

# InTouch

Winter 2022



The magazine of  
Fleet and Beacon Hill  
United Reformed Churches

## FLEET URC & BEACON HILL URC

Both churches are currently without a Minister



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@FleetURC



**YouTube** Fleet United Reformed Church

#### CHURCH CONTACTS

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*Treasurer:* **John Gibbons**, 01252 614200  
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## GREETINGS FROM THE REVD MICHAEL HODGSON



I admit it. I'm a total addict. A TV programme which began as part of BBC 2's daytime schedule in 2017 has now become one of BBC 1 Primetime's most popular shows. For me it has also become an unmissable part of the week—The Repair Shop. As I'm sure you know, people bring battered, well-worn and often broken items to be repaired by a team of experts, who do the most incredible jobs. Very often the items have interesting stories behind them, and when their owners tell them they can often become emotional, showing just how much that item means to them. When they see their items repaired there are frequently tears again, and it's often a programme where sadness is turned to joy, and to delight, and to wonder. It's a programme about items that really matter to people.

I am interested to see the items and to see how they are fixed, but for me one of the real joys of the programme are the experts—an incredibly skilled bunch of people who just get on with it, and who smile and dismiss the thanks given them, saying something like, "It was a pleasure", or "It was a joy to work on", or even "Thank you so much for bringing it in". The experts are so clever and such super people. If ever you want to have your faith in human nature restored, or to spend an hour in the company of some very talented, kind and modest people, then this is the programme.

Sometimes the owner's emotions touch the experts too. It's not unknown for them to become a little moist in the eye. Will and Dom have been caught like this—and so too have the teddy bear ladies, Amanda and Julie. I remember the episode when a five year old was given back his mother's repaired teddy bear, which had been 'scorched' in a recent house fire that had completely destroyed the family's home. As that little boy shyly snuggled it to him I defy anyone not to have been moved. It's also not unknown for a story to chime with the expert's personal life as well, for example when something in the repair of a rocking horse, whose owner had been widowed, moved leather restorer Suzie to tears, herself recently widowed. There was a very touching moment as Suzie's brother, Steve (another of the experts) went to comfort her.

So The Repair Shop is a programme I really look forward to each week. Such kind, genuine people. It certainly lifts my spirits and my general mood; but there is something else I note as well. Few of the items they restore, and which mean so much to people, are actually of any great commercial value.

It may be that the programme doesn't accept things worth over a certain amount, but the cost of the repairers' time and skill must normally vastly outweigh any value in terms of £sd. It's what an item means to someone that's important. That's how things are valued, and I like that.

I could be a little surprised that the series was ever commissioned in the first place, and certainly surprised that it's now shown at a prime evening time. There's no sex, violence or bad language. It's not gritty or hyped up—quite the reverse. It must be one of the most gentle programmes possible, and yet I'm not alone in finding that it's compulsive viewing and extremely popular. If you've never watched it, then give it a go—but beware, you may find yourself hooked by the end of the episode.

A pastoral letter about a telly programme may be a little unusual, but to me it's all about respect and skill and right-values and kindness and caring—and those are all things that are surely appropriate to this letter.

With all good wishes,

*Michael Hodgson*



## A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Come, Holy God,  
who has been with us this past year,  
who has laughed with us, and cried with us,  
who has cradled us in goodness and love,  
Bless us with a joy to continue to seek you.

Come, Holy God,  
As we stand on the cusp of new beginnings,  
As we stand with eyes fixed on the future,  
As we stand with open hands,  
welcoming you to come with us,  
Bless us with the desire to continue to seek you.

Come, Holy God,  
In anticipation of what may be waiting for us,  
In anticipation of what memories we will make,  
In anticipation of the surprises that await us,  
Bless us with wisdom to recognise you  
in the new days, weeks and months ahead.

