



ST ANNE'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

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MAGAZINE

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2025

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A MESSAGE FROM THE REVEREND JANET CALDERLEY

Phew! At last it's August and things can slow down a little. July was such a packed month, following on from June's galas and club days to yet more carnivals, summer fairs, afternoon teas and table top sales, but now I'm looking forward to a slightly quieter time (please?). In our churches August is usually a quiet month without any meetings, since we assume many people will be on holiday, and no major festivals as we are in that long period of time between Pentecost and Advent which some churches call 'ordinary time'.

When there is not much to write about I often find myself going back to the traditional British obsession with the weather and this year, during the past few weeks, it has seemed determined to outdo itself with record temperatures and long dry spells. But I really don't want to talk about the unusual and improbable British weather, so I thought I'd write about 'improbable' saints instead.

One improbable saint who sounds very appropriate for summer is St Serenus the Gardener. Born in Greece in the 4th century Serenus became an expert in horticulture. One day he came across the wife and daughter of a Roman imperial guard trespassing in his garden and asked them to return in the cool of the evening to see it better. They thought they had been told to get out and went off in a huff. The guard complained to the Emperor Maximian who found Serenus innocent of insulting the guard's wife, but, just as he thought he was in the clear, Serenus was invited to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods, which he refused to do, so Maximian had him beheaded anyway. Serenus is therefore the patron saint of those who suffer imaginary slights.

Another couple of unlikely saints who might get very busy over the bank holiday weekend are St Floridus and St Laurus, the patron saints of home improvements. They were 2nd century builders and interior designers working on a pagan temple in Illyria. Halfway through the job they converted to Christianity, smashed all the idols of Mithras and replaced them with crosses and other Christian symbols, which so annoyed the client he had them drowned in a well.

A saint you might have heard of is St Sebastian who you have probably seen in paintings as the victim of a martyrdom which left him full of arrows. However, he did not actually die that way. He was rescued by Irene of Rome who took him back to her house and nursed him back to health. Unfortunately, when the Emperor Diocletian passed by Sebastian went out to harangue him, for which insult the emperor had him clubbed to death and his body thrown into a privy. This episode of his life has proved less appealing to artists.

St Adelaide of Italy was a powerful 10th century figure who was regent of the Holy Roman Empire. She was the daughter of the King of Burgundy who married her off to Lothair, the King of Italy, who was then poisoned. She subsequently married the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto the Great, and wielded great influence until she was exiled by her daughter-in-law, Theophanu. Although they were later reconciled, Adelaide is still celebrated as the patron saint of those having trouble with their in-laws.

These are just a few of the thousands of saints who have odd patronages or suffered unusual martyrdoms. Some of the stories are very entertaining, many quite gruesome, others very moving and many, quite frankly, unbelievable. But I suspect that the most remarkable stories of saints are those that go untold – the stories of ordinary people who kept the faith in their own quiet way, who stood beside the marginalised or those in need, who persevered against all the odds, who sometimes suffered greatly, almost unnoticed, and yet triumphed over adversity. There are many such 'quiet' saints. You may know some of them in your own church or community. Their achievements may not be great in worldly terms, but they make a difference. Do you know anyone who fits that description? We all have the potential to be one of those "quiet saints". This summer, during the quiet 'ordinary' time, let's try to make a difference and join the ranks of the "improbable saints"!

Rev Janet

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10.45AM IN THE CHURCH

3rd August	Communion led by Pastor David Grimshaw
10th August	Leader - the Reverend Martin and Phyllis Graham
17th August	Songs of Praise
24th August	Leader - Rene Kendall
31st August	Leader - Eileen Garfitt
7th September	Communion led by the Reverend Peter Colwell
14th September	Leader - the Reverend Jim Williams
21st September	Harvest Festival led by Elizabeth Fleming
28th September	Leader - the Reverend Janet Calderley

