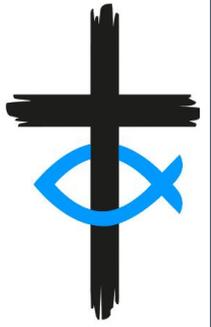




# THE NEWS



*March 2026*

The Magazine of Potters Bar United Reformed Church



**15<sup>th</sup> March - Mothering Sunday**



Dear friends

I hope everyone is keeping well, we have had such a wet winter even a cold dry spell would be welcome.

I am coming up to my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and it has got me reminiscing about the past. Many of you, like me, were brought up during World War Two. Looking back, I feel we were happier then than many of the young people today. We didn't have Television, mobile phones, fridge/freezers, cars, etc. I remember going to the red telephone boxes and pressing button 'B' in the hope that someone hadn't taken their change! We managed with Ration Books, but I was lucky that my grandad had an allotment so we were never short of vegetables. He also had friends who would give him rabbits and pigeons for our dinner.

I lived in a cottage with no hot water and an outside toilet. Nowadays the younger generation feel they are unlucky if they don't have all the mod. cons. We now have mobile phones, microwaves, air fryers, robots, driverless cars, the list goes on. How things have changed – who would have thought we could put a man on the moon, or send a rocket to Mars?

I feel sorry for the young people today as there is so much unrest and violence in the world. All we can do is pray for things to get better.

Let us all look forward to Easter and all that it means, and hopefully another lovely breakfast prepared by our gentlemen members.

God Bless



*Marian Poulton*

*On behalf of the Elders*

**Church Officers and Elders**

**Interim Minister:** Reverend David Aplin

**Serving Elders**

David Aplin, Revd. 07900673529

Alastair Maclean 653636

Janet O'Connor 856967

Frank Palmer 873179

Marian Poulton 07795516707

**Treasurer (Asst):** Alastair Maclean Tel: 01707 335238

**Lettings Officer:** Jane Wood

Mobile: 07879 687569

**Chairman Premises & Finance Committee**

John Knott Tel: 01707 335238

**Mother Teresa's Philosophy**

People are often unreasonable and self-centred.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends. And some genuine enemies.

Succeed anyway.

What you spend years creating, others may destroy overnight. Create anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

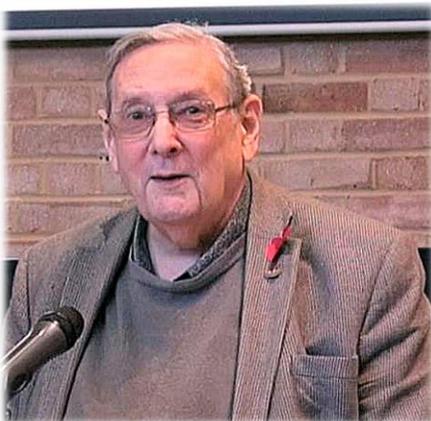
If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous,

Be happy anyway.

Give the best you have, and it may never be enough.

Give the best you have anyway.

**John Cobley**



John sadly passed away on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2025 aged 78 years. John's memory will be treasured with great affection by his many friends

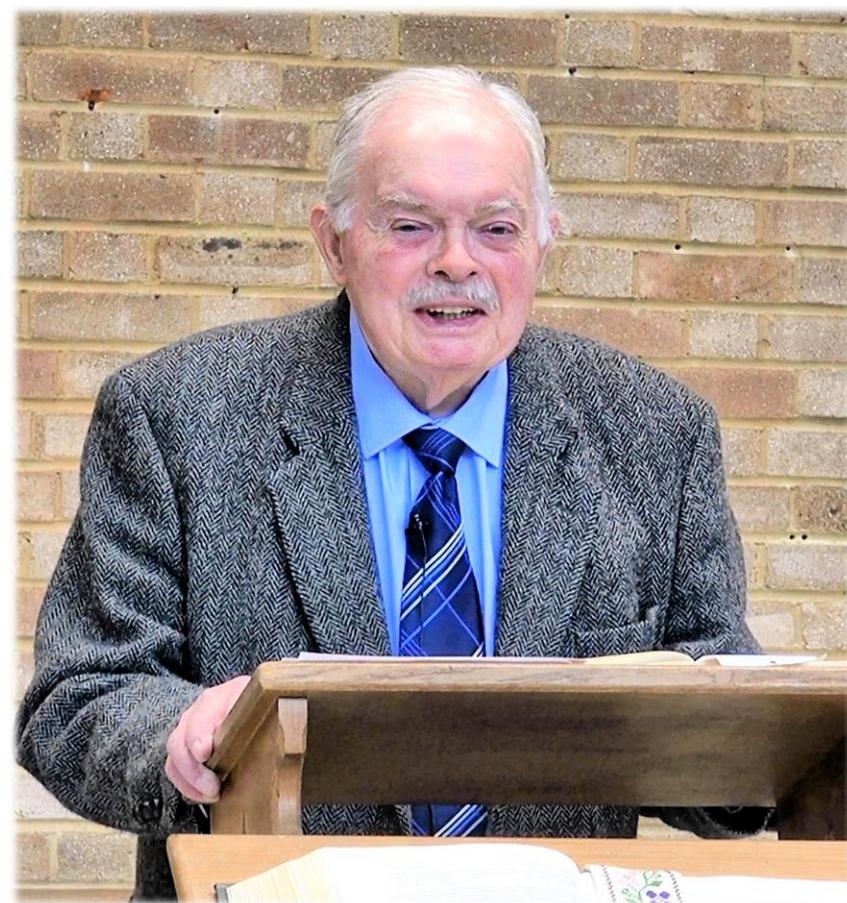
He played a huge part in the life of Christ Church URC, Hatfield and of the Edgware and District Radio Society and will be a loss to all who knew him.

The funeral was held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February at 2 pm at Christ Church URC, 25 St Albans Road East, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 0EJ, followed by the committal at Oak Hill Crematorium at 3 pm led by

Reverend David Aplin.



## Communion Service Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February – led by Mike Findley



*With the Anglican Lectionary differing from ours this week (different Bible readings and themes), Mike has had to work without the usual books to help guide the service in line with the readings. So preparing his reflections had been a challenge, but one he'd enjoyed. And if you need an example of someone who "walks the talk" – look no further.*

Our Bible readings from Micah and 1 Corinthians were aligned with each other. Mike's first theme, drawing on Micah, was humility—being humble, not seeking to be big or important, but instead choosing to walk meekly and do what God wanted, rather than trying to boost our own ego. The second from Corinthians was on how, for many people, the message we professed—Christ crucified and risen for us—seemed like foolishness, just as it had in Paul's day.

