

**CONTACT**

No. 377  
March 2024

# Wallington United Reformed Church



Dear Friends....

The snowdrops in the garden have been out for a while, a few brave daffodils are beginning to open up and one of the trees at the bottom of the garden is beginning to blossom. The signs are clear, Spring is on its way even though, as I write this, we are not even halfway through February. In the past few days we have avoided the cold and snow that hit the north of the country and the advance weather forecast shows daytime temperatures pretty much staying in double digits for the next fortnight. The arrival of Spring is important, not only because it reminds of the natural cycle which provides us with our food, but also because many people do struggle through the darker and colder days of Winter. For them these signs of new life are signposts pointing to better times to come when the days will be longer, the sun will be brighter, the air will be warmer and more will be possible.

Of course there can be setbacks; this is England after all and we know how unreliable the weather can be. There may well be periods of frost and none of us would be very shocked to see snow returning within the next month or so. The bulbs and blossom that have brightened the world may find themselves under pressure and early new life can be at risk from changes in temperature or extreme weather conditions. However the signs are there and we know that Summer will follow Spring (however disappointing it may turn out to be).

In the 40<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Isaiah the prophet addresses God's people in exile, offering them hope in their dark times: they will be going home! There is no timeframe offered and no specific detail but to the exiles it is the first sign that things are changing and better days are on the way. It is a promise of a new time; the advent of Spring following the dark and difficult times they have endured. There will be struggles and setbacks when they return home but the prophet tells them to remember who God is, what he has done for them and how he has been with them through the difficult times. He tells them to remember the history of the world, the history of their people and their history and to trust. In a similar, but smaller way, we remind those who are struggling in the depths of Winter to trust that Spring and Summer will come as they have in the past.

It's not just in Winter that people struggle in dark times both within the church and outside it. It is the task of God's people – us – to point to the signs of hope and promise, however small or dim they may be and carry within us the memory of God's presence and activity. I want to encourage you in the coming months to look for the signs of hope in the world and where possible to share what you see and know with those who struggle.

*Craig Bowman*

# Our Wider Community

## The Lent Lilly

A.E. Housman

‘Tis spring; come out to ramble  
The hilly brakes around,  
For under thorn and bramble

About the hollow ground  
The primroses are found.  
And there’s the windflower chilly  
With all the winds at play,  
And there’s the Lenten lily  
That has not long to stay  
And dies on Easter day.



And since till girls go maying  
You find the primrose still,  
And find the windflower playing  
With every wind at will,  
But not the daffodil,

Bring baskets now, and sally  
Upon the spring’s array,  
And bear from hill and valley  
The daffodil away  
That dies on Easter day.

*We ask your prayers for all who are anxious or unwell and those who are housebound or have any difficulties at this time.*

**[If you have any news of the church family to bring us up to date or that you would like to be included in Contact please let Alan know. Thank you.]**

## Reform magazine: February 2024 issue



### A moving story of solidarity begins February's *Reform* interview with Rabbi Jonathan Wittenburg.

The rabbi talks to Stephen Tomkins about the pain of the current war in Gaza and the West Bank. He also discusses his new book, which unpacks the scriptures of the Torah, shared by both Jews and Christians.

Within those scriptures, Andy Lie finds a model of leadership that he says modern-day politicians

might do well to study. Meanwhile, turning to the New Testament, Sam Richards explores what we have to learn from Jesus about young people, and the question "Did Jesus really cast out demons?" receives four thought-provoking responses.

On the letters pages, there is praise for the new-look URC-Reform podcast; and one church says the problems it has been having with its bank mirrors wider issues experienced by churches and charities across the UK.

Assembly Executive: Day one round up, 9 February

### **The 2024 meeting of the United Reformed Church (URC) Assembly Executive opened on 9 February at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, with a welcome by the Revd Dr Tessa Henry Robinson, Moderator of the URC General Assembly 2023-2024.**

The Moderator also welcomed members into new roles and new members of Assembly Executive attending for the first time.