FLOWERS

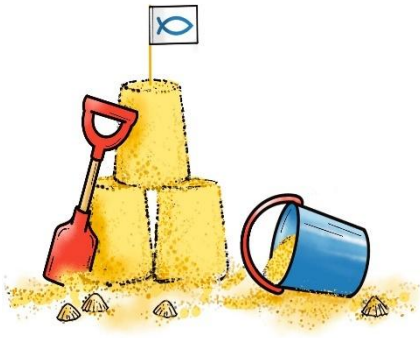
3rd August	Elma Templeton
10th August	Church flowers
17th August	Jackie Dell
24th August	Church flowers
31st August	Church flowers
7th September	Millie Watson
14th September	Kate Scott
21st September	Harvest Festival
28th September	Sandra Bigley

THURSDAY SHOPPERS' SERVICES AT 10AM IN THE HALL

7th August	Leader - Peter Melvin
14th August	Communion led by the Reverend Janet Calderley
21st August	Leader - Margaret Russell
28th August	Leader - Eileen Garfitt
4th September	Leader - Pastor David Grimshaw
11th September	Communion led by the Reverend Jim Williams
18th September	Leader - Doug Clements
25th September	Mini Harvest Songs of Praise

Note: unexpected events may necessitate late changes to the list of leaders.

A PRAYER FOR AUGUST



Heavenly Father,

August - summer holidays and sunny skies. All should be well and yet, around the world, all is *not* well!

Every day, it seems, new wars begin, catastrophes occur, world politicians play power games - and people suffer.

It can feel overwhelming, and we want to bury our heads in the sand, rather than build sandcastles on the beach.

Help us Lord, to look up; to see things with Your perspective; to remember that Jesus warned us that in this world we will have trouble. Then help us to remember that He told us to take heart, because He has overcome the world.

Father, help us to savour the summer, as we put our trust in You - our strength, our hope, our ultimate and unfailing security.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

Daphne Kitching

GIVE HIM A CALL!

The phone was a great invention. How easy, to press a few numbers on our small devices and speak to someone the other side of the world. Once a phone was a luxury item; now we take it for granted that this gadget in our pocket enables us to contact anyone, at any time, in any place.

However, how many times have you rung someone, only to be given a recorded message giving a variety of options? Then you must wait in a queue for ages before your call is answered. A voice informs you that 'your call is important to us' ... but meanwhile you are left waiting, listening to endless music.

Yes, a phone may be useful in all kinds of circumstances, but it can also be very frustrating! So, it's good to know that God can be contacted immediately we need Him.

There is no celestial call centre where our messages are delayed or referred. With prayer we can call on God directly. This service is free, with no charges. He hears our every call, and we can be confident that our Creator will answer us in ways which are only for our good.

'When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond.' (Isaiah 58:9)

Lester Amann

FUNDRAISING

As we are almost halfway through our year of fundraising events here are reminders of what is still to come.

On the **3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th August**, Jackie Dell has offered to play the pipe organ and Wurlitzer in the Church following morning worship. She would like you to sponsor her and the money collected will go towards our heating fund. Collect your coffee from the hall and bring it back into the Church to listen to Jackie playing. Please support her.

On **Saturday 23 August 2025** we will be holding another of our popular craft fairs from 10am - 3pm. Admission is by donation and there will be a full complement of tables with something for everyone.

On **Saturday 20 September 2025** we will be holding our harvest coffee morning with treats to have with your coffee, a few stalls, plus a raffle and a bake table.

Following the harvest festival service on **Sunday 21 September 2025**, we will have a Jacob's Join lunch in the hall. Food can be brought into the community room before the service. This is a time to get together over lunch.

Another date for your diaries is **25 October 2025** when we will hold another craft fair.

If you need further information about any of our events, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the fundraising team.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Avril Cook, on behalf of the fundraising team

SEPTEMBER PRAYER

Dear Father,

September again! How quickly the months roll by. How quickly our lives move forward. Help us this September to welcome the new starts in our everyday lives - the new school year, the new clubs and activities for all ages that start up again this month. There are so many opportunities, so much to keep us busy. Help us Lord, this September, to commit each new day and each new activity to you, aware that every day is a gift from you. Help us to choose wisely how we spend the time you give us and to reflect your love and generosity and kindness to those we meet each day.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

Daphne Kitching

THE VICAR WHO WON WIMBLEDON

Ninety years ago, on 21 August 1935, John Hartley, the British tennis player, died. He was the only clergyman ever to win Wimbledon and was World Number One in both 1879 and 1880 - winning Wimbledon both years.

