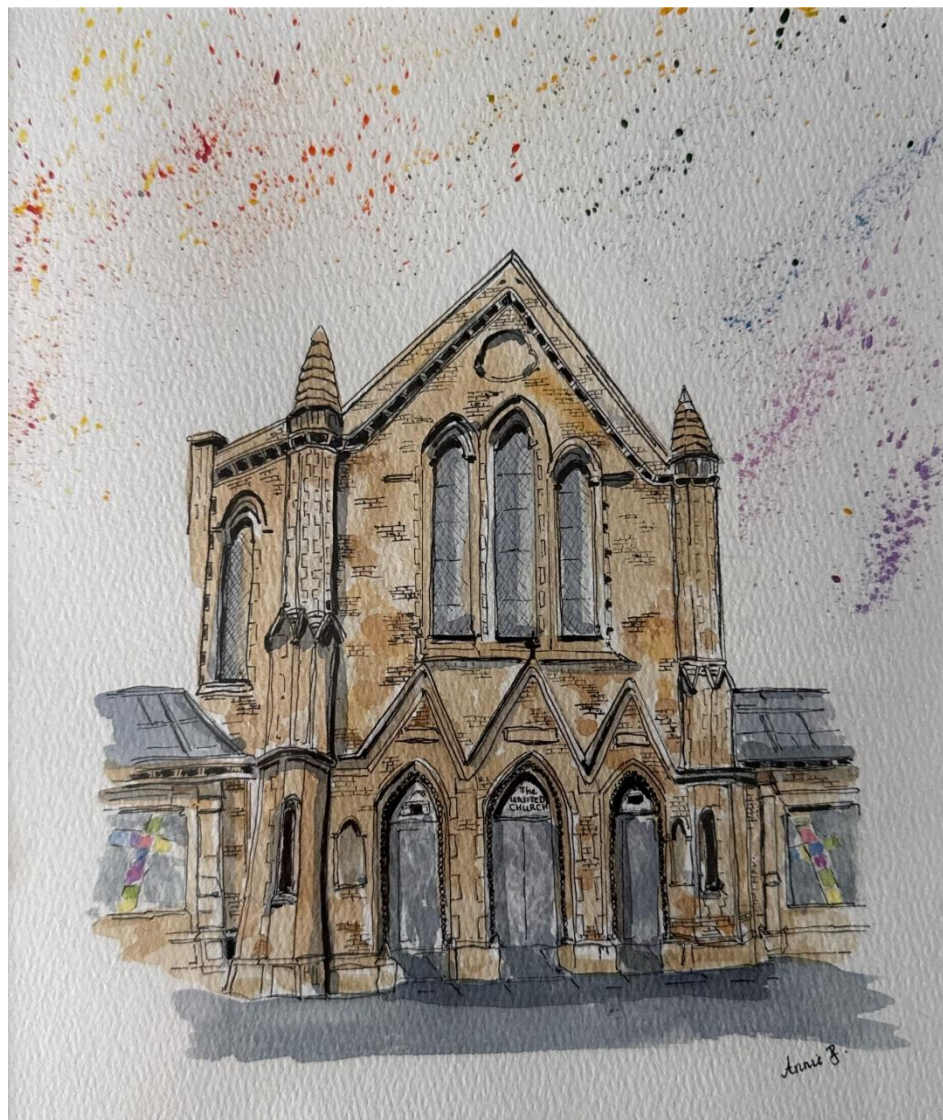




# Yours

## October 2026

Magazine of  
The United  
Church  
Winchester



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## Opening Letter – A Brick Thrown in Love!

Not the normal title for a pastoral letter! But it was the title of a world première piece when we visited the BBC Proms on 4 September. Rosie and I were really there for Ralph Vaughan Williams, if you see what I mean, his 'Fantasia' and Symphony No. 9. With them came a piece by Carol Smickersgill, called 'A Brick Thrown in Love'. It is an engaging composition reflecting on an event in 2016 at an 'Anti-fascist Rally' when a brick was thrown. She re-envisages the event, from being about a missile thrown in anger, which could be destructive, into a call for a collective effort for rebuilding.

It made me think that 'brick throwing' – so often a wilful violent act which is harmful for community – might become a constructive, compassionate act which could rebuild community.

