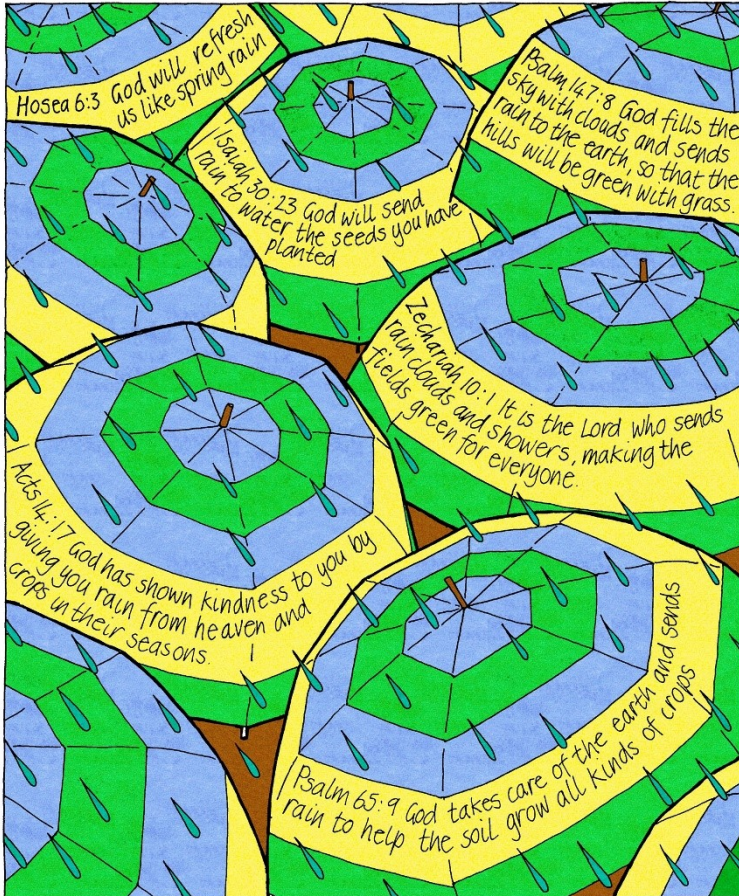


# In Touch

February  
– April  
2019



Fleet United Reformed Church



# FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Kings Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3AF

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[www.facebook.com/fleeturc](http://www.facebook.com/fleeturc)



[@FleetURC](https://twitter.com/FleetURC)

## CHURCH CONTACTS

*Minister:* **Revd Ruth Dillon**, 01252 625238  
[revrdillon@btinternet.com](mailto:revrdillon@btinternet.com)

*Secretary:* Please address all enquiries to  
Margaret Armes

*Assistant Administrator:* **Margaret Armes**, 01252 650994  
[b.ames@ntlworld.com](mailto:b.ames@ntlworld.com)

*Treasurer:* **John Gibbons**, 01252 614200  
[jmgibbons@hotmail.com](mailto:jmgibbons@hotmail.com)

*Hall Bookings:* **Brian Armes**, 01252 650994  
[b.ames@ntlworld.com](mailto: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

*'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 details

*Bible Study:* See page 5 for details

*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*

Christmas and New Year are now behind us, and in the month of March we start thinking about Lent, Spring and Mothering Sunday, and our minds turn to family life. Families are the groups that God places us all in for encouragement, love and support, through good times and bad. You can usually tell the strength of a family by how they deal with the difficulties we all face in life.

It is when things go wrong that we find ourselves asking those ‘What if?’ and ‘Why me?’ questions. We naturally wonder if we could have changed things: ‘What if I had done something different, would these difficulties have been avoided?’ This can be very useful if it helps us learn from our mistakes, but it can also be very debilitating if we are dealing with things we cannot change, like an illness or a death.

When things are going well and happiness seems ours, it’s easy to believe in a loving God who cares for us. But when things are going badly it is easy to believe that God doesn’t care or has abandoned us altogether. Or worse still, we stop believing that there is a God at all. That’s when we need the love and support of our family, particularly our Christian family.