The Reverend John Thorneycroft Hartley was born in 1849 in Wolverhampton and was well connected: his parents were both from Staffordshire industrial business families, and he married Alice Lascelles Murray, daughter of the 4th Earl of Mansfield and a granddaughter of Henry Lascelles, 3rd Earl of Harewood. They had no children.

He won the 1879 Gentlemen's Singles title against Irish champion Vere St Leger Goold in three sets on 15 July, retaining his title the following year. But in attempting the hat-trick in 1881 he lost the shortest ever men's final, 0-6, 1-6, 1-6, in 37 minutes. He was said to have been ill at the time.

Hartley had become a priest in 1873. He was firstly curate of Christ Church, Southwark, and then became vicar of Burneston, a village in North Yorkshire, from 1874 to 1919. In 1891 he became Rural Dean of East Catterick, and later he was Honorary Canon of Ripon Cathedral.

As an amateur, he received no cash for his Wimbledon wins, and in the course of his first finals win he caught a train to Yorkshire so that he could do his duty and take his services at Burneston on the Sunday. Not only that, but he stayed with a dying parishioner until he passed away on the Monday - the day of the semi-finals. A rain delay helped him to get back to London in time.

At the Golden Jubilee Championships in 1926 he received a silver medal from Queen Mary as one of 34 surviving champions.

Tim Lenton

PRAYER GROWS IN POPULARITY

Well over three million people have now used the Church of England's Daily Prayer podcast and app, which offers Morning and Evening Prayer in audio form.

Launched during the pandemic, the service has seen over 12 million downloads, with thousands tuning in each day.

Blending scripture, music, and reflection, it reflects a wider resurgence of interest in regular prayer and spiritual rhythm, showing that ancient words continue to find new life in modern formats.

SAILING WITH THE SPIRIT

On a calm, windless day, it can be frustrating to be in a sailboat. Your sails are ready to go, but with no wind and only calm waters, you aren't going anywhere!

Some sailors try to propel their little boat forward by paddling with their hands. Others fret over the lack of wind. But others simply stay on land and patiently wait. For it isn't until a breeze blows up, and the sails fill out, that a sailboat can skim out towards the open sea.

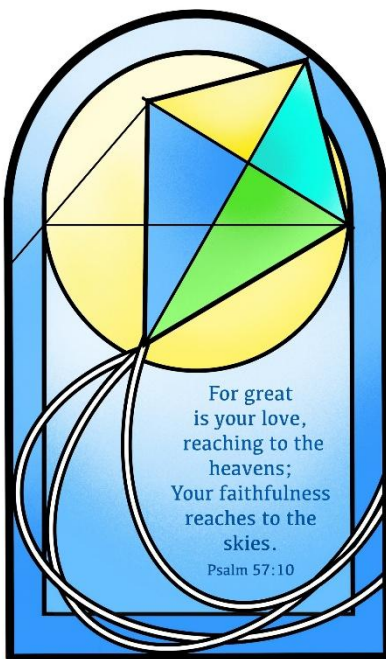
This scene is similar as to how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. The Bible describes the Spirit as wind and sometimes, like the sailors, we may have to wait for His energising power to guide and move us onwards. There are occasions, from a spiritual standpoint, when nothing seems to be happening – for weeks and months on end. During these waiting times we may wonder what purpose God has for us.

But while some of the people in the sailing club might have left their boats to do other things, they were also watching for signs of the coming wind. No one was packing up and going home! They were waiting with a purpose.

In our times of stillness and waiting, we can also wait with a purpose. We can pray for the Church, our community and the world. We can pray that we will be ready for God to move us into the next course He has planned for us. And we can keep our sails ready, for the Spirit to blow afresh into our lives!

Lester Amann

LET'S GO FLY A KITE!



Our annual Kite Festival here in St Anne's takes place this year from Friday 29th to Sunday 31st August.