Afterwards I reflected, where would it be a positive act to put a brick in the works? I realise that all through the years of austerity I wanted to throw that brick. Years of seeing public institutions underfunded, understaffed and lacking resources to undertake the vision to care for the community, educate young people, bring health and care to those who need it. I'd use the brick to knock down austerity and in turn build vision, help learning and provide health and care.

Brick throwing might become international! To throw my brick further towards countries and leaders where autocracy rules, where wealth is the driver, where nations claim another country as theirs, and of course where they invade another sovereign state. Or where a nation's natural resources are 'grabbed' by international organisations with foreign government backing. Perhaps you join me in such brick throwing!

Let our bricks land where truth is distorted, where lies are traded as fact. Let our bricks land in such a way that such practices are brought to a grinding halt.

But also let the thrown bricks build up. Let them join with other bricks to build bridges. Bridges to reach out to the displaced, the needy, and to build places for healing, wholeness and safety.

Where we throw our bricks let them land on injustice, let them crush evil, let them expose selfishness and untruths. Let our 'bricks' be prayers of faith, commitments to support worthy causes that are for the 'common good'. Let our 'bricks' be actions which show compassion, build relations with others and deepen community. The prophet Amos would have thrown bricks (read Amos chapters 1–3!) and made sure they landed to bring down corrupt rulers and empty religious ritual. Similarly, Micah, but he also offered the 'brick' of good practice, that we should, 'Do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8).

Let us use our 'brick' as a community of Jesus followers to stand for justice, serve the community, care for creation, to speak up for policies which encourage the common good, and to share our faith gladly with others. It may be that brick throwing in love was always part of discipleship! So, where would your thrown 'brick' land to make changes? Or more positively, with whom could you join in using your 'brick' to build positive community and transform lives?

*Howard*

## Editorial

This month's front cover painting of the United Church was painted by Ann Bulley as a parting gift to Revd Tim Searle. We continue to pray for him as he begins his ministry in the Solent Cluster area.

In this month's edition Moireach Harmer writes about a memorable return to Scotland, Chris Young enthuses about a tree that comes into its own in Autumn, and Sandy Foster whets our appetite for the Bishops Bells concert on 17 October.

If you have any suggestions for improving *Yours*, we will welcome your thoughts. If you would like to join the *Yours* team, please contact us. If you haven't contributed before and are hesitating about sending something in, let us know if you would like some help putting a piece together. Contact us at [yours@uw.org.uk](mailto:yours@uw.org.uk).

Thank you to all this month's contributors.

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

## News of the United Church Family

Please remember Tony Wood in your prayers after his diagnosis of prostate cancer.

Adrian and Ann Bulley sent the following update to be included in *Yours*. Please continue to remember Adrian and Ann in your prayers.



'After over five weeks in hospital Adrian was discharged at the end of August with no diagnosis but with the promise of follow-up outpatient appointments. The medics think the problem is some sort of autoimmune illness affecting the muscles, veins and/or blood vessels.

Adrian now has four dates in the diary for travelling to Andover or Winchester hospitals and hopes to get close to a diagnosis and some sort of treatment before too long. In the meantime, he is left much as he was when he went into hospital, except that he now has a regime of painkillers which help enormously, and he can retreat to his own bed when necessary!'

Nigel and Chris Trimmings would like to thank everyone for their good wishes and visits during Nigel's recent illness. Nigel is recovering well.

Congratulations to Jo Perrett who celebrated her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday on 10 September.

Graham and Jenny Mackenzie are pleased to inform members that their daughter Anne Clews (née Mackenzie) successfully gained a Post Graduate Certificate in Secondary Education in Religious Education at Leeds University in July and has taken up her first post teaching RE to secondary school pupils in Harrogate on the 7 September.

Our prayers and good wishes go with all those returning to or taking up places in higher education, away from home.

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

**Jane Lawson, Pastoral Lead**

## The Warmth of House Groups



Arriving for our House group I found a Birthday Surprise. This is a group photo I thought shows the warmth we share being members.

**Rosie MacMullen**

Read about United Church House Groups in [March Yours](#) page 12. If you'd like to join one, write to [yours@ucw.org.uk](mailto:yours@ucw.org.uk) (Ed.)

## A Prayer of Confession

We come before you today, O Lord God, with a sense of awe when we reflect on your holiness – ‘immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible, hid from our eyes ...’ and from that light sometimes want to shy away because it can be too revealing of the darkness, the shadows and the shades of our lives.

