



ST ANNE'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

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MAGAZINE AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024

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SUMMER HOLIDAYS

'Summertime and the living is easy.' George Gershwin's words could be aptly applied to August, when many of us take holidays. It's a month to focus on summertime (weather permitting!!); family and barbeques; the beach and ice cream; long days with no school! It's a time to wind down from the hectic pace of normal routine.

However, while summer is a season, it is also a state of mind. We all have periods in life, which are summer-like, when life goes well. How can we walk by faith in the summers or good times of our spiritual lives?

Summer Distinctives: When we go through times of sickness, financial pressure, difficult relationships and other problems, we more easily focus on God. In a spiritual summer season, we can subtly find ourselves enjoying the gifts without acknowledging the Giver! The greatest danger in the summertime season of life is to forget the One who is responsible for the good things we are enjoying.

Summer Distractions: Our normal routine revolves around clocks and calendars, but we can easily get distracted when we break these disciplined routines. In the spiritual summer seasons of life, there is a temptation to miss out on our regular times with God in Bible reading and prayer! Things that make summer seasons enjoyable can also become big distractions.

Summer Directives: How can we make the most of this summer season and keep focused on God? We need to maintain a gratitude attitude: thankful to God for all His blessings: 'When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land He has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God.' (Deuteronomy 8:10/11).

So let's stay close and stay grateful to God in this summer season of life!

Canon Paul Hardingham

A PRAYER FOR AUGUST 2024

Lord, in a year of changes in our country and in the world, we thank You for the regular rhythm of each year.

We thank You for August, the month of holidays and rest for many, especially for families and those tied to termly timetables. We pray for Your blessing and restoration for all.

As we take time out of normal routines, help us to still make space for You; to be refreshed spiritually as well as physically.

Feed us, Lord, by Your Word; revive us by Your Holy Spirit; encourage us by Your indwelling presence, so that we might naturally reflect Your love to all we meet, on holiday or at home or at work.

In Jesus' name. Amen

Daphne Kitching

THURSDAY SHOPPERS' SERVICES AT 10AM IN THE HALL

1st August	Leader - Linda Lunn
8th August	Communion led by the Reverend Janet Calderley
15th August	Leader - Stephanie Johnson
22nd August	Leader - Liz Stone
29th August	Leader - Margaret Russell
5th September	Leader - Peter Melvin
12th September	Communion led by the Reverend Jim Williams
19th September	Leader - Pastor David Grimshaw
26th September	Mini Harvest Praise

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10.45AM

4th August	Communion led by Pastor David Grimshaw
11th August	Leader - Margaret Russell
18th August	Leader - Stuart Gay
25th August	Songs of Praise in the hall
1st September	Communion led by Elizabeth Fleming
8th September	Leader - Doug Clements
15th September	Leader - the Reverend Jim Williams
22nd September	Harvest led by Margaret Russell
29th September	Leader - Andrew Barratt

Note: unexpected events may make it necessary to make late changes to the list of leaders.

FLOWERS

4th August	Elma Templeton
11th August	Church flowers
18th August	Jackie Dell
25th August	Church flowers
1st September	Millie Watson
8th September	Kate Scott
15th September	Church flowers
22nd September	Harvest flowers
29th September	Sandra Bigley

NEWS FROM ECO CHURCH

Since Eco Church was launched in 2016, the Eco Church survey has guided churches through practical ways to care for creation. They have written to say that they are refreshing the survey and that there will be another revised survey to be launched by the end of this year. As I reported earlier this year, St Anne's URC is waiting until further work with buildings has been completed before continuing with the current survey, which had resulted in our becoming a Silver Eco Church in 2018.

After the new survey has been received we shall be able to continue our efforts to achieve a Gold Award. Until then I shall continue to send the Green Tips recommended by A Rocha, beginning with those for August and September.

August - Assist wildlife during hot weather

Provide hedgehogs with a juicy snack like mealworms or canned dog food as their prey of slugs, snails and worms diminishes, and ensure a safe exit for them and other small mammals if you have a garden pond. Help garden birds by maintaining a filled bird bath and supplying supplementary food including black sunflower seeds, pinhead oatmeal, soaked sultanas, raisins, currants, mealworms, waxworms and a nutritious seed mixture when natural supplies become scarce. More tips can be found at arocha.org.uk/looking-after-wildlife-in-the-heat/

September - Step outside this Season of Creation (1 September - 4 October)

Connect with nature and dedicate this time to God as the Creator and sustainer of life. Choose an idea or two from A Rocha's resource and encourage your church family to take part, too! Free to download at arocha.org.uk/step-outside-this-season-of-creation-resource/

Dorothy Tatton

WHAT GARDENING CAN DO FOR YOUR BRAIN

People who spend time gardening may have better brain function in later life than those who do not. Such are the findings of a recent study at the University of Edinburgh.