Like the sailors in the previous article hoping for wind to fill out their sails, the organisers of the Kite Festival will be hoping for a breeze strong enough to lift the kites.

As we watch this spectacular display, let's think of these wonderful words of Psalm 57 and of the love of God that reaches beyond anything, however wonderful, that this world can ever give.

Editors: The Reverend Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the Church of England, considers Christian films.

WILL CHRISTIAN MOVIES EVER MAKE AN IMPACT IN THE UK?

Christian movies have never really made a big impact in UK cinemas - and there are few signs that this is changing.

Earlier this year, an animation film, 'The King of Kings' broke box office records in the US and elsewhere - making it the most successful opening for a biblical animated feature - but in the UK it was only shown at selected cinemas.

I saw it at my local Odeon, with just a couple of rows full, and only two daily daytime screenings. The crowds were opting to see 'A Minecraft Movie,' or Disney's 'Snow White.'

I was entranced and challenged by the 'Bonhoeffer' movie that was also shown at some British cinemas earlier this year. That certainly deserved a much larger audience.

Ironically, 'The King of Kings' should have had added resonance for UK movie-goers, with the biblical story being voiced by many British actors, and Victorian author Charles Dickens featured.

The success of 'The Chosen' has proved there is a large global audience for the story of Christ. But the drift away from cinemas to the streaming companies like Netflix means that big screen movies may not have the impact they once had.

I've never been one for the big biblical classics like 'Ben Hur' or 'The Ten Commandments,' and my first brush with Christian movies in the UK was the 1967 film 'Two a Penny', starring singer Cliff Richard, showing at a local church. I don't think it was noticed by the Oscar judges...

I saw Mel Gibson's epic 'The Passion of the Christ' 2004 movie twice. First, at a preview screening at the National Religious Broadcasting convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, when several thousand evangelical delegates were moved to tears. And then, weeks later, at my local cinema, north of London, where I sat in a half-empty studio, and cinemagoers near me ate popcorn and chatted during the crucifixion scenes. Two audiences - two very different reactions.

I wish well all those moviemakers seeking to attract UK cinema audiences to watch Christian films, and I hope they are successful. But I feel it's going to be an uphill struggle.

DRAMA

"Did the play have an unhappy ending?"

"Oh no - everyone was glad when it was over."

ACTIVITIES FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG IN HEART

Starfishes will resume after the summer break on **Monday 8 September 2025** at 9.30am in the hall.

Pat Allen-Frost

Messy Church is now on its summer holiday. Our last indoor session was in June with a theme of things changing in light and dark. Our final session before the summer break will be participating in the movie-theme parade for St Anne's Carnival, so very exciting.

With that end-of-term feeling it is time to thank Reverend Janet for all her input into Messy Church. With her enthusiasm and knowledge of so many topics, we have explored different stories through many different crafts. The catering volunteers are an essential part of each session and have always brought a delicious meal to the table, often reflecting the theme of the session or the season. I know all our Messy Church family thoroughly enjoy the delicious feast at the end of each gathering.

The Messy Church core team look forward to seeing you all on the third Friday of each month from 3.30pm in the Church Hall, starting on **Friday 19th September 2025**.

Again, many thanks to our volunteers at Messy Church who bring so many talents to the sessions. We wish all our Messy Church family a very fun-filled summer holiday.

Jane Randles

WHEN I SAY I AM A CHRISTIAN

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting, "I am saved!"

I'm whispering, "I get lost; that is why I chose this way."

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride.

I'm confessing that I stumble and need Someone to be my Guide.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging I am strong.

I'm professing that I'm weak, and I pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success.

I'm admitting I have failed and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect.

My flaws are all too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain.

I have my share of heartaches, which is why I cry His name.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I do not wish to judge.

I have no authority; I only know I'm loved.

Author unknown

HARVEST FIELD

All around, confusion,
All around, helplessness,
People lost in the bad news of every day.
Longing for purpose,
Searching for security and significance
Here in the white field of our generation.

The harvest is still great,
The workers are still few,
But the Lord of the harvest
Is the same
Yesterday, today and forever.