As individuals and as a community of your followers in this church we can easily become self-satisfied and even proud of what we do.

But the searching rays of your light reveal a different story – of mixed motives, selfish ambition, judgement of others, the easy path.

We’re not all bad – your creation is good, but in your presence we cannot boast – we can simply be – and that is what you see and still love and still call us your children and, through Jesus Christ, your friends.

Forgive, we pray, our weaknesses, our failures, our sins; restore us through your love, and through your love and through your Spirit may the light of your love shine through us in what we do and how we love.

And to your name be all the glory. AMEN

Absolution. Where regret is real, pardon is ours through him who loved us. Our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

**Rev'd Howard Sharp**

# Pray without Ceasing?

## Readings

1 Thessalonians 5:17 'Pray without ceasing.'

Ephesians 6:18 'Pray at all times in the Spirit.'

1 Timothy 2:8 'I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands.'

## Reflection

Pray without ceasing? Paul, have you seen my life?

There are emails to answer...meals to cook...people to care for...deadlines to meet...laundry that mysteriously multiplies when I'm not looking! And you're suggesting I just... pray. Constantly!?

Is this meant to make me feel inspired...or guilty? Because if this is the benchmark of faithful living, then I am failing!

'Pray without ceasing.' Does that mean kneeling all day? Whispering holy words while trying to have a coherent conversation? Ignoring the world in order to talk to God?

I have heard this verse used as a measuring stick for devotion: 'If you loved God more, you would pray more.' And: 'If you were serious about your faith, you'd make time.'

As if prayer were another task on the to-do list. Another obligation. Another place to feel inadequate.

But surely that cannot be what Paul means.

Because life itself demands our attention.

Because God gave us bodies to move, minds to think, hands to work.

Because Jesus himself didn't spend every waking moment in formal prayer.

So what is this 'unceasing' prayer?

Maybe it isn't about 'speaking' to God all the time.  
Maybe it's about living as though God is always there.

Not constant words...but constant awareness.

A quiet turning of the heart. A steady undercurrent of connection.  
A life lived in conversation, even when no words are spoken.

Perhaps prayer without ceasing looks like:

a sigh when things are hard;  
a thank you when something goes right;  
a cry for help in the middle of chaos;  
a moment of stillness in the noise.

Perhaps it is less about posture...and more about presence.

Not withdrawing from life to pray, but carrying God with me into life.

Because if God is truly everywhere, then prayer can happen

anywhere: in traffic. in meetings, in kitchens, in hospital corridors, and in ordinary, unremarkable moments.

Maybe, then, 'pray without ceasing' is not an impossible command...but a gentle reminder that I am never alone.

## **Prayer**

God,  
I do not always know how to pray.  
Life is noisy, busy, distracting.

Help me to live with an awareness of you  
That runs beneath everything I do.

Turn my sighs into prayers,  
My gratitude into worship,  
My worries into conversation with you.

Teach me that prayer is not another burden,  
But a reminder  
That you are always here.  
Amen.

**The Revd YuFen Chen, a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, serving as a Partner in Mission in London, from [URC Daily Devotions](#)**

## Bishop's Bells

Some of you will already know that one of my hobbies is handbell ringing! I am just one member of Bishop's Bells Handbell Team, based in Bishop's Waltham where Mike and I live. Bishop's Bells, or BB as we call it, was formed in 1984 and I am a proud original member! We are now a team of 17 ringers who meet weekly on a Tuesday evening at St Peter's Church in Bishop's Waltham. As former ringer Veronica Postles will tell you, Tuesday is called 'Our Therapy Night!'



We have 85 bells in our set, some of them about 150 years old, others purchased more recently through fundraising and grants. Up until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, English handbell ringing was only carried out in church towers (usually cold places!) Portable musical bells were then devised so that tower bellringers could practise their 'rounds & changes' in more congenial surroundings, ie pubs and inns! Handbell ringing then spread throughout the country. Indeed, Handel called Britain 'The Ringing Isle'.



All of us at BB love our bells and we regularly demonstrate the art of handbell ringing locally, nationally and even internationally. It falls to me to take the bookings for BB, so I was surprised to realise that, in the last 18 months, we have played at a variety of venues: 11 WI groups, 2 Care Homes, 9 Community groups, e.g Cameo and Memory Clubs, Stroke Support etc. Our venues also included Gardening Clubs, Church Fellowship groups...one funeral and one wedding! The bride at the wedding turned out to have a rather

famous father in the shape of Jack Dee, the comedian. This was

very popular with certain members of BB who are avid followers of 'I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue!'

