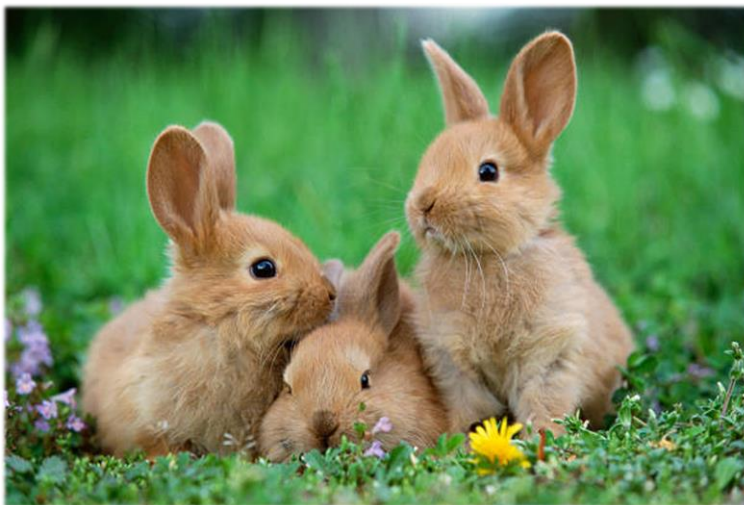
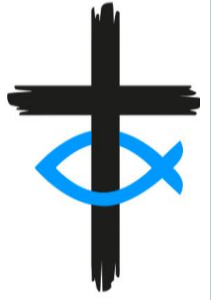




THE NEWS

July 2026

The Magazine of Potters Bar United Reformed Church



A Simple Code

**No grumbling, no sulking, no feuding, no fighting,
But looking and looking for things to delight in!
No hating the state of the world every minute,
But seeking and finding the beauty that's in it,
No worrying and letting your troubles confound you,
But laughing and liking the people around you!**

(I think these pictures will help !)

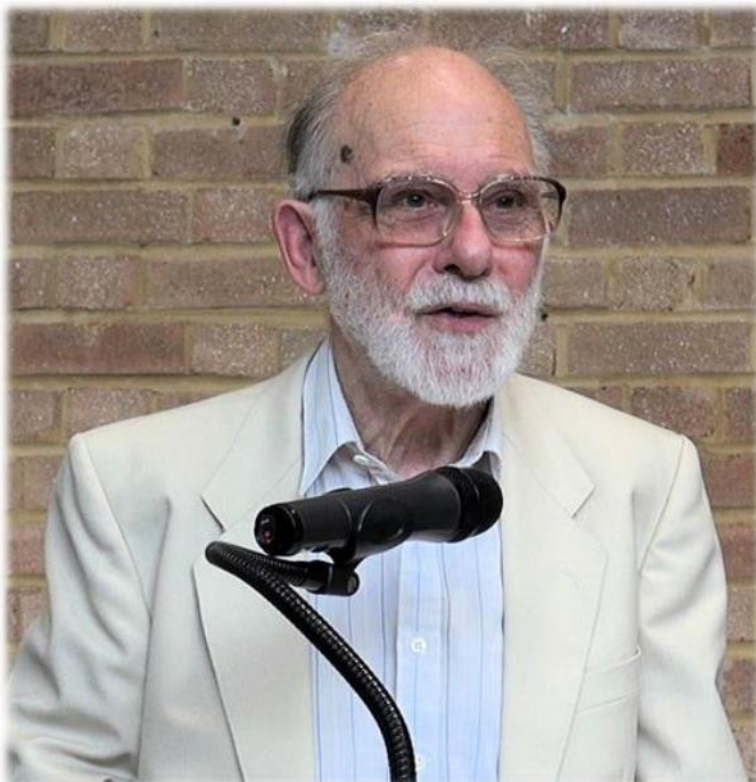


Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of our Church News, covering a busy June during which we were pleased to have Maureen Marlow join the Eldership and Janet O'Connor and Marian Poulton extend their terms.

July promises to be equally active with our Church Anniversary (the 92nd) being celebrated on Saturday 11th July with a BBQ, Pimm's and Cream Tea, accompanied by a Jazz Band. Tickets are adults £10, family £20 from Janet O'Connor.(856967).or Daniela in the Nursery.

