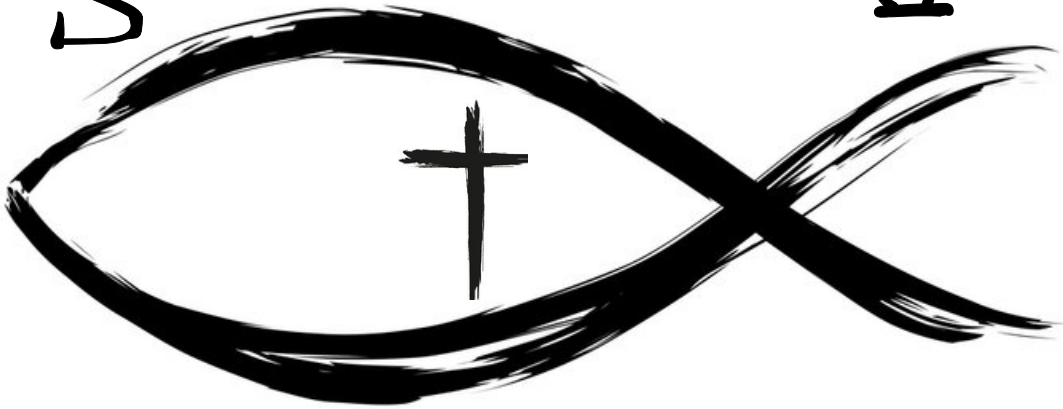


Wallington United Reformed
Church



**CONTACT
MAGAZINE**



No.402 September 2026

Extrinsic

Did you know...

www.wurc.org.uk

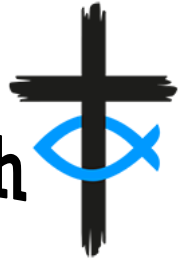
is our church internet address. Look us
up sometime!

Minister:

Reverend Craig Bowman

Email: minister@wurc.org.uk

Wallington United Reformed Church



Dear Friends....

It seems strange to be writing an article for the September Contact because September feels like the start of Autumn and it seems to have been Summer for so long. The long (very) hot days have been with us for months and for me it is always a disappointment when Summer seems to be coming to an end. (However I am sure there are many who are glad that this year's extreme temperatures are soon to be behind us.)

It's also strange because in recent years Louise, Thomas and I will have been heading off on holiday in late August/early September for a break before the new term starts. However, now that Thomas has finished at college, for the first time in about 18 years we are free to go on holiday when we choose, so we have pencilled in some time at the end of September. Also, with the arrival of September (and you may wish to cover your ears at this point) the focus of the church year changes as we look ahead to Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, and then Advent and Christmas.

This is a time of change whether it is to do with the weather, family circumstances or the cycle of the church's year and, to be honest, most of us don't like change. Unpredictable change can be particularly hard but even those changes we know are coming can be unsettling. With Autumn comes shortened days and increased darkness along with falling temperatures and few of us welcome those.

Change is difficult for most of us, especially if we don't think we have any control over the change.

A few weeks ago the Gospel reading for Sunday was Peter declaring that Jesus was the Messiah – God's chosen one. (Matthew 16:13-20) Peter's declaration came as they were travelling on the road near to Caesarea Philippi. By the time this event was written down as part of the Good News of God's kingdom about 40 years had passed and the world had changed dramatically from the way it had been when the conversation first took place.

The city of Jerusalem as the centre of Jewish life – the Jewish court a symbolic counterbalance to the power of Rome, and the people's way of staying connected to their God, the Temple in Jerusalem – was gone.

Rome had enough of the persistent, troublesome rebelliousness of

the Jewish people and the ineffectiveness of the local authorities to keep the peace, and they sent the army in, in full force.

The city of Jerusalem was over-run.

The Jewish king was deposed.

The Temple was attacked and destroyed.

And on the hill of Masada, where the last remaining rebels were held trapped for weeks and cruelly murdered, Rome brought the old normal for the Jewish people to an end.

From that moment on, the people had no living centre.

