

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him may not be lost, but have the eternal life."

John 3:16 -



HAPPY EASTER

JESUS

IS ALIVE!

Read the Easter story in Luke 22-24

+ THE CROSS + is a symbol of DEATH

It reminds us how God's Son, Jesus, was put to death by being nailed to a cross.

+ THE CROSS +
is a symbol of
LIFE
It reminds us
that Jesus has
risen from the dead
and is alive with
God in heaven.

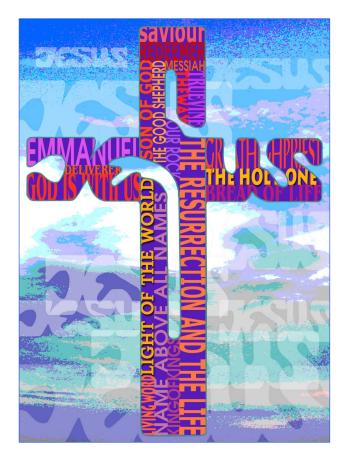


+ THE CROSS +
is a symbol of
LOVE
It reminds us
God loves us so much
that through His Son
Jesus we can become

God's children too.

+ THE CROSS +
is a symbol of
HOPE
It reminds us that
as God's children we
will one day be with
God in heaven.

InTouch





Fleet United Reformed Church

"We are a community of faithful Christian people, working to spread the love of God to all."

Our Mission Statement



FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Kings Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3AF

tel: 01252 623629 (ansaphone) email: admin@fleeturc.org.uk web: www.fleet.urc.org.uk



www.facebook.com/fleeturc



@FleetURC

CHURCH CONTACTS

Minister: Revd Ruth Dillon, 01252 625238

revrdillon@btinternet.com

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moray.henderson@ntlworld.com

Assistant Margaret Armes, 01252 650994

Administrator: b.armes@ntlworld.com

Treasurer: John Gibbons, 01252 614200

jmgibbons@hotmail.com

Hall Bookings: Brian Armes, 01252 650994

b.armes@ntlworld.com

SUNDAY WORSHIP

10 am: Family Worship Holy Communion usually on third Sunday of month First Sunday only: 6.30 pm Holy Communion

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

'Footsteps' Young People's Group: Sundays, 10 am (term time only)

House Group:Mondays, 10 am (at 35 Frere Ave)Prayer Group:See page 5 for dates and timesBible Study:See page 5 for dates and timesPilots:Tuesdays, 4-5 pm (term time only)

Coffee Morning: Thursdays, 10–11.30 am

Toddlers Group: Fridays, 10 am

Under the umbrella of the United Reformed Church, *Brownie* and *Rainbow Units* meet each week during school term.

Up to date details of all the above activities are available from the Church Office, from the Church Secretary, or on our website.

FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends

One of the contemporary hymns that will probably be sung in many churches as we approach Easter is 'Meekness and Majesty', written and composed by Graham Kendrick. Although it is not in our Rejoice and Sing hymnbook, we have sung the hymn here at Fleet URC. So as we enter the season of Easter the paradox of the meekness of Jesus on the cross on Good Friday compared with the mystery and majesty of Easter and the Resurrection resonates with our Christian faith.



People who do not regularly attend church often think that Christmas is the busiest time; but although the Christmas season is busy, in reality Lent, Holy Week and Easter can easily beat it.

For the Gospel writers Easter is by far the more important. Mark's Gospel, possibly written in a hurry at a time of persecution, has no Christmas story at all; but a third of the length of the Gospel is taken up with Jesus' last week of life. A lot goes on, and it is all significant.

Firstly, Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem to the shouts of 'Hosanna!' proclaims the **majesty** of Jesus; yet the crowd's understanding of majesty was mistaken. Their hopes were political and for the present situation, rather than God's Kingdom perspective.