The authors of the study observe that gardening involves: "not only physical exertion but creativity and planning. Engaging in gardening projects, learning about plants, and general garden upkeep - involve complex cognitive processes such as memory and executive function. Consistent with the 'use it or lose it' framework of cognitive function, more engagement in gardening may be directly associated with a lower risk of cognitive decline."

As one doctor said: "People often don't realise the wide range of benefits that gardening can bring. For example, digging, planting and pulling weeds will increase hand strength,

which research has shown can also boost brain health. Growing your own food can help you eat a healthier diet; another key factor. And staying connected to other people is beneficial for brain health, so community allotments are a great place to socialise, reducing loneliness and isolation."

The researchers want more study into the possible benefits of gardening, hoping it might help against cognitive decline.

THE MINISTRIES AND MISSION FUND

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches (URCs) and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs)

Dear Friends,

Firstly, thank you for all your contributions to your local church in 2023. This includes your financial contribution which plays an important part in the life of the whole church through the Ministries & Mission Fund (M&M).

As officers of the denomination, it's good for us to be rooted in a local URC (or LEP) congregation and to work out our faith in the local context, as well as across the entire United Reformed Church. On the other hand, it is good for you in local churches to know that those who serve you nationally understand the local church financial issues as well. And there have been some big issues over the last 12-18 months: inflation, a "cost of living crisis" for many, with energy costs rising to unprecedented levels etc. Churches and ministers have had the same challenges as so many others.

The M&M Fund of the URC pays for ministers' stipends, training, Assembly costs and all the central support functions for ministry in the URC across three nations. The M&M Fund's main income is contributions from the churches with some top-up from synods, together with investment income and grants etc.

In 2023 the churches continued to support the M&M Fund to a wonderful level, but there also was significant and generous synod support. Overall, the giving to the M&M Fund was slightly ahead of budget at £16.3 million. It was also only 2% down on 2022's result. However, we should note that these figures include the synods' extra contributions this year which amounted to £1.9 million, an increased amount compared to 2022.

The full M&M account for 2023 in summary shows: Income - £18.2m - of which £16.3m was from churches' and synods' contributions; Expenditure - £19.3m; Deficit - £1.1m.

2024 is not going to be an easy year either and we are again budgeting for a deficit. We have a commitment from synods to continue their support on top of church contributions and a plan for balancing the M&M budget over the next 5-7 years, including budget reductions of central costs of 3 to 5% per annum.

So, thank you to all of you who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2023 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

Stewardship of our resources, personally, as local churches and as a denomination is rarely easy, but it is one of the challenges we are called to in making our faith real. As the Spirit directs and as our means allow, can the churches once more continue to respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God? Again, thank you all!

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,

Alan Yates (Treasurer); Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)

FUNDRAISING

Since the last edition of our Church's magazine we have held another of our popular Book and Jigsaw Fairs.

On **Saturday 17 August 2024** we are holding a very special coffee morning in aid of child amputees in Gambia. This event is to help these children who are less fortunate than ours in support of one of Pastor David Grimshaw's many projects. He will be at our coffee morning should any of you require further information. Please come along and help us to help these children.

There will be some stalls, a raffle and, of course, coffee and cake plus our popular bake stall. There will also be donation jars. Coffee and cake will cost £2, and we will be open from 10am - 1pm. Let us be a small part of helping these children to be able to walk again.

Saturday 21 September 2024 is the date of our harvest coffee morning which is part of our harvest weekend celebrations. Between 10am - 12noon there will be coffee, cakes and a raffle.

On **Sunday 22 September 2024**, following morning worship, we will be having our Jacob's Join Lunch. It was a successful event last year and we have been asked to repeat it. More details will be given nearer the time.

We look forward to seeing you at these events and thank you for your continuing support.

Avril Cook and the fundraising team

A MESSAGE FROM THE REVEREND JANET CALDERLEY

This year has been quite a year for anniversaries. 4 August sees the 110th anniversary of the beginning of the first world war and 3 September will be the 85th anniversary of the second. But one which was most in the news this year, of course, was the 80th anniversary of D Day on 6th June.