Karen noted that Samuel was not an obvious person to bring God's word, as he did not even know the Lord. At Assembly Executive, she said, there are some voices we turn off and others we find it easy to attend to.

Who do we give attention to? she asked. Who do we filter out? Who do we hear and who do we ignore? How do we know which voices are God's? Karen quoted Tessa as saying: "Listening is pastoral and can be life-saving." Are we ready to hear God's voice?"

### **Update from Finance on budget progress**

Alan Yates, URC Treasurer, gave a verbal update about the work done following the Assembly Executive Budget meeting which took place by Zoom on 28 November 2023.

In recent years, Alan reminded the Assembly Executive, meeting at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, that the Ministry and Mission (MoM) fund deficit has been increasing. The consultations that have taken place, Alan continued, have been done with grace. And he shared that in 2023, the Synods had given £1.9m to 'top up' the MoM fund. "Without that support, the fund would have been in deficit of £3m last year, and I thank the Synods for their generosity."

### **H1 Ministries: URC Competency Process**

The Revd Mary Thomas presented Paper H1, which takes a pastoral approach in handling concerns around a minister's performance so as to assist them to improve performance of their duties.

Mary advised Assembly Executive that this new process arose from responses from those who have had to implement the previous URC Capability Process, agreed at General Assembly 2020. They felt that process was similar to a disciplinary process and was not helpful.

Mary explained how the process of discernment (an inner sense of Call alongside external discernment) is a process that continues throughout Ministers' work in various posts through the use of the Marks of the Ministry for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Core Competencies for Church Related Community Workers.

Ministers are not expected to demonstrate gifts in all areas, so they are supported throughout their years of ministry to grow in recognition and self-awareness of what learning could enhance their practice and what tools could equip them.

Sometimes, Mary explained, the performance of a minister may fall short, and if this does not fall under a disability as defined under the Equality Act

2010, the revised Competency Process can be used to assist the minister and the relevant council of the church.

"It is hoped that this process, which mirrors that of the Amber Light process used by our RCLs, might achieve an improved working life for the minister and help them to flourish in their post," Mary said.

"It also allows for the fact that this may not be possible and outlines how the relevant council of the church may seek to move the minister to inactive status."

The resolution was then put to Assembly Executive and was carried unanimously.



# **Taken from 2020 Prayer Handbook**

## **‘Prayers from the heart’**

Edited by Karen Campbell and Ian Fosten

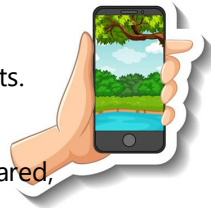
The 2020 Prayer Handbook is made up of a mixture of prayer styles and approaches; some finely crafted material and pieces which would be readily accessible and easily used by a wide range of readers.

### **Have you not seen us?**

By Julian Sanders

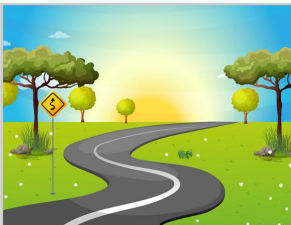
Lord God,  
Your people cried  
‘Why have we fasted and you have not seen it?’  
We know that you do not require  
outward displays of faith,  
but are pleased by the inner turnings of our hearts.

Yet in this generation which ‘likes’ and ‘uploads’,  
where life is not real unless it is uploaded and shared,  
we are too often persuaded  
that you might be impressed  
by our public displays of faith.  
Help us, Lord,  
to give and not boast of our giving,  
to pray when others might not hear,  
to abstain and not let others know of our discomfort  
so that our right living  
might be pleasing to you.  
May our hearts not seek the commendation  
of this fickle world,  
but seek instead the lasting and eternal reward  
of our unseen Father in heaven.



### **When the journey is long**

By Heather Whyte



We walk the path of life,  
one step at a time,  
heads up, hearts light,  
our eyes feasting on the glory of your creation,  
our feet eager for the next step,  
an awareness of your presence all around.  
Sometimes, though, our hearts are heavy,  
the days are long,  
the weight of the world is upon our shoulders

and the path seems endless.  
We feel alone.

