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This time the magazine has been printed 'in house'. If anyone would like their copy sent out to them by email, please let me know on carrh2@virginmedia.com

The Editorial team would like to thank all those who have in any way contributed to the magazine. In this issue we have some 'heavier' articles and some more 'light weight' items and we hope they will interest a wide audience. We appreciate all you have done and hope you enjoy the content, because without your contribution there would be nothing.

Thank you.

Front Cover. Manse Tea Party

Back Cover. Manse Tea Party

LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

June 2026

Dear friends,

As summer opens before us, many of us will welcome the lighter evenings, the warmth of the sun, time in gardens, visits with family, or simply a slower pace. Summer can be a season of refreshment, and perhaps also a season when we notice more clearly the quiet gifts of God: the beauty of creation, the kindness of neighbours, and the steady grace that carries us day by day.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that even a cup of cold water offered in his name is not forgotten (Matthew 10.40–42). It is a wonderfully summer image: simple, practical, refreshing, and life-giving. It reminds us that the kingdom of God is not built only through grand gestures, but through small acts of faithful love.

That is an encouragement for us at Emmanuel. We may sometimes feel small in a changing world. The church no longer stands at the centre of public life in the way it once did, and many of us know the limits of energy, age, resources, or confidence. Yet Jesus does not dismiss smallness. He blesses faithfulness. He honours those who continue to pray, welcome, serve, encourage, give, visit, listen, and even simply turn up.

Jesus calls his disciples "little ones" not to belittle them, but to name the humility and dependence that mark the life of faith. We do not carry Christ because we are impressive or powerful. We carry Christ because he has chosen to be with us. *"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me,"* he says. What a promise: that Christ's presence is made known through ordinary people, ordinary kindness, and ordinary faith.

St Paul reminds us too that we are not to let fear, resignation, or hopelessness rule over us. We are not under the power of sin; we are under grace (Romans 6.14). Grace invites us to lift our eyes, not because we have all the answers, but

because Christ goes before us. Grace teaches us that weakness can become the place where God's strength is revealed (2 Corinthians 12.9).

This was true in the life of St Patrick, who discovered God's nearness in vulnerability and hardship, and later prayed those beautiful words from St Patrick's Breastplate: *"Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me."* That prayer is a good summer prayer for Emmanuel: Christ in our homes, Christ in our worship, Christ in our conversations, Christ in our rest, Christ in our hopes for the future.

So, this summer, let us not measure Emmanuel by what we cannot do, but by the Christ who lives among us. Let us cherish the cups of cold water: the phone call, the prayer, the welcome, the shared task, the quiet encouragement. These things matter deeply. They refresh others, and they witness to the love of God.

May this summer bring you rest, renewal, and the quiet confidence that Christ is with us still. And may Emmanuel continue to be a place where even the smallest acts of love become signs of his kingdom.

Grace and peace be with you,

James

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50 years ago in 1976, this church made some dedications to which they were committed to keep. The church re-dedicated themselves each year. These are the words used and the dedications made. Is this church still of the same mind?

TRINITY CHURCH – REDDITCH

Dedications made at the OPENING of Trinity Church

On Friday 28th February 1976 (and since amended)

To the Life of a Family:

We are called here to the life of a family – God's Family.

It is a life of acceptance to all who want to come and belong.

It is a life of continual growth in faith and love toward God and toward one another. It is expressed in all our meetings; in *church* meetings and committees;

in Junior Church; youth groups and uniformed organisations; in fellowship for all in social and cultural activities.

This is a place where, under the authority of the love of God, our own family is enriched.

To this work we offer ourselves.

Lord, we accept this calling and dedicate ourselves to it.

To the Life of Hospitality

We are called here to a life of hospitality. There are many organisations in the town which come with their gifts and graces, problems and needs, to which we shall gladly offer our home. There are many guests of differing ages and origins, creeds and customs, nationalities and denominations, whom God seeks to bind into one family in Christ. We offer to God the work of all who in any way contribute to the welcome of the Centre, those who administer it and those who clean it, those who receive strangers and those who provide refreshments.

Let all people who call this place their home, know themselves to be called to show hospitality to others, according to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this work we offer ourselves.

Lord, we accept this calling and dedicate ourselves to it.

To a life of service:

We are called here to a life of service and care towards our town.

This calling we share with the many others; with civic, social and welfare agencies, especially Carers' Careline, Victim Support, Nightstop, and St. Basil's, who work from these premises with members of the churches of the Town Centre Covenant and Churches Together in Redditch.

This calling is expressed through many service groups and committees. We are called to be ready to share in both the burdens and joys of others. We need faithfulness and truth, strength and obedience. We have to practise that humble and sensitive openness to what God is saying to us, both through others and for others.

To this work we offer ourselves.

Lord, We accept this calling and dedicate ourselves to it.

To a life of concern for the world:

We are called here to a life of concern for the world. The cries of its needs beat incessantly on our ears; cries of poverty and starvation, injustice and conflict, ignorance and disease.

We are called to stewardship in the use of the world's resources, to press for justice and generosity towards the poor of the world, and to respect the integrity of creation.

We do this as we support the work of the World Church, and organisations such as Christian Aid, Traidcraft, Oxfam, World Development, United Nations, and Amnesty International.

We also do this as we make sure that we do not waste, but use wisely and well the resources in our hands.

Through Commitment for Life we aim to fulfil our obligations in reading, thinking, action and giving.

We also will be aware of all we have to learn from the world, from other people and faiths, and from the Church elsewhere in the world. This calling we fulfil only as we are prepared to dedicate our eyes to see, our ears to listen, our hearts to feel, our pockets to provide and our time to give.

To this calling we dedicate ourselves.

Lord, we accept this calling and dedicate ourselves to it.

To a life of Worship:

We are called here to a life of worship. This life is our common offering of ourselves to God, to be his family, welcoming, caring and undertaking responsibility for the world which he loves. He has given us this place to be a house for his worship. Here praise and prayer shall be offered to him. Here the saving gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be preached. Here the sacrament of his grace shall be celebrated. In gratitude and reverence, we re-dedicate this

To the Glory of God the Father, who has called us by his grace:

To the glory of God the Son, who loves us and gave himself for us:

And to the Glory of God the Holy Spirit, who illuminates and sanctifies us:

We re-dedicate ourselves and our church.

Desert Island Discs



On 28th March, members and friends gathered for a delightful **Desert Island Discs–themed afternoon tea**, an event that combined music, memories, fellowship and cake in equal measure! The afternoon brought together a wonderfully varied programme of pieces chosen by members of the congregation, each with a personal story behind it.



Selections ranged from beloved hymns such as *Amazing Grace*, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* and *Abide With Me*, to classical favourites including Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* and Sibelius' *Finlandia*. There were also lighter moments with pieces like *Mr Blue Sky* and *Rock Island Line*, ensuring a rich and varied musical journey.



What made the afternoon particularly special was hearing contributors share why their chosen music meant so much to them. These reflections were at times moving, at times amusing, and always heartfelt. Who knew, for instance, that Cheuk had such a romantic side, revealed through the choice of *Hymne de L'Amour*!

A huge thank you to the FORT team for organising the enjoyable afternoon which included delicious cakes and refreshments. Thanks to Mary, too for accompanying the hymn singing. The afternoon was warmly appreciated by all who attended.