And this is His field.
He planted, He will give growth
If we will be His workforce
And go out into the field - where He already is -
To gather the harvest
Of His kingdom compassion.

Lord of the harvest,
In Your grace, we pray,
Send us.



Daphne Kitching

IN PRAISE OF OLIVE OIL

Olive oil is surprisingly good for you. It has been found to be able to ward off chronic disease and to boost your brain health. So, when those ancient Greeks praised it as an aid to staying young and healthy, it seems they were right.

While the Mediterranean diet can include up to four tablespoons of olive oil per day, a recent study at Harvard has found that even just half a tablespoon of olive oil per day helps protect your heart and brain from disease. It may even slash your risk of Parkinson's or Alzheimer's by 29 per cent, and cancer by 17 per cent.

Olive oil is packed with monounsaturated fats, and even has anti-inflammatory properties, which have been compared to Ibuprofen. The best way to eat it? Add it as a dressing to your salads. Frying with it can degrade some of its properties.

SCOTTISH DIASPORA CHURCHES

Diaspora churches in Scotland welcome over 22,000 to their services each week, with a new congregation having started every eight weeks since 2000. So says research published late last year.

What is a 'diaspora' church? One largely made up of those who have spread or been dispersed from their homeland.

In the 2021 UK population census, some 10.7 million people had been born abroad, representing some 16% of the population. Over half a million of these live in Scotland, mostly in the major cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee.

Some of these refugees and immigrants are Christian, and between them they have started over 200 new congregations.

What do these churches look like? The report *Churches without People and People without Churches* suggests that for every 100 Diasporan Churches:

70 would be African, 17 Asian and 8 European;

80 would be in cities, 16 in large towns and 3 in small towns;

53 would be members of networks such as MECTIS (Minority Ethnic Churches Together in Scotland) or local ecumenical groups;

20 would worship in their own property, 25 would share a sacred place, 42 would hire a secular public space;

44 have already planted a new church, 36 are working towards it;

18 would have female leaders, 70 would have bi-vocational leaders;

83 use English in their worship.

Could the declining Church of Scotland foster a connectional missional partnership with one of these Diaspora churches? Or allow a vacant church building to be sold at a moderate price? Or let one of their churches at a peppercorn rent?

Given some similar opportunities and problems in some parts of England, could the Church of England do the same? [or indeed *The United Reformed Church!* - Editors]

***Source: Churches without People and People without Churches,
Diaspora Congregations in Scotland.***

***Report by Brendan Research, led by Dr Sheila Akoniah-Conteh,
supported by Reverend Dr Fiona Tweedie and Reverend Dr Liam Jerrold Fraser.***

MUSIC APPRECIATION

The music critic enthused: "Here is Tchaikovsky at his best. Music so beautiful that it has to be heard to be appreciated."

A lot of music is like that.

DEATHS

We commend to God's loving care Jack Pickles who died on 14 June 2025 and Jennifer Hopkins who died on 19 June 2025. Please remember their families and friends in your prayers.

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who enquired about me and to Reverend Jim for his visits whilst I was in hospital recently. I am grateful for all the good wishes and support at this time and hope to get back to Church in the near future.

Renee Binns

Very many thanks to all our friends at St Anne's URC for the lovely flowers delivered as usual with a kind smile by Avril on the occasion of John's birthday. Also, thanks for the birthday and anniversary cards we both receive every year. We very much appreciate the work done in keeping in touch with us. We realise it takes time and care. Kind thoughts.

Reverend Audrey and John Boon

Very many thanks to Avril and all the church family for the lovely flowers we received on separate occasions to mark our two birthdays in June. They were, as always, very much appreciated.

Duncan Foulds and Liz Stone

Thank you to the church family for the lovely flowers I received on what would have been our 70th wedding anniversary. Thank you also for the love, support, flowers, cards, emails and visits that Don and I received during his illness and on his passing. We were, and are, very well blessed and I thank you all.

Sylvia Snape



Items for the October/November edition of the magazine should be with the editors no later than **Sunday 14 September 2025**, please.