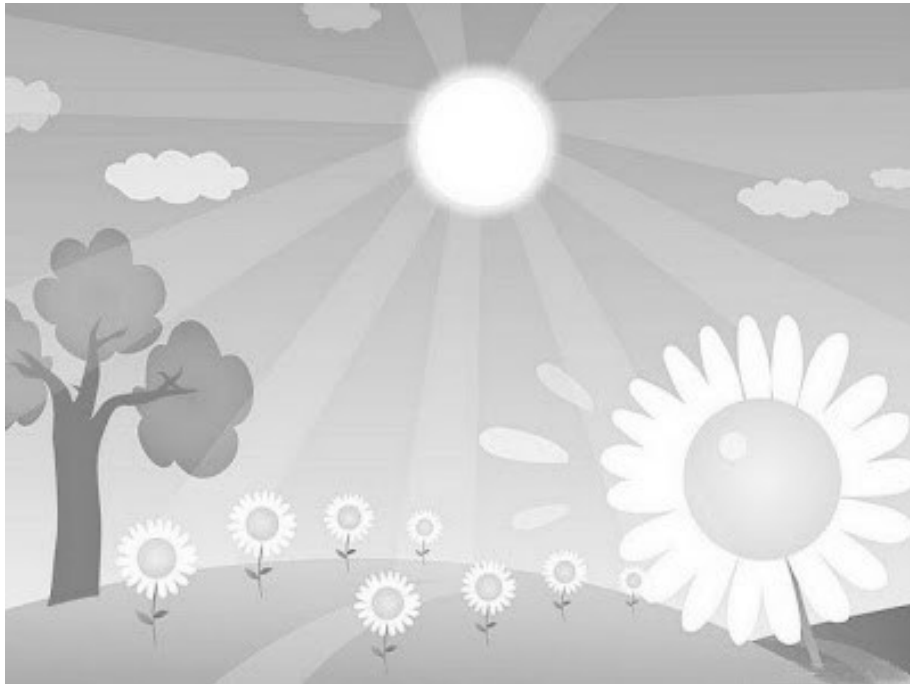


## South Leicestershire Group URC



**SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE GROUP UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**  
Saffron Lane-Wigston Magna-South Wigston  
Oadby-Whetstone

<http://southleicsgroupurc.org.uk>

Part of the South and East Leicestershire Area with Abbots Rd URC

**Contact us:**

**Reverend Richard Eastman** 0116 2714751

South Leicestershire Group Minister

**Mrs Eileen Williams** 0116 2478929

Local Church Leader

**Revd Martin Ferris** 0116 2419357

Resource Minister South and East Leicestershire Area

**South Wigston**

Di Statham Secretary 0116 2810053

Noel Oldershaw Treasurer 0116 2813398

Marion Bartholomew Magazine 0116 2717755

**Wigston Magna**

Eileen Williams Secretary 0116 2478929

Ray Green Acting Treasurer 0116 2887774

Ray Green Room Lettings 0116 2887774 /  
07518 214144

Mary Childs Brigades Contact 07946093786

Sheila Stephens Magazine 0116 4315206

Church Office answerphone 0116 2882666

**Saffron Lane**

Sandra Clay Secretary/Finance/Magazine 0116 2835375

Elizabeth Richardson Treasurer 0116 2993176

**Oadby**

Pauline Hudson Secretary 0116 2712913

Tony Hudson Treasurer 0116 2712913

**Whetstone**

Janet Statham Correspondence Secretary 0116 2863335

Glenis Chapman Treasurer

Jean Warner Room Lettings 0116 2752405

Kevin West Magazine 0116 2779402

**Abbots Road**

Revd Pam Smith Secretary 07830037308

Eric Hanson Treasurer

## Pentecost and Beyond!

Just like the rallying cries of Henry V, perhaps Christians should adopt a new rallying cry and perhaps that should be 'Pentecost and beyond!' (apologies to Buzz Light Year). It is Mission with a capital 'M' that we need to engage with.

Along with Covid 19 came a new war cry . 'LET'S ZOOM'. I fear that Zoom is ok for business meetings but as for worship, I find it a 'cold experience'. Sitting in the isolation of a study, staring at a screen full of worshippers, in various states of readiness; muted (or perhaps not), various noises pervade my senses, the odd rustle of a biscuit packet, a slurp of coffee and occasionally a cat will meander across the screen. Oh, the joys of 'Zoom'. It is what it is, it doesn't come anywhere near the real experience of being church, 'in the flesh' (apologies to St. Paul), where you can sense the tension, will the readers turn up? Has someone remembered to put the urn on low for the 'after service' coffee? Are the biscuits fresh, (last week the custard creams left a lot to be desired), do we have a musician? Are the hymn numbers up? Is the Duty Elder here? Is it communion? Where is the bread? Why hasn't everyone settled down to prepare for worship? The reality is, we have been very British about it and have made the best of the situation with the resources that have emerged, so thank you for the Zoom Services, the music and the effort that has gone into 'Techno-Church', but let us make gathering together a better experience.

