

CHURCH CALENDAR

FEBRUARY—MARCH 2018

February

4th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
5th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
11th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd John Whitton
14th		<i>Ash Wednesday</i>
18th	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion, with Ordination and Induction of Elders, led by Revd Ruth Dillon
19th	2 pm	Bible Study
21st	7.30 pm	Elders Meeting
22nd	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Group
25th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mr Sydney Shore



March

1st	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Group
2nd		<i>Women's World Day of Prayer (details of services on p.11)</i>
4th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon, followed by Church AGM & Election of Secretary and Treasurer
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
5th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
8th	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Group
11th	10 am	<i>Mothering Sunday</i> Family Worship led by Mr Ian Fletcher, followed by Church Sunday lunch
12th	2 pm	Bible Study
15th	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Group
18th	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
22nd	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Group
23rd	7.30 pm	Church Social: Quiz Night
26th	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Group

For times of Easter services please see page 4.

Please be aware that the dates and times of meetings and social events may change. You are advised to check beforehand on the church website, www.fleet.urb.org.uk, or with Assistant Administrator, Margaret Armes (650994).

In Touch

February—March 2018



Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures for ever—Psalm 136, v 1



Fleet United Reformed Church



FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

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www.facebook.com/fleeturc



@FleetURC

CHURCH CONTACTS

<i>Minister:</i>	Revd Ruth Dillon , 01252 625238 revrdillon@btinternet.com
<i>Secretary:</i>	Moray Henderson , 01252 659569 moray.henderson@ntlworld.com
<i>Assistant Administrator:</i>	Margaret Armes , 01252 650994 b.ames@ntlworld.com
<i>Treasurer:</i>	John Gibbons , 01252 614200 jmgibbons@hotmail.com
<i>Hall Bookings:</i>	Brian Armes , 01252 650994 b.ames@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

<i>'Footsteps' Young People's Group:</i>	Sundays, 10 am (<i>term time only</i>)
<i>House Group 1:</i>	Mondays, 10 am (at 35 Frere Ave)
<i>House Group 2:</i>	See page 5 for details
<i>Prayer Group:</i>	See page 5 for details
<i>Bible Study:</i>	See page 5 for details
<i>Coffee Morning:</i>	Thursdays, 10–11.30 am
<i>Toddlers Group:</i>	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

The snowdrops are coming through in my pots at the manse. Spring is just around the corner!

I love this time of year, the time in between winter and spring; the time of expectation, of hope and of waiting. I know that the winter nights are now shorter, and the snowdrops peeking through the soil are evidence that the daylight is getting stronger.

All this points to the season of flourishing that we call Spring.

This weekend, the URC Youth Assembly (15–25 year olds) was held in Litchfield, and I witnessed another kind of flourishing. The theme for the weekend was 'Pilgrimage—are we there yet?', where I was invited to run two workshops entitled 'Personal Pilgrimage—a search to find God', as well as to conduct the late night communion on the Saturday night.

Two hundred young people came from all corners of the United Reformed Church, and the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland even drove a minibus from Glasgow to enable young people from Scotland to attend.

Kevin Watson, the Moderator of General Assembly, was present all weekend, as was the Deputy General Secretary Richard Church, and Lawrence Moore, who was the keynote speaker for the event.

The Youth Assembly is run just like the General Assembly. Discussions were varied, ranging from equality issues; mental health awareness; strongly encouraging all churches to be inclusive; acknowledging and supporting diversity in churches; lowering the age limit of Youth Assembly; to recommending that all churches have WIFI. Resolutions were proposed, seconded and tabled, and those accepted will be brought to General Assembly for recommendation. They are hopeful that some of the resolutions will be accepted. At one point I was seated next to Kevin Watson, who commented that the Youth Assembly had firmly got to grips with consensus voting, and that he was learning from them and the process of chairing the meeting.

Each young person stood waiting in a line to speak, and one 15 year old girl who had complex needs spoke passionately and eloquently about how young people should have a voice in the local church, not just at Youth Assembly.