Secondly, as Holy Week progresses the atmosphere changes and we see Jesus standing in front of Pilot. The word **meekness** leads me to think of mildness and ineffectiveness. Jesus' meekness always seems to be of a different sort. Jesus allows things to happen to him, and in that way he is submissive. But his teaching in the Temple and his answers to Jewish and Roman leaders remain challenging. He struggles with what is happening to him and cries out in despair from the cross, representing all who suffer unjustly and unfairly. Jesus' meekness is not weak, but comes out from who he is in relationship to his father, and suggests a tremendous strength. Pilate is ironically right when he declares 'Behold the man'.

Throughout the story of Holy Week and Easter there is **mystery**.

Why this way?

Why is innocent suffering the constant human story, whether in first century Palestine or in 21st century Syria, and so many other places we could all so easily name?

- That mystery is answered by another, a triumphant one which overturns all our fears and despair.
- The mystery of death being conquered: Jesus is living and reigning not just in the experiences of those who knew him then, but actively affecting our lives now.

• The mystery of Easter is the outworking of that hope, not just in a quiet garden tomb, but in the hustle and bustle of the world now, and in and through us.

So as we sing *Meekness and Majesty* this Easter season, let us recall the range of human emotions Jesus would have felt, and in those human emotions, and as the morning dew and blood mingled together on the ground, our hope was born on Easter morning.

Jesus the Christ is Risen!! Alleluia!

Easter blessings

Ruth



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Baptism

On 19th March proud parents Rebecca and Matthew Dumbleton brought their baby son Luke Graham to be baptised. It was such a happy occasion, and lovely to meet so many of their friends and family members who had come to support Luke on his special day. The service was conducted by our Minister, Ruth.



Quiz Night



Our latest social evening was a very successful Quiz Night—a fish and chip supper followed by a general knowledge quiz that had many of us scratching our heads! Quiz Night has become an annual favourite, and this year was supported by over fifty members and friends of the church, who all agreed that it had been a very enjoyable evening of fun and fellowship.

DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM THE URC

Every morning a reading, reflection and prayer are sent out by email from the URC. They are written by a team of around 100 people from different places and perspectives and are designed to help enrich our discipleship.

You can read them all by going to http://devotions.urc.org.uk, where you can also sign up to receive them yourself.



ANNUAL LEAVE

Ruth, our Minister, will not be available on the following dates:

26th April—3rd May (Annual leave)

22nd—25th May (Ministers' Spring School)

5th—10th June (Annual leave)



BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Each month we meet in the vestry to explore the Lectionary readings for the following Sunday. The next gatherings will be at **2 pm** on:

> Monday, 10th April Monday, 8th May Monday, 12th June

MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP

The monthly Prayer Group will meet on the following dates at 12 noon in the vestry at Fleet URC (Please note the change from the regular dates)

Monday, 10th April Monday, 8th May Monday, 12th June

Come and join us for 30 minutes of quiet meditation and prayer.

CELEBRATING 500 YEARS OF THE REFORMATION



Martin Luther's anniversary will be on 31st October, so a special worship remembering the Reformation, our roots and heritage, will be held on **Sunday 29th October.**

Complementing this service, there will be a film about Martin Luther's life, 'Luther', starring Joseph Fiennes and Peter Ustinov, as well as 'Walk with Martin Luther', exploring the man, his faith and challenges.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS

Footsteps

Our young people have been studying some notable Old Testament characters. For each person they made a poster with a collage indicating key elements of the Biblical story and these, mounted together, formed a stunning visual display. The young people introduced their handiwork to an appreciative congregation in a recent Sunday morning service.





The characters from the Old Testament that they depicted were:

Adam and Eve, Abraham & Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Jacob, Noah, Samuel, Ruth, Daniel, Nehemiah, David and Samuel.

Margaret Armes



Pilots

The Pilots Group have been busy learning about Canada, our chosen topic for this term. John Gibbons came to tell us about life in Canada, and



brought with him a large Canadian flag and some biscuits ('cookies') and cakes made from maple syrup. We also put maple syrup on our pancakes when we made them on Shrove Tuesday.