There were ceremonies and commemorations not only in France at the landing sites and D Day memorials but at the embarkation ports and many other places in Britain and Europe. Some of the most touching images we saw were of the very few survivors still alive who were at the commemorations in Normandy as they were presented with flowers by local school children. Stories of the day included accounts from soldiers and others from both sides of the conflict.

Watching and listening to them I was reminded of a story from 10 years ago at the 70th anniversary about the Normandy veteran who 'escaped' from his care home to board a ferry and join the celebrations in France. His exploits went global and he was acclaimed as a hero all around the world, including Germany, now no longer the enemy.

It has been quite a summer for sport, too. In football, at the time of writing, England have just defeated the Netherlands to get through to the final of the Euros, Andy Murray has gone out at Wimbledon, the Tour de France is underway, we have the T20 Cricket World Championships going on, and the summer rugby internationals. Despite national allegiances, and with the possible exception of football, these are all events which bring us closer together. As sportsmen and women and their supporters travel the world, enjoying the hospitality of the host countries and giving hospitality in return, it is a tragedy that there are still so many conflicts and issues that keep us apart.

In the Ukraine, Palestine, Syria and the Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and so many other places in Africa, Asia and around the world, communities are still being torn apart by extremism and terrorism, with so many complicating factors including political ideologies, religion, tribal or national identity, and history. This year over half of all the democracies in the world are holding major elections and in many of them far right and nationalist groups and political parties are gaining ground. Despite a Labour victory it is a trend which we have seen ourselves in our own recent elections.

In such turbulent times we would do well to remember St. Paul's words to the church in Galatia, 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28).

Learning to live together is a major part of being a Christian. It means looking back to what Jesus did and taught, but mostly it means putting those teachings into practice and living in the now, being part of the community, looking after each other, displaying Christ's love and setting an example for those around us. It is very important that we don't separate ourselves from the world around us but live as part of it showing our love and concern for all.

We have a responsibility to the communities in which we live, to be aware of what is happening and to be involved in it. And in a world which is increasingly interdependent, where events and attitudes have global repercussions, it is now more important than ever that we make our voices heard and that we proclaim Christ's gospel of love.

Rev Janet

AS FINE SILVER

Malachi 3:3 says: *"He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."*

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study. They got to wondering what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out.

She rang a silversmith and arranged to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest, beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest, so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot, and then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver." She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy - when I see my image in it."

So, if today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you. His aim is not to abandon or destroy you, but to refine you - until He sees His image in you.

CRAFT GROUP

Craft Group has no meetings in August. It will resume its fortnightly meetings starting at 1pm on **Thursday 12 September 2024** in the hall.

We knit, sew or crochet and enjoy a cup of tea/coffee and a biscuit. We would be pleased to have new members. Just drop by for a warm welcome.

Sue Melvin

STARFISHES

The Starfishes team would like to thank all the parents and grandparents who have contributed to the success of the sessions, particularly over the last few months when the team was somewhat depleted.

Starfishes will resume after the summer break on **Monday 9 September 2024** at 9.30am in the hall.

MESSY CHURCH

The summer months have seen Messy Church make a noise and get colourful.

In June our theme was about making a noise and various sound-creating objects were made at our craft tables.

Messy Church and Starfishes were in all the colours of the carnival for the St Annes Carnival Parade, with colours so bright and cheerful it totally eclipsed the slightly damp weather of the day. Pushchairs were adorned with colourful balloons, umbrellas were decorated with brightly coloured ribbons, and hilariously coloured circus bow ties were worn with comical style. The effect was that there were smiles all round.

Messy Church takes its summer break now and will return on **20 September 2024**, the third Friday of the month, at 3.30pm in the hall.

As always, a huge thank-you to our volunteers, who give up their free time to help on the craft tables or create delicious meals at the end of the session. A big thank-you, too, to Rev Janet, who brings her enthusiasm and extensive craft knowledge to each session.

If you want to get craft ideas to do over the summer holidays, then take a look at the Messy Church Facebook page: [messychurch@stannesurc](https://www.facebook.com/messychurchstannesurc). Click on videos and scroll down to find the How To videos.

Thanks also go to those of you that are online shopping with Easyfundraising. If you haven't done it already, then type Easyfundraising into the search engine. Once on the website, search for St Annes URC and select it as your cause. Once log on details are completed, start online shopping with your favourite retailers. This is a wonderful way to support Messy Church, Starfishes and the Church as a whole.

The Messy Church Core Team wish you all a wonderful summer.

