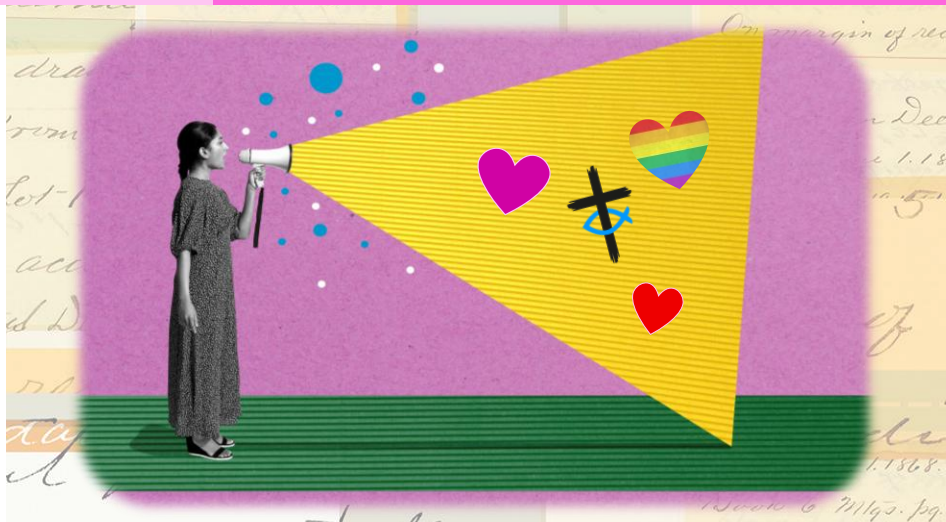




FOCUS

April 2026



Luke 12: 11-12

“When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.”

London Street United Reformed Church
Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 7NU

Tadley (Old Meeting) United Reformed Church
Malthouse Ln, Hants, RG26 3NY

Thought For The Month



This month Joy Williams recalls some Easter memories.

As you read this the coming Easter holiday may be on your mind. Will it mean extra work, or will it be a welcome, longer break, in which to relax and catch up with ourselves? The answer, I guess for most of us is 'It's a bit of both'. When I was working though, it was definitely the welcome, longer break!

As a small child I cannot remember the family making much of Lent. It was wartime and rationing so we didn't really have much to give up anyway. Easter for us, it seemed, began on Good Friday and I remember one very exciting evening from that time - for me, anyway. My mother was in a play at a church as one of Mary's friends who were helping her to sort out Jesus' things after his crucifixion. To be going out when normally it is time for bed is exciting! As we entered the church it was dark. After a while, light shone through the cracks around the curtains draped across in front of the communion table. Suddenly, they were drawn back and the brightest lights I'd ever seen came on. The stage was revealed and eventually my Mum spoke her one line: "Oh, it's the little boat that Jesus made". (How I wanted one just like it for bath time!) Do you also have happy memories of little incidents like that from your childhood connected with Easter too?

Another thing I remember from later, as a teenager, is getting up early on Easter Day and cycling into town for 8am communion. The opening hymn would be "Welcome! Happy Morning! Age to age shall say; hell today is vanquished; heaven is won today." to a great tune by Arthur Sullivan. A very joyful start to the day!

That was all a long time ago but sometimes as we are chatting to the customers on the Hot Food Table the subject of belief in God, Jesus, the Bible and the church comes up and some, in a sort of wistful way, say that they wish they knew more "but...". I've asked them if they have ever been to church. After a moment's thought the answer they quite often give is "I went sometimes with my Gran(/Nan)". The memories, hopefully good ones, start to come back so then I say something like "Why not give it another go now?"

People are seeking. They want to know more about Jesus and the Christian faith. Maybe the seed of faith has been dormant for years, but

it can be awakened in a moment. Don't be afraid to plant the appropriate seed when opportunities arise. If we listen to the conversation with ears and heart, then we will sense the moment to speak and what to say. The moment is often fleeting so be brave, trusting in the gifts of wisdom and discernment the Holy Spirit has already given you. God will use it in building his kingdom here on earth and he is well able to take care of his reputation and even use our mistakes and 'failures' to do it.

Our prayer:

Heavenly Father, may your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven and may we all, as followers of Jesus Christ, work together to hasten his return. Amen.

The Noticeboard

Information, tips, updates, and more...