Micah had been a prophet from the southern kingdom of Judah, serving between 740 BC and 698 BC. The role of a prophet was often misunderstood, Mike thought; it was less about predicting the distant future and more about speaking on behalf of God to challenge the leaders and the people of the time. And Micah had been troubled by how the Jewish people had strayed from their faith and practices, reminding them that God had done great things for

them, yet they ignored God and went their own way. He challenged them by asking what God truly required. Was it burnt offerings and extravagant displays of devotion? No—Micah insisted that God desired people to live humbly, act justly, and love mercy.

The message was a warning: grand gestures did not impress God; what mattered was the condition of our hearts, what drove us, and the principles by which we lived. We were called to genuine humility, not a showy or artificial kind. God desired that we walked humbly every day.

Considering the vastness of the universe as we understood it, Mike wondered whether the writers of the Old and New Testaments might have spoken more about humility had they known how immense creation was and how powerful God must be. Our calling was to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. The small, quiet acts of service—being present for others, helping those in need, opening our homes—were what truly mattered. We should not seek status or importance for ourselves but simply serve and do God's work humbly.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians had told them that the message of Christ's death on the cross was considered nonsense or foolishness by many. In Paul's time, the idea that a god would allow himself to die, especially in such a shameful way, would have been unthinkable for most people. Gods were expected to be powerful and invulnerable. And Corinth, known for its toughness and moral laxity, was not a city that would have welcomed what it saw as foolishness.

Paul had said that Christianity was not reserved for the upper classes or the highly educated. It was simple and accessible to ordinary people. He told the Corinthians that few of them were wise or influential by worldly standards, but that was not required. True Christian faith meant putting your trust in God, walking humbly, and accepting the message of Christ's death and resurrection.

Many people struggled with the concept of resurrection, even within the church, yet it was central to Christianity—without it, our faith would be just another philosophy. Resurrection opened the door to new life, both in this world and beyond. The Christian message was foolishness to those who were perishing, Paul had written. To those who were being saved, it was the power of God. The "foolishness of God" was wiser than human wisdom, and the "weakness of God" was stronger than human strength. And God had deliberately chosen what the world considered foolish or weak to shame the wise and strong.

The cross was at the centre of our beliefs and the most recognisable symbol of Christianity. Some years ago, Mike's small church in Chiswell Green had been asked to lead the ecumenical service at St. Albans Abbey on Good Friday evening.

One reading from that service, "**Why Do We Lift Up the Cross?**" – which he read to us - remained particularly memorable for him. It encapsulated our beliefs and highlighted Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians.

There was often a mistaken belief among people on the fringes of church life that they were not good enough to become members. Yet, the point of Christianity was that we came as we were, precisely because we were not good enough. The cross bridged the gap between us and God, wiping away our failings. Unlike some other religions, in Christianity, you did not have to become good before joining; you joined and then allowed God to transform you.

Our challenge, therefore, was to walk humbly, love mercy, act justly, and let God be present in our lives, resisting the temptation to seek status or recognition for ourselves.

### Why do we lift up the cross?

Surely, we could have come up with another symbol to front our faith. The stone rolled away, Christ ascending to God, that's a beautiful image. The baby in the manger, the king on the donkey.

Why the cross?

Why would we want this image always in front of us? Why do we have this image as a representation of what we believe, or what ultimately saves us?

We are Christians. Followers of the Christ who died on this cross because He loved us. Because he has something to teach the world and would not be deterred, even by death. Look at the cross and remember Him when your heart wants to betray someone you love. Look at the cross and remember Him when you are tempted to deny who you are or what you believe. Look at the cross and remember Him when you want to wash your hands of the whole awful mess you see in the world.

The cross cries out its warning against loving yourself more than others. Against fearing truth that may cost you something. Against selling what is priceless for 30 pieces of silver. Do not ever forget this symbol. Do not ever let it become just a piece of jewellery, or a work of art, or a design for a stained-glass window. It should burn your heart and mind and spirit every day.

Why do we lift this up?

Maybe because the cross has the power to change the world. We are Christians, followers of the Christ who died on this cross because He loved us. And we are Christians because we believe He has something to give the world. That he was not defeated, even by death. He calls us to resurrection. Not resuscitation of our old life, but resurrection to an entirely new way. We are called into death with Him, death to all that holds us down or keeps us apart, death to our meaningless clinging to that which will crumble and fall. We are called to new life through Jesus Christ. Who died forgiving. And lives on with the message of new life still singing in our hearts.

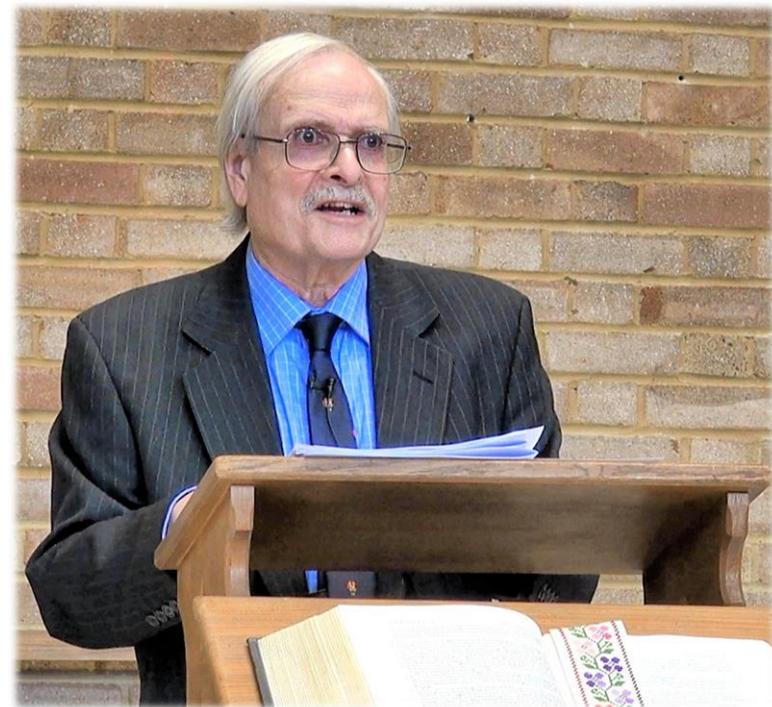
Lift him high.

Never put that symbol down. Let it live in you. Let it sing out its truth that even when we fail, God remains, love prevails, and we are forgiven and freed. Resurrection happens today.

There will come a time when everything around you will be gone, blown away like dust. But there will never come a time when the wind breath of God ceases to blow, when the Spirit sleeps.

Let us worship what holds everything fast.

