

# CHURCH NEWS

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The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

Partnership Ministers:

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**FEBRUARY 2023**

Friends,

## *The Language of Love*

Valentine's Day reminds us of the importance of expressing our love to those close to us. But how can we go beyond simply offering flowers and a card? Jesus says: '*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another*' (John 13:34). How can we express love like Jesus in our everyday relationships to our partner, children, neighbours or work colleagues?

### *Listening*

We need to listen to others, just as Jesus did. He asked questions of people and waited for them to process their answer. According to James, '*everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry*' (James 1:19). How well do we listen to others? How often do we find ourselves already thinking of what we want to say before somebody's finished speaking? Listening takes time; don't rush it!

### *Touching*

Jesus reached out to touch the untouchables in His world, including lepers, the sick and children. This was completely out of character for rabbis of His day. For us today, a warm handshake may be of value. Of course, it should always be an *appropriate* touch – helpful for the other person, not just for ourselves.

### *Speaking*

Jesus' conversation was always full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Do we speak words of *grace*, by offering comfort, giving encouragement or expressing care and concern? However, we should also be ready to speak words of *truth*, in asking for forgiveness, seeking reconciliation or addressing conflict. As Paul urges us, don't avoid: '*speaking the truth in love*'.

There is the challenge for us in expressing love this Valentine's Day?

**Canon Paul Hardingham**  
Parish Pump

## NEWS AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

We think of those in our congregation, members and friends, who are anxious about their health and those who are unable to join us for Sunday worship for any reason. Spring bulbs are visibly pushing their way through the soil and we hope that it won't be too long before the weather reflects this change.

We greatly appreciated our in-house worship leaders, Sandy and Bernie, for their services last month and special thanks go to Liz Delafield, Mission Mentor, who we welcomed for the first time on 15 FEB, for her Eco service as we start the journey of working towards an Eco Church Award. We were pleased to welcome Pastor K and his family that day in the congregation prior to his leading our worship on 29 JAN at a joint service with Bramhall and Heald Green URCs for which we are very grateful.

Best wishes to everyone who will be celebrating their birthday in February.

**The News Team**

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT; 27 FEB~12 MAR  
Sun 5 MAR Traidcraft Afternoon Tea 3~5pm

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## FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE

The highlight of our January meetings was definitely Elva's talk, with music, on her favourite hymns and their histories. Most interesting was the history of "Amazing Grace" written by John Newton. There is a film about him which we hope to get hold of to be shown at our Saturday Film Matinee.

For our final meeting in January we had a quiz to make us think! Unfortunately some of our members have not been well and we wish them a speedy recovery.

**Carole Davies**

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## WARM SPACE NEWS

Every Tuesday, 11am~2pm, we open as a warm space, with newspapers and a chat. However, refreshments now extend to

**SOUP & SWEET, yes, every week!**

**Bernie**

## CHURCHES TOGETHER...



**Annual General Meeting**  
**Tues 7 Feb 7.30 pm**  
**United Reformed Church**

Lenten Lunches 2023      12 noon ~ 2 pm  
25 FEB - St Ann's RC  
4 MAR - Grove Lane Baptist  
11 MAR - United Reformed Church  
18 MAR - All Saints'  
25 MAR - Friends Meeting House  
1 APR - Methodist

## Everybody Welcome

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## DISTURB US, LORD

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased  
with ourselves,  
When our dreams have come true  
Because we have dreamed too little,  
When we arrived safely  
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when  
With the abundance of things we possess  
We have lost our thirst  
For the waters of life;  
Having fallen in love with life,  
We have ceased to dream of eternity  
And in our efforts to build a new earth,  
We have allowed our vision  
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,  
To venture on wider seas  
Where storms will show your mastery;  
Where losing sight of land,  
We shall find the stars.  
We ask You to push back  
The horizons of our hopes;  
And to push into the future  
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

*Attributed to Sir Francis Drake, 16th Century*

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## SOME HINTS ABOUT PRAYER THIS LENT

Prayer is instinctive for human beings, even those who don't regard themselves as religious. You are standing at a bus stop in the wind and the rain, thinking 'I do hope the bus will come soon'. It's an inner yearning. It defies logic: either the bus is coming, or it isn't. But we all do it. It's instinctive and it's the raw material of prayer. Hoping for something better is basic. Like all instincts, it needs to be trained.

### COFFEE MORNING & Warm Chat -- In aid of The British Leprosy Mission 10~11.45am Sat 4 FEB 23 ALL ARE WELCOME

To whom do we pray? What you pray, and the way you do it will be shaped by your view of God. Christian prayers are fashioned by what we know of Jesus and what He taught about prayer.