Now is the time to get serious. We need to engage with the communities around us and we need to replenish the energy levels in our churches. This may be an injection of 'youth' into the membership and a mission focus on younger folks. We need new energy within our fellowships within the Group. We need to have a chance of utilising

young talent so that they can become the driving force behind the church renewal program. 'Whole Church Mission' is what is needed. We need prayer teams, we need Coffee makers, 'toastie bun' makers, listeners and innovators. We need whizz kids with the technology, we need wiser, older heads for advice, and more importantly we need the 'Whole Church', the whole body of Christ to work together to develop a new era of outreach.

When I look around Wigston Magna Church, I see the notables of the past commemorated for their decades of service where the life of the Church was a priority. Service to God was perhaps the most important aspect of their lives, more important than other things. They had of course very little to distract them compared with the distractions of today. (TV, Face-book; whats-app; Twitter; www; etc). We need to harness the power of Social Media and Information Technology to enable us to reach out and that will need people to learn new skills. I hear the cry 'We are too old to learn new ways' and that might be true if we were by ourselves but we are not. We can learn to do new things, we just have to accept that we can be helped by the Power of the Holy Spirit and prayer. I believe that the churches will flourish if we allow them too, but it will take hard work. The challenge is there for us to rise to and with the help of prayer and determination we can rebuild our churches and leave a legacy for future generations as it was left to us

What will happen if we continue as we are? The answer is simple, churches will close, the threat is real, but we can overcome the problem by intelligent use of our buildings. They should no longer be a space isolated for a one hour worship service each week, they should be places where the community can use them, for whatever purpose, job clubs, coffee mornings, friendship groups. The potential for engaging with the community will be enormous, from that will come opportunities to evangelise and for people to become part of

our faith community. The latest buzz phrase in mission is 're-wilding the Church', allowing church and faith communities to re-engage with the communities in which they are set.

We need Elders and members to step up and take the lead, we need ambassadors for our faith of all ages and we need the enthusiasm that the disciples had on that first Pentecost Sunday, the challenge is there, the question is can we meet it?

Keep safe Stay Well,

Richard



I would like to thank all who expressed their birthday wishes and sent cards, emails and Facebook greetings. I had a lovely birthday and have now reached my retirement age! Thank you.

Richard

## SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES

Whetstone URC	10.00 am
Oadby URC	10.15 am
South Wigston URC	10.30 am
Wigston Magna	10.30 am
Saffron Lane	11.00 am
Abbots Road	10.45 am

**Please check with the relevant Church Secretaries to confirm when services are taking place at any of the Group Churches.**



## Regular Group Church Events

### MEETINGS / EVENTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

For any more information / advice please contact the Church Secretary

#### **South Wigston**

Di Statham	Secretary	0116 2810053
------------	-----------	--------------

#### **Wigston Magna**

Eileen Williams	Secretary	0116 2478929
-----------------	-----------	--------------

#### **Saffron Lane**

Sandra Clay	Secretary	0116 2835375
-------------	-----------	--------------

#### **Oadby**

Pauline Hudson	Secretary	0116 2712913
----------------	-----------	--------------

#### **Whetstone**

Janet Statham	Correspondence Secretary	0116 2863335
Jean Warner	Room Lettings	0116 2752405

#### **Abbots Road**

Revd Pam Smith	Secretary	07830037308
----------------	-----------	-------------

### **DEADLINE FOR JULY & AUGUST 2021 MAGAZINE**

**Sunday 20 June 2021**

**Send your items to your church representative or direct to  
[di.statham@btinternet.com](mailto:di.statham@btinternet.com)**

If you do not have a computer a hand written copy can be accepted.  
Contact Di Statham 0116 2810053 for information

# Wigston Magna News

## SERVICES IN JUNE

6	Mr. David Todd
13	Rev. Martin Ferris
20	The Worship Group (this will be a Communion Service)
27	Rev. Les Gill

We will be holding a Church Meeting on **Sunday August 1** after Morning Worship. Please do your best to attend

## FLOWER ROTA

6	Sandra Dunkerley
13	Pauline Pagett
20	Herbert & Ida Austin Memorial
27	Elaine & Graham Wiggins

If you would like to provide flowers on any occasion, or give towards the cost, please speak to Malcolm



## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

15 Evelyn Judd

19 Pauline Pagett



A huge thank you to everyone who sent cards and good wishes to  
Charlie and Eileen on their Golden Anniversary.  
They were really appreciated.  
Eileen

### RECIPE – June: Smoked Ham Paella (Serves 4)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 onion, sliced  
1 red pepper, seeded and diced  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
7 ozs long grain rice  
6 ozs smoked ham, roughly diced  
1 and a half pints chicken or vegetable stock  
Half a teaspoon each of paprika and turmeric  
6 ozs large prawns, thawed if frozen  
4 ozs frozen peas  
Salt & pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large frying pan and cook the onion for 3 - 4 minutes until soft.