## Morning Service Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February – led by Martyn Macphee



*Last week I commented about Mike Findley “walking the talk”, so it’s nice to be able to observe that Martyn fits the definition of “The Salt of the Earth” so very clearly.*

### **The Salt of the Earth: Living as Salty Christians**

We were to focus on the first verse of the day’s NT reading “You are the salt of the earth.” The image was straightforward and unmistakable. Jesus employed an everyday object—salt—that was as familiar to his listeners then as it is to us now. The message was clear: just as a pinch of salt unlocked the flavour in food, a small group of believers could transform the world around them. They became the salt for the earth, carrying the message to others.

The image of salt challenged us to consider how we could be “the salt of the earth” as we were called to be—salty Christians. Salt worked best when dissolved into food. The point was not to eat the salt itself, but to enjoy the food enhanced by it. Similarly, Christians were not called to

draw attention to themselves, but to work quietly behind the scenes, adding the right flavour to the world.

Jesus had warned his disciples not to make a show of their good deeds, such as giving alms with ostentation. Instead, he taught them to give discreetly—“don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does.” Salty Christians blended into the community, making the world a better place without seeking the spotlight. The trick was to blend in without losing one’s identity as a disciple of Jesus Christ. As Reinhold Niebuhr put it, “be in the world, but not of the world”.

Standing too far apart from the world could lead to being seen as odd or out of touch. On the other hand, standing too close risked blending in so much that one’s Christian witness was lost. The challenge was to engage with society without being assimilated into it.

Salty Christians lived in the world without becoming part of it. They interacted with all members of the community, from the powerful to the ordinary, without losing their distinction as Christian witnesses. It could be tempting to go with the flow, but Christians had to ask themselves: “if you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?”. Would others know you were a disciple of Jesus Christ if you did not tell them? How did your words and actions reflect your faith? Was there anything you would not do because you are a Christian?

The story of Eric Liddell, the Scottish runner who had refused to compete in the Olympics on a Sunday, illustrated this principle. He had been expected to win the 100 metres but chose instead to run the 400 metres on the following Monday, winning gold and breaking the world record. His actions had spoken louder than words, and his faith shaped his choices. Salty Christians were known by what they did - and by what they would not do.

Everyday choices, from what we watched to what we read, reflected our faith and influenced others. Others were watching, and our decisions spoke volumes about our values.

Jesus had not only called his disciples “the salt of the earth” but also warned them, “if salt loses its flavour, it is good for nothing except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot”. In Jesus’ time, most salt came from the Dead Sea and was often contaminated with other minerals. Over time, exposure to the elements could cause it to lose its flavour and become useless, then used only for salting icy roadways.

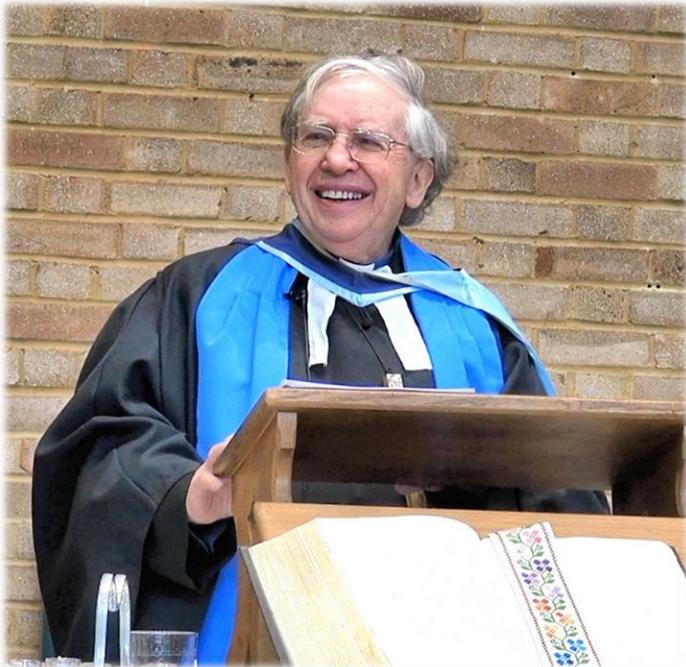
For Christians, losing our saltiness was a real risk. Yet the Gospel assured us that our saltiness could be restored by turning away from the influence of the secular world and returning to Christ. The word was “repent.” Through repentance, prayer, and seeking forgiveness, we drew closer to God, much like the way a rope cut and then knotted became shorter, as in Beth Moore’s Bible study illustration. Though our lifeline might be full of knots from past failings, it connected us to the same God—and each time we returned, and with each new knot, we grew closer to Him.

Joseph Hart, who had written the hymn “Come ye sinners, poor and needy,” had understood this well. Jesus stood ready to save, full of pity, love, and power. As Christians, we were called to be the salt of the earth: quietly adding flavour, living out our faith, and drawing closer to God despite our imperfections.

*Martyn has a serious face, and whilst there is humour in his reflections, we rarely see him smile. So being caught out on the date of the Olympics in which Eric Liddell competed (proving that at least one person in the congregation was awake!) we got a smile. It's one of the pleasures of editing the Service videos.*



## Communion Service Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February - led by Revd. David Aplin



*The day's two readings both described meetings with God at the top of mountains, bright lights and clouds - Moses receiving stone tablets, and Jesus's Transfiguration.*

David opened with the Riddle of St Ives; lots of people and animals, but ultimately only one person was actually going to St Ives.

Moses had gone up the mountain, David noted, but he had not gone alone—Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu accompanied him, along with seventy elders. In the end though, Moses had been the only one to meet with God directly: the others were only able to witness the dazzling light of God's presence from a distance. It had been a pivotal moment in the Jewish faith. The stones, the ark, the tabernacle, the altar, and the vestments were all specified for the people to see.

Looking at the story of the Transfiguration, we might also ask how many people were present. Matthew's account might have suggested that it was just Jesus, Moses, and Elijah (*though Peter James and John were clearly close enough to talk to Jesus*). The Scripture told us that Peter had offered to build shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. But the reading had also made it clear that, in the end, Jesus had been alone.

While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud declared, "This is my son, in whom I am well pleased." The disciples present had been filled with fear, but Jesus had approached and touched them gently, telling them not to be afraid. And when they opened their eyes, they saw that Jesus was alone.

So, why was the Transfiguration a solitary event? Jesus had not required the presence of the great prophets to validate His identity. It was far more significant that the Father Himself had proclaimed, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased."

David reflected on the meaning of Jesus' actions, drawing near to the disciples, touching them gently, and telling them not to be afraid. The disciples had enjoyed a close, personal relationship with Jesus. He was not remote, elevated far above them, or like a distant king surrounded by officials and armies. Instead, He was present, someone they could touch, and who could touch them in return.

This was more than stating the obvious—it held meaning for each of us. Our relationship with God was not a matter of us being very low and Him being very high. God had chosen to be close to us, and for us to be close to Him. Our relationship with God was personal, through the Spirit. Jesus should be our best friend—or, as children might say, our "bestest" friend. He wanted it to be so. We should let Him into our hearts; let Him reach deep into our souls. Jesus loved us—we should love Him in return, loving Him as a close friend, not as a distant figure to be feared.



