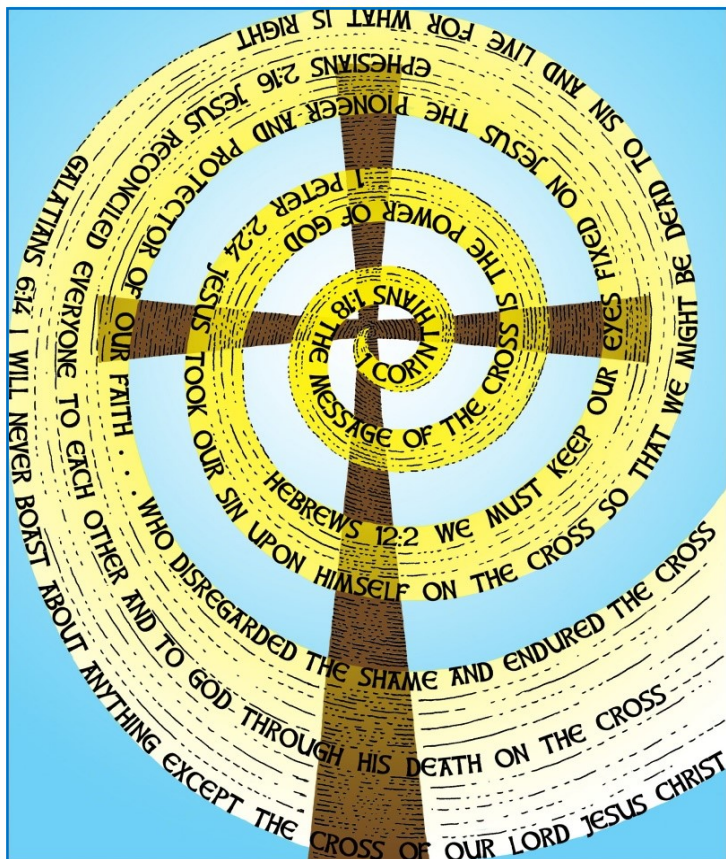


InTouch

Spring 2022



The magazine of
Fleet and Beacon Hill
United Reformed Churches

FLEET URC & BEACON HILL URC

Both churches are currently without a Minister



FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Kings Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3AF

tel: 01252 623629 (ansaphone)

email: admin@fleeturc.org.uk

web: www.fleeturc.org.uk



www.facebook.com/fleeturc



@FleetURC



YouTube Fleet and Beacon Hill United Reformed Churches

CHURCH CONTACTS

Secretary: **Margaret Armes**, 01252 650994
b.ames@ntlworld.com

Treasurer: **John Gibbons**, 01252 614200
jmgibbons@hotmail.com

Hall Bookings: **Margaret Armes**, 01252 650994
b.ames@ntlworld.com



BEACON HILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Churt Road, Beacon Hill, Hindhead, Surrey, GU26 6NL

web: www.beaconhillurc.com



www.facebook.com/beaconhillurc



YouTube Fleet and Beacon Hill United Reformed Churches

CHURCH CONTACTS

Secretary: **Hugh Le Fanu**, 01428 607546
bhurcsecretary@gmail.com

Treasurer: **Christine Allen**, 07713 153110
bhurctreasurer@yahoo.com

Pastoral Care Coordinator: **Karen Smith**, 07742 669341
kpmsmith@hotmail.com

Hall Bookings: **Bridget Mitchell**, 01428 606236
bridget.rjm@sky.com

GREETINGS FROM THE REVD MICHAEL HODGSON



My letter this month is, as always, being written a little before publication date, and so things could have changed by the time you read this, but I'm writing as the war in Ukraine continues to unfold and further atrocities are committed. The pictures and stories from the streets break the heart and we wonder how this is all going to end. Chilling parallels can be drawn between now and the lead up to the start of the Second World War. A Third World War is just too horrific to contemplate. What is going to happen next?

Outside a war zone, when there is a tragedy, as say after the London Bridge bombings or the Manchester Arena attack, there is the opportunity for people to take on board what has happened, or to recover with a calm atmosphere. In the Ukraine that's not possible, as those recovering in the hospitals are still able to hear and to feel the war going on around them, never knowing if the hospital they are in is about to be the next building to be hit. There is no escape. There is no area of peace or sanctuary. Even going underground, they can still feel the ground shake and they dread what will await them later. Over two million people have fled the country. Praying for the people of Ukraine may seem a poor response from us and I suspect that I'm not alone in feeling a great helplessness as the tragedy unfolds.