Is this how the Israelites felt -  
thirsty, hungry, dispirited;  
unable to face another step?  
Then in the middle of the desert, living water,  
flowing free like a mountain spring,  
pure and fresh, a revival of hope.



This is how it feels when the day is hard,  
and every step is a challenge -  
then suddenly we sense your presence with us,  
lifting and refreshing us,  
giving hope, and strength for the journey ahead.



Loving God, source of all being,  
for your eternal presence with us,  
we thank you.

## Walk and Talk

Friday mornings.

10 am for walking.

Meet outside the first entrance for  
walking.



11 am for tea and cake in  
the Waterfall Cafe at Dobbies  
if you don't wish to walk.



**Everyone  
welcome.**





# It Happened in March

## March 1st

American band leader Glenn Miller (1904-1944) was born in Carilinda, Iowa. His music gained enormous popularity during the 1940's through recordings such as *Moonlight Serenade* and *String of Pearls*. On December 15, 1944, his plane disappeared over the English Channel while en route to Paris where he was scheduled to perform.

## March 3rd

*Telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. Bell and his father were involved in teaching deaf persons to speak. Bell developed an interest in the vibrating membrane as a method of electrically transmitting sounds.*

## March 9th

Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin (1934-1968) was born in Gzhatsk, Russia. On April 12, 1961, he became the first human in space, orbiting in a capsule 187 miles above the Earth's surface in a flight lasting 108 minutes.

## March 12th

*1994 - The Church of England ordained 32 women as its first female priests. In protest, 700 male clergy members and thousands of church members left the church and joined the Roman Catholic Church which does not allow women priests.*

## March 15th...the Ides of March

Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate chamber in Rome by Brutus and fellow conspirators.

## March 19th

*Wyatt Earp (1848-1929) was born in Monmouth, Illinois. He became a legendary figure in the Wild West as a lawman and gunfighter*

## March 25th

**1807** - The British Parliament abolished the slave trade following a long campaign against it by Quakers and others.

## March 30th

*Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) was born in Groot Zundert, Holland. He was a Postimpressionist painter, generally considered the greatest Dutch painter after Rembrandt.*



**Saturday 9th March**  
**In the church**



**Kids & Teens**



**Pre-loved  
Sale**



**11.00am-3.00pm**

All money raised is for the NAS...  
find out more about how autistic people  
and families are supported.

**Come along to browse...**

clothes, accessories,  
books, games,  
toys... and more...



stay for a cuppa, and  
enjoy a cake.

**CASH ONLY**



## Easter Services

Sunday 24th March

10.30am **Palm Sunday** Service

led by Phil Hyde



Thursday 28th March

8.00pm **Maundy Thursday** Service

*Joint service with St Andrew's, at Wallington URC,  
led by Rev Craig Bowman.*

Friday 29th March

**Good Friday Happening:** 10.00am

All welcome! Join us at Wallington URC for craft, flower arranging, singing, setting up the Easter Garden, and (of course) hot-cross buns.

Sunday 31st March

**Easter Day**

*10.30am Service to be led by Rev Craig Bowman.*



Diary Dates				
March				
Sunday	3rd	10.30am	Morning service...with the Sacrament of Holy Communion...to be led by Revd Craig Bowman	
Sunday	10th	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by Alan Cruchley	
Sunday	17th	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by Revd Craig Bowman	
Sunday	24th	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by Phil Hyde	
Sunday	31st	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by Revd Craig Bowman	
April				
Sunday	7th	10.30am	Morning service...with the Sacrament of Holy Communion...to be led by Revd Craig Bowman	

**PLEASE NOTE...Articles for the April 2024 issue of Contact** should be given to Janet or Robin Willis by **Tuesday 26th March** unless a later date has been agreed by prior arrangement. Contributions are very acceptable by e-mail: jmw321wmj @ yahoo.co.uk.