He'd bent down to comfort His disciples when they were afraid, and He would do the same for us. Throughout our lives, He would encourage us. We were to trust in Him and love Him always.



*A fitting message for the reception of two new church members, Jenny Blumsom and Maureen Marlow – something for us all to celebrate.*



## Lunchtime Recital Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February – Franklin Cing-Jie Tan (piano)



It was Joyce (Joyce Lau Sze Wing) who has played the organ for us on a few Sundays who suggested we invite her husband Franklin to play for us at a Lunchtime Recital, with a programme described as

**From Passion to Dream** - A journey of musical imagination from Beethoven's impassioned *Pathétique Sonata* to Liszt's serene *Liebestraum* — embracing



Chopin's lyricism and Debussy's impressionism, revealing the piano's power to express the full spectrum from passion to dream.

### Programme:

**Beethoven - Pathétique Sonata**

**Chopin - Waltz in Eb Op.18**

**Chopin - Waltz in Ab Op. 34, No. 1**

**Chopin - Waltz Op. 64 No. 2 in C# minor**

**Debussy - Arabesque No.1**

**Liszt - Liebestraum**

An excellent choice of pieces for our audience. And Franklin certainly delivered on the piano's power of expression. As ardent watchers of the pianist's hands (*I commented for Peter May in January that his fingers seemed to caress the keys.*) Franklin's fingers seemed to tickle the keys during the Chopin Waltzes.

Born in Indonesia, in his introduction Franklin told us that he'd started to play the piano at the age of 12, captivated by the music he'd heard on his father's radio. And his programme for us represented some of his

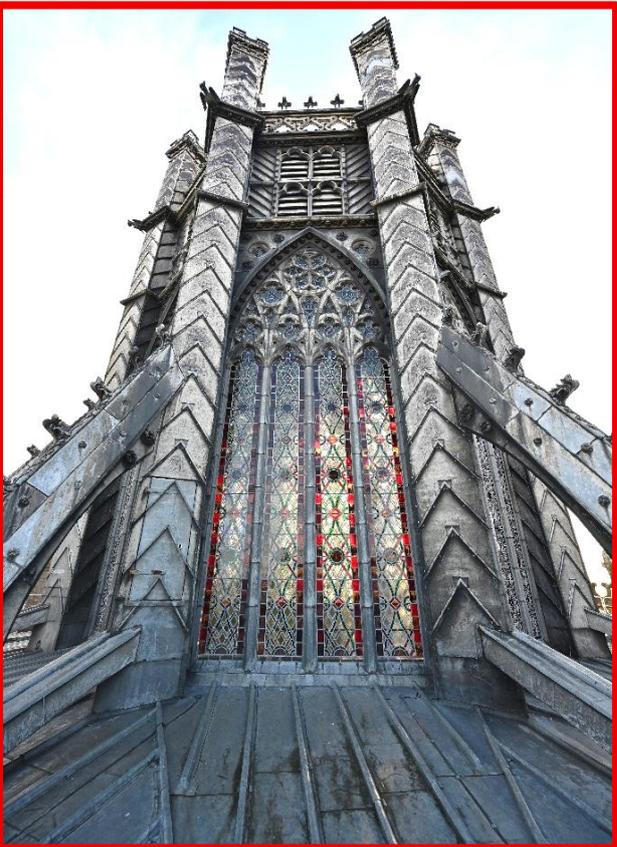
favourite pieces – as they were for us as well.

After the performance, in an aside, he told me that he felt he'd not played at his best – something that I, and the rest of the audience, would not have noticed. But it does allow me to hope that he'll come to play for us again. And someone said, when I mentioned Franklin's comment, "If that's how he plays when he's not at his best, I'm definitely going to be there when he is!" I think we'd all agree with that.

Thankyou Franklin and thankyou Joyce!



