

PRENTON NEWS

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



APRIL & MAY 2026

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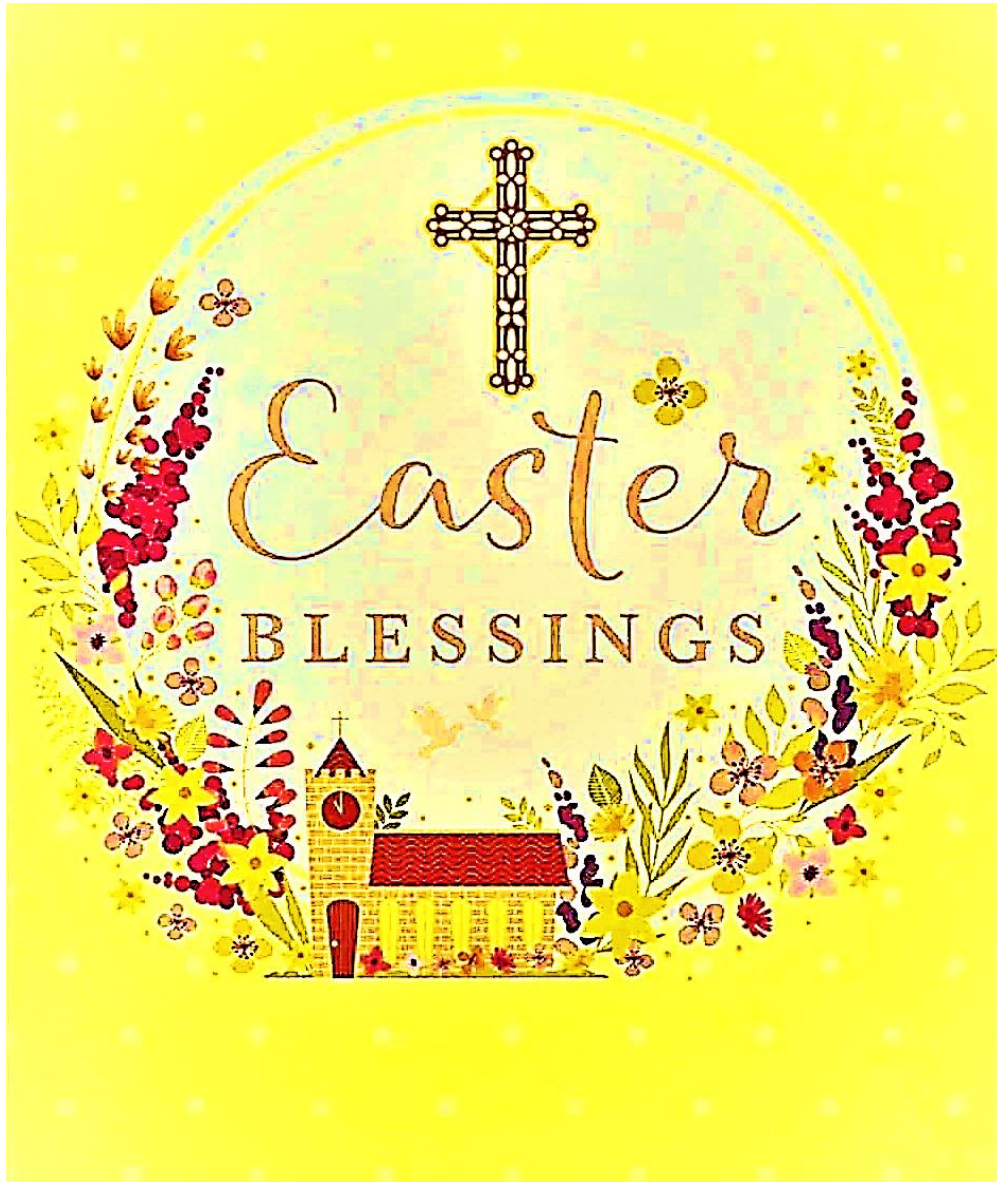
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Church & Community Activities

Monday	1 st Tranmere Rainbows, Brownies & Guides	5.00 p.m.
Tuesday	Guitar Jam Group	6.30 p.m.
Wednesday	Welcome Space	
	Coffee	10.00 a.m.
	Lunch	12.00 p.m.
	Align Performing Arts	4.30 p.m.
	House Group	7.00 p.m.
	Men's Group	7.30 p.m.