Church Flowers

The Flower Committee would like to thank Alison Jamieson for donating & arranging the Easter Flowers.

If you wish to celebrate an important occasion by donating the Church flowers, please contact Liz Lindsay.



Christian Aid Lunch

Our next church meeting is the ACM on (Sunday) May 3rd and will be preceded by a shared lunch of bread and soup as part of our Christian Aid actions.



Can you help to make sure that no one in our local community goes hungry?



Items **urgently** needed: Fruit Juice, UHT Milk, Custard, Marmite, Loo Roll, Hair Conditioner.

Items needed: Squash, Cooking Sauce, Deodorant, Tinned Meat (e.g. Chilli, Stewing Steak, Ham), Tinned Spaghetti, Powdered Milk, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Veg, Tinned Tomatoes, Pet Food, Household Cleaning Products & Washing Up Liquid, Jam, Tuna, Rice Pudding, Hot/Cold Desserts (e.g. Jelly, Sponge Pudding, Angel Delight), Coffee, Tampons.

Please **do not** give Shower Gel & Soap, Baby Food, Hot/Cold Cereal, Nappies, Non-Dairy Milk, Pasta, Pulses, Rice, Sanitary Pads, or Tinned Beans, as these are already in surplus.

Donations can be left at London Street URC in the container provided. For up-to-date lists, or to find other donation points, go to:

<https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/givehelp/food/>

Or download the BankTheFood app from the Apple App/Google Play store and select Basingstoke Foodbank.



The latest Foodbytes magazine can be found by following this link:

<https://cms.trussell.org.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/Spring%2026%20Foodbytes.pdf>

Eco Tip

God's Gift -- Our World

The Environment -- Our Responsibility

Reduce food waste by shopping for 'wonky' fruit and vegetables.



Don't forget, you can recycle the following items at London Street: Empty Printer Cartridges, Aluminium Containers and Foil, and Batteries.

Angels

Due to the success of the Angels, we have started knitting ones for this year.

They are quick and easy to knit; I have the pattern if anyone wants to join knitting them.

Or come along on a Monday morning to Craft Group!!!

God bless,
Carol Scott



Happy Birthday to the following members of our church family:

Jean Rae Young

Chris Ayland

If you know someone who is 80+ that would like their birthday added to the list in Focus, please let Jenny McCloy or the Editor know.

Birthday Thanks!

Dorothy Burrows would like to say thank you for the cards and best wishes sent to her for her birthday. She celebrated her special day with family including her 3 Children, 5 Grandchildren, and 6 Great Grandchildren. She had a wonderful day and particularly liked the cake that Cherry Blossom Manor's chef Angel had made!



Church Decorations

The Church will be open
Sat 4th April '26 10:30-
12:30 for people to
decorate the windowsills
for Easter.

Please sign the form on the
notice board. Thank you.



Charity Event at Tadley (Poster on next page)

Tadley URC are organising a fun evening out to raise funds for Adonai School in Uganda (7pm, 16th May). Many of you may recall hearing about the vital work that this organisation does in caring for and schooling orphans, the poor and needy, and the under privileged in Uganda. Last year Adonai School took on 100 more needy children, and we want to help them with the large cost burden that this act of love has resulted in. Come and join us and have great fun with a team at our "Almost Family Fortunes Evening" and help raise funds for a great charitable cause too.

Teams can be any number from 4-8 and any age. Bring your own drinks and snacks and come prepared to have a laugh and enjoy yourself!

Love in Christ,
Mark and All at Tadley URC



The logo for 'All Star Family Fortunes' is the background of the top half of the poster. It features the words 'All Star' in a cursive font at the top, 'FAMILY FORTUNES' in large, bold, block letters in the center, and a row of five stars at the bottom. The entire logo is set against a dark blue background with a subtle grid pattern and some light effects.