## David Morris PHOTO CORNER - VISIT TO ELY CATHEDRAL

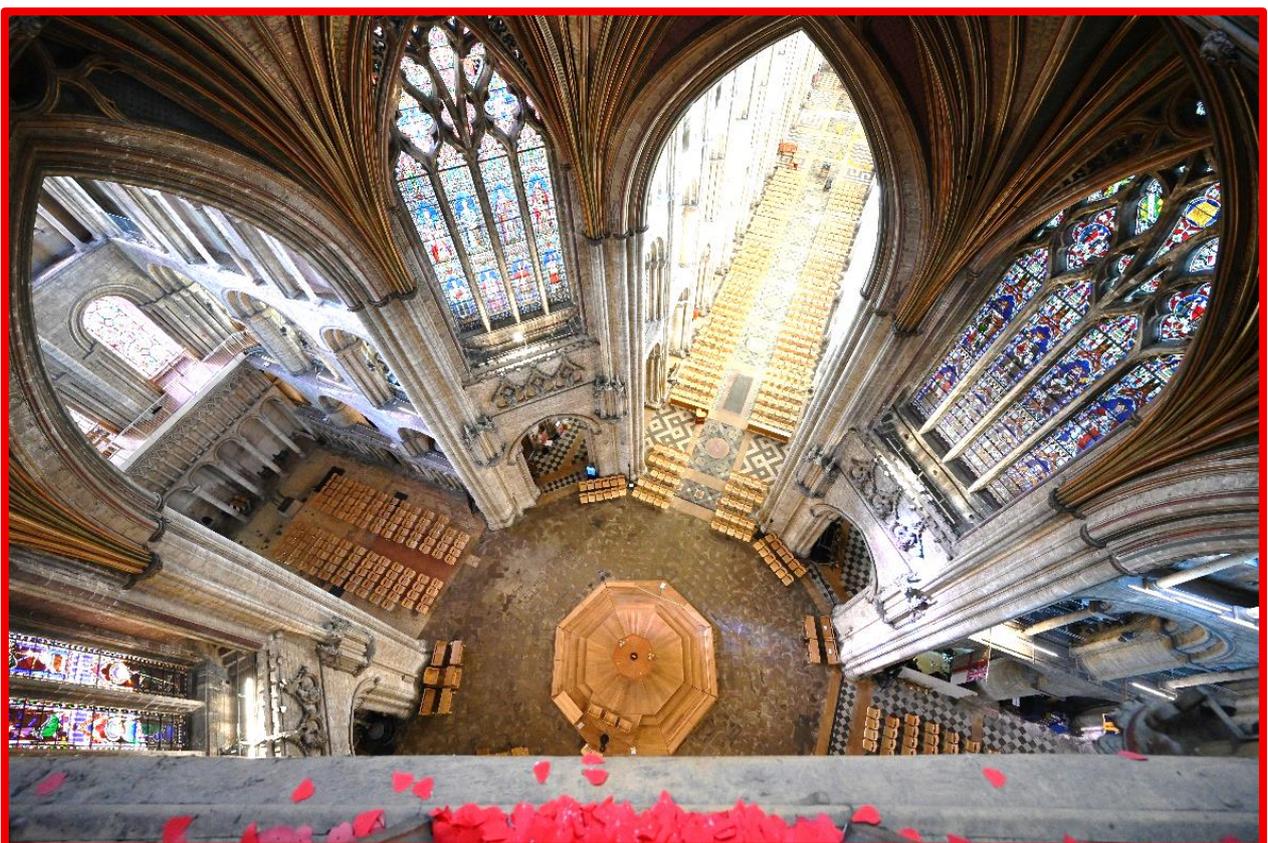


Ely Cathedral's Octagon Tower is a 14th-century masterpiece built after the original Norman central tower collapsed in 1322, replacing it with a unique wooden, lead-covered octagonal structure topped by a lantern, designed by William of Ely, to create a lighter, more open space over the crossing, serving as an engineering marvel of its time. This innovative design used timber for the wide span, supporting a complex internal structure and lantern, and remains a symbol of resilience and medieval ingenuity. It is not a bell tower; the bells are located in the West Tower.

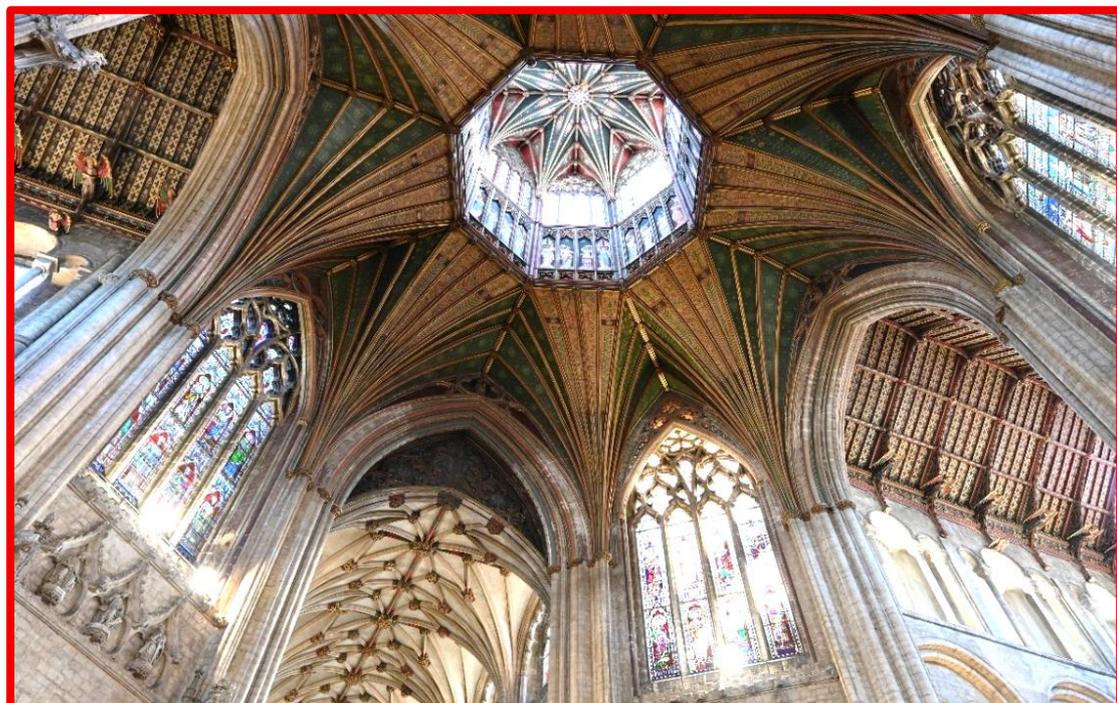
Our guide took us to the main tower, a climb of about 170 spiral stone steps, (there is a stop halfway to have a rest). After the initial climb we ventured outside to have a good view of Ely and surrounding countryside. Then made our way through a small hatch leading into the wooden lantern itself. The central feature was rebuilt in the 14th century after a fire. It is famous for its painted angel doors and celebrating music and praise.

To return it was back through the hatch and 170 steps back to ground level. The central lantern, also octagonal in form, has angles offset from the great Octagon and panels showing pictures of musical angels. One of the panels had been opened to enable us to take pictures.

Looking down onto the nave. The poppies on the ledge are from remembrance.



2 Pictures looking up into the octagon tower from ground level.



A view of the Altar

We will definitely make a return visit, a wonderful building itself plus idyllic to take photographs.

This is the third tower I have climbed to date, St Albans Abbey and Lincoln Cathedral (the tallest climbable tower, is not easy – 338 steps). On my bucket list for 2026 are York Minster and St Pauls.



## Diary for March

Sun 1	11.00	Communion Service led by Mr David Ramsay
Fri 6	12.15	Lunchtime Recital by Vanessa Brooks-White (violin) and Charis Morgan (viola)
	13.15	Charity Lunch
	14.30	Phoenix Whist Group (every Friday)
	19.00	Choir Practice (every Friday)
Sun 8	11.00	Morning Service led by Mrs Anne Walton
Mon 9	19.00 – 20.30	First Rehearsal for the Good Friday Choir – Stainer’s “The Crucifixion”
Tue 10	14.00	Elders’ Meeting
Sun 15	11.00	Communion Mothers’ Day Service -led by Reverend David Aplin
Mon 16	19.00 – 20.30	Rehearsal for the Good Friday Choir
Thur 19	10.30	Events Group Meeting
Sun 22	11.00	Morning Service led by Mr Tony Alderman
Mon 23	19.00 – 20.30	Rehearsal for the Good Friday Choir
Wed 25	14.00	Knit & Natter Group in the Vestry
Sun 29	11.00	Palm Sunday Service led by Mr Mike Findley followed by Church Meeting (British Summertime begins - clocks forward on Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> )
Mon 30	19.00 – 20.30	Rehearsal for Good Friday Choir
<b>APRIL 2</b>	<b>18.30</b>	<b>Maundy Thursday Supper with communion led by Reverend David Aplin</b>
<b>Fri 3</b>	<b>17.00</b>	<b>Final Rehearsal for Performance at 19.00 of “Stainer’s Crucifixion” in our Church</b>
<b>Sun 5</b>	<b>9.45</b>	<b>Easter Breakfast followed by Communion Service at 11.00.</b>

## Rotas

### Pulpit Supply:

1<sup>st</sup> David Ramsay, 8<sup>th</sup> Anne Walton, 15<sup>th</sup> Revd David Aplin, 22<sup>nd</sup> Tony Alderman, 29<sup>th</sup> Mike Findley