Sudoku Answers for February:

6	5	7	1	9	2	3	8	4
9	2	1	3	4	8	6	7	5
3	4	8	6	5	7	9	2	1
5	8	9	4	3	6	2	1	7
7	3	6	2	1	5	8	4	9
4	1	2	7	8	9	5	6	3
1	9	4	8	6	3	7	5	2
8	7	3	5	2	1	4	9	6
2	6	5	9	7	4	1	3	8

# Puzzle Corner

N	F	P	E	O	P	L	E
G	U	L	Y	K	S	A	R
A	E	S	O	T	S	N	F
R	S	T	A	W	R	D	I
D	A	R	K	N	E	S	S
E	S	E	E	R	T	R	H
N	A	N	I	M	A	L	S
S	D	R	I	B	W	E	D

## Bible Word Search: The Creation

Animals, Birds, Darkness, Fish, Flowers, Garden, Land, People, Sky, Stars, Sun, Trees, Waters

## Bible Word Search: Prophets

Ezekiel, Haggai, Jeremiah, Joel, Nahum, Obadiah, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, John, Malachi, Hosea

J	L	H	N	D	E	A	N
I	E	H	O	L	E	I	O
E	O	R	I	S	Z	H	B
J	J	J	E	L	E	C	A
N	A	H	U	M	K	A	D
H	A	G	G	A	I	L	I
A	H	S	I	L	E	A	A
S	A	M	U	E	L	M	H

A sudoku puzzle consists of a 9 by 9 grid. This grid is subdivided into nine 3 x 3 boxes.

Some of the cells in the grid are prefilled with a number between 1 and 9, while many other cells are blank.

Your job is to determine the correct number to be entered in each of the empty cells.

The numbers 1 to 9 must appear just once in each row, column, and 3 x 3 box.

2				9	1		5	8
	5	8	6		2			7
		4	8				3	
	2			6			7	
7			9		8	3		
	8			2	5		6	4
	6					5		
			1		6	2		9
9	1		5	8			4	

# EVERY WEEK AT WALLINGTON U.R.C.

## Times of Worship

**Sunday**                      10.30am                      Family Service

## Activities you can find on our Premises

**Monday - Friday 9.15am-1.15pm** *Holmwood Pre – school*

<b>Monday</b>	10.00-11.00am	Yoga
	1.00-2.30pm	Al-Anon
	2.00-4.00pm	Bananas Art
	7.00-8.00pm	Yoga
	7.45-10.00pm	Explorer Scouts
<b>Tuesday</b>	9.15am-1.20pm	Hartbeeps (mother and baby activities)
	10.00-11.00am	Pilates
	12.30-2.30pm	AA Meeting
	1.40-3.40pm	U3A Art group
	5.00-6.00pm	Rainbows
	6.00-7.30pm	Brownies (10th Wallington)
	8.00-10.00pm	Epsom Downs Badminton, Winter(Sept-May)
<b>Wednesday</b>	10.30-11.30am	Baby Massage
	7.30-10.00pm	Chess Club
<b>Thursday</b>	10.00-11.00am	Pilates
	11.00-12.00noon	Senior Movers Exercise
	1.15-3.15pm	Lace Making
	2.00-4.00pm	Ladies' Badminton, Winter(Sept-May)
	2.00-4.00pm	Fallen Angels Drama
	6.00-7.00pm	Pilates
	7.25-10.00pm	Carshalton & Wallington Art Group
<b>Friday</b>	9.30am-12.30pm	NAS Coffee morning (monthly)
	9.30am-3.00pm	Reading Fairy Sutton
	6.45-8.30pm	Guides(8th Wallington)
<b>Saturday</b>	8.30-9.30am	Fitness
	10.00-12.15pm	Zumba



## South London Tamil Church (SLTC)

SLTC invite you to join them for  
their Sunday service which starts  
at 3pm.

**Everyone welcome!**