



# THE NEWS



## *June News*

The Magazine of Potters Bar United Reformed Church



The beauty of the English Countryside in Spring



Dear friends

I am sure everyone appreciates the beautiful flower arrangements we enjoy every Sunday in the church, four of which were on the cover of May's News, so I thought I would give you some background information. Presently there are 7 of us – 3 groups of 2 (Chris & Margaret Hillyard, Marian and Heather, and Janet O'C & Maren) and Barbara who does it alone. Therefore each group does it 3 times a year. We buy the flowers from Tesco or Sainsburys.

Albert Waite was the organizer for very many years when I joined the church in 1995, and he used to go to Springfield at Crews Hill every Thursday and always did very distinctive arrangements. One of the special memories at that time is of the small Easter Cross. He bought the frame and it was always Margaret Hill's job to fill it with daffodils - if still in season - or yellow roses. It was then hung on the brick wall in the church.



When he died very unexpectedly Barbara Corfe took over and arranged everything very efficiently. She asked for volunteers, as mentioned above, some of whom had no experience at all, I for one. However, with a little bit of instruction we managed. Barbara also arranged workshops with LUI the owner of Majestic Flowers – no longer in Darkes Lane - at one of which we were shown how to make wreaths for Christmas. At Christmas the church is always filled with decorated and lit Trees (thanks to Robert). Steve the Caretaker dresses the big tree and each of us does one tree each. Babara also organised the poppies on Remembrance Day sewing over 150 knitted



poppies (which the Knit & Natter group had made), to netting which was draped over the pulpit. She also arranged the artificial flowers in the vestibule, changing them for the seasons. Albert had originated this.



I have also spoken at length to Margaret Barton, pictured here in 2002, who with Jean Taylor (Roger Taylor's mother) was in charge of flowers in the 80's. She named some other ladies who you may remember – Gwen Pursey, Barbara Potts, and Margaret Miller. There was of course a very large congregation at that time, and they had Flower Festivals which were open to the public, but she said their busy time was for Weddings. One year they had 13 Weddings and on one occasion they had two Weddings on the same day. The mothers of the brides each wanted their own flowers and colours which must have been so difficult, but the ladies managed it.

As most of you contribute to the cost of the flowers which is a date chosen for remembrance of a loved one or a birthday or special occasion, we thank you very much indeed and so the flowers will continue to give pleasure to us all. If you would like to join this list, there are some dates available.

Wishing you all a very healthy, happy and safe summer holiday – wherever you may go.

*Janet O'Connor*

*On behalf of the Elders*

## Church Officers and Elders

**Interim Minister:** Reverend David Aplin

### **Serving Elders**

David Aplin, Revd. 07900673529

Alastair Maclean 653636

Maureen Marlow 652252

Janet O'Connor 856967

Frank Palmer 873179

Marian Poulton 07795516707

**Lettings Officer:**

Jane Wood

Mobile: 07879 687569

**Chairman Premises & Finance Committee**

John Knott Tel: 01707 335238

## **Out of the mouths of babes.....**

Whatever the relationship between God and Mother Nature, we know that God wants us to take care of this beautiful world He gave us. Parents have been teaching their children about Nature long before folks began talking of ecology and pollution. There's the time, for example, when a boy went fishing with his Dad and was scolded for tossing a banana peel into a stream. "The Lord doesn't like us to dirty up His rivers," Dad explained. Just then a sudden squall came up, with thunder crashing and lightning forks stabbing down all around them. The two fishermen hurried back to camp through a drenching downpour. As they sat shivering miserably in their tent, soaked to the skin, the boy looked out at the darkening heavens and said,

"All that over one little banana peel!"

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God has so much to do each day that this little girl felt quite sympathetic toward Him. When her mother complained because all three children were sick at once, 10-year-old Cheryl said, "If you think you have troubles, Mummy, just think about God. He has to watch His children all over the world. Now, that's what I call troubles!"

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As mentioned in my letter, we have a Knit & Natter Group which meets once a month and Maren Aplin brought some of her little chicks that she had made for Easter for the children in her daughter's Special Needs School.

Each one contained a crème egg.

We are quite a large group now – having 12 or more ladies each month and recently we have sent a number of blankets, some crocheted - double and single, lap blankets, many scarves with matching bobble hats, and jumpers to Ukraine. We all enjoy a cup of tea and a biscuit but mainly there's much chatter and laughing.



## Stephen Jones at 75

After we sang Happy Birthday Stephen last Sunday (*with that lovely discordant finish*) it's good to reflect on our good fortune to have had Stephen as our Director of Music for the last 14 years.

And we nearly missed the opportunity when Maurice Kench stood down. We were told that Stephen with his multiple choirs and teaching commitments was far too busy to take on another role. We have to thank Paula for intervening and insisting that he was the man for the job.

Stephen is our organist most Sundays and opens and closes the Services with a musical interlude – and that might be his most obvious presence for some. But there is a lot more to the Director of Music role. Essentially it is to enable and to foster the musical life of our church in both the social and religious context, music being an important part of our church life, and of our outreach.

Having the right 'kit' is a starting point, and Stephen has overseen the upgrade/refurbishment of our church organ, the purchase of our Yamaha Grand Piano which features in most of our recitals, and the Yamaha keyboard for our choir. He's used his extensive range of contacts to other musicians to establish our now regular series of lunchtime recitals – including a couple featuring himself (*one of which was on Zoom during the Covid lockdown*). The Aeolian Singers – one of the choirs he conducts – is a regular visitor for a Christmas Concert, and at key Services during the year. And he has been the 'glue' for the Good Friday Choir whose performances (or Services) on Good Friday are now an established feature of our church year.