We are, however, an Easter people, and in that faith we affirm that, 'The Lord is risen!' Thinking about the war in Ukraine, I can't help but think that on Easter Day we shall be celebrating that the tyrants of Jesus' day found that they did not have the last word after all. For all their plotting, their brutality and their cruelty—for all their darkness and for all the fear that they built around them—they weren't actually in control. The Lord is risen! As Martin Luther has commented about all tyrants, 'Theirs was a short-lived day'. They are also never remembered well.

St John famously writes about the light that shines in the darkness and how the darkness has never been able to put it out. On Easter Day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The darkness could not put out the light of Christ then—or since. Darkness never does have the final word, and I am certain that the light is still shining in the darkness of the war in Ukraine. Darkness never wins.

I was struck by a picture I saw the other week of a Russian woman showing her protest against the war. Putin has made demonstrations against the war illegal. It's illegal to refer to it as a war at all, and yet this elderly lady found a way to show her protest. As she went about her ordinary living, her ordinary

clothes just happened to be in the same colours as the Ukrainian flag. You may also have seen the picture of the Russian Embassy in Lisbon lit up in the Ukrainian colours—the lights being beamed on to the building by neighbours. Apparently the Russian Ambassador was apoplectic.

Sydney Carter famously wrote, 'They buried my body and they thought I'd gone, but I am the dance and I still go on'. He also wrote, 'I am the life that'll never, never die'. We celebrate the truth of that again this Easter. In this country we shall be celebrating it surrounded by the joy of Spring. In the Ukraine it likely, tragically, that it will be celebrated in a time of war; but wherever we are, may the light of the resurrection shine in this world, bringing hope and encouragement in place of despair.

With all good wishes,

Revd Michael Hodgson, Interim Moderator, Fleet URC



A PRAYER OF COMPASSION

Compassionate God,

We are all very distressed at the news reports of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The constant bombing of peaceful, historical cities and towns resulting in destruction and many innocent lives lost, fills us with sadness. It is difficult for us to relate to such mass, unprovoked destruction.

We ask that you comfort and guide the many thousands who find themselves homeless as a result of this war.

Many traumatised refugees are fleeing to safety on long, dangerous journeys in very cold weather, with what few essential possessions they could hastily gather and carry. Welcoming neighbouring countries are giving them food, shelter, basic comforts and reassuring love.

We ask that you support and comfort families as they endeavour to rebuild their shattered lives in a strange and completely new environment. Give them the strength and will to adjust to their unplanned surroundings. We also ask that hostilities may end and that lasting peace prevails, enabling people of all nationalities to live in harmony.

We ask these things in your name.

Amen

Michael Orchard, Beacon Hill URC

~ HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES 2022 ~

FLEET URC

(Please note: The Maundy Thursday & Good Friday services are at Fleet Methodist Church; Sunday services at Fleet URC)

Sunday, 10th April—*Palm Sunday*

10 am Morning Worship led by Mr Sydney Shore CBE

Thursday, 14th April—*Maundy Thursday*

7.30 pm A Service of Tenebrae (Methodist Church)
led by Revd Nick Oborski

Friday, 15th April—*Good Friday*

2 pm A Service of Reflection (Methodist Church)
led by Mrs Julie Clark

Sunday, 17th April—*Easter Day*

10 am Easter Morning Worship with Holy Communion,
led by Revd Dr Kevin Snyman



BEACON HILL URC

Sunday, 10th April—*Palm Sunday*

10 am Morning Worship led by Revd John Whitton

Thursday, 14th April—*Maundy Thursday*

7.30 pm Tenebrae Service with Holy Communion in the Osborne Hall
(NB: Booking is essential—contact Karen Smith)

Friday, 15th April—*Good Friday*

11 am A Reflective Act of Worship at St Alban's, Hindhead, followed
by a Walk of Witness through the village to Beacon Hill URC,
where there will be a short time of prayer and refreshments

Sunday, 17th April—*Easter Day*

8.30 am An Agape Breakfast in The Hub
(NB: Booking is essential—contact Karen Smith)

10 am Easter Morning Worship with Holy Communion
led by Mrs Karen Smith





CHRISTIAN AID WEEK, 15—21 MAY

There will be a Cake and Plant Sale in support of Christian Aid in the car park of St Philip & St James, Fleet, on **Saturday 14th May from 2.30 pm**. Please come along and support us.