Add the red pepper, garlic and rice, stir-fry for 1 minute.

Add the ham, stock, paprika and turmeric, bring to the boil and simmer for 12 minutes.

Stir in the prawns and peas and cook for a further 3 - 4 minutes.

Season to taste and serve immediately.



### GARDENING NOTES - June

- 1) Divide daffodils and narcissi when the leaves start to yellow.
- 2) Pinch out tips of leading shoots on dahlias, and water, mulch and spray against pests.
- 3) Mow lawns at least once a week.
- 4) Trim privet hedges.
- 5) After flowering, cut down early-flowering perennials to 3 inches from the ground.
- 6) Divide primroses for re-planting.



### DIARY - June

9 Elders' Meeting 10.00am

We plan to be open for worship every Sunday morning at 10.30 am

**Thought for the month ahead.**

It's easier to go down a hill than up it,  
but the view is much better from the top.

*Henry Ward Beecher*

## South Wigston News

### PRAYER LIST – June: Please pray for:

- 1 All troubled nations that they may live in harmony, especially those caught up in the Israel-Gaza conflict.
- 2 Young people applying for jobs & university having been unable to take their exams
- 3 The people of India, suffering from the new strain of the virus.
- 4 Those whose businesses have suffered over the past year.
- 5 All those who are engaged in caring for the sick.
- 6 All those preaching the Word of God in our churches today.
- 8 Give thanks for the talents God has given us, and pray that they may be used to His greater glory.
- 9 All who are sick, especially those suffering from a terminal illness.
- 10 All who are elderly, especially those who are housebound.
- 11 All who make our localities a better place to live.
- 12 The farmers who grow our food.
- 13 All who are able to meet in church today, and especially those who wish to attend, but feel unable.
- 14 All who are homeless.
- 15 The leaders of the nations in these difficult times.
- 16 Families living in poverty.
- 17 All victims of crime and violence.
- 18 Give thanks for the joy of reading, and especially for those volunteers who keep our libraries going.
- 19 Those who are locked into some kind of addiction.
- 20 All fathers on this, their special day.
- 21 All who are lonely and afraid.
- 22 Children who have a difficult home life.
- 23 Those who are homeless.
- 24 On Midsummer Day, give thanks for the beauty of our world.
- 25 Give thanks for the gift of music.
- 26 Those third world countries pushed further into debt by the covid virus.
- 27 Give thanks for all those who have provided us with church services throughout the pandemic.
- 28 Give thanks for all those who have worked tirelessly to provide vaccines for the corona virus.
- 29 Those who are in training for the Ministry.
- 30 Give thanks to God for all the blessings we have received.

# South Wigston News

## Rules for Life

God gave us 10 rules  
To keep us from sin  
Learn them and live them  
And find peace from within  
Have but one God  
Don't let "desires" win.

Don't worship objects  
For this is a sin  
Don't misuse His name  
And swear "For Christ's sake!"  
But call on Him often  
For He's real, not a fake.

Keep one day for him  
To worship and praise  
To come to his house  
To rest but not laze

Your parents are special  
So honour them well  
They are not perfect  
But you're not, as well !

Don't murder another  
Or make their life hell  
By bullying or tormenting  
For these count as well.

Cont .....

Don't take someone's  
Partner to make them your own  
For then you will find  
One day you'll be alone !

Don't steal from another  
Nor lie. But be true  
Nor be envious of others  
For God sees what you do.

Jesus said Believe in Me  
And do what I do.  
And love one another  
As I have loved you.



## Saffron Lane News

### Preachers and Readers list for June/July 2021

	OT	NT	SERV	COLL	Preacher	
Jun 6 <sup>th</sup>	7	8	7	13	R Eastman	Communion
Jun 13 <sup>th</sup>	12	30	12	13	K Drinkwater	Communion
Jun 20 <sup>th</sup>	36	35	36	13	S Eastman	Communion
Jun 27 <sup>th</sup>	4	3	#	14	P Tiplady	Family Service
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	6	5	6	13	R Eastman	Communion
July 11 <sup>th</sup>	8	7	8	13	M Ferris	Communion
July 18 <sup>th</sup>	30	12	30	13	E Williams	Communion
July 25 <sup>th</sup>	35	36	#	14	G Milnes	Family Service

3 Kath T	7. Angela S	12. Elizabeth R	# no server
4. Maureen F	8. Brian S	13. Darren C	30 Sandra
5. Sue B	10. Molly B	14. Mackenzie	35 Anne
6. Pat S	11. Richard B		36 Dec B

### Birthdays

#### June

15<sup>th</sup> Anne Goss

28<sup>th</sup> Sandra Clay

#### July

No July Birthdays



## Saffron Lane News

### Saffron Lane Leicester in 2020

It all started well in February as I went to The Hayes Conference Centre to attend the Christian Woman's fellowship for the weekend. I attended this with all my old friends which I have made in the 30 odd years I have been going there.