And we had "An Audience with Stephen Jones" at our 2025 Church Dinner

He's seen a good church choir mutate into its current 'mini-choir' form as death and departures have depleted numbers but still carefully shepherds us through anthems familiar and new. He must be a brilliant teacher because he is patient, encourages us, explains some of the mysteries (*for us*) of the music scores, and then modifies them to reflect our individual capabilities to get the performance he's looking for – well sometimes at least! (we are always told it was a great anthem afterwards).

Our rehearsals on Fridays are a highlight of the week, full of anecdotes, stories about past misdemeanours of a mis-spent musical youth – often with little musical 'vignettes' on the keyboard. And for a tenor it's great to have Stephen helping you find your way against the main tune by singing it out whilst he plays. If the tenors seem more confident, he'll drop to the base line, so occasionally we have a 3-part (soprano, tenor, base) offering.

He can be unforgiving, but only when someone puts a coffee cup or a flower vase on his recently restored organ console. I understand he's still negotiating with the Premises & Finances Group on whether we build a gallows, or employ a firing squad!

As many of us know, 75 is a milestone not a tombstone, and we wish Stephen many more years of healthy and enjoyable life – hopefully not a few of them with us all at Potters Bar URC.

Robert



# Lunchtime Recital 5<sup>th</sup> June at 12.15 - Lin Xu-Zhang (piano)



## Programme:

**Stephen Hough:** Fanfare Toccata (2021)

**Franz Joseph Haydn:** Variations in F minor, Hob. XVII: 6

**Giles Farnaby:** Fantasia in G, MB 24/5

**Thomas Tomkins:** Pavan and Galliard: *Earl Strafford*, MB 5/43-44

**Orlando Gibbons:** *The Woods so Wild*, MB 20/29

**William Byrd:** Fantasia in A, MB 27/13

**William Byrd:** *O Mistress Mine*, MB 28/83

*\*N.B. the works by Farnaby, Tomkins, Gibbons and Byrd will be performed as a set\**

The Australian-born pianist Lin Xu-Zhang has emerged as one of the most compelling young artists of his generation, acclaimed for the rare refinement of his pianism and the intellectual depth that informs his interpretations. His performances are characterised by a distinctive fusion of historically informed insight and contemporary sensibility, articulated through an expressive command of the modern piano. His artistry spans an extraordinary breadth of repertoire - from the music of the Renaissance to that of today's leading composers - embracing figures as diverse as Couperin and Dukas, Sweelinck and Schoenberg, Mozart and Messiaen.

In the 2025-26 season, Lin undertakes an ambitious schedule of more than four dozen recitals across the United Kingdom and internationally. Notable engagements include an all-William Byrd programme at Lincoln Cathedral, where the composer once served as organist and master of the choristers over four centuries ago, and performances at the Royal Academy of Music's Summer Piano Festival, marking the culmination of the institution's multi-year traversal of Robert Schumann's complete piano works. As a concerto soloist, he also recently appeared in a rare performance of Arnold Schoenberg's Piano Concerto at the Academy and as a committed advocate of new music, he has premiered works by leading Australian composers such as Gerard Brophy, Alex Pozniak, and Katia Beaugeais.

Lin graduated with first-class honours in his undergraduate studies earlier this year from the Royal Academy of Music, London with the highest mark in his concerto exam, studying under Joanna MacGregor CBE alongside further tutelage from Steven Osborne OBE. A laureate of several international competitions, he continues his Master of Music studies at the Academy as a scholarship recipient. He resides in central London.

## Lunchtime Recital Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May – Jinah Shim (piano)



This was Jinah's first recital with us and unusually she'd contacted Stephen and asked if she could play for us. I think if he'd known, he'd have bitten her hand off - *but just the right hand of course!*.

Jinah advised us to strap on our seatbelts for the 25-minute performance of Robert Schumann's Kreisleriana. Good advice, because at times it was indeed "Äußerst bewegt" - extremely animated – as was she. We'd talked about the pleasure of watching the pianist's hands, some stroking the keys, some playing with force, others appearing to tickle the keys. Well for



Schumann we got the full spectrum from Jinah. And we were 'wowed'!



touch for the respective digits – not easy to achieve.

She rounded off the session with Fazil Say's Paganini Jazz- certainly light-hearted, but also technically demanding. I think we were all breathless when she finished. Lovely to chat to Jinah afterwards as many of us did.

We certainly hope she'll come and play for us again!



