

Link

March 2026

The Magazine of the United Reformed Church
Stratford-upon-Avon



Worship, Witness and love for others through Jesus Christ

**The United Reformed Church
Rother Street
Stratford-upon-Avon**

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Thoughts for March

God has a plan

I have read several articles recently, about Judas Iscariot. Some were on Facebook (Written by 'Farmer Girl' - very thought provoking they were too), but I don't have permission to reproduce them. So, I thought I would summarise the content.

I realise that it is a little early to talk about part of the Easter story, but it made an impression on me and I felt that I should share it with you.

Judas is always portrayed as the villain of the Easter story. He betrayed Jesus, he kissed Jesus and then took money from the Pharisees in return for the betrayal. He betrayed the Son of God. He would be the character in the pantomime that everybody would boo and hiss at, as soon as he appeared.

But the uncomfortable fact is that without Judas there would have been no Easter story, no cross, no death, no resurrection and no saviour of the world. If we didn't have the cross and the resurrection, there would be no forgiveness for our sins, no salvation, no future hope for mankind. All we would have is a prophet who told us how to live our lives.



But this part of the Easter Story was not an accident. It was all planned by God - it wasn't a surprise to Jesus, at all. He knew exactly what would happen all along. In John's gospel chapter 6 we read that Jesus said to his disciples in response to a comment by Peter: "I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil" John adds: "He was speaking of Judas son of Simon Iscariot, one of the twelve who would betray him"

Even knowing this, Jesus still chose Judas as one of his disciples.

That's fascinating, I think. Judas was with Jesus and the twelve for three whole years. He was even allowed to look after their money (perhaps because he was

more educated). He listened to Jesus; he watched his miracles.

Jesus knew exactly what Judas would do. Jesus told his disciples several times that he would die and rise again. He knew that Judas would kiss him, that he would betray him to the authorities. Presumably he knew about his trial, the cross and his death. And YET he still chose Judas.

So, God had a plan. Judas was part of that plan. His betrayal became part of God's rescue plan for mankind. Of course, that doesn't absolve Judas: he still took the decision to betray, he still took the money. But in a sense, he was led into the greater story, the greater plan that God had for us all. God used the betrayal for salvation.



Judas did display remorse; he returned the silver “I have sinned” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man”. Then he went away and killed himself.

In his triple denial, Peter also failed Jesus, but there is a difference in how they both dealt with their failure and their guilt. Peter came back to Jesus, but Judas ran away. Peter discovered that God's mercy was bigger than his sin, but Judas felt that his sin was bigger than God's mercy.

Having read about this and thought about it I have to say that I felt sorry for Judas. He failed like all of us do from time to time. But through his poor choices he became a tool in enabling salvation.

We all have some similarities to Judas. We all have moments when we exchange something that God would want, for something temporary, because it suits our circumstances at the time. We convince ourselves that it is good for us in the short term. Like Judas we walk with Jesus, we listen to him, we see his good deeds, but yet we still choose our own way sometimes.

Let's not forget that Judas was a part of God's plan to save the world, to wipe out sin, to deliver everlasting life.

I have quoted this passage from Isaiah before: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways.”

The good news is that God has a plan for all of us - but it may not be what we are

expecting. As humans we all fail and “fall short of the glory” - just as Judas did.

Let’s think on that as we travel the path through Lent to the cross.

Peter

P.S. For more information about Judas Iscariot see the article later in the magazine.

Family News

A very well attended Thanksgiving Service led by Peter was held on Monday 16th February in Church to celebrate the life of Margaret Simpson. Margaret had been a member at Rother Street for over twenty years and was a regular worshipper, latterly accompanied by her daughter Heather. She also enjoyed our Friday Coffee Mornings where she happily enjoyed the chat and added her very own brand of repartee. Her daughters, Helen, Catherine and Heather very generously provided refreshments in Church after the service. She will be sadly missed by us all.