Kathryn Bellshaw

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Thanks



I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all those who sent messages/cards of condolence after the passing of my step mother (Sue Leeson).

Sarah and I, along with the rest of the family, were very deeply touched by the very special and comforting messages which we received.

Her funeral was at a crematorium just south of Sheffield, and took place on Friday 10th April. It was a real joy to see so many people (from both our families & good friends) who came to pay their respects to Sue. The service content totally reflected her love for life, family, fun and most importantly....cake!!!

All your prayers & messages of comfort were so much appreciated. Many thanks again to every one of you.

Howard

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Every woman has a story... what's yours?

Emmanuel is delighted to welcome award-winning author, TV presenter and speaker **Kate Nicholas** to a special women's event on **Saturday 12th September**.

The Bible is filled with remarkable women whose stories continue to inspire us today—Ruth, Esther, Deborah, the Samaritan woman, and many more. Their lives remind us that God works through ordinary people in extraordinary ways.

Kate is passionate about sharing her own "soul story"—an inspiring journey of faith, challenge and hope. Through her unconventional path to faith and her remarkable experience of healing, she has discovered how God can use

every circumstance of our lives, even the most difficult, to shape us into the people He created us to be.

During this special day (10am–3pm), Kate will share her story and encourage us to reflect on our own journeys. Together, we'll explore where God has met us in challenging times and consider how our experiences, gifts and testimonies can inspire and encourage others.

Join us for a day of inspiration, reflection, fellowship and friendship as we celebrate the ways God has been at work in our lives. We hope you'll leave with a deeper appreciation of your own story and a renewed sense of God's faithfulness through every chapter.

We would love you to join us. Tickets are available to purchase on Sunday mornings, Tuesday or Thursday's 10-12noon too: the £10 cost includes lunch and refreshments.

We look forward to seeing you.

Jackie Russell, Sharon, Susan, Helen, Kay and Chris



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A Poem for All Faiths

Through history's shadowed lanes, Jews have faced unjust pain,

Persecuted for their faith,

Yet hope survives in hearts that see beyond divide,

Where love for every creed and faith is not denied.

Let kindness be our guide, so hatred has no place,

Embrace each soul with warmth, regardless of their race.

United in respect, humanity can then thrive

In loving every faith, true peace will then arrive.

Anon

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New member's story



On 14th April, I was privileged and glad to be accepted into membership of this wonderful church. Right from my very first steps, taken with some trepidation, I was made to feel very welcome. I knew that membership of this church was God's plan for me and I wish I had listened to Him sooner.

As a new member, I have been invited to share with the congregation some of my story – so here goes.

I was born and grew up in a small market town in East Yorkshire. I was baptised at the local Methodist church and from an early age attended Sunday School, starting back in the days when Sunday School was held in the afternoon. A picture of Christ in the school-room made a big impression on me and the teaching I received led me to want Jesus in my life from then on. The church was a big part of my life through the youth club, the housegroup for teenagers, confirmation and eventually marriage to David.

When I left school, I went on to study at the University of Leeds, where I graduated in French and Latin. During my time in Leeds, I attended a couple

of churches close to my various student accommodation, but preferred to go to my 'home' church whenever I visited my parents. During my time in Leeds I met David and we were married soon after I graduated. We had been married only 3 months before we moved to Redditch when David got a new job.

I worked in the Civil Service until I went on maternity leave with my son, Adam. A colleague recommended Headless Cross Methodist church and that's where the next stage of my journey of faith started. My son and daughter, Sarah, were both baptised and confirmed in that church and both attended Sunday School and were members of the Brigades. I taught in the Sunday School and volunteered as a steward. Having completed my year as chief steward, I found it quite hard to just be a congregation member.

When my daughter started school, I started work as a Teaching Assistant, which allowed me to be at home when the children were not at school. I first supported two students with sensory impairments at Alcester Grammar School and then worked in the Languages department at Studley High School. During my time at Studley High, my line manager suggested that they support me in training to be a teacher, so that's how at the grand old age of 50 I started a course at Warwick University and gained Qualified Teacher Status. There followed 14 glorious years as Head of Languages at Birchensale Middle School until I retired during the first year of Covid. Our days are now filled with various activities as members of the u3a and I also volunteer at the library as a teacher of adults who are learning to read.

My son got a job in Boston, USA, where he met Elizabeth. They got married and eventually delighted us with the arrival of our twin granddaughters. The Covid years were very difficult for me and I struggled with depression, overwhelmed by global events, which meant we were unable to be with Adam for nearly 2 years and unable to meet our granddaughters until they were 8 months old. After several difficult months, my daughter graduated at Coventry university and now enjoys her work in the community as an Occupational Therapist, supporting people with learning difficulties. We were delighted when she and Michael were married nearly 2 years ago.

My years as a teacher were understandably very busy, so my attendance at church became more and more patchy. In addition, I needed to find somewhere else to worship as the church at Headless Cross was demolished.

When life started to return to 'normal' following the pandemic, I felt God was prompting me to go back to church and I did try a few churches, but I never seemed to 'fit'. However, I continued to pray for guidance and my heart was opened to 'try' Emmanuel Church – and the rest as they say…

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly and I wait patiently to learn of God's plan for me in the life of my new 'home' church.

Anne West

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My Beloved Dad's death – An End to Doubt and the Glory of his Passing

I may be biased, but my father was a good man. A family physician, rather than a GP and someone who always had time for everyone. He was a church elder in the Church of Scotland and sang in the choir at his village church in Fossoway. He and my mother had 62 years of happy marriage before she passed away in 2019 after a stroke caused by vascular dementia.

After her death, Dad took comfort in his garden and made it his purpose in what remained of his life to visit those who were lonely and housebound. I visited more often and could see he was becoming increasingly physically frail and frustrated that he was no longer able to do everything he wanted to do in the garden.

The start of Dad's onward journey? A vision of what was to come

My habit was to phone Dad every day and chat about what we had both been doing or discuss the News, or a TV programme. He would also on occasion tell me if he'd had a strange dream.

One day, just a few days after a visit from me in late November 2025, he said he'd had a dream that he was in bed but felt that he was floating above his body and felt very peaceful and calm. I now believe this was the start of his

onward journey to God. Was he caught up in the 'third heaven'... 'in the body and out of the body'? **(2 Corinthians 12:1-4)**

Several days later I had early morning phone call from Dad, and he said he felt very unwell and could I get hold of my brother to go down and see him. I finally got my brother to answer his phone, and he drove the 40-minute car journey from Perth. Reluctantly, Dad agreed to my brother calling the GP who arrived and suspected a heart attack and admitted Dad to hospital.

I drove up that day with my sister and after two nights in hospital and a battle with the consultants, they agreed Dad could return home if we could arrange a hospital bed and personal care as it was Dad's wish to die at home.

Dad was fortunate to have the comfort of his own bedroom to share his final thoughts with us and all his grandchildren including a FaceTime with my daughter, Claire, who was in Australia with work at the time. Claire was delighted that her Grandad could choose a reading and a hymn for her wedding this summer.

He was on a lot of pain medication and on-call District Nurses visited throughout the night to administer more pain relief. My sister and brother and I sat with him constantly, playing his favourite hymns and reading verses from the Bible.