© *Ruth Dillon*



Phyllis  
Tuckwell  
Hospice

## HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY BAND

**Saturday, 26th February at 7.30 pm**

at the Church on the Heath

**Tickets £15**

Tickets available from the Hospice Shop,  
or on-line: <https://www.pth.org.uk/event/hampshireconstabularycharityconcert/>



## NOTICE BOARD



### 'NURTURING OUR FAITH' & LENT GROUPS

Our Bible Study Group will meet on  
Zoom at **11 am on 21 February**.

Lent Groups will start in March  
and meet on Zoom at **11 am** on  
the following dates:

**7 & 21 March and 4 April**

(See page 7)

### PRAYER GROUP

Our monthly Prayer  
Group will meet on  
Zoom on **Mondays**  
at **11 am** on the  
following dates:



**14 February, 14 March, 11 April**  
(2nd Monday of the month)

Come and join us for 30 minutes of  
quiet meditation.

### COFFEE MORNINGS— FLEET URC

Our weekly coffee mornings have  
resumed and are now meeting  
on **Wednesday mornings,**  
**10 am—11.30 am** in the church hall.

Come along—meet your friends—  
make new ones!

### PRAYER CIRCLE (FLEET)



As the Prayer Circle approaches its second anniversary,  
we would remind people that a small group of us  
have committed to daily prayer for those in need of it.

If you'd like to make a prayer request please ring  
Margaret Tracey on 01252 246195; or speak to  
one of the elders. All referrals are in strict confidence.

## THANK YOU, LARA



A big thank you to Lara of 3rd Fleet Guides for creating this beautiful picture of our church, which she and Guide Leader Squirrel presented to us during our Autumn parade service. The Guides wanted to thank Fleet URC for the support we give to all the uniformed organisations meeting on our premises. They have especially valued this during the recent pandemic restrictions.

We were delighted to receive such a special picture, which is now on display in our church foyer.



### 'STAND BY ME'—PLEASE HELP US SPONSOR A CHILD

At the Fleet URC Church Meeting in November 2021 it was proposed that the church would support a charity sponsoring a child; and it was agreed that Footsteps would take on organising the collection of money each month. Initially it was suggested that the charity be Action Aid; but having done some research and discussions in Footsteps on a number of different options, we have chosen a charity called 'Stand by Me'.

We in Footsteps thought it might be useful to explain a bit more about them, and how you can help to support it each month.

'Stand by Me' ([www.standby.me](http://www.standby.me)) helps children in poorer developing countries to have better lives. Some aspects of these children's lives that you would be helping to improve include: providing them with enough food to live, giving them better healthcare, enabling them to receive a proper education, and giving them an overall better quality of life. The charity also supports children who don't have parents by providing foster parents to give better personal care.

92% of the money we donate goes straight to the child and their community. The remaining 8% goes to support the charity, 'Stand by Me', and to help with our relationship with the child. Each year, as we continue to sponsor the child, we will get annual progress reviews on how they are doing, and communication so that we can get to know them as a person.

To take part in this charity sponsorship we, the congregation, need to collect £23 every month for each child sponsored. We will be accepting any amount you would like to give regularly each month: that could be 50p, £1, or more if you like. We would really appreciate it if you donated a little each month, so please speak to a member of Footsteps if you want to sign up, or find out more.

*'Footsteps' Young People's Group, Fleet URC*



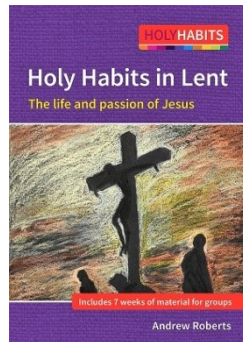
## NURTURING OUR FAITH THROUGH BIBLE STUDY DURING LENT

### HOLY HABITS: FOLLOWING JESUS

This year we will be discussing some of the content of the Lenten course, *Following Jesus*, which looks at Holy Habits in the life and passion of Jesus. This course was written by Andrew Roberts, Methodist Minister and author of *Holy Habits* (Malcolm Down Publishing, 2016). The aim of Holy Habits is to deepen the discipleship of those who are following Jesus, which seems a good focus during Lent.