Members who remember Mary Wild will be sad to learn of her passing in Scotland on Monday 9th February in her 97th year. Mary moved to Scotland in 2012, several years after the death of her husband, David. Both had been active members at Rother Street for many years. Mary spent the last years of her life near to her daughter Susan and family. Our condolences go to Mary's family and friends at this time.

Brian spent a couple of nights in Warwick Hospital following a severe nose bleed. He is gradually regaining his strength and equilibrium after a rather scary episode.

Lastly, some good news. Katie's son and his wife are expecting a baby.

Ileen Fisher

What’s on at the Bear Pit

White Liars / Black Comedy: 13th to 21st March at 7.30pm
Matinees on 14th and 21st at 2.30pm



White Liars

Sophie Lemberg, a disillusioned fortune teller who claims aristocratic lineage. She's visited by Tom, a rock singer, and Frank, his manager, who bribes Sophie to manipulate Tom's romantic choices through staged clairvoyance. But as the session unfolds, layers of truth and fiction unravel revealing that all three characters are entangled in lies, not just about love, but identity, ambition, and emotional survival.

Black Comedy

Brindsley, a young sculptor, has borrowed antique furniture from his neighbour to impress a visiting millionaire art collector and his fiancée's father. Just as guests arrive, a power outage plunges the apartment into darkness but in a brilliant theatrical twist, the stage is fully lit when the characters are "in the dark," and goes dark when they "see." As visitors pile in, including Brindsley's ex-girlfriend and the neighbour, the chaos escalates. Characters stumble, collide, and reveal secrets, all while pretending they can't see. The play's ingenious lighting reversal turns physical comedy into a metaphor for hidden truths and social pretence.

Tickets: £15 (Under 25's £10)

Meet on the Ledge: 22nd March at 7pm



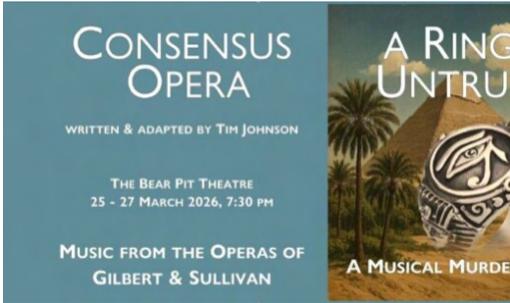
The Bear Pit Theatre welcomes back Warwickshire-based folk-rock favourites Meet On The Ledge. The band are celebrating thirty-three-and-a-third years together with their 'Third of a Century' Tour.

This concert will showcase the various styles and influences that have helped the band become a favourite on the UK folk festival circuit, including their own self-penned material, high octane arrangements of traditional folk songs, and a few snippets from their hugely successful Pink Floyd tribute set, which toured the UK throughout 2023 and 2024.

Tickets: £14

A Ring of Untruths: 25th to 27th March at 7.30pm

Consensus Opera production written and adapted by Tim Johnson. Music by Gilbert & Sullivan



A gruesome discovery in the 1970s takes the police on a journey back to 1938 and soon we are at a cocktail reception in France where rivalry and revenge are in the air.

Movie Director, Randolph Dangersmith, is under pressure to persuade his American ex-fiancée, Vera duBois, to star in his next film alongside his new

love interest Frances Fogbound, the famous British aviatrix, whose close friend and wealthy heiress, Evelyn Mulch, has a score to settle with Professor Doug Underhill, the unscrupulous archaeologist who is providing the screenplay. Things unravel as the Professor presents Vera with a priceless Egyptian ring to wear in the film, only for it to be stolen in plain sight, right under the watchful eye of Police Commissar Citroen, who is disguised as the Head Waiter as he pursues Randolph for a string of high-profile jewel thefts.

Will matters come to a head? Is foul murder afoot? Is Inspector Bill Lawless close at hand? Will his keen eye for detail ensure the murderer is dragged out on his ear?