On Sunday morning, two hospital GPs and a District Nurse were in attendance to set up a morphine driver to deliver more continuous pain relief. I had gone to the kitchen to make them all a coffee when they said that the end was very near. His pulse faded away and the GP looked at his watch to call the time of death, when just at that minute, slowly Dad opened his beautiful blue eyes – like the sky on a clear Summer's day. His eyes had not been open for about 18 hours. He slowly and deliberately looked at me, turned to my sister and my brother and he wept – tears pouring down his face.

'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed.' **(1 Corinthians 15:52)**

It was, for me, a 'glimpse of glory', and I feel very privileged to have witnessed this event. God was waiting for Dad, but Dad turned back to share his last moments with his family.

He died just after 10.00am, just as his local church service was beginning.

Heather Humphries

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Olive Hall – local celebrity

"Where are the others?" asked the astonished young lad from St. George's CE First School when he recognised Olive on a Redditch

bus – on her own. He was referring to the other members of the

"Open The Book" team who visited his school with Olive for Monday mornings' Assembly. We told and acted Bible stories, including children and staff in actions - and sometimes dressing up.

Olive explained to the boy that we didn't live together (as he had

imagined). She was a 'celebrity' in his estimation. Olive was recognised like this more than once.

Olive Hall and John Tongue – Open the Book – Assembly at St. George's School



There were several "Open The Book" teams in Redditch at that time, going to different schools, as part of a wider ecumenical project enabling every child to hear the story of the Bible at school in their Primary years. Olive's team included Anne Batchelor, Elaine Cooke, John Allured, John Tongue, Ros Williams, Jackie Marsh (from Emmanuel); Enid Mullis, Margaret and John Lloyd (St. Leonards Beoley); Gill Kendrick

(Crabbs Cross Methodist); Judith Grubb (The Bridge); and Chris Littlewood (St. Philips Webheath).

When visiting the Archers College Restaurant recently with some of Tuesday Fellowship, the former Head Teacher of St. Georges, now enjoying retirement and out with friends, reminded Ros and Jackie of the much enjoyed Monday mornings years ago.

Jackie Marsh

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At the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, in January, we had hoped that Bishop Hovakim Manukian, Primate of the Armenian Church in the United Kingdom, would have been able to join us in our service on 25th January 2026. However, this was not to be, but the Bishop sent this letter to John.

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DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

To: Emmanuel Church Redditch **Sunday 25th January 2026**

Dear Father John, brothers and sisters,

I very much regret that I am unable to be with you in person on this important and prayerful occasion. Please accept my warmest greetings, my heartfelt congratulations, and my sincere love and prayers as you gather for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Though I cannot stand among you physically today, I am deeply present with you in spirit, united with you in prayer, thanksgiving, and hope.

This Week of Prayer invites us to pause and to remember who we are in Christ. In a world so often marked by division, uncertainty, and fear, the Church is called to bear witness to another reality — the reality of unity rooted not in human effort, but in God's own life. As Saint Paul reminds us, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4–6). Christian

unity, therefore, is not something we invent; it is a gift we are entrusted to receive, to safeguard, and to make visible.

The theme of light speaks powerfully to this calling. We do not create our own light; we receive it. Christ is Light from Light, and when we walk in His light, we begin to see one another not as strangers or rivals, but as members of one Body. The light of Christ reveals our wounds and our divisions, yet it also heals them. It challenges us to conversion of heart, while never abandoning us, and calls us to walk together, even when unity feels fragile or incomplete.

The Armenian Christian tradition, shaped by centuries of faith, suffering, and perseverance, knows deeply that unity is sustained not by comfort, but by faithfulness. Through persecution, exile, and hardship, the Church learned that unity is preserved when believers remain rooted in Christ and committed to one another. As Saint Paul writes, "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another" (Romans 12:5). Unity is therefore communion — a shared life grounded in Christ, enriched by diversity, and strengthened by love.

Your prayer today is a living witness. When Christians pray together, sing together, and listen to the Word of God together, they proclaim to the world that division does not have the final word. In praying together, we affirm that reconciliation is possible, that peace is worth striving for, and that love is stronger than fear.

May this service be a moment of grace for all who take part. May the light you share strengthen your faith, renew your commitment to unity, and deepen your compassion for one another and for the world. And may the Holy Spirit continue to guide us — not only during this Week of Prayer, but in our daily lives — so that, in the words of Saint Paul, we may live a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

Please remember our church and people in your prayers.

With every blessing and affection in Christ,

Bishop Hovakim Manukyan

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Two New Presidents for Churches Together in England

Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic (Orthodox) Church in Great Britain and Ireland; and newly consecrated leader of the Catholic Church in England, **Archbishop of Westminster Richard Moth** have both joined the interdenominational Presidency of Churches Together in England.

John Marsh

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Jenny's Special evening out at 'The Blues'



It all began a very long time ago in Crewe. Jenny's father was a Birmingham City football fan, even though they lived in Crewe. Now why Birmingham City instead of Crewe, Jenny could never make out, however this being the case, Jenny decided to support her local team, but that was before Jenny met David!

David's father lived in Birmingham and worked at Longbridge. During the war, David's mother went to visit her sister in Crewe, where David was born and he became a Birmingham City football fan, the same as his father.

Later, David and Jenny met at a dance in Crewe. When talking to each other it transpired that David and his father were Birmingham City football supporters, so on meeting Jenny's father, a firm connection was formed. It took a few months, after their first meeting, for Jenny to change her allegiance to Birmingham City from Crewe: however, once changed it has never wavered.



After David and Jenny married, they lived in a flat in West Bromwich and with David having a close knit family, they often visited family

members all over the city. This gave rise for Jenny to have a great fondness for Birmingham itself. From the mid 1960's Jenny became a follower of Birmingham City Football Club (The Blues).

David and Jenny were Season Ticket holders at The Blues for many years, but now on her own, Jenny does not go to watch the team. It was therefore a lovely surprise when Jenny's Christmas present from Nick (her son) and family, was an evening match at the Blues with hospitality. Both Jenny and Nick looked forward with great joy and excitement to this great treat. The date set for the match was 10th March 2026. However, due to essential work commitments for Nick, the date had to be changed. The club were very good and were able to transfer this special event to Wednesday 22nd April 2026.



The game in April was Birmingham City v Preston North End. Jenny had been concerned that parking could be a problem, as when they had been before they had to park in the street and walk quite a way to the ground. However, Nick had it all arranged, as Jenny could not walk far, a parking space had been provided right next to the stand, wonderful! Jenny and Nick were provided with an excellent 3 course, 5*star meal and even after the match were served soup before leaving. The match came up to expectations with The Blues, not letting the side down, as they won the match 2 - 1. A really very enjoyable evening for both Jenny and Nick (who is himself a Birmingham City supporter), with a few emotional moments mixed in.

Thank you to Jenny for sharing her special event with us.

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Annoyance Economy

On 4th May the *Daily Mail* published an article on its City & Finance page with this title. I hadn't heard of it before. Apparently it's a term coined in the US to describe how the irritations visited upon us by companies add up, taking a financial and psychological toll on consumers.

The article described many such annoyances – and many of us will have suffered many of them. They include:

- Hidden fees,
- 'We are experiencing higher call volumes than usual',
- 'Unexpected items in the bagging area',
- The chatbot that has an answer for every question except yours,
- The effort to find a company's phone number,
- The eternity it takes for them to answer the phone – or cut you off,
- Often , 'Press 1 for ..., press 2 for.....etc. followed by more menu choices,
- The difficulty of cancelling unwanted subscriptions.

