## CHURCH CALENDAR APRIL—MAY 2018

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1st	10 am	Easter Day Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Mrs Thelma Roberts (Please bring a flower to help decorate the Cross.)
		Please note: There will be NO evening service
5th	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Group (rescheduled meeting)
8th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon
9th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
15th	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd John Mackerness
16th	2 pm	Monthly Bible Study
22nd	10 am	Family Worship & Parade Service, led by Revd Ruth Dillon
25th	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting
26th	7.30 pm	Monthly House Group
29th	10 am	Family Worship led by Tamyra Sherratt and Nicola Hamilton



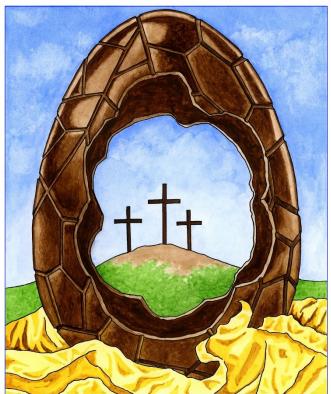
May		
6th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Meg Nicholson, followed by Church Meeting
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Graham Hoslett
11th	7 pm	Curry Night for Palani Mission
13th-	–19th	Christian Aid Week
13th	10 am	Family Worship led by Anna Crawford
14th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
17th May—12th June, 10 am—4 pm Vine Art Therapy Exhibition		
20th	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
21st	2 pm	Monthly Bible Study
23rd	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting (tbc)
24th	7.30 pm	Monthly House Group
27th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mr Andrew Gibb

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.urc.org.uk, or with Assistant Administrator, Margaret Armes (650994).

Items for the June—July 2018 issue of *In Touch* should be with Christine Gibbons by **Sunday 13th May** (christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk).

# InTouch

### April—May 2018



The Truth Behind the Egg



Fleet United Reformed Church

#### 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



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@FleetURC

#### **CHURCH CONTACTS**

Minister: Revd Ruth Dillon, 01252 625238

revrdillon@btinternet.com

Secretary: Tamyra Sherratt, 01252 629418

tlsherratt13@virginmedia.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 1: Mondays, 10 am (at 35 Frere Ave)

House Group 2:See page 5 for detailsPrayer Group:See page 5 for detailsBible Study:See page 5 for detailsCoffee 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

In 1999 England witnessed a complete solar eclipse. I can remember exactly where I was at the time, for I had been to visit my mother in Grimsby for a few days, and was driving on the M62 back home to Blackpool.

It was a very dramatic experience: cars were slowing as the daylight dwindled and, approaching the motorway services, I decided to stop and savour the moment.

The sky darkened and there were lots of murmurs of wonder as faces peered skywards. Some of you



reading this letter may also remember where you were when this event happened, but for me it was a dramatic experience and the memory of it and the feelings I experienced have never left me. I, like many other motorists who also stopped at the motorway services on the M62, was mesmerised. Words like 'apocalyptic', 'transformative' and 'dramatic' were used by the media and within my hearing. At the time I was candidating for the URC ministry, so I was acutely aware of the God who brings wonder and awe into our lives; but this was something I had never encountered before.

When I returned home, I heard of many people who had not seen it with their own eyes, but had seen the effect, as lights were switched on at 12 noon as though it was 9 pm!

Alas, opportunities come and go, and as the next total eclipse is not until 2026, I shall have to wait and see if I shall be a direct witness or one who will see the effects.

At **Easter** we celebrate again the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; then 50 days later the Holy Spirit comes to move the disciples into action at the event we call **Pentecost**. Reading the Bible accounts leaves you in no doubt about the life-transforming experience upon those disciples who witnessed it. Yes, some are doubting to begin with, but are then transformed into confident and strong witnesses of what humanly seemed impossible. Their confidence was infectious and their energy and joy unquenchable. It was the driving force behind the incredible growth and expansion of the early church.