Their new situation was a long, vulnerable dispersion as a people scattered like ashes and broken remnants across the face of the earth.

It's in this situation that the Christian community remembers and starts to retell and write down the stories about Jesus the Messiah.

And in Matthew's account the story takes place not in the Temple, not in a synagogue in some surviving Jewish village, not even in the safety of a Jewish home – but out on the road, in the open, in the very shadow of Caesarea Philippi, an administrative centre of the alien power that has invaded and, in hindsight, is about to destroy all that they have counted on to preserve their identity as God's people in the world.

And what Peter's declaration says is that it doesn't matter!

It doesn't matter what normal you find yourself in – old, new, or in-between.

It doesn't matter if your city, your temple, your king or your kingdom are intact and still giving structure to your lives, or if they're gone and taken from you.

It doesn't matter if you have a safe place in the world you can call your own and of which you are in charge, or if you're out on the road, in the open, on a long, hard way from what was to whatever will be.

It doesn't matter, because Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the living God, and he is really quite portable and thoroughly adaptable.

We believe in a God who comes to us not lodged in a particular building or in a particular set of rules. Rather he comes to us as one who journeys with us as life changes around us. As Summer moves into Autumn, as we give thanks for the wonder of God's creation and its bounty, as we recall the sacrifice that others have made for us and our world and then, as our thoughts turn to the coming of the Christ child into the world, let us hold on to the fact that our God is a God who stays with us through change; a God who is so much more dependable than the transient and fickle things of this world!

Craig

Getting into a Back-to-School Routine

Transitioning from the relaxed summer schedule to the structured school routine can be challenging. To make this shift smoother, start re-establishing a school-friendly routine a weeks, or so, before the first day. This includes setting regular wake-up and bedtime hours, meal times and study periods.

Gradually adjust bedtime and wake-up times to align with the school schedule.

Encourage a balanced daily routine that includes time for homework, physical activity and relaxation.

Try to organise getting school supplies, this can help everyone to feel more prepared and less anxious about moving forward. Make a checklist of necessary items such as notebooks, pens, calculators and any other specific supplies required.

Starting a new school, or secondary school can be daunting, but signing up for sports, drama, or chess clubs is a good way to make friends with similar interests. Remember friendships take time to develop: don't panic if you don't have a new friend immediately.

Whilst it can be a time of great excitement for some, others feel nervous and apprehensive. These feelings are perfectly normal.

AND...

Never worry about asking for help.

As all the exam results are now out, we think of all those who have had their results. Our good wishes are sent to all our young people, those who are going back to start the new term in new classes, new schools and colleges, and to all those who are on their way to universities around the country.

Taken from 2024 Prayer Handbook

'Full to the Brim'

Edited by Sue McCoan and Stephen Ansa-Addo

Themes of fullness and emptiness run through the Bible. The prayers gathered in this handbook speak of different kinds of fullness - fullness of blessing, fullness of being too busy - and of the need, sometimes, to empty ourselves in order to be filled afresh.

For the first day of Creation-tide

By Susan Durber

Thank you, God for the beginning and the future,
for your good and beautiful creation;
for winter and summer, rain and sun,
grapes on the vines and fig trees juicy with fruit.
Thank you for the bloom of flowers and songs of birds,
for voices to sing your praise at seedtime and harvest
from sheer joy at all that is created.

Thank you, God who made each one of us,
to be part of this good and fruitful creation;
for the desire that makes us sweet with longing,
the love and tenderness for which you have made us.
Thank you for the glow of human skin,
for the joy of love made flesh and for lips to kiss,
and sing in praise of the goodness of all you have made.

Thank you, God who calls us to do what is holy and right
for your good and wonderful creation;
for the real hope of renewing all things for future days,
the assurance that love will win and creation be restored.
Thank you for your call to be better, to 'arise',
to honour and cherish as sacred all that you have made,
and to turn our hearts always only to what is good.

Let us pray

By Sue McCoan

Let us pray.
Let us call for help when we are suffering
Let us sing praises, when we are joyful
Let us be thankful for the gift of prayer.