Almost

*Just a Fun
Night Out!*

**Raising Much Needed
Funds for Adonai Uganda**

Teams of up to 8

£7.50/person

7pm, May 16th

Tadley URC Immanuel Centre, Tadley. RG26 3NY

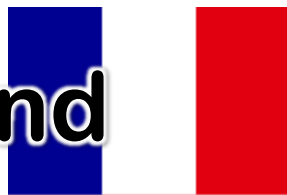
For Tickets contact Mark 07849 546894

mandjward@hotmail.co.uk

Bring Your own Drinks & Snacks



Le Weekend



24th to 26th April at London Street URC

Theme: Stories of Hope and Joy

- 
- A time to meet friends old and new from Wessex synod and our partner region in Northern France
 - Worship, discussion, activities, sightseeing, games
 - Open to all ages, we have something for everyone
 - A programme for Children and Young People
 - Come for one day or the whole weekend
 - No language barriers, everything is translated

Save the date – find out more from Gill:

secretary@basingstokeurc.org.uk

— JOIN US FOR A —

Easter Day

FAMILY CHURCH SERVICE



— STARTING AT —

10:30AM



**Maundy
Thursday
Service**

**2nd April
7.00pm
at Tadley
URC**

**A reflective service remembering
Christ's last supper with His disciples.**

*"A new command I give you: Love one
another. As I have loved you, so you
must love one another."*

*For more details Mark Ward/Paul Gross contact@tadleyurc.com
Tadley URC, Malthouse Lane, Tadley, RG26 3NY. Car Park off Main Road A340*

A wooden cross stands on a green hill at sunrise. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, and the grass is a vibrant green. The cross is the central focus, with its shadow cast on the grass.

Easter Day Sunrise Service

6am Sunday 5th April,
Tadley Skate Park

He has risen!

Join us at Tadley Skate Park for a short reflective service of songs and readings as the dawn breaks and the sun rises...

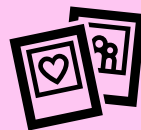
8am breakfast at Tadley URC follows. Please RSVP.
Further details Mark Ward or Cathy Pynn
contact@tadleyurc.com or c.pynn@btinternet.com

Charity Number: 1187062



Funeral/Thanksgiving Services

Peter Bentall shares his thoughts on these emotional occasions and our approach to them.



Quite out-of-the-blue recently I received an email from a former work colleague of the early 1980's, whose wife was also a member of London Street at the time. She had just suddenly died, aged 90, and he recalled that I was a lay preacher in the URC. He was asking if I would be willing to conduct her funeral service at the Crematorium. Due to the suddenness of her death he had not been able to discuss funeral ideas/wishes, but he was sure she would have wanted it to be 'religious but relaxed', as he put it. He had booked two slots at the crem. as he wanted it to be a full expression of her life with as many contributions and shared memories as possible.

Such a contrast to many funerals, even some Christian ones, when the impression is given that people are embarrassed/uncomfortable and there is little personal element, with no one willing/able to share memories. 25 minutes and it's all over; surely an 80/90-year life deserves more than that.

Not so with this one. In two good sessions David and I (guided by the Holy Spirit I would say) worked out the framework for the service with contributions from the various family generations to be 'bookended' by the 'religious' bits. In the event I thought the highlight was the great granddaughter (the only one who did not cry!) reading with great confidence and meaning, the poem 'Miss me but let me go'. The Service nicely filled the 'double' time available. The crematorium was standing room only and everyone, it seemed, went to the pub afterwards!

Even some Church funeral Services can be 'disappointing', I feel. The 'Established' Churches have their own set liturgies, allowing little or no variation, the celebrant just has to change the name/gender and may have little or no knowledge of the deceased. Any eulogy or other contributions may be included after the formalities and may even need to be deemed 'suitable' for a Church environment!

Contrast that with the time Mike Burrell was here and he had 3 funerals of church members in one week, yet each was fully 'personal' for each of the three different 'characters'.

Sometimes we hear the view that young children should be 'shielded' from funerals as too distressing for them, but isn't the truth that they are often more ready to share their thoughts publicly than adults? I recall a great grandson (6) at my mother's funeral who stood up and simply said 'great granny smiled a lot', enough said!

One of the saddest situations I think (and we have these at London Street) is when a long time church member/attendee passes away but the family has no church connections and opts for the crematorium (albeit maybe with a Minister celebrant) with only a few of the fellowship able to attend as the crematorium is not the easiest place to get to. At best we manage a Thanksgiving Service in London Street at a later date. Possibly the deceased has not made their wishes known or we have not been able to discuss with family, but a long Christian life is not fully acknowledged.

Even if a Church Service is arranged are we always sufficiently aware that many/most of those attending will not be churchgoers and have no Christian background, so that even reciting the Lord's Prayer would be a novelty. How can we be as inclusive as possible and make people feel welcomed and comfortable? Do we make our services so 'formal' that no one wishes to share memories/put on slide shows/have a laugh?