All the biblical material is taken from Luke's Gospel, and each session will follow a similar structure:

A time of Gathering—a time of Reflection—  
a chance to Respond



We will be holding three Bible Study sessions online during Lent:

**Monday 7th March, 11 am**, led by Karen Smith - *Jesus guided by Scripture*

**Monday 21st March, 11 am**, led by Revd Ray Stanyon

**Monday, 4th April, 11 am**, led by Karen Smith - *Jesus generous under pressure*

A Zoom link will be sent out in the week before each session, with some details of the readings and questions. Hoping to see you there!

*Karen Smith, Beacon Hill URC*





## THANK YOU FROM CARITAS

Thank you so much for welcoming Caritas into Fleet URC before Christmas, and for supporting our Christmas gift appeal. All the gifts have found homes with low

income and struggling families in the local area, where I know they have made a huge impact and been gratefully received. Thank you!

This year's appeal raised 3,310 new gifts, which is an incredible achievement. This enabled Julie, our link at Tesco's in Chineham, to cover the overwhelming demand on our local Children's Services this year. So many families are finding life very tough. This year we also worked alongside Spotlight UK, a charity that provides activities for young people and practical help where needed. We were able to support approximately 3,200 children across Basingstoke, Newbury, Reading, Rushmoor and Hart.

We also hold a weekly group where our parents can meet informally for a tea or coffee. Initially we had only six families/individuals; but gradually confidence is growing and others are coming along, so we now have about twelve families who are interested. It is lovely to see self-esteem and self-confidence building up, and it is a pleasure to run. One parent has even changed her nursery times to suit the group, and we have heard of a couple of the children becoming very keen to come along on our mornings!

If you would like to support our work, we meet at St Bede's Church, Popley, from 9.30 am to 12 noon on Thursday mornings, and we would love to have enough people to form a monthly rota. Other help required: cooks to provide sandwiches or even a hot meal; an electrician to PAT test donated equipment; a driver or helper with a van to transport items. Also, if you have an old PC or laptop you no longer need, we would gladly receive it to help a teenager with their schoolwork. (We are fortunate in having someone who will clear and recondition PCs and laptops for us.)

Please contact me if you feel you can help, or if you would like any more information.

*Brita Coleman, on behalf of Caritas*  
07464 925699



*Carol Rayner presented Caritas representative Jill Blackburn with a cheque at our Autumn Craft Fair*



## LINK TO HOPE APPEAL 2021

Once again, Beacon Hill URC has supported the *Link to Hope* Shoebox Appeal.



Our boxes (left) were delivered to Bordon to join others at Worthing Headquarters to be distributed to Eastern Europe. A huge thanks to all in our church and those from the *Shared Art* class who helped by filling boxes or donating money to enable us to fill over 25 boxes!

When we see the joy on the faces and adults in the photos on the *Link to Hope* DVD and Facebook pages, it makes one realise that such a small box can be a 'life saver'.

*Link to Hope* not only distributes donated shoeboxes, but rebuilds lives through education and social care. Their Facebook post on Christmas Day was, 'Thank you for helping to send smiles to people in Eastern Europe through your shoeboxes. We wish you a wonderful Christmas.' (See photos below)



We are already starting to collect items and shoeboxes for the 2022 boxes. If you have any shoeboxes for men's size 8 or larger, please bring them to church. Karen is happy to collect them from Fleet when leading worship there.

Thank you to all, once again.

*Bridget Mitchell, Beacon Hill URC*





## PALANI MISSION UPDATE

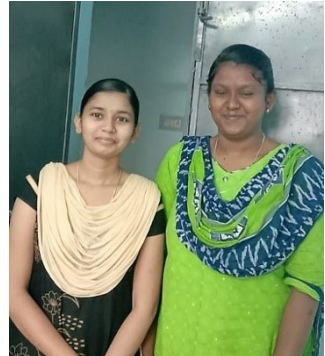
In a message received from Revd John Abraham in November 2021 he was pleased to confirm that the recently-installed borewell was functioning well and providing good and surplus water. The families who received goats are benefitting from them, and their standard of living is improving. In addition, two more families have been helped by having new roofs installed.