Having had for several months Herts Young Homeless as our Charity Lunch and Communion charity, at our June meeting we were pleased to endorse the selection of CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) as its successor. CRY aims to screen out, as a service not currently provided by the NHS, the 1 in 300 apparently healthy young people who might otherwise succumb each year to mostly preventable heart ailments including sadly, Amelia Aplin, David's granddaughter, who collapsed on a football pitch in March.



*Alastair Maclean
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

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Chairman Premises & Finance Committee

John Knott Tel: 01707 335238



We recently visited **Tony Alderman** to pick up a copy of the CRY Magazine for Alastair. CRY is a charity whose mission is to prevent young sudden cardiac deaths by promoting awareness, conducting screenings, and supporting affected families. Sudden cardiac death is a tragedy that has occurred both in his family and – as we know - in that of David Aplin.

A charity the church is now supporting.

Tony had been in hospital for some time with serious internal bleeding, but is now at home, in reasonably good spirits and rebuilding his strength – particularly in the legs - under Physio supervision. He’s still active both at Synod and at the charity he chairs in Barnet, that provides alms houses for people of limited financial means.

Our ‘brief chat’ lasted around 2 hours, and Tony asked us to pass on his greetings to church members. He’s under palliative care for his liver cancer but has plans to beat his projected timeline. I think we’ll have to find further reasons for a visit.
Robert

I hate it when I can't figure out how to operate the iPad and my tech support guy is asleep.

He's 5 and it's past his bedtime.

Tip for a successful marriage:

Don't ask your wife when dinner will be ready while she's mowing the lawn.

It does annoy me when the operator says "Your call is very important to us. Please enjoy this 40 minute flute solo"

Morning Service Sunday 31st May 2026 – led by Revd. John Steele



When John comes to lead our worship, we know we are in for a lively session. But firing off party poppers in church during the Service might have seemed a risky choice – particularly with our Chief Elf sitting in the back row. We loved it! And it was all in a good cause, as an illustration of Life in the Spirit as part of Trinity Sunday.



John wanted us to think about party poppers. We usually

saw them at celebrations: small containers filled with paper and a little charge, waiting to burst into colour and movement. But a party popper did nothing until someone pulled the string. Its potential remained hidden until it was released. That image helped us think about our own lives. God's Spirit was within us—not paper, but God's power, life, and energy. Just as a party popper was released at the right moment, God wanted to release us into the world with His love, truth, and faith for the good of others. That was part of why we gathered together: to be renewed for the work God had given us.

Even in a quiet service (*and this one was far from that!*), God was at work through each person present. He worked through our personalities, our quietness, our smiles, our friendship, and the care we showed to others. It might not always look dramatic, but God was making a difference in the world through us.

A party popper was finished once it had been fired, but when God released His power through us He did not leave us empty—He refilled us. That was the remarkable difference.

The more we gave, the more God filled us again.

When we felt exhausted, God gave courage, strength, and energy.

When we felt like giving up, He reminded us that we were part of His plan for what needed to change in the world.

There were certainly times when we felt ready to pack it all in, and then suddenly we'd remember that God was still at work and that our lives mattered in His purposes. So, we were not to be "party poopers"—people who brought gloom where there should be joy. Instead, we should trust God's Spirit to make a difference in our lives and trust Him to make a difference in the lives of others through us.



When God's Spirit was let loose, things changed. God did not leave the world as it was; He brought life, movement, and transformation. We might prefer things to stay comfortable and familiar, but God's Spirit called us to live with His life within us.

Of course, after we'd fired off the party poppers, somebody would have to clean up! But John said that God was happy with a mess as part of change in our lives.

Life in the Spirit

John had been passing through St. Albans the other day when he'd noticed a piece of graffiti on a wall: "Life's a bitch." At first, he'd walked past it. But later he'd found himself thinking about it again. The phrase had been blunt, memorable, and impossible to ignore. The word itself had more than one meaning. It could refer literally to a female animal, but in common speech it was also used to describe something harsh, painful, or deeply unpleasant. Whatever its origin, the statement resonated because many of us had known moments when life felt joyless, empty, or unbearably hard. We too, at times, might have been tempted to say that life offered little pleasure, little meaning, and little hope.