In June, we performed at an afternoon concert in Holy Trinity Church, Gosport (see photo).

I think this is our 3<sup>rd</sup> concert at United Church, the last one being in November 2019, before Covid struck. So, we're very pleased to be performing here again and hope you will all come along to hear us.



Our programme will feature both classical and modern tunes arranged especially for handbells, which we hope you will enjoy. We are delighted to be joined by the daughters and friends of one of our ringers. They are all talented young musicians and I'm sure you'll agree how important it is to encourage young people, indeed all people, to play and enjoy music. As Tony mentioned in the September *Yours* magazine, the new 'People's Piano' is for us all.

Do come along to our concert on Saturday 17 October at 3 pm. Admission is free, with donations to the ongoing People's Piano Fund and Music Fund. Hopefully, you'll love the sound of our bells! There will be tea and lots of cake afterwards. What's not to like? See you there!

**Sandy Foster & BB.**

***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.***

## Winchester Churches Christmas Project 2026

Winchester Churches Christmas Project has a remarkable record of 33 years helping people in the Winchester area at Christmas. We cannot emphasise enough how different this project is to many other schemes. It is *not* a 'one size fits all' offering as each case is 'tailor made.' Families can choose for themselves what would help them most. As most of you know, this can be amazingly diverse: perhaps some exciting stuff like Christmas food and presents or a special treat; or it could be something much more prosaic such as the payment of a worrying bill.

It may be only October, but the Project needs to start early! As I have said before, each year we launch the Project with three big unknowns – the number of people referred to us, how many volunteers will come forward and how much money will be available. It really is an enormous leap of faith, and your prayers for the Project would be much appreciated.

Last Christmas we were pleased to help a total of 96 people. Some families could not quite believe that anyone would take the time and trouble – that they really mattered. More detail appeared in the February edition of *Yours*. Our help comes with absolutely no strings attached: we demonstrate our Christian faith and witness in our practical help and care for those we visit.

Last year, our dedicated volunteers come from 10 different Winchester churches. A truly ecumenical bunch and they are absolutely key to the Project. As usual, we will be contacting volunteers from previous years directly to ask if they are able to help again this year. However, we always welcome new volunteers (who would be paired with someone experienced). For more information, please contact me via email [deanacre@talktalk.net](mailto:deanacre@talktalk.net). We do need to know volunteer numbers by **Saturday 31 October**, please.

Our funding is totally reliant on support from congregations and individuals. We know that life is getting even more challenging each year and we would be extremely grateful for donations. We fund our volunteers upfront (in mid-November) so early donations are particularly welcome. Thanks.

If you would like to give by bank transfer, our bank account is now with The Newbury Building Society. **'Winchester Churches Christmas Project.'** Sort code **62-28-74.** Account number **00000000.** Reference **7210056868.** [Yes, that account number is correct, but the reference number is vital]. For those who wish to give by cheque or cash, there will be donation envelopes and boxes available in church from early October. Please make cheques payable to 'Winchester Churches Christmas Project'. If you can, please Gift Aid your donation by completing a Gift Aid form.

Thank you to everyone for your prayerful and practical support.

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

## **Ginkgo Biloba – An Extraordinary Tree of Particular Interest in the Autumn**

When walking from the car park to Fareham URC to attend Tim Searle's induction service, one of the first things to catch my eye as I approached the church was the Maidenhair tree, *Ginkgo biloba*, growing in the forefront of the church's grounds.

*Ginkgo biloba* possesses a number of qualities that make it exceptional.

Perhaps **uppermost** on the list of these is that it is a plant that has survived, more or less 'intact' for hundreds of millions of years, being the sole representative of its plant order and a plant

that would have been seen growing during the era of the dinosaurs.

Yet this is not a plant that you have to make a special journey to see, e.g. a botanic garden; indeed, there are trees growing quite close to the United Church in Andover Road and its environs and they are worth looking at, especially in the autumn when they typically give a bright yellow autumn display. There is a group of trees growing in Andover Road on the western side of the road just above the junction with Worthy Lane; while in Worthy Lane itself there is a small tree growing in the street verge on the east side, being the first tree you come to, this standing just beyond the junction with Hyde Close.

