

PRENTON NEWS

**The Magazine of
Prenton United Reformed Church
Prenton Road West, Birkenhead**



**APRIL 2023
&
MAY 2023**

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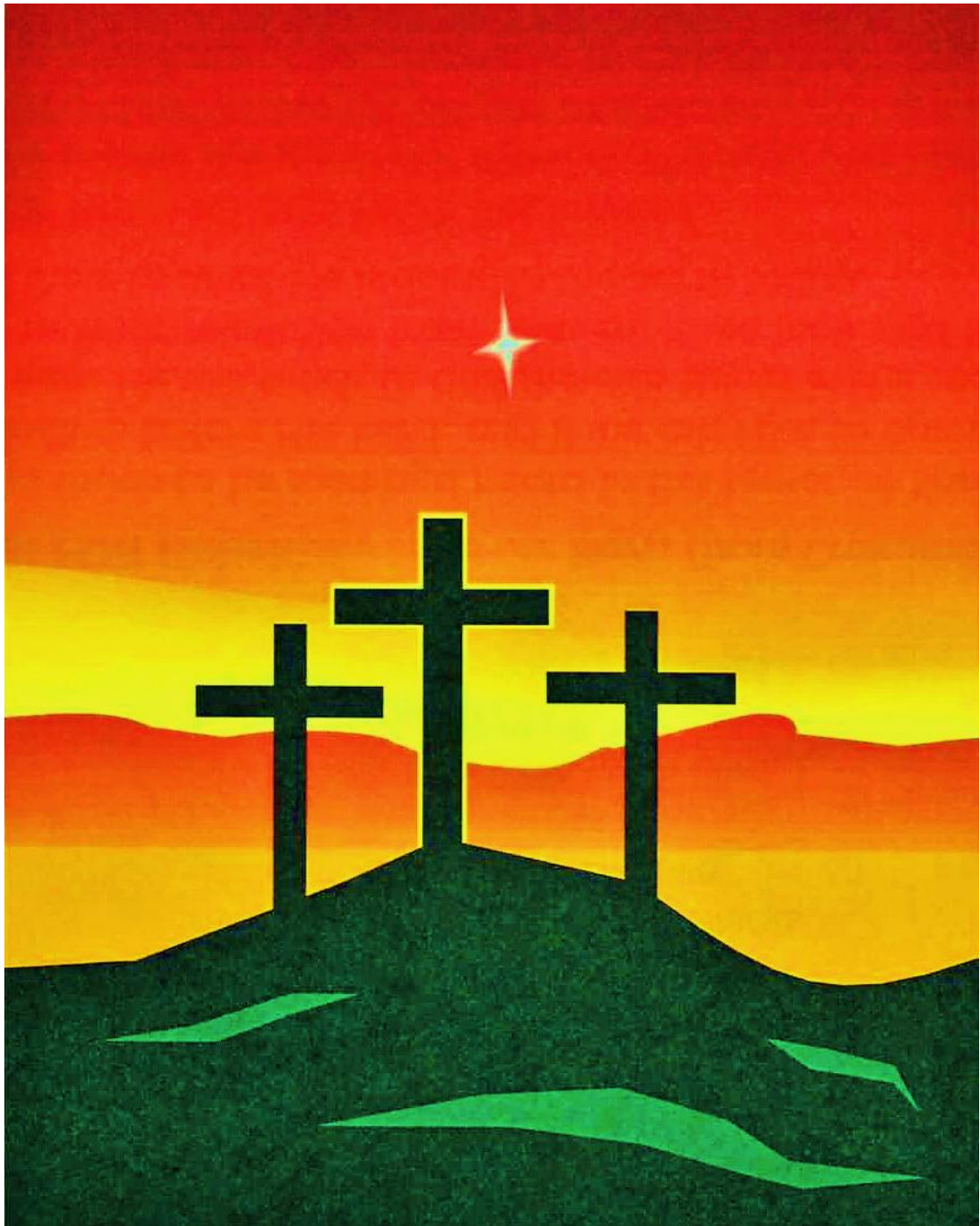
Church Website: prentonurc.org.uk
Any information, pictures or articles for the website should be sent to
Philip Roper at phil.e.roper@btinternet.com