Sometimes we can have a magical view of God; for instance, if we hold our prayer book he will grant us three wishes to spare us all our troubles, and that when danger comes he will send his Spirit to whisk us off to safety. But if God did make all Christians free of trouble all their lives, then what use would they be to humanity? It is only through dealing with our own troubles that we have any understanding of what others are going through in theirs, and are able to offer support.

Therefore Mothering Sunday fits so snugly into Lent, the time we use to prepare ourselves for the festival of Easter. It is at Easter that Jesus gives us his example of how he uses his innocent suffering for the benefit of those who put their trust in him. Jesus is always there with us, in good times and in bad—part of our joy and sharer of our pain, just like our physical family.

Perhaps a more useful question for us to get to when things are going wrong is, ‘What next?’ We cannot change the past, we can only use it to make things better, usually for somebody else. It is often as we reach out to help others that we find ourselves being healed along the way.

So this Lent, consider not giving things up, but taking things on. Think about some small thing you can do to help another. You could babysit, or visit an elderly neighbour, or offer a friend a lift. Simple things.

Sometimes you can do a great deal with a simple smile and a word of encouragement. If you want to be serious about it then have a look at the **40acts** website for ideas. (More information about **40acts** on page 11 of the magazine.) <http://www.40acts.org.uk/>

Let's make a real difference in Lent this year.

Blessings

*Ruth*

*(Based on a conversation with an Anglican colleague in Lancashire; with thanks to Pam.)*



## JELLY BABY GOSPEL



*After my family address in November, I was asked if I would put the Jelly Baby Gospel in the magazine... so here it is.*

After World War 1, Jelly Babies had been known as Peace Babies, each colour representing a different continent or country; but during World War 2 production had ceased because of rationing.

After the Second World War Bassett's reinterpreted each jelly baby differently. They were then produced with individual symbols to tell the Gospel story.

The **black** jelly baby has a heart on it to remind us that sometimes our hearts are sinful, and not how God intended them to be.

The **green** jelly baby is crying, to remind us that God weeps over such a state of heart.

The **red** jelly baby has the letter 'B' to show us that Jesus died for us and shed his blood for us.

The **pink** jelly baby is crawling like a baby. This shows that when we recognise Jesus and receive Jesus into our hearts, then we are a new creation (born again) into a new life and lifestyle.

The **yellow** jelly baby bears a necklace to remind us that we will receive the riches of Heaven.

The **orange** jelly baby carries a bum bag to show that we should be getting prepared to meet Jesus in Heaven, and we do this by sorting out our lives here on earth, seeking righteousness and holiness.

*Ruth*

## MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP



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

**Monday, 18th February**

**Monday 4th March**

**Monday 8th April**

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



## MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY

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

**Monday, 25th February**

**Monday 11th March**

**Monday 15th April**



## NOTICE BOARD

### FRIENDS OF PALANI MISSION

There will be a meeting on **Thursday, 21st February at 7.30 pm** for anyone interested in supporting the church and projects at Palani.

Place: 24a Forest End, Fleet, GU52 7XE

Please contact Ruth or Bee if you would like to attend.

### ANNUAL & STUDY LEAVE

Ruth, our Minister, will not be available from:

**1st—7th February**  
(Annual leave)

**29th March—7th April**  
(Annual leave)

**20th April—2nd May**  
(Ministers' Spring School)

### LENT BOOKLET

The Ecumenical Lent Booklet will be available from early March.

If you would like a copy, please see Ruth. There will also be spare copies available at the back of the church.



### CHRISTIAN AID WEEK, 12th—18th MAY

There will be a Cake and Plant Sale in support of Christian Aid on Saturday 11th May in the Parish Hall, Church Road, from 10 am—12 noon. Please come along and support us. Donations of cakes and/or plants would be greatly appreciated.

*Linda Storey*



## FAMILY NEWS—CELEBRATIONS!

We rejoice with Jenny Devis's family and with Bernard and Mavis Potter, who have all had reasons to celebrate in recent weeks.