The two girls we will be sponsoring this year have gained admission to the ANM (Community Nursing) course. Their names are Amutha Priya and Leela Priya. Both are from poor families, and are very grateful for our support.

Revd John asks us to continue to uphold their ministry in prayer, as they remember all of us in their prayers.

The 'Friends of Palani Mission' will meet to discuss future plans at **7.30 pm on Tuesday, 15 February** at the home of Christine & John Gibbons. If you would like to be involved in making a difference, come and join us!

*John Gibbons, Fleet URC*



*Leela Priya & Amutha Priya*



## HELP NEEDED!

We urgently need extra people to help operate the digital equipment at Fleet before and during Sunday services, particularly in the following areas:

- Operating the church computer to show slides on the projector.
- Operating the sound system.
- Operating the Hymnal to play organ music.

Please let Stephen Dumbleton know if you are interested, even if you can only help out occasionally. Full training will be given—anyone can give it a try and junior church members will be especially welcome. Any help you can give will be gratefully received.

## CHRISTMAS AND FOOTBALL—WHAT HAVE THEY IN COMMON?

A lad told his friend that he was going to a Premier League Football Match the following Saturday. His friend, like him, had never been to one, so asked for a report when they met again.

He went with his father and uncle, his sister and a group of family friends. When they got near the stadium the crowds grew very large and there was a lot of pushing. He saw a hot dog van, and asked to go and get one, which he did, and spent a long time eating it. So much so that the crowds had thinned and he realised that the match must have started. He had his ticket, so he looked for the gate to get in; saw the toilets, made himself comfortable, and went to the stands. He looked a long time to find his party, eventually spotting them, and pushed his way through. One of the friends was in his class at school. He rather fancied her, and began a conversation about their new German teacher, the weekend's homework, and the number of friends who had Covid-19. Then he heard the whistle, and realised it must be half time.



They went out to the concourse and he treated the girl friend to a hot dog, and one for himself, of course. They chatted for a while when the others had gone back to the stands, before eventually making their way to join their party. His uncle gave him a programme, and he looked through it, not recognising any of the players; but there was a quiz about football geography which he found interesting. He filled it in. He was interested in electrical gadgets, and he studied the various electrically operated adverts and notices when the whistle blew, the crowd clapped and they all made their way home.

Meeting his friend again, the friend asked him what the score had been at the football match. Unfortunately he didn't know. 'Well, who was playing?', asked his friend; but he didn't know that either.

*Stephen Thornton*



## CELEBRATING OUR 50TH

The United Reformed Church is 50 years old in 2022, and there is much to celebrate, although it comes at a time when our churches are struggling as we emerge from the pandemic. We have had it tough; but those who came before us knew countless sufferings too, yet remained faithful.

Our roots are firmly in The Reformation, when people on continental Europe started asking searching questions about the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century. Called to support its members and equip them for mission, the Church is yet a human organisation, and so needs scrutiny to make sure it is following its Master in the way Jesus intended. Those early questioners found the church to be sadly lacking. The Reformation took a different form in each country, starting in England with Henry VIII cutting ties with Rome and, for his own dubious reasons, forming the Church of England with himself as head. Our forebears objected to this, and started meeting separately from their Parish Churches and organising themselves in ways we would now recognise.



**Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972**

When Elizabeth I came to the throne she sought to unite the nation, making it compulsory to belong to the Parish Church, with severe penalties for those who would not conform. The Civil War in the 17th century saw nonconformists largely on the side of the Roundheads against the King, and when Oliver

Cromwell became Protector there was a largely Congregational/Presbyterian parliament. But when Cromwell died there was no obvious successor, so that the people clamoured for Charles 1st's son to become King. Parliament agreed, on the proviso that he would constitute the Church on Reformed principles, which Charles II promised to do; but immediately on becoming King he reneged on his promise and reinstated the Church of England. Then the Act of Uniformity was passed, which compelled people to conform, on pain of death or imprisonment. Eighteen hundred Anglican priests were thrown out of their livings, and nonconformists had to meet in secret.