### Duty Officer:

1<sup>st</sup> Frank Palmer, 8<sup>th</sup> Janet Green, 15<sup>th</sup> Frank Palmer, 22<sup>nd</sup> Janet Green, 29<sup>th</sup> David Ramsay

### Flower Donations: (Arrangers: Heather Rae & Marian Poulton)

1<sup>st</sup> Heather Rae/Geoff Peterson, 8<sup>th</sup> Flower Fund, 15<sup>th</sup> Flower Fund, 22<sup>nd</sup> Tony/Barbara Corfe, 29<sup>th</sup> Flower Fund

### Communion Preparation:

1<sup>st</sup> Margaret Hillyard 15<sup>th</sup> David/Chris Ramsay

### Coffee:

1<sup>st</sup> Chris/David Ramsay, 8<sup>th</sup> Heather Rae, 15<sup>th</sup> Marian Poulton, 22<sup>nd</sup> Margaret Hillyard, 29<sup>th</sup> Chris/David Ramsay

### Readers:

1<sup>st</sup> Frank Palmer, 8<sup>th</sup> David Ramsay, 15<sup>th</sup> Marian Poulton, 22<sup>nd</sup> Mary Deller, 29<sup>th</sup> John Knott

## I've got a Service in the Morning

*(Phil Barton, arr. Robert)*

*(This was sung by the three lads at our church dinner: Robert, Frank and David Ramsay, accompanied by John Knott on the piano)*

I've got a service in the morning, fuzzy eyed and feeling far from prime.  
David be very gentle, coz I'm feeling mental, so get me to the church on time.

We light a candle in the morning; Janet don't forget to make it shine

Whoops can't work the lighter; a match should make it brighter,  
so get me to the church on time.

*I've had a coffee, give me some more*

*If I'm still drinking, don't shut the door, cos....*

We've got an anthem in the morning, practice in the hall from half past nine,

No time for coffee, hope we're not off-key, so get me to the church on time.

We've got a reading in the morning, the Bible Reader is getting past his prime,

Hope he won't mumble, someone's sure to grumble, so get me to the church on time.

*If I've a reading, tell me before*

*If I'm a steward, tell me the score, cos.....*

We've got a sermon in the morning, our preacher really lays it on the line,

Wake me if I'm sleeping, hope that no one's peeping, so get me to the church on time.

We're singing hymns all through the morning, those with stirring tunes are always fine,

Cheer me if I'm saddened, my Soul is truly gladdened, so get me to the church on time.

*If I'm still sleeping, give me a call*

*I want to be there, to see you all, cos....*

I've got a service in the morning, look how John has made the windows shine,

Gosh what a blunder, my world is torn asunder, I'm here and it's just half past nine.

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## Recipe for a New Year

Take 12 months, then thoroughly clean them from all bitterness, hate and jealousy.

Cut each month into 28 or 31 parts. Mix well in to each day one part of each of the following:

Patience, courage and work, faithfulness, generosity and kindness.

Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation and one good deed.

Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play and a cupful of good humour.

Pour all of this into a vessel of love.

Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile and serve with quietness, unselfishness and cheerfulness.

## The Highway Companion

A while ago Margaret Barton, loaned me a book written by Sir Harry Secombe, called the Highway Companion. It was written from readings, memorable poems and heart-warming prose on themes covering creation, faith, hope, charity, love and peace, given over the many years of a TV Programme he presented called “Highway”. It is difficult to reconcile what we know of the comedian in the Goon Show to a very professional singer, writer of books and a deeply religious gentleman. I have chosen a memorable interview he had on the ‘Highway’ visit to Jersey, with Gerald Durrell at his zoo there. He writes:

“A zoo dedicated to the conservation of endangered animals throughout the world. Immediately the interview started a Limia – an animal only to be found in the wild on the island of Madagascar -leapt onto my shoulder. I started off by asking Gerald what animals he had there at his zoo, and he replied happily, ‘Oh we’ve got everything. What would you like to be bitten by?’

In a more serious vein, he said that as far as mankind is concerned, all things are possible. Paraphrasing the great American naturalist William Reed, he said that as far as mankind is concerned, while it is possible another Mozart or Rembrandt might be born, any species of animal once lost is lost forever. Right on cue at these words the Limia leapt from my shoulder. “

I was reminded of this conversation when I again came across the poem selected by Maxwell Deas at Sunderland for his reading. The poem “The Sandpiper” written by Celia Thaxter, and contains these memorable lines: ‘ I do not fear for thee, though wroth, the tempest rushes through the sky,

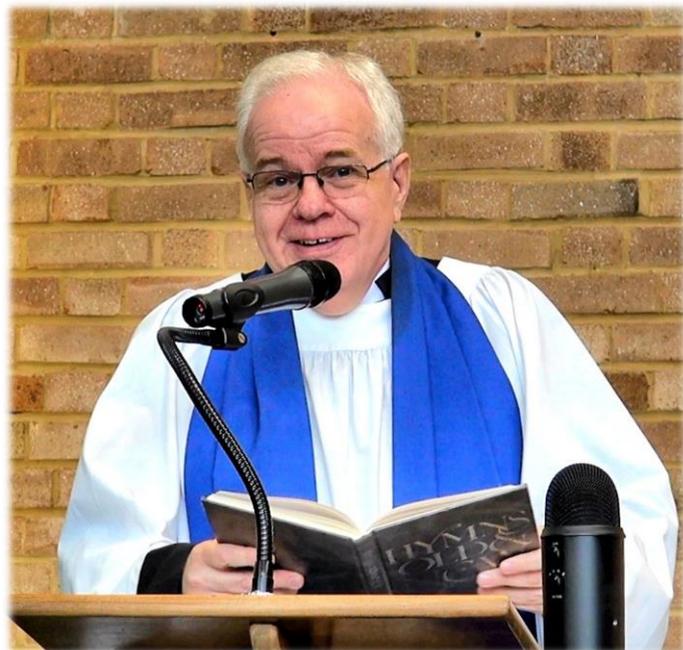
For are we not God’s children both, Thou little sandpiper and I? ‘

I know that Gerald Durrell would approve of those words, so for that matter would the leaping Limia.

*Sir Harry Secombe*

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## Morning Service Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February –led by Canon Richard Osborn.



*Richard was last with us in May 2025, so we were all suffering from RODS (Richard Osborn Deficit Syndrome) and hoping for a cure, which duly came. And once again he joined our mini-choir for an anthem – meaning we were perhaps the only choir in Europe well stocked with tenors- if only for the day.*



83 years ago was the last time when Lent and the Muslim observance of Ramadan had begun on the same day, Richard told us - *and he didn’t ask for a show of hands for those who had been around at the time.* Lent and Ramadan had much in common. Both were centred around values of fasting, reflection, discipline, and the strengthening of faith. Lent lasted for 40 days but didn’t include Sundays – giving us a respite day each week.

