

Churches Together in Winchester Pentecost Service

There will be a City-wide Pentecost celebration at St Peters Church, Jewry Street, hosted as part of their church centenary on **Sunday 24 May at 7 pm.**

All are welcome.

Churches Together in Winchester
Working Together for the City

Part of the Churches Together Network



**'THE UPPER ROOM' - A TIME OF PRAYER
AND WORSHIP FOR THY KINGDOM COME**

16 May 2026, 6:30-8pm
Winchester Cathedral

Join Trinity's Big Sleep Out!



Members of the church family are invited to take part in Trinity Winchester's Big Sleep Out on Friday 19 June 2026 at Winchester Rugby Club. This inspiring event challenges participants to spend a night

outdoors to raise awareness and funds for people experiencing homelessness.

The evening will include live entertainment, food, and a fun shelter-building activity. It is a wonderful chance to come together, support one another, and reflect on how we can live out our faith through compassion and service.

By joining in, you can help make a real difference in our community and support Trinity's vital work.

Tickets can be purchased here at trinitysbigsleepout.eventbrite.co.uk

More information <https://trinitywinchester.org.uk/>





Vintage Fun

All welcome!



Sowing and Planting

Monday 11th May

2 - 4 pm

At the

United Church

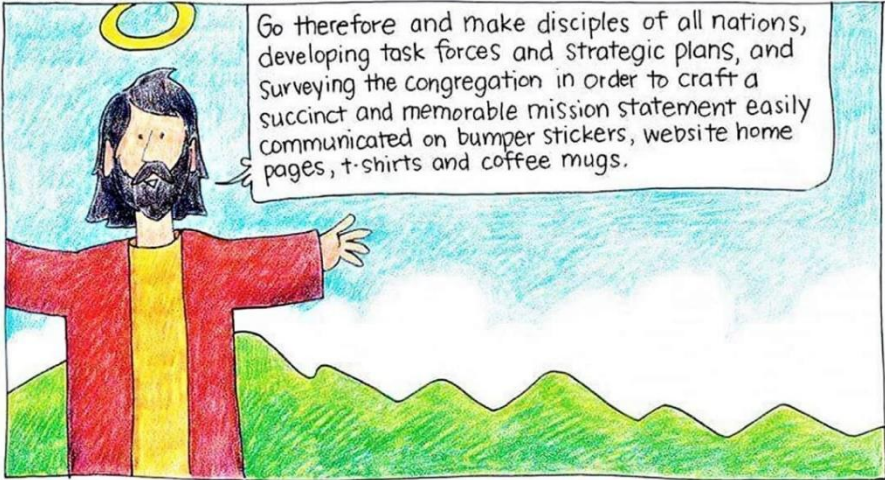
Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RZ

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

Caraway
with

Comedy Corner

THE GREAT COMMISSION REVISITED



The deadline for June Yours is **Monday 11 May**. All contributions welcome. Send to yours@ucw.org.uk.



Services for May 2026

In-person and live-streamed

3 MAY

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

10 MAY **CHRISTIAN AID WEEK**

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Bryan Coates

17 MAY

9.00 am **Holy Communion** Revd Tim Searle

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

24 MAY **PENTECOST**

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Revd Tim Searle

7.00 pm **Churches Together in Winchester Pentecost Service at St Peter's**

31 MAY

10.30 am **Morning Worship** Sandra Timms

HC: Holy Communion

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

YouTube: tinyurl.com/ucw-services