Tickets: £15

The Audience: 28th March at 7.30pm

A National Theatre screening.

Helen Mirren reprises her role as Queen Elizabeth II in Peter Morgan's acclaimed play *The Audience*, which imagines the private weekly meetings between the Queen and her Prime Ministers across her six-decade reign.

These audiences are constitutionally confidential and never recorded, so the play invents what might have been said behind closed doors.

Tickets: £14



Night Falls: 31st March at 7.30pm & 1st April at 2.30pm

A modern Passion Play performed by Riding Lights.

See article later in the magazine and the advert on the back page

Tickets: £15 (Under 16's £10)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Evensong was always very special to the monks of Saint Michael's Abbey. So, they were delighted when a famous tenor, the Pavarotti of his day, stopped for a night's hospitality on his way to London.

The Senior Monk suggested to the Prior that this singer led the worship at Evensong that evening and he readily agreed.

Later that evening the Angel of The Lord appeared to the Prior in his study. Here he addressed him in a stern voice.

"God has sent me to ask if you have a problem."

"Sorry?" asked the Prior.

"Well. Do you have a problem? He hasn't received your evensong tonight."

"But," replied the Prior, "It was sung by the tenor so beautifully that we were all sure that it was the best that there has ever been."

“Ah! But it wasn’t sung from the heart. It may have sounded beautiful to your ears but God’s feelings are more special. If somebody isn’t fully meaning what they are singing, it may not reach God.”

“So what shall we do?” asked the distraught Prior.

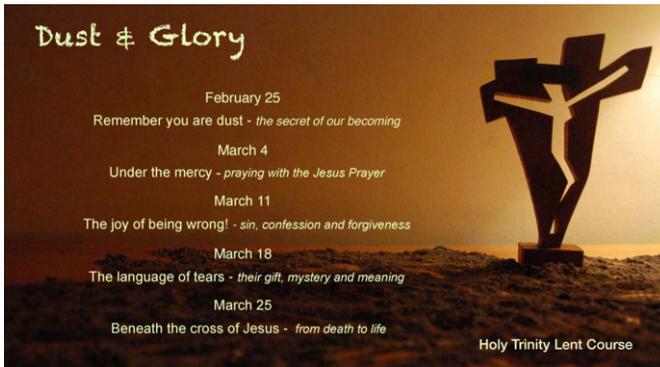
The angel thought for a second. “I suggest you monks all sing evensong again; God will certainly hear it this time.”

And the wiser Prior headed back towards the chapel.....

Carole Sampson

Lent Courses 2026

We all have two choices for this year’s Lent Course:



Dust & Glory

February 25
Remember you are dust - *the secret of our becoming*

March 4
Under the mercy - *praying with the Jesus Prayer*

March 11
The joy of being wrong! - *sin, confession and forgiveness*

March 18
The language of tears - *their gift, mystery and meaning*

March 25
Beneath the cross of Jesus - *from death to life*

Holy Trinity Lent Course

The poster features a large, dark silhouette of a cross with a white figure of Jesus on it, set against a golden, hazy background. The text is arranged in a list format on the left side.

Firstly, on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 - 9.30pm, Holy Trinity will be hosting five sessions in the Parish Centre. Their course is entitled ‘Dust or Glory’. David Runcorn, an Anglican priest, speaker, writer and spiritual guide, will be exploring five core aspects of the Christian Faith and prayer.



Lent Course:
Calling Wounded Earth Home

Mondays, 7:30pm at the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

23rd Feb LOVE - God & Creation
2nd Mar TRUTH - Climate Change
9th Mar WISDOM - Response
16th Mar JUSTICE - Living Together
23rd Mar HOPE - Christ’s Gospel

Refreshments from 7pm

 **STRATFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER**

The poster has a white background with a cracked, dark line running across it, symbolizing a wound. A golden cross is visible in the bottom right corner. The text is in various colors (orange, green, black) and fonts.