Above all should we not be discussing our thoughts/ideas/wishes within family/fellowship so that our own funerals can be 'personal' and an appropriate celebration/thanksgiving for the individual?

And I haven't even begun to talk about battles with Funeral Directors who assure you they will comply with your wishes except their public image seems to demand that ends up as 'their way'!

It will be of no surprise to know that my own 'farewell' is well developed and (like my sermons) will not be short. After all, the best URC Services have 5 hymns!



A Quiet Thought

*The great thing about getting older is that you
don't lose all the other ages you've been.*

Madeleine L'Engle

A Prayer-Poem For Peace



Inspired by Proverbs 6: 16-19 and Matthew 5: 3-9.

Dear Lord, we know you see those smiles,
and promises by crocodiles.
The ones who can't stick to their story,
as truth be told it's all vainglory.
They cry that war was necessary,
and the children we now mourn and bury
are just called 'acceptable losses'.
They'll 'win', no matter what the cost is.

A 'vic-tory won for the flag',
all I see is a damp, limp rag
tied to a lamppost in my street,
'It's flown for pride' is the deceit.
And then they tell me of the danger
of taking in a foreign stranger.
A stranger homeless-left by war,
the one *they* started. Please, no more.

They do not understand Your ways,
Your promise 'til the end of days.
Bless us as we mourn such death,
and cry for peace with all our breath.
Let mercy reign and fighting cease,
by Your example love increase.
Protect the innocent who flee
and see them safe to sanctuary.

And we pray too for those among us
full of hate, our self-serving brothers,
let them see Your holy light,
turned back to You by such a sight.
May they too receive Your love,
and emulate the peaceful dove.
We ask in Jesus' name, again.
Our Saviour, Shepherd, Lord, Amen.



Jesus Is Raised From The Dead



Jean Young writes about the importance of the resurrection.

In biblical times, Jewish dead were always buried. With a shortage of cultivable land, cemeteries would normally be where the ground was poor and rocky. A hole would be excavated, and after the internment it would be covered with stones to prevent jackals digging up the body. The poorest Jews would usually be buried in a mass grave. Skeletons of crucified victims of the first century C.E. have been discovered in one cemetery in Jerusalem.

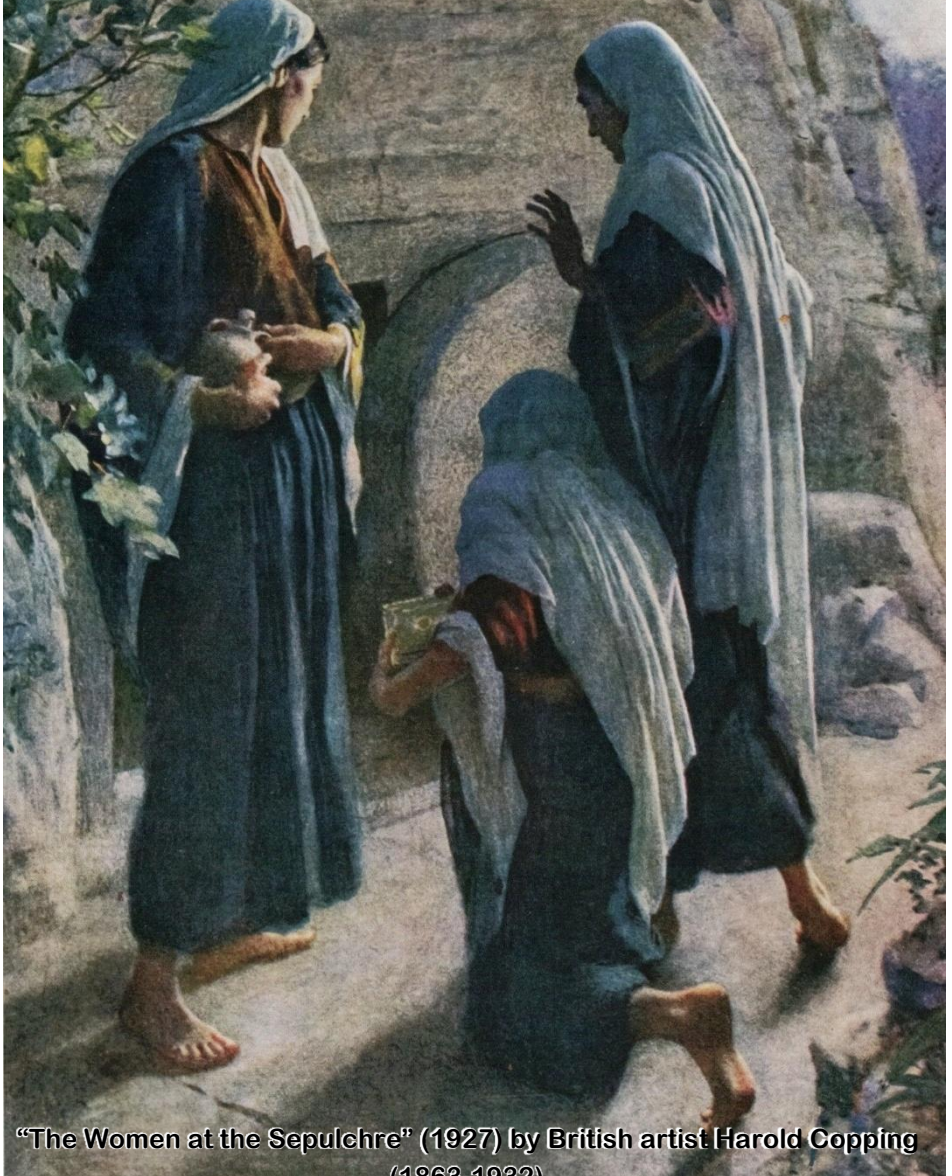
For those who could afford it, tombs or sepulchres could be bought. They were made by cutting into limestone rock and had a tightly fastened wheel-shaped door which was rolled up a track, and rolled back, when necessary. It was held in place by a block which was removed when the door was returned to seal the tomb. This was probably the kind of tomb which Joseph of Arimathea owned (John 20:12).

