

PRENTON NEWS

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



APRIL & MAY 2025

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Church & Community Activities during school term time

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| Monday | Little Movers | 10.00 a.m. |
| | 1 st Tranmere Rainbows, Brownies & Guides | 5.00 p.m. |
| Tuesday | Guitar Jam Group | 6.30 p.m. |
| Wednesday | Warm, Welcome Space | |
| | Coffee | 10.00 a.m. |
| | Lunch | 12.15 p.m. |

Donations towards the cost of the magazine would be appreciated.

At EASTER TIME



*MAY THE JOY OF EASTER
BE WITH YOU TODAY
AND MAY GOD'S GREATEST BLESSINGS
BE WITH YOU ALWAYS.*

FROM THE MANSE

HAPPY EASTER - THE NEW COVENANT SEALED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD

As a child I liked to watch the old Westerns and, I particularly liked it when Cowboys and Indians banded together to fight a common foe. Usually, this allegiance was sealed when cowboy and Indian would cut their palms with knives and shake hands, mingling their blood together as they became 'Blood Brothers'. They sealed the deal and if either broke the deal there would be consequences. As a child, our equivalent of similar allegiances was by spitting on our palms and shaking hands. The deal was sealed and if either broke the deal there would be consequences.

But what have 'bloody' or 'spitty' palms got to do with Easter. Well, it's all to do with sealing the deal and the consequences of breaking it.

At Easter time we see the outworking of the deal or covenant that God made with Abram (soon to be renamed Abraham). In that deal, God would be Abram and his descendants God, and they would be His people. We read about it in Genesis 15 when God tells Abram to get a cow, goat and ram, cut them in half, and arrange the halves so that they formed a pathway in between.

In Abram's day this was how covenants were made and deals sealed. It was called a Suzerain Covenant and God used the culture of the day to seal a deal. It's not something we use today. We don't even cut or spit on our palms to make a deal, we usually use pen and paper and sign a contract. But even here, breaking a contract would have consequences.

With a Suzerain Covenant each party would walk between the carcasses of the animals as a symbolic gesture that if either

broke the deal, they would suffer the same consequences as the animals lying dead at their feet.

However, when God made this covenant with Abram, it was only God who walked the path between the carcasses. So, it was God who would be the only one to suffer the consequences if either He or Abram or his descendants broke the covenant.

Fast forward now to Good Friday and we see God in Jesus facing the consequences of that broken covenant as His own body was torn and killed on the cross at Calvary.

But, just a day before, God made a new covenant as Jesus gave bread and wine to his disciples telling them that this would be sealed by His blood. The consequence of this New Covenant would be that those who entered into it with Jesus would be raised to New Life and live with him forever.

When Jesus cried out on the cross 'It is finished' what was finished was the consequences of the old broken covenant and the sealing of a new binding covenant.

Throughout thousands of years, God has been using covenants among His people to bring us from a fallen world to redemption through His final covenant in Christ!

At Easter, we celebrate the greatest expression of God's covenant — the death and resurrection of Jesus. Just as God passed through the sacrificed animals in Genesis 15, taking the full responsibility of the covenant upon Himself, so too did Jesus bear the weight of our sin on the cross. His resurrection is the guarantee that God's promises are true — promises of life, salvation, and eternal hope.

This Easter, let us rejoice that we are heirs of that same covenant.

Happy Easter.

Jeff.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY & FRIENDS

We continue to remember, in our prayers, all the members and friends who are unable to join us regularly on a Sunday morning for whatever reason.

Congratulations to **Fred and Anne Foulkes** who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on March 20th, and it is good to see **Joan Bradley** back in Church.

Glennie Mortimer's Funeral was held at Landican Crematorium on Wednesday February 26th and we send our love and condolences to her son, Michael, daughter Hazel and all their family and friends at this sad time. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all.

In January my daughter, Angela Samata became a Deputy Lieutenant for Merseyside. It was a very proud moment for myself and my family.

Angela has worked alongside mental health and suicide prevention as a career. She also works with Outsider Art. This is working with mental health using Art as a way of people expressing themselves. She went to New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Japan to research how they used Outsider Art. This was funded by The Churchill Fellowship.

Angela is a BAFTA Nominee for a programme called "Life after Suicide" which she made for the BBC.