We pray by invitation. Again and again, Jesus encouraged His companions to pray. A couple of His parables on the subject have been misinterpreted as instructions to persuade a resistant God to do what we want. Have a look at Luke 18, verses 1-8, about a widow whose perseverance finally persuaded an unwilling judge to rule in her favour. The lesson is that God is *not* like that! Similarly, an unwelcome neighbour who persistently calls for help in the middle of the night gets what he wants (Luke 11:5-13). The lesson? If tenacious lobbying can overcome human unwillingness, *how much more* our gracious God will heed His children's cry.

Pushing at an open door. Jesus is already praying for us. So, when we start to pray, we step on to an already moving staircase. Sometimes prayer seems tougher than it need be. Jesus invited us to be linked to Him, in the way an inexperienced bullock is yoked to a mature ox. Have a look at Matthew 11:28-29, which concludes "for my yoke is easy and my burden is light". When Marion Bartoli unexpectedly won the 2013 Women's Wimbledon final, she said "I believe if you put all your heart and effort into everything you are doing, then God is there to help you."

Is your prayer on the right lines? Try adding "for Christ's sake" at the end. "Please let my marrow win the Gardening Club competition"? No. "Not my will but yours" is the key. So when praying, don't give God instructions, just report for duty.

## WHAT IS LOVE?

With Valentines Day coming... *a group of children were asked: 'What does love mean?' The answers they gave were surprising for their depth of insight....*

- "When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca - age 8

- "When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy - age 4

- "Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other." Karl - age 5

- "Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your chips, without making them give you any of theirs." Chrissy - age 6

- "Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." Terri - age 4

- "Love is when mum makes coffee for my dad and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK." Danny - age 7

- "Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mum and Dad are like that. They look gross when they kiss." Emily - age 8

- "If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate." Nikka - age 6 (We need a few million more Nikka's on this planet)

"My mummy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night." – Clare, aged 6

"Love is when mummy gives daddy the best piece of chicken." - Elaine - age 5

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day" Mary Ann age 4

## **NET ZERO in my NEIGHBOURHOOD**

*We're launching this new campaign, exploring why we're focusing on local councils for climate action, and how you can get involved.*

*I'd like to use my car less but buses are unreliable.*

*I'd like to recycle more but recycling bins are only collected fortnightly.*

*I'd like to be more energy efficient but the costs of insulating & heating my home costs too much.*

If you've ever had thoughts like these, you'll know that it can be difficult to live a more planet-friendly lifestyle when your local infrastructure doesn't offer the support you need. National leaders can sign treaties and individuals can commit to make changes, but without the crucial middle layer of public services, we can struggle to connect our personal willingness to act with change on a global scale.

The attention given to COP26 rightly showed the importance of international cooperation, and agreements made at that level are essential for coordinating global action. Many felt disappointed by the outcomes of talks in Glasgow, but it has helped to place climate at the top of the political agenda.

If you felt disempowered and unrepresented by world leaders at COP26, you can have a real impact by engaging with your local councils. Local politics may not seem as glitzy or important as global conferences, but they have a series of responsibilities that can take the area you live in a long way towards a net zero future. The recent election of new councillors presents an opportunity for you and your church to reach out and build a relationship to work together on climate and other issues – and councils are increasingly looking to churches for community support.

### **FILM MATINEE**

**Saturday 25 FEBRUARY**

**2.30 pm**

### **The case for councils**

So why do local councils matter for net zero?

Research from the Local Government Association (LGA) suggests that local authorities have influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas. This is mainly due to their responsibilities in four key areas:

**Transport.** Councils oversee local transport plans and can prioritise decarbonisation efforts. They also play a key role in supporting the transition to electric vehicle use, and developing walking and cycling infrastructure. Nottingham city council, for example, has installed more than 130 public electric vehicle charging points, and has one of the UK's largest fleets of electric buses.

**Buildings.** Councils play a key role in ensuring new buildings are energy efficient and old buildings can be retrofitted with better insulation and heating systems. This applies both to council-owned buildings (including council buildings, social housing, commercial units, schools, leisure centres etc.) and privately-owned buildings. They oversee planning and regulation (although they are constrained by standards set by national government) and can map the housing stock of the area. Somerset West and Taunton district council has pledged to manage its buildings and land in a biodiversity-friendly manner and is building zero-carbon council houses, as well as retrofitting existing homes across the district.

**Energy.** Every council can encourage the development of clean energy infrastructure. They can bring relevant local partners together to develop the future of local energy, influence clean energy infrastructure implementation with planning policy, and offer support for local people and community energy organisations to undertake energy projects. Telford and Wrekin council has built a publicly-owned solar farm, which has saved more than 13,000 tonnes of CO2 and generated £1.3m for the council.