Donations towards the cost of the magazine would be appreciated



May the joy of Easter be with you today
and may God's greatest blessings
be with you always

HAPPY EASTER

FROM THE MANSE

EASTER: WHEN HOPE STEPS OUT OF THE TOMB

Recently, I've noticed the mornings getting lighter earlier and with that, the hope of longer warmer days and the anticipation of summer. And, just like a bright dawn after a long night, Easter arrives quietly and yet powerfully, full of hope and anticipation. For Christians Easter it is not simply a date on the calendar or the conclusion of Holy Week. Easter is the beating heart of our faith. It is the day we proclaim, with joy and confidence, that death does not have the final word.

At the centre of Easter stands a simple but life-changing truth: the tomb is empty.

The story is familiar. Jesus was crucified, buried, and sealed in a borrowed grave. His friends were scattered and broken, overwhelmed by grief and fear. All their hopes seemed to have ended on a cross. But on the third day, everything changed. God raised Jesus from the dead.

This is not only a miracle to be admired, it is a promise to be trusted. Easter tells us that God is faithful even when everything appears lost. When the women came to the tomb early in the morning, they were not expecting resurrection. They came carrying spices, not songs. They came to honour a body and a dead friend, not to celebrate a victory. Yet God had already been at work long before they arrived.

So often, we approach our own lives in the same way. We bring our grief, our disappointments, our unanswered prayers, and our private struggles. We prepare ourselves for what we think is the end.

But Easter reminds us that God is never limited by what we can see. Even when hope feels buried, God is still able to roll the stone away.

Easter is God's answer to our deepest fears, that suffering is meaningless, guilt can't truly be forgiven, and death is the ultimate defeat.

In the resurrection of Jesus, God responds to all three. The risen Christ declares that suffering can be transformed, that forgiveness is real and complete, and that death has been conquered. The cross reveals God's love; the empty tomb reveals God's power.

Easter faith doesn't deny pain. It meets pain honestly, and then dares to believe that pain will not have the final word.

The risen Jesus still bears the marks of the nails. Resurrection did not erase the wounds; it redeemed them. That truth speaks gently to those who carry scars of their own. God does not ask us to forget what has hurt us. Instead, He promises to bring life through it.

This is why Easter matters so deeply in a world shaped by uncertainty and loss. We live in a time when headlines are heavy with despair, anxiety is common, and many people quietly carry burdens no one else can see. The message of Easter is not a shallow optimism or a quick fix. It is a steady, unshakable hope grounded in what God has already done.

Because Christ lives, despair does not define us. Because Christ lives, forgiveness is always possible. Because Christ lives, the future is not closed.

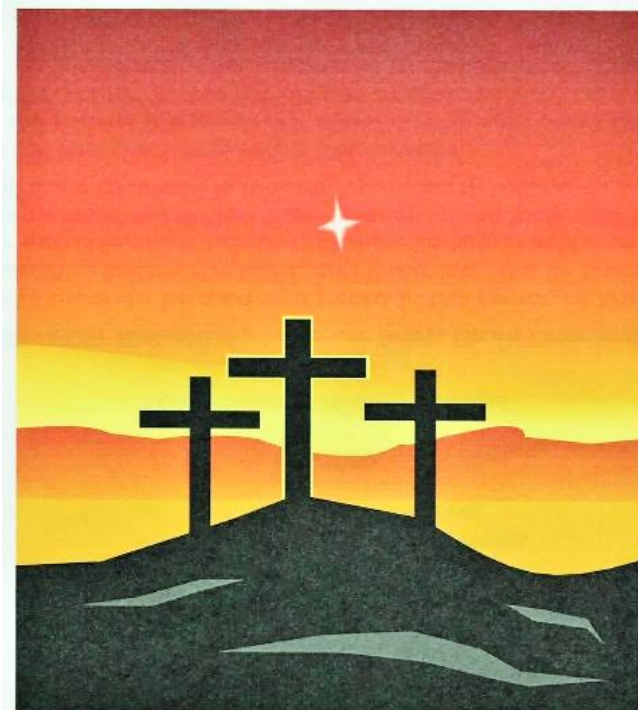
The good news of Easter is not that we must have perfect faith. It is that we place our imperfect faith in a perfect and faithful God.

As we celebrate this Easter season, may we allow its message to reach beyond familiar hymns and beautiful lilies. May it settle into our hearts and quietly reshape the way we live. The stone is rolled away. The grave is empty. Christ is alive.

And because He lives, hope is not a fragile wish, it is a living reality.

Happy Easter and God bless.

Jeff.



On a hill faraway 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 cross, the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the cross, the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY & FRIENDS

Several members of our congregation and Ron Taylor are still waiting for a date for surgical procedures at Arrowe Park Hospital. We do hope and pray that these necessary operations can be carried out soon and everyone will be out of pain.

We also remember in our prayers all the members of our fellowship who are unable to join us on a Sunday morning.

SPECIAL DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The “One Pot Supper” planned for Friday 17th April has, due to unforeseen circumstances, been postponed until a later date.