On 16th December Jenny's daughter and son in law, Gemma and Mike Lawton, brought their children, Jack and Sophia, to be baptised during morning service. What a joy to see the church full to overflowing with all their family and friends who had come along to support them!

Congratulations also to Bernard and Mavis, who recently celebrated their Diamond Wedding.

### A message from Bernard & Mavis:

We would like to express our thanks for all the good wishes and support we received on the occasion of our Diamond Wedding.

It was wonderful to see so many family and friends at the Service of Worship & Praise on Sunday, 13th January when our son Andrew conducted the Service. Andrew has now been a Baptist Minister for over 20 years. He grew up in this Church, and it is a reminder that seeds sown nearly 50 years ago have borne fruit.



We were delighted to welcome a good number of friends to Open House on 17th January, the actual Anniversary Day. We received over 40 cards (including one from the Queen) and our lounge still resembles a florist's shop!

Thank you to everyone.

*Bernard & Mavis Potter*

**Bill and Pearl Thomas**, who returned to Fleet for Bernard and Mavis's celebratory service, brought with them Christian greetings from their new church, St Andrews, Devizes.

It was lovely to see Bill and Pearl again, along with many other friends from years gone by.

## Change of Address:

Cynthia Searle is moving. From **8th February** her address will be:

Flat 5,  
Argyll Court,  
Clarence Road,  
Fleet, GU51 3SH

We wish Cynthia every happiness in her new home.



### EASTER SERVICES 2019



#### April

14th		<i>Palm Sunday:</i>
	10 am	Family Worship led by Mr Paul Murphy
18th		<i>Maundy Thursday:</i>
	7.30pm	Communion Service led by Mrs Thelma Roberts
19th		<i>Good Friday :</i>
	10.30 am	A service of symbolism and reflection led by Revd Ruth Dillon
21st		<i>Easter Day:</i>
	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon (Please bring a flower to help decorate the Cross.)



## URC YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2019 'TASTER DAY'

In January I was fortunate to attend a 'taster day' at the URC Youth Assembly at Litchfield.

When I arrived with other youths from different Synods, I signed in, got a folder with my name on it, and inside was a lanyard, which I had to wear all day. Phil Ray met us, and Dan Morrell, the previous Youth Moderator, gave us a little introduction to the 'taster day'.

The first activity was problem-solving. This was an outdoor activity, where balancing weights were made from wood and metal. We all got on it and had to make it stay in the middle for 10 seconds; however our group managed for 15 seconds.

The second activity was a little like an assault course. We had to go through a kind of web made from rope without touching the rope, and if you did then you had to go through again. We did it again, but this time, once you had gone through a space, other people could not use it. The final time we held each other's hand and went through, so it didn't close because it was like a door.

The third activity was team work and balancing, where we had to help each other over a wall, followed by walking over a pole, and get all the team to the other side first. However you had to get the wooden planks from the floor without putting your feet on the floor.



The fourth activity was another problem solving one, and included a minute's walk, with one person blindfolded in the middle of the group. Once we got to the metal poles we had to negotiate a way through the gate.

The final activity was a jumping rope activity, where individually we had to jump from one place to another without touching the floor with the aid of only a rope. (I felt a little like Tarzan!!) There were three squares and a rope in the middle, and you had to swing from one

square to the other with two people on each square. We then had one square that all of us had to get on, and there were six of us inside and four outside; then the instructor made the square a little smaller and we all had to stand on it.

Lunch was delicious, ham and potato wedges, and it was very welcome as we were all cold from being outside.

After lunch a 30 minute assembly/prayer service was held. We heard about the prophet Jeremiah, and how God asked him to bury his dirty pants! I knew some of the songs we sang, but not others. It was good to be with other youth, as I could talk about youth issues which affected me and other people.

In the afternoon I attended a craft workshop, where I made a variety of little objects. To conclude the day, Dan returned to explain how Youth Assembly works. Anyone can speak and make a comment about the issue being discussed. Topics at this Youth Assembly included refugees, mental health, and the environment.