When observed closely, you will see the peculiar form of the leaves and branches, showing their 'primitive' form. Yet the positive points do not simply nest in the aesthetic; the tree is very pollution resistant together with being drought tolerant.

Perhaps most notable of all, the tree was found to be able to regenerate itself following the atom bomb explosion at Hiroshima; this in contrast to most vegetation which was, like almost all other life forms being so close to the epicentre of the explosion, killed outright. Many of these regenerated trees are still alive today. This special status perhaps being a signifier of that 'something special' that the species has which has enabled it to remain manifest as a life form for so long.

Whilst, ultimately, *Ginkgo biloba* is quite a large tree, the good news is that there are smaller cultivars available for gardens smaller than the garden at Fareham URC.

Finally, whilst not unique, *Ginkgo* is unusual in being a deciduous conifer, this feature means that the gardener can, for example, successfully grow late winter bulbs and corms, e.g. Snowdrops and early Crocus, under the tree which would not be possible under evergreen conifers.

As always, the *Hillier Manual of Trees and Shrubs* (copies to be found in the HCC libraries) is a good source of information about the cultivars available together with wider points of interest, while the Wikipedia entry is extensive, presenting information amongst other curiosities about a *Ginkgo* specimen reported as to be 1,400 years old.



I have a cultivar of *Ginkgo biloba* in my own garden, (see inset); this being the cultivar 'Chi-chi'. This is more densely branched than the 'type' species and is seen here in its autumn apparel.

**Chris Young**

## A Trip to Scotland

Nearly a year ago, my friend Debbie suggested a trip to Scotland, so we began planning and booking dog-friendly accommodation for our overnight stops. At last, after a good deal of forethought — my car serviced, a 'sling' bought for Debbie's dog, Toby — 11 May 2026 arrived. The sling was held in place by loops around the head restraints of the front and back seats, and Toby travelled very comfortably in his hammock. Cases packed and loaded, along with Toby's food and bedding.

We set off at 9 a.m., heading first for Alrewas and the National Memorial Arboretum near Lichfield. I had been before, to the military memorials, but Debbie had not, and she was amazed by the sheer variety of them, not all of them military. We saw only a few; it is such a huge site. From there we travelled on to a village near Nottingham, where I stayed with a friend and her husband, and Debbie stayed with her brother and his wife, who, as it happens, live in the same close.

On Tuesday we drove to Windermere for a two-night stay. On Wednesday we boarded a boat for a trip around the lake, hopping off at Ambleside to visit The Apple Pie Café & Bakery, where we enjoyed a delicious portion of spicy apple pie and cream. All of this was recommended by my son, Simon, who has swum the ten-mile length of Windermere three times. It usually takes him around six hours, using his arms alone (he has no legs) and stopping regularly to refuel at his support boat. Eventually we were back in Bowness, and drove on to Lakeland, the kitchen shop, to see the headquarters and all its facilities.

Thursday took us to an overnight stay in a Travelodge near Paisley, which set us up beautifully for the drive to Appin. The road runs the length of Loch Lomond and on towards Rannoch Moor and Glen Coe, but first one must stop at The Green Welly in Tyndrum: plenty of parking and a multitude of Scottish fare to buy, or not. We shared a speciality macaroni cheese pie. Delicious.

Our home for the next week was an Airbnb in Appin called Clachan Geala, Scottish Gaelic for White Stones. A path led down to the foreshore of Loch Linnhe, with a backdrop of mountains running down to the opposite shore. It was all very comfortable, with every appliance and kitchen utensil we could possibly need.



On Saturday we visited Fort William, which sadly no longer seems quite as vibrant as it once was — a common story these days. We drove on to Spean Bridge and the memorial to the SAS men of the Second World War who trained in this area. Then we went to see Kate, the daughter of my cousin Fiona, and Kate's seven-year-old daughter: a lovely afternoon of reminiscing and of trying to work out exactly how my

name should be pronounced.

On Sunday I drove to Onich and found a Church of Scotland service at Nether Lochaber Parish Church. I was made very welcome, with many of the congregation apologising for the wet weather.

Monday 18 saw us back in Fort William to take the train to Corrou station on Rannoch Moor. The station was built for the Corrou estate, so that visitors could travel up and be met by a carriage; otherwise, it is a ten-mile trek across country. It stands at 1,338 feet above sea level, so although the sun shone warmly, the wind whipped about



coolly. We enjoyed a tasty lunch, and made sure of catching the only train back, at 3.15 p.m.