Church & Community Activities during school term time

Monday	1 st Tranmere Rainbows, Brownies & Guides	5.00 p.m.
Tuesday	Phoenix Dance Group	6.30 p.m.
Wednesday	Warm Space. Coffee & Lunch	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.
	Dance Class	5.30 p.m.
2nd in month	Mid-Week Communion	11.45 a.m.
Thursday	Dance Class	4.00 p.m.
Friday	Dance Class	5.00 p.m.
Saturday	Dance Class	9.00 a.m.

Donations towards the cost of the magazine would be appreciated.

Wishing you all a blessed and happy Easter



On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

From the Manse

IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST, I GLORY.

When Heather was getting her new hip recently, the grandsons wanted to know if it was a smart hip that could be linked to Wi-Fi, if so, would they be able to control it with voice commands. You can imagine can't you, how young boys might want to control their grandmother; 'Alexa, make grandma get me a biscuit', or 'Alexa, make grandma leave the room when she's telling us off'. How great would it be to have that sort of control over somebody!

This subject sort of became the focus of one of our Lent studies recently when we were discussing the need for the Cross of Christ. The question was asked as to why God introduced free will – you remember he did that by telling Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; why didn't God leave Adam and Eve in their ignorance and under His total control?

There is a simple answer to that question which has a not so simple solution.

Out of love God created us and wanted us to love Him in return, but in order to love God we must have a choice. God wants us to love him not because we're programmed like some computerised smart device, but because it's what we decide to do. That's free will. And in that free will we have a choice to do the things God wants for us to do and what he made us for.

However, just like our parents, grandparents, and a long line of ancestors reaching back to a garden, we have a choice of doing right or wrong by God.

For Adam and Eve their choice led to paradise lost which has been our inheritance since. God though, in His great love, has found a way for us once again to walk with Him in paradise – the Cross of Christ.

Through Jesus' sacrifice, the consequences of our wrong choices have been dealt with by God himself so that we could be restored and for us paradise regained.

As we celebrate Easter – though not with an overindulgence of chocolate I hope – let's thank God for His love for each of us and for the gift of free will that enables us to love Him in return. And let's thank God, who through Jesus Christ, has secured paradise for us once more.

Happy Easter.

Jeff

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY & FRIENDS

We send our love and sincere condolences to the family and friends of **Joyce Mann** who passed away on February 4th, peacefully in her sleep. Her funeral will be on Friday 21st April at 12 noon in Church followed by interment at Bebington Cemetery.

The Covid virus seems to be on the ascendancy again with several of our congregation becoming quite poorly. We wish you all a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing you back in Church again in the very near future.

We are so pleased that **Heather Hughes** has had her hip operation and that she is back home and taking her recovery slowly.

We remember in our prayers all the members and friends who are, at the present time, unable to join us regularly on a Sunday morning and in particular: **Jeanette Adams, Donna Birks, Peter & Joan Carroll, Carys Evans, Iris Hatton, Don Howard, Jo Johns, Julie & Tim Jones, Dylis & John Letchford, Margaret Lloyd, Nora McGrath, Glennie Mortimer and Mary Segar.**

THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone for their telephone calls, cards, messages and offers of help whilst I was laid low with Covid and the after effects, and especially those who did some shopping and picked up my prescriptions from the Chemists.

You are wonderful friends and a supreme example of Christianity in the community.

Marian

FROM OUR TREASURER

We may be a small church, but we are a Church full of big hearts.

So far this year, we have donated £200 to Christian Aid for the Earthquake Appeal following the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria and £866.08 has been forwarded to the Wirral's Chernobyl Children's Life Line charity, after previous fundraising events organised by Jean Bayley and Joyce Holland.

From our Christmas Collections the Wirral Food Bank has received £50 along with the contents of the Food Bank Box, looked after by Pam Lawrence, and Christian Aid received a further £50.