That feeling of inner struggle connected with the words of **Paul in Romans 7**. He described a reality many people recognised: the painful gap between what we wanted to do and what we actually did. Paul had spoken of wanting to do

good yet finding himself doing the very things he hated. His cry was one of frustration, helplessness, and sorrow. His words reminded us that human life often felt like a battleground. We could find ourselves in conflict with our own desires, habits, and weaknesses. Left to ourselves, we did not become better; often we simply became more aware of how powerless we were to change. Paul's message was that we were not meant to fight this battle alone. What we could not overcome by our own strength, God could begin to change in us through the Holy Spirit.

Much of Christian life began with the recognition that willpower alone was not enough. We might know what was right. We might even long to do it. But still we found ourselves trapped in familiar patterns.

- We trusted our own wisdom.
- We pleased ourselves.
- We took a few steps forward, only to slip back again.
- We knew the good, yet struggled to live it consistently.

Paul had known this well through the burden of rules and regulations. But the Christian faith was not simply about trying harder. It was about being united with Christ and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, who brought real transformation.

At Pentecost, the Church celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit with wind, fire, and power. That moment marked not just the birth of the Church, but the beginning of a new kind of life for believers. Those first Christians had been changed. They became new people, and God had given them strength for what he called them to do. The same was true for us. When the Spirit of God lived within us, we were no longer ruled by guilt or by the fear that we were cut off from God. We might still know weakness, uncertainty, and even fear, but we were not abandoned. We were held by God, and he continued his work within us. The point was not that we improved ourselves by our own efforts. Rather, we lived faithfully before God and allowed his Spirit to reshape our lives. Change came not through self-reliance, but through grace.

One theologian had expressed it by saying that the gift of the Holy Spirit closed the final gap between the life of God and our own lives. Though difficult to grasp, the truth was simple: when we placed ourselves in God's hands and admitted our weakness, God began to do in us what we could never do for ourselves. That was why the message did not end with despair. Even when the world looked broken and troubling, God's Spirit was still at work. His purposes were still moving forward, and his kingdom was still coming.



John returned to the words on the wall: *"Life's a bitch."* On one level, they expressed a truth many people felt in moments of pain. But they were not the final word. For those who trusted God, suffering and struggle did not have the last say. God gave joy in place of despair, peace in place of turmoil, comfort in place of bitterness, and strength for the life he called us to live.

Might we trust him enough to let his Spirit change us, sustain us, and lead us into life.

And this week somebody remembered without any prompting that she had to light the candles!

Winchester Cathedral

Winchester Cathedral has a famous West Window. It is admired by thousands of visitors every year, yet it is nothing but a "hotch potch" of small pieces of glass put together in a haphazard way. It means a lot to the local folk, because it serves as a sad reminder that in the 17th century Oliver Cromwell almost overran the city.

Cromwell hoped, no doubt, to destroy the cathedral but all he did was to break up the beautiful West Window. Later, the good people of the town collected all the pieces of broken glass and used them to make a new whole. So although its original beauty has gone, the window now has a unique charm.

When life appears to be completely shattered, if we can make the effort to pick up the pieces and do our best to restore harmony, surely some good will in time, emerge.

Francis Gay



HEALTH TALK

Supporting your wellbeing, *inside and out*

Join us and learn from our experts:



Tania Marques

Long-Term Conditions (LTC)
Deputy Clinical Lead



Niamh Fairweather

Long-Term Conditions (LTC)
Assistant Psychologist

How Talking Therapies can support those with long-term physical health conditions and their emotional well-being.



They say:

'With this talk, we aim to raise awareness of the relationship between physical and emotional well-being. We recognise that living with LTCs can affect various aspects of our lives, including our quality of life, relationships, work, hobbies and finances. Additionally, feeling low, anxious, or stressed about living with an LTC can make it even harder to manage our health effectively.



Accessing support through Hertfordshire and Mid Essex Talking Therapies can help you manage your LTC, engage with what matters the most to you and live a full, meaningful life.'



WEDNESDAY
8th JULY
7.15PM



UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH
Darkes Lane



ALL WELCOME
Come along and join us for this important health conversation.



To book your place please contact
friendsofparkfieldppg@gmail.com



Lunchtime Recital 5th June 2026 – Lin Xu-Zhang



(piano)

This was Lin's second recital for us and the main emphasis was on the renaissance music of the late 16th and early 17th century. Since coming to the UK from Australia (a Sydneysider) he'd developed a deepening interest in this style of music originally composed for the harpsichord. For him the complexity of the music, the abrupt changes of tempo and the interplay of multiple tunes was both a challenge and a delight. For us, I think, more emphasis on the delight.