The article expresses the hope that AI will soon improve and provide better personalised self-service tools. I'm not convinced. I'm just glad that if I ring Emmanuel Church I usually get the kind, understanding, helpful human voice of Nicki.

David Gee

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If you remember in the last edition we reported about the visit of :-

Two Ukrainian refugee friends, regularly seen at Emmanuel helping run the Ukrainian Café, are Svéitlana and her daughter Emmanuela. They made a Christmas visit home to Kyiv to see husband and father, visit Myroslav who has stayed in Ukraine to provide medical care.



This photograph should have been with the article. Here we see Emmanuela in her traditional costume representing Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees (BRWR), at Alcester Court Leet last year, when BRWR won a prize cup.

It is sad to know that the Ukrainian Café does not still happen at Emmanuel, however we are glad to report that it is thriving in Bromsgrove.

Thank you John for sending the original article in and for the reminder that we had missed this photograph. Apologies.

Helen

Refugee Week 2026 took place **15–21 June 2026**. The official theme was **"Courage"**, marking both the annual celebration and the **75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention**. You can support Bromsgrove & Redditch Welcome Refugees by purchasing RefuJUICE. Every bottle helps support refugees and people seeking sanctuary in our local communities.

RefuJUICE

The perfect purchase for apple juice lovers who want to welcome those seeking sanctuary as they settle into our communities.

Every penny of profit from RefuJUICE helps fund Bromsgrove & Redditch Welcome Refugees, a charity supporting around 200 refugees in and around the local area.

3 × 0.75L bottles for £12

12 bottles for £40

Free local delivery

Place your orders at:refujuice.brwr@gmail.com

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Church Family News

Many of you will remember Revd. Mike Spencer, who died on the 18th April 2026. Mike and Barbara were very active in this church for several years after Mike retired. One of the groups led by Mike and Barbara was the Monday Prayer group. This was where the participants looked at Christian

Charities, some well known and some unknown to most of us. Several new charities came to light, but the most interesting was 'Mary's Meals' for which we come together in December to support with a 'Soup and a Pudding' lunch, with donations.

Mike took many services, and was the Chaplain for the Astwood Bank Memorial Service at their cenotaph around 11th November, due to his having been an Army Chaplain. Mike and Barbara moved to Gloucester when Barbara's became very ill, as their daughter lived there.

We send our condolences to Barbara and the family.

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We have recently heard that Lucy's, our book-keeper till February, Father-in-Law has died suddenly. We send our condolences to Lucy, Pete and family.

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Since Easter we have celebrated several Big birthdays. Angela's 80th and Jenny's 80th on 13th and 14th July respectively. We also heard that Chris and John have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Congratulations to you all.

Helen

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From the Church and Community Pastor: faith, heatwaves, and climate instability

Hello everyone!

Many people in the congregation have lost close relatives over the past few months. We are upholding them all in prayer. Please pray for all those dealing with bereavement at Emmanuel.

We're all struggling with the heat this week, as we have the second heat wave of the year, in what will no doubt become more and more regular occurrences in this country. The week I'm writing this in June has a temperature forecast of 36 degrees in Redditch and the Birmingham area. Older people and people with certain health conditions will be particularly

suffering in this level of heat. Please keep an eye on those around you over this coming summer.

I'm a big fan of open water swimming and it is amazing in this heat, but it can also be dangerous if people go to lakes on their own and they go in too fast. Many people have died in France and several died in the last heat wave here in the UK. I am careful to always go to places which are regulated by open water swimming groups like NOWCA, where they always make you have a colourful hat and float and there are people watching in canoes in case you get into trouble. Younger people tend to be the most risk-taking when it comes to things like plunging into lakes. Please impress upon the young people you know the dangers of open water swimming, so that they can enjoy it safely.

There are many countries which are more used to dealing with extreme heat, and we in the UK are going to have to get more clued up on it, as these heatwaves become more common. There is a helpful article on the BBC website: you can read about how to stay cool in hot weather (search for 'Six ways to keep your home and yourself cool in hot weather'). For example, we don't always realise that having the windows open is only a good idea if the air outside is cooler than inside. When it is very hot, it's best to close all curtains and blinds and keep windows shut. In hotter countries where they are used to temperatures over 30 and 40 degrees, they have shutters on the windows and stone/wooden floors. I wonder if we will have to move towards that in the future.

As we enter a future of climate instability, with more extreme weather conditions and a generally warmer planet, people will be more fearful about how they will cope. Climate anxiety is becoming a thing, especially among the younger generations. It's important to remember that we are called to two important roles as a church – to help people in the here and now, with their practical needs, and also to point them to a greater reality which goes even beyond the existential fears we may have. We must alleviate people's suffering in this reality, at the same time as reminding people of a greater reality of God's love which is bigger than everything we experience and goes even beyond death. A church which only focuses on people's physical needs lets people down because it doesn't tell the story of hope beyond pain,

suffering and death. However, a church which only focuses on the spiritual life or life after death whilst ignoring people's physical needs is uncaring and unchristian. Jesus cared equally about people's spiritual and physical health. He also cared about people's emotional health and about the health of the community as a whole.

God cares about the whole of life – physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, political, and relational. All of it matters and all of it is important to God. I believe that, in a world which will become more challenging than ever in certain physical ways, people will need a church which brings love, faith and hope to the fore. Love will hold people and help them in practical ways, as well as pointing them to God's overwhelming love for them. Hope is essential for us to not descend into nihilism and depression. And faith is an anchor in good times and in challenging times too. 'We have an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows roll; fastened to the Rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love', as the classic hymn says.

Let's pray for good times but also be prepared to offer people steadfast love, hope and faith in the difficult ones.

God bless you all.

Ruth Wilde

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500 Years of William Tyndale's New Testament

William Tyndale's dream was to make the Bible accessible to ordinary people. Five hundred years after the publication of his English New Testament, his influence continues to shape how millions read God's Word today.

In 2026, Christians will mark the 500th anniversary of one of the most influential books in English history: William Tyndale's 1526 English New Testament. It was the first complete New Testament to be translated directly from the original Greek into English and made available in print.

Born in Gloucestershire in the early 1490s, Tyndale was passionate about Scripture and believed that ordinary people should be able to read the Bible for themselves. At a time when the Bible was largely accessible only to clergy and scholars, he famously declared that he wanted even "the boy who drives the plough" to know the Scriptures.

Inspired by the availability of newly published Greek manuscripts and by Martin Luther's German translation of the New Testament, Tyndale began translating the Bible into clear, everyday English. Unable to secure official approval in England, he continued his work in Germany. The New Testament was finally printed in Worms in 1526, and thousands of copies were secretly brought into England, where they were eagerly read.

Tyndale later learned Hebrew and began translating the Old Testament while working in Antwerp. However, his efforts came at great personal cost. Accused of heresy, he was betrayed, arrested and executed in 1536 before he could complete the work.

Despite his tragic death, Tyndale's legacy is immense. His translation became the foundation for many later English Bibles, including the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible and the King James Version. His influence can still be seen in modern translations such as the Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version and English Standard Version. His distinctive language also shaped English literature, including the works of Shakespeare and many well-loved hymns.