**Waste.** Councils are responsible for the collection and disposal of household and commercial waste. They can take steps to increase recycling, implement food and garden waste collections, and improve communications about appropriate waste disposal. Stroud district council has created a local waste-management company in partnership with neighbouring authorities, and now sends the least waste per capita to landfill.

Councils are well-placed to deliver on net zero as they are the master planners of places, convenors of civil society and business, and have detailed knowledge of place and people. With their understanding of the specific needs of their locality, they can ensure the transition to net zero is just and appropriate to place.

Yet they are also limited in what they can achieve by the responsibilities and resources devolved to them by central government. The LGA has asked to work in closer partnership with government, calling for longer-term funding and unambiguous policy positions that allow councils to plan strategically over a number of years. As David Renard, leader of Swindon council put it, 'net zero can only be achieved if councils are empowered'.

85% of local authorities in the UK have set a target year for reaching net zero emissions. The vast majority of these come well in advance of the national government's own target of 2050. 88% have published climate action plans, outlining how they plan to reach net zero. For residents, the task is now to scrutinise the quality of these plans, ask for improvements, and hold councils accountable to implementing them.

You can see how your council compares to others and identify what they can improve here, and see an example of a good template plan [here](#).

## **'Breakfast Before'**

**9.30am ~ 12 FEB**

**[& every 2nd Sunday]**

**Typical menu:**

**Drinks, toast, Cereal, pancakes,  
~ Croissant or pain au chocolat?**

### **The role of churches**

Having made their plans, councils need to listen deeply to the needs of their communities in order to succeed. Churches can play a key role in facilitating this. They too have a deep understanding of their area, and often have relationships with those who are marginalised through support services like foodbanks and homeless shelters.

Justice for people and planet is central to our theology. Christians can play a key role in bringing their own knowledge of the community together with this concern for justice to ensure that councils' plans for transition are just, fair and sufficient. As the cost-of-living crisis bites, Christians should campaign for a renewable energy future that is affordable and sustainable, rather than abandon the net zero agenda and re-embrace fossil fuels. All of creation, human and otherwise, deserves a more thoughtful response than closing our eyes and ignoring the challenge that we know we must face.

### **Take Action:**

So how can we take action? As many of us will now have a new set of councilors in place, it's a great time to question your council on their net zero commitments as they plan their agenda. Check out your council's stated climate plans, and identify where they can improve. You could use this excellent guide from Climate Emergency UK to begin a conversation about the changes they can make.

To support this, we're launching a new campaign called 'Net Zero In My Neighbourhood'. We'll be calling on churches to be convening spaces for their communities to meet together with local councils, in order to secure a just and fair transition towards net zero.

It's crucial that local churches build strong relationships with their local councillors, whether newly-elected or well-established, so that they can play a key role in advocating for the communities they know and serve. Net Zero In My Neighbourhood will build the foundation to do just that, bringing people together and offering tools and resources to get you going. The transition to net zero is an essential goal that can be achieved if we value the local – and churches can lead the way in making sure it is a just transition.

Sign up to join our network of activists and hear more at the bottom of this page. Also, you can join us as we seek to re-imagine power and politics From the Ground Up at our conference on June 11th, where we will be running an introductory workshop for this campaign.

**Joint Public Issues Team  
(URC, Meths & Baptists)**

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**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

from **Taiwan**

**"I have heard about your faith"**

**at All Saints' Church**

**2 pm - FRIDAY 3 MARCH**

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

\*\*\*\*\*

For the young, and not so...



**Mouse Makes**

What was the special meal  
Jesus was preparing to eat?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 26:18*



What did Jesus give  
thanks for and share?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 26:27*

What did Jesus say  
this represented?

His \_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 26:27-28*



What did Jesus take,  
bless and break?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 26:26*

What did Jesus say  
this represented?

His \_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 26:26*



Jesus instructed his disciples to continue  
to break bread and share the cup "in

\_\_\_\_\_

of me."

*1 Corinthians 11:24-25*



SUPPER  
LAMB • LORD  
DISCIPLES  
TOGETHER  
EVENING  
ROOM • JAR  
WATER • TWELVE  
JESUS • CHRIST  
NIGHT • TOOK  
THANKS  
BLESSING  
BROKE • GIVEN  
COVENANT  
DRINK • EAT  
FORGIVENESS  
SINS • HOLY  
COMMUNION  
EUCCHARIST

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

*Find the words from the questions too!*



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## PARTNERSHIP MINISTRY

The REV KURAUONE MUTIMWII continues to acquaint himself with his 15 strong steering group, his 10 churches, and his 10 Elderships, not to mention a new working modus operandi and a new culture for living. The family now has a car (the

roads are... !\*?) and the Satnav is God sent for postcodes, proven by his finding CH URC several times. The children are at last in school, (frustrating the efforts of Manchester Education Committee). The weather is not to the families liking and he does not think they will ever get used to it!