Some Christians today are like that—but many have some doubts or questions which perhaps stop them from knowing that transformation, that confidence, that inner joy. If you are one of these, don't worry: just keep 'Walking the Way' in faith and trust.

One thing that I have learned through that one event on the M62, is never to miss an opportunity that God lays in your path to experience Him—and life—more deeply.

Too often in church our doing gets in the way of our being! This year, as we bathe in the Easter light of the Resurrection, as we are inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit and encouraged by the United Reformed Church with

'Walking the Way: Living the Life of Jesus Today' (see page 8), I would like to invite you to undertake a task: go on retreat, read a good Christian book, go to hear a celebrated preacher, take time to talk with other Christians about your shared faith—and yes, your doubts too! And above all take time to talk and listen to God.

Also remember that life, family, your friends, your relaxation, your skills—everything that makes you 'you'—are gifts from God to be used and enjoyed to the full! Don't make the same mistake too many Ministers do—of neglecting yourself! My love of theatre and my violin playing skills are now on their knees just because over so many years I haven't had time to enjoy the partaking and playing, which is tragic really—but hopefully never beyond repair!

'Rome wasn't built in a day', nor will be the Kingdom of God. It is a process of happening, of people discovering and growing, of the church serving and witnessing! Resurrection faith is about how we live, not just about what we do!

Always remember the times when God breaks through into your life, whether with dramatic events or with gentle waves, for each are precious to you and to God.

May the Easter Resurrection, and the energy of the Holy Spirit, enable you always to walk the path of discipleship and enable you to give witness to the Risen Lord.

Blessings,

Ruth



#### AN EVENING WITH SAJU

Another wonderful curry evening with our own chef, Saju Mathew, will be held in the church hall on **Friday, 11th May**, commencing at **7 pm** prompt.

The programme will start with a cooking demonstration by Saju lasting approximately 30 minutes, followed by a three-course Indian meal.

Drinks are included in the ticket price of £15, and tickets are available from John Johnstone (01252 684684) or John Gibbons (07900 908990).



Only 70 tickets are available, so please contact the ticket sellers as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Any unsold tickets will be available to people outside the church after Monday, 16th April.

All proceeds from the event will be sent to the Palani Mission to train two community nurses based at the hospital adjacent to the Mission.

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First aid

#### **FIRST AID TRAINING**

#### Saturday, 14th July, 2—4 pm at Fleet URC

This course is suitable for everyone, whether or not they have had previous training.

(Please note that all First Aid certificates should be renewed every three years)

Please see Margaret Armes for more information and to sign up.



#### **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, 16th April Monday, 21st May

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#### **NOTICE BOARD**

#### **NEW HOUSE GROUP**

A new house group meets on the 4th Thursday of the month, **7.30 pm**, at 39 Malthouse Close.

Next meetings:

#### 26th April & 24th May

Everyone is welcome.

Please contact Meg Nicholson (687075) for more details.

#### **MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP**

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

Monday, 9th April Monday, 14th May

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



#### **ANNUAL & STUDY LEAVE**

Ruth, our Minister, will not be available on the following dates: 29th April (Annual Leave) 30th April—3rd May (National Ministers' Gathering)



#### CHRISTIAN AID WEEK, 13th—19th MAY

Do you have some time to spare? We are looking for new collectors, and would be very pleased to hear from you. Perhaps there are two of you, and you would like to collect with a friend?

Please contact Linda Storey (647650) or Liz McClune (628206) if you would like to get involved. (It's a good opportunity to look at other people's gardens as well, which sometimes leads to interesting conversations!)

#### **FOOTSTEPS**

On Saturday 17th February the young people and some of their families went to the Church on the Heath to a Family Orchestral Concert given by the Pelly Orchestra.

It was an amazing concert, that began when the conductor walked in dressed as a pirate and opened the concert with the music from *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Bob the Builder, Star Wars and excerpts from the Carnival of the Animals were just some of the well-known pieces played. What made it even more interesting was the invitation for the children to take the opportunity to wander close to the musicians.