Donations of plants and/or cakes (with listed ingredients) will be greatly appreciated. *Linda Storey, Fleet URC*



NOTICE BOARD

Please note that contributions for the Summer issue of *InTouch* should be with the editor, Christine Gibbons, by **Sunday 22 May** (christine.gibbons@beech-ride.co.uk)



'NURTURING OUR FAITH' JOINT GROUP

Our Bible Study Group will meet on Zoom **at 11 am** on the following Mondays:

9th May*, 20th June, 18th July
(*date change with Nurture Group)
See page 7 for more information.



JOINT PRAYER GROUP

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

11th April, 16th May*, 13th June, 11th July
(*date change with Nurture Group)

Come and join us for 30 minutes of quiet meditation.

'STAND BY ME'—UPDATE FROM FOOTSTEPS



Thank you so much for your fantastic response to our request to support 'Stand by Me' (www.standbyme). We now have enough pledged support each month to sponsor three children!

Look out for us collecting the sponsorship money during coffee and fellowship after church on Sundays, and hopefully we will soon have more information to bring to you about the children themselves.

Helen Bailey, on behalf of Footsteps Young People's Group, Fleet URC

NURTURING OUR FAITH: BIBLE STUDY ONLINE

Lent Groups

As you read this, our Lent groups will almost have concluded. These have been thinking about *Holy Habits*, based on the writings of Revd Andrew Roberts, who identifies these as a way to help us think about how to deepen the discipleship of those who are following Jesus. I'd like to thank Revd Graham Hoslett for leading us in two of these sessions while I took some time out. It certainly refreshed me during Lent to join a discussion group as a participant.

Graham encouraged us to think about our discipleship, first, by developing the focus on Biblical Teaching, and in the second session by considering Jesus serving with gladness, and what that directs us to develop in our discipleship. Our final session, on **4th April** online at 11 am, will be considering how, even under the oppressive critical pressure of the religious authorities, Jesus continued to be generous in his ministry. Do join us if you can.



Nurturing Our Faith Groups Spring/Summer

Having been one of the households without electricity following Storm Eunice, I wasn't able to lead the planned session in February, so we'll try again through the Spring and Summer with the planned series *Who is Christ for us today?* We will be discussing the 'I am' sayings from John's Gospel, thinking about what they are drawing us to understand about living our faith in the very disturbed and challenging atmosphere of our world in 2022. Your insights and ideas are warmly welcomed in these meetings, as much as your company in joining us to listen and reflect, so come along online if you can.

Dates for your diary:

Monday 9th May (a date swap this month with Prayer Time online as I'm in Oberammergau the following week); **Monday 20th June**; **Monday 18th July**.

All meetings are online at 11 am. A Zoom link will be sent out in the week before each session, with details of the readings.

Karen Smith, Beacon Hill URC





Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972

CELEBRATING OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

I am sure most of you know that this year the United Reformed Church celebrates its 50th Anniversary on 1st October.

Margaret Armes and I are planning an Afternoon Tea for Fleet URC to mark this important occasion, and this will be held on the actual day of the anniversary, **Saturday 1st October, from 3 to 5 pm** in our church hall.

Invitations will be sent to you all with the request that you RSVP so that we can plan seating and, of course, the tea. If you have any special dietary requirements, please let us know.

Even at this early stage, can I ask you to lend us your cake stands? We promise to look after them carefully! Also, if you are able to assist in any way, please see either Margaret or myself.

We hope that you are happy with this plan, and will wish to join us at this happy event.

Darrell Henderson, Fleet URC



WESSEX SYNOD BIG DAY OUT

Come and celebrate the URC's 50th Jubilee with Wessex Synod at Hollycombe Steam in the Country! It's a great day out for *all* the family and for *all* ages.

Attractions include the largest traditional steam fairground in Britain, steam railways, beautiful woodland gardens, brass band, games, crafts, refreshments, and much more.



Saturday, 7th May, 2022

Adult tickets: £8

Child tickets: £5 (ages 3-15)

For more information, and to book, go to:

<https://wessexsynodurc.org.uk/wessex-synod-big-day-out-2022/>

A party from Fleet URC is going along, and if you would like to join us, please speak to Margaret Armes (01252 623629).

GOLDEN JOTTINGS NO 5: REMEMBERING THE BIBLE SOCIETY

The fifth in a series of reminiscences by Bernard and Mavis Potter, marking their 50 years of membership at Fleet URC.