We note
he

played the first two pieces without music, but for the five renaissance composers he had the score on his tablet. We wondered how he could even read the music given the speed of the many trills and frequent switches of tune between hands. In fact, he could play the pieces from memory but uses the score more as a backstop – impressive in any event.



Having graduated this year from the Royal Academy of Music with first-class honours, he's now working on a Masters, and intends to progress to a PhD.



Plenty of time in London for another visit then!

You can view the recital video at <https://pottersbarurc.org/music-in-our-church/previous-recitals-2/5-june-2026/>

(At Lin's request we've not included the Stephen Hough Fanfare Toccata because of copyright concerns).

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

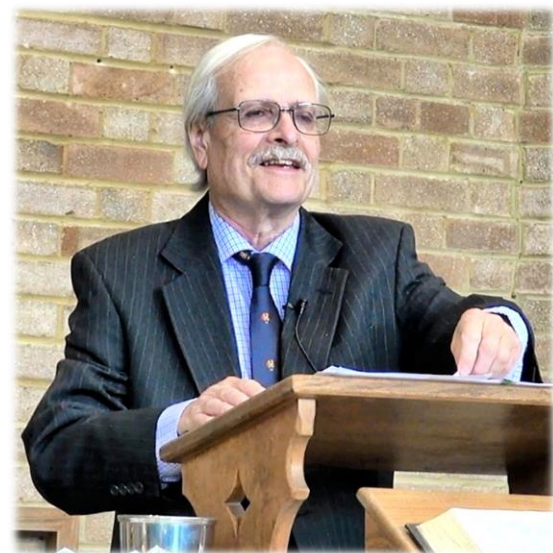
Orlando Gibbons: *The Woods so Wild*, MB 20/29

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

Communion Service Sunday 7th June – led by Martyn Macphee



It's always a pleasure to have Martyn lead our worship. His reflection was entitled "Sinners All", but it might equally have had the title "Jesus and the Wrong Company" because as he was preparing Martyn had found myself thinking about his years in investment banking and about the kind of leadership that the world often admired.

Martyn gave us the example of Jack Welch, the former chief executive of General Electric, a man famous for his forceful style and uncompromising approach to management. He had been brilliant, successful, and deeply influential, but he'd represented a model of leadership built on efficiency, advantage, and hard decisions. By that standard, Jesus would never have made a successful corporate CEO. He'd spent his time with the wrong people, ignored the accepted routes to influence, and he'd shown little interest in cultivating the powerful.

And that was exactly what we'd heard in the reading from Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus had been criticised for eating with tax collectors and sinners. In every age, people tended to look down on certain professions or kinds of people, and tax collectors in Jesus' day were among the most despised. They were seen not only as agents of an oppressive system, but also as people who profited from it. If Jesus had wanted to build his reputation in the conventional way, he would have courted the influential religious leaders in Jerusalem. Instead, he'd chosen the company of those regarded as morally suspect and socially unacceptable.

Matthew was most likely sitting in Capernaum, a busy town positioned on an important trade route and near a territorial boundary, making it an ideal place for collecting tolls and customs. Matthew was not simply a clerk; he was part of a profitable, highly visible system. He would have had all the tools of his trade before him, collecting money from travellers and merchants, and almost certainly benefiting from a system everyone resented but understood. People might have despised tax collectors, but tax collectors were often doing very well for themselves.

Into that scene Jesus had walked and simply said, "Follow me." There had been no lengthy argument and no moral lecture. Matthew had left his booth and followed Jesus. Then he'd invited Jesus to dinner and brought along his friends and associates—the very people respectable society would rather have avoided. Jesus had deliberately placed himself in their company. From a worldly point of view, it was a disastrous strategy. From the point of view of the kingdom of God, it revealed the heart of his ministry.

By this point in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus had already been in trouble—not because his teaching was obviously unorthodox, but because of the company he'd kept. He was not following the expected script - building alliances with the respectable and powerful. He was spending time with sinners, and that had offended the religious leaders.

The point of the story was not simply that Matthew was a sinner; it was that we all were. We were all in the same boat, and every one of us carried that same label before God. Yet the good news was that God's love was not reserved for the respectable, the polished, or the apparently qualified. God loved everyone—those inside the church and those outside it, those who behaved as we thought they should, and those who did not.