Keep an eye on our new Church Notice Boards for acknowledgements of these gifts.

If you want to know the details of where all your money went last year and were unable to attend the Church Annual General Meeting on March 19th, please ask me for a copy of the Church Accounts for 2022.

Pauline

A TRIBUTE TO JOYCE MANN

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Joyce Mann but thank God that Joyce passed away peacefully in her sleep.

Although she had not been able to be with us for worship for the last few weeks she was, as ever, in good spirits.

Joyce started attending Prenton URC in 2017, accompanying her sister, Dot, and, along with Dot, became a member in 2019.

Although Joyce was unable to be physically actively involved in the life of the church due to her advanced years, she became an integral part of our church and enriching our fellowship which has become less at her passing. She loved to be in the thick of things and enjoyed a giggle and was always generous in her giving to appeals, especially for Macmillan and the shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.

Although she had no immediate family of her own, she was very much part of her sister Dot's family and was always included in any family event. And although Joyce and Dot were rarely seen apart, Joyce continued to live independently to the end.

Joyce loved the worship life of our church and enjoyed greatly, church social events when she was able to attend. She enriched the life of our fellowship and, despite her advancing years and health challenges, she rarely complained but was always ready to offer a word of comfort or encouragement.

Joyce was known by her family as Aunty Joy, and that's exactly as I would like to remember her, a joy to our fellowship.

We thank God for Joyce Mann, for the privilege of sharing life with her and the knowledge, that through faith in Christ we will meet again.

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD - PRAYER GROUP

Our Prayer Group is held every first Tuesday in the month at my home from 1.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

This is turning out to be a joyful, informative and encouraging group. If you would like to join in but are not sure a Prayer Group is for you, speak to myself or anyone else who takes part and they will give you an honest lowdown on what we get up to! Cake testing is usually on the agenda!!

Keep an eye on the Notice Board for information on what we do each month.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 4th April. There will not be a meeting in May, but, weather permitting, I am planning a Prayer Picnic on Tuesday 6th June.

Pauline

THANK YOU

After over a year of waiting for surgery I am relieved to be able to tell you that I have had a hip replacement and the change in pain is nothing short of miraculous.

I want to thank everybody who prayed for me and for the skill of those who looked after me. It is a wonderful feeling to know that so many people are upholding you in prayer.

My nervousness was calmed, the sedative and anaesthetic gave me total sleep, I knew nothing of the process, and that was exactly what I needed!

I'm told that I am doing well in my post-operative progress, and I have had very little post-operative pain, for which I am incredibly grateful.

I know I have to face this operation again when I have my other hip replaced but I can face it with confidence.

So, thank you, for your love and prayers, for your cards, messages and flowers and for the gifts of meals to take pressure off Jeff as he cares for me day to day.

The process of recovery lasts some time, 6 weeks of very limited activity and then a build-up back to 'normality'. I look forward to being able to do things that have been difficult for me and taking my full role again. In the meantime, please continue to pray for me for patience and allowing God to use me as I have had so much time physically inactive.

With thanks,
Heather.

SOCIAL EVENT "PIE & PUDDING NIGHT" with a raffle on Friday 21st April from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Can you help to make this a special evening by –



- (a) Donating a raffle prize, (something you would like to win), that would be appreciated by all ages.
- (b) Donating Pies such as Meat & Potato, Cottage Pie, Fish Pie or Vegetarian Pies or your favourite type of Pie.
- (c) Donating a Pudding. Suggestions are: Rice Pudding, Apple & Blackberry Tart, Fruit Crumble, Trifle, Cheesecake (Jeff is quite good at making these!), Raspberry Sponge Cake, Lemon Drizzle Cake or your favourite pudding and, of course, custard and cream.



A list is on the Notice Board so 'sign up' and come and join us and I am hoping that we will be able to fill the Hall with our congregation and people from the organisations who use our premises.