Over the years the Fleet Congregational Church/Fleet United Reformed Church had a reputation for the support it gave to The Bible Society (earlier known as The British & Foreign Bible Society). For a number of years it provided both the Secretary and Treasurer for the local group. It was especially active along with the other denominations in the town during the 1980s. All the churches provided representatives to both the General Committee as well as a Ladies' Action Group.

Three events stand out during this period, all of which were memorable occasions.

Firstly: A Hymn Writing event, for use at various local Bible Society events, both mid-week and special united services. The theme for the hymns was 'The Bible'.

Secondly: Fleet URC mounted an Exhibition featuring a few different aspects of the work of the Society. This included translation, distribution, production (including the various advances in printing technology).

Thirdly: Promotion of a New Testament written in the native tongues of the four Home Countries. The local committee thought it a good idea to have an evening in which food from the various countries was sampled, after which four people would speak on behalf of the country they were representing. But it went a bit further than that: the representatives were asked to dress in the national costume.



As I was asked to represent England, John Bull was chosen for the National Costume. Not an easy task to produce from scratch. It needed work from Mavis to cobble up a good representation of the man. Firstly the top hat, which was borrowed. I already had a white shirt and some old white trousers. The waistcoat was an old Union Flag tied at the back with tape. The morning coat came from the wardrobe of the Christchurch Players, Crookham. Footwear was some well polished gumboots; and finally, the bow tie was home-made from a piece of blue material.

This was a learning/fun evening shared by local Churches, whilst being a good opportunity to learn more about the work of the Society.

Bernard and Mavis Potter, Fleet URC

[Footnote: Some people at the event were also members of the Carnival Committee, and I was invited to lead the Carnival Procession. The picture, taken along Fleet Road, gives an impression of the costume.]

It's now 18 months since we completed the Bronze Eco Church Award assessment and we have been actively thinking about how to make progress in achieving the criteria to be awarded a Silver Award, which is quite a demanding standard to attain. But it's part of our mission planning to work towards it, so the spearhead group of Robert, Bridget, Hugh and Karen have been investigating ways to work with others and share the intent to be more eco friendly as part of the communities we talk to and work with—and one of those ways has been sharing news of our eco initiatives as a church with you!

Hugh has recently been talking to St Alban's Church in Beacon Hill, who are just starting out on looking at how to be a more eco friendly church. He's been able to share some of our experience in completing the questionnaire A Rocha supply after registering with them as an assessment of what's in place already. We are looking at some joint work to invite speakers to an ecumenical eco focused service and identify what we can do in Beacon Hill to encourage eco friendly practice.

One of the trees in the church garden bordering the neighbouring Primary School playground needed cutting back recently, so members Hugh and Robert set to. Then Tom, one of the Nursery School assistants who has Forest School training, saw the branches and plans to repurpose some of the longer ones to show the children how to make a tepee from recycled wood. We look forward to seeing his handiwork in summer! Robert and Bridget have also been tidying up the garden at church, ready for Karen's plans for the 2022 *Road to Emmaus* Easter garden to emerge, currently mulched with shredded bark chippings from the tree.



Our new sensory garden—'Before' and 'After' Photos

Our sensory garden needed an update, and Tom has made it much more appealing and exciting for both the nursery children and the church, including 'touch' areas and planters from recycled tyres from the garage next door to us. The re-purposed garden area can help children with special needs interact, as some of the plants have different textured leaves. The area in the

centre has been surfaced with gravel and bark chippings to make an all-weather surface for those wishing to access the garden through the year. He has also used some of the turf from this area to improve the worn areas in the rest of the lawn.

It's been a delight to collaborate with the Nursery; and we have all benefitted from the re-use, re-purposing and recycling that's come out of it.

'The Eco Team' (Robert, Bridget, Hugh and Karen), Beacon Hill URC



PALANI MISSION UPDATE



We recently received a message from Revd John Abraham with some good news from the Mission: Two more of the girls we have been sponsoring to train as community nurses have passed their final examinations with distinction, and are now employed.

Ms Elamathy is working in the Palani Mission Hospital, and Ms Soumiya has a placement in her native village. Congratulations to them both!

Employment not only secures the girls' future livelihood, but also provides a source of income to support their extended families. Revd John said that both the girls and their parents send their love, sincere thanks and gratitude to all of us at Fleet URC who have helped them on their way.

Priya and Leela, our latest students, are busy with their studies and doing well.