To end the day we had a 10-15 minute prayer session before we went home.

I really enjoyed the day, and I wish to express my thanks to Fleet URC for allowing me to attend and for funding this 'taster day'.

*William Goodall*



## ANGEL BOMBING

The Angel Blessing Service was held this year at the Holy Trinity Church in Church Crookham, and was led by Deacon James Snyder. The service consisted of hymns and readings on the theme of Angels. To see the 3,000 knitted and crocheted angels all together was a lovely sight!



I believe that Angels have a special place in our lives: for some they are merely spiritual beings, but for Christians they are messengers of God. They protected Daniel in the Lion's den, led the Hebrews out of Egypt, greeted a young Mary, and spoke to the shepherds. To this day Angels as messengers continue to guide and protect us.

Thanks once again to everyone involved. URC knitters, you have again excelled yourselves! Without your talent and support we couldn't bring this magical event to the people of Fleet.

Thanks also to our Angel Bombing group, Christine Gibbons, Pam Hasted, Moray Henderson and Val Cox, for getting up early to distribute our 250+ angels around town. I took some angels to Fleet Hospital for the people who were unable to collect their own due to ill health. They loved them.

Please look at the photos and posts on [www.facebook.com/FleetChristmasAngels](https://www.facebook.com/FleetChristmasAngels), and also on our Fleet URC Facebook page. They will make you smile.

I do not know if this will be repeated again this year. There are thoughts that it would be nice to knit something different, but as I said, Angels are messengers who hopefully will lead those whose lives they touch back to Jesus.

Thank you all.

*Darrell Henderson*



**Phyllis  
Tuckwell  
Hospice**

### **HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY BAND**

**Saturday, 16th February at 7.30 pm**

at the Church on the Heath

**Tickets £12**

Available from the Hospice Shop  
or by calling 01252 683540

## LENT GROUPS

**All are invited to Ecumenical Lent Courses in Fleet**

Beginning Thursday 7th March for six weeks

### FLEET URC KINGS ROAD



**MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
WHERE YOU ARE**

Contact: Revd Ruth Dillon  
revrdillon@btinternet.com

### FLEET METHODIST CHURCH



**BASED ON THE FILM  
THE THEORY OF  
EVERYTHING**

Contact: Revd Billy Slatter  
minister@fleetmethodist.org.uk

This year you have a choice of two Lent Groups. They are different, but on the same night and at the same time, 7.30 pm.

**Fruitfulness on the Front Line** is a six-week course about everyday discipleship, making a difference to people and situations where you are, and how God can and does work in and through our daily lives.

**The Mystery of Everything** is a six-week Lent course which explores ways in which the mysteries of the universe and of everyday life—and the acceptance that we have more questions than answers—can reinvigorate our faith and spiritual journey.

*Ruth*



## HOLY HABITS—GENEROSITY—40ACTS



Are you thinking about this Holy Habit—Generosity? Well, here is a real challenge for you. If you do not want to join a Lent study group, you could make this a personal Lent challenge.

**40acts** is the generosity challenge for

Lent, created by the UK Christian charity, Stewardship.

For eight years, **40acts** has asked a question: what if Lent could be about more than just giving stuff up? What if it could be a time of radical generosity, as well as a spiritual discipline?

Over the years **40acts** has become a movement of over 100,000 people on a mission to impact their communities with generosity—during Lent and beyond.

'**40activists**' (you!) receive a daily email throughout Lent (not including Sundays!) with a generosity challenge (an 'act') and short Bible-based blog sent straight to your inbox. Each act is designed to sharpen your awareness and give you practical ways to stretch your faith as well as your generosity, with three challenge levels.

**40acts** is completely free to sign up to. **40acts** challenges cost as much as you would like or can afford to spend on others. Some of the challenges can involve money, but different options have been created for each act, so if you don't have a lot to spend you can still give a lot with your time, energy, skills, resources and prayers.

The challenge lasts for seven weeks—it's a test of endurance and focus as much as anything else! Try to build **40acts** into your day right from the start, and pace yourself.