She followed this with a Prelude and Nocturne for the left hand, written by Scriabin after he'd lost the use of his right hand. It was difficult, she told us, for those used to playing with both hands to keep that right hand immobile. Also, taking on the often quite different roles of the left and right hands with a single hand, required a lot of practice. Jinah uses the thumb and little finger for emphasising the melody and the other three fingers for the accompaniment. Still, getting that emphasis requires a different

### Robert Schumann – Kreisleriana, Op. 16

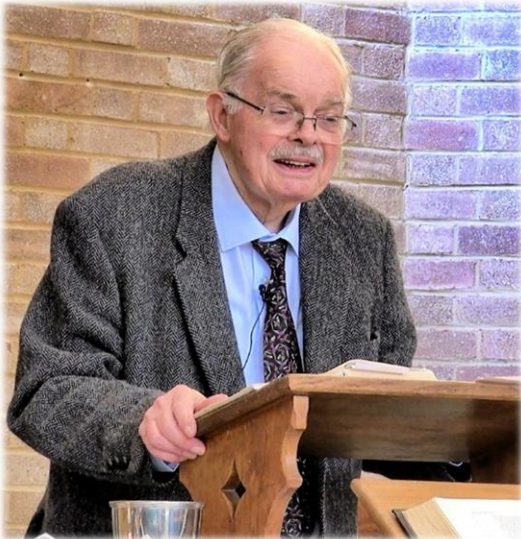
- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Äußerst bewegt                | (extremely animated)             |
| 2. Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch | (very profound and not too fast) |
| 3. Sehr aufgeregt                | (very excited)                   |
| 4. Sehr langsam                  | (very slow)                      |
| 5. Sehr lebhaft                  | (very lively)                    |
| 6. Sehr langsam                  | (very slow)                      |
| 7. Sehr rasch                    | (very fast)                      |
| 8. Schnell und spielend          | (fast and playful)               |

### Scriabin- Prelude and Nocturne for the Left Hand Op. 9

### Fazil Say - Paganini Jazz

The recital video is at <https://pottersbarurc.org/previous-recitals-2/1-may-2026/>

## Communion Service Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May - led by Mike Findley



*Very good of Mike to come to us at short notice to cover for Tony Alderman, who is now home from hospital and rebuilding his strength. Mike's interest in family ancestry has revealed two family branches coming together, one Calvinist the other Irish Catholic. Spanning these two is perhaps the clue to Mike's very open-minded and enquiring mind-set on his faith journey.*

The day's readings were to include the story of Stephen's stoning—a truly horrific event. Yet, despite its brutality, there were aspects of the story that remained relevant to us; there were messages we could take from it and apply to our own lives. This was to be followed by a very well-known passage from John's Gospel: John, Chapter 14.

Preaching on such a familiar passage, Mike told us, was always a challenge, as everyone brought their own understandings and feelings about what these words meant to them. Sharing an interpretation that differed from someone's deeply held beliefs could be unsettling, but it was important to be sensitive to this diversity of thought. Mike's hope was to introduce some

new perspectives—ideas to ponder and take with us as we journeyed through the coming weeks, months, and years.

The **Stoning of Stephen** was a saddening, violent story. The early Christian apostles were focused on spreading the word, so they appointed seven others to handle social service tasks, and Stephen was among those appointed to serve food and support members of the fraternity. Stephen, full of God's grace and power, performed wonders and miraculous signs among the people, but he faced opposition, and these adversaries falsely accused him of blasphemy, taking him before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council that governed religious life in Israel.

Stephen had delivered a lengthy speech, recounting Jewish historical events and highlighting where the nation had gone astray by ignoring God. Stephen had asserted, "the Most High does not live in houses made by men," emphasizing that God was not confined within a human construction, like the temple in Jerusalem, but rather among people wherever they were. This idea troubled the council, and it led to his death by stoning.

Many believed that God was met in church, but the truth was that God could be encountered anywhere—at home, walking down the street, doing daily chores, or in nature. God could be seen in the faces of others: you could see God's suffering in the suffering and injustice in the world - and in those who were different from us. God was not confined to a building or place. While church offered peace and space for reflection, God existed wherever we were, and God's Spirit was always with us.

Mike was irritated by people quoting Genesis, saying man was made in the image of God. The author writing thousands of years ago could not have comprehended the vastness of the universe or the power behind it. God wasn't a bigger, nicer, stronger version of us sitting above the clouds. God existed in a completely different sphere, unimaginable to our minds, even with our greater understanding, and we needed to rethink our conceptions about God and where God lived, recognising God's omnipresence. Despite God's vastness, He cared for each of us individually and wanted us to be part of His world.

Christianity was often seen as simply being nice to people, leading some to argue it was irrelevant in today's harsh world. However, the Bible's messages of love, care, and compassion had first been preached in violent and unjust settings, where life was cheap. These messages were necessary then, and they remained necessary now. The light of the gospel persisted and continued to shine in a dark world.

The story of Stephen presented further challenges. Saul, later known as Paul (after his meeting on the Damascus Road), had been hunting down Christians, but had just held the coats for the leaders of the Jewish community when they stoned Stephen. This prompted us to ask whether we let others do our unpleasant work for us, holding the coats metaphorically for those who did evil in our name, even if we pretended it was not us.

Finally, as Stephen was being stoned, he looked up to heaven. Did we ever look up metaphorically, lifting our eyes to the glory of God. Ecstasy meant to stand outside oneself, and by doing so, we could see things differently. We should strive to be changed, amazed, and open to visions of God in our lives.

The lectionary for the day included **John chapter 14**, a well-known passage. Jesus's farewell discourse after supper was delivered to apostles who were content yet confused, continually asking questions. Jesus had begun by urging his followers not to let their hearts be troubled. Many of us had troubled hearts, but Jesus encouraged us to calm down and



have confidence. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" was one of seven "I Am" sayings in John's Gospel. The early Christians were called the People of the Way.

Jesus offered confidence, joy, and relaxation. Many struggled to relax and sought constant confirmation in life. We were challenged to be confident, to know we were not alone, and to be confident that God's Spirit was with us. We were invited to reach out and hold the hand of God as we walked through life. If we put our hand in God's hand, our confidence would build, peace would come, and we would become relaxed about the future.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." – a message we should take to heart.