On Saturday 23rd May we are having our “Gardening and Clean Up” morning from 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon.

Come and join us and bring something with you to cut hedges or brush up

with or an apron to help make lunch in the kitchen. More hands make light work.



FABRIC

There is a lull at the moment but the heating engineer has serviced the boiler which is in the East Room and heats the hall, but we still have to top it up with water until he comes back!!! Possibly a leak somewhere??

Fred

LIVING FAITH NOW

We pray on a regular basis: *'Help our church to grow in numbers and in spiritual commitment to you.'*

On 28th February, a very few of us went to join in a morning listening to two speakers who wanted to help us to Live Our Faith.

One of the speakers talked about how our faith should be lived in our actions around social justice, incorporating our faith into all aspects of our lives including spending, giving, politics, prayer and awareness of world situations.

The other talked about allowing God to use us every day, in our contacts, in our communities, church activities, social events, being open to the Holy Spirit's leading and getting to know how to offer ourselves in a real and normal way.

Mersey Synod's Mission and Discipleship committee have heard that people in local churches say that they don't know how to Live Faith - moving it forward, allowing it to grow in real, practical ways, so that our faith makes a difference.

So, listening to that, the committee have arranged some events and invited speakers, to help you and other people from the synod to come together and learn and share. So that perhaps *'our church will grow in number and in spiritual commitment'* as we pray.

The next 2 events are on the Saturday mornings of 6th June and 26th September.

Please prayerfully consider joining, be open to what you can do rather than thinking about why you can't join in.

Heather

LIVING FAITH CONFERENCE

On Saturday February 28th a group of us from Prenton and Wallasey Village Churches attended this conference at Warrington.

There were two speakers. Sally Foster-Fullton who currently works as Christian Aid's UK and Global Church Ambassador, led a session on being a "Mouthpiece for Justice."

This was a particularly challenging theme considering the amount of injustice in our world, but it did make us think about what we could do about it.

Clearly there are worldwide injustices which produce famine, disease, poverty, repression, persecution and discrimination - the list is endless really.

We were left wondering what can my voice or actions achieve in the light of this.

The speaker suggested that sometimes silent protest could be effective e.g. standing silently and peacefully as a group countering loud protests of people demonstrating about immigrants outside hotels or writing an individual letter to your local MP, or simply speaking up if you hear someone being verbally abusive.

There are the usual routes of donating your time and/or money to groups that support the homeless, the unemployed, the lonely, the desolated and the disadvantaged.

Many of us do recognize and support some of these injustices in our own way, or as a church - but can we do more? Probably! And we can all pray.

Proverbs 31: 8,9. “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.”

Prayer

Lord, we live in a world of great divides and injustices.

We have the rich and the poor

the powerful and the weak

the well-fed and the hungry

the healthy and the sick

those who enjoy peace and those who endure war

those who rebel in freedom and

those who fight for justice.

Lord, you hold all things ultimately in your hands but give us also the courage to be a mouthpiece for Justice until Your kingdom come. Amen

SAVE THE DATE

The next Living Faith morning will be on June 6th when the themes will be Ministering Grace & Love & Modelling Godly Character. A lot of work goes into planning and delivering these sessions. Please consider giving up a few hours of your time for the next one and put the date in your diary and join us and be inspired and uplifted.

Pauline

On Saturday 28th February Pauline and I went to the Synod Living Faith Day in Warrington. The 2nd speaker Sue Ainscough was truly inspiring, a very ordinary down to earth lady who was full of the Holy Spirit and shared some simple ways of Living our Faith. Her theme was LOVE, God’s love for us and through him our love for one another.

Sue belongs to the Carradoc Community Church in Liverpool who work with the homeless and those in need and who share God's love in practical ways. She told us of a time, during Covid, of a young woman who had belonged to the church but had not attended for a long time and was dangerously ill in hospital. Sue was prompted by the Spirit to go to the hospital to pray for her, she didn't respond immediately, then learned that the woman was in a coma, so she went straight to the hospital, she wasn't allowed to visit, it was the next of kin only.

She parked in the car park which was virtually empty, and walked around the car park praying out loud for her friend. The young woman eventually recovered and returned to the church. When Sue told her that she prayed for her in the hospital car park she replied that she had told her husband that Sue Ainscough had been to see her. Although Sue had not been inside the hospital the lady knew that she had been there.

Sue was also prompted by the Holy Spirit to make cards with hearts in the middle. On one card she wrote "**you are seen**"; on another she wrote "**you are loved**" and around a third she wrote the words of Proverbs 3:5. At first, she made 20 of them, then gave them to people she met during the course of her day. Then she felt prompted to make 100, then 1,000 which she leaves in various places where lonely and vulnerable people might find them. She brought a bag full of them to the Synod Day for us to take away to share with people we might feel would need them.