On Tuesday we drove a short way towards Oban to visit my cousin Fiona and her husband, whom we found in the middle of packing up their home after thirty-eight years. It was good to see them both before their imminent move.

On Wednesday we drove to Mallaig by way of Arisaig, with its lovely white sandy beaches. The sun shone and it was very warm in a sheltered spot, though the air was still quite cool. On the way back we simply had to stop at Glenfinnan viaduct, the bridge made famous by the Harry Potter films.



Thursday, our last day in Appin, was given over to Staffa and Fingal's Cave. We parked in Oban and boarded the CalMac ferry to Mull and were then driven across towards the Isle of Ulva to pick up the boat out to Staffa. Fortunately, it was not raining, as Debbie and I were on the open top deck: cold, but we were well wrapped up.



At first, we were accompanied by a white-tailed eagle, who I suspect was hoping we would stir up some fish. We did not. Then a pod of dolphins swam alongside and performed off our port side, and there were many, many puffins in flight.

I did not get off the boat. Anyone who has visited Staffa will know that the sea there is turbulent, that the pilot can only hold the boat near the step, and that you must jump off (and back on) the moment you are told to. Instead, I had my own personal trip up to see Fingal's Cave as close as was possible, and then along the whole length of the island. Debbie was able to take photographs from inside the cave, and she has many pictures of the puffins at close quarters, the birds observing the visitors quite as intently as the visitors observing the birds.

On Friday we packed up and loaded the car for the journey home. I drove to Luss, on the banks of Loch Lomond, where we stopped for a snack, and then Debbie drove all the way to Blackpool. We went along the esplanade there, marvelling at the wonderful expanse of sandy beach, if not at the 'attractions' on the landward side, and spent the night at another Travelodge, in Blackburn.

Saturday brought another overnight stay, Debbie with her family and I with my friends, and on Sunday we finally drove home — in the heatwave. Toby, being a black Labrador, did not enjoy that part of his travels. He had had a great many first-time adventures: up and down in a lift, up and down steps on a boat (he lives in a bungalow), a bus ride, and so many people stopping to pat his head.

It was a wonderful time exploring Scotland again, with swathes of real bluebells along the roadside making a beautiful blue vista, and with both of us seeing relatives along the way. We drove 1,661 miles in all. But I do like getting home, even if it means a great deal of washing — which at least dried quickly in the heatwave.



**Moireach Harmer**

## News of the Wider Church

*Churches and Christian charities* are quietly delivering a quarter of a million essential services every week throughout England, according to a new report. The Gather Movement commissioned the Heart of the Neighbourhood report to paint 'the first comprehensive national picture' of how churches nourish their communities.

From food banks and debt advice centres to youth groups, mental health hubs, and loneliness initiatives, the research reveals that church-based provision is a vital, and yet often under-recognised, pillar of the nation's social support infrastructure. The findings were independently verified by Kohlrabi Consulting, and are based on telephone surveys with 1,632 churches and Christian charities across 25 local authority areas, representing a population of 6.1 million people. In total, it identified 12,840 instances of community provision spanning food security, children and family support, mental health and wellbeing, and housing and homelessness services. The report has been presented to the Faith and Society All-Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster. It emphasises that it's not just Christians who benefit from churches, with people of all faiths and none being helped by food banks and mental health services where public provision is stretched or unavailable. Around half of the services identified support children and families.

The report calls for greater recognition of the church's role, and fresh partnerships with organisations across sectors to unlock capacity, reduce pressure on public services, and help build stronger local communities.

**Baptism on the Beach** A Devon beach was awash with new Christians August bank holiday weekend as 170 people were baptised in the sea at Bigbury-on-Sea, with many more looking on.



The mass baptism was organised entirely through social media by Merlin Kraft, founder of the Christian channel BibleLadUK,

after he began receiving requests from people across Britain wanting to take part. Some went to remarkable lengths to be there. Speaking to *Premier Christian News*, Kraft said: 'There was an extraordinary couple that came from Leeds, and they could only get themselves as far as Kingsbridge, and then they walked the remaining three hours through fields to get to Bigbury to be baptised.'