Secondly, the Stratford Churches Together Eco-Church group will be running a course on Monday evenings, and we will be hosting it at Rother Street. A different church will lead the session each week. I will be leading the last session on 'Hope'. The fifth mark of Mission is caring for Creation so we as Christians have a responsibility to think about, to publicise and to act to save God's creation.

Peter

Margaret Simpson

At the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Margaret, I read this eulogy written by her daughters, Heather Helen & Catherine. I added a small part at the end on behalf of the church:

Margaret had many interests and accomplishments over her ninety-three-and-a-half years. It seemed that whatever she put her mind to, she excelled at. But rather than listing her many talents; in this tribute, her daughters would like to honour the most significant one – that of Teacher.

As a child Margaret attended Cotteridge Junior and Infant School, where she was amazed to discover, on her very first day, that not all children learned to read and write before starting school. Margaret was seated next to a boy who was having difficulty simply writing his own name, so she set to work helping him with the task. She later said that it was this experience that set her on the path to becoming a teacher.



Margaret had graduated from Kings Norton Grammar School with a State Scholarship, which meant she could apply to any institute of higher learning in England. One of her top subjects at school was Art, so she was encouraged to apply to the Slade School of Art in London. Margaret was interviewed and offered a place at The Slade, but her heart was set on teaching. She regretfully turned down the offer from the Slade, in favour of a place at teacher training college. A few years later she was back at Cotteridge school, this time as a teacher.

After a few years of teaching at Cotteridge, Margaret met and married Hamish and they moved to Henley-in-Arden and started a family - having three daughters in relatively quick succession. This meant that for a few years she was a homemaker. It

didn't mean she wasn't teaching though— she just wasn't getting paid for it; her daughters were her very willing pupils.

Margaret taught them to read very early on. She made her own word cards, and her writing was so neat, that the cards looked as though they had been printed professionally. She encouraged Catherine, Heather and Helen to join the library as soon as they were old enough, and to choose books from the monthly Puffin Club magazine – books which, once read, would be passed along, to benefit somebody else. She would make her daughters home-made, hardboard jigsaws from their favourite pictures, carefully drawing the shapes of the jigsaw pieces and cutting them out with a fretsaw. She taught her children (and many of their friends, too) to knit, sew and to crochet. She showed them how to make their own glove puppets, with heads made from papier mache, shaped over a plasticine mould, then painted and varnished. She would then patiently sit and watch the puppet shows the girls and their friends put on. She took them on nature walks, naming the flowers they saw, pointing out frogspawn and mushrooms, catkins and birds' nests. There were also annual trips to the theatre and ballet. Back home, in the kitchen, she showed them how to make rock cakes, shortbread, honeycomb-toffee and fudge.

Both Margaret and Hamish, also taught by example. They were open-minded, generous and accepting of difference. They never appeared to discriminate for age, class, race or sexuality. They looked out for older neighbours and were regarded by the locals in Henley as something of an unofficial Citizens Advice Bureau. It wasn't unusual to see somebody sitting in the living room crying into their coffee, sharing their problems, either for practical help, or advice, or simply to offload to a non-judgmental listener. Their children's friends also benefitted from their informed and down-to-earth advice.

Although Margaret wasn't able to teach full-time with a young family, she and Hamish could sometimes coordinate their working days to enable her to do supply teaching. She taught at Henley Junior and Infants school, Tanworth-in-Arden school, and the Montessori pre-school. Sometimes her own children would find themselves in her class and have to remember to call her "Mrs Simpson" and not "Mum". In fact, her daughters found that even at home they could get her attention more quickly if they started their enquiry, "Mrs Simpson. . ."