Pam

PENTECOST

THE DAY THE CHURCH FOUND ITS VOICE

Fifty days after Easter, the Church celebrates one of the most extraordinary moments in Christian history: Pentecost. Often called *the Birthday of the Church*, Pentecost marks the day when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the followers of Jesus, transforming a small and fearful group of disciples into a bold and vibrant community of faith.

The story is found in Acts chapter 2. After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, His disciples gathered together in Jerusalem, waiting as He had instructed them. They were uncertain about what would come next, but they trusted His promise that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit.

Then, suddenly, everything changed.

Scripture describes the moment with powerful imagery: a sound like a rushing wind filled the house where they were sitting, and what appeared to be tongues of fire came to rest on each of them. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in different languages, declaring the wonders of God.

Jerusalem at that time was filled with pilgrims from many nations who had come for the Jewish festival of Pentecost. To their amazement, each person heard the disciples speaking in their own language. People from different cultures and backgrounds were united by one message: the good news of Jesus Christ.

In that moment, the gospel stepped beyond boundaries of language, nationality, and culture. What began in a quiet room quickly spilled out into the streets.

Peter, who only weeks earlier had denied knowing Jesus, now stood up with courage and proclaimed the message of Christ's death and resurrection. His words were not carefully rehearsed speeches; they were the result of a heart transformed by the Spirit of God. That day, about three thousand people responded to the message and were baptised.

Pentecost reveals something essential about the nature of the Church.

The Church was never meant to be merely an institution or a building. From the beginning, it was a Spirit-filled community - ordinary people, fishermen, tax collectors, and everyday workers empowered by God to share extraordinary hope.

Pentecost reminds us that the strength of the Church does not come from human ability, but from divine presence. A presence that continues to guide, comfort, convict, and empower believers today. In quiet acts of compassion, in courageous stands for truth, and in the faithful witness of Christians around the world.

Pentecost challenges us personally. It asks whether we are open to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. Are we ready for fear to give way to courage, confusion to clarity, and silence to joyful proclamation? The Spirit did not simply comfort the disciples - He equipped them for a mission and He can do the same for us too.

The same invitation remains today. God calls His people not only to believe in Christ but also to participate in His work in the world: sharing hope, serving others, and living lives shaped by love, grace, and truth.

As we celebrate Pentecost, we are reminded that the Church is not sustained by tradition alone, nor by programmes or structures. It is sustained by the living Spirit of God.

Pentecost invites us to pray a simple but profound prayer: *Maranatha - Come, Holy Spirit*. For when the Spirit moves, hearts are changed, faith is renewed, and the Church finds its voice once again.

God bless.

Jeff

THE MODERATOR'S VISIT TO PREACH AT PRENTON

The Moderator, Rev Geoff Felton, visited us on Sunday 22nd February, and we very much enjoyed his service. It was the first Sunday in Lent, which was reflected in his sermon and the hymns he chose.

I was asked by a number of members if I would ask him to come again, which I did. Geoff explained that he has over 70 churches to visit, and other work as well, so another visit to us would be unlikely to be in 2026. However, I have done as he suggested, and written to his PA, who organises his diary, requesting another visit when that is possible. She has replied that it will likely be towards the end of 2026, or into 2027.

Marian

Sunday School Teacher: "What do you know about Good Friday?"

Boy: "Please, Miss, do you mean Friday wot did the 'ousework for Robinson Crusoe?"



26th February 2026

Dear Friends at Prenton URC

Thank you for your very kind donation of £75.00 which was raised following your Toy Service towards the work here at Charles Thompson's Mission. It was incredibly kind of you to think of us and support the work here at the Mission once again.

During Christmas the food donations enabled us to continue helping those in the community who are struggling to make ends meet with donations going towards, our food bank, emergency food parcels, Christmas food hampers or a hot meal for those who are homeless. We were also able to help over 1,000 children with a gift at Christmas.

We are still able to continue serving breakfast to those in our community who are homeless and those that are living in poverty, as well as running our weekly food bank. We have seen the numbers using the food bank rise, so your gift will be greatly appreciated to help us replenish this each week. We are able to give out clean clothing, basic essentials, shower facilities, offer help with advice with applications, accommodation, finance, medical help from the GP, nurse, drug service, podiatrist and optician.

On behalf of all the team at Charles Thompson's Mission and all those who will benefit from your kind donation, I want to thank you for your generosity, and thank you for partnering with us. We could not do what we do, without your help.