Martyn was reminded of a story about a courtroom in which the call was not "All rise," but "All debtors rise." In a sense, that was exactly what happened whenever we gathered before God. We came as debtors: people who lived not on our own righteousness, but on mercy. God wiped the ledger clean. He forgave our debts. And yet, like people who clear one account only to run it up again, we continued to fall short. One might think that such indebtedness would disqualify us from following Jesus, but the story showed the opposite. Jesus had called the unqualified. He'd called people like Matthew, and therefore people like us.

Following Jesus was not grounded in our competence, but in his grace. He had full authority yet did not use it to condemn. He used it to bless, to show compassion, and to open a path for us. This was why the language of debt in the Lord's Prayer mattered so much. We prayed for forgiveness because we needed it, and we asked for the grace to extend that same forgiveness to others. So here was the good news: Jesus was willing to keep company with us. More than that, he chose to do so. He didn't wait for us to become impressive, respectable, or spiritually polished. He'd come to us in our need and offer forgiveness. That was the heart of the gospel.

And so our prayer should be simple and honest: Father, forgive us our debts, and give us the courage and generosity to forgive the debts of others. Keep company with us, Lord, we pray, in Jesus' name.

PHOTO CORNER – Weald & Downland Living Museum

A popular TV programme “The Repair Shop” is located on a 40-acre open-air museum in the South Downs National Park that preserves over 50 rescued historic buildings spanning 1,000 years of English rural life.

The filming takes place in the museum's Court Barn which is closed to the public when the programme is being filmed.

Just a bit of background - The Repair Shop, the production company pays for all materials and labour for the restorations, making the repairs free for the owners of sentimental items, though they can optionally donate to charity. The experts are paid by the production company for their time and skill, and the entire "shop" is a set, not a commercial business for walk-ins, with items selected through an application process.



Just to add, to get it in perspective, the size of the Barn is smaller than Tilbury Hall.

There is a smaller adjacent barn where the engineer work is undertaken.

In the lower picture you can see a teddy bear, work in hand. progress?



The Museum was very interesting, and we enjoyed the day in the warm sunshine.

More from Sir Harry Secombe

Many years ago, in 1958, there was a film that took the British public by storm. It was a World War II espionage story and was based on fact. The title of the film was ‘Carve Her Name with Pride’. It tells the heroic story of Violette Szabo, a London shopgirl whose French officer husband is killed in action. She enlists as a British agent and on her second mission is captured by the Germans. She is sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp, and is finally executed, winning a posthumous George Cross for her bravery.

The star of the film was Virginia McKenna, and we were delighted to welcome her to our ‘Highway’ programme from Dundee.

There was little problem in finding the reading, because all we needed to do was use these words written by Leo Marks. The words are read as a voice-over at the very end of the film. You can consider the lyric from two standpoints and it responds to either.

You can think of it as a love poem, but equally convincingly it responds if you want to consider it as a sacred song. A measure of its greatness.

*The life that I have is all that I have
And the life that I have is yours.
The love that I have, of the life that I have
Is yours and yours and yours.
A sleep I shall have, a rest I shall have
Yet death will be but a pause.
For the peace of my years, in the long green grass
Will be yours and yours and yours*

Leo Marks

Morning Service Sunday 14th June – led by Mike Findley



I don't think it's the first time that Mike has told us about what it was like in his house when he was growing up. His mother had worked part-time, and Saturday morning was cleaning morning. She would say, "I cannot do this all on my own; you children will have to help." He felt it could be a useful picture for the day's reading. Jesus had been travelling from town to town and synagogue to synagogue. He'd seen how much needed to be done, and he could not do it all on his own. So he'd called his disciples and sent them out to share in the work. That was the message for us too. We were called to be Christ's hands, eyes, ears, and voice in the world today.

The reading from Matthew 9 &10 told us that Jesus had had compassion. At its heart, compassion meant "to suffer with." Jesus had seen people suffering, and he'd suffered with them. He'd seen people who were harassed, helpless, and without hope — like sheep without a shepherd. When we looked around today, it was not so very different. Many people felt lost, directionless, and forgotten.

In Jesus' day, the authorities had often seemed more interested in power, order, and their own advantage than in the plight of ordinary people. The people had had little guidance, little protection, and little sense that anyone truly cared for

them. Jesus had seen a great harvest of souls waiting to be gathered and told his disciples that they must help. “Go out and do the things I have been doing.”