And just before the close of the Service Janet spotted Ted Maycock, who will be celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> on Tuesday – so we were able to sing Happy Birthday to Ted after all.

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## Morning Service Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May – led by Anne Walton



Anne went seriously over time (and was mentally rapping her own knuckles!) but it was a jam-packed session. We started with a 'plug' for Christian Aid Week supported by a video clip about growing vegetables in townships in Kenya, then listened to an Anthem from the choir, before moving on to the complexity in today's world of ordering a coffee.

Anne asked us if we ever felt overwhelmed when ordering coffee. It had been much simpler when she was younger, but now you could choose from cappuccinos, espressos, skinny lattes, caramel macchiatos, and countless other variations. They were all, in one way or another, still coffee. And that variety had made her think of the ancient Greeks, who'd had six words for what we simply called love.

- **Eros** – passionate or romantic love, associated with desire.
- **Philia** – the love of friendship, loyalty, and companionship.,
- **Ludus** – playful, affectionate love, often seen in young love or light-hearted affection.
- **Agape** – selfless, generous love extended to all people, including strangers.
- **Pragma** – mature, enduring love that grows through patience, compromise, and commitment.
- **Philautia** – self-love, which can be either unhealthy when it becomes self-obsession or healthy when it reflects a secure sense of self.

One of these words, *agape*, was especially striking. It described selfless love given freely to others, whether they were family, friends, or complete strangers. The term was later translated into Latin as *caritas*, which was where we'd got the word *charity*. *Pragma*, or mature love, spoke of the deep understanding that developed between people over time. It was the love that learned patience, compromise, and tolerance. *Philautia*, meanwhile, reminded us that self-love had two sides: it could become unhealthy self-obsession, but it could also be the healthy security that enabled us to love others well. Anne suggested that perhaps we could borrow something from the Greeks, recognising the different forms love can take. And in doing so, we might become just as sophisticated in the art of loving as we were in ordering a cup of coffee.

In the **reading from John 14**, It had struck Anne that, while Jesus clearly intended his words to be a comfort, they were also a challenge. He was calling his followers into a deeper understanding of what it meant to belong to him. And as Jesus was not physically present with us, so the question became: how did we continue to follow him? The answer was simple to say but demanding to live: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Anne felt it might help to hear that verse not as a condition, but as a statement of reality: "Since you love me, you will be keeping my commandments". Love for Christ was meant to find expression in the way we lived.

- The greatest commandment: to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.
- The new commandment Jesus gave at the Last Supper: to love one another as he loved us.

And that last one was the one that caught us every time: "Love one another as I have loved you." How were we to love as Christ loves? Were we really capable of it? The word used in the passage was *agape*: selfless, generous love given for the good of others. It was the kind of love Jesus showed when he knelt to wash his disciples' feet, and the kind of love he'd shown most fully on the cross. This was the love Christ offered to us, and it was the love he commanded us to offer to one another and to all whom we met. Jesus knew this calling was beyond our own strength. That is why he'd promised help: "I will ask about the future."

the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you for ever.” We needed that help—certainly Anne did. Jesus had told the disciples that this Spirit of truth would dwell within them. And if that was true for them, it was true for us as well.

Anne thought that these past weeks had been teaching us how to be disciples who grew in intimacy with the risen Christ. Surely that was one of the great themes of the Easter season: not simply believing that Christ was risen but learning how to live in close fellowship with him and revealing him to a world that did not yet see him.

As the theologian Caroline Lewis had observed, there was more to being a child of God than simply being raised from the dead. In John’s Gospel, resurrection was not the end of the story. The ascension and the promise of abundant life reminded us that God’s purpose was deeper and fuller: an ongoing life of communion with God. If Christ had died to reconcile the world to God, then we could not ignore the brokenness that still surrounded us. We could see suffering, conflict, poverty, and hatred in many places. Faced with such need, we were called to continue Christ’s mission: to plant the seeds of his kingdom and help them grow.

We did this empowered by the Holy Spirit, our Helper. In that strength, we were commissioned to be Christ’s representatives in today’s world, loving one another so deeply and selflessly that others might come to know Christ’s love through us.

But that was not the end of the story. “Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again”. And while we waited for his return, we were called to keep growing in fellowship with him, to keep loving as he’d loved, and to keep building God’s kingdom here on earth.

## Communion Service Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May – led by Revd. David Aplin



*In our churches we tended to very much underplay the importance of Ascension. We all knew that the most important day in the year of the Church was Easter Day, when Lord had been resurrected, when He’d come back to life. And David was to show us that it wasn’t the only important thing; that Ascension was absolutely vital for the future of our souls in the Kingdom of God.*

**The Ascension Story** in Acts was covered in a single verse. As the disciples watched, Jesus had been lifted up, and a cloud had taken him out of their sight. In one sense, that was the whole story of the Ascension. Yet there was far more to it than that. The whole story of Jesus Christ was extraordinary. David hesitated to call it unbelievable, because it was a story we were called to believe. And when we reflected on it, we might well ask: which part was the most astonishing?