There followed horrendous times for our ancestors, which were gradually lessened by the '10 Mile Act', allowing them to meet ten miles away from any town or village, and lessened again by the '5 Mile Act'. Eventually The Act of Toleration made it possible for our people to be free to worship as they wished, although until the late 19th century we were barred from taking part in public affairs or from going to Oxford or Cambridge (the only universities at that time). Nonconformists therefore started their own

colleges, which have developed into our 'red brick' universities, the first to teach science.

Believing that Mission and Unity go together, the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches came together in 1972 to form the United Reformed Church, thinking that the Church of England and the Methodist Church would join with us to form a United Church in England. Sadly, that dream is still a dream.

Therefore we give thanks for 50 years of worship and mission; for thousands of Members, Elders and Ministers, and for countless people who have served the church and world, all keeping to the Reformed Principles, ie: being reformed, and ever reforming; the Priesthood of all believers; the centrality of the Bible; decisions by Councils; freedom from the State; and freedom to worship as led.

And here's to the future!

*Stephen Thornton*

(For information about how the URC will be celebrating 50 years, see: <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/our-50th-anniversary>)



**WESSEX SYNOD**  
**BIG**  
*Day Out* **2022**

**Saturday  
7th May 2022**

**Hollycombe**  
STEAM IN THE COUNTRY

Attractions for everyone, Largest Traditional Steam Fairground in Britain, Steam Railways, Listed Woodland Gardens including an Azalea Walk, Treasure Hunt, Reflective Labyrinth, Live Brass Band, Synod Marquee and Activity Field with Interactive Zones and Workshops, Refreshments and Worship.

**50** The United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church  
Wessex Synod

*A great day out for **all** the family  
and for **all** ages*

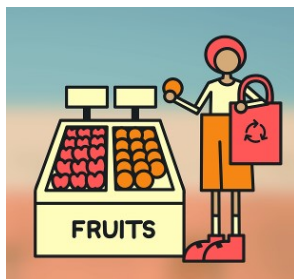
A photograph of a red steam locomotive pulling a passenger carriage through a grassy field. The locomotive is black with red accents, and the carriage is red with blue seating. People are visible in the carriage.

## RECYCLING.... SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In an ideal world nobody would be recycling! Why? Because there would be nothing **to** recycle. All products would come with no packaging, or it would be biodegradable/compostable. Unfortunately we do not live in an ideal world and, whilst recycling must be done where possible, it is not the answer to the problem.

So what can be recycled in Fleet? Do you know? Stop reading now and jot down your ideas. There are at least 30 different categories of recyclable items! Answers on page 17.

Where possible, we should look for unpackaged items, whether that's second hand or from a supermarket or zero-waste shop. Have you considered asking for something without packaging? The more people who ask, the more shops will consider this option. Waitrose allows you to bring your own clean tub to its counters for meat, fish and delicatessen items, for example. Similarly, loose bakery items from supermarkets can be placed in your own Tupperware.



Have you ever tried to make your own? That is another option. Jams, pickles, ketchups, cordials and baked goods can be made at home if you have the time. If buying, glass and metal are both infinitely recyclable, although they carry a greater carbon footprint because of their weight and the cost of transporting them.

Anything single use should be avoided! Even paper bags that are used once should be avoided; but plastic is the big one! Avoid at all costs if you can. This is almost impossible, but some people manage it or get very close. Both paper and plastic degrade every time they are recycled, so eventually will end up as landfill.

So for 2022, what can you do to reduce your recycling? Do you need advice about how to make an area of your life more green? Would you like more information on particular green issues or products? Let me know, and I will try to answer your question in future issues of *InTouch*.

**Grace Bagshaw, Fleet URC**



## RECYCLING ALUMINIUM FOIL

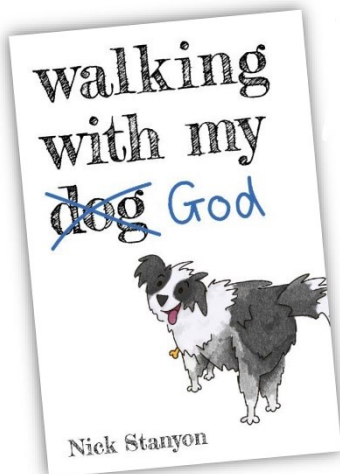
Thank you to everyone who kindly saves their used foil for the Multiple Sclerosis Society's fundraising—it is very much appreciated. The foil is sold by weight, so a large amount is needed to make money. Every little pie dish counts!