Young people of different cultures, abilities, disabilities, sexuality, and ages, all contributed to making the event very special for me, culminating in a very atmospheric late night communion, which I had the privilege to conduct.

Flourishing is happening within the United Reformed Church—I have seen it with my own eyes. However with new shoots, new thoughts, new ideas and new understanding comes change and a need for different ways of doing things, which is a big challenge to us all. Young people live in the same world as us, but are in tune to inclusivity, mental health issues, equality and



diversity, in a way that is very different from when I was growing up.

The Youth Moderator, Dan Morrell, left the young people and the observers with a challenge in his leaving address: to seek the Kingdom of God on our pilgrimage and discipleship, to challenge injustice, to be inclusive, to have all our senses open to the presence of God, and to be the voice of the United Reformed Church in 2018 and beyond.

We are all responsible for shaping and guiding young people to enable them to be part of the Kingdom of God. Many young people feel frustrated that churches are not flourishing, and are reluctant to change their ideas. Some feel alone, that they are the voice crying out in the wilderness.



Dan Morrell & Hannah Jones

Is anyone listening to them? Are we willing to be part of the change the Youth Assembly has identified?

Driving back in the snow after the event, I felt elated, challenged and encouraged. Dan Morrell, who is training to be a pilot, has passed the responsibility of Youth Moderator to Hannah Jones, a newly qualified doctor at St George's in London. However we all, as members of URC congregations in England, Scotland and Wales, have a responsibility to encourage all young people in their faith, and not leave it for the few who lead Junior Church.

I feel humbled and privileged to have been part of a movement within the URC that is flourishing and

growing. May we be encouraged to know that the Holy Spirit is moving within our denomination.

Every blessing,

Ruth

EASTER SERVICES 2018



March		
25th		<i>Palm Sunday</i>
10 am		Family Worship led by Revd Ray Stanyon
29th	7.30 pm	<i>Maundy Thursday Communion Service</i> led by Revd Ruth Dillon
30th	10.30 am	<i>Good Friday Service</i> led by Mrs Meg Nicholson
April		
1st		<i>Easter Day</i>
10 am		Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Mrs Thelma Roberts (Please bring a flower to help decorate the Cross.)
6.30 pm		Evening Service to be confirmed



Pelly Concert Orchestra

FAMILY CONCERT

Saturday 17th February, 4—5 pm

Church on the Heath

Family favourites such as Star Wars, Bob the Builder, Lion King, Beauty and the Beast, Pirates of the Caribbean

All tickets £5

Tel: 0345 269 4619; email: tickets@pellyorchestra.co.uk



MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY

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:

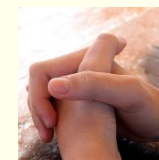
Monday, 19th February
Monday, 12th March

MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP

The monthly Prayer Group will meet on the following dates at **12 noon** in the vestry at Fleet URC

Monday, 5th February
Monday, 5th March

Come and join us for 30 minutes of quiet meditation



NOTICE BOARD

NEW HOUSE GROUP

A new house group meets monthly at 7.30 pm at 39 Malthouse Close.

Next meeting: 15th February

Everyone is welcome.

Please contact Meg Nicholson (687075) for more details.

ANNUAL & STUDY LEAVE

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

6th—7th February

(Haslemere clergy retreat)

12th—16th February

(Training and Development)

Items for the April—May issue of *In Touch* should be with Christine Gibbons by **Sunday 18th March 2018**
christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk

Art of
the
possible

☒ YES
☐ NO
☐ MAYBE

JP JOINT PUBLIC
IT ISSUES TEAM
CHURCHES WORKING
FOR PEACE & JUSTICE



**BAPTISTS
TOGETHER**

The **Methodist Church**

The Church of Scotland

ECUMENICAL LENT GROUP 2018 ART OF THE POSSIBLE

**THURSDAY - FEB 22ND, MARCH 1ST 8TH 15TH 22ND
MONDAY – MARCH 26TH
7.30PM-9PM**

FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH. KINGS ROAD, FLEET

Does politics have a role in the Church or is it a distraction from our mission? Is politics about compromise – what is possible – when our Christian faith is about truth?