Thomas said, "It was absolutely superb! It was amazing and I really enjoyed it." Alice gave it nine out of ten, and said, "It was very entertaining and child friendly. The music was great and fun to listen to."

We all really enjoyed the concert, and the chance to spend more time with our friends in 'Footsteps'. We hope they do another Family Concert.

On Palm Sunday our young people helped to decorate the church windows with paper palm leaves which members of the congregation had decorated to illustrate the things that made them joyful. In their group they made a magnificent 'Hosanna' banner which they displayed over the front door for everyone to see as they exit our church building.

#### Margaret Armes







#### Pelly Concert Orchestra

#### **SALUTE TO THE CINEMA**

Saturday 21st April, 7.30 pm

Church on the Heath

Music from films, including Western movie themes, The King's Speech, Fantasia, The Lion King

Tickets in advance: £11 (children £6; seniors £10)

Tickets at the door: £13 (children £6; seniors £12)

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

#### **PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATOR**



At the Church Meeting on the 4th March 2018 it was agreed that we would have a Public Access Defibrillator fitted to the outside Church wall. This has now been installed and is ready for use. It has been registered with the ambulance service so that, in the case of a person ringing for an ambulance to a cardiac arrest in the local vicinity, they can inform the caller that there is a defibrillator at Fleet URC, and can give instructions on how to use it.

The defibrillator will be checked on a monthly basis by Fleet Community Responders, who will also replace any pads used, and the battery when

required. They will also be able to download the information if it is used for the hospital, so they can see how many shocks have been given to a patient.

The quicker a defibrillator can be used, the better for the patient and their chance of survival. The defibrillator is safe and simple to use and training is offered to anyone who wishes to learn how to use it. Two sessions have currently been scheduled: Saturday 14th and Saturday 21st April, from 10 am to 12 noon. It is only necessary to attend one session

The defibrillator is fully automated, and can only shock one heart rhythm—ventricular fibrillation (you've probably heard it on 'Casualty'!). It simply means that the heart is quivering, a bit like a jelly, and not beating properly. The defibrillator stops the quivering and hopefully allows the heart to return to a more normal rhythm.

If you are interested in defibrillator training, please speak to either Margaret Armes (650994) or myself (07909 632511). Thank you.

Carol Rayner



#### TRAINING FOR LEARNING AND SERVICE (TLS)

Please pray for Carol Rayner and Nicola Hamilton as they undertake TLS. Carol Rayner has registered on the TLS Lite + Training programme, which will enable her to continue further training to become a National Accredited Lay Preacher.

#### **NATIONAL GATHERING OF URC MINISTERS**

The Ministers' Spring School will be a little different this year. URC Ministers from all the Synods across the UK will be gathering in Staffordshire for five days, to reflect on and discuss the United Reformed Church discipleship programme, 'Walking the Way' (please see more on page 8). More in the next 'In Touch' magazine

Ruth

#### 10 FACTS ABOUT PENTECOST



Pentecost Sunday falls this year on 20th May. But many people, including Christians, may not know why the day is special or what is celebrated. Unlike Easter and Christmas, when colourful eggs, Easter bunnies, Christmas trees and Santa Claus are harbingers of the upcoming Christian holidays, there are no such social markers by secular society ahead of Pentecost. For those who need a quick and basic understanding of what Pentecost Sunday is, below are listed ten things you should know about the holiday:

- 1. Pentecost Sunday marks the day when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles.
- 2. Pentecost Sunday occurs 50 days after Easter.
- 3. The Bible records the Pentecost in Acts 2: 1—13.
- 4. Pentecost comes 10 days after the Ascension of Jesus Christ.
- 5. Pentecost is also known as 'the birthday of the church'.
- 6. Pentecost fulfils Jesus' promise to send the 'Counsellor' and 'Spirit of Truth' in John 16: 5—15.
- 7. Pentecost launches the large-scale spreading of the Gospel after Jesus' ascension. Acts 2: 41 records that Peter when spoke to the crowd after receiving the Holy Spirit some 3,000 people were baptised.
- 8. The Pentecostal movement derives its name from the New Testament event in Acts 2.
- 9. Jews also celebrate Pentecost, but not for the same reason as Christians. The celebration by Jews of Pentecost is to observe God giving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai 50 days after the Exodus. The Pentecost in Jewish tradition takes place 50 days after Passover.
- 10. In Western churches Pentecost is usually represented by the colour red, which symbolizes the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Ruth