As soon as the children were old enough to look after themselves, Margaret went back to teaching full time at the C of E school at the traffic lights in Stratford, which later moved to the Willows. She got on well with all her colleagues, many of whom remained friends long after they had retired. She facilitated and participated in

many after-school and holiday activities, and she was an enthusiastic performer in the school pantomime. It was testament to her BIG personality that Margaret – at only five-foot tall – could carry off the role as the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk.



In the eighties, with the advent of home computers, Margaret could see that they would have a significant role to play in education, so she enrolled on a programming course to get ahead of the curve. It was a wise move, as there were very few IT teachers at the time - so few, in fact, that she was asked to stay on as an IT teacher at the Willows after she had retired from full-time teaching. Margaret often recounted the story of a boy who had had particular difficulty with the traditional academic subjects. It transpired that this child had an extraordinary aptitude for computer science and programming. She was so delighted with his programming talent she sent him to the Head with a note telling the Head what an excellent pupil he was. The Head had never had anyone sent to his office before - for being good!



Margaret always referred to her pupils as “her children”. “That’s one of my children”, she would say to her companions, when greeted by a cheery “Hello, Mrs Simpson” while out and about in Stratford. In fact, this often led to confusion, such as the time somebody asked her how many children she had, and she absent-mindedly replied, “Oh, about thirty”. And, once, she even introduced a pupil’s parent to a friend as, “the father of one of my children”.

Often, ex-pupils would stop to reminisce with her about their schooldays and express their appreciation for her support and guidance. So, it shouldn’t have come as a surprise, when there were so many positive responses to a post on social media informing people of her death. Colleagues, ex-pupils and parents described Margaret as supportive, empathetic, inspiring, entertaining and engaging.

Margaret’s daughters would like to express their gratitude for all the messages and

cards that people have sent, and to say what a comfort and delight it has been to read your memories and stories of Margaret.

There is a proverb that says "It takes a village to raise a child". It took a very special village to keep Margaret independent, happy and fulfilled in her final years - that being the Church, friends, neighbours, carers and the local community. For this her daughters are deeply grateful.

Catherine, Heather and Helen have also asked me to invite you to take a few flowers from the arrangement as you leave, to remember Margaret over the next few days. It may feel strange but that is the reason the flowers are here.



Addition by the Church:

Margaret joined our church around the year 2000, having previously attended Holy Trinity. She became a formal member of this church in 2004.

Margaret might have been short in stature, but she had a big personality. A personality that you couldn't miss.

She was a very regular attendee at our Friday Coffee mornings. If you have ever attended the coffee morning you will have seen her. She livened up the proceedings with her cheeky and witty comments. It was impossible to keep her down!

Recently, of course, Margaret began to be forgetful and less interested in life. However, one Friday last summer, two of our members brought along a young Muslim girl, of seven, called Maham (MAAhum). Margaret immediately started to relate to her and drew some coloured pictures for her. Heather took some photos to share with her sisters, because despite Margaret's memory problems it proved that she was still able to relate to a stranger. Margaret became 'Grandma Margaret' to Maham and they met up every Friday coffee morning during the summer holidays.

A few years ago, Margaret was asked to fill in reference form for her, friend Barbara Lister, with whom she had taught. The form was for an organisation called Contact the Elderly and it was a reference for Barbara to be a volunteer driver.

Contact the Elderly held Sunday afternoon teas for the elderly, and volunteers were required to take people to and from the tea in their cars.

Margaret hilariously filled in this form - definitely, with tongue in cheek!

The questions went like this:

How long has the applicant been known to you?

I have known Barbara for over 30years.

In what capacity?

We had the same probation officer and did community service together.

Any other comments?

Barbara can beat any police car from a standing start at a red light. She is brilliant at handbrake turns and is currently third in Top Gear's list of celebrities in a reasonably priced banger!

We need your agreement to hold your details on a confidential database, which will only be used for internal use and to keep you informed of our activities.

Not applicable - the police already have all the details!

That was an example of how, despite her diminutive size, she was a lively box-of-tricks. If you look at the slideshow of her you will see other examples. She was always smiling and got on well with everyone as far as we could see.