Five centuries later, millions of people continue to benefit from Tyndale's commitment to making God's Word accessible to everyone. Modern translations, including the *Everyday Faith Bible*, continue this vision by helping people engage with Scripture in their daily lives and workplaces—just as Tyndale hoped the ploughboy of his day would do.

For more information about William Tyndale and his enduring legacy, visit the Tyndale Society at **www.tyndale.org**.

Tyndale Titbits:

- In 2002, Tyndale was voted number 26 in the list of '100 Greatest Britons'.
- The Oxford English Dictionary quotes Tyndale's works more than 800 times.
- Tyndale coined some new words which are still used in Bibles and sermons today like 'Passover' and 'scapegoat'.
- Only three copies of the 1526 New Testament are known to have survived. One is in the British Library, a partial copy in St Paul's Cathedral, and a pristine copy in Stuttgart.

Kathryn

After a recent visit to Peckwood, Rev. Ruth Wilson wonders what the Psalmist and author of Psalm 23 might have written …

In a 'Sun'-lit Clearing: A Woodland Psalm

The Lord is the Keeper of these ancient woods and he walks with me.
I shall not be lost.
He leads me beneath the green hush of old trees,
into clearings of rest and dappled light.
He restores my soul in the stillness of the forest,
and guides my steps along winding paths
where roots run deep and truth endures.
Even though I wander through shadowed groves,
where the light grows thin and the way uncertain,
I will not fear.
For you are present in every rustling leaf,
in fallen trunks and rising shoots you show me hope.
In the keeping of the woodland, through its ancient seasons, I am comforted.

You prepare a place for me
in a sunlit clearing, with the world's noise still clamouring for my attention.
A place where woodsmoke curls up through shafts of light – a sign of

goodness,
and mercy falls, soft as rain through branches.

You anoint me with the fragrance of bluebells and the deep forest earth;
my senses are filled with the sights and the sounds of the forest
and my cup overflows with life renewed.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me
through every forest path I tread,
and I will dwell in the presence of my Keeper —
forever.

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On Sunday 28th June the Methodist churches in the area came together to celebrate with Ruth upon her retirement and concluding service as a Minister.

Memories

Graeme first saw Ruth when he was volunteering and she came across as quite firm and a little bit fearful! However first impressions are just that and you can find out more about a person over time. And Ruth is not just that first impression.

Jackie told us that Ruth's vision for enabling people to see and experience God's creation at Peckwood has been instrumental in setting up Forest Space and groups such as Seeds and Saplings. More and more families are now visiting and being introduced to faith through God's creation.

Graeme and Jackie Russell

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Turning the Final Page… and Starting Again

As you read this, members of our Bible Book Club will have gathered to discuss *Haggai*, the final book in our reading journey through all 66 books of

the Bible. Since the club began in 2021, we have travelled together from Genesis to Revelation, exploring stories, prophecies, poetry, letters, and everything in between.

Not everyone has been with us from the beginning, of course. Some members have read the entire Bible alongside the group, while others joined partway through. Yet together we have reached a remarkable milestone: completing the whole Bible.

And now, we're turning back to page one.

From the outset, we chose not to read the books in strict chronological order. Instead, we alternated between the Old and New Testament and occasionally followed a more challenging book with one that felt a little easier to navigate. Perhaps our preachers sometimes wish they could do the same when faced with a particularly demanding reading for Sunday worship! Credit is certainly due to those who faithfully tackle these passages.

One of the resources that has enriched our discussions is the excellent series of study guides produced by the Bible Society. Each guide provides helpful background information, discussion questions, and thoughtful advice for tackling some of the Bible's more challenging passages. The Bible Society describes Scripture as God's gift to the world, adding, *"We want everyone to discover its message for themselves."* Amen to that.

As we begin a new term and a new journey through Scripture, why not consider joining us? Speak to Tony, Helen, Ian, Hayley, Mic, Susan, Ocie, or Sharon and ask what keeps them coming back. You may discover that the next chapter of your own Bible-reading journey starts here.

Bible Book Club meets monthly on a Monday from 12.30pm–1.30pm.

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Travelling Alone, Or Not?

Many of you will know that when I retired my plan was take a series of train trips to explore Europe. These would be entirely independently planned, arranged and booked by myself and take me from the Russian border to the Atlantic coast and from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean. Retiring in September 2020 meant Covid

delayed my plans and then Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine has delayed the easternmost of my plans.

However, as at June 2026 I have travelled 68,000 miles by train, 400 by ferry and 7,500 by air, the latter to reach far flung corners and islands. Twenty-eight countries encompassing over two hundred and fifty towns and cities have been visited. I have stayed in some excellent hotels and some that leave a little, or a lot, to be desired. I have enjoyed amazing scenery from the comfort of my train seat and I have seen sights that show the increasing divide between have's and have-nots in our world.

I try to eat in local restaurants serving food authentic to that region. Sitting in a restaurant which does not have an English translation of the menu and where customers are only speaking the local language is usually a good sign. Consequently, I have enjoyed some excellent meals and a few that I really don't want to know all the ingredients of. Usually the meal has been accompanied by local beer or red wine.

I have encountered train delays and rail replacement buses, travelled on state of the art 21st century trains and 1950's trains still in daily service, used two taxis where rail connections were temporarily withdrawn in Covid and never re-instated. On three occasions I have walked up to four miles across national borders due to the absence of train services and two of these led to interesting encounters.

Crossing from Italy into Slovenia I had walked four miles from the last town in Italy to the border where I arrived at the same time as a gentleman driving alone. I had two miles left to walk but when he offered me a lift I accepted. During the short journey he explained that he was a Christian and he had felt God leading him to use that particular route rather than the direct route to his destination.

Crossing from Croatia into Serbia I arrived at the first town but could see no signs to a station and I couldn't even see a railway line. I went into a shop to enquire. The shop-keeper didn't speak English but the one customer spoke a little. He started to explain then stopped and said 'I take you'. After saying something to his young son off we went, a journey of around five minutes. Another act of kindness, was God in this as well?

April 12th 2026, the Sunday after Easter, in our regular Sunday night online prayer meeting we prayed that God would be with us in the coming week. Nothing special or unusual in that. The next day, Monday 13th April, I travelled south to visit Mum. My train from Northallerton was delayed and I missed my connection in London.

Never mind there was one thirty minutes later. I alighted at Aylesford in Kent, an unstaffed station without a taxi rank and no shops anywhere near. As I exited I noticed a man who had been on the same train looking at his phone. He turned to me and asked ‘Excuse me, do you know where Milner Road is?’ I replied yes and asked where he was looking for and he said ‘Bradbury House’. I told him that was I was going as my mum was a resident there. He told me that the agency had asked him to cover a shift and he had never been there before. We walked together.

During the walk I said ‘I don’t know if you believe in God or not but if you do you should thank him for leading you to the right person.’ He then told me that he was a Christian and on the train he had been praying that God would lead him to ask the right person. ‘You’re lucky’ I said, ‘I should have been on the train thirty minutes earlier.’ ‘Praise God’ was his reply. As we neared the end of our twenty minute walk a lady stopped her car and asked us if we knew where Bradbury House was. I pointed it out to her. My walking companion turned to me and said ‘God’s certainly working today’.