Let us pray with one another.
Let us pray for those who are sick or in need
And may our prayer be a blessing to them
Let us share our confessions and our forgiveness
And may we grow together in grace and in peace.

Let us pray in faith,
Confident that God hears all our prayers,
Spoken, sung and silent.
Let us pray, and let us keep on praying,
In the name of Jesus.

Prayer for divine direction

By Ana Gobledale

Unite us to be peace makers
overflowing with fervour
to build peace among people
share abundance
promote human rights
turn arms into ploughshares

Empower us to be justice workers
full to the brim with passion to
speak truth to evil
dismantle oppression
liberate the occupied.

Peace perfect peace
Justice perfect justice

Show us how to walk your path
Acknowledging and sharing abundance
Guide us in the ways of peace
And justice



8th Wallington Rainbows

The Rainbows that were meeting at our church every week have, sadly, decided that they are no longer able to continue.

For their last meeting, on Tuesday 14th July, they invited a 'Petting Zoo' to come along.

The animals were outside Holmwood Hall, along Holmwood Gardens.

The girls had a wonderful time stroking, talking to and cuddling all the animals, the baby ducklings and hens were a particular favourite. All of the animals were very friendly, with the Alpaca being something different. The goat and a small sheep enjoyed being taken for walks on leads.



We do want to thank the leaders for all of their time and commitment in helping the girls to develop their skills and become more confident.



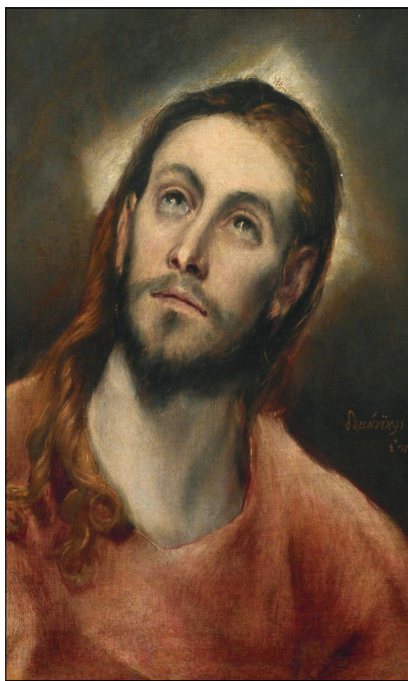
Clare Davison explores what we can learn from Jesus about prayer

To his disciples, Jesus is the example in everything, and prayer is no different. The Gospels give us firsthand accounts, as well as accounts from those who talked with the first disciples. They paint a picture which helps us in our own prayer life.

We might immediately think of when Jesus went away to be alone with his Father, and his instruction to us to pray in private. Yet his prayer life was, from young childhood, rooted in his Jewish heritage, reciting prayers at three set times from their oral tradition, with additional prayers for the Sabbath and festivals.

These quite long prayers included words from the Psalms, a rich source for prayer. We know that on the cross Jesus quoted from Psalm 22, and a prayer from Psalm 31 taught to children at bedtime, according to William Barclay's commentary: 'Into your hands I commit my spirit.' Prayers of blessing were said before and after every meal. Rabbis used their own blessings. Jesus, after his resurrection, was recognised at the meal in Emmaus in the blessing he used.

As we reflect on using set prayers in our Reformed tradition, we don't have the prayer books of the Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican traditions, mostly based on Bible verses and Psalms. We do have the richness of the Bible itself, the Lord's Prayer, the use of Psalms from our Presbyterian roots, prayers produced through the Daily Devotions and the Prayer Handbooks, with myriad other available prayer resources.



It was a rhythm of life for Jesus, and can be something for us to develop too, in our own daily patterns

Luke tells us, that 'Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed'. This was different. It was the time Jesus spent with the Father when he needed to search God's heart or to be refreshed for his work. We can describe it maybe as a more intimate place. We know that Jesus possessed the fullness of God, the Holy Spirit. In a sense, even his touch in healing was prayer, even every step, yet he still needed that time in solitude with God. How much more do we?