Fred

DIARY FOR APRIL 2023

APRIL		ALL SERVICES WILL BE HELD IN THE CHURCH HALL	
Palm Sunday	2nd	11.00 a.m. 12.15 p.m.	Holy Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes Church Meeting
Tuesday	4th	1.30 p.m.	Conversations with God
Wednesday	5th	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m. 7.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Lunch Lenten Group Meeting at the Manse
Maundy Thursday	6th		
Good Friday	7th		
<h1 style="color: red;">He is Risen!</h1>			
Easter Sunday	9th	11.00 a.m.	The Elders
Wednesday	12th	10.00 a.m. 11.45 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Mid-Week Communion Lunch
Friday	14th	1.00 p.m.	Masonic Ladies
Sunday	16th	11.00 a.m.	Rev Jeff Hughes
Tuesday	18th	9.30 a.m.	Elders' Meeting
Wednesday	19th	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Lunch
Friday	21st	12.00 noon 6.00 p.m.	Joyce Mann's Funeral Pie & Pudding Night
Sunday	23rd	11.00 a.m.	Mr Ron Taylor
Wednesday	26th	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Lunch
Sunday	30th	11.00 a.m.	Mrs Marian Davies

DIARY FOR MAY 2023

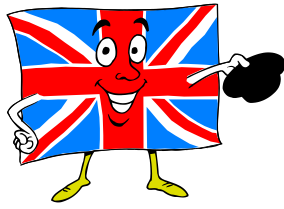
MAY		WE ARE BACK IN CHURCH	
Monday	1st		<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Wednesday	3rd	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Lunch
Saturday	6th	Coronation Day of King Charles III & Queen Camilla	
Sunday	7th	11.00 a.m.	Holy Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes
Monday	8th		<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Wednesday	10th	10.00 a.m. 11.45 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Mid-Week Communion Lunch
Sunday	14th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Ray Craig Copy required for June & July Magazine
Wednesday	17th	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Lunch
Saturday	20th	10.00 a.m.	LICC Day at Hoole URC
Sunday	21st	11.00 a.m.	Rev Jeff Hughes
Wednesday	24th	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Lunch
Sunday	28th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Ron Taylor
Monday	29th		<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Wednesday	31st	10.00 a.m. 12.30 p.m.	Warm Space. Coffee Morning followed by Lunch



A friend of mine who is a pastor said this, “Whenever the conflict gets too much in my church, I go and visit the local kennels. There’s a whole group there that’s always pleased to see me!”



THE COMING OF THE KING



No, this isn't a re-run of the letter I sent you in November last year with the Advent devotions of the same title, but it is a reminder that on the 6th May 2023 Charles will be crowned **King Charles III**.

I'm sure, that republican and royalist alike, we will all see something of or mark this historic event in some way. And I'm sure that it will be marked in our church through the Warm Spaces and Coffee Mornings too, hopefully with a special menu, possibly even a cream tea. Now that's worth a coronation in my books.

Charles will have to promise many things at his coronation, but one likely promise caught my attention, '*I will to the utmost of my power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel.*'

The crown Charles will wear is designed to set him apart of course, but it is also designed to point to a higher power, God.

I encourage you, even if you didn't vote for him, to pray for Charles in this new role and that he will set an example for all to follow of faith and faithfulness.

Jeff

WARM SPACE

A huge "Thank You" to everyone who attends on Wednesdays. Just you being there is an encouragement. We are welcoming some people who do not attend Church but who are clearly enjoying the warmth, the food and the companionship. Please make sure you say hello and have a chat with all the "new faces". It turns out many of them are already known to some of you.



If you are one of the washer-ups and the put-awayers, just know that I am very grateful

Pauline

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible: Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter.

Little Rick was excited about the task, but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. Even after much practice, he could barely get past the first line.

On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Rick was very nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said, "The Lord is my shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 2023

At last year's AGM I quoted Jeremiah 29:11, which says, **"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'** But sometimes God's plans can appear elusive.