It is recognised that there will be days when completing the act—for whatever reason—will be difficult. Please don't feel demoralised if that happens to you. The challenge can be adapted to use as you like—and different options have been provided with a traffic light system, so that it is easier to participate even on the tough days.

Because being part of a community helps challengers to stay connected for the long haul, there will be a link to **40acts** on the Fleet URC website and Facebook pages.

### What to do next

During February you can sign up (via the link below), and once Lent starts you will get a daily email, a Biblical reflection, and a task to do, eg an act of generosity. <https://40acts.org.uk/>

Good luck!

*Ruth*

PS—I will be joining you.

## PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Fruit and vegetables from many countries around the world are found in our shops each day. Bananas first appeared in British shops on this day in April 1633.

Today, out of every £1 we pay for some bananas, only 11p goes to those who have grown and picked them in faraway countries. The other 89p goes to all the 'middlemen' - those who pack and transport the fruit to Britain, and to the big retailers and the shops.

With most jars of coffee that we buy, 92p out of every £1 that we spend goes to all the middlemen—including those who export and process the coffee beans, and those who package the jars and sell them. Out of every £1 that we spend on jars of coffee, only 8p goes to those who grow the coffee.

More and more people are trying to be sure that workers in faraway countries are paid fairly for the goods that come to us.

The 'Fairtrade Foundation' was set up in 1992 by Christian Aid, Oxfam, and CAFOD (the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development).

'Fairtrade' products include tea, coffee and chocolate, and they are to be found in most major supermarkets, with a 'Fairtrade' label on them. The 'Fairtrade' label guarantees that checks have been made to ensure fair wages, decent working conditions, good health and safety standards, and long-term contracts. Coffee from 'Fairtrade' is also available in the House of Commons.



**FAIRTRADE**

Let's simply spend a few moments in silence, reflecting how wealthy we are compared with the majority of people throughout the world.

*Ruth*



**Let us pray:**

Lord, that we may live simply  
so that others may simply live.

*Amen*

### FLEET URC TODDLER GROUP



The Fleet URC Toddler group urgently needs help in the kitchen. They are looking for volunteers to help prepare and serve tea, coffee and juice for the attendees. Toddler group runs on Friday mornings, 10-11.15 am, and volunteers would only need to do one Friday a month, on a rota.

They are a friendly, popular group, and very welcoming to new volunteers! Please give careful consideration to whether you can help them out. Contact Lindsay on 07549 603187.



## UNLOCK

This is the heading I used to introduce the *Unlock* London Walk which I reported on last

year. As a reminder, *Unlock* is a small Christian charity based in Sheffield. It began in 1972 and is run from Handsworth Parish Centre on only two days a week by a staff of three.

Their aim is to help urban churches of any denomination to respond to their particular challenges, focussing on bringing the Bible alive to people mainly of a non-book, text-shy culture. Their resource material is freely available on-line (web address below).

Their major fund-raising event is an annual sponsored walk around an area of London. This is supported by many people and churches within reach of the capital, and greatly looked forward to and enjoyed, whatever the weather! This year's date is **Saturday 27th April**, but the route has not yet been finally decided. The original plan was for it to be in the Thamesmead area, to mark the opening of Crossrail; however as this has been significantly delayed, this route may be for the 2020 walk!

An alternative under consideration is in the Morden and South Wimbledon districts, where there are lots of interesting churches for possible check-points.

Wherever it goes, I plan to walk, with a friend from my previous church, and anyone else who would like to walk for 7-8 miles around London. A map is supplied with the route marked with seven check-point churches. Each one visited gains a stamp, a breather, and usually refreshments and a toilet facility.

The object is to raise awareness and funds, and I will be round with a sponsor form and further details some time between now and April. Your support would be greatly appreciated, and if anyone would like to join me please let me know. Meanwhile, the web address for *Unlock* is: [unlock-urban.org.uk](http://unlock-urban.org.uk)—worth a look. Thank you.