Matthew tells us that Joseph was a rich disciple of Jesus (Matthew 27: 57-60). He was a respected Pharisaic member of the Sanhedrin Jewish ruling council/court (Mark 15: 43). He wanted to spare Jesus the indignity of being buried in a mass grave. So, he courageously went to Pilate to petition him for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised by Joseph's request. He knew that a crucified victim could live for a very long time. However, when the Roman centurion in charge of the soldiers who crucified Jesus assured Pilate that he had died on the cross, he granted his body to Joseph.

The law specified that all burial formalities be concluded before the Sabbath lest this day be defiled. So, Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. By then, the Sabbath was beginning, Joseph and the woman who accompanied him, had run out of time and were unable to anoint Jesus' body properly.

As the sun rose on Sunday, the third day, Mary and her companions made their way to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus with myrrh and spices. They stopped in their tracks when they saw the stone door had been rolled away. On entering the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side. He told them not to be alarmed as Jesus was raised and was no longer there (Mark 16: 6).

'The faith in the resurrection of Jesus became the bedrock on which Christianity was founded. Later, Paul would write to the Corinthians that if Christ had not been raised from the dead, then all faith would be in vain (1 Corinthians 15: 14).' (National Geographic – "Jesus An Illustrated Life" Jean-Pierre Isbouts.)



"The Women at the Sepulchre" (1927) by British artist Harold Copping (1863-1932)

The Prayer Circle



Please remember the following people in your prayers...

Our Iranian friends, anxious about friends and family in Iran

Margaret Carrick Smith and family.