She quietly displayed her Christian faith. I never remember her getting annoyed or grouching about someone. I'm sure she must have done at some stage, but she didn't say it in public. Her Christianity was reflected in how she behaved – and that is more important than any religious knowledge or beliefs. That is practical Christianity.

She was a good example to follow. Our Church community is now poorer without her.

Peter

Pope Leo's Lenten Address

Here are three paragraphs extracted from Pope Leo's Lenten address at the Vatican on 22nd February:

If Lent is a time for listening, fasting is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting

makes it easier to recognize what we “hunger” for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our “appetites,” keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbour.



In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbour. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

Dear friends, let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us. Let us ask for the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also extends to our use of language, so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others. Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.

Pope Leo

Judas Iscariot

What's in a name?

Sometimes knowing the names of people from antiquity gives us more information about them.

In those days the people of the lower classes did not have surnames. In order to differentiate people with the same first names, designations were added to help distinguish them.

An example of this would be Mary: apparently Mary was one of the most common names in first century Palestine. So, each one in the New Testament is given an ‘add-on’ e.g. Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalene (That

indicating that she came from the town of Magdala, a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee).

So, what about Judas Iscariot? The add-on is to distinguish him from any other Judas of the time. In fact, Mark 6:3 tells us that Jesus himself had a brother called Judas. There is a very short epistle written by Jude in the New Testament - possibly by Jesus's half-brother.

What does 'Iscariot' mean? There have been many different interpretations of this add-on name.

Some have suggested it comes from the Jewish words 'isqa're'ut' which might mean the one who makes money out of friendship. Some believe it came from the name of the region known as Issachar (i.e. he was an Issachariot). Others have suggested it sounds a bit like the Latin word for a dagger: 'sica'. There was a group of Jews known as the Sicarii - Jewish dagger assassins. They were zealots who advocated violence against the Roman Empire. Maybe the word derives from the Hebrew word for liar - 'saqqar', and that it designates his basic nature. Others have suggested it comes from an Aramaic word 'isqar' which signifies a person with a ruddy complexion.

Personally, I find some of these explanations difficult to believe - they would all have been known to the disciples - would they have tolerated a Jewish dagger assassin, or a known liar as one of their crowd?

By far the commonest explanation is that Iscariot comes from the Hebrew words 'ish-Kerioth' - which would indicate that here was a man who came from the village of Kerioth. Kerioth was thought to be in the southern part of Israel nearer to Jerusalem. This means that he was different from all the other disciples because all the rest came from the North; he would have been a Judean. It also means that he would have been more educated than the other disciples. Perhaps that why he was designated as the disciples' treasurer?

Why would Jesus, who spent most of his ministry in the region of Galilee, have someone from a completely different part of the country from all the rest of his followers? But, maybe, that was a part of God's big plan for Jesus.

Peter

“The time is always right to do what is right”

Martin Luther King

Walk of Witness

Just a reminder that the Stratford Churches Together Good Friday Walk of Witness will take place again on the morning of Good Friday. It is being organised this year by Holy Trinity, but as we went to press the details have not yet been publicised. It will start at 10.30am, as usual and may start in a different location from the usual Waterside Venue. Look out for the details in the 'Notices' on the orders of Service. I will also send round a message to everybody once we have been informed of the running order.

Passion Play

Our church, this year, is hosting and promoting a Holy Week Passion Play which will be performed in the Bear Pit Theatre. Performances will occur on Tuesday 31st March at 7.30pm and Wednesday 1st April at 2.30pm. Please see the back page for details of how to book your tickets. 'Night Falls' is a modern passion play that will be performed by a theatre company called Riding Lights from West Yorkshire. Here is a synopsis:



Extraordinary Story, Extraordinary Theatre

“Don’t want Safe. I want Life. I want to Rise.”