The next day I was on the Eurostar train from London to Brussels. The gentleman sitting across the aisle from me couldn’t plug his phone in. I offered the use of my adaptor. We began talking and at some point he asked me what I did. I explained that I was a retired Christian Minister. He said that he had recently started thinking about going back to church. He then told me that he grew up a Catholic and married an Anglican. To avoid upsetting their parents they hadn’t had their children christened but now, aged ten and twelve, the boys had started asking why they weren’t Christian. The conversation moved on. As I got up to leave the train I said ‘It’s not too late to go back to church and it doesn’t have to be Catholic or Anglican.’ ‘I might just do that’ he said.

Towards the end of this trip I was taking a train from Lienz in Austria to Fortezza in Italy. It was a through train but during the journey we were informed that trains were replaced by buses from the Italian border at San Candido. I checked online and sure enough there was a replacement bus. Oddly it was due to go at the exact same time as the train arrived with the next one thirty minutes later. The carriage I was travelling in was virtually empty but as we approached the station a young lady came from the carriage behind and stood by the front doors. She glanced at her watch, then at the station clock. We were one minute early. I thought: ‘She’s going for the bus’. Rucksack on my back and fifty years older I followed her getting ever further behind. Across the tracks, yes it was allowed, through a door marked ‘Pizza’, past the ticket machines, out into the street just in time to see her

board a bus. The engine started, the bus began to move, I waved, the driver saw me in the mirror, stopped and let me on, checking it was the rail replacement bus as I boarded. She and I were the only passengers from the train who made the bus and consequently arrived at Fortezza in time for the fast train to Innsbruck. We never spoke or acknowledged each other but had God used her as an unknowing Angel to guide me to the bus? Did God prompt me to follow her?

Then are more stories I could tell and many more that I have forgotten but it is not only when travelling that God is evident. Sometime after my first pacemaker was fitted I was at Worcester Hospital for a routine check-up. As part of this I had an ECG. I was on my own in the ECG waiting room when a man came in. He was flustered, turned to me and said 'Where are they. I've been sent for an ECG but no-one is here'. I explained the waiting room procedure and he sat down. After a few moments he continued saying, 'I thought I was well but I'm dying. I've been told I need a pacemaker'. I replied, 'I've got one'. He looked at me and said, 'But you look normal'. I explained that was what a pacemaker does, that it enables not restricts life'. I could see the anxiety recede from his face.

In 2024 I had my pacemaker changed because the battery was almost expired. During the procedure the surgeon was talking to me and at one point he said, 'What would you normally be doing on a Thursday morning?' I explained that I was a retired Christian Minister and I would probably be preparing worship for Sunday. The surgeon replied that his uncle was a Minister in the United Reformed Church. I asked his name and on being told I said that I had served alongside him and his wife on various committees many years ago. I told the surgeon that I was happy for him to mention that he had changed my pacemaker the next time he spoke to his uncle. 'That my be the prompt I need' he said, 'I haven't spoken to them for a long time.'

Sometimes with the people we know there is a conversation that is more significant than all of the others. That only comes about because of the relationship built up over time. Standing at the bar one Sunday afternoon following a game a young female footballer turned to me and said, 'You're the strangest priest I know.' She continued 'what I mean is I can talk to you'. She went on to explain that she was a Catholic and apart from occasional Confession and even more occasional words after Mass she never spoke to her priest. I said, 'that's because you met me in a social context whereas the Parish Priest you first knew as an authority figure who spoke with your parents. I am not part of the system.' Conversation continued.

Some years ago on a Saturday shortly before Christmas I had a phone call soon after breakfast telling me that someone had been rushed to hospital unconscious. I could not drop everything and rush to the hospital and the caller understood that. It was early afternoon when I set off for the hospital on City Road Birmingham. The traffic was terrible and as I approached the hospital I prayed that God would find me somewhere to park. He did, and not just somewhere. Right opposite the hospital on the Saturday afternoon before Christmas was an empty parking bay. I took it and gave thanks to God.

It's all about response, yours and theirs. I have never started a conversation with 'Hello, I'm a Christian' or anything like it. Most conversations have begun with the other person saying something. Occasionally I have spoken the first words, usually in response to a situation such as a couple uncertain of how to find a connecting train or bus. The opening gambit begins in many ways but in the vast majority of cases an opportunity will come to drop in something that indicates that I am a person of faith. Where it goes from there is entirely dependent upon the other person. They either pick it up and run with it or they ignore it. I respect their response and am led by it.

I have come to the conclusion that it is probably easier to talk to a stranger about faith than it is to talk to non-believing family and friends about faith. Talking about faith with a stranger has the same security for both parties in that you will never meet again. There is an anonymity about it that provides a cloak of confidentiality. We may never know the outcome of a conversation. We are seed-sowers not crop-harvesters. We have to accept that and rejoice that God has used us in that way. Our work is over, the only thing left for us to do is to remember that person in our prayers.

In my first pastorate a retired minister wrote an article about significant conversations. Now in retirement I realise that it is not up to us to judge what is significant and what is not. God's view on what is significant may be very different to ours. Our role, as commanded by Jesus, is to be witnesses to him. Maybe a conversation about nothing in particular with a nervous traveller is just as significant as giving our testimony of a life walked with Jesus. It certainly is if that's what God wants us to do at that moment.

Retirement as a Christian Minister is a strange phenomenon and it is different for us all. For me all life is a holiday. I choose what I do: thus I lead Sunday worship around twenty times a year as well as leading midweek worship monthly, Bible Studies and prayer meetings. On the other hand I go to very few meetings and to

every request I can say either, ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Sometimes I need to remind people that I have retired from stipendiary ministry, not from being a Christian! Released from the responsibilities of stipendiary ministry I am experiencing more and more opportunities to talk with people outside the church. Reflection suggests that was also true before I trained for ministry.

In the early 1980’s I was living and working in Greater Manchester. On a train from London to Manchester I took out my Bible and some paper to prepare worship for Sunday. The young woman sitting opposite me looked at the Bible and said. ‘Do you believe all that?’ Conversation continued until we reached Manchester. The sermon was written later. Whether that conversation changed that young person’s life I do not know. What I do know is that I shared faith for two hours and I believe that is what God wanted at that moment.

The train still comes to Redditch, even on Sundays. Maybe I will be on it one day and we can worship God together again.

Ian Ring

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Easter Experience for the Brownies and Rainbows

On Tuesday the 17th March at 5.30pm, a small group of Rainbows (the youngest Girl Guides) were treated to the ‘Easter Experience’, put on for them by Emmanuel Church in the narthex and hall. The older Brownies (which was a much larger group) came to see the same thing about 45 minutes later. These Rainbows and Brownies are from ‘our’ Guides group which meets each Tuesday evening in the Ecumenical centre.



The girls were first greeted by a ‘narrator’ in the form of John Allured, who told them about the exciting news that Jesus was arriving in Jerusalem that day and they must all wave and shout ‘hosanna!’ Jesus, played by Chris Stroud, then came by and the girls all waved scarves and shouted hosanna at him!

The girls then met a ‘guide’ – Rev. James – who gave them all an empty goodie bag and took them into the hall to meet all the characters from the last week of

Jesus' life. Pearl Swanborough was in a 'room' (a gazebo decorated like a room in the 1st C) where she talked about pouring perfume on Jesus' head. While she was talking about it, Jesus (Chris) appeared next to her and said his lines in the story. The girls were rapt. Their attention was on both Chris and Pearl all the time, listening to the story. At the end of that little story, the girls asked questions and were given a small bag of lavender to put in their goodie bags.