Coming into a new normal after lockdown and struggling with a large deficit in our finances it was difficult to see how the future would pan out for us as a church in the building here in Prenton Road West. This AGM however we sound a more positive note.

True, we still carry a deficit going into 2023, and pressures remain on our finances but, I'm glad to say that we started 2023 with a much reduced deficit. The fellowship responded well to appeals that the freewill offering increased by more than 10% and income from hall lettings almost doubled. There is hope and expectation too, income from hall users will increase and that we will receive some funds from our insurer due to loss of income during lockdown. Thank you for all your efforts in increasing your giving but can I urge you once again to consider giving sacrificially by increasing your regular giving as much as you are able.

We decided to continue worshipping in the hall from November through to May. This of course has helped to reduce our fuel costs, but it would mean that our special services and events such as Remembrance, Christmas, and Easter would not be in the main worship area.

AGMs are an opportunity for us to review our involvement in God's mission here in Prenton and we have much to celebrate and plenty to hope for. The coffee morning on Wednesdays has gone from strength to strength with increased numbers of church members attending and some residents from the local community. This provision was extended into a Warm Space in the autumn and is to be further extended into a Welcome Space beyond the end of the Warm Space initiative. The prayer meeting too is growing and is proving a great time of fellowship, learning and prayer. We have also continued with our Lent groups which it is hoped will continue after Easter as a regular house group.

Since our last AGM in 2022, we have lost one member, Joyce Mann in the last couple of weeks. We thank God for her and the way she enriched our fellowship during the short number of years she was able to be with us.

We have had no marriages or funerals in church, but we have conducted 5 infant blessings.

Inevitably, many in our fellowship are feeling the effects of old age and

illness which keeps them from regular worship, and we pray for God's blessing and healing upon them and all members of our fellowship who are struggling.

I'd like to thank all of those who contribute to the worship life of this fellowship, the elders, our organist, readers, prayers, and worship leaders, especially during those times when they've had to step in at short notice due to the ongoing impact of Covid. And for all those who look towards the maintenance of the buildings. There are some larger maintenance jobs which will need doing but only once our finances are on a more even keel.

I want to thank everyone involved in the life of the church, especially Jean, your Church Secretary, who works tirelessly for this fellowship, and for Pauline, our treasurer, who has thrown herself into the role with great professionalism but also with a strong mission focus. And an eye to the future. I'd also like to thank Margaret Meade who has given Pauline much support and has taken on responsibility for a number of areas of our church finances. I'd also like to thank Carys, and Fred and Anne for their years coordinating the flower fund and hall bookings and for their new replacements, Pam and Sue. Your service is much appreciated despite the hassles you face.

We have continued to support our regular charities; sending over 100 shoeboxes to the third world again through Operation Christmas child, and continuing to support Charles Thompson, MacMillan, Christian Aid and Wirral Foodbank.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the church; your contribution is vital to the life of this church and the purpose of the Gospel.

A big thank you to the gardeners, visitors and those keeping in touch with people on the phone, the cleaners, Magazine editor and article writers, and refreshment providers, and all who help in the setting up and setting down for worship each week. If you think you can help with any of these and don't already have a role within the church's life then please speak with Jean or me.

As we move into the plans God has prepared for us I'd like to remind you of another verse from scripture. This too was one which has been an encouragement to me throughout my call, training, and ministry. It was give to Joshua as he was about to lead the people into the Promised Land. Let this be a verse that helps us plan for the rest of 2023, **'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go'**

Every blessing
Jeff.

AGM 19th March 2022

At our AGM many thanks were given to all who had done so much work over the year in many capacities. Special thanks go to Jeff and Heather, and to Pauline and Margaret for their work to improve the accounts. The form filling has been a mammoth task. Thanks too for increased giving is offered to all who were able to help in this way. Our accounts are looking much healthier and it is encouraging to have more Hall bookings.

Sue Jones and I were re-elected as elders for a further three years and I was re-elected as secretary.

Sadly, the number of people attending services regularly has declined. This is mainly because people are getting older and less able to get out. Our membership is now forty-three and thirty people on average attend weekly.