Yours sincerely, **Bernie Frost**

DIARY FOR APRIL 2026

APRIL			
Wednesday	1st	10.00 a.m. 12.00 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Good Friday	3rd		
HE IS RISEN!			
Easter Sunday	5th	11.00 a.m.	Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes
Tuesday	7th	1.30 p.m.	Conversations with God
Wednesday	8th	10.00 a.m. 12.00 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Friday	10th	1.00 p.m.	Masonic Ladies
Sunday	12th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Bernie Frost
Wednesday	15th	10.00 a.m. 12.00 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Sunday	19th	11.00 a.m.	Our Favourite Hymns
Wednesday	22nd	10.00 a.m. 12.00 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch
Sunday	26th	11.00 a.m.	Rev Robert Barthram
Wednesday	29th	10.00 a.m. 12.00 p.m. 7.00 p.m.	Warm Welcome Space Coffee Morning Lunch House Group at the Manse

DIARY FOR MAY 2026

MAY			
Friday	1st	1.00 p.m.	Masonic Ladies
Sunday	3rd	11.00 a.m.	Communion. Rev Jeff Hughes
Tuesday	5th	1.30 p.m.	Conversations with God
Wednesday	6th		Warm Welcome Space
		10.00 a.m.	Coffee Morning
		12.00 p.m.	Lunch
		7.00 p.m.	House Group at the Manse
Friday	8th	1.00 p.m.	Masonic Ladies
Christian Aid Week			
Sunday	10th	11.00 a.m.	Mrs M Davies & Mrs P Green
Tuesday	12th	1.00 p.m.	Elders' Meeting at the Manse
Wednesday	13th		Warm Welcome Space
		10.00 a.m.	Coffee Morning
		12.00 p.m.	Lunch
		7.00 p.m.	House Group at the Manse
Sunday	17th	11.00 a.m.	Rev Jeff Hughes
			Church Meeting
			Articles for the June & July 2026
			Church Magazine
Wednesday	20th		Warm Welcome Space
		10.00 a.m.	Coffee Morning
		12.00 p.m.	Lunch
		7.00 p.m.	House Group at the Manse
Saturday	23rd	9.30 a.m.	Gardening & Clean Up Morning
Sunday	24th	11.00 a.m.	Mr Andrew Gale
Wednesday	27th		Warm Welcome Space
		10.00 a.m.	Coffee Morning
		12.00 p.m.	Lunch
		7.00 p.m.	House Group at the Manse
Sunday	31st	11.00 a.m.	Dr Geff Meyer



Where hardship means hunger... urban farmers can grow hope.

Our church has supported Christian Aid Week as part of our giving for as long as many of us can remember. Perhaps we have become a little blasé and just throw a few pounds in an envelope and salve our consciences for another year.

Times are tough for us, that is so true, but Christian Aid are helping those for whom threat of starvation is a daily worry. So please pray about how much you can afford to give to Christian Aid to save a life and to grow hope.

This is what Christian Aid say.

In the crowded and noisy settlements of Nairobi, most parents wake every single day knowing that they must go and earn money, otherwise their children won't eat that evening.

With no formal work opportunities, heartbreakingly low pay, and no social support, it's a precarious and frightening daily struggle that no family should have to face.

The aching hunger is bad enough. The relentless stress is overwhelming. **'When I wake up, I have a lot of worries. Sometimes I don't have food,'** says Fridah Moraa, a recently widowed grandmother determined to support her family on what little she earns.

'Now I'm responsible for everything.' With school costs, rent and water to cover, providing food for every meal is a problem that never goes away.

But Fridah's faith in God, and in her own ability to provide, is unwavering. With tools, seeds and specialist

training from Christian Aid's partner, Beacon of Hope, Fridah's now making the most of a small space in the city to grow a steady supply of fresh vegetables that she can cook for her family or sell on her market stall.



Reflecting on her new role in life, Fridah says: **'I never thought that a woman could also be a provider.'**

With her inner strength, unstoppable resolve, and a little help from Beacon of Hope, Fridah's overcoming poverty to feed the youngest members of her family and protect them from the threat of malnutrition.

Fridah rightly takes pride in all she's achieving: **'When I harvest what I've planted, it makes me happy. Urban farming has changed my life.'**

Christian Aid and its supporters are joining together once again during **Christian Aid Week (10-16 May)** to fund raise in all kinds of ways - from coffee mornings and craft stalls to hiking and biking for the 70k in May challenge.

With seven days to make a difference, every gift, act and prayer counts. What will you do to support someone like Fridah to grow food, protect their children from hunger, and nurture hope?

£5 could buy the seeds that kickstart a family's nutritious vegetable garden.



£10 could pay for the pair of chickens that produce fertiliser for an urban farmer.