It was an important time, as we mirrored the 40 days and nights that Jesus spent in the desert wilderness (He didn't get Sundays off!). It was a period of spiritual preparation for the celebration of Easter and the main elements to the observance of Lent were prayer, worship and study; almsgiving (giving to charities); and fasting.

Richard suggested we might like to devote more time to prayer and reading the Bible at home during these 40 days, reflecting on what we read, or join a Lent study group. Giving to charity was another key aspect; and if we decided to give something up for Lent, the money we saved could be directed to a specific charity. Fasting was often the most difficult discipline of Lent. We might think of giving up biscuits, chocolate, or alcohol but compared to the Muslim community, our traditional fasts could seem rather modest. Richard thought we might consider abstinence in the widest possible sense—perhaps abstaining from watching television at certain times, not using computers and mobile devices as much, or using the car less, and walking or taking public transport more.

A particularly practical and often overlooked form of abstinence, suggested by Pope Leo, was to refrain from words that offended and hurt our neighbour. He encouraged us to disarm our language, avoid harsh words and rash judgement, refrain from slander and speaking ill of those not present and unable to defend themselves. Instead, we were to strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among friends, in the media, and within Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred would give way to words of hope and peace.

The beginning of Lent, particularly the first Sunday, invited us to reflect on Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. Temptation was a natural element of the human condition. We were constantly faced with temptation—hardly a moment passed without it, in one form or another. We were regularly tempted to put ourselves first, to seek our own comfort and pleasure. Since we were all sinners, we needed Lent—a time focused on reflection, self-examination, and penitence. But we needed hope as well; the assurance that temptation's power need not overcome us.

The temptation of Jesus had followed directly after His baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan - a pivotal moment in his life - when a voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." This spiritual high point was quickly followed by the Spirit leading him into the desert to be tempted by the devil. This was remarkable: why would God allow His Son to endure such an ordeal? Perhaps it was necessary for Jesus, who was both God and man, to truly empathise with humanity. If He was to bear our sin and stand with us in our frailty, He needed to experience our broken humanity in its fullness. As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews had said, "Because Jesus himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted."

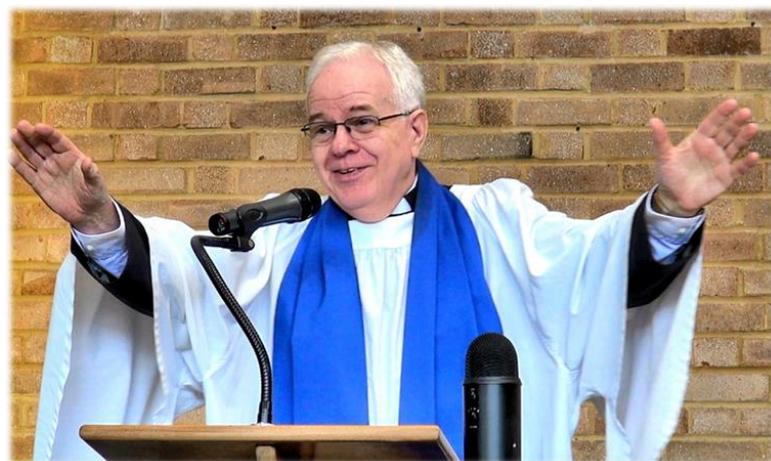
But Jesus' freedom in responding to temptation was also crucial. His choice to resist temptation reversed the effects of the Fall. While Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, had chosen not to resist temptation and thus brought about original sin, Jesus, in the wilderness, had chosen to resist, beginning the undoing of the curse.

The first temptation (food for a very hungry man ) was to seek immediate, personal gratification—a challenge we also faced daily. Our society increasingly struggled with patience, and the pursuit of instant fulfilment was commonplace. Jesus had rejected this temptation, quoting Deuteronomy and choosing to place God's will above personal comfort.

The second temptation was to seek attention through sensational acts, to put ego at the centre. Again, Jesus had resisted, responding with Deuteronomy: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Finally, the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would worship him. This was the temptation of worldly power—a lure many leaders and individuals succumbed to, seeking dominance and control (And Richard reminded us that we should be mindful, perhaps, of our own petty pursuits for power, and how we were prepared to push people aside so we could have control). Jesus, however, knew that true authority belonged to God alone, and he refused to bow. Having resisted all three temptations, Jesus stood with us in our own struggles, knowing firsthand what it meant to be tempted, and demonstrating that it was possible to resist, provided we remained close to God and attentive to His will. As we continued through Lent, it was important to remember the cost Jesus had borne—physically and spiritually. We were encouraged to commit to reading Scripture, deepening our knowledge of God's Word, and strengthening our own resolve against temptation. Though it was only through the Spirit's strength and the victory of Christ's cross that sin and death were overcome, each of us had a part to play in daily battles with temptation.

So, we should pray for strength to resist and give thanks to God for all Jesus was willing to endure, so that we might be free.



## *Lunchtime Recital Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March – Vanessa*

### *Brookes-White (violin) and Charis Morgan (viola)*



### **Programme:**

**Folk Tunes: King of the Fairies and O'Carolan's Concert**

**J.S Bach - 3 Duets after Two-part Inventions, S.772-786**

**Sibelius - Duo in C Major for Violin and Viola**

**Mozart - Duo No2 in B flat, KV 424 II. Andante Cantabile**

**Benedikt Brydern - Bebop for Beagles**

**I. Hoover's Holiday**

**II. Cookies in Space**

**IV. Roosevelt's Sun Shower**

**V. Flea Control: Mission Impossible**

**Four Tangos (Various composers and we will announce these on the day)**

**Halvorsen - Sarabande con Variazioni**

## Moozic appreciation at PBURC – something you may not know about.



The U3A Potters Bar and Barnet piano groups are getting together on **Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> April** to give their second informal piano concert at the United Reformed Church, 245 Darkes Lane. EN6 1 BZ. And it's free.

We will **start at 3 pm. Duration about 2 and a half hours with a break for tea.**

The programme covers all genres and skill levels and a dozen of us are preparing to "face the music". on the church Yamaha, grand piano. Our programme includes solo, duet, and trio performances. About 20 in total.

There will be a little song and a poem too. It's a great opportunity for us put away our nerves and to show what we can do and to have fun. And we do.

Rod (*pictured having been corralled, at the PBURC Church Dinner panto*)

He assures us that Moooonlight Serenade is not in the programme!

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### Forgotten Verse

MARGARET Skeet, from Little Brickhill, Bucks, recalls her brother playing a song when she was younger, cleverly written to involve cards and the Bible. It tells the tale of how a soldier arrested for playing cards in church explains himself.