‘Night Falls’ focuses on the days leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. It’s a dramatic tale told through the eyes of Lazurus; a man struggling with faith, doubt, fear and hope. Featuring original music by Nikki Crowley, Night Falls is a fresh, vivid and dynamic retelling of the Easter story, blending an extraordinary score with powerful drama.

Four final days before an execution that will change everything.

Three enemies that want to put an end to the so-called Messiah.

Two strangers torn between faith and doubt, hope and grief, trying to prevent Jesus of Nazareth from getting himself arrested.

One safe house in Bethany.

The hours are running out, but even as night falls, a strange hope is wrapped in a secret that both strangers share. For this is the house of Lazarus, and under his roof, the impossible has already occurred.....

Writer and director Paul Birch says:

"Night Falls explores the familiar story of Christ's Passion from a surprising new perspective. The drama explores themes of faith, doubt, courage and fear and suggests how, even in our darkest moments, there is still hope to be found."

Peter



The poster features a blue cross icon with a person inside, the text 'World Day of Prayer 2026', and 'Prepared by Christian Women from Nigeria'. Below this is the phrase 'I will give you rest, come' in green. An illustration shows a group of women carrying items on their heads and shoulders, with a man in a white headscarf in the foreground. The text 'Gift Amarachi Ottah' is visible at the bottom of the illustration. The event details are: '2pm Friday 6th March 2026 at St Gregory's RC Church, Warwick Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6UJ'. A final paragraph states: 'This ecumenical service joins in a great wave of prayer which encircles the globe, beginning in Samoa and ending, 146 countries later, in American Samoa, all praying with and for the country and people of Nigeria.'

World Day of Prayer 2026
Prepared by Christian Women from Nigeria

*I will give you rest,
come*

2pm Friday 6th March 2026
at
St Gregory's RC Church
Warwick Road, Stratford-upon-Avon,
CV37 6UJ

This ecumenical service joins in a great wave of prayer which encircles the globe, beginning in Samoa and ending, 146 countries later, in American Samoa, all praying with and for the country and people of Nigeria.

A man has collapsed on the ferris wheel at the local fair.
Paramedics on site say he is slowly coming around.

A Helping Hand

There is a horse chestnut tree in Bideford known as the “Wonkey Conker Tree”

Twenty-something years ago, it was in danger of falling over.

In some locations it might have been left to fall. In others, metal props might have been used.

But the local authority, a private benefactor and a craftsman called John Butler provided a giant oak hand, rising from the ground and grasping one of the lower boughs.

It has become a much-photographed landmark. Perhaps because, in our hearts, we know we all need a helping hand.



Unnecessary Extras

When the author J.M. Barrie talked about being kinder than necessary in “The Little White Bird”, he didn’t have a character speak the words.

He didn’t state it like ancient words of wisdom, demanding due respect. He framed it as a question from himself to us.

“Shall we make a new rule of life from tonight: always to try to be a little kinder than necessary?”

The basics might be commanded by law. A lot might be encompassed by societal expectation.

But when it comes to the little, unnecessary extras - those are always up to us - if we will!

Submitted by Fran Maddy from The Friendship Book

FAITH AND FILM – LENT SHOWINGS 2026

Holy Trinity Parish Centre Lounge

Friday 6th of March & Friday 27th March: 4-7pm



Films designed to complement Rev. David Runcorn's Lenten series 'Dust and Glory'

BRIGHTON ROCK: FRIDAY 6 March. Church Lounge, 4.00pm-7.00pm

Directed by John Boulting (1948), this is a Gangland thriller starring Richard Attenborough. Based on novel by Graham Greene, it asks questions about the dust of which we are made and God's infinite mercy.

Controversial for its dark themes and its handling of Catholic 'sin' and 'judgment', this quintessential British *film noir* now ranks at no. 15 in the British Film Institute's survey of the top 100 British films.