#### WALKING THE WAY: LIVING THE LIFE OF JESUS TODAY



'Walking the Way' is the United Reformed Church's exciting focus on lifelong Christian discipleship and mission. It moves beyond a set of programmes, into the world, where each step we take is accompanied by Jesus, helping us to bring about change in our own lives and, ultimately, in church culture and society.

As we engage in 'Walking the Way', your understanding of what being a Christian disciple means will hopefully deepen. Who knows, you may grow beyond your wildest dreams, living as a disciple in all parts of your life.

The Greek word for 'disciple' is *mathetes*, which literally means: 'one who learns as they follow'.

'Walking the Way' explores what it means to follow actively, learn from and eventually be transformed by-Jesus. It is for anyone at any stage of the Christian journey-whoever you are, whatever your existing relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church, whatever your personal circumstances. It is for you whether you have been following Jesus for five days or five decades.

Of course there is nothing new about being a disciple of Christ. What is new about 'Walking the Way' is its practical, flexible, dynamic and accessible approach, and the wide range of supporting resources produced and planned. Over time you will find rich, creative materials to help you on your walk—as an individual, as you walk with a few others, and as you walk courageously in the world.

At Fleet URC we have started to 'Walk the Way', as we have already studied Holy Habits in worship: however on 22nd April during Sunday service we shall be launching 'Walking the Way' officially.

Ruth



#### THY KINGDOM COME



From 10th—20th May communities and churches around the world are gathering together to pray that their friends, families THY KINGDOM COME and neighbours come to know Jesus Christ.

> Prayer events of all shapes and sizes will take place across the ten days, including 24/7 prayer rooms, prayer days, prayer

walks and half nights of prayer. Cathedrals, churches and other venues will host Beacon Events, gathering people across towns and cities to worship and to pray for the empowering of the Holy Spirit for effective witness.

Here at Fleet URC we shall be participating this year in partnership with the Vine Centre, Aldershot. Art has been used as a way of gaining confidence, progression and reflection to an individual's road to recovery and healing.

The Vine Art Therapy has been funded by the Arts Council, and is used by many clients. Some have mental health issues, addictions, unemployment, low self esteem, poverty and homelessness.

The work will be displayed in the worship area for four weeks. Please come and reflect prayerfully on 'Thy Kingdom Come' from a particular perspective, with short prayer reflections.

The launch will be on the evening of 17th May, with local MP, dignitaries and community groups present.

Please come and support the event.

17th May—12th June 2018, 10 am—4 pm. Free admission.

#### PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

As I write the articles for this edition of 'In Touch', President Trump and Kim Jong-un of North Korea are due to meet in May. This reflection below and the prayer seem particularly relevant.

Lord, may their meeting be one of peace and reconciliation. Amen.

In 1889, the date of 1st May was settled upon as the day to celebrate across the world the achievements and hopes of workers. May Day became particularly significant in Communist countries, and a Parade was held to praise political leaders and display military tanks, missiles and planes.

Before the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Moscow—the capital of the then Soviet Union—held the greatest of all military parades. At the 1954 May Day Parade in Red Square in Moscow, American observers saw what they thought was a huge fleet of long-range nuclear bombers flying overhead, one by one.