Please note that only real silver foil is suitable (ie foil that remains folded when crushed and does not open up again like crisp bags). Do ensure that the foil is clean.

You can give the foil to me at church on Sunday mornings or at Wednesday coffee mornings. Please contact me if you have any queries.

*Meg Nicholson (01252 687075), Fleet URC*

## WALKING WITH MY ~~DOG~~ GOD—Revd Nick Stanyon



If you are looking for an inspiring read during these difficult times, then I can recommend Nick Stanyon's book, *Walking with my ~~Dog~~ God*. Nick was our minister here at Fleet URC from 1988 to 1994.

Every chapter of the book stands alone, and ends with a thought-provoking devotional section. The following notes are taken from the back cover:

*While my dog may be the starting point, you will realise that it's my God I'm really talking about. There have been many who have pointed out the word-play that 'dog' is 'god' in reverse. I hope you don't find these reflections quite as corny as that! In fact I hope you will find some of them deeply challenging. Unlike*

*Nina, who really wouldn't hurt anyone, these cosy little reflections may suddenly turn round and bite! If they do, they will have done their job.*

*Walking with my ~~Dog~~ God* is available from Nick at a cost of £8.99 plus P&P. If you would like a copy, please let me know and I will put in a combined order. Nick also writes the blog *Marking the Moment*, in which characters from the gospel reflect on their meeting with Jesus. It can be found at <https://nickstanyon.com>.

*Bee Griffiths, Fleet URC (01252 660599)*



## GOD'S WONDERFUL WORLD—

### WHERE DO BUTTERFLIES GO IN WINTER?

We usually associate butterflies with summer days, but have you ever wondered how these delicate creatures survive our winters in Britain?

Butterflies are ectothermic—which means they cannot regulate their own body temperature, and rely instead on external heat sources to keep warm. This is why they perch on leaves or flowers, fanning their wings to bask in the sun, or seek shaded areas to cool down. So when sources of heat become harder to find, they struggle. Understandably our winters pose a problem.



*Brown Hairstreak*

To overcome this, butterflies have adapted in a remarkable number of ways to survive.

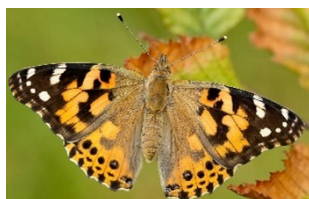
The most common way for them to overwinter in Britain is either as a caterpillar in their larval stage, or as a chrysalis. They also find refuge at the bottom of plants, or bury themselves in leaf litter or soil where they wait, hopefully undisturbed, until Spring. This tactic is used by a large majority of British species, which include Orange Tips and Common Blue.

One of the safest ways is to wait the cold out as an egg. The Brown Hairstreak is one that employs this strategy.

A less common method, chosen by Brimstone, Comma, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral, is to overwinter in their adult form in sheds, log piles, or even rabbit burrows. They have been known to wake up occasionally on warmer days, and have been spotted in December or January.



*Comma*



*Painted Lady*

The amazing Painted Lady escapes the cold by making an epic migration to Northern Africa in the search for warmer weather.

Despite these adaptations to our cold winters, butterfly numbers are decreasing rapidly. The Small Tortoiseshell has fallen by 80 per cent in south east England since 1990.

So—apart from knitting them scarves and bobble hats—here are a few things that can help:

- Delay cutting back and tidying up leaf litter.

- Leave a wilder area in your garden with long grasses, ivy and nettles.
- Plan to plant nectar-rich plants, such as forget-me-nots, bugle, heather or sweet william.