There were times that were essential for meeting the needs of the people he ministered to, as well as in times of spiritual exhaustion. Jesus spent time alone in prayer before major decisions and crises points: 40 days in the wilderness before the start of his ministry, a whole night before choosing the apostles, before his first conflict with the Pharisees, even before times of teaching the disciples, and, of course, on his journey to the cross: from the transfiguration, through the nights of Holy Week on Mount Olivet, to the Garden of Gethsemane.

As we follow him in discipleship, that is our need too: quality time to grapple with God in prayer, to take that intimacy to another level, to bring our decisions, our work, all we do before God. It's not just in petition for those things: prayer is a two-way relationship, God wants to speak to us, to show us what's on



God's heart. It is in that place we can spend time alone with God, where we can open ourselves to listen and to receive.

Equally, Jesus' teaching on prayer is important for us to hear. Much of what he says is in contrast to the Pharisees. Going to a solitary place is in contrast to making a show of prayer in public places. Standing up to pray wasn't the problem, that was normal in the Jewish faith; it was the lack of humility before God. We are to come in humility,

remembering who we are praying to, the creator, sustainer and saviour of all.

Jesus also gives us the model prayer we use weekly in public worship, and some use daily in private. The Lord's Prayer is succinct.

It praises and adores God as our heavenly father, praying for God's kingdom and will to be done. The focus is on God, whom we come to in that attitude of humility. It then moves to our petitions in asking for daily provision, forgiveness and protection from harm. As a model, we can work our own prayers within it, yet it stands on its own.

Another area which strikes me is Jesus' teaching on what to pray for, some of which is in the Lord's prayer. The parable about the widow's perseverance for justice guides us to pray for those experiencing great hardship. Jesus also tells us in the Sermon on the Mount to pray for those who do us wrong.

In his prayer recorded in John 17, just before his arrest, Jesus prays for himself as well as his disciples, present and future. That encourages us to pray for ourselves too, though we may be reticent. To me, the prayer for those of us who come after is mind-blowingly wonderful. It encourages us to pray for those who come to Jesus as a result of our witness. Prayer for others to come to know Jesus is never far from my own heart, and prayer is the underpinning of our outreach as churches.

The Spirit is fundamental to our Christian lives, including our prayer lives. As the Spirit was wholly in Jesus, so Jesus says the Spirit reveals God's heart to us and is the one through whom we commune with God in prayer.

So, as disciples, let us pray...

Many thanks to URC Reformed magazine for these articles and for allowing us to use them.

Heat-waves

Having been through all the heat-waves that have developed this year, this poem may be of interest. Hope you like it.

Heat Wave

This muggy, sultry sun is no fun:
Longest sustained heatwave for over forty years.
Suffocating Sahara with Death Valley cracks
In the dry arid soil.

My electric fan shattered with a power surge
Into fragmented plastic shards.
I so miss it now.
It's oppressively tropical,
With volcanic heat
And Pressure bearing down on us.
The clammy mugginess of a sauna.
Not the clean dry air you find abroad,
Yet still that remorseless torrid scorching,
Roasting and toasting.
Just too much.

Hot air clothed in humid moisture,
Stuffy and sweaty,
Steaming to a haze
And later
Thunder storms.

I long for a cool brew
To freeze my throat
And quench my raging thirst:
Ice cool, ice cool, ice cool.
I'm sure not talking
Of tea.

Paul Butters

06-08-2018

Hottest heatwave in the UK since 1976.

2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEWS

Five marks of Faith in Action

General Assembly commended the Five Marks for the URC's Faith in Action team:

- TELL the good news;
- TREASURE creation;
- TRANSFORM unjust structures;
- TEND - to others' needs;
- TEACH faith, hope and love

Group to review the place of URC Youth

A two-year task group was set up to explore the identity, purpose and development of URC Youth. Kacie Hodgson, URC Youth Moderator, said that changes in Church life and in the experiences of young people made this a time to review the role of URC Youth. Challenges facing them included inconsistency of opportunity and support across the URC; focus on events rather than sustained relationships; increasing mobility making traditional models of church membership difficult; young people wanting their voices to be integrated into the decision-making of the General Assembly, rather than separate structures. The group will make an interim report to the 2027 Assembly.