As Easter approaches we will be making and decorating chocolate eggs using special moulds. We are also working hard to achieve our First Aid Crests, and we are

grateful to Mary Mathew for teaching us what we need to know.

On 20th May 23 people from the church will be supporting the Pilots by going along to the Pilots Big Day Out at Warwick Castle. We are all looking forward to having lots of fun there, as well as meeting Pilots from other URC groups around the country.

Bee Griffiths



Everyone is invited to come to the Wessex and South Western Synod Big Day Out, a fun celebration day with the theme—'Feasts and Festivals'.

The day will start at 10 am and end at 3 pm with an act of worship (including Communion).

There will be lots of different activities in four sessions, including:

Crafts; Flag Making; Drama; Street Dance; Godly Play; Bread Making; Talks, Seminars and Workshops; Exhibitions; Live Music; Sports and Games

Please bring a picnic lunch. There will be places to sit down at a table, and free tea, coffee and soft drinks will be provided. Please note that there will be no food on sale at the event.

A coach will be going from the church, and ticket prices are:

Adults £8 (£18 including coach)
Young People 5-16 £4 (£12 including coach).

Please let me know if you would like tickets, or any further information. *Bee Griffiths* (660599)

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK. 14th—20th MAY



This year, in addition to the usual house-to-house and High Street collections, we will also be collecting at Fleet railway station. We will need two people per day from 6.30—8.30 am. A nice early start, and then the rest of the day at leisure—what more could you want!

Collectors are urgently required to help cover

our section of Fleet. If you are able to help, I will be very happy to hear from you.

The Cake and Plant Sale will be held at Fleet Parish Community Centre on Saturday, 13th May. Contributions of both cakes and plants would be lovely, and much appreciated.

The joint Christian Aid service this year will be on Sunday 14th May at 6.45 pm at Christ Church, Gally Hill Road. This service is always inspiring, so please put the date in your diary and come along.

Linda Storey (647650)



'THY KINGDOM COME'

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland are encouraging all churches,

regardless of denomination, to be involved in a global prayer for mission and evangelism.



The initiative is called 'Thy Kingdom Come', and during ten days (25th May-4th June) churches and individuals are called to pray for communities and global situations in a wave of global prayer.

At Fleet United Reformed Church the church will be 'open' and available for prayer throughout the day for users of the premises and church members and friends, concluding with an evening of prayer on

Saturday, June 3rd, from 6 pm to 12 midnight. Look for the poster with more details.

If you would like further information, please speak to me or go to the website link: https://www.thykingdomcome.global.

Ruth



APRIL

April that brings moments of brilliant sun Can also bring us rain and sudden snow, Hurl hail, and chase the clouds across the sky: A microcosm of our weather's range, Perhaps the unpredicted moods of April Mirror the strange experience of Easter— The seeming tragedy of love's defeat, Beyond all hope, the joy of Jesus risen.

Sheila Durbin



WALKING THE WAY 2017

In the coming years the United Reformed Church wants to place a greater emphasis on discipleship and mission, under the banner 'Walking the Way'-living the life of Jesus today.

We are all called to follow Jesus, to be a disciple and to practise the skills of discipleship on our own and with others.

Like the disciples in Acts, we are called to walk with Christ, in the power of that same Spirit who inspired them to follow Jesus and go where they had not been before.

What does it mean to be a disciple today?

At its most basic, a disciple is simply a learner, someone who is learning to follow Jesus (in this moment), growing in his/her relationship with him, with other people, and with the wider world/creation.

This takes time—a life time—and it happens by doing it. There is no set way. There is no course that will tell you how to do it. It is simply setting out in faith, following Jesus and trusting in God. On the journey of faith we are always encouraged to take the next step and, as we do so, we make the road by walking.

The United Reformed Church is producing resources to aid people in being a disciple; for example, topics for discussion; a new course for discipleship; Lent and Advent worship resources, and much more.

This is not just another initiative, but it is encouraging all people to be involved in lifelong learning about faith and discipleship.