The best thing you can do if you see a butterfly flying about in your house in the middle of winter is to help it relocate to a cooler spot. Put it in a cardboard box for a while to calm it down, and then leave it in your shed, garden, or another suitable location. Somewhere cool and dry is ideal. Remember to release it in spring.

Butterflies are not expressly found in our Scripture, but to me the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly has striking parallels to Christian conversion, transfiguration and resurrection.

*Darrell Henderson, Fleet URC*



## **ANSWERS TO THE RECYCLING QUESTION\*** (see page14)

1. Paper; 2. Card; 3. Cans/Tins; 4. Aerosol Cans; 5. Plastic Bottles (not tubs—anything with a ‘neck’ counts); 6. Metal lids, eg from a beer bottle, jam jar etc — *All the above items can be recycled in the ‘blue’ recycling bins.*

7. Foil; 8. Textiles; 9. Crisp Packets (although crisps in compostable packets are available at *Scoop!*); 10. Milk bottle lids; 11. Pringles Tubes; 12. Contact lenses and glasses; 13. Pens; 14. Printer Ink Cartridges.

15. Toothcare waste (eg toothpaste tubes, brushes etc); 16. Baby wipe packets (best avoided anyway); 17. Pet food pouches; 18. Bras; 19. Babybel/Cheese wrappers; 21. Tassimo pods; 22. Batteries; 23. Stamps; 24. Bread bags.

25. Old paint; 26. Water filters; 27. Blister packs; 28. WEEE (Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment); 29. Garden waste; 30. Other soft plastics, including peelable film lids, cereal, rice and dry food bags, frozen food bags, salad bags, flower wrapping, multipack film wrap, cling film and sleeves on bottles, carrier bags, clothing bags, bubble wrap, magazine & newspaper wrappers, toilet roll and kitchen roll wrapping.

*\* NB—Answers are based on information available on the ‘Keep Hart Clean’ Facebook page. For more information on recycling any of these items, please look online or ask me for details.*

*Grace Bagshaw, Fleet URC*

## STEPWISE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

### What is Stepwise?

Stepwise is an integral part of *Walking the Way—living the life of Jesus today*, the URC's focus on whole-life discipleship and mission.



Wessex Synod is delighted that Stepwise is now part of the life of the Synod, with people having completed the first stream, while others are just about to start. A Synod Stepwise Advocacy Group has been formed and they have been working hard to make sure that all the procedures are put in place to ensure that Stepwise has been able to happen through the last 18 months.

Stepwise is a programme of learning and discipleship development for everyone—whether you are exploring and enriching your personal faith life, discerning where God's call on your life may be leading, preparing for a new direction, or developing a specific role within your community or church.

One key aspect is that, as a Stepwise participant, your group will have a facilitator, and you will also have a mentor who will be with you throughout your Stepwise stream. The Synod Advocacy Group is ensuring safe recruitment and orientation of voluntary facilitators and mentors.

### What is a Stepwise Stream?

Stepwise has five streams: Faith Filled Life, Faith Filled Worship, Faith Fuelled Leadership, Faith Filled Confidence and Faith Filled Community. Everyone starts with Faith Filled Life, and after that depends on you. You don't have to follow any set path through it.



Stepwise is open to anyone who is keen to reflect on and develop their Christian faith. If you're ready to be stimulated and challenged—and want to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others—then Stepwise could be just what you're looking for.

Stepwise is learner orientated and designed to draw on the strengths and to address the needs of individual learners, in the contexts of their communities and churches. The programme emphasises the vital importance of people learning from their daily lives, wherever and whoever God calls them to be.

There are different start times, so there should be a group that is convenient for you—either online or in person.

### I'm Interested! What do I do next?

This is what you need to know:

- All participants wanting to engage in the Stepwise programme will have to begin with completing Faith Filled Life.

- If you want to participate in Faith Filled Life, go to our Synod website and fill in an application form, and send this to Ruth Heine, [development@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:development@urcwessex.org.uk). You will then be contacted by a member of the Synod Advocacy Group.
- Synod will identify where the learning Hubs will be located within the Synod, and what online offering there may be.
- Groups will be formed logically for participants and will be registered with Synod. This will connect you for your login for your online learning.
- You will have a mentor throughout Stepwise, and if you are unable to identify one from your church you will be given help to find one.