Mods old and new

'The friendliness of each welcome, is what Catriona Wheeler (pictured), outgoing General Assembly Moderator, singled out as the highlight of her visits to local churches over the last year. 'What they have in common is celebrating the Lord's work in that community through the people of the church.' She spoke of the concerns they had shared with her, of ageing congregations and widely stretched ministers - especially poignant, she said, as her own church, Trinity URC in Lincoln, held its final service in January. 'I pray that the Church Life Fund will provide a meaningful practical support to churches



who will then be able to devote their energy to other aspects of church life.' The Revd Neil Thorogood was inducted as Moderator for 2026-2027, and the Revd Dr Susan Durber was elected as Moderator for the following year.

URC/Methodist liaison agreed

General Assembly agreed to a consultative meeting of Methodist District Chairs and URC Synod Moderators aiming for great collaboration between the two Churches. Presenting the proposal, Sarah Lane Cawte (pictured), Convenor of the Faith in Action Committee, noted that there are around 200 Methodist/URC Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

Rethink gender in the Basis of Union

On the initiative of the URC Youth Assembly, General Assembly agreed to a review of gendered language in the Basis of Union, a foundational document of the URC. Introducing the proposal, the Youth Moderator, Kacie Hodgson, said the present language does not reflect the URC's commitment to the ministry women, or acknowledge the existence of non-binary ministers. A report on the matter will come to the 2028 Assembly.

Reappointments

The Revd Dr John Bradbury, General Secretary; the Revd Jamie Kissack, Moderator of Yorkshire Synod; the Revd Nicola Furley-Smith Deputy General Secretary (Ministries); and Karen Campbell, Head of Global and Intercultural Church, were each appointed for a further term. Mike Thomason was welcomed as Moderator of North Western Synod and Paul Robinson as Moderator of Southern Synod.

Many thanks to URC Reformed magazine for these articles and for allowing us to use them.

Create a quiet space:

Create a quiet, peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you. Each morning the United Reformed Church has a reading, reflection and short prayer which helps us to focus on our journeys of Christian discipleship.

The Waters before the Word

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Reflection

Before there was light, there was water. Before there was form, there was movement. Before the Word was spoken, the Spirit hovered over the deep.

The Bible opens not with solid ground, but with the deep waters. It is striking that creation does not start with something stable, but with something fluid. Water has no shape of its own, yet it shapes everything around it. It can bring life or take it away. And still, God chooses this restless, shifting element as the first place to move.

In Genesis, the deep is not a threat to be removed but the space where life begins. God does not silence the waters or push them aside. Instead, the Spirit moves gently across them, watching and waiting.

There are times in our own lives that feel like that deep place. Everything feels uncertain and without form. We cannot see what is ahead, and we long for something firm to hold on to.

Yet the story reminds us that God's Spirit is already there, moving quietly in what seems empty or lost. The deep is not the absence of God. It is often the place where God is preparing something new.

In the ancient world, the sea was a symbol of fear and chaos. Yet that is where God begins. God's first act of creation takes place

not in certainty, but in mystery. Maybe faith is the same. It does not always stand on firm ground, but rests in the quiet confidence that the Spirit is near, even in the dark and the deep.

So when life feels uncertain, remember the beginning. The Spirit of God still moves over the waters. The Word that once spoke light into darkness is still speaking today. God does not erase the deep. God transforms it into a place of new creation.

Prayer

Creator God,
You move over the deep places of our lives,
where we see only uncertainty and fear.
Help us to trust Your quiet presence
when the shape of tomorrow is still hidden.
Breathe your Spirit into our chaos,
and speak your light once more. Amen.