We might think first of the virgin conception and the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem, the city of David. Yet the story of Jesus’ early life was, in many

ways, wonderfully ordinary. He’d lived quietly and worked as a carpenter until the age of thirty. Then, after his baptism by John, his public ministry had begun, and the Gospels told us all that followed: his teaching, his healing, his compassion, and his power. He was recognised as the Christ, and yet he was also cruelly crucified, dead, and buried. His resurrection was truly astonishing, and then, at the close of his earthly ministry, he’d ascended into heaven. That too was absolutely incredible.

Where had he gone? We were not left without an answer. We *did* know where he had gone, and why. John’s Gospel began with these words: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Christ came from the Father, and in the Ascension he’d returned to the Father.

The Son had entered our world because humanity had again and again turned away from God, falling into false worship and evil. So the Father had sent the Son, who’d humbled himself to become fully human. In his earthly life, Jesus had embraced the reality of our human condition. He’d prayed, trusted, and obeyed. If miracles had been done, they had been done in dependence upon the Father and through the Spirit. And when his earthly work was complete, he’d not remained on earth to grow old; he’d ascended to the Father’s house, and his earthly life had reached its fulfilment in glory.

**What the Ascension Meant for Us**

First, the Ascension pointed us to eternal life. Jesus had shown us the way to the Father's home. Our bodies were mortal, but our souls belonged to God and were called onward into his life. This was not an abstract idea; it mattered personally to every one of us.

Second, the Ascension mattered for this life as well. God had given us the freedom to choose between right and wrong, good and evil. He did not force our obedience. We were free, and with that freedom came responsibility. Yet God had not left us alone in our weakness: he'd given us the help of the Holy Spirit.

While he was on earth, Jesus had taught us how to pray. He'd given us the Lord's Prayer, and throughout his ministry he'd showed us by his own example a life lived in communion with the Father. Because of the Spirit he'd given us, we could turn to God in every season of life. Our prayers did not need to be complicated; they could be as simple and honest as:

- "Please, God, help me."
- "Thank you, Lord."
- "I am sorry, Lord."

Such prayers had been enough for Jesus in his earthly life, and they were enough for us now. God listened, and the Spirit was at work.

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**.....And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.**

If Elvis Presley had lived, he would be thinking about his pension now. The folk singer Bob Dylan said that hearing Elvis Presley playing rock and roll for the first time was "like busting out of jail".

Elvis Presley isn't everyone's first choice when it comes to music but what Dylan meant was that he'd been liberated – he'd heard music played like he'd never heard it played before. It had opened his mind to something new, offered him new ideas, given him a musical freedom he'd never had before.

It's easy to react to new ideas with a closed mind. To condemn without thinking, to seal ourselves off from all that makes life different. It's safer that way of course. You don't need to take risks, but it's less interesting.

Faith is meant to liberate, to free us from our hang-ups and fears, and give us something positive to live with. But sad to say, we often try to protect our faith by closing our minds to new ideas. We pull what we know around us like a comfort blanket and refuse to listen.

Seeing a new church being built, an old aborigine asked, "If God loves everybody why do people build walls?" I'm not suggesting that we don't need church buildings but his question says to me that rather than sheltering inside the walls we build – whether they're made of brick or just walls in our minds – we should be out in the world with everyone else.

We may have to take risks, we may be exposed to music we've never listened to before, but we might just hear something new, gain something worth having.

## Diary for June

Fri	5	12.15	Lunchtime Recital by Lin.XuZhang
		13.15	Charity Lunch
		14.30	Phoenix Whist Group (every Friday)
		19.00	Choir Practice (every Friday)
Sun	7	11.00	Communion Service led by Mr Martyn Macphee
Tue	9	14.00	Elders' Meeting
Sun	14	11.00	Morning Service led by Mr Mike Findley
Tue	16	10.45	Visit to Capel Manor (see Robert) – 10.45 is arrival time at Capel Manor
Sun	21	11.00	Communion Service led by Reverend David Aplin - Fathers' Day
Wed	24	14.00	Knit & Natter Group in the Vestry
Thu	25	10.30	Events Group Meeting
Sun	28	11.00	Morning Service led by Canon Richard Osborn

## Rotas

### Pulpit Supply

7<sup>th</sup> Mr Martyn Macphee   14<sup>th</sup> Mr Mike Findley   21<sup>st</sup> Reverend David Aplin   28<sup>th</sup> Canon Richard Osborn

### Duty Officer

7<sup>th</sup> Frank Palmer   14<sup>th</sup> Janet Green   21<sup>st</sup> David Ramsay   28<sup>th</sup> Frank Palmer

### Communion Preparation

7<sup>th</sup> Marian Poulton & Heather Rae   21<sup>st</sup> Janet O'Connor & Mary Deller

### Bible Readers

7<sup>th</sup> Heather Rae   14<sup>th</sup> Janet Green   21<sup>st</sup> Robert Hillyard   28<sup>th</sup> Jenny Blumsom

### Coffee

7<sup>th</sup> Margaret Hillyard   14<sup>th</sup> Marian Poulton   21<sup>st</sup> Chris & David Ramsay   28<sup>th</sup> Heather Rae

## A Dementia Friends Awareness Session at Potters Bar URC – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026



*Julie Churchouse of Alzheimer's UK gave us a fascinating hour of information and insights about dementia in a talk arranged by the Friends of Parkfield PPG.*

*Julie told us that her mother had had Alzheimer's and also that she'd worked in a care home before joining Alzheimer's UK, so she spoke with that special passion that comes from those intimate experiences.*

*The distillation of her messages below does not convey the detail or depth of those real-life experiences that she used to illustrate and make real what dementia awareness is about. For that (if you weren't there) you need to watch the session video.*

Many people only start learning about dementia when it affects them directly, and by then the learning curve can feel overwhelming. Greater awareness helps everyone—not only individuals and families currently affected, but also friends, neighbours, and the wider community.