At first, the disciples had been sent only to the people of Israel. But as the biblical story unfolded, it had become clear that God’s message was not for one people alone. The mission had begun in one place but did not stay there. It opened outward to the whole world.

There was also very practical advice in this reading: “You received without payment; give without payment.” The disciples were told not to make personal gain their aim. Their work was not to be driven by ambition, reward, or status, but by the kingdom of God. This remained true for us. We were not to force people, pressure them, or manipulate them. We were to love people into God’s realm. The message was to be shown in what we did: in compassion, kindness, generosity, and presence.

What we offered could not be bought: hope, peace, joy, and a sense of being valued and loved. These were gifts of grace. They were not things anyone could earn or purchase. We could not make God love us more by our efforts. God knew us as we were, and God accepted us as we were. A place in heaven was not something you earned. It was gift, pure gift. And because we ourselves were accepted, we were called to help other people know that they too were wanted, valued, and loved.

So many people today felt lonely, overlooked, and unimportant. Part of our calling was to show them otherwise — to help them know that they mattered, that they were respected, and that they were not forgotten. The message of the Bible had not been written in easy times. It was written in times of war, oppression, adversity, and unjust rule. That mattered. The call to love, to show kindness, and to bring peace had never been meant only for comfortable times. It was given precisely for difficult times. So when we wondered whether life was too hard today for such a calling, we should remember that the Christian message was born in hardship.

There were small but beautiful details in the reading. When you entered a house, offer peace. And if that peace was not received, not to condemn — simply take the peace back. Jesus also said that when we faced difficulty, not to be anxious about what to say. The words would be given to us. That did not mean speaking would always feel easy. It took courage to go out and speak to others. But courage grew with practice, and confidence came with experience.

When he’d first begun preaching, Mike had been told by an older church secretary to speak from the heart and from experience; to speak about what he knew, what he had lived, and what God had done in him. That was how we were to speak to others about faith: not in a forced or artificial way, but honestly. We were to tell people what being a Christian meant to us, how faith gave us peace, inner strength, calm, and purpose.

In many religions, the focus seemed to be, “How do I get where I want to go? How do I improve myself?” But the Christian calling was not only about our own spiritual destination. It was also about helping others find hope, peace, purpose, and the love of God. That was why the disciples’ work would have stood out so clearly in their own time. In a society where many people were neglected and unsupported, their compassion and service would have looked strikingly different. And the same was true now: when we acted with love, mercy, and kindness, the message would shine out. We never knew how our words might reach another person. What meant little to one might mean a great deal to another. So our calling was simply to be faithful: to speak when needed, to act with compassion, and to trust that God would use what we offered.

The message was clear. We were sent out, just as the disciples were sent out, to show compassion, to bring peace, to offer hope, to help people know they were valued, and to let God’s love be seen in our actions. We were not to be afraid. The words we needed would be given to us, and the work we were called to do was still the same: to help bring others into the joy, hope, and peace of God’s kingdom.

So live this day, that at its close, you may feel no shame, but gladness

As something you have done.....or tried to do.

So live this day, that at its close, someone may have cause to bless you

For something you have done.....or tried to do.

So live this day, that at its close, you may rest in peace and quiet content

Knowing what you have done.....or tried to do.

Try, that’s the important thing.....and eventually you will make it !

The Wedding of Jennifer Lane and Peter Gooch - 20th June 2026.

Twenty – six – twenty-six, a date easy to remember - and one neither Jenny nor Peter is likely to forget!

Jenny has come into our lives and our community quietly, as a guest at recitals and charity lunches. Peter not so quietly, as a leader of our worship and notable hymn soloist. And now they have done something that many of us did quite a few years ago – sealing their recent friendship and love with a

bond of marriage.

This was an irresistible opportunity for some of the ladies of our church to be there to see it.