Jean

A MAN CALLED JESUS

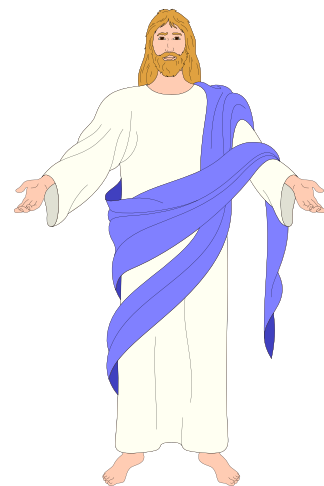
**He would be known among his townsmen
As a carpenter of wood,
And He'd be recognised by children
As their friend, so kind and good.**

**He would some day do wondrous works,
The lame would walk, the blind would see,
And those restored would call him 'healer'
Wondering who this man could be.**

**He would be known by His disciples
As the Master, while with love,
He taught them of His Heavenly Father
And His kingdom, high above.**

**And at the end, they would remember
When those who went to view the dead
Found not a body, still and lifeless,
But an angel there instead.**

**And then they'd give the Galilean,
Whom they'd followed and adored
His rightful name for all the ages . . .
"Jesus Christ, the risen Lord".**



Supplied by Barry Lawrence

ROTAS FOR APRIL 2023

Duty Elder

April	2nd	Shelby Ambrose
	9th	Elaine Parkin
	30th	Jean Bayley



Communion Elders

April	2nd	Fred Foulkes & Pauline Green
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Door Duty

April	2nd	Jean & Les Bayley, Joan Bradley
	9th	Margaret Higson, Barbara Jones, Maureen Makin
	16th	Sue Jones, Barry Lawrence, Joan Lawrence
	23rd	Elaine Parkin, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
	30th	Joan Bradley, Margaret Higson, Barbara Jones

Readers

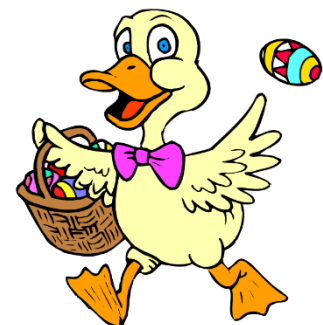
April	2nd	Pam Lawrence & Joyce Holland
	9th	Fred Foulkes & Philip Roper
	16th	Marian Davies & Joan Bradley
	23rd	Barry Lawrence & Jean Bayley
	30th	Shelby Ambrose & Glyn Roper

Prayers of Intercession

April	2nd	Philip Roper
	9th	Barry Lawrence
	16th	Jean Bayley
	23rd	Pauline Green
	30th	Sue Jones

Church Flowers

April	2nd	Jeanette Adams
	9th	Easter
	16th	
	23rd	Marian Davies
	30th	Julie Jones



ROTAS FOR MAY 2023

Duty Elder

May	7th	Fred Foulkes
	14th	Shelby Ambrose
	21st	Sue Jones
	28th	Elaine Parkin

Communion Elders

May	7th	Shelby Ambrose & Jean Bayley
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Door Duty

May	7th	Barry Lawrence, Joan Lawrence, Maureen Makin
	14th	Jean & Les Bayley, Sue Jones
	21st	Margaret Higson, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
	28th	Barry Lawrence, Barbara Jones, Maureen Makin

Readers

May	5th	Heather Hughes & Pam Lawrence
	14th	Joyce Holland & Marian Davies
	21st	Joan Bradley & Jean Bayley
	28th	Shelby Ambrose & Philip Roper

Prayers of Intercession

May	7th	Claire Thomas
	14th	Philip Roper
	21st	Heather Hughes
	28th	Jean Bayley

Sound System

May	7th	Elaine Parkin
	14th	Elaine Parkin
	21st	Marian Davies
	28th	Marian Davies

Church Flowers

May	7th	Maureen Makin
	14th	Elaine Parkin
	21st	Pauline Green
	28th	Claire Thomas