Jane Randles, on behalf of Messy Church Core Team



REFUGEES FIND HOPE THROUGH MUSIC CHARITY SUPPORTED BY MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP (MAF)

Mission Aviation Fellowship is partnering with an unusual programme which reaches out to traumatised refugees in Bidibidi, in northern Uganda, the world's second largest refugee settlement.

'Brass for Africa' is a music programme that visits the settlement twice a week, bringing joy to hundreds of stranded people who have barely survived the horrors of war.

The Bidibidi Settlement is 'home' to at least 272,000 mostly South Sudanese refugees who have fled South Sudan's six-year civil war. They are haunted by graphic memories of the murders they have witnessed, and many are in the grip of depression.

According to Brass for Africa, the refugees have responded well to the music programme, and the suicide rate among them has significantly dropped. What has especially helped them has been the chance to learn to play brass instruments themselves. This helps them to relax, and also to learn a new skill which may one day help them earn a living.

Brass for Africa supports many other vulnerable people across Uganda, Rwanda and Liberia.

WARM WELCOME GROWS LARGER

As summer will soon turn to the cool of autumn, the Warm Welcome Campaign has recently announced that it is beginning a 'new chapter'.

It explains: "What started as a crisis response to keep people warm through the winter has blossomed into a movement to reconnect individuals and communities across the country all year round."

Since Warm Welcome discovered that 62% of the UK population now live within a 30-minute walk of a registered Warm Welcome Space, it has drawn up a new five-year strategy. This sets out "an ambitious vision to ensure that every single person in this country has free access to welcoming community spaces."

Warm Welcome launched in Autumn 2022 and since then nearly 4,000 community spaces of all kinds have received over 4.5 million visits between them.

It says: "These Spaces have touched countless lives, transforming people's circumstances, their sense of belonging and purpose." As well as providing warmth and safety, "84% of our guests said the Space had helped them feel a stronger sense of belonging in their community."

This autumn, Warm Welcome is inviting all community spaces to register with them for free through its website. More details at: www.warmwelcome.uk.

The Editors are pleased to include the following item which was given to them by somebody who prefers to remain anonymous.

INTROSPECTIVE

Moving to St Annes to retire, it's exciting.
Choosing a house, the beach is inviting.
It's a new world, my husband thinks,
But it ends too soon, in just a wink.
Tragedy strikes from out of the blue.
I just can't really believe it's true.
I've lost my friend, my love, my light.
It seemed to happen overnight.
What can I do, life isn't the same.
I miss him so much, I don't have an aim.
We've only been here just over a year,
No need for friends, we had each other near.
Should I join a Church, I begin to wonder.
Not sure what I believe, but I start to ponder.
The URC seems to call out to me,
It's not far to go, perhaps I should see.
I walk past the door again and again.
My courage deserts me, I can't, it's a pain.
I force myself in, through the door at last.
Friendly faces greet me and take me past,
Into the Church, someone to sit with.
Friendship, belonging they want to give.
Join us for coffee and a natter.
They want to welcome me and chatter.
It makes me feel better, I 'll come again.
The friendly welcome is always the same.
Join in and help, it's therapeutic.
I feel part of a family, I'm suited.
I'm not very religious I have to say,
But there's more to it than that every day.
It's a family who cares and always can,
Be there for each other and love their fellow man.
I think that's what it means to me,
Though for others it may be different I see.
The URC means a lot and I think,
It helped me when I felt I might sink.
It's a place of friendship, love and kindness
And belief in a God who cares and is mindful,

That we're only human and sometimes wonder,
What life is about, we can't help but ponder.
We can only do our best
And hope when it comes our time to rest,
He will see,
We've been the very best we could be.

DEATHS

We commend to God's loving care:

Elizabeth Whittaker who died on 25 May 2024; Mary Eatock who died on 4 June 2024;
Barbara Shardlow who died on 22 June 2024.

Please remember their families and friends in your prayers.

THANK YOU

Very many thanks to all our friends for sending the lovely flowers to celebrate our 65th wedding anniversary. A special thanks to Avril and George and to Sarah for delivering the flowers. We very much appreciate all the best wishes when we meet people from the church and especially to Chris and Pauline for their kindness in inviting us from time to time for coffee in their apartments.

Reverend Audrey and John Boon

Thank you to Avril and all the church family for the lovely flowers and card which I received on my birthday in June.

Liz Stone

KEEP SMILING.....



"How thoughtful, wearing something
all the wedding guests could shelter
under in case of rain."

Items for the October/November magazine should be with the editors no later than
Sunday 8 September 2024, please.