The money we sent to repair roofs has been well spent on four—possibly five—houses. This project has been subject to delays because of coronavirus restrictions, and Revd John has asked us to hold this work in particular in our prayers. The photo below shows the structure of the rafters and PVC sheets that insulate the living areas from the rain and sun, providing a cool, dry environment.



The other photo is of an elderly widow with no children, who lives alone. When Sheeba John asked her how she managed to live in such a leaking house, she replied, "Jesus is my umbrella." Sheeba was truly humbled by such faith.

/cont

Revd John ended his message to us, "Once again we thank and praise God for you, and thank each one of you for the prayerful, thoughtful and sacrificial contributions. May God richly bless you and the work of your hands."

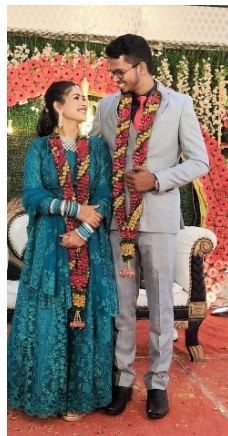
The 'Friends of Palani Mission' met on 15th February to discuss future plans. As a result of the fundraising ideas discussed there will be another Curry Evening on **Friday, 13th May**. Tickets are £15 per head, with a limit of 80 covers. The money raised will go towards the training of our sponsored girls and more roofs. If there is any money left over we will encourage plans for another medical camp.

Something else to look forward to: Jenny Butterworth has offered to open her beautiful garden to visitors again later this summer (date to be announced).

Finally, we have received the happy news of the marriage of Nithya and Gopi (also known as Emmanuel, who acted as driver for the group from our church when they visited Palani). These photos show their Hindu wedding; there will be a Christian blessing later.



John Gibbons, Fleet URC



CHRISTMAS KNITTED ANGELS



Just a little note for your information. We are planning on decorating Fleet again this year with our knitted angels to pass on the Christmas message.

I know it is March. I know that I am a nag bags, but it is only nine months before we start our annual 'yarn bombing'!

I have a crotchet pattern if anyone wishes to make these glorious angels in the crotchet style. Also, please let me know if you would like a knitting pattern.

The total number of Angels distributed around Fleet and Church Crookham in 2021 was again over three thousand. Extra knitted Angels were handed in on the days we were distributing them, so unfortunately we did not have a complete tally. Our church supplied 411, which was amazing!

Darrell Henderson, Fleet URC



LET'S PRAY

I've wanted to write about prayer for some time now. It's such a huge part of our walk with God. Recently I've been encouraged by reading a short book by Anne Lamott, titled 'HELP, THANKS, WOW'. For me it's not so much about what she writes in her book, but more about the concept of these three prayers asking for help, giving thanks, or exclaiming 'Wow!'.

It's not difficult to think of times we have asked God for **HELP**. It's often our first prayer when we have difficulties, decisions to make, anxiety to cope with, or simply needing strength to get through the day. "Lord, help me..." When we pray we often ask for a lot of things, not just for ourselves. We ask God to help our families or friends, to help our leaders, to help people facing disaster across the world. We pray for healing for ourselves and others. Sometimes we pray the same request repeatedly, not knowing or seeing an answer; but we believe God hears our prayers.

Some of our earliest prayers are prayers of **THANKS**. We have much to be thankful for: a new day, good food, good company, our families and friends, our health, and so much more. We probably say thank you to someone several times a day, so it should be our natural position to be thankful to God. God loves us, God provides for us, God died to save us, God is our daily companion, and God gives us strength and peace. The list is endless, and we are overwhelmingly grateful to God.

The **WOW** Prayer is the most exciting and the most challenging. "Wow is about having one's mind blown by the mesmerizing or the miraculous." (Anne Lamott). Wow is a simple childlike response to an amazing sunset, a rainbow, a child's first steps, and an unexpected phone call from a loved one—or anything that makes us stop. Wow reminds us how much God loves to bless us and encourage us. It's good to share our wow moments: it helps us acknowledge what a wonderful creator God we are privileged to know.

We sometimes want to ask God for a miracle. I like to call these wow prayers, where the answer would be so amazing it would be impossible to contain our response. God truly loves us.

Finally, but probably most importantly, prayer is about a relationship with God. We can talk with God at any time, anywhere, but we must also listen. Listening is the beginning of prayer. Sometimes we have too much to say! I think God wants us to just be quiet in His presence.

Mother Teresa writes, "God speaks in the silence of the heart, and we listen. And then we speak to God from the fullness of our heart, and God listens. And this listening and this speaking is what prayer is meant to be."