£15 could purchase the hand tools that mean an urban farmer can tend their crops.

£30 could buy the trio of cone garden planters that host hundreds of plants in a tiny city space.



CaféJam

spread some song across your heart

Join the **CAFÉ JAM BAND** for a **BIG SING!**

Worship God through singing - café jam worship is café style, informal and for all those of any ability who love to sing or just listen.

Lots of cakes and drinks provided.

When: Sunday 19th April 2026

Time: 6.30 p.m. start

Venue: **WALLASEY VILLAGE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

Wallasey Village, Wallasey CH45 3LP

For more details contact Rita on
07838 103310 or
rita.griffiths4@ntlworld.com



FROM THE PEWS

A couple of weeks ago Laura had an unexpected day off from the Day Centre in Moreton. As it was a beautiful sunny day, we decided to have a day out in Southport, my home town, and visit the Botanical Gardens in Churchtown. Dougie was our chauffeur, and we met my sister in the park.

The flowers were superb with beds of multi-coloured primulas, obviously planted by the gardeners, but the most spectacular were the banks and fields of purple and white crocus. They really took my breath away and there were millions of them.



I felt I was in God's presence, surrounded by such natural beauty. Although they only last a few short weeks, they are a true testament to the wonder of God's creation.

We ended the day with a delicious Cappuccino which was also amazing, but not a patch on the flowers!

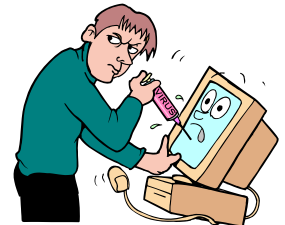
Sue

DID YOU KNOW

On March 23rd 1743 King George II heard Handel's "Messiah" for the first time. He stood up during the Hallelujah Chorus, so everyone else had to, instigating a tradition that has continued to this day.

People suggested he stood to ease his gout, or that being slightly deaf, he mistook the tune for the National Anthem. But perhaps this most powerful of men simply felt the need to stand, respectfully, when praises were being offered to the greatest King?

I was having trouble with my computer so I called Harold, the computer guy, to come over. Harold clicked a couple of buttons and solved the problem and he gave me a bill for a minimum service call.



As he was walking away, I called after him, "So, what was wrong?"

"It was an ID Ten T error," he replied.

I didn't want to appear stupid, but I nonetheless asked, "An ID Test T error?"

What's that in case I need to fix it again?"

Harold grinned, "Haven't you ever heard of an ID Ten T error before?"

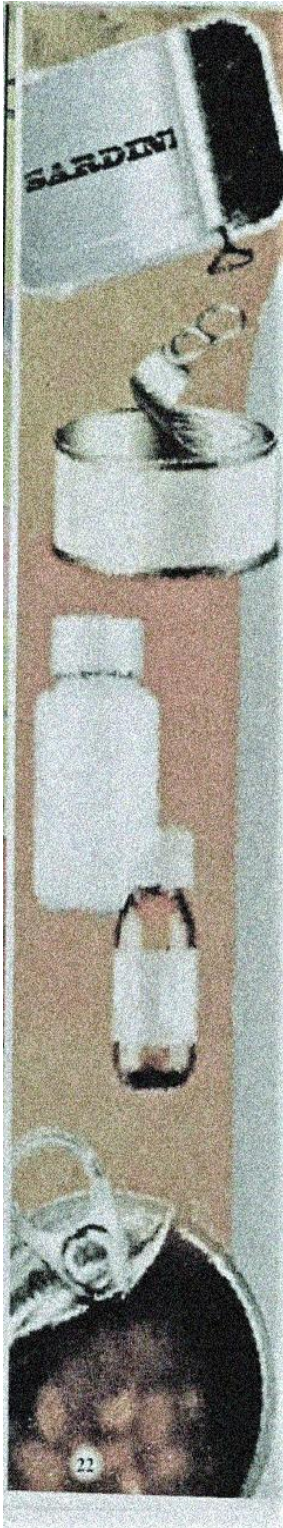
"No," I replied.

"Write it down," he said, "and I think you'll figure it out."

So, I wrote it down.

I D 10 T

HELP WANTED!



What is it I'm doing wrong
When it comes to opening things?
Some bottle tops are challenging,
Oh, and tins of beans with rings.

Pull the ring to open can,
Sauce flies out – I'm mottled.
Grip top firmly, squeeze and turn,
I hate those caps on bottles.

Tops with little collars say,
Pull tag and peel around.
Without good sight and fingernails,
Not as easy as it sounds.

Sometimes we're told, *To open lid*
Press firmly down, then twist.
That's all right if you possess
A strong and healthy wrist.

I battle with the wrapping
On biscuits, chocolate, cakes,
Hard plastic casing sealed on card
Is very hard to break.