**Clergy Mental Health** A landmark report launched at the House of Lords warns that the British vicar is becoming an 'endangered species', leaving the nation's poorest communities without regular priestly care. Official Church data reveals a stark picture of a workforce in decline, with 71 per cent of ministry leaders citing poor clergy wellbeing as the main barrier to attracting candidates.



*Save the Parish* campaign chair the Revd Marcus Walker told *Premier Christian News* he was not surprised by the findings. '35% of incumbents, people in charge of parishes, have signs of being clinically depressed ... 29% of all priests show signs of being depressed'.

The number of stipendiary (paid and full-time) clergy has fallen to a historic low, but he added that for those who have the vocation, 'It's the best thing you can do, certainly if you're called to it.'



IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER  
Ezekiel 47:9, 12

## Living Water

Season of Creation 2026

**Churches across the UK** and around the world are marking this year's Season of Creation with the theme of 'Living Water,' after a summer of

record-breaking heat and drought. The Church of England has now designated the first Sunday of September as a new Festival of Creation in Christ, aligning with the wider ecumenical Season of Creation observed from 1 September to 4 October, culminating with the Feast of Francis of Assisi. In the Catholic Church, 1 September marks the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, which launches a period of prayer and action.

It comes as provisional Met Office figures indicate Britain has experienced its hottest summer since records began, with extreme heat and drought placing new pressure on infrastructure, food production, and the emergency services tackling wildfires. The agency reports that Britain's cereal harvest is expected to be the lowest since comparable records began in 1984, as man-made climate change increases the likelihood of such extreme weather events. This year's theme, 'Living Water,' draws inspiration from Ezekiel 47:9: 'Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live.'

## **Safeguarding:** Clergy in England who are told about incidents of



child sexual abuse during Confession will not be legally bound to report the disclosures to authorities when a new law comes into force next year. A new mandatory reporting law which is part of the Crime and Policing Act states that those working, volunteering or undertaking 'relevant activity' with children must report any abuse disclosures. Section 85 of the

Act says the duty applies to people undertaking 'regulated activity'. However, Confession has not been classified as a 'regulated activity', so will be exempt from the reporting requirement. The fact that a priest hears confessions does not make the hearing of Confession a regulated activity.

The Church of England has made clear that 'disclosures of abuse must be reported but with a pastoral and compassionate response so that all victims and survivors who come forward are supported'. A Home Office spokesman said: 'There are no religious exemptions to reporting instances of child sexual abuse for those working or volunteering with children. The Crime and Policing Bill will not change this.'

**Hong Kong** Christian pro-democracy campaigner Joshua Wong is facing a possible life sentence after pleading guilty to colluding with foreign entities.

The 29-year-old became a symbol of Hong Kong's opposition to China's strict security laws during the 'Umbrella' protests in 2014 and 2019. Last year he was sentenced to four years and eight months for subversion after being convicted along with 45 other campaigners.



Appearing at beginning of September at Hong Kong's High Court, Wong was accused of conspiring with self-exiled activist Nathan Law and others in 2020 to implore foreign countries to impose sanctions and blockades or other hostile activities against Hong Kong and mainland China. The offence carries a maximum life penalty. Human rights campaigner and co-founder of Hong Kong Watch, Benedict Rogers is a long-standing supporter of Wong. He told *Premier Christian News* he is a 'really remarkable young man' who shouldn't be behind bars at all. 'What that charge means is simply talking to foreign politicians'. Joshua had communication with people like Nancy Pelosi, the former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. And essentially what he's charged with is peacefully advocating for democracy and human rights, which are the things, the values, that Hong Kong was promised when it was returned to China,' he said.

### **Greenbelt** – a long-running festival is taking a pause in 2027



while it continues to search for a new home.

The faith, arts and music festival Greenbelt held its final event at Boughton

House, Northamptonshire, over the August Bank Holiday weekend after basing itself at the stately home since 2014.

The festival was launched 52 years ago and has moved home seven times, the cost of providing a 'hefty' infrastructure at the rural location had become more expensive each year.

Creative director Paul Northup said: 'We'd rather pause for a year than settle for somewhere that doesn't allow Greenbelt to flourish over the long-term.' It planned to go out with a bang and a 'memorable farewell' to Boughton House, with Arrested Development and The Proclaimers in the line-up as well as Charlotte Church, Michael Sheen and Cathy Newman.

Greenbelt said although it would not stage a 'full-scale festival' in 2027, there would still be events and activities including a community camping gathering and an online Lent programme. The full festival would return in 2028.