We started the year by taking all the church photographs out of their four old albums so we could have new ones out for the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This soon came to a halt as the shops were shut due to lockdown so I was unable to buy replacement albums.

Then came March and the shock of coronavirus coming in from China. I thought "I hope this goes away quick as it is our churches special year 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary". We had meals out booked, fundraising planned and the Moderator had been booked two years previously. An Anniversary Cake and food had been ordered for a special September tea after the service.

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 comes and the church goes into lockdown - we didn't even do that in the war. Members were told that we would be closing until further notice and posters were put outside the Church "CHURCH CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS".

In May a 'Mr Nobody' drove into the wall in the front of our church and that left us with a nice bill to pay - all had to be sorted whilst we were in lockdown. We had workmen booked to take down the church chimney and also heighten a side wall as people were getting into the back of church.

## Saffron Lane News

Cont....

The church had workmen booked to sand and varnish the hall and church floors but we had to wait because the shops were closed so we could not get the sander or the varnish needed to complete the works. The workmen only had the bit they had left from before the lockdown, so we decided to start with the hall so our playschool moved out ready for the work to commence.

A lot of the members had letters from our Doctors to say that we must all isolate for 11 weeks because of different things wrong with us, but I still went out to queue for food and toilet rolls.

Then the playschool were asked to open so that the parents who were working for the NHS could leave their children. We only had the hall half done by then, so we decided to move them into the church as a temporary measure - what a difference that made to the church.

While I was at home I read about 25 books, passing them onto members of the church. I made over 100 Christmas cards and I made some posters for the Anniversary and also for our remembrance service.

I went to the Induction Service at Abbots Road Church for Revd Martin Ferris but only two from each of the South Leicestershire Group Churches were allowed to attend.

Each day we were allowed to go out for a walk so at dinner time I would take my daughters dog Freddie out for our usual walk. We have been going every dinnertime for nine years as my daughter works at a school and is not able to get home. I think its him that has kept me sane.

## Saffron Lane News

Then came the planning for the church's opening. All the safety precautions were in place, people had their own seat to sit on, their own hymn books in plastic folders with their name's on. Doors marked IN and OUT, communion bread in plastic bags and no tea ,coffee and cakes after the service. The worst thing was no singing or being able to hug each other. But we were opening our doors for the first time since March

September 27<sup>th</sup> 2020 came and we had our very small anniversary service - no Moderator just us and Eileen Williams who is our churches regular leader. We did have a slice of cream sponge to take home in a plastic box. We met each Sunday after that until the dreaded Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December when we arrived at Church to find someone had smashed 8 of our new double-glazed windows. We felt gutted as we work so hard and there are so few of us to do the work, As a result we decided to close until after Christmas so we missed all our Christmas services.

There are regular things I have to do including taking minutes at the Elders Meeting, sitting two seats apart at Church, also taking the churches money and logging it in an account book and on the computer, and paying into the bank. Elizabeth pays out the bills for the church - we are a good team.

While on lockdown I have been to the church every Saturday morning and flushed all the toilets and left the taps running so it flushes the water through the church.

Then after Christmas we were back to another lockdown, but the members are all getting their vaccinations when they are called in to the doctors

.

This is how we spent our 2020 lockdown.