The next person to tell a story was John Legge playing a servant called Reuben who was asked by his father a long time ago to greet some guests who were arriving and to wash their feet, after their long and dirty walk. Reuben (John) said he was very surprised at this man Jesus because he insisted gently that he must be the one to wash his disciples' feet that day. Reuben answered questions and gave the girls some soap to put in their goodie bags.



The girls were then guided by James to the third 'room' which was decorated with bread and big earthenware jugs where Jan Chaney played a character called Ruth who served Jesus and his disciples at the table when they had the last supper. She told how she was very confused by what Jesus said about his body and blood, but she has heard that 'in your time, people in Christian churches still drink wine and eat bread and remember Jesus in this way'. She gave them a picture of the bread and wine to take away and answered their – often very tricky but fascinating! – questions.

Finally, they came to me (Ruth Wilde), and I was in a garden with plants all around me. I was playing Mary Magdalene and I told them the story of the death of Jesus and how distraught I was, but how I then met a man near the grave where the stone had been rolled away, and that man turned out to be Jesus. I was amazed and so happy! They asked me questions and I gave them all a beautiful cross that Elisabeth Grove made for them.



Thanks to everyone who took part in this wonderful outreach event. A special thanks to Catshill Methodist who helped us set up, let us borrow their props and gazebos, and gave us invaluable advice. We couldn't have done it without them.

Below is some of the enthusiastic feedback we received from the Rainbow and Brownies leaders:

'My goodness their set up for the Easter Experience is amazing!'

'Incredible'

'Just the right level'

Ruth Wilde

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A Ghanaian Church Prayer

O Lord our God

Listen to us here

You accept also the prayers of our sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Americas and Europe.

We are all one in prayer

So my we, as one, rightly carry out your commission to witness and to love in the church and throughout the world.

Accept our prayers graciously even when they are somewhat strange.

They are offered in Jesus name.

Amen.

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In 1998 my cousin RoseAnn had terminal cancer. I was aware that she hadn't been going to church for some time.

I wrote this song, 'Come to the Saviour' for her. I sang it to her when I visited her in hospital shortly before she died.

I wasn't aware, until after she died, that her husband had been very controlling and abusive, which is why she hadn't been able to go to church.

Elisabeth Grove

Come to the Saviour

(Tune – Skye Boat Song)

Chorus

Come to the Saviour seeking his peace

Trust in his loving care

Rest for the weary seeking relief

His love's beyond compare

Though shadows fall

Across your life

He'll never let you down

Through doubt and fear

He's always there

Scarred by a thorny crown

Chorus

He lived your doubt

He lived your fear

Your pain and suffering

They led Him out

Stripped and bruised

Hung Him on cal'vrys tree

Chorus

Open your heart

Let Him come in

He's waiting at the door

Bringing you peace

Bringing you hope

His love for evermore

Chorus

Elisabeth Grove

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Howard Leeson sings at the Royal Albert Hall

As most of you know, after retiring nearly 4 years ago, I joined the Alcester Male Voice Choir.



Ever since joining a church choir at the age of 12, as head of the sopranos & singing "Once in Royal Davids City" as a solo, I have always had a keen interest in singing. Also, whilst working away with my job near to Cambridge, I joined the Duxford Community Choir. I had great pleasure in singing some amazing pieces of music. One of the most memorable pieces was 'Lacrimosa – Requiem' - W. A. Mozart. What a wonderful piece of music and very moving!!! Finally, after having recently retired, I received an e mail from a friend pre-September 2022, inviting me to attend an AMVC promotion night. From that night on and listening to the music they have sung and the venues they have performed at made me realise that this choir was for me. I have not looked back since.

Since joining the choir, I have always dreamed of singing at a prestigious location. Well, on June 7th 2026, this dream finally came to fruition! The AMVC had been asked to sing with 18 other Male Voice Choirs, was in the 27th London Welsh Festival of Male Choirs. In order that the choir were up to standard, we also had to attend 2 rehearsal sessions at the Morriston Tabernacle church in Swansea. The sound of male voices from just these sessions (300-400 men at each) was enough to get me really excited at the thought of singing with 700+ men.

On the day of the concert, the choir arrived at the RAH, after being driven down by coach. Seeing the RAH in reality, along with numerous other choirs all very smartly dressed, started to trigger off real excitement, along with a few nerves!!! We had landed.



Our plan for the day was for all the choirs and orchestra members and soloists to take part in numerous formal photo sessions and then having a full practice session: this took over 3 hours!!!! However, the sound of all the choirs was totally AWESOME! I had never heard anything like it!! After the practice session all the choirs returned to their allocated dressing rooms (for a well-earned rest, drink and packed lunch), of which there were many.

At just after 5pm, we were all asked to line up in our dressing rooms and get ready for processing on to the stage, in readiness for the concert to start. At 6pm on the 7th June 2026, the 27th London Welsh Festival of Male Choirs started. The Programme consisted of:



The 27th London Welsh Festival of Male Choirs

Sunday 7 June 2026

The King

Choir
Divine Brahma (The Pearl Fishers) — *Georges Bizet*
Take Me Home — *Rod Edwards & Roger Hand*
Ave Verum Corpus — *W.A. Mozart Arr. Adrián A. Cuello Piriquabis*
A March for St David — *Grahame Davies/Edward-Rhys Harry*

Jappe Dendievel (Bassoon)

Choir
O Love — *George Matheson/Elaine Hagenberg*

Eleri Gwilym (Soprano)

Choir and Audience
Calon Lân (words on last page)

Choir
Myfanwy — *Richard Davies/Joseph Parry*
The Water is Wide/Ar Lan y Môr — *Traditional Scottish/Welsh Arr. Edward-Rhys Harry*
Hoff Yw'r Iesu — *D. Thomas/C. Taliesin Rhys Arr. Edward-Rhys Harry*

Interval
The Royal Albert Hall is a non-smoking building.
Video recording will not be allowed under any circumstances

Welsh Chamber Orchestra
Palladio (1st Movement: Allegretto) — *Karl Jenkins*

Choir
Morte Criste — *Isaac Watts/Emrys Jones*
Ride The Chariot (Solo: Owain Rowlands) — *Traditional Arr. Wm Henry Smith*
Don't Go Chasing Shadows (Aberfan Commemoration) — *Edward-Rhys Harry*

Owain Rowlands (Baritone)

Choir
Y Tangnefeddwyr — *Waldo Williams/Eric Jones*
An American Trilogy — *Traditional Arr. M. Newbury/Alwyn Humphreys*
Deus Salutis (Llef) — *David Charles/G.H. Jones Arr. Mansel Thomas*
Bydd Myrdd o Ryfeddodau (Babel) — *David George Jones/Traditional Arr. Robat Arwyn*

Choir and Audience
Rachie (words on last page)

Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau

After **every item of music performed**, all the choirs, musicians and soloists received rapturous applause from the audience. For me, and those members of the AMVC who had not previously taken part in this event before, this was very, very special and I particularly was very emotional. Once the encore was delivered, the

whole of the audience stood up, and yet again we received rapturous applause. The concert had been a great success. I will not forget that day for a very long time.