Do you have such trouble,
Or is it only me?
Thank heavens I'm still able
To open a box of tea!

Thelma Moss

AN EASTER STORY OF SORTS - RESURRECTIONS, REDEMPTIONS, REFRAMING AND REAPPRAISALS.

In 2004 I moved from leafy Oxfordshire to inner city London, Hackney to be exact. The most multicultural part of the UK. with about 89 languages spoken.

Well, you see I had been encouraged to visit by the people from the wealthy church which I had been attending. The Church of England would partner churches in financially better off areas with churches in less well-off areas. Christchurch, Abingdon and Christchurch-on-the-Mead in Hackney were matched many years ago.

I had been encouraged to go by some from my homegroup who, with cars bulging of 2nd hand clothes and 1st hand toys, regularly took the trip. There, I saw for the first-time what poverty in the UK looked like.

The then Vicar of CC in Hackney invited me to become Pastoral Assistant and so I went. I went and my heart broke. I felt completely overwhelmed; the shock to my system was immense. I didn't want to give up faced by the scale of need. I needed to stop thinking that I should try to or indeed that I could try to fix everything for everyone.

God is God after all. And I am not.

After my year as a Pastoral Assistant I opted to stay. I was a member of a little but dogged church on an estate that had held the nickname Devil's Island. Something about these people kind of transfixed me. I think I had quickly grown to love them. I know I had quickly come to respect them.

I lived with a Vicar on the neighbouring estate, this one in an area with the nickname Murder Mile. It took about

eight years for me to kind of settle. Around this time, I lost my job with a charity that was based in another part of the city. At first, I freaked out. After a while I asked others to pray for me. Friends from different places did.

With me they sought the Lord our God as to what I should do next. While a variety of folk from round the country added my call to prayer to join in with those of the saints living in Hackney. I longed to do something that would bless God, bless others, help those financially less well off, be good across ethnicities, bring people together and in to church and also be good for the environment.

What could do all this?

One night the Holy Spirit moved me from my angst riddled slumber. I walked through a dodgy dark winter night on an estate with a bad reputation in the minds of many, through unfamiliar areas and lots of nerves until I stopped and had a confirming 'crack' of the Spirit and then peace in my inner most parts.

I arrived at some large black foreboding gates. I knew I had to go in. I was being moved to. Inside was a dark path behind a Community Centre. At the end of the path - a green rectangle of grass.

What could do all this? - Community gardening.

I began volunteering locally and fell in with the local Grounds Maintenance Team who were exceptionally kind, caring and regularly went an extra five miles in supporting local people.

John and his team had a special attitude.

Even while they were private contractors, they were determined not to give any less of a service to the

people who lived on these community housing estates compared to people who lived in the posh parts of town. They created beautiful mini oasis amongst the high rises and the terraced streets.

John who lived out of town had been longing for a local person to work well with him. Turns out that I was to be one of them.

John encouraged me when I was low. He heard me. We heard each other.

John had been seeing the hopes of people for allotments - local elderly people from the Caribbean had already been digging up the lawns in the grounds of their sheltered accommodation. So, he began digging and properly edging the lawns for them.

He saw the Turkish Mum who had fought for space to sow seeds for Vine leaves so she could cook with them. He gave her railing space on which they could grow.

Instead of herbicides to control weeds, he and his team planted loads of wild flowers.

He would provide expertise, knowledge and tools and I would make grant applications.

Together we would listen to people who lived in different parts of the estates and ask them what they would like to happen to their nearest green or often grey space.

I would translate the ideas into funding applications, rich with the local enthusiasm and ideas and the horticultural knowledge of John and my neighbours. Combined with many volunteering hours and with many of my neighbours, who became friends, together with John's Team, we created about a dozen new community

spaces - whether improvements to parks, wildlife education for kids, growing workshops for adults, community allotment spaces, even a brand new picnic area and most pleasing of all to me - a monthly community meal that included food grown on the estates.

While all this had been going on, I had agreed to take responsibility for the tending of the very large collection of indoor plants that furnished All Souls unusual upper window balcony area.

I began to “neighbour” the churches plants with seedlings that could be shared about the estates.

A few years before I joined in, John had begun welcoming people from all over, on a monthly Green Day to look around the estates and some of his innovative tending of them.

After a year or so of my being involved the Church now ‘qualified’ to be included on these tours. It was after all the estates ‘Greenhouse’. And just one stop on the estate-wide tour down from the site of the first garden I mentioned here (the one found on the walk the Spirit led me on) was The Nye Bevan Community Hall (yep - National Health service) and where we now ran a Community Meal. What an honour.