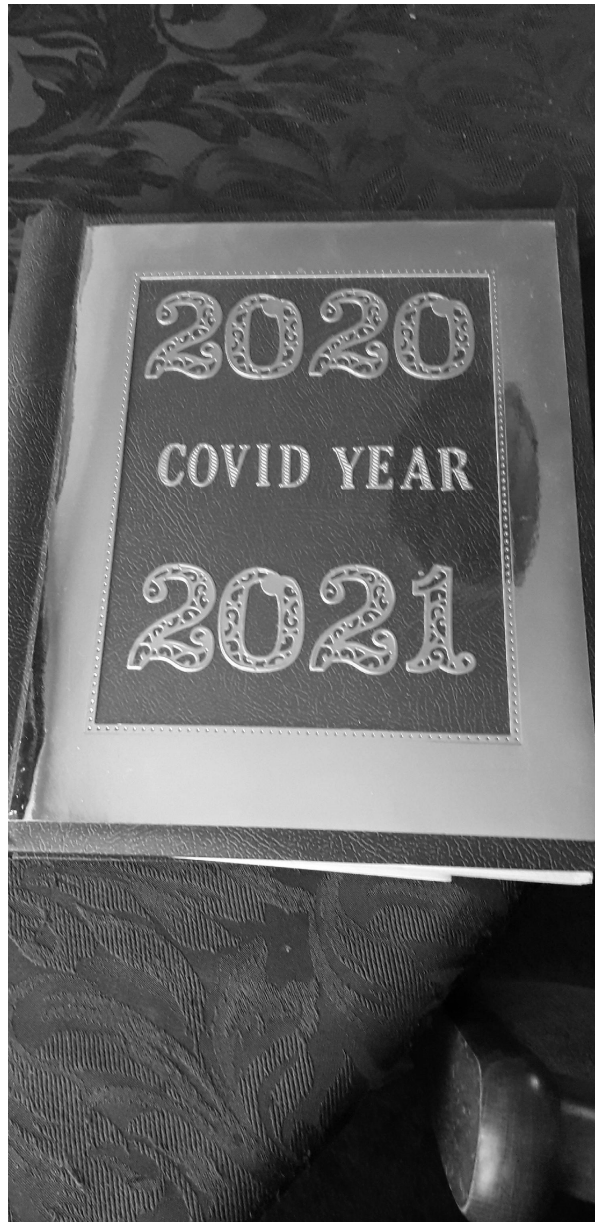
## Saffron Lane News

**Cont....**

I have taken lots of pictures of 2020 as a record of our special 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, so I can fill yet another photograph album. They are not the ones I was expecting to take, but hopefully all the members of Saffron Lane and the members at South Wigston, Oadby, Wigston Magna and Whetstone have all pulled through the Coronavirus.

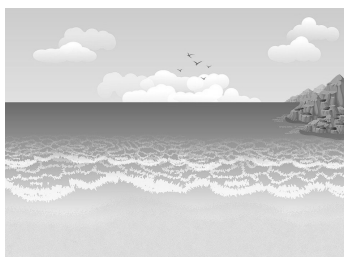
Sandra Clay

When you are next at Saffron Lane please have a look at our photo album



## Choosing a holiday by Doreen Storton

Holiday brochures by the score  
Are scatted about all over the floor:  
I've been on my knees for simply ages.  
Leafing through all the glossy pages.  
Looking at picturesque coastal views,  
Wondering which resort to choose.  
Whether to go to Brighton or Hove,  
Or staying somewhere near Lulworth cove  
Glorious Devon cries out to be  
Explored and visited regularly.  
The rugged cliffs of Cornwall too:  
Newquay, St. Ives, Polperro, Looe?  
The south-east coast of England may  
Have plenty of sunshine every day:  
So perhaps we could go to Ramsgate again,  
And know there wouldn't be much rain.  
The east coast always gives us pleasure;  
With much to do or relax at leisure.  
Scotland, Wales, or the Isle of Man?  
Beautiful views for the eye to scan.  
We've no idea where we'd like to spend  
Our summer holiday, but in the end,  
Wherever we choose, we will surely be  
Content and happy, just to be by the sea.



# Saffron Lane News

## Fundraising

Sadly, because of the pandemic Saffron Lane like many others in 2020/2021 have been unable to raise funds for the Church and our annual charity. However, as Christians we should do what we can to help. I am reminded of the words of John Wesley :-

"Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can."

Following the "Lent Challenge" we have twinned our £60 Tap with Uganda. Uganda has over 1.423 million refugees, with the majority coming from South Sudan through its northern border so we felt this would help in a small way.



Likewise, we have also forwarded the same amount to help Christian Aid who are trying to alleviate the crisis in India.

Elizabeth

Saffron Lane URC

## Whetstone News

How wonderful it has been to be back worshipping God in His house at Whetstone!

It has been most definitely appreciated by our regular Congregation who have considerably benefitted from being able to join together in friendship, fellowship and worship! (Socially distanced, of course!)

We have also been joined by friends from the Baptist Church which is currently not open for indoor worship.

We thank Sylvia and Malcolm for joining us and for their continued support of our church.

We thank all of those who have led worship throughout April and early May, beginning at Easter Sunday and continuing each Sunday thereafter. We are grateful for their faith in us and in our ability, as a church, to offer a Covid safe environment. We also thank them for their faith in God and His ability to protect His faithful followers!

Special thanks to Eileen Williams who agreed to lead our worship when other worship leaders were unavailable! Also, we want her to know how much it was appreciated that she came and joined our worship on all the other Sundays, whilst the other group churches were closed.

We thank Kevin for the new hanging baskets at the front of the church and for the re-backing and re-sealing of our notice board.

Although small touches, they show that the church is still loved and continues in its aim to be at the heart of the spiritual life of those who live in Whetstone and beyond.

## Whetstone News

In preparation for further easing of lockdown measures, the drama group have further invested in their commitment to our church and our building, by installing more technology to enhance their future productions.

We feel truly blessed to have their support and their continued faith in the longevity of our church and therefore their continued use of, and investment in the church hall!