Her work is from her own lived experience and this has led to being invited to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party in May. I am also going together with my younger daughter, Helen, and we are very much looking forward to attending.

Jenny Lloyd

Wednesday Coffee Morning

TRIBUTE TO GLENNIE MORTIMER

I know we were all sad to hear of the death of Glennie and we send our condolences to her family. Until the last two or three years, Glennie was a constant presence here at Prenton.

In January this year she had been a member for fifty-six years and, along with her husband Tom, had always joined in everything. She was a member of the Choir, the Monday Group, and the Drama Group, which flourished here for many years, and involved endless rehearsals! She became an Elder, taking on all that involves, and for many years took the minutes at both Elders and Church meetings. She continued to do this even after she decided she was too old to serve as an Elder, which was a big boon to me when I became Church Secretary. Thank you, Glennie.

She also kept the Church diary for years and acted as Bookings Secretary. That was and is a thankless task - ask Fred, Anne and Sue! People seem to think you know something is happening even when they haven't told you, and that was the one thing I heard her moan about.

Glennie was the sort of person who just got on with things. Life was not easy for her, especially after Tom's early death, but she kept going and doing the activities she enjoyed. Her faith didn't waver and we all benefitted from her positive attitude and Prenton URC has much to be thankful for. Her years of service contributed much to our fellowship.

Jean Bayley

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance.

Ecclesiastes 3 versus 1, 2 and 4

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".

After a church service one Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mum, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up."

"That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?"

"Well," said the little boy, "I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen."

From A Bucket of Surprises, J John and Mark Stibbe, Monarch Books

A legend recounts the return of Jesus to heaven after His time on earth. He returned bearing the marks of His earthly pilgrimage with its cruel cross and shameful death.

The Angel Gabriel approached Him and said. “Master you must have suffered terribly for people down there.”

“I did,” said Jesus.

“And,” continued Gabriel, “do they now know all about how you loved them and what you did for them?”

“Oh no,” said Jesus. “not yet. Right now, only a handful of people in Israel know.”

Gabriel was perplexed. “Then what have you done,” he asked, “to let all people know about your love for them?”

“Well, I have asked Peter, James, John and a few others to tell people about Me. Those who are told will in turn tell others and the gospel will be spread to the farthest reaches of the globe. Ultimately all of humankind will hear about Me and what I have done on their behalf.”

Gabriel frowned and looked sceptical. He knew people weren’t dependable. “Yes,” he said, “but what if Peter, James and John grow weary? What if the people who come after them forget? And what if, way down in the 20th and 21st centuries, people get too busy to bother to tell others about you; haven’t you made any other plans?”

“No, I have made no other plans, Gabriel,” Jesus answered. “I’m counting on them.”

From A Bucket of Surprises, J John and Mark Stibbe, Monarch Books

The existential question
“What came first – the chocolate chicken or
the chocolate egg!”

DIARY FOR APRIL 2025

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Wednesday | 2nd | 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch 6.00 p.m. Meal 7.00 p.m. Lent Study Group | Warm Welcome Space |
| Friday | 4th | 1.00 p.m. | Masonic Ladies |
| Sunday | 6th | 11.00 a.m. Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes 12.30 p.m. Church Lunch | |
| Tuesday | 8th | 1.30 p.m. Conversations with God 6.30 p.m. Guitar Jam Group | |
| Wednesday | 9th | 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch 6.00 p.m. Meal 7.00 p.m. Lent Study Group | Warm Welcome Space |
| Friday | 11th | 1.00 p.m. | Masonic Ladies |
| Palm Sunday | 13th | 11.00 a.m. | Dr Philip Roper |
| Wednesday | 16th | 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch 6.00 p.m. Meal 7.00 p.m. Lent Study Group | Warm Welcome Space |
| Maundy Thursday | 17th | | |
| Good Friday | 18th | | |
| Easter Sunday | 20th | 11.00 a.m. | Communion. Worship Group |
| Wednesday | 23rd | 10.00 a.m. Coffee Morning 12.15 p.m. Lunch 6.00 p.m. Meal 7.00 p.m. House Group | Warm Welcome Space |