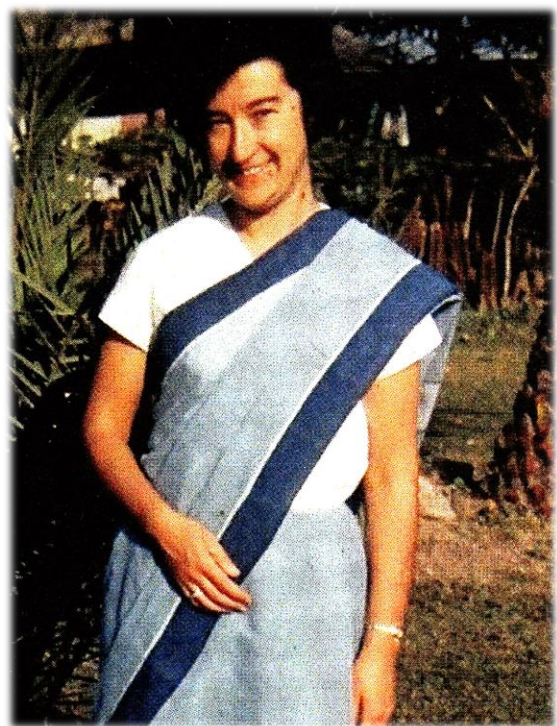
The wedding was held at Jenny’s church for the last 70 years, the Winchmore Hill Baptist Church. We arrived early (*parking!*) to find Peter already “waiting at the church”.

For one lady, the last opportunity for a hug?

The church was full to bursting and there were many pictures up on the screen to view whilst we waited for the bride to arrive. We knew Jenny had been a missionary. We learned she had been a Baptist Missionary in East Pakistan (*now Bangladesh*) from 1968.

There were also pictures shown of Peter doing some of *his* missionary work at Potters Bar URC.

The Baptist .Marriage Service had some nice touches. Three candles to be lit. The two outer candles are lit by the happy couple just before the formal part begins. The middle candle is for later.



The marriage ceremony itself was quite brief. There were no objections from the congregation, and the couple were told they could not object at this stage. The vows were given; rings were exchanged.....



.....and then of course what the ladies had been waiting for – the KISS. (Peter was told his first attempt lacked sufficient passion – amply made up for on the second round!)



With that done, another piece of symbolism, the middle candle was lit using the outer two candles to signal that two were now one. What a lovely idea!



The minister's thoughts on marriage included the need for firm foundations should love fade. At the age of 87 (Jenny), and for Peter his third marriage, I think they both know how important and life sustaining a 'good marriage' is, so we can hope that theirs will be all that they want it to be and secure their future together. We'll look forward to sharing a little of that future with them within our church community. After a presentation to Jenny to mark her missionary work, she confirmed they both intended to continue with missionary activities!

How they met and what had brought them together remained an unanswered question for our ladies. Perhaps there was a clue in one of the pictures we saw on the screen.



We wish them good health, happiness, and a rewarding life together!

Diary for July

Fri	3	12.15	Lunchtime Recital by Mr Ivan Linford (organ)
		13.15	Charity Lunch
		14.30	Phoenix Whist Group (every Friday)
		19.00	Choir Practice (every Friday)
Sun	5	11.00	Morning Communion Service led by Anne Walton
Tue	7	14.00	Elders' Meeting
Sat	11	15.00	Anniversary Celebration - BBQ/Cream Tea -tickets from Janet O'Connor
Sun	12	11.00	Anniversary Service – led by Reverend David Aplin
Sun	19	11.00	Morning Communion Service led by Pastor Peter Gooch
		13.00	Followed by Church Meeting
Sun	26	11.00	Morning Service led by Mr David Ramsay
Wed	29	14.00	Knit & Natter Group held in the Vestry

Rotas for July

Pulpit Supply

5th Anne Walton 12th Reverend David Aplin 19th Pastor Peter Gooch 26th Mr David Ramsay

Duty Officers

5th Mr Frank Palmer 12th Mr David Ramsay 19th Janet Green 26th Frank Palmer

Communion Preparation

5th Marian Poulton 19th Janet O'Connor

Bible Readers

5th Mr Frank Palmer 12th Mr David Ramsay 19th Mrs Marian Poulton 26th Mrs Jenny Blumsom

Coffee

5th Chris Ramsay 12th Margaret Hillyard 19th Marian Poulton 26th Chris Ramsay

***You can't change the past,
But you can ruin the present
By worrying about the future.***

Lunchtime Recital at 12.15 on Friday 3rd July -Organ Recital by Ivan Linford

This month there is a change to the planned recital as Charlie Price's clarinet partner has had to withdraw. However it offers us the chance to welcome back Ivan Linford, who last played for us in May 2024.