Jenny Butterworth, Fleet URC

[Anne Lamott, *Help, Thanks, Wow*: Hodder & Stoughton (2015)]

A PRAYER IN CELEBRATION OF SPRINGTIME

Lord, at this time of year, as dawn breaks and the edge of darkness gives way to early light, the sun slowly rises, heralding another spring day.

We are full of joy as the days lengthen, as the warmth from the sun slowly increases; spring flowers, trees and shrubs burst into life, surprising us with their amazing array of colour, variety of shape, and their scent attracting the pollinating insects. Birds happily sing as they gather their nest building material—some eagerly peck our lawns in their search for food, making their chirping, mating calls.

Seeds that have laid dormant during the winter are energised into life, eager to show a face to a fast-changing world. We are overwhelmed at your skill in containing so much energy in a small seed. When given the right conditions, they burst into life, producing plants—each one perfect and beautiful.

We are surrounded by this priceless seasonal beauty in a tranquil county. We thank you for our generosity in giving us these gifts and ask that you guide us as we endeavour to look after them for your future children.

Amen

Michael Orchard, Beacon Hill URC



GOD'S WONDERFUL WORLD—MOTHER TREES

I wonder if many of you know that there are Mother Trees in our world. Now you might think that I am fixated on Mothers as it is March which of course is the month we celebrate Mothering Sunday here in the UK; but on listening to and reading articles by Suzanne Simard* about these wonderful important plants in our world, I thought I would share some facts.

Mother Trees are also known as Hub Trees, and they are in forests all over the world. Recognising the importance of these trees and the vast underground network connecting all trees has added to our understanding of how forests work.

Mother Trees tap into this network, which is made up of mycorrhizal fungi, a type of fungus that helps trees to absorb water, carbon and nutrients from the soil. The network connects entire forests like an underground internet, helping

trees to communicate and share resources. In this way each Mother Tree acts as a central hub, communicating with its young seedlings around it. In a single forest a Mother Tree can be connected to hundreds of other trees.

Mother Trees transmit carbon through the mycorrhizal network to young seedlings in need, prioritising kin seedlings over stranger seedlings. They can also shrink their own roots to assist their young if there is a problem.

When forests are harvested the retention of Mother Trees helps the forest regenerate faster because seeds from the Mother Tree can germinate more quickly and tap into the fungal web to receive the resources they need for survival. They can send whatever nutrients, water and carbon they don't use through the fungi to other seedlings.

Trees look out for each other as well and have impressive communication signals. For instance apple trees under attack by caterpillars will release chemicals that attract caterpillar-eating birds. Other trees can release airborne chemical signals to each other to warn about an incoming threat such as insects, so that their closest neighbours will produce tannins to make their leaves taste bitter.



There is also a whole lot of folklore and myth surrounding trees—and many pagan cultures, including the Celts, believed that kindly spirits lived in trees. The Aborigines' belief is that all living things share the same soul or spirit.

Did you know that the saying 'knock on wood' originates from the practice of knocking on tree trunks to waken the spirits for protection?

It has also been proved that just looking at trees can make us feel happier, less stressed and more creative. This is partly because they release chemicals called phytoncides, which can have an amazing effect on us when we breathe them in—reducing blood pressure, lowering anxiety levels and increasing our pain threshold. They can even boost our levels of anti-cancer proteins!

A mother's love is like nothing else in the world. It's both strong and gentle; loud and quiet; unrelenting and yielding; protecting and releasing; demanding and unassuming... even in trees!

Darrell Henderson, Fleet URC

[*Suzanne Simard, *Finding the Mother Tree*: Penguin Books (2022)]



REVISITING ZERO WASTE

'Zero Waste' is a term that is commonly used among the eco-conscious, and is one that I have used before in *InTouch*. Do you think you know what it means? It might mean more than you think!

In essence, Zero Waste is exactly that. A term for a person who creates very little waste. Some people refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle and rot so effectively that in an entire year they have less land-fill (black bin) waste than would fill one carrier bag. Something to aspire to, but difficult to achieve!

To help us on our journey, we have Zero Waste shops such as Fleet Scoop. You will find me in Fleet Scoop every Wednesday refilling my jars with oats, pasta, herbs, spices, rice, chocolate, cleaning materials etc. This has made a huge difference to our waste as we have converted to better choices over the last few years. Our waste for a fortnight for a family of four now fills only two thirds of our kitchen bin, typically; but we are still looking for ways to improve on that.