Look out for more information about 'Walking the Way' in the church magazine and during forthcoming church meetings. Ruth

CHURCH AND SOCIETY ON IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES: An Immigrant's Perspective

(This is the first in a series of articles on topical subjects issued by the Church and Society Group of Wessex Synod.)

Introduction

While fear of immigrants and refugees has existed for some time, in the time since the Brexit vote and President Trump's election it has become particularly palpable. This fear is in part fuelled by the media, and can be seen in many newspaper headlines related to immigration.

My Experience as an Immigrant in the NHS

The media informs us about immigrants taking British jobs, and at the same time it tells us about critical shortages of doctors, nurses and other health



professionals. The NHS recruited me from Zimbabwe due to staff shortages. My husband, who is a Power System Engineer, speaks of shortages of engineers and of having to recruit from outside the United Kingdom.

Curbing illegal immigration

The Government is doing all it can to stop illegal immigration and those who come from other EU countries to exploit benefits. Not that I support illegal immigrants, but the truth is that they leave

a tormented life to go to life where one has to live a lie and in hiding from the authorities. Those who work illegally pay tax to the government which they rarely benefit from. They are unable to access medical health or other assistances.

I once came across a man who had fist-like swellings in his neck. He was admitted to hospital very ill. As soon as the hospital discovered that he was an illegal immigrant working illegally in the UK he was discharged without any medication and was not even told the results of his tests. As gravely ill as he was he had to go back to his country.

Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

As a working immigrant I sympathise with those who cannot find jobs in the fields they want to work. Hopefully Brexit will lead to more jobs, as promised. On the other hand, one wonders who will fill the current employment shortages, which are not being met by British nationals.

Time will tell whether we can live as an entity without the help of our neighbours. Brexit and President Trump have brought a glimmer of hope to those who really struggle with immigrants and refugees.



Conclusion

As God's people we are given the capability to reason. We do not always get it right, but we do learn from our mistakes. When we have got it wrong we should be humble enough to apologise, forgive, and move on.

Life is precious and too short. Let us not take immigration issues personally but leave them in the hands of the authorities, as each refugee and immigrant has their own story to tell. Let us think of our physical and spiritual health. After all, we were all immigrants at some point. I would like to encourage all immigrants, refugees and British nationals to live peacefully and in community with our fellow humans for a happier society.

Enala Bhebhe (Church & Society Group, Wessex Synod)





CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FLEET AND CROOKHAM (CTFC)

To start on a happy note, Churches Together invited all volunteers who helped with the Christmas Day lunch to share an afternoon together on 19th March. Volunteer Pam Hasted went along and said it was a lovely afternoon with tasty sandwiches, cakes and friendly chat.

Fleet Angels were nominated to receive a 'High Sheriff Award' from the High Sheriff of Hampshire. This took place in the Great Hall, Winchester, on 15th March. Although Fleet Angels do not seek recognition for what they do, the award was greatly appreciated and very much deserved.

Easter events in Fleet are as follows. These are in addition to the services taking place here at Fleet URC (see Church Calendar insert).

Fleet Methodist Church will again hand out Hot Cross Buns with an Easter message in the week leading up to Easter.

Maundy Thursday (April 13th): There will be a reprise of the shoe cleaning in Fleet town that three of our ministers undertook a few years ago.

Good Friday (April 14th): The Catholic community has invited all Christians to join them outside the Church of Our Lady at 10.30 am for the Stations of the Cross.

Easter Sunday (April 16th): A Sonrise Service led by the Parish of Fleet will be held at 6 am at Tweseldown.

And now a gentle reminder to all you knitters that we will need our knitted Angels again this Christmas. There is also a pattern for crocheting them, although it has not yet been tested. If you would like to have a copy of this or one for the knitted ones, just let me know.

God bless and thank you for your support.