Northup said: 'Over the last year we've visited some wonderful sites and had countless conversations about what Greenbelt's



future could look like. We've realised that we're not simply looking for somewhere to site a festival. We're looking for somewhere Greenbelt can more fully be itself: more imaginative, more rooted,

more sustainable, more accessible, and after more than 50 years we owe it to our audience, artists, partners and future generations of festival goers to take the time to get this as right as we possibly can,'

As well as music and entertainment, Greenbelt hosts discussions by campaigners and sessions exploring faith.

**Dorothy Lusmore**

# October Updates

## **Christmas Crafts 2026**

Do you love crafting and making a difference to your local community? We are looking for handmade items to include in our member gift bags for Christmas. If you'd like to get involved pop and see the team.



## **Charity Christmas Cards**

*We are very lucky to have a collection of Christmas cards designed by members of MHA ready to sell to raise funds for MHA Winchester. Cards will be on sale Monday, Tuesday and Fridays from the United Church hall and the MHA office. £3 per pack.*



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

**Call us on 01962 890995**

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

# Animal Service

Giving thanks  
for our pets!

**Saturday  
3rd October**

10.30am-11.15am

**Canada Common  
Methodist Chapel,  
SO51 6DH**

Refreshments afterwards

All well-behaved  
humans welcome with  
their pets!  
or  
bring a photo of your  
beloved animal?

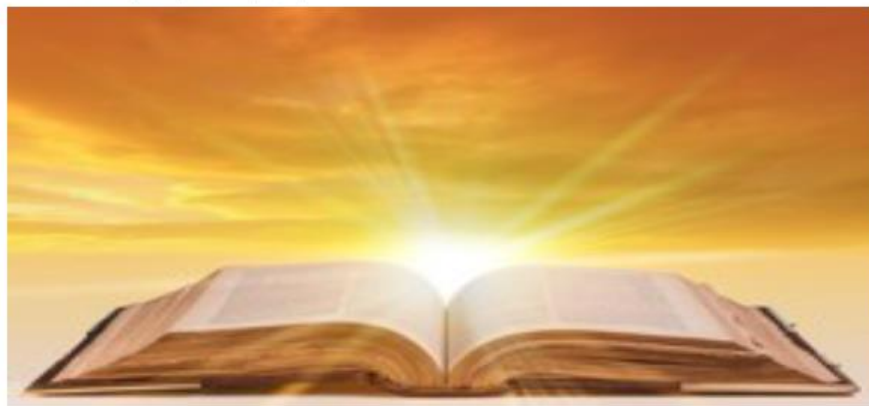


"God made the wild animals according to their kinds,  
the livestock according to their kinds,  
and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.  
And God saw that it was good." Genesis 1:25



Vintage Fun

All welcome!



**Bible Monday**

**Monday 12th October**

**2 - 4 pm**

at the

**United Church**

Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RZ

Call 07564390109

Vintage Fun is a monthly afternoon of friendship  
over a cup of tea. Each afternoon will  
offer a Variety of Activities.

*Caraway*

# HANDBELL CONCERT

with Bishops Bells and friends !  
Featuring young guest solo musicians  
Saturday October 17th 2026 at 3pm  
United Church Jewry Street Winchester SO23 8RZ



Enjoy an afternoon of handbell music  
followed by tea and refreshments  
Free admission - donations welcome !  
Proceeds towards the People's Piano and Music Fund

## Comedy Corner



"This is a letter from Paul. And these are some study guides, maps, and workbooks I've made available on a no-risk, ten-day trial offer."

**How can our brain remember  
we forgot something but can't  
remember what we forgot**



"Well done, well-done, or well, done?"

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



## Services for October 2026

In-person and live-streamed

### 4 OCTOBER

10.30 am      **Morning Worship (HC)**      Revd Neil Messer

### 11 OCTOBER

10.30 am      **Morning Worship**      Professor Clive Marsh

### 18 OCTOBER

9.00 am      **Holy Communion**      Revd Peter Rayson

10.30 am      **Morning Worship**      Lesley Ritchie

### 25 OCTOBER

10.30 am      **Live Stream of Circuit Service from Wesley Weeke,  
celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

*HC: Holy Communion*

UCW website: [ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/](https://ucw.org.uk/streamed-services/)

YouTube: [tinyurl.com/ucw-services](https://tinyurl.com/ucw-services)