Barbara Banbury and David Corfield

Marguerite Hurford and her son Michael

Lizzy Payne as she explores her calling, at Wessex Synod's Mission House

Louise & David Waller

Maggie & Richard Morgans

Christine & Eric Clucas

Bev Harris and Dom

Hyacinth Ridguard

Stan & Sandra Marut

Peter & Ruth Bentall

Doina Rasnita

Jean Young

Carol Scott

Ian McCloy

Joan Mussellwhite

Dick & Anne Davey

Jason Dudley

The Patterson family

Claire Macro

Jenny McCloy

Beryl Wootton

Joyce Cook

Sheila Munro

Karen Bell

Rob Williams

Nicolle Whitby

Stephen Grout's father

John Featherstone and his daughter Laura

Brian & Elaine Cole and their family

Gill Vickery

Daily Bible Readings



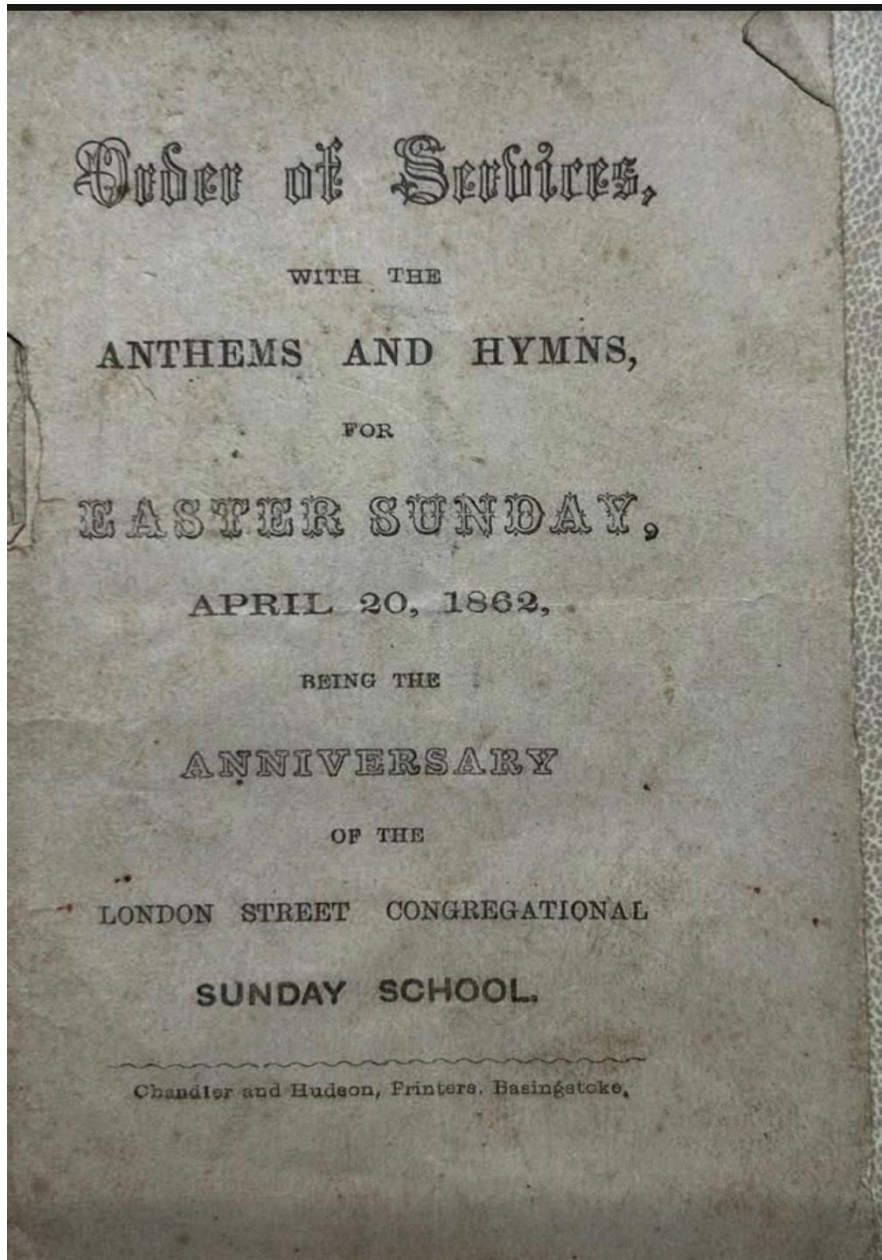
This month's assigned readings.

	Psalm	New Testament		Psalm	New Testament
1st	39: 1-6	Luke 6: 1-26	16th	46: 8-11	Luke 12: 22-34
2nd	39: 7-13	Luke 6: 27-49	17th	23	Luke 12: 35-59
3rd	40: 1-10	Luke 7: 1-28	18th	47	Luke 13: 1-21
4th	40: 11-17	Luke 7: 29-50	19th	48: 1-8	Luke 13: 22-35
5th	41: 1-6	Luke 8: 1-25	20th	48: 9-14	Luke 14
6th	41: 7-13	Luke 8: 26-39	21st	49: 1-11	Luke 15: 1-10
7th	42: 1-6	Luke 8: 40-56	22nd	49: 12-20	Luke 15: 11-32
8th	42: 7-11	Luke 9: 1-20	23rd	50: 1-6	Luke 16: 1-15
9th	43	Luke 9: 21-43a	24th	50: 7-15	Luke 16: 16-31
10th	44: 1-7	Luke 9: 43b-62	25th	50: 16-23	Luke 17: 1-19
11th	44: 8-19, 26	Luke 10: 1-24	26th	51: 1-6	Luke 17: 20-37
12th	44: 20-26	Luke 10: 25-42	27th	51: 7-12	Luke 18: 1-17
13th	45: 1-9	Luke 11: 1-28	28th	51: 13-19	Luke 18: 18-43
14th	45: 10-17	Luke 11: 29-54	29th	52	Luke 19: 1-27
15th	46: 1-7	Luke 12: 1-21	30th	53	Luke 19: 28-48