DIARY FOR APRIL & MAY 2025

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|--|
| APRIL | | | |
| Back in Church | | | |
| Sunday | 27th | 11.00 a.m. | Mr Ron Taylor |
| Wednesday | 30th | | Warm Welcome Space |
| | | 10.00 a.m. | Coffee Morning |
| | | 12.15 p.m. | Lunch |
| | | 6.00 p.m. | Meal |
| | | 7.00 p.m. | House Group |
| MAY | | | |
| Friday | 2nd | 6.00 p.m. | Fish & Chip Supper to celebrate 80 years since the end of World War II |
| Sunday | 4th | 11.00 a.m. | Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes |
| Monday | 5th | | Bank Holiday |
| Tuesday | 6th | 1.30 p.m. | Conversations with God |
| Wednesday | 7th | | Warm Welcome Space |
| | | 10.00 a.m. | Coffee Morning |
| | | 12.15 p.m. | Lunch |
| Sunday | 11th | 11.00 a.m. | Mr Chris Doran |
| Wednesday | 14th | | Warm Welcome Space |
| | | 10.00 a.m. | Coffee Morning |
| | | 12.15 p.m. | Lunch |
| Sunday | 18th | 11.00 a.m. | Worship Group |
| Wednesday | 21st | | Warm Welcome Space |
| | | 10.00 a.m. | Coffee Morning |
| | | 12.15 p.m. | Lunch |
| | | 6.00 p.m. | Meal |
| | | 7.00 p.m. | House Group |
| Sunday | 25th | 11.00 a.m. | Mr Ron Taylor |
| Monday | 26th | | Bank Holiday |
| Wednesday | 28th | | Warm Welcome Space |
| | | 10.00 a.m. | Coffee Morning |
| | | 12.15 p.m. | Lunch |
| | | 6.00 p.m. | Meal |
| | | 7.00 p.m. | House Group |

Some thoughts about Easter from John Lennox, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Oxford University and founding member of OCCA (Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics).

Dear Friends,

Here in the UK, spring is in the air! As the days grow longer and nature awakens, I'm reminded of the hope and renewal at the heart of the Christian faith.

On our countryside walks, Sally and I are often struck by the beauty of creation—the vibrant colours, the songs of birds, and the warmth of the sun—all reflecting God's goodness and the joy of new life in Christ.

In and around Oxford, daffodils are in full bloom, their golden hues brightening the landscape. Wordsworth's poem 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' captures the beauty of "golden daffodils" and how they can lift our mood and bring us joy:

“For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.”

These daffodils, with their fleeting beauty and quiet resilience, are a powerful metaphor for the Christian journey. Like the arrival of spring, faith brings life to the barren places of our hearts, filling them with joy, hope, and a sense of purpose.

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, C.S. Lewis vividly portrays the coming of spring in Narnia as a powerful symbol of renewal and hope. Under the reign of the White Witch, Narnia was locked in a perpetual winter, a season of coldness and despair. “It is winter in Narnia and it has been for ever so long” - Mr. Tumnus

But with the arrival of Aslan, the snow begins to melt, flowers

bloom, and streams start to flow again. Spring sweeps across the land, bringing life where there was once death, and joy where there was once sorrow.

“... when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again.” - Mr. Beaver

This beautiful imagery conveys the Christian message of redemption. Just as Narnia's transformation signals the end of darkness and the dawn of a new era, so too does the resurrection of Christ bring the ultimate hope of renewal and eternal life. In both stories - Narnia's and ours - we see that hope is not lost, and new life is always possible through Him who makes all things new.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON SUNDAY 16TH MARCH 2025

At the recent Synod meeting, churches were encouraged to share things about their church life which brought them joy and, whilst our small fellowship experiences many pressures, we still have much to be joyful about.

I shared that our Welcome Space was thriving with more than 20 people staying for lunch and more joining for coffee and fellowship. I also shared that through this group two people had become regular worshippers with one joining our House Group and the other the Prayer Group. We thank God for Jan and Julian and pray that they will find a home with us and that their faith will deepen and their relationship with Jesus grow.

I shared the joy we had in our 'new kitchen'. This has enabled us to offer a more varied selection of lunches at our Welcome Space and has made our social events easier to manage and co-ordinate. A special thanks to Pauline and Heather for their regular contribution to this work and to Synod for their donation of £2,500 in recognition of the Mission of this fellowship.