At a time when a lot of people say they are turned off by politics, many in our churches are still concerned about what is going on in our world. What does politics mean for our faith – and what should our faith mean for our politics?

JP JOINT PUBLIC
IT ISSUES TEAM
CHURCHES WORKING
FOR PEACE & JUSTICE



The **Methodist Church**

**BAPTISTS
TOGETHER**

The Church of Scotland

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: REVRDILLON@BTINTERNET.COM 01252 625238

FOOTSTEPS

The members of Footsteps, young and old, would like to thank everyone who supported them on Christmas Eve when they led the morning service—a great success. The young people explored what the individual letters of the word 'Christmas' might mean, and even provided musical accompaniment to some of the carols. Congratulations and very well done to all those who took part!



An Appeal for Help:

The leaders who set up and clear away on a Sunday morning are finding it difficult to do it for both Footsteps and the creche. The creche area is very important as it is a space where parents can take their very young children, should they feel it necessary to take them out of the service.

We are hoping that there is someone in our congregation who can spare five minutes before and after the service to help us. Everything is in the cupboard in the creche room, and there will always be someone around to ask.

If you think you can help, please talk to one of us.

Margaret Armes, Grace Bagshaw & Helen Bailey



JEAN'S JOTTINGS: Learning to Drive

I began driving lessons at a latish age—35 years old. My wonderful husband decided to teach me: easy peasy, he said.

We had three small sons, so we had to take them with us on each lesson. Not a problem, they could—and did—yell and fight just as well in the car as in the garden. We also spent many 'happy' hours negotiating 12-point turns and parking wildly in empty car parks.

However one day we decided to go to the coast. We lived in Birmingham and shared the driving—me half an hour, husband the rest of the journey! As we were driving down a long, straight road I saw in the distance what looked like a small animal on my side of the road. As I drew nearer I went round the creature, not wishing to flatten it, when we all realised at the same moment that it was—a large brown bag!



I was never able to stop my sons and husband from relating this at every family gathering, much to my embarrassment!

Jean Schafer

LIGHT SHIFT

This morning wind-swept trees and steady rain
Combined to give the day a cheerless look
And after a mild spell, the chill of autumn
Seemed to prevail and man-made heat alone
Did not suffice to comfort heart and body.

Then, all unheralded, a ray of sun
Pierced the grey cloud-banks to transform the scene,
Shining in rain drops hanging from the leaves;
Reminding me that in my looming trials
I should find help, kindness from friend and stranger
And God's great love would always comfort me.

Sheila Durbin

PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

On 23rd February 1976 the English painter L S Lowry died. He painted scenes of mills and houses in the industrial towns of Manchester and Salford, painting in a simple, almost child-like way. He portrayed enormous factories and smoking chimneys that surrounded people whom he showed as small, stick-like figures. Lowry said of himself, "I'm a simple man, and I use simple materials." A song was written about Lowry and his paintings: *'Matchstalk Men and Matchstalk Cats and Dogs.'*



LS Lowry: *Walking to Work*

Thinking of the 'little people' whom Lowry painted, we are reminded that, in the gospels, if others saw anyone as 'small' or 'insignificant', Jesus made them 'walk tall'.

Zacchaeus lived in Jericho. He was a small man who wanted others to look up to him, and he hoped to gain importance as a tax collector. As Jesus walked along the road, crowds stood around him and the small Zacchaeus could not see. He ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to make himself look bigger. As Jesus moved along he not only looked at Zacchaeus, but also called him by his name.

Jesus arranged to eat in his house that night, showing the crowd that, whilst they had an attitude of rejecting Zacchaeus, he did not.

Ruth

Let us pray:



Lord Jesus, you called Zacchaeus by his name and enabled him to grow.
I ask you to enter my life in a new way this day that I may grow in stature and wisdom and grace as the person you call me to be.
Inspire me to follow you more closely and help me to live in such a way that I encourage others and bring life to them.
No one is small in your eyes;
Let no one be small in mine.