### Answers to last month's missing word quiz:

Morning by morning new **mercies** I see

Oh what **needless** pains we bear

Watching and waiting **looking** above

The **vilest** offender who truly believes

For by His power, each **tree** and flower

Not a **doubt** nor a fear not a **sigh** nor a tear

In Jesus begun, in Heaven made **whole**

I see the **stars** I hear the **mighty** thunder

Well Done if you got them all correct.

## Whetstone News

The following article, called "Created in God's image" was recently published in the parish magazine for Whetstone and Cosby:

A furniture restorer is casually browsing in an antique shop when his glance falls on a dusty wooden cabinet. His pupils dilate and his heart races. Is it really possible? He is inches away from a piece by one of the greatest designers of the 20th century: Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

This dust covered cabinet is, incredibly, a highly sought after collectors item, worth an eye watering amount. Finally, after 40 years lying abandoned, fresh eyes recognise it as the lost treasure it is. Now it can be lovingly restored to its original splendour and fulfil the unique purpose for which it was created.

Do we need fresh eyes today to recognise that we are, in fact, a unique and precious masterpiece: lovingly created for a special purpose in the world! Grasping the wonder that we are intentionally crafted by the creator of the cosmos should be brain scrambling, horizon shifting, life changing news!

But if I'm honest, sometimes I feel a bit underwhelmed with who I have turned out to be. I feel more like IKEA flat pack than vintage masterpiece!

Thankfully, the Holy Spirit is in the restoration business, relentlessly searching in the dusty corners of our spiritual amnesia and reminding us of the wonder of whose we are and why we are here.

Could we, like Elihu, who in Job 33: 4 realised that "the spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life".

## Whetstone News

Cont.....

God, the master restorer sees the truth of who we are, even when we are hiding in a corner, covered in years of dust and sin. We imagine God is the only one likely to see our flaws, when actually he's the one whose heart leaps most as he catches sight of his beautiful, yet broken creation!

So let's allow the Holy Spirit lovingly to restore God's image in us through his word and through time spent in worship and in wonder at who he has created us to be.

Esther Stansfield

Author of "Lift the label", exploring how to live a lifestyle of biblical justice.

### Preachers for June:

6th - Mrs. Shirley Eastman (Holy Communion)

13th - Rev. Les Gill

20th - Mr. Paul Baxter

27th - Rev. Richard Eastman

### Why Do Men Never Listen ??

After four years of painstaking work, resulting in the permanent damage of his eyesight, Michelangelo finally finished painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Arriving home, his wife asked, "Where on earth have you been?"

Michelangelo explained the great work of art that he had just completed.

"Typical!" his wife exclaimed. "Why do men never listen?!"

"I only asked you to paint the chapel cistern!"

## Preachers for June

6	Philip Tiplady	Communion Service
13	Revd Richard Eastman	
20	Jacquie Gavin	Communion Service
27	Revd Martin Ferris	

Our Services start at 10.15 am

If you would like any further information about our services please contact the Church Secretary - Pauline Hudson 0116 2712913



## Abbots Road News



## *Welcome*

On Sunday 25th April we welcomed Charlotte Ferris into membership at Abbots Road United Reformed Church. This was conducted as part of our regular zoom services and included the act of Holy Communion.

Charlotte has been part of the URC since the age of five, joining the Girl's Brigade and worshipping with her parents every Sunday. When she was sixteen she began teaching in the Junior church and completed various Scripture Union exams. Charlotte's ministry is music and at the age of nine she taught herself to play the piano and also learnt the clarinet completing practical exams in both. She is a very accomplished pianist and an experienced worship leader, having led music in many churches. This is where she is most at home, making music and leading others in worshipping the Lord. She always says this is her God given gift and calling, knowing from a young age that this is what God wanted her to do. She can also sing very well too!

## **Abbots Road News**

Cont.....

Since returning to work after having her children, she has worked in education in various roles and is a qualified Teaching Assistant specialising in Special Needs. For the last ten years she was a Sixth Form Pastoral Manager for a large academy in Kent.

Since moving to Leicester she has joined an education agency and she is currently working as a Teaching Assistant at Ab Kettleby Primary School.

She is very excited to be part of the new South & East Leicestershire Area and the opportunities that this will bring, and is looking forward to getting to know everybody.

### **The Alphabet Prayer**

A father hears his little girl repeating the alphabet as best she can, but he notices she has her eyes closed. He asks her what she is doing and she opens one eye to look at him. "I'm praying daddy" she whispered. "It sounds an awful lot like letters," he said. Mummy says letters make up all the words," his daughter explained, "and sometimes when I pray to God I don't know what to say so I give him all the letters and let him turn them into the right words."

There is great truth in this. Even as adults it can be difficult to find the right words, so perhaps we ought to borrow that little girl's faith, and hand it all over to God.