In fact there were only four such bombers. Again and again each plane roared over Red Square and then flew over the horizon before travelling back

round again, out of sight. Because the four planes were equally spaced, they gave the impression of a huge fleet of these nuclear bombers, flying over one by one. During the following three years America spent millions of dollars building fighter planes that could intercept what they though were many nuclear bombers. Then it was discovered that the Soviet nuclear threat actually lay in missiles, and so Western countries began to spend more and more, producing their own missiles. This was part of the 'Arms Race', wasting more and more money and resources.

As it was Communism that focussed particularly on 1st May as the Workers' Day, Pope Pius XII in 1955 declared the same day to be the feast of St Joseph the Worker.



Joseph (a carpenter) is the patron saint of all working people. *Ruth* 

#### Let us pray:

On this day, Lord,

we can celebrate many achievements of humanity as a whole, but never let us forget

that each and every individual needs to be held in respect.

We pray today for the unemployed and for those unable to work, and we ask you to give success to the work of our hands. *Amen* 



#### **CHAMELEON DAYS**

Now is the year's hinge, the chameleon days, Offering many gifts, but none for long. Beyond my window, flowering cherries shine, Their bright profusion topped by trees still bare; Above, blue sky is islanded by cloud, The longed-for sunlight soon put out by grey, And yet we love the spring; recurring chance, Promise of life renewed, a sign of hope Among our dull perplexities, our griefs.

What lasting joy can fickle April give? Transcendent certainty: in Christ we live.

Sheila Durbin



#### FROM TAMYRA SHERRATT, Our New Church Secretary



On 4th March 2018 I was humbled to have been elected as Church Secretary for Fleet URC, having been an elder since January 2015.

As we begin this journey to discern the Lord's will for Fleet URC and the part he has planned for each one of us, I believe it is vital to receive everyone's views. Whether you served in the past, building the wonderful legacy of this church; whether you continue to serve actively, either in a formal capacity or quietly in the background in the

many ways I know you do; whether you are no longer able to attend church; whether you are a young person just starting to find your way; or whatever your association with Fleet URC—you are all a vital part of our church family, and we value your opinion. If you are uncomfortable speaking out in a church meeting, please speak or write to me or to any of the other elders to ensure that we are aware of your views.

Since 1983 I have held various secretarial roles in engineering, project and legal work, and currently I work full-time in Guildford as a paralegal. As with Moray before me, Margaret Armes has agreed to continue as Deputy Secretary, and without her help, along with the support of the eldership and the wider church, my role would be impossible.

Finally, for those who would not have been attending at that time, and as a reminder for others, I thought it would be appropriate to include the testimony I made on 15th December 2013, when I became a member of Fleet URC:

I was born into a loving Christian family in Indiana, to parents who have recently celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary. I was baptised as a baby and confirmed as a teenager, with several generations of my family attending the same local congregation of the United Church of Christ. I only left age 23, at the time of my first marriage and move to Georgia, where we joined a Southern Baptist congregation following immersion baptism.

After my marriage break up, life was a bit complicated. I never lost my faith, but I struggled to forgive myself initially, and I felt uncomfortable trying to find a church. Unfortunately the wonderful church upbringing I had had, with the wide range of people I knew, was impossible to replicate elsewhere.

Through work I met and married an amazing Englishman, and moved to England in 1993. For several years I went to church infrequently. I briefly attended Fleet URC, but something was not quite right for me at that stage of my life, so I tried Fleet Baptist Church and became a member there. Unfortunately recent changes forced me to a difficult decision that Fleet Baptist Church was no longer right for me, and I resigned my membership in July 2013 after nearly twelve years.

In trying Fleet URC again, it felt right this time around. I cannot really put my finger on why, although a smaller church, a more traditional format of services and organ music are all part of the reason. Also, although one should not focus on a building, I love older buildings, and was thrilled to see that the sanctuary retains the beams and bricks that make me think of an old country church, which has a wonderful 'welcome home' feel for me.

The hymn I chose for the membership service—'Come ye thankful people, come' - is one I remember from back home in Indiana, and it holds a wealth of meanings. I grew up in a rural farming community where the weather was not just an idle topic of conversation, but was crucial to the preparation of fields for planting, growth of the crops, and harvesting. The knock-on effect of a good or a bad harvest was enormous; but the farmers also had an enormous faith in the Lord's plan, no matter how it might seem to us on earth.