Amen

LENTEN VALENTINES

This February, Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day share the same date!

It seems an odd mix, yet there is an obvious link: *love*. Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, is about learning how to love God more as we give God space in our lives. It is also an opportunity to reflect on Jesus' experience in the wilderness (Luke 2: 1-13).

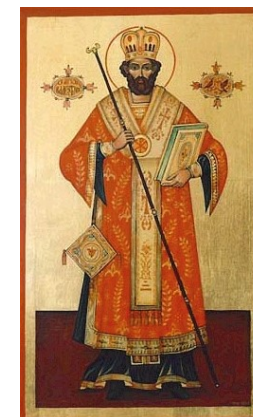
Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit (v1), where He was tempted by Satan, but demonstrated the path of real love. Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread. Love gets to the heart of human need, and doesn't just satisfy physical desires. Satan tempts Jesus to worship him. However worshipping God is the beginning of love and results in sacrificial service to meet the needs of others. Finally He is tempted to put God to the test by jumping off the Temple. Only real love can change hearts by practical love and care.

Lent teaches us how to live out the love of God in practice, as we follow Jesus in the way of the cross.

Valentine was Christ's follower, committed to sharing God's love with others. We know little about him, except that he was a priest who lived in the 3rd century AD and was martyred on 14th February. The Emperor Claudius felt that soldiers in the Roman army were distracted from their duty by their wives, and so attempted to outlaw marriage. It is believed that Valentine married couples in secret. He also helped Christians in Rome during times of persecution. He demonstrated the importance of showing real love in action.

In trying to understand the meaning of her revelations from God, Julian of Norwich found, 'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning.'

Revd Paul Hardingham, *The Parish Pump*



St Valentine



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FLEET AND CROOKHAM (CTFC)

I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year and hope that your Christmas was full of family, love and celebrations.

The **Angel Bombing** was again a great success. Over 3,000 angels were knitted, of which 310 came from our church. This year, instead of all the churches meeting together to attach the labels, we organised our own 'label bee', where we chatted and commented on all the different angels that our church had made. Then there was a ceremony at Fleet Methodist Church on 3rd December when the angels were blessed in readiness for their public debut on 16th December.



I should like to thank all who helped with the knitting, label attaching and distribution of the angels in Fleet Road. Once again, there were some very favourable reports on Facebook, with stories shared. For instance, when we were in Fleet Road at 6 am a little girl and her mother came running along. It was lovely to hear the girl shout, "I found one!" She had woken her mother early to be sure of finding an angel, but the mother thought she had

made a mistake—she found it hard to believe that we would put them out so early in the morning.

Christmas Day lunch:

Pam Hasted and Val and Brian Cox represented us this year at the Harlington Centre, and all agreed it was a very enjoyable afternoon. There were approximately 35 guests, who enjoyed a splendid Christmas meal, followed by a ten minute 'pantomime' ably performed by a team of volunteers. At 3 pm they listened to the Queen's Speech, following which Father Christmas made an appearance with gifts for all guests.

Future of Churches Together:

Following a survey issued in Autumn 2017 to canvass the views of their congregations, local ministers met to discuss the results. It was agreed that it was an appropriate time for Churches Together to take a break, and to go into a 'fallow period'. The following proposals were made:

- Ministers to strengthen their relationships to enable greater working together in the future.
- A project group to be set up under the chair of Patrick Butler, with Will Parker of FACCTS as secretary, to ensure that existing projects continue to run successfully.
- Meetings of representatives to be suspended until the AGM in September.

At a subsequent meeting of representatives on 11th January there was a robust discussion on the future of Churches Together. As there is currently no Chairperson or Secretary, Will Parker led the meeting, where it was agreed that there will be no further CT initiatives in 2018, apart from a theatre production planned at the Church on the Heath. Individual churches are invited to lead their own projects ecumenically.