Darrell Henderson, CTFC Representative

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

I came across this story when I was representing the United Reformed Church at the Women's Presbyterian Conference in Taiwan in 2012. During a Bible study we discussed the events of Holy Week, and one Korean minister offered us this reflection:

In Korea there is a story told, a legend, about a man who dies and goes to Heaven. He says to the gatekeeper, "Before I go into Heaven, I'd like you to take me on a tour of Hell."

And so the man is taken to visit Hell. When he gets there he is surprised to see a long table piled high with the finest food anyone could ever want. But he saw that the people in Hell were starving, and he asked his guide, "Why is everyone starving?"



"It's like this," said the guide. "Everybody who comes to Hell is given a pair of chopsticks two metres long, which they have to hold at the end. Of course no one can eat with chopsticks that long. Look at everyone lifting their chopsticks trying to feed themselves—they miss their mouths every time. How miserable they all look!"

The man agreed that this really was Hell, and he asked to be taken straight back to Heaven. When he arrived there he saw the same kind of table piled high with the very same food. But here the people looked so very happy.

"No chopsticks, I suppose?" asked the man. "Oh yes," said his guide. "They have the same chopsticks, two metres long, and they must be held at the end, the same as in Hell. But here in Heaven people have learned that as they feed their neighbour with the long chopsticks their neighbour feeds them!"



Let us pray:

Lord, inspire me always to have genuine care and concern for others, and may people be as generous to me as I am to them. *Amen*

Ruth



PALANI MISSION—UPDATE

Our Mission Partner, Palani Mission, can be found in a remote part of the southern province of India called Tamil Nadu, and it belongs to the St Thomas Evangelical Churches of India. It has two objectives: firstly, to provide religious teaching based upon the life and work of Jesus, and secondly, to relieve the poverty and suffering of the poor. In the case of the latter, it is very much a charity providing shelter, food and clothing—the very basics of life.



At Fleet URC we are currently sponsoring two trainee midwives on a two-year course at the nearby Mission Hospital, and they will complete their two years of classroom work in Summer 2018. They will then spend their third year working at the hospital to gain hands-on experience of delivery and infant healthcare. In return they will receive a stipend from the hospital to cover their living expenses.

It is hoped that the Mission Hospital will then employ the girls on a permanent salaried staff basis,

thus securing a good future for them and a great benefit to the local community.

The sponsorship of the girls is covered completely

by money raised from Saju Mathew's Indian cookery demonstrations, the second of which was held in the church hall in February this year. This was a hugely successful evening, and the 90 guests were all treated to a three-course Indian feast after the demonstration.

Following this event, the Inner Wheel of Hart Rotary Club donated a further £200 to the project.

At our recent AGM church members agreed to explore the possibility of a long-term relationship

with Palani Mission, and the viability of sponsoring two more midwives.

John Gibbons



Hospice

TEA AT THE ELVETHAM HOTEL with violinist Kai Choi

Monday, 15th May, 2.30 for 3 pm

Tickets: £20

Available from the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice shop, or by calling 01252 612527

Dates for your diary:

Sale of Plants at Cranbrook Court, Fleet, on 4th June Street Collection in Fleet on 17th June

Please contact me if you would like more information about any of the above events ~ Vera Mosley (684431)



SAFEGUARDING TRAINING at Fleet URC

Part 1 on Thursday 15th June Part 2 on Thursday 22nd June 7.30—9.30 pm



Led by Phil Ray, Children's Youth and Development Officer for Wessex Synod

This course is open to everyone.

Those who work with our young people are encouraged to attend if at all possible; but it is also important for Elders, Ministers, FACCTS workers, Parents, Grandparents—and anyone who has any contact at all with children. The training will help to protect us, as well as the children we all care about.

Topics covered are:

Safeguarding Policy; Premises; People; Protecting Children and Adults at Risk; Paper Trails; and Safer Church Culture.

Please put the dates in your diary. Come and talk to me, tell me you are interested or would like more information. The more people who come along the better. The experience, expertise and knowledge of every individual is vitally important if we are to get it right.