And so, an inconspicuous red brick 60s built Church that got lost amongst the rest of the street furniture, despite the 12ft concrete cross outside, was on the map.

Literally as I had drawn a map to help people from outside the area feel welcome and to find their way around when we weren’t about to show people.

The Green Days saw people who lived on estates that others looked down on and who often - for good reason - struggled not to wear chips on shoulders and expletive anger about their circumstances welcome people warmly, kindly, perhaps even courageously to their often tightly held refuge amidst surrounding gentrification. Three entire estates resurrected. Maybe not. Maybe some way to that.

I do know that I saw alcoholics love it when it had looked so doubtful. Fearful individuals willing to open their minds to others. Fierce team work that got lots of good things done.

People who had moved themselves half way round the world to evade persecution gaining some more reasons to call a place home. People of many different nationalities and backgrounds working happily together. Faithfulness like you would not believe. And all too much of the humility that goes well with the saying that people who have the least give the most.

The estate which had been known as part of Murder Mile and next to Devil's Island was gaining an ever-expanding reputation in a new way. Those wild flowers I mentioned earlier - the most prolific was the poppy. The estate got to be called by many, by a new name, the Poppy Estate.

We even, at one point, started our own wildflower mix and gave it away to any and all who wanted some. One of my favourite things about all these great things is that people who did not feel that they had a home were now welcoming people into their homes. A bit like me, a Forces kid, with no place called home, found a home in a place I would not have predicted.

The Clapton Park estate has featured at the Chelsea Flower Show, in the Guardian newspaper, and has been cited, by many green gardening and urban development professionals, as an example to be copied and has featured in at least one book (of which I have a copy).

This, like Jesus' resurrection, it is all true. And there is evidence (see below).

I must confess that one of the things that was mercifully resurrected was my mind, my heart and my will. All of these much more willing to view people much more positively and to share much more enthusiastically and to remember to try to meet and walk with the other instead of presuming as to what they or where they live will actually be like - beyond the headlines.

There is much more detail I could readily share if you want you can look in these places:

<https://claptonparkestate.wordpress.com/get-involved/>

<https://www.grassroofcompany.co.uk/socialhousing>

(Where you might spot a map I drew)

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2012/oct/11/clapton-park-estate-john-little>

I was determined that the Church might benefit from this as well and so was really happy to share one of the Clapton Park stories here:

<https://peacemeal.co/2016/10/22/willington-court-community-garden/>

Rob Elliott

Rob Elliott came to two of our services in February and I understand that he attends the same church as our Moderator's mother. He lives next door to Ray and Marian Craig in Waterpark Road.

ROTAS FOR APRIL 2026

Duty Elder

April 5th Marian Davies
12th Pauline Green
19th Elaine Parkin
26th Jean Bayley

Communion Elders

April 5th Fred Foulkes & Elaine Parkin

Door Duty

April 5th Heather Hughes, Sue Kite, Elaine Parkin
12th Jean & Les Bayley, Deryk Jones
19th Pauline Green, Barbara Jones, Barry Lawrence
26th Sue Kite, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper

Readers

April 5th Philip Roper & Glyn Roper
12th Pam Lawrence & Barry Lawrence
19th Deryk Jones & Fred Foulkes
26th Shelby Ambrose & Julian Megraw

Prayers of Intercession

April 5th Barry Lawrence
12th Pauline Green
19th Claire Thomas
26th Jean Bayley

Church Flowers

April 5th Easter
12th Jeanette Adams
19th
26th Julie Jones

ROTAS FOR MAY 2026

Duty Elder

May 3rd Shelby Ambrose
10th Sue Kite
17th Fred Foulkes
24th Elaine Parkin
31st Pauline Green

Communion Elders

May 3rd Jean Bayley & Sue Kite

Door Duty

May 3rd Deryk Jones, Barbara Jones, Elaine Parkin
10th Jean & Les Bayley, Barry Lawrence
17th Heather Hughes, Glyn Roper, Philip Roper
24th Pauline Green, Deryk Jones, Sue Kite
31st Jean & Les Bayley, Barbara Jones

Readers

May 3rd Joyce Holland & Marian Davies
10th Philip Roper & Pam Lawrence
17th Deryk Jones & Jean Bayley
24th Glyn Roper & Barry Lawrence
31st Fred Foulkes & Julian Megraw

Prayers of Intercession

May 3rd Philip Roper
10th Sue Kite
17th Barry Lawrence
24th Claire Thomas
31st Pauline Green

Sound System

Heather Hughes
Elaine Parkin
Marian Davies
Marian Davies
Elaine Parkin

Church Flowers

May 3rd Mike Tudor
10th Pauline Green
17th Elaine Parkin
24th Claire Thomas
31st