Other points:

- Representatives Andrew Johnston (Methodist Church) and David Spain (Catholic Community) have stepped down.
- Anna Chaplaincy coordinator Elaine Gilbert, gave an update. She is currently working in Gracewell Care Home, Church Crookham, with the support of management and staff.
- There will be an 'open forum' at Livingstones on 12th July to discuss future plans for Churches Together.

I am looking forward to seeing the progress of the new format. Please do let me know your thoughts and ideas.

Women's World Day of Prayer:

The services this year will be held on **Friday 2nd March 2018**, at Church Crookham Baptist Church (10 am) and the Church on the Heath (7.30 pm). Everyone is welcome. The service has been written by the women of Suriname, a beautiful and colourful country on the north eastern coast of South America.

God bless,

Darrell Henderson, CTFC Representative



Phyllis
Tuckwell
Hospice

HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY BAND

Saturday, 10th February at 7.30 pm

at the Church on the Heath

Tickets £12

DINNER AT PARADISO (formerly Al Fresco)

Tuesday, 20th March, 7.00 for 7.30 pm

Tickets £22

Tickets for both events are available from the Hospice Shop
or from Vera Mosley (684431)

THINK: RECYCLE

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it (Psalm 24 v1)*



In our last edition of *In Touch*, some of you may have read about my passion for all things environmental, and I left you with the question, 'What one thing can you do now to improve our world?' I wonder if anyone has given this any thought? Thoughts are the first step, but taking action is the next! So where to start?

At Fleet URC we already have some ways established; perhaps you could consider contributing to these as a first

step (if you haven't already!)

1. Used stamps. Although many business letters don't have stamps, consider all the Christmas card envelopes, birthday or greetings card envelopes, and other mail that comes with a stamp. By tearing off the stamp carefully (leaving a small margin) and putting them aside, you can bring them in to the box in the church, and thereby help local charities too!
2. Foil—a wonder in the kitchen! So many uses, but did you know that it is quite easy to wash your foil and reuse it? We use foil several times before it is relegated (usually quite crumpled and with holes appearing) to our foil recycling bag. If you buy pies, quiches, Kit-Kat type biscuits etc that come in foil trays or wrappings, these can be washed and saved too. Don't be fooled by foiled plastic though; genuine foil stays squashed when you squash it, whereas foiled plastic springs back. Meg Nicholson is always delighted to receive a bag of foil, which goes to support a charity researching into MS.
3. Milk bottle tops—the plastic kind. If you buy your milk from supermarkets in plastic bottles, please save the lids and pass them on to John and Christine Gibbons. The tops are passed on again via other people. Strangely, their final destination is unknown to us, but if they are recycled or put to a good purpose, that has to be better than throwing them in the bin! NB: Milkmen still deliver milk in returnable/reusable glass bottles with foil tops—see point 2.
4. Don't forget Bee's stall—any unwanted items can be passed on to Bee to sell at her stall at coffee mornings, and at our annual Craft Fair.

I hope these suggestions might prompt you to make a change for the better in 2018. Anyone who watched 'Blue Planet' will know what a devastating effect plastic is having on our world, so any change that we can make now will be a change for the good. We don't need to wait 25 years to get started!

Grace Bagshaw



COMMITMENT FOR LIFE

*A Prayer by Tamyra Sherratt,
Commitment for Life Link Person:*

Dear Lord,

As we travel through 2018, help us to focus on you. It is so easy to become caught up in many distractions and differing views. We pray that your will for the world will shine through the darkness. In Jesus' name we pray.

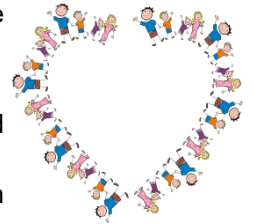
Amen

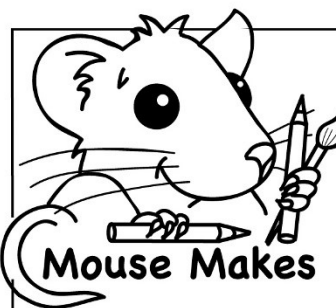


LOVE IS...