Howard Leeson (Tenor 2) – Alcester Male Voice Choir

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Emmanuel Church at Redditch Pride

On June 6th, Emmanuel Church was present at Redditch Pride, joining the celebrations, the march, and the conversations that took place throughout the day. Being there for the fourth year running, was a visible sign of Emmanuel's commitment to listening, welcoming, and engaging with the wider community, and it was encouraging to see how warmly that presence was received.



The Pride march was a joyful and energetic experience. Leading the procession was the Someone at the Door Samba Band, whose infectious rhythms set the tone for the whole event. It was lovely to see Mike and Anne Schofield in the band.

A big thank you goes to the Emmanuel members who gave time, energy, and enthusiasm to the day: James, Kathryn, Ruth, Kay, Pearl, Hayley, and Kim. Each person played a part in helping Emmanuel Church show up well — whether through setting up, walking in the march, chatting with passers-by, or simply offering a friendly smile and open conversation.

People stopped to ask questions about Emmanuel Church, to share their own stories, or simply to express appreciation for seeing a church present at Pride. The conversations were thoughtful, respectful, and often surprisingly deep, touching on faith, community, inclusion, and what it means to belong. These moments reminded everyone involved of the power of being present and willing to listen without agenda.



Emmanuel Church's presence at Redditch Pride was a meaningful and positive experience. It offered a chance to build bridges, to show care, and to take part in something that mattered deeply to many in the town. Those who took part came away encouraged, grateful, and hopeful about future opportunities to continue these conversations and connections.

Kathryn

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Beetle Drive



The Narthex was filled with laughter, friendly competition and fellowship on 20th June when we held our latest Beetle Drive. The event was very well attended, with plenty of enthusiasm as teams rolled the dice and raced to complete their beetles. The afternoon included a delicious cream tea and we were also able to enjoy a selection of homemade cakes baked by Fiona, who kindly shared her birthday celebration with





us. A heartfelt thank you goes to the FORT team for all their hard work and organisation in making the event such a success. Their planning, preparation and efforts on the day ensured that everything ran smoothly.

It was a lovely afternoon, full of fun, friendship and community spirit - a great time was had by all. We look forward to the next one!

Kathryn Bellshaw

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Content and free

When all the angry words are over

And we have loved ones at our side.

Help us forgive all that has been said

So all the pain and hurt subsides.

We know not when our time will come

but come it will, so Lord be at our side

Help us leave each other with happy hearts.

Then with you Lord we'll lovingly abide.

So Lord when our life has finally ended

and to your side we happily be.

Let’s leave all we know with love in their hearts,

To our resting place we go content and free.

Ann Gee

Feed the Birds – But Thoughtfully

If you enjoy feeding the birds, you are not alone. Surveys suggest that up to 60% of households in the UK regularly feed wild birds. This contributes to an estimated £250 million spent annually on bird food, with around 150,000 tonnes of seed sold each year.

When feeding wild birds, here are five common mistakes to avoid:

1. Not Keeping Feeders Clean – Dirty feeders can spread disease among birds. The RSPB recommends cleaning feeders at least once a week using a mild soap, such as washing-up liquid.

2. Leaving Too Much Food Out – Excess food can attract rodents. Provide food little and often, topping up feeders regularly. Peanuts should be offered in a rigid mesh feeder and fat-based foods avoided during hot weather.

3. Feeding Bread – Bread provides little nutritional value and can lead to malnutrition. Instead, offer mealworms, seeds, sunflower hearts, dried fruit, peanuts and suitable fat-based foods.

4. Forgetting to Provide Water – Birds need fresh water every day for drinking and bathing, especially during warm weather.

5. Putting Feeders in the Wrong Place – Position feeders near shrubs, trees and bushes. A variety of feeding stations will attract a wider range of birds.

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Prayer

Lord, when I struggle show me the way,
When I'm in a muddle teach me I pray.
Confusion at times overwhelms my mind,
I turn to you, for you are gentle and kind.
Lord forgive my sins, they are many I fear,
Keep me safe and warm, wipe away every tear.
Amen

Ian Hands

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The Story Behind the Hymn: Lord, for the Years

"Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way, sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided: Lord, for the years, we bring our thanks today."

"Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us, speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze, teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us: Lord of the Word, receive your people's praise."

"Lord, for our hopes, the dreams of all our living, Christ and his kingdom one united aim; rulers and peoples bound in high thanksgiving, Lord of our hopes, our trust is in your Name."

By Timothy Dudley Smith

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Prayer

Father, I have sinned, forgive me Lord I pray,

Show mercy to this abhorrent man, set him right today.

Grant me mercy Lord, although I'm deserving of death,

I long to walk with you all the days that I have breath.

Please mould me, shape me, do not forsake me.

I will sing your praise all my future days.

Amen.

Ian Hands

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Recipes from Good Morning Sunday Cookery Book

Trinity Sunday – Coventry Godcakes
From St Godman, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham

During the 16th century. It was the custom in Coventry for godparents to give their godchildren cakes for good luck at the time of their confirmation. The cakes were usually triangular turnovers whose three points were said to represent the Holy Trinity. So they were suitable for Trinity Sunday. The size of the cakes denoted the wealth of the giver and each family tried to outdo the others.

Ingredients:
- 1.2 oz (350 g) puff pastry
- Beaten egg to seal and glaze
- 8 oz (225 g) mincemeat or jam
- 7 fl oz (225 ml) grated sugar

Method:
Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C, gas mark 7). Roll out pastry and cut into 4-inch squares. Place filling in the centre, dampen edges, fold into triangles and seal. Brush with beaten egg and bake for 12–15 minutes until golden brown. Serve warm with cream.

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Midlife Crisis

A middle-aged woman seemed timid as she visited her gynaecologist.

“Come now,” coaxed the doctor, “you’ve been seeing me for years! There’s nothing you can’t tell me.”

“This one’s kind of strange…” said the woman.

“Let me be the judge of that,” the doctor replied.

“Well,” said the woman, “Yesterday I went to the bathroom in the morning and I heard a plink-plink in the toilet. When I looked down, the water was full of pennies.”

“Mmmm, I see,” said the doctor.

“That afternoon I went again and there were five pence pieces in the bowl.”

“Uh-huh,” the doctor said, becoming more interested.

“That night,” she went on, “There were ten pence pieces and this morning there were twenty pence pieces! You’ve got to tell me what’s wrong with me! I’m scared out of my wits!”

The gynaecologist put a comforting hand on her shoulder.

“There's nothing to be frightened about,” said the doctor. “You're simply going through the change.” 😄

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Golfer: "I’d move heaven and earth to break 100 on this course."

Caddie: "Try heaven, you’ve already moved most of the earth." 😄

Dates for your Diary

Women's Event

You are now able to purchase your ticket of £10 for this event, with our guest speaker Kate Nicholas. The event is to be held on Saturday 12th September at Emmanuel Church, 10.00 a.m. – 3.00p.m. Please see Sharon for tickets.

Afternoon Quiz Join us on **Saturday 14th November** 2.00-4.00p.m. for a Quiz with John Legge. Teams of 4-6 £2.50 per person, plus tea and light refreshments.

Christmas Gathering – Monday 7th December 2026 Join us at the Queen's Head for our evening of readings, carols and light Indian buffet. £12 per head.

The deadline of submission for the next magazine is 30th October 2026.









Photos from the Manse Tea party Afternoon