Times Gone By



Rediscovered by Carol Scott, a piece of our history...



Order of Services,

WITH THE

ANTHEMS AND HYMNS,

FOR

EASTER SUNDAY,

APRIL 20, 1862,

BEING THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

LONDON STREET CONGREGATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Chandler and Hudson, Printers, Basingstoke.

Event Diaries



What's on this month at London Street & Old Meeting URCS.

At London Street URC (unless otherwise stated):

Regular Events

Sunday Worship 10:30am			
Mondays	10:15am	Craft Group	
Tuesdays	5:45-6:45pm	Squirrels	In Term Time. All in the Den except Scouts and Beavers, who meet in the Wessex Hall.
		Beavers	
	7-8:30pm	Cubs	
	7-9pm	Scouts	
Wednesdays	10:30am	Memory Tree	
	12:15pm	Lunchtime Prayers	
Thursdays	7:15-9:15pm	Explorers	In Term Time. In the Den.

April Worship Diary

5th	Easter Sunday. Service includes Holy Communion Led by Revd. Denis Smith; Musician: Alex Macro.
12th	Led by The Worship Group; Musician: Revd. Denis Smith.
19th	Led by Revd. Mike Burrell; Musician: Mark Best.
26th	Service includes Holy Communion Led by Revd. Dr. Michael Hopkins; Musician: Peter Dixon.

Duty Elder for the month: Margaret Carrick Smith.

Next Church Meeting (is the ACM):

May 3rd (Sunday) at 1:15pm (in the Sanctuary)

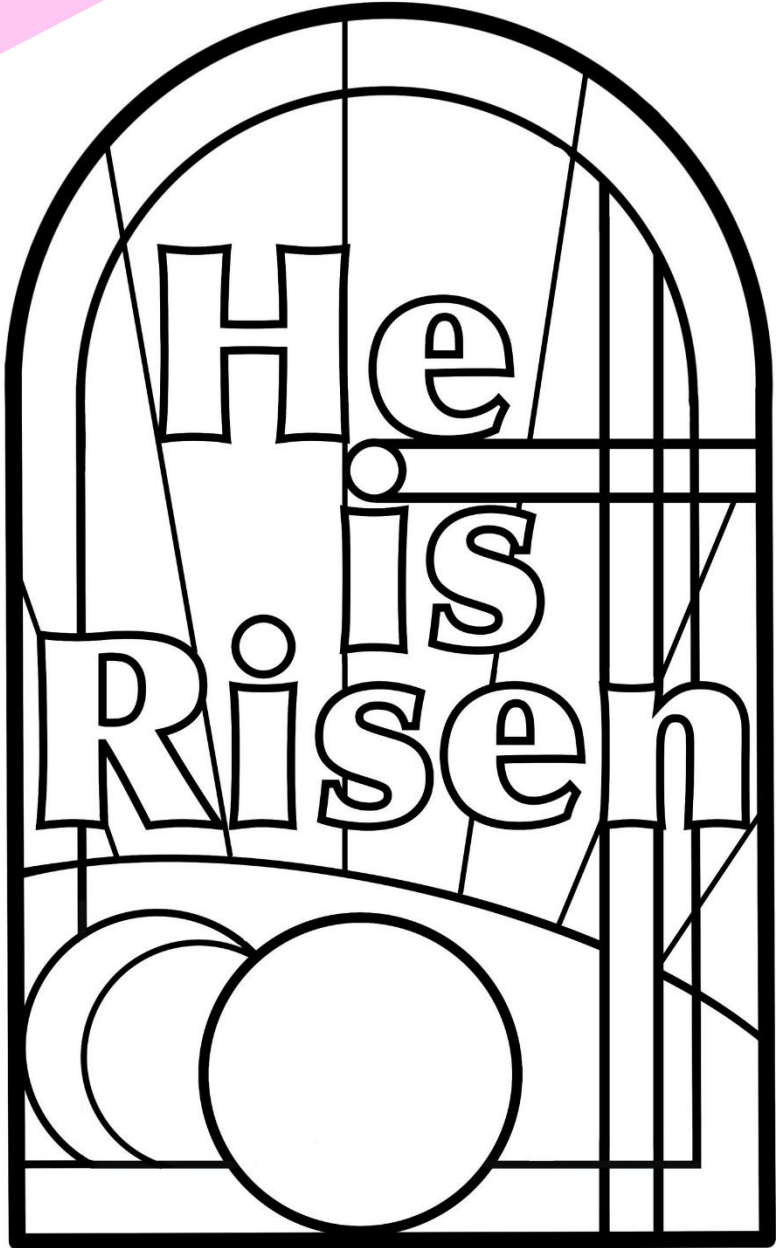
At Tadley (Old Meeting) URC (unless otherwise stated):