The earliest reference was in a book by Mary Bacon in 1762, but it was a hit for country musician Tex Ritter in 1948. Here's an excerpt...

#### DECK OF CARDS

Tex Ritter  
(1948)

"When I look at the Ace... it reminds me there is but one God,

And the deuce, tells me the Bible is divided into two...

When I see the three, I think of father, son and holy ghost.

When I look at the four, I think of... Matthew, Mark Luke and John...

When I see the five, it reminds me of the five wise virgins, who trimmed their lamp...

When I look at the six, I know that in six days, God made this great heaven and earth

And the seven tells me that on the seventh day, He rested ... and called it holy.

And when I see the eight, I think of ...Noah, his wife their three sons and their wives.

When I see the nine. I think of the lepers our Saviour cleansed...

When I see the ten, I always remembered the ten commandments...

When I see the King... I know there is but one King of Heaven...

So you see Sir, my deck of cards serves me not only as a Bible,

almanac, but also a prayer book."

*We think he got off!*

# Church Dinner 14<sup>th</sup> February 2026



A couple of  
Valentine Poems  
and Grace from  
David Ramsay





**The Guardians of the Premises**



**Malcolm Golland who serenaded us with his Clarinet.**



**And then.....  
wait for it!**



# The 'Tilbury Players' presented Cinderella's Beanstalk, a John Knott Production







A big thankyou to everyone who took part – to our guest actors & actresses - and especially to John Knott for holding it all together for us on the night – the one person totally off-camera.

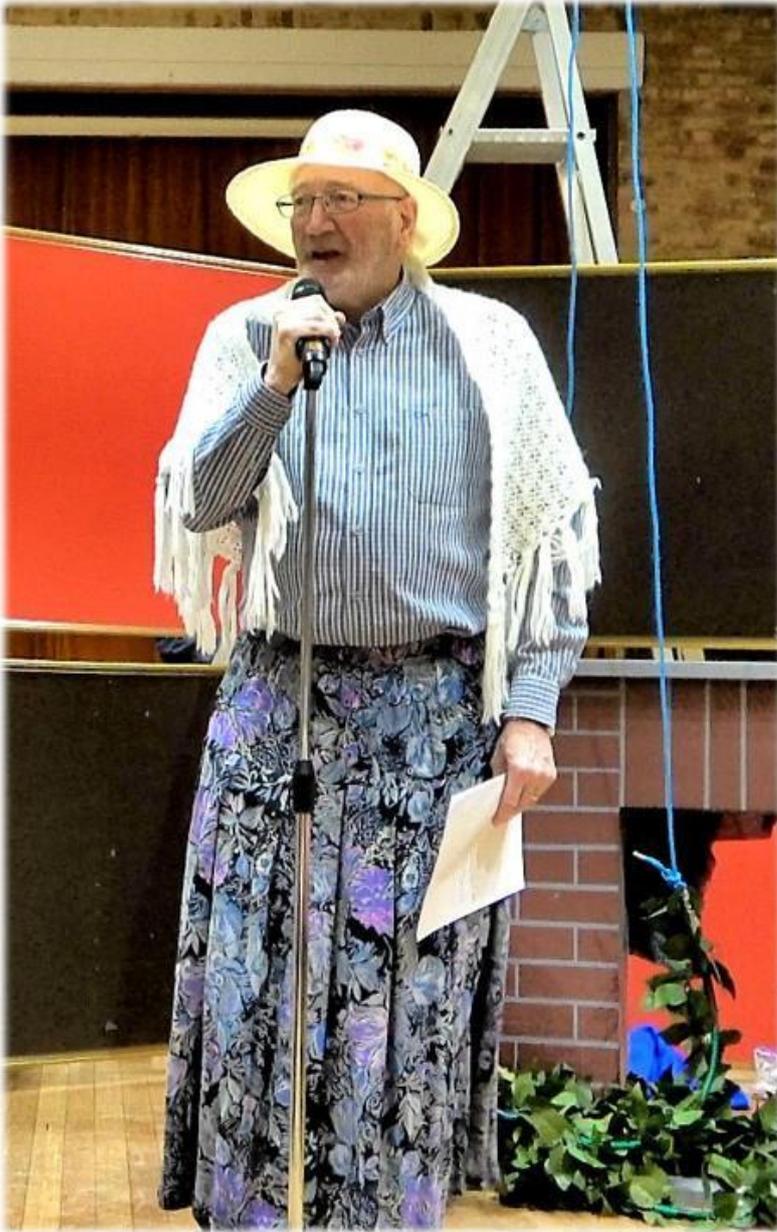


A big thanks too to Rod and to Steve for taking on their roles unforwarned on the night – and Steve was left holding his sign long after the scenes had changed – a true hero.

And to David Ramsay for the closing prayers.

The video of the play is on our website at <https://pottersbarurc.org/latest-news-2-2/> , though some parts are just off the “stage” covered by the camera. For all the cast it is a chance to see what the audience saw – if you can stand the thought of it!

We all had a big laugh!



And we should perhaps especially thank John and Janice Gunther, who are regulars at our recitals and charity lunches (and dance at our BBQs) for agreeing to take part in the Church Dinner entertainment with a poem reading, and taking on the roles of Prince and an Ugly Sister – surely a mis-casting in the latter case!



# THE GOOD FRIDAY CHOIR

## John Stainer's Crucifixion.

**7.00pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2026**

Potters Bar United Reformed Church  
Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1BZ

**Director of Music – Stephen Jones**

**Accompanist – Simon Worley**

The Good Friday Choir will be having four evening rehearsals on  
Mondays March 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> - 7.00 - 8.30 pm  
with a final rehearsal at 17.00 before the performance  
at The United Reformed Church on Good Friday

If you enjoy singing, please come and join us and give your details below.

**We would love to welcome you**, but are asking for a donation of £20 this year  
towards the cost of the soloists and accompanist. Paying by card will be an option.

We hope that some of you will have **your own copies** of **The Crucifixion** and can bring them.  
Stephen has located a source of some additional free copies that we can borrow if needed.

We'll have the traditional glass of wine or juice and hot cross bun once we are done on the day!



Name: .....

Telephone No: .....

Email: .....

Church / Choral Group: .....

Please circle :    Soprano                      Alto                      Tenor                      Bass

**Complete & return this slip as soon as possible before 7<sup>th</sup> February:**

by email: [robert\\_hillyard@hotmail.com](mailto:robert_hillyard@hotmail.com) (Robert underscore Hillyard)

or hand in to: The Office at PBURC for Attention of Robert Hillyard.

If you have any questions please call: 01707 654165

*We will assume that you will attend all rehearsals unless you let us know.*