## A Thank You from The Bridge Homelessness to Hope

Dear Friends,

On behalf of everyone involved with The Bridge Homelessness to Hope let me take this opportunity to thank you for choosing us as your charity of the year and for your efforts in raising £689 which will be used for the support of our work.

We're grateful for support at any time, but particularly at this moment, when our donations, in line with other charities, have taken a massive hit.

I have attached a link to our new look website which will show some of the work we're doing in support of the 'homeless and vulnerably housed'

<https://www.bridgeleicester.org/>

and we will get acknowledgment of your support added to the website shortly.

Once again many thanks,  
Yours sincerely,  
David Fawcett,  
Operations Manager,  
The Bridge - Homelessness to Hope.



## Abbots Road News

### LOROS and a local family.

The last 12 months have been some of the most challenging for LOROS in its history but despite this, LOROS has continued to support patients and their families when they need us the most.

This spring, Julie Sutton is supporting the LOROS Spring into Summer Raffle, alongside her son's, Ryan and Ellis, and their family and friends. The Sutton family are very much part of our wider Church family at Abbots Road.

On Valentine's Day 2014, Nick, Julie's husband, was diagnosed with bowel cancer, and secondary lung cancer, at just 43 years old. Their sons were only six and two at the time. Julie said: "I really don't know how we coped with such tragic news, I just remember how unbelievably tough it was. We spent the next four years trying to have as much fun with the boys as we possibly could, until January 2018, when Nick was admitted to LOROS."

You can read more about Nick, Julie, Ryan and Ellis on the Loros website.

You can help Loros be there for families like the Suttons by playing the LOROS Spring into Summer Raffle this year. Every single ticket counts, and will make a huge difference to our patients living with a terminal illness right now.

Raffle tickets are £1 each and available from Thursday 15th April until Sunday 13th June 2021. Tickets can be purchased online, by phone (0116) 231 8430, by completing your postal raffle pack or by visiting one of our LOROS charity shops.

### URC HOLIDAY CLUB MATERIAL.

Are you thinking of running a holiday club this year? Then why not use the one being specially written by our wider URC team?

The idea for Supersleuths arose from the Heroes and Villains theme and has been developed for use in a 5 to 11s holiday club but with appendices to help you adapt the theme for 11 to 14 year olds, for an intergenerational event or for vintage holiday clubs.

The material includes original songs, prayer, craft, stories, drama, snacks to make, games and more. Not confident at story-telling or drama? There is no need to worry as these will be available as videos for use if you need a bit of extra support or if you are running your holiday club online.

Supersleuths will be released as a downloadable PDF on [urc.org.uk/resources-forchildren-and-youth](http://urc.org.uk/resources-forchildren-and-youth) on 1 June 2021.

But if you're already planning how to decorate your church, think 1950s detective agency!

### GOOD NEWS : SMALL GRANTS REMIT EXTENDED TO INCLUDE HOLIDAY CLUBS

Children's and Youth Work Committee hopes to encourage churches wanting to engage with children and young people in these challenging times by widening the remit of their small grants. One of the innovative ways that churches may be considering is running a holiday club this year, maybe even using the Supersleuths material. The Committee have agreed to make available grants of £50 or £100 to help with the purchase of craft materials, snacks, decorations, games equipment, Zoom licences etc. Contact [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) to explore how we might be able to help.

## Climate Sunday (from URC)

The Climate Sunday initiative is calling on all local churches across Great Britain & Ireland to hold a climate-focused service on any Sunday before COP26 (November 2021).

In response, the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team from across the country have collaborated to put together an online intergenerational worship entitled *God's World - Hands Off!* which will be premiered on YouTube on 28 May in time for Environment Sunday which is on 6 June 2021.

**We would love you to join us on 6 June as all ages from across the URC lead us in worshipping together.**

Alternatively, you may want to use part of the material in forming your own Climate Sunday worship. For this reason, we will be putting together a YouTube playlist which includes each of the segments as individual videos which you may use as you see fit. Available to download from the URC Children's and Youth Work resource page will be downloadable pages for Bible journaling and doodling on the theme. [www.urc.org.uk/resources-forchildren-and-youth](http://www.urc.org.uk/resources-forchildren-and-youth)

Families on Faith Adventures @ Home for the week of 28 May 2021 will focus on Psalm 8. Find it on [www.urc.org.uk/familieson-faith-adventures](http://www.urc.org.uk/familieson-faith-adventures) Other resources for planning your own Climate Sunday service are available from the Climate Sunday Website <https://www.climatesunday.org/>

URC Youth will be focusing on the Environment in September and will be planning their own Climate Sunday worship

## A THANK YOU

**From: The United Reformed Church Finance Committee**

**To: All members and adherents of**

**United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

It would be fair to describe the year-and-a-bit since March 2020 as having been "different", wouldn't it? Lots of us have experienced loss of loved ones, loss of income and perhaps jobs. All have experienced periods of lockdown; periods without 'non-essential' shops; and continuous and extensive disruption to our 'normal' social interactions and relationships. The world we thought we understood and could take for granted has been utterly transformed. How many of us imagined at the start of 2020 that we could go months without a haircut or without people not in our 'bubble' entering our homes?