To find out more, please contact:

Mary Thomas, [dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk) or  
Ray Stanyon, [dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk).



## TALKING BANNERS...

We have been busy undertaking a review of the Worship Area at Beacon Hill in recent months, influenced by the upgrade of the audio-visual facilities currently being installed. Some areas needed 'warming up', and we were looking for something decorative to put on the walls.



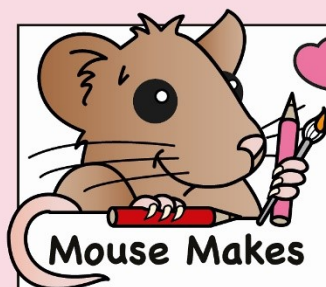
Although it was sad that Chandler's Ford URC closed last year, we were delighted to be able to rehouse two of the banners made by Steve Prosser and Joan Waldron, amongst others. Karen used to lead worship there regularly when living in the area, so having the 'Welcome' and the 'Pentecost' banners displayed in the church at Beacon Hill allows that connection to be continued into the future at a place of worship.



Talking Banners also reminded some of a banner created by members of Beacon Hill years ago, which has been found and proudly displayed in the worship area.

*Beacon Hill Elders*

*(Photos: Christine Allen)*



Lord, you are a God who shows  
\_\_\_\_\_ and is \_\_\_\_\_  
...You have great \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 86:1

Love the Lord your  
God with all your

\_\_\_\_\_ with all your

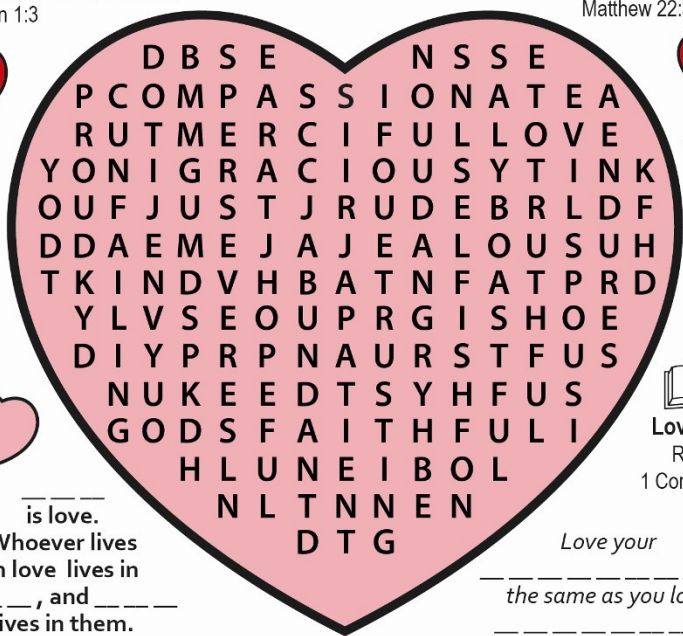
\_\_\_\_\_ and with all your

\_\_\_\_\_ Matthew 22:37

See what great love the Father  
has for us that He would call us His

1 John 1:3

How did  
God show  
He **loved** us?  
Read 1 John 4:9



\_\_\_\_\_ is love.  
Whoever lives  
in love lives in  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_  
lives in them.  
1 John 4:16

Love is ..  
Read  
1 Cor 13:4-7

Love your  
\_\_\_\_\_ the same as you love

Matthew 22:39

**Love is:**  
PATIENT • KIND • GRACIOUS • JUST • TRUTHFUL • TRUSTING • HOPEFUL  
PERSEVERE • ENDURES • GOD  
**Love is not:**  
JEALOUS • ENVY • BOASTFUL • PROUD • SELFISH • ANGRY • RUDE • EVIL  
**God's love is:**  
LOVE • MERCIFUL • FAITHFUL • UNFAILING • ABUNDANT • COMPASSIONATE