Our House Group, which meets at the Manse, started this time last year, initially meeting for seven weeks but such is the desire to learn more of faith and to share fellowship, that we have continued to meet with more than a third of the worshipping fellowship. We still have room for more if you would like to join us and I am always open to suggestions of topics for the group to consider.

We continue to rejoice in our Prayer Group which is growing in numbers, in those participating, and those growing in confidence to pray for and with one another. It has been a delight to see presentations on the notice board of what the group have been focusing on, which people from other churches have commented on and have taken the idea to their own fellowships.

Pressures as always, remain on our finances so I would ask you to be generous in your giving and if possible, work on the principal of the tithe. Although we show a deficit of around £2,000 for 2024, we still expect some funds from Synod for the work carried out in the West Room and the Hall which would have cleared that deficit. Again, our thanks go to Pauline Green for all the hard work she does as our Treasurer and to Margaret Meade for her continued support.

There still needs to be work done around the buildings particularly to tackle the problem of the black mould growing in the corridors and toilets. Planned work on the lighting in the Kinghorn and the purchasing of new chairs has been put on hold whilst we prioritise more urgent maintenance in line with our finances.

We must acknowledge that none of us are getting any younger and many in our fellowship are feeling the effects of advancing years and all that comes with it. For some it prevents 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 would like to thank all of those who contribute to the worship life of this fellowship, the Elders, our Organist, Readers, Prayers, and Worship Leaders. A big 'Thank You' to all who lend a hand in keeping our premises ready for worship and community use.

As we look forward to Easter, we rejoice in God's blessings in these signs of new life within our church which should give us hope for the future and encourage us now in the task of worshipping God and sharing the Gospel.

And, as we thank God for this new life, we remember those of our fellowship who have passed into glory since our Annual General Meeting last year.

We remember with thanksgiving Harry Bradley, Maureen Makin and Glennie Mortimer. We thank God for them and their years of faithful service to this fellowship. We hope to hold a Memorial Service for Glennie in the coming months.

The Worship Group continues to develop in confidence and it is great to see more of our own church family arranging and leading worship more regularly. We are thankful too for our regular visiting Worship Leaders and particularly thank Ron Taylor for his continuing support.

Since our last Annual General Meeting, we have had two Marriages in Church, Susan Jones to Dougie Kite and Helen Abram to Rob Hughes. There have also been two Funerals, Harry Bradley and Maureen Makin, and I have conducted five Infant Blessings.

We have continued to support our regular charities; sending a record number of shoeboxes again last Christmas in support of Operation Christmas Child, and we have continued to support Charles Thompson Mission, Macmillan's, Christian Aid and the Wirral Foodbank and this year, for the first time, Open Doors, a charity which supports and highlights the plight of Persecuted Christians around the world.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the life of the church, especially Jean Bayley, our Church Secretary, who works tirelessly for this fellowship, I would also like to thank Pam and Sue for co-ordinating the Flower Fund and Hall bookings.

A big thank you to the gardeners, pastoral visitors, the cleaners, magazine editor and article writers, and refreshment providers, and all who help in the setting up and setting down for worship and the welcome space each week. 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.

It would be good if more would volunteer to share the load and if you think you can help and do not already have a role within the church's life then please speak with Jean or myself.

We still face the challenges of dwindling numbers, decreasing income, and increasing expenditure as well as issues from the wider church concerning deployment of ministry. So, we need to start planning ahead now for my retirement in 3 years' time. Some questions we need to consider are: What should our priorities be? Can we manage the increasing burden on finances in the building as it is? How can we grow in numbers and raise up new leaders?

Our future may appear a little uncertain with the pressures we face as a small ageing church but **Proverbs 3:5-6** reminds us to trust in God for the future. This is what it says, ***"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."*** God bless.

Jeff.