What do children know about love? When questioned, some four to eight year olds came up with the following:

- * When you're born and see your mummy for the first time. That's love.
- * Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.
- * If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who hates you.
- * Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.
- * I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones.
- * You have to fall in love before you get married. Then when you're married, you just sit around and read books together.
- * I let my big sister pick on me because my Mum says she only picks on me because she loves me.
- * Love goes on even when you stop breathing, and you pick up where you left off when you reach Heaven.
- * Love cards like Valentine's cards say stuff on them that we'd like to say ourselves, but we wouldn't be caught dead saying it.
- * When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.



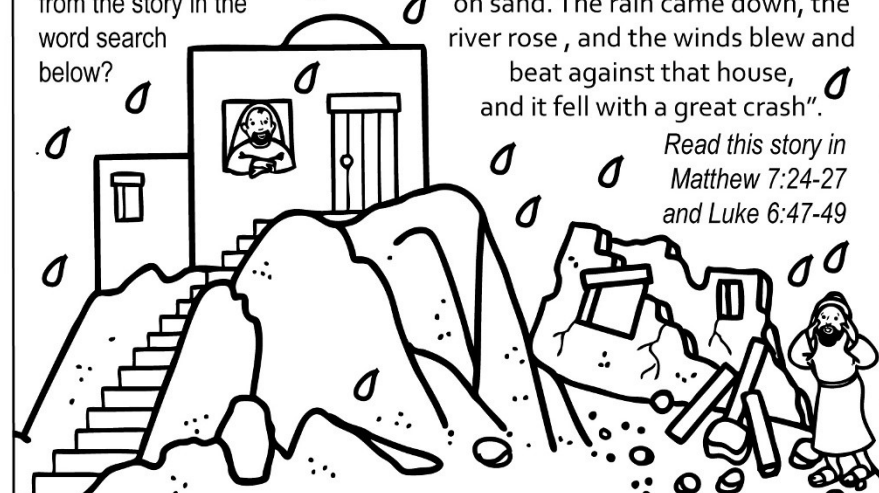


Mouse Makes

Can you find the words from the story in the word search below?

Jesus taught his disciples...
 "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds his house on solid rock. Though the rain came down, the river rose and the winds blew and beat against the house it did not fall. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the river rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash".

*Read this story in
Matthew 7:24-27
and Luke 6:47-49*



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

LISTEN • HEAR • JESUS • WORDS • WISE • MAN • BUILT • HOUSE • SOLID
 FOUNDATION • ROCK • RAIN • WIND • FLOOD • RIVER • BURST • FOOLISH
 SAND • GROUND • COLLAPSED • FELL • DESTROYED • RUIN

AND ANOTHER THING....

New Year Musings

Our New Year's Day walk wasn't quite the same this year. The canal was still its usual watery self: no change there. But nothing else stirred. Not a bird in sight, and even the perennial ducks seemed subdued.



But why should things be the same each year? Not just the walks, but anything? Perhaps we take too much for granted? Many of us wish each other, 'Happy New Year' - *not a duplicate New Year*.

Even our TV programmes are different, thank goodness. What would we think if our TV programmes were exactly the same every year?

That reminds me, did anyone watch Robert Powell in 'The Real Jesus' on the History Channel over Christmas? Robert Powell took us for a walk in the footsteps of Jesus, through the Holy Land. I think that walking was more the norm in those days: no public transport, just 'Shanks's Pony'. And when,

as we are told, Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, it made that particular annual Passover quite different. I could watch that programme again. But watching it again wouldn't be quite the same, just different.

As I was saying, our New Year's Day walk does vary from year to year—but His message remains the same... for ever.

Thanks be to God.

Eric Perry



A final thought about Love:

Love seeketh not itself to please,
 Nor for itself hath any care,
 But for another gives its ease,
 And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair.

*William Blake
 from Songs of Experience,
 'The Clod and the Pebble'*