*Margaret Tracey*



## IT'S TIME TO GET DRASTIC... DITCH THE PLASTIC!

Fleet now has its very own 'zero waste' shop... Fleet Scoop! If you haven't heard of it yet, where have you been? Several months in the planning, Fleet Scoop is run by Kate Cottrell, a local lady, mum, part-time teacher at Velmead Junior School, and passionate advocate for living a greener lifestyle.



*So what is a zero-waste shop?* It is a shop which allows its customers to bring along their own reusable containers (old jam jars, Tupperware tubs, bottles etc) to fill with loose goods which are sold in the shop. Customers therefore have 'zero waste' to throw in their bins or recycle at home. The shop itself buys in bulk, so there is packaging in the supply chain, but considerably less than the equivalent of buying individual packets in a supermarket!

*What do they sell?* Kate does not have a definitive list yet, as her wide range of stock is increasing week by week. Sometimes this is in response to customer requests. As a new shop, it will take a while to learn what is popular and what there is a demand for. Currently Fleet Scoop stocks a wide range of herbs and spices, dried goods such as pasta, rice, oats, muesli, granola, seeds, nuts (including chocolate covered nuts), lentils, beans etc. Liquid goods include flavoured olive oils (locally grown rapeseed oil coming soon), shampoo, laundry liquid, fabric softener, and washing up liquid. Items to allow you to use less plastic include bamboo toothbrushes, beeswax wraps,



produce bags, cotton make-up removers, metal water bottles, handkerchiefs, fabric 'kitchen roll', bar soap, toothpaste alternatives, and plastic straw alternatives.

*How does it work?* The first time you visit it is worth asking how everything works, but it is very simple. You weigh your container and lid on the shop scales and mark the weight on the container with one of the pens provided. You fill your container with the goods you require (separate containers for each separate item) and once you have finished you take all your items to the till. The full containers are weighed and the price calculated. You can even have your receipt emailed to you to save paper!



*So where is Fleet Scoop?* Fleet Scoop has taken up residence at 14 Reading Road South (the old Bath Times shop, which is a few doors down from the Water Sky Chinese Restaurant). The easiest place to park is the Gurkha Square car park. Opening hours are currently 9.30 am—2.30 pm on Monday and Tuesday, 9.30 am—2 pm on Thursday and Friday (closed Wednesdays), or 9.30 am—5 pm on Saturdays.

If nothing else, please go and have a look around and support a new local business on our high street. You will receive a warm welcome! You may be surprised at the range of goods on offer, and anything you buy without plastic is a positive step in looking after our planet.

*Grace Bagshaw*



## DEATH CAFE

A date for your diary:

**Thursday, 16th May, 2—4 pm,  
at Costa Coffee, Hart Shopping Centre, Fleet**

### **What is Death Café?**

To date there have been 7638 Death Cafes in 64 countries, and Ruth has been asked to run one in collaboration with a Fleet funeral director and a Fleet solicitor.



At a Death Café people, often strangers, gather to eat cake, drink tea or coffee, and discuss death.

Death Café's objective is **'to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives'**.

A Death Café is a group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counselling session.

### **Death Cafes are always offered:**

- On a not-for-profit basis;
- In an accessible, respectful and confidential space;
- With no intention of leading people to any conclusion, product or course of action;
- Alongside refreshing drinks and nourishing food—and cake! Hence Costa Coffee in Fleet!

More details in the next 'In Touch' magazine.

## MY ROLE AS PASTORAL CONVENOR



A few people have been asking me what is involved in my role as 'Pastoral Convenor of North East Synod'? A good question! So I thought I would let you know the different aspects of ministry that I am involved in with my role as Convenor.

There are four convenors in Wessex synod: North East, North West, South East, and South West.

There are 23 churches in North East area, and as Convenor a significant amount of my time is spent in conversations: in person, on the telephone, and by email. It is essential to establish basic working relationships and mutual understanding with:

- The Synod moderator and Training and Development officers (DSO);
- Our ecumenical partners (in consultation with the Moderator, DSO, and Ecumenical Officer).