**Bernie**



## SERVICES

Elders' wish to keep everyone safe, so please stay home if you are ill. You may wear masks (perhaps for singing). Also, understand our plans may change with little notice. We may sometimes have a speaker and sometimes a simple in-house led service. Video conferencing continues and Leaders or readers may Zoom in or speak in church.

Duties are performed by a small team on a rota. Please check the board for swops.

Date	5 FEB	12 FEB		19 FEB	26 FEB
Service	Morning Worship	Morning Worship	Evening Service	Morning Worship	Morning Communion
Time	10.30 am	10.30 am	6.30 pm	10.30 am	10.30 am
Leader	Sandy Smith	Chris Whitehead		Rev Martin Smith	Rev Jonnie Hill
Elder Duty	P Oliver	D Phillips	Zoom Service ~computer	B Stevens	S Smith / D Phillips
Door	M Hardie	J Hodson		C Davies	M Smith
Reader					
Flowers	H Elsdon	Silk		E Shackcloth	Silk
Coffee	D Green	C Davies		M Hardie	H Elsdon
Notes			Meeting ID: 821 8150 8988 Password: 716978	Video link from Wilmslow URC includes <b>COMMUNION</b>	<b>HOLY COMMUNION Induction of Elders</b>

## CHURCH REGISTERS - none

## LECTIONARY for February

**5 FEB:** Isaiah 58.1-9a,(9b-12); Psalm 112.1-9; 1 Corinthians 2.1-12,(13-16); Matthew 5.13-20  
**12 FEB:** Deuteronomy 30.15-20; Psalm 119.1-8; 1 Corinthians 3.1-9; Matthew 5.21-37  
**19 FEB:** Exodus 24.12-18; Psalm 2; Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1.16-21; Matthew 17.1-9  
**26 FEB:** Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5.12-19; Matthew 4.1-11

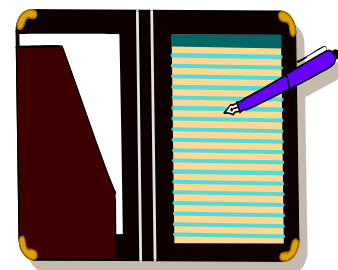
## PRAYERS ANSWERED?

A small boy badly wanted a baby brother, so his dad suggested he pray every night for one. The boy prayed earnestly, night after night for a whole month, but his prayers seemingly weren't answered. So after a few weeks he lost interest as boys are apt, and he didn't bother to ask anymore.

Some months later, his dad said they were going to see Mum in the hospital and he was going to get a big surprise. When they got to the room, the little boy saw his mother holding **twins**. The little boy stood still for a moment, and then cautiously observed: "It's a good thing I stopped praying when I did."

**Parish Pump**

# CALENDAR



.....to the best of the editor's knowledge, unless you know better.....

## FEBRUARY 2023

Wed 01	1.30~3 pm	FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE - Swann Grove
Thu 02		
Fri 03	2.00 pm	Choir Rehearsal
Sat 04	10am~12 noon	Coffee morning ~ for <b>Leprosy</b>
Mon 06		
Tues 07	11am - 2 pm	WARM SPACE / SOUP, SWEET & MEET in coffee lounge
Wed 08	10.30 am	Elders' ~church
Thu 09	1.30~3 pm	FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE ~Swann Gr
Fri 10	7.30 pm	Worship Group meeting on Zoom
	2 pm	Choir Rehearsal
Sun 12	9.30 am	Breakfast Before
Mon 13		
Tues 14	11am ~ 2 pm	WARM SPACE / SOUP, SWEET & MEET in coffee lounge
Wed 15	1.30~3 pm	FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE - Swann Grove
Thu 16		
Fri 17	2pm	Choir Rehearsal
Mon 20		
Tues 21	11am ~ 2 pm	WARM SPACE / SOUP, SWEET & MEET in coffee lounge
Wed 22	Ash Wednesday - Lent begins	1.30~3 pm FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE - Swann Grove
Thu 23		
Fri 24	10am	Management meeting at Church
Sat 25	2pm	Choir Rehearsal
	12 - 2 pm	CTCH Lent Lunch - St Ann's RC
	2.30 pm	FILM MATINEE
Mon 27		
Tues 28	11am ~ 2 pm	WARM SPACE / SOUP, SWEET & MEET in coffee lounge

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