As members of United Reformed Church congregations ourselves, we understand much of what your church community has experienced since March 2020. The absence of what is now regularly labelled "in-person worship" for much (or all) of this time has compelled us to turn to other ways of being church. Buildings in which we used to praise God regularly have been shut, both to regular worshipers and others who might have sought solace within their walls during these desperate and troubling times. It has been hard to maintain close fellowship with people we only meet over Zoom (or the like) - if we are digitally enabled.

Financially, things have been extremely tough too. Plate offerings have collapsed; some regular givers have had to reduce or entirely stop giving to support God's work; and those churches which hire out their premises have seen income from that source disappear.

At denominational level, we feared that these financial troubles would spell disaster for the URC's Ministry and Mission ('M&M') fund through which the URC has always supported and developed our stipendiary ministers and Church Related Community Workers. It would have been all too easy for congregations to forget that for almost 49 years this fund (under various names) has provided stipends, pension contributions and training for all ministers throughout the three nations in which the URC operates: so that ministry reaches where synods judge it to be most needed and is paid for according to each congregation's ability to contribute (though the ways of determining that vary from synod to synod).

It was all very well to remind ourselves that the M&M fund is meant to be the first call on every congregation's resources if the undertaking to financially support our ministers is to be honoured. We feared that drastically reduced income would make that impossible and that, because the need was less visible than the other calls on your diminished resources, payments to the M&M fund would have stopped first.

We are sorry if we ever doubted you.

It quickly became apparent that, although some congregations had to reduce their pledged giving to the M&M fund, many more of you were continuing to meet the 2020 commitments you had made during better times, despite the struggles that required. At the start of that year we had been expecting churches and synods to contribute around £18.5 million to the fund. By the year end, all but half-a-million pounds of that had been received. Since Church House staff and committees managed to reduce their budgeted expenditure by almost £1 million, your money enabled us to meet the full costs of our Ministries, Education & Learning, Children's and Youth Work and Mission departments in 2020 as well as covering amounts spent on safeguarding, denominational governance and communications.

What is perhaps even more amazing is that, collectively, you have pledged to give £17.3 million during 2021 despite the financial problems caused by the pandemic being fully apparent well before your offers for this year were made. We are always grateful for the financial support given each year to the M&M fund by all of you; but this past year has been phenomenal.

Thank you to those of you who have been able to maintain or increase financial support for your church congregation through this difficult time. That has enabled those responsible for your congregation's finances to keep more money flowing to the M&M fund than we expected.

Thank you for all your previous financial support to those of you who, after prayerful consideration, have had to reduce or stop giving in response to your changed financial circumstances.

Thank you for the pledges your congregation has made about contributing to the M&M fund during 2021 even though you were by then aware of the impact the pandemic was having on your local congregation's finances.

Thank you in anticipation for what you agree to offer to the M&M fund during 2022 to enable the denomination to deliver ministry, education and learning, children's work and mission activity on God's (and your) behalf.

We are aware that synods have played a significant part in encouraging and supporting many congregations with their contributions to the M&M fund. We have separately written to Synod Treasurers to express our thanks to them and their colleagues too.

Of course, our giving for God's work is in response to the amazing generosity and love of God which we see in Jesus. Nonetheless, it is important for us to thank every one of you for what you do for God, your congregation and its and our denominational finances.

**Thank you!**

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours in Christ,

**Ian Hardie (Treasurer) and John Piper (Deputy Treasurer)**

**- On behalf of the whole United Reformed Church Finance Committee**



## Lectionary Readings

### June 6<sup>th</sup>

1 Samuel 8: 4-11,16-20 or Genesis 3 8 - 15

Psalms 130 or Psalm 138

2 Corinthians 4: 13-5:1

Mark 3: 20-35

### June 13<sup>th</sup>

1 Samuel 15: 34-16: or Ezekiel 17 22 - 24

Psalms 20 or Psalm 92 1 - 4, 12 - 15

2 Corinthians 5: 6-10 (11-13) 14-17

Mark 4: 26-34

### June 20<sup>th</sup>

1 Samuel 17:(1a,4-11,19-23)32-49 or Job 38 1 - 11

Psalms 9: 9-20 or Psalm 107 1 - 3, 23 - 32

2 Corinthians 6: 1-13

Mark 4: 35-41

### June 27<sup>th</sup>

2 Samuel 1: 1,17-27 or Lamentations 3 23 - 33

Psalms 130 or Psalm 30

2 Corinthians 8: 7-15

Mark 5: 21-43