The main functions of the Convenor's role are to:

- Chair meetings of Synod Pastoral Committee (SPC) five times a year.
- Draw up agenda, ensure minutes are taken, checked and distributed as necessary, including to the Moderator's PA for Synod records.
- Ensure all churches and ministers in the area are in touch with the committee through a nominated member of the SPC—a link person.
- Contact potential Interim Moderators for vacant churches and get their and the relevant church agreement, which is endorsed by the committee.
- Ensure that Pastorate Mission Profiles and Summary Sheets of declared vacancies are given to the Synod Moderator.
- Ensure that concurrence can be given for new ministers entering the Synod.
- Check that Interim Moderators have the standard Terms of Settlement, and that those agreed by the Pastorate and Minister do not contradict these.
- Receive requests for authorisation of Lay Presidency for Communion (and in cases of expediency and time, give approval), and have same endorsed by the Committee.
- Receive notification from the LMMR Administrator of forthcoming Church Reviews and communicate this to the relevant church(es) and minister(s) of the Pastorate. At the end of the process to receive the updated Pastorate Mission Profile, note any changes/issues and liaise with the DSO as required, then pass the Profile to the Administrator for filing.

- Ensure that all the Committee's work is carried out in accordance with the Scheme of Union, General Assembly resolutions, and Synod resolutions.

Alongside these functions are the myriad of situations which occur within the life of churches: sickness, conflict, and many others, and occasionally the Pastoral Convenor must attend and chair specific Elders' and Church Meetings of the church involved.

Another aspect of my role is **to support the ministers within the North East Area**, and this is done either by email, phone, or face-to-face meetings. As ministerial deployment is reducing, I am actively working with the ministers to see how the shape of ministry will look by 2020.

As Pastoral Convenor I am required to give a report and attend the *Ministries and Learning Committee* five times a year, where the four Area Convenors meet, along with the Moderator and DSO's, and discuss pastoral concerns, strategy and development.

As Pastoral Convenor I am also required to attend the *Nominations Committee* once a year. *Wessex Synod* and *Area gatherings* meet twice a year, and this is a great way to keep in touch with churches in my North East Area.

I hope this information has given you an insight into my additional role within Wessex Synod.

*Ruth*



## EASTER

Easter, a season of new birth,  
Of life restored and boundless hope;  
A source of light which grows and grows,  
As we essay the final slope.

In old age it's a promise sure  
That we may share Christ's victory  
And, as he promised his first friends,  
Where he is, there we too shall be.

*Sheila Durbin*



## BELLA

Just before Christmas I was able to be part of a Christmas Fayre in Eversley. While my friend Jill and I were behind our table, a little girl called Bella was looking at our crafts with her Mum. She was smiling and jumping from one foot to the other. I said she looked happy and that her smile made me smile, and she said, "I am happy because it will soon be Christmas. I am so excited!"

I asked her what she liked most about Christmas, thinking she would say Santa, presents, decorations; but her answer made me feel quite tingly.

"Well," she said, "Do you know it is Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day?" I said I did, and then she said, "I know, and on Christmas Day we have a birthday cake for him at teatime and sing 'Happy Birthday, dear Jesus'. Because I have been a good girl Mummy let me choose the cake this year. I chose a unicorn cake and it is pink. Do you think he will like it?"

I bet you can guess my answer. What a wonderful heart and mind Bella has. May she always be happy that Jesus is in her life, and may she always wish him a 'Happy Birthday'.

*Darrell Henderson*



## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FLEET AND CROOKHAM (CTFC)

At our meeting on 8th January 2019, Mark Mabin (Secretary) provided a presentation on the direction and vision that had been developed by the Ministers of Fleet Churches throughout 2018.