However, Zero Waste goes beyond that to the way we waste resources. If you have things in your home, loft, garage or shed that are not being used, they are being wasted. Those resources could be used by others. Do your kitchen cupboards have pots, dishes or cutlery that you're not using? Perhaps someone moving out of home for the first time would be delighted to have those kitchen utensils. Clothes or shoes that you no longer wear, for whatever reason, would be better being worn by someone than no one. What about entertainment ... books, games, dvds, cds? Could a school or playgroup benefit from outgrown children's games and toys? Charity shops are always looking for donations!



Some things are not as easy to pass on to others, so what do you do with items which are not charity-shoppable? We often use an app called Olio. It's a free app that allows you to share unwanted items. Food can be given away for free if it is in date, including leftovers and excess items, eg a cake with some slices missing; teabags you tried but didn't get on with; a glut of tomatoes from your greenhouse. Olio 'food

heroes' are also nominated representatives who collect food from supermarkets which is about to go past its Best Before date to share on the app. Non-food items can cover many categories from computer cables, helium balloons, books, party items ... you name it and you can pretty much Olio it! You can give and get any item for free but you can also list items to lend. The useful thing about Olio is that items can be listed by distance, so you know which items are being given away



closest to you. Freegle is an alternative to Olio, which has been around for longer and serves a similar purpose, but does not include the sharing of food. Either of these is a great way to share unwanted items.

We are all guilty of wasting something. Have a think about what you have around you that can be redistributed to prevent the waste of those resources. Perhaps give Olio or Freegle a try! Good luck.

Grace Bagshaw, Fleet URC



FLEET AND CROOKHAM CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SCHOOLS (FACCTS)

Throughout the past two years of pandemic and lockdown I have continued my association with FACCTS, and this is a summary of their activities during that time:

Sadly, when the country first went into lockdown in Spring 2020, FACCTS had limited or no access to schools. However in the Summer term, as soon as they were able to, they focussed on what they considered to be the most important thing, the 'It's Your Move' video for Year 6, the last year of junior school—all about moving up to secondary school.

In the Autumn and Winter of 2020/2021 FACCTS made monthly assembly videos for infant and junior schools, and a Christmas video starring a Ninja spy. There was also an 'In Search of Christmas' family trail around Fleet which used QR codes to find the next clue.

In the Spring and Summer of 2021 the assembly videos were continued, and extended to include secondary schools. They continued to run Outdoor Club with Year 7 at Court Moor School, and ran a Christian Union club with Year 8. They also served coffee to staff at both Court Moor and Calthorpe Park Schools!

In the Autumn and Winter of 2021/2022 FACCTS were able to re-start several of their lunch clubs at several junior schools, and *Open the Book* assemblies at three infant and one primary school, and they videoed these for the children when visitors to the school were later restricted.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) money management lessons have been run with all Year 9 classes in both Calthorpe Park and Court Moor Schools. They have also prepared some RE lessons for Calthorpe Park students.

Easter presentations with Year 6 in all the junior schools are currently being planned, and weekly staff coffee at both secondary schools continues.

Rosemarie Scully, Fleet URC

FAKE FESTIVALS!

We hear much today about fake news, but we are also swamped by fake festivals. Here's a list:

1. **Valentine's Day**—apparently all about lovers exchanging cards and flowers. There's nothing wrong in that, but the Valentine we celebrate on February 14th, had nothing to do with that.

Valentine was executed in Rome on 14th February, about the year 268 CE, for giving help to persecuted Christians. It was in the time of the Emperor Claudius II, when Christians had to meet in secret, and if found to be practising their faith they were thrown to the lions or received some other awful fate. Most were very poor, so Valentine gave them help, for which he was clubbed to death and beheaded.

The festival therefore, to be true, should be giving thanks for the faith and courage of those early Christians, and asking ourselves about the state of our own faith.

2. **Mother's Day**, when we celebrate mothers. Again, there is nothing wrong in that, but the Festival is really about giving thanks for Mother Church, for her care of us and the teaching we gain from her. The question to ask is, what has Mother Church taught us, and are we willing to learn it?



3. **Easter**—all about eggs, rabbits, bonnets, without any thought of what it truly celebrates, the rising from death of Jesus, and his call to us to follow him who is with us always.

Sadly, many people celebrate Easter without reflecting on Good Friday, when Jesus was crucified; and if we don't think long and hard about Good Friday, we will miss the point of Easter Day.