**Key message 1: Dementia is not a natural part of ageing** - Dementia is not an inevitable part of getting older. Age can increase the risk, but growing older does

not automatically mean someone will develop dementia.

Many people also remain undiagnosed, which can leave them without support. Dementia does not only affect older people: there are also many people under 65 living with a diagnosis. For younger people in particular, getting a diagnosis can take time because symptoms may initially be mistaken for stress, menopause, or other conditions. That is why early advice and assessment are so important.

**Key message 2: Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain** - A helpful way to picture dementia is to imagine the brain as a set of fairy lights. In a healthy brain, the connections are working well. With dementia, some of those connections begin to flicker, weaken, and eventually fail. That is why abilities can vary from day to day and why dementia progresses over time.

There are ways to support brain health, including:

- staying hydrated;
- keeping mentally active;
- staying socially engaged;
- challenging the brain with new activities, such as using your non-dominant hand, learning some words in another language, or trying a musical instrument;
- looking after physical health, especially heart and circulation health.

Medication may help with some types of dementia by supporting brain function for a time, but dementia is progressive and cannot currently be reversed.

**Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia** - Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of brain diseases. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type, but there are many others. The main types commonly discussed are:

- **Alzheimer's disease** – often affects short-term memory and language first, with gradual progression.
- **Vascular dementia** – linked to blood supply problems in the brain and may progress in steps rather than gradually.
- **Dementia with Lewy bodies** – can involve movement changes, vivid hallucinations, and Parkinson's-like symptoms.
- **Frontotemporal dementia** – often affects behaviour, personality, and social filters, and is more likely to occur at a younger age.

Symptoms vary greatly, which is why diagnosis and support need to be person-centred.

**Key message 3: Dementia is not just about losing your memory** - It can also affect language, vision, hearing, sequencing, attention, movement, judgement, and behaviour. Not every person will experience all of these changes, and not to the same degree, but understanding the possible effects helps us provide better support.

Simple adjustments can make a big difference. For example:

- using prompts or reminders for daily routines;

- reducing visual clutter and strong patterns;
- using coloured plates or contrasting toilet seats to make important items easier to see;
- checking that glasses and hearing aids are clean, working, and being used;
- breaking tasks down into smaller, manageable steps.

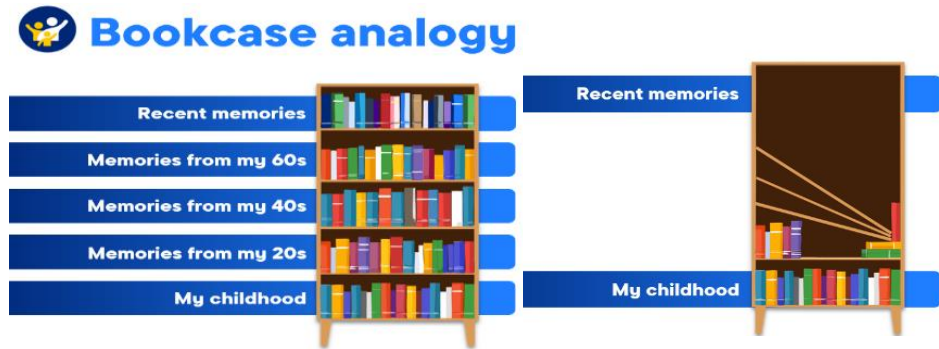
## Communication and support

People living with dementia can still communicate, but they may need more time and support. It helps to listen carefully, reduce distractions, speak clearly, use familiar words, and pay attention to body language and tone.

It is also important to involve the person in decisions wherever possible. Even when someone cannot manage a full task independently, they may still be able to take part in part of it.

## The bookcase idea: memory and emotion

One way to think about memory in dementia is as a bookcase. Recent memories sit on the top shelves and older memories lower down. As dementia progresses, the top shelves are often affected first, which means recent events are harder to retain while older memories may remain more accessible and can remain fresh and real.



However, even when factual memory fades, emotional memory often remains. Someone may not remember what you did together yesterday, but they may still hold on to the feeling your visit created. That is why kindness, reassurance, and emotional connection matter so much.

## Why breaking tasks down matters

A simple task such as making a cup of tea actually involves many separate steps: deciding to make it, finding the kettle, filling it, choosing the right tap, locating the cup, tea bags, milk, spoon, and so on. For someone living with dementia, that sequence can become very difficult.

Rather than taking over completely, it can help to break the task down and support only the parts the person finds hard. For example, you might place the cup, tea bag, and spoon where they can be seen, then make the drink alongside them so they can copy the steps. Supporting someone to do part of a task can help preserve independence, confidence, and routine.

**Key message 4: There is more to the person than the dementia** - Behaviour always has meaning. If someone seems distressed, restless, or withdrawn, there may be a reason: pain, fear, confusion, boredom, habit, or an unmet need. Looking beyond the label of dementia helps us respond more compassionately and effectively.

Meaningful activity can make a big difference. For example, someone who used to have a regular job or routine may still feel a need for purpose and structure. Helping them continue familiar activities in an adapted way can reduce distress and improve wellbeing.