I also discovered a personal connection in that the hymn is sung to the tune 'St George's, Windsor', a reminder of the wonderful man I met and moved to England to be with, as we were married in Aldershot in 1993 on St George's Day.

Tamyra Sherratt, Church Secretary, Fleet URC



#### THINK: RECYCLE



According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the UK's plastic waste will rocket by over a million tonnes by 2030, with a 34% rise in crisp packets, 41% more plastic straws and 9% more drinks bottles. All of these will potentially harm the environment, so what can we do?

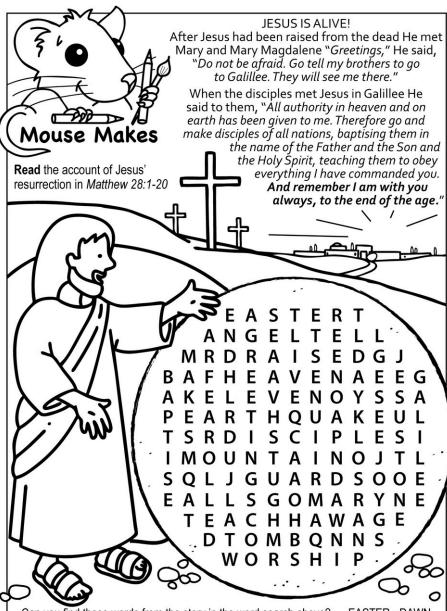
Don't be overwhelmed by the scale of the problem... every small step that you take will make a difference! Start by making 'simple swaps'.

- 1. Stop accepting plastic bags in shops... take your own fabric bags with you. Small ones can be folded and kept in pockets, or even on keyrings! Perhaps keep some in the boot of your car.
- 2. Eating out? Ask for your drink without a straw!
- 3. Don't buy water or drinks in plastic bottles: invest in a metal or glass bottle to bring with you, and don't be afraid to ask for a refill. The more people who ask for refills, the more normal the request will become!
- Coffee cups: invest in a reusable coffee cup like a Keep Cup, or ask for a cup and saucer if given the option. Try searching online for 'reusable coffee cups'.

These four 'simple swaps' are known as 'The Big Four' in environmental circles, and are a very good place to start. Remember that every step you take is a step in the right direction!

Grace Bagshaw

#### **CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY**



Can you find these words from the story in the word search above? EASTER • DAWN DAY • MARY • TOMB • EARTHQUAKE • ANGEL • HEAVEN • ROLLED • STONE • GUARDS JESUS • RAISED • FEAR • JOY • RAN • GREETINGS • TELL • DISCIPLES • SEE • ELEVEN GALILEE • MOUNTAIN • WORSHIP • ALL • GO • MAKE • BAPTISE • TEACH • END • AGE

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## AND ANOTHER THING.... Everything that is Good....

"God is everything that is good, as I see, and the goodness which everything has is God."

Julian of Norwich



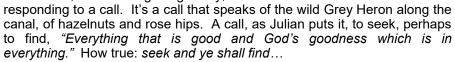
Try to imagine Julian as a young girl, exploring the Norfolk hedgerows. She gathers her hazelnuts and rose hips, the Autumn fruit of Rosa Canina: Rosa Canina, said to have been imported by the Romans following Caesar's invasion in 55 BC.

It seems to me unlikely that the Romans, hardened soldiers that they were, would introduce *Rosa Canina* to Britain just for its

loveliness. It seems more likely they valued its vitamin C content, as we did during the Second World War, when citrus fruits were unobtainable.

Today, most of us have more time to put on our walking shoes, to venture outdoors and to appreciate our hedgerows as if each has been lovingly crafted.

Sometimes, when I am getting ready, I feel as if I am



Eric Perry



#### A final thought:

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time

Attributed to Martin Luther