LIVING: FRIDAY 27 March. Church Lounge, 4.00pm-7.00 pm

Directed by Oliver Hirmanus (2022), this is an English-language remake of the 1952 Japanese film *Ikiru*. Set in 1953 in London, it stars Bill Nighy as a bureaucrat in the public works department who discovers he has a fatal illness and learns to live again. Delightful and far-reaching film.

In what ways, and to what extent, does it illuminate what Christians mean by 'resurrection'?

Thank You's

Thank you to all the members of the congregation who were able to assist with transport to Coventry Hospital during the course of my treatment. It was very helpful, together with the pleasure of your company on the journey to and fro.

Ashley

Many thanks to Sue Cragoe-Jones for all the work she has put in recently in improving the gardens outside the front of the church - and for the flowers and plants she has bought.

Linda

Puns

I told my wife she was drawing her eyebrows too high. She looked surprised.

I'm on a whisky diet. I have lost three days already.

I used to play the piano by ear, but now I use my hands and fingers.

I only know 25 letters in the alphabet. I don't know 'y'

Parallel lines have so much in common. It's a shame they'll never meet.

Where is a maths teacher's favourite place in New York? - Times Square

How does a mathematician plough fields? With a pro-tractor

How do you stay warm in any room? Just huddle in a corner - it's always 90 degrees.

Why did the students do multiplication problems on the floor? The teacher told them not to use tables.

The shovel was a ground-breaking invention.

The best way to communicate with fish is to drop them a line.

I can't stand Russian dolls - they are so full of themselves.

I stayed up all night wondering where the sun went - then it dawned on me.

What did one eye say to the other? Just between you and me something smells.

Celebrating Water

The 'Gathering for Water and Nature' takes place in Stratford from 7th to 15th March, featuring 10 days of events, including the international day of action for rivers on 14th March. The festival is organised by River Hope and Rubbish Friends. The celebration involves films, talks and arts, culminating in a finale at the Crowne Plaza on 15th March.

Key highlights:

- The Gathering: a series of events focussing on local rivers, including Robert Macfarlane speaking at the Rother Street Arts House on the 6th
- Creative and educational events: including film screenings, poetry, music and workshops at the Brook Arts Club on 10th March
- Action for Rivers: focussed on connecting people to nature through community-led actions and advocacy.
- Water and River blessing on Saturday 14th in the Dell, by Holy Trinity at 3pm

For more information go to www.riverhope.org.uk/the-gathering

You will have to register for the events being held at the Crowne Plaza: Friday 13th and Saturday 14th.

Try this today: instead of listing what went wrong, name three small things that went right. A warm cup of coffee, a kind word from a stranger, or a quiet moment of sun. Happiness is often just a matter of where you choose to look.

Sunday Services at 9.30am

1st March	Holy Communion	Peter Horrocks / David Sampson
15th March	Morning Service	Simon Burne
29th March	Morning Service	Peter Horrocks
	Palm Sunday	
3rd April	Tenebrae at 7.30pm	

F&F Rota March

Please report any problems with the buildings in March to:

Ashley Pettifer 01789 293578

or

Sarah Salmon 01789 295976 / 07816 565371

Flower Rota

1st March	David & Carole
15th March	Linda & Peter
29th March	Wrendy
5th April	Ileen

Link

Because of the way our Sunday services are now structured, the editors have decided that the physical copies of Link magazine will be available on the 1st Sunday of each month rather than the last Sunday of the month. The electronic version may well be available before then. When there are 5 Sundays in the month the Link will be available on that 5th Sunday.

The April edition of Link will be published on the 29th March.

The deadline for submission to the next edition is Monday 23rd March.

We are short of material: please send us your articles, pictures, humour etc.

Editors contact details:

Telephone: 01789 750971 Email: peterhorrocks@doctors.net.uk

**RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY
PRESENTS**

NIGHT FALLS

BY PAUL BIRCH



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