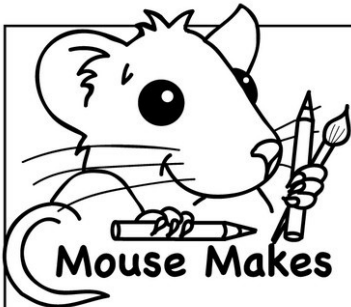
A few plans and changes were discussed as follows:

A Unity Service was held at the end of January, at which we celebrated together the different traditions that make up Churches Together. We hope that the service stirred up those passionate about working together to become 'Partners'. We will begin using the branding 'Christians Together' rather than 'Churches Together' to reflect a change in the structure within Churches Together.

It is suggested that the role of Church Representatives should change to become Church Partners, and that formal meetings of representatives should become more relaxed informal gatherings. Our first meeting will be held at 8.30 am on Saturday 16th February, over breakfast.

These changes will be proposed and discussed at the Churches Together AGM this year, where changes to the Constitution are expected to be made. Before that they will be presented to us here at Fleet URC at our Church Meeting.

*Darrell Henderson, CTFC Representative*



### WHAT IS LOVE?

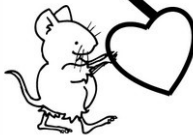
Cross out every other letter to find the Bible verse, then look it up.

OHNKEWJLOSHCNP  
CGHUADPBTFEKRA  
FJOMUORD  
VWEURDSKEV  
TOEGNP

### God's love is...

Change each letter to the letter before it in the alphabet.

"Hpe mpwfe uif xpsme tp nvdi  
uibu if hbwf ijt pomz tpo tp  
uibu fwfszpoif xip cfmjfwft  
jo ijn nbz opu ejf cvu  
ibwf fufsobm mjgf."  
Kpio 3:16



### How does God show he loves us?

Look at this in a mirror!

su rot **evol** eiH bewodE boG  
otni no2 ylno zirl gnibEe yd  
ew tsrt oz ,bhow eht  
etil evar thgim  
miH dguorht  
e:4 noh 1

### HOW LONG IS GOD'S LOVE?

Cross out all the xxx to find out!

xxGxixvxexxtxhxaxnxkxsxxtxoxxtxhx  
exxLxoxrxdx,xfxoxrxxHxexxiixxsxg  
xoxxoxdx,xxHxixsxsxxtxeaxxdx  
fxaxsxtxxlxoxvxeexnxdxu  
rxxexsxfxoxrxxexvxxexr.  
xpxsxaxxlmxmx  
1x3x6:1

"The steadfast **love** of  
the Lord *never* ceases"  
Lamentations 3:22



## CHURCH CALENDAR

### February

3rd	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Karen Smith
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Graham Hoslett
10th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Karen Smith
17th	10 am	Family Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
18th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
19th	7—9.15 pm	Synod Gathering at Fleet URC
21st	7.30 pm	'Friends of Palani Mission' meeting at 24a Forest End, Fleet
24th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Anna Crawford
25th	2 pm	Monthly Bible Study
27th	7.30 am	Elders' Meeting

### March

1st		<i>World Day of Prayer (WDP)</i>
	10 am	WDP Service at Christ Church, Church Crookham
	7.30 pm	WDP Service at St Philip & St James
3rd	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Ruth Dillon, followed by Church AGM & Election of Secretary and Treasurer + Church Meeting
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Revd Ruth Dillon
4th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
7th	7.30 pm	Ecumenical Lent Groups start (see page 10)
9th	10 am	Elders' Away Day at the Church on the Heath
10th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd David Netherwood, followed by Church Sunday Lunch
11th	2 pm	Monthly Bible Study
17th	10 am	<i>Mission Sunday:</i> Family Worship & Holy Communion, led by Revd Ruth Dillon; Speaker: Mr Jeremy Dunk
20th	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting (tbc)
24th	10 am	Family Worship led by Mrs Karen Smith
31st	10 am	<i>Mothering Sunday:</i> Family Worship led by Mr Alan Goldring

### April

7th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Iain Stewart (tbc)
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship & Holy Communion led by Mrs Helen Everard
8th	12 noon	Monthly Prayer Group
24th	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting
28th	10 am	Family Worship led by Revd Howard Sharp

**For details of Easter Services please see page 7.**