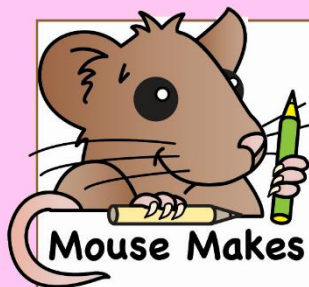
Sunday Worship 10:30am		
Monday Afternoons	Ladies' Cell Group	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Monday Evenings	Cell Group	Contact Mark Ward or Paul Gross.
Tuesday Evenings	Joint Prayer Time with St Paul's	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Wednesday Evenings	Prayer via Zoom	Contact Mark Ward.
Friday Afternoons	Men's Shed	2pm. Contact Paul Gross.
Saturday Mornings	Ladies' Breakfast & Talk	10am, 2nd Saturday of each month. Everyone welcome.
	Men's Breakfast & Talk	10am, 4th Saturday of each month. Everyone welcome.

April Worship Diary

2nd (Thurs)	Reflective Service at 7pm.
5th	Easter Dawn Service, 6am at Tadley Skate Park. Followed by a cooked breakfast in the Immanuel Centre at 8am. Then joining London St. for a family service at 10:30am.
12th	Led by Revd. Rob Young.
19th	Led by Rob & Jan Lloyd.
26th	Led by Philip Jones.

Colour In!



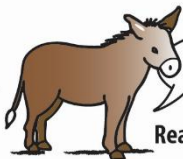


G O O D N E W S
 O H O S A N N A
 D E A T H Q B V
 V N C O E E U I
 U A H N A A R O
 M I R E V S Y U
 A L I V E T D R
 R I S E N E O K
 Y O T H O R N S
 P A L M S Q K A
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 C R U C I F Y G
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 O C J E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

JESUS • DONKEY • PALMS
 HOSANNA • PILATE • THORNS
 CRUCIFY • NAIL • CROSS
 QUAKE • DEATH • BURY
 TOMB • STONE • EMPTY
 ANGEL • MARY • HEAVEN
 RISEN • ALIVE • GOD
 GOOD NEWS • CHRIST
 SAVIOUR • EASTER • JOY



EASTER WITNESS - I WAS THERE



I carried Jesus into Jerusalem

Read Matthew 21:1-11



I handed Jesus over to be crucified

Read Matthew 27:11-26



I nailed Jesus to the cross

Read Mark 15:16-32



We watched Jesus die

Read Mark 15:33-41

I laid his body in my tomb



Read Mark 15:42-47



I guarded the tomb

Read Matthew 27:62-66

We saw the empty tomb

Read Matthew 28:1-10



and spoke to the angel

Jesus is alive!
He ate a meal with me!



Read Luke 24:13-35



Next Issue...

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Focus magazine. If you would like to contribute to the May magazine, please contact the editor by 19th of April.

London Street United Reformed Church

London Street URC, Basingstoke seeks to ensure that all content and information published in this issue of FOCUS is current and accurate. The information included does not in any way constitute legal or professional advice and the church cannot be held liable for actions arising from its use.

London Street United Reformed Church is a working name of
Registered Charity London Street (Basingstoke) United Reformed
Church Charity [reg. no. 1130801]