4. **Hallowe'en** (October 31st)—as important to All Saints' Day (November 1st) as Christmas Eve is to Christmas Day. These days it seems to be all about trick and treat, ghosts, spider's webs and shock; but it is really about giving thanks for all the Christians of the past who fought the good fight of faith, and in whose inheritance we stand today. And we are called to be saints in our day. A saint in the Bible isn't only some dead Christian from long ago, but all the Christians, past and present, who follow Jesus—and indeed, those who are to come.

Such a festival is a far cry from what we have today. Wouldn't it be good if we could tell each other and the world the stories of the wonderful Christians who have served before us?

5. **Christmas!** Parties, cards, presents, feasting, lights, trees and families, without any thought for many that it really celebrates the birth of Jesus, the only one who can help us have life in all its fulness, and the world to find its peace and justice. He is the one we all need more than any other and yet, even celebrating his birthday, he is often ignored.

Revd Stephen M Thornton



UNLOCK

[*Unlock* is a non denominational Christian charity founded in 1972. It exists to support urban churches of any denomination in

responding to the opportunities and challenges in their areas.]

You can guess why there's been no news of *Unlock* for two years! However, in that time they have not been idle, even with sadly diminished finances.

On their website (www.unlock-urban.org.uk) there is a very helpful resource entitled 'The Year We Stayed at Home', including a colourful time-line of national events that enabled me to see where my life was affected by government action and its outworkings. It's available to download free.

Sadly, on-the-ground work had to be suspended in Sheffield, Rotherham, Liverpool, Sunderland, Burnley, Hull, Newcastle and Hastings. The only place it is operational is Cardiff, where Sharon continues to work with local Christian organisations Caru and TAVS.

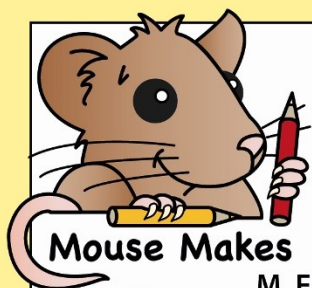
This year, the main fund-raiser London walk is due to happen in reality, on Saturday 23rd April. I will be away in Devon then, so will not be seeking sponsorship! If you have a heart for taking 'down to earth' Christianity to inner cities, any donations will be received most gratefully. Maybe you have links with one of the above-named places? The postal address is:

Unlock Office, 15 Station Road, Rotherham, S60 1HN

If you are interested in doing the walk, it's about 7.5 miles, with five church checkpoints in the Tower Hamlets area. The routes are always interesting and rewarding, with refreshments available. See me for the map. (In an orderly queue!)

Margaret Tracey, Fleet URC





Mouse Makes



Who betrayed Jesus?
Who denied Jesus?

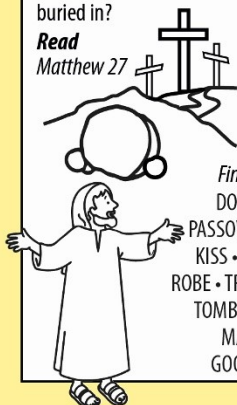
Read Matthew 26:17-75



What did the soldiers put
on Jesus at his crucifixion?
What time did Jesus die?
Whose tomb was Jesus
buried in?

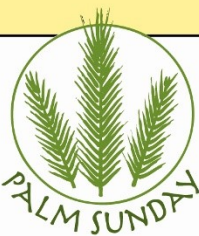
Read

Matthew 27



HAPPY EASTER!

Jesus has risen!
Jesus is with us!
Jesus will come
again!



What did Jesus send the
disciples to find?

What did the
crowd do?

Read
Matthew
21:1-11



What did
Jesus do
at Passover?

Read Matthew 26:17-30



On the third day who
rolled away the stone
covering the tomb?
What had happened
to Jesus?

Read
Matthew 28



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

Find these words from the Easter story in the word search:

DONKEY • ROAD • BRANCHES • PALMS • KING • HOSANNA
PASSOVER • ROOM • BREAD • WINE • CUP • MEAL • BODY • BLOOD
KISS • MESSIAH • CHRIST • JESUS • CRUCIFY • CROWN • THORNS
ROBE • TREE • NAILS • CROSS • DARKNESS • QUAKE • DEATH • LOTS
TOMB • LINEN • STONE • BODY • BURY • THREE DAYS • MORNING
MARY • ANGEL • HEAVEN • GOD • RAISED • JOY • GO TELL
GOOD NEWS • PEACE • SPIRIT • SAVIOUR • PRAISE • EASTER