EASTER WORD SEARCH

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | L | P | T | K | V | C | L | H | C | K | J | F | R | B | C | V |
| M | K | J | E | S | U | S | G | P | R | D | W | K | N | M | R | K |
| Z | E | J | D | W | T | K | M | G | O | W | P | I | M | L | J | R |
| T | B | S | L | R | L | R | Q | J | S | B | L | N | L | X | C | I |
| G | H | N | S | L | E | L | N | E | S | E | R | G | V | R | H | S |
| V | M | I | Q | I | C | S | C | T | G | L | T | L | O | O | K | E |
| H | T | L | R | M | A | I | U | N | Y | M | C | W | L | P | T | N |
| C | Y | X | H | D | F | H | A | R | R | R | N | Y | F | N | Y | T |
| W | M | L | B | I | D | G | D | Q | R | O | A | N | H | B | N | P |
| H | J | B | R | P | L | A | R | Y | F | E | O | M | P | X | S | M |
| T | W | C | E | F | M | E | Y | T | A | I | C | B | L | A | C | Y |
| P | A | P | L | V | T | K | H | T | T | D | G | T | V | Q | H | T |
| S | N | Q | R | S | O | O | M | A | Z | X | N | I | I | P | G | V |
| H | N | N | A | K | R | L | V | R | W | R | O | U | W | O | W | C |
| Z | N | E | L | N | N | L | N | J | W | R | T | N | S | L | N | K |
| N | V | J | S | V | A | E | M | P | T | Y | T | O | M | B | W | K |
| H | O | P | E | S | K | G | O | O | D | F | R | I | D | A | Y | W |

Angel

Cross

Crown of Thorns

Easter

Empty Tomb

Good Friday

Holy

Hope

Jesus

King

Love

Mary

Messiah

Resurrection

Risen

Sacrifice

Salvation

Sunday

Savior

Third Day





ROTAS FOR APRIL 2025



Duty Elder

| | | |
|-------|------|---------------|
| April | 6th | Elaine Parkin |
| | 13th | Sue Kite |
| | 20th | Marian Davies |
| | 27th | Fred Foulkes |



Communion Elders

| | | |
|-------|------|--------------------------------|
| April | 6th | Shelby Ambrose & Marian Davies |
| | 20th | Pauline Green & Elaine Parkin |

Door Duty

| | | |
|-------|------|--|
| April | 6th | Barbara Jones, Sue Kite, Barry Lawrence |
| | 13th | Pauline Green, Heather Hughes, Elaine Parkin |
| | 20th | Deryk Jones, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper |
| | 27th | Jean & Les Bayley, Barbara Jones |

Readers

| | | |
|-------|------|--------------------------------|
| April | 6th | Pam Lawrence & Fred Foulkes |
| | 13th | Barry Lawrence & Marian Davies |
| | 20th | Joyce Holland & Jean Bayley |
| | 27th | Deryk Jones & Glyn Roper |

Prayers of Intercession

| | | |
|-------|------|----------------|
| April | 6th | Claire Thomas |
| | 13th | Sue Kite |
| | 20th | Barry Lawrence |
| | 27th | Philip Roper |

Sound System

Elaine Parkin

Church Flowers

| | | |
|-------|------|----------------|
| April | 6th | Margaret Meade |
| | 13th | Jeanette Adams |
| | 20th | Easter |
| | 27th | Julie Jones |

ROTAS FOR MAY 2025

Duty Elder

| | | |
|-----|------|----------------|
| May | 4th | Shelby Ambrose |
| | 11th | Jean Bayley |
| | 18th | Pauline Green |
| | 25th | Elaine Parkin |

Communion Elders

| | | |
|-----|-----|------------------------|
| May | 4th | Jean Bayley & Sue Kite |
|-----|-----|------------------------|

Door Duty

| | | |
|-----|------|--|
| May | 4th | Pauline Green, Barry Lawrence, Elaine Parkin |
| | 11th | Sue Kite, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper |
| | 18th | Jean & Les Bayley, Heather Hughes |
| | 25th | Pauline Green, Deryk Jones, Barry Lawrence |

Readers

| | | |
|-----|------|---------------------------------|
| May | 4th | Philip Roper & Pam Lawrence |
| | 11th | Shelby Ambrose & Barry Lawrence |
| | 18th | Fred Foulkes & Marian Davies |
| | 25th | Joyce Holland & Shelby Ambrose |

Prayers of Intercession

| | | |
|-----|------|----------------|
| May | 4th | Heather Hughes |
| | 11th | Jean Bayley |
| | 18th | Pauline Green |
| | 25th | Claire Thomas |

Sound System

| |
|---------------|
| Marian Davies |
| Marian Davies |
| Elaine Parkin |
| Marian Davies |

Church Flowers

| | | |
|-----|------|---------------|
| May | 4th | |
| | 11th | Pauline Green |
| | 18th | Elaine Parkin |
| | 25th | Claire Thomas |