**Key message 5: A little understanding makes a big difference** - When someone is diagnosed with dementia, their world can shrink very quickly. Friends and family may not know what to say or do, and people can become isolated. Small acts of understanding matter: staying in touch, dropping in for a short visit, offering a bit of company, or giving a carer a few minutes' respite can all make a real difference.

## Support available

The Alzheimer's Society offers information and support, including access to trained dementia advisers. In Hertfordshire, support is also available through Memory Support Hertfordshire, a partnership that includes the Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, Carers in Hertfordshire, and Admiral Nurses. Together, these services can help with practical advice, benefits, planning, carer support, and more specialist family support when needed.

You can view the presentation video at <https://pottersbarurc.org/2770-2/>



Telephone: 0300 131 3946  
Monday to Friday, 9am-4pm

Email: [info@memorysupportherts.org.uk](mailto:info@memorysupportherts.org.uk)

Website: [www.memorysupportherts.org.uk](http://www.memorysupportherts.org.uk)

## DAVID MORRIS'S PHOTO CORNER – Brussels

### Our Journey

We travelled by Eurostar from St Pancras at a max speed of 186mph but restricted to 100mph in the tunnel, overall journey time is 2 hours, in the tunnel is 20 minutes. The tunnel length is 23.5 miles long and depth varies between 150 and 246 feet. What a pleasant way to travel.

### The Atomium



I visited the Atomium when I was 15 with my father in 1958, 68 years ago. It was the centre piece for the 1958 World Fair (Expo 58). The 9 spheres each represent one iron atom, a single unit cell of an iron crystal magnified 165 billion times.

It stands 102m high, each sphere diameter is 18m. Even with booked tickets we queued for over an hour. Once inside you have two options – take a lift to the top viewing gallery (about a two hour wait) or use the escalator/stairs to visit several spheres. The centre sphere had the history of Expo 58, and the other spheres had digital art productions; sadly no viewing galleries.

It was intended to dismantle the Atomium after Expo 58. In 2006 the whole structure was refurbished, replacing the original aluminium panels with stainless steel panels. *(Unfortunately, it was generally very overcast, sadly disappointed not getting good pictures.)*



### The European Parliament

We went to the EU Parliament building; the static display took us over 2 hours to view and we could have spent more time. I would say the display was at least 75m long giving a historical reminder over the years mainly of Europe, for example the Cuban crisis, the building/dismantling of the Berlin wall, the first space flight by Yuri Gagarin, the death of Lady Diana and Queen Elizabeth II. It also went into great details how the EU was formed. The road to the European Union began at the Hague Congress in May 1948. It set the political foundation that directly led to pooling Europe's iron, steel, and coal industries. Six founding nations—Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The European Union (EU) has grown from its original 6 founding members in 1958 to 27 member states and 24 languages today.

The EU Parliament operates from three countries, Brussels - Executive & Legislative Hub (European Commission & Council), Strasbourg - Plenary Parliamentary Voting Seat and Luxemburg - Legal & Financial Hub.

The day-to-day committee work mostly happens in Brussels, however Strasbourg serves as the official seat of the European Parliament, hosting its monthly four-day plenary sessions where Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) debate and vote on EU legislation. It is a powerful symbol of Franco-German reconciliation and post-WWII European integration. The 751 Members (of which 40% are women) of the European Parliament (MEPs) are organized into eight political/transnational alliances based on shared political ideologies and affinities rather than their nationality. The EU represents 453 million people.



For Pauline, a visit to the Belgian Choco-Story Brussels was a must, it is an interactive chocolate museum that traces the 5,000-year history of cocoa from its ancient Mayan and Aztec origins to the creation of the famous Belgian praline.

We were on a hop on off bus tour and decided to get off, by chance we found a War Museum which spans over 1,000 years of military technology and history, featuring everything from medieval suits of armour to modern fighter jets.



**The Manneken Pis** - is a world-famous, 55.5 centimetre-tall bronze fountain sculpture of a naked young boy. There are over 130 costume-changing ceremonies and folk parades throughout the year. Whenever he receives a new outfit, the official Order of Friends of the Manneken march through the streets in full regalia, accompanied by a brass band with popular songs. His clothing includes traditional national dress donated by international ambassadors, regional trade uniforms, historical military gear, football strip and pop-culture.



It was a wonderful active week away, our first real holiday since covid. A disappointment was I could not sample some of the 301 Belgian beers, hopefully next time.

Pauline and David Morris

## Morning Service Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May – led by Pastor Peter Gooch



*The theme of the day was the coming of the Holy Spirit, but it was 'gremlins' that appeared to rule the day with the sound system and projection of the hymns. After we'd sung Happy Birthday to Stephen, our Director of Music, the sound system tried to drown Peter out with crackles and bangs. He seemed remarkably unfazed by it all. And we all coped with singing the words on the screen (as we'd been told to) whilst these changed repeatedly mid-verse. Ah well....*

**The coming of the Holy Spirit was central to Christian life,** Pastor Peter told us. As John Stott had observed, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable—indeed impossible—without the Holy Spirit. There could be no life without the life-giver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christlike character without his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. Just as a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit of God would be dead.

At the beginning of Luke's Gospel, the Holy Spirit had descended upon Jesus at his baptism. As Jesus entered his public ministry, he was full of the Holy Spirit, led by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, and anointed by the Spirit. Then, at the beginning of Luke's second volume, Acts, the same Holy Spirit had come upon the disciples at

Pentecost to equip them for God's mission in the world. In this sense, Pentecost was the crowning act of Jesus' saving work before his return: Jesus was born into our humanity, lived among us, died for our sins, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and then poured out the Holy Spirit on his people.