Margaret Armes

SPRING QUIET DAY
at Beacon Hill URC
Saturday 6th May 2017
10 am—4 pm
Theme: A Light for my Path



A space where we can meet God, prepare ourselves for the budding growth of the earth, and reflect on our discipleship.

Including: prayer walk (weather permitting); making a prayer pot for summer; opportunity for silent prayer; prayer stations; reflective worship

Lunch will be provided

Cost: £7.50 per person

Please phone 01252 625238 to reserve a place



COMMITMENT FOR LIFE (CforL)

Please continue to pray for the work of CforL and its partners. CforL envelopes are on the table under the CforL bulletin board at the back of the church. Please place them in the Sunday

morning offering during any service. If you would like to be added to Stories for Change distribution, please let me know.

Tamyra Sherratt, Commitment for Life Link Person

AND ANOTHER THING.... A Favourite Prayer

Thank you to Carol Woods, who has offered the following in response to my appeal for favourite prayers. I would be delighted to receive more suggestions for publication in future editions of the Newsletter. If you can, please include a brief explanation why the prayer is particularly meaningful for you ~ Christine Gibbons, Editor

Carol writes:

Whenever I have felt in need of help, this prayer has been a great salvation to me. It has helped me to reflect, to accept and understand the choices I have had to make over the past year.

Sadly, I do not know the author's name. Maybe someone will know?

A Prayer for Difficult Times

Dear Lord,

You know all that I am dealing with.

You know that there are things happening that are beyond my control.

Please help me to accept what I can't change.

Help me turn my worry time to prayer time.

Please help me so that these things don't spoil my joy.

Help me to keep my eyes fixed on you.

I give you my stress, I give you my disappointments. I give you my frustrations and sadness, and ask for your peace.

May your will be done. In Jesus' name I pray. *Amen*



CHURCH CALENDAR: APRIL—JUNE 2017

April

2nd	10 am	Family Worship (Parade Service) led by Revd Ruth Dillon	
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Com	munion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
10th	12 noon 2 pm	Monthly Prayer Group) I Monthly Bible Study)	led by Revd Ruth Dillon

Easter Services		
9th		Palm Sunday
	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd John Whitton
		(You are asked to bring your Palm Cross if you have retained it from last year.)
13th	7.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Service led by Mrs Thelma Roberts
14th	11 am	Good Friday Service led by Revd Ruth Dillon
16th		Easter Sunday
	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon (Please bring a flower to help decorate the Cross.)

23rd	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Diana Middleditch
26th	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
30th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mr Paul Murphy



May

6th 7th	10 am 10 am	Spring Quiet Day at Beacon Hill URC Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon, followed by	
<i>i</i> u i	10 am	Church Meeting	
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon	
8th	12 noon 2 pm	Monthly Prayer Group) led by Revd Ruth Dillon Monthly Bible Study)	
14th	10 am	Mission Sunday Family Worship led by Revd Alan Clarredge ('Rivers of Living Water')	
14th-	–20th	Christian Aid Week	
17th	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting (to be confirmed)	
21st	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Anthea Wickens	
28th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Howard Sharp	

June

6 pm—12 am <i>'Thy Kingdom Come'</i> Prayer Evening	
10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon
6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Thelma Roberts, followed by Church Sunday lunch
12 noon 2 pm	Monthly Prayer Group) led by Revd Ruth Dillon Monthly Bible Study)
7.30 pm	Safeguarding Training Part 1
10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
7.30 pm	Safeguarding Training Part 2
7.30 pm	Social Event: Beetle Drive
10 am	Family Worship led Mrs Diana Middleditch
	10 am 6.30 pm 10 am 12 noon 2 pm 7.30 pm 10 am 7.30 pm 7.30 pm 7.30 pm



The dates and times of meetings and social events may change. Please check beforehand on the church website, www.fleet.urc.org.uk, or with Assistant Administrator, Margaret Armes (650994).

The next issue of *In Touch* will also cover three months, ie July—September. Items for inclusion should be with Christine Gibbons by **Sunday 12th June** (christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk).