Today's writer

The Revd Dr Seoyoung Kim is a Lecturer in Applied Theology at the Belfast School of Theology and a Central Committee member of the World Council of Churches.

Walk and Talk



Friday mornings.

10 am for walking.

11am for a cuppa

We're often at Dobbies or
Oaks Park and sometimes
elsewhere.

Please Ring Sheila on 07905 301309
for the day's plan if you would like to
join us for Walking and/or Talking.



**Everyone
welcome.**



Diary Dates			
September			
Sunday	6th	10.30am	Morning service...with the Sacrament of Holy Communion...to be led by Revd Craig Bowman
Sunday	13th	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by
Sunday	20th	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by Revd Craig Bowman
Sunday	27th	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by
October			
Sunday	4th	10.30am	Morning service...with the Sacrament of Holy Communion...to be led by Revd Craig Bowman
Sunday	11th	10.30am	Morning service...to be led by
Sunday	18th	10.30am	Morning service...to include Harvest Festival Thanksgiving to be led by Revd Craig Bowman

PLEASE NOTE...Articles for the October 2026 issue of Contact should be given to Janet or Robin Willis by **Wednesday 23rd September** unless a later date has been agreed by prior arrangement. Contributions are very acceptable by e-mail: jmw321wmj @ yahoo.co.uk.

Sudoku Answers for
July/August

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

Answers

Brickwork Word Puzzle

ANGELS
LANES
SEAL
SEA
SAFE
FLEAS
FLAMES

Puzzle Corner

A Brickwork Word Puzzle

Enter the answers to the clues in the bricks in the wall. Every word contains the same letters as its neighbour –plus or minus one letter.

1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

1. Deliver a sermon
2. Arrive safely
3. Notice sounds
4. The sense organ on the side of the head
5. Ages, epochs
6. Give out a portion
7. Look for a lost item

T	C	H	U	M	B	L	E
D	M	H	T	I	A	F	J
U	E	A	A	M	I	E	R
O	V	J	V	R	Z	N	M
L	E	I	A	R	I	C	R
C	S	L	E	A	E	O	O
L	P	E	R	S	I	S	T
E	L	E	M	R	A	C	S

***Bible Word Search: Elijah Prays
for Rain***

Carmel, Chariot, Cloud, Elijah, Faith,
Humble, Jezreel, Persist, Rain,
Servant, Seven, Storm

***Bible Word Search: Wisdom in
Trials***

Ask, Comfort, Hard Time, Help, Peace,
Prayer, Protect, Provide, Rejoice,
Sorrow, Spirit

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

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.

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

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*

Monday	10.00-11.00am 1.00-2.30pm 2.00-4.00pm 7.00-9.30pm	Yoga Al-Anon Bananas Art Pilates (two classes)
Tuesday	9.15am-1.20pm 10.00-11.00am 10.00-12.00noon 12.30-2.30pm 1.40-3.40pm 5.00-6.00pm 6.00-7.30pm 8.00-10.00pm	Hartbeeps (mother and baby activities) Pilates Catherine Walsh Studio (Art Class) AA Meeting U3A Art group (fortnightly) Rainbows(1st South Wallington) Brownies (10th Wallington) Epsom Downs Badminton, Winter(Sept-May)
Wednesday	10.00-11.30am 7.30-10.00pm	Baby Massage Chess Club
Thursday	10.00-11.00am 11.00-12.00noon 1.15-3.15pm 2.00-4.00pm 2.00-4.00pm 6.00-7.00pm 7.25-10.00pm	Pilates Senior Movers Exercise Lace Making Ladies' Badminton, Winter(Sept-April) Fallen Angels Drama Pilates Carshalton & Wallington Art Group
Friday	9.30am-12.30pm 2.00- 4.00pm 6.45-8.30pm	NAS Coffee morning (monthly) Stitching Together (fortnightly) Guides(8th Wallington)
Saturday	8.30-9.30am 10.00-12.15pm 2.00-5.00pm	Fitness Zumba Reading Fairy



South London Tamil Church (SLTC)

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

Everyone welcome!