Pentecost also marked a new era. In the Old Testament, the Spirit had come upon particular people for particular tasks. Now the Spirit was given to all who came to Christ. The apostles had been equipped for their calling as witnesses, and the church had been launched into its worldwide mission.

Luke had described three striking signs at Pentecost:

A sound like a rushing wind, pointing to the breath of God and the coming of the Spirit.

What seemed to be tongues of fire, suggesting God's holy and purifying presence.

Speech in many languages, showing that the message of Christ is for all peoples.

These signs had awakened the crowd and prepared the way for (apostle) Peter's sermon. His message had focused on Jesus. He'd spoken first about the events of the gospel: Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and exaltation. Jesus of Nazareth had been truly human, yet he'd been accredited by God through mighty works, wonders, and signs. Peter had then turned to the cross. Jesus had been handed over to wicked men and crucified, yet this was not outside God's purpose. His death had been a victory not a defeat - part of God's saving plan. Through the death of his Son, God was accomplishing salvation for sinners. But death could not hold Jesus. God had raised him from the dead, reversing the verdict of men and exalting him to the highest place. The resurrection had been not only victory over death; it had been God's declaration that Jesus was Lord.

Peter had supported his message with two witnesses:

The Old Testament Scriptures, which pointed forward to Christ.

The apostles, who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Peter had shown that the Psalms and the prophets had found their fulfilment in Jesus. David's words could not refer to himself, for David died and was buried; they pointed ahead to the risen Christ. In the same way, Scripture as a whole bore witness to Jesus. The apostles confirmed this testimony because they had seen these things with their own eyes.

Together, Scripture and eyewitness testimony proclaimed the truth of Christ's resurrection and reign.

Peter had not only spoken about what Jesus had done; he'd also spoken about what Jesus now offered. To those who respond to him, Christ promised:

Forgiveness of sins.

The gift of the Holy Spirit.

These gifts brought true freedom: freedom from guilt, defilement, judgment, and self-centredness, and freedom to become the people God had created us to be.

Peter had also made it clear that the gospel called for a response. Those who'd heard him were cut to the heart and asked, "What shall we do?" His answer was simple and urgent: repent, believe, and be baptised.

To repent was to turn from sin and self-rule and to turn towards God. It was to leave behind the life in which self sat in the driving seat and to submit instead to the rule of Christ. Baptism was the public sign of that new allegiance and of belonging to the people of Jesus.

And as Pastor Peter told us, the offer of salvation was open to all. Everyone who called on the name of the Lord would be saved. God placed no limit on those who could come to him in faith.

On the day of Pentecost, about three thousand people had responded to this message. The church's task today was still to proclaim those same truths with clarity, courage, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had come on that day—and still brought life, power, conviction, and hope to God's people today.

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## EDDI'S SERVICE

Eddi, priest of St Wilfrid, in his chapel at Manhood End

Ordered a midnight service, for such as cared to attend.

But the Saxons were keeping Christmas, and the night was stormy as well,

Nobody came to the service, though Eddie rang the bell.

"Wicked weather for walking", said Eddi of Manhood End,

'But I must go on with the service, for such as care to attend'.

The altar-lamps were lighted, an old marsh donkey came,

Bold as a guest invited, and stared at the guttering flame.

The storm beat on at the windows, the water splashed on the floor,

And a wet, yoke-weary bullock, pushed in through the open door.

'How do I know what is greatest, how do I know what is least

That is my Father's business,' said Eddi, Wilfrid's priest.

But three are gathered together – listen to me and attend

I bring good news, my brethren!' said Eddi of Manhood End.

And he told the ox of a manger, and a stall in Bethlehem,

And he spoke to the ass of a rider, that rode to Jerusalem.

They steamed and dripped in the chancel, they listened and never stirred.

While, just as though they were Bishops, Eddi preached them the Word.

Till the gale blew off on the marshes, and the windows showed the day,

And the ox and the ass together, wheeled and clattered away.

And when the Saxons mocked him, said Eddi of Manhood End ,

'I dare not shut His chapel, on such as care to attend.'

*Rudyard Kipling*



# Guided Visit to Capel Manor Gardens

**Date: Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

**Time to Meet/Start:** - 10.45 a.m. in the car park for 11.00 start.

**Venue Address:** - Capel Manor Gardens  
Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 4RQ

**Cost:** £15.00 for entry and guided tour.

**What to expect:** - A guided 90-minute tour with one of their experienced gardeners. They will show us around some of the best areas sharing their knowledge of plants and the history of the site along the way. The pathways are suitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

**Following the tour:** Following the tour we can go to the café for lunch

After lunch we are free to continue to enjoy the gardens using the Gardens map that we will be given on arrival.

**We need to know by 2<sup>nd</sup> June who is coming.**

Please e-mail, phone, or speak to Robert Hillyard [robert\\_hillyard@hotmail.com](mailto:robert_hillyard@hotmail.com)

Tel: 654165

Once we have numbers we can try to coordinate transport to Capel Manor.

**Any last-minute changes – Contact Robert Hillyard Tel: 01707 654165 or 07753 606236**



# Church flowers through the years and a few faces to remember?



Looking through the archives for Janet's Page-1 message, we found these as well.