<https://pottersbarurc.org/previous-recital-10-may-2025/>

He loves to play our organ, appreciating the clarity of the sound. With luck the new organist's bench will be there for him (height adjustable and no creaks!)



Ivan Linford enjoys a busy freelance career as an organist and pianist. Based in Oakham, the county town of Rutland, he is accompanist to the Rutland Choral Society, Grantham Choral Society and Leicester Bach Choir. He plays the organ in a variety of churches in the local area for Sunday services and is much in demand, both locally and further afield, for playing at weddings, funerals and concerts. He holds the degrees of Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts from the University of Huddersfield and is an Associate of the Royal College of Organists and Fellow of the Independent Society of Musicians. As a postgraduate student, he was Organ Scholar at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and subsequently held posts at Oakham Parish Church, Leicester Cathedral and Oakham School. Born in 1973 in Peterborough, he was a former chorister at the Cathedral. As a choral accompanist, he has visited various countries including Ireland, France, Belgium, Italy, Hungary and the USA. He has given organ recitals and accompanied choirs at many English cathedrals (including St Paul's and Westminster Cathedrals in London) and has also performed on BBC television and radio. This year, he is busy giving recitals in various venues and in August, he plays in the summer series at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, where the organ was comprehensively restored in 2022.

Programme

Lo Ballo Del' Intorcias	Antonio Valente (c1520-1581)
Choral Partita: <i>Christ, der ist mein leben</i> <i>Choral with 12 variations</i>	Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)
Prelude and Fugue in C, BWV 545	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Andante with Variations	Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Penguins' Playtime	Nigel Ogden (1954-2026)

Communion Service Sunday 21st June – led by Revd. David Aplin



*It was Father's Day, and although David told us that he'd been reluctant to assume leadership of the 'Aplin clan' when His father died (his Mam had looked to him to take on this responsibility because he was a **man**), he was now a delighted great grandfather (great grumpy), Theo (8lb 3 oz) had been born the previous Thursday.*

He was "lucky, lucky, lucky" not just for this, but also because it was the day for the induction of Maureen Marlow as a serving Elder and a "refresher" for Janet O'Connor and Marian Poulton who were to serve a further year.

The reading from **Romans 6** - Dead to sin, alive in Christ – told us that If we died with Christ, we would also live



with Him. We knew that since Christ was raised from the dead, He could not die again; death no longer had mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He now lives, He lives with God.

In the same way, we were called to count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

David felt we should beware of reading this too literally. If dying with Christ meant that we could somehow avoid physical death altogether, our churches would soon be full. It would also create some practical difficulties—perhaps even with pensions and the triple lock—if they had to be paid out for centuries. But the reality was that our earthly lives were limited: four score years, give or take a score, notwithstanding serious illness or accident. We passed on, and succeeding generations took over.

Some wealthy people had found the idea of death unwelcome, distasteful, and unworthy of them. With their great resources, they planned to have their bodies cryogenically frozen until medical science could cure whatever had caused their death. Large sums of money were set aside for that eventuality. Yet this was as foolish as the rich man who'd filled his barns, built bigger ones, and stored up all his grain—only to die that very night, unable to take any of it with him.

When we physically died and our bodies perished, this was dying with Christ. Yet it was also living with Christ, because we lived with Him. In the resurrection, Christ had not only overcome death; He'd revealed that victory so that many might believe. Our life after death would not be displayed in the same way. We would not have to return and say, "Look at me; I am still alive." But it would be just as real and just as absolute. Our souls would live on.

We heard a great deal about near-death experiences and David hoped we did not dismiss them as mere fantasy, for many people had described what might be glimpses of the life to come.

Later in Romans, Paul said that we should not let sin reign in our bodies. This did not mean that we were expected never to sin. Jesus knew that we were sinners; that is why we had prayers of confession, in which we admitted our sins—even those we did not fully recognise. But if we were truly penitent, we should do our best to control and minimise our sins.

Jesus had died upon the cross so that the truly penitent might be saved. This was no small matter: it was our ticket to the greatest promise in heaven and on earth. Through faith in the Son and the Father, the gates of God's kingdom were opened, and there our souls might dwell there forevermore. Death had been conquered by Jesus Christ.

Did our bodies—or our souls—need to be cryogenically frozen so that we could be brought back to life at some point in the future? Not at all. Our souls passed into the loving hands of God as we died, and we remained alive through Him. The body might die, but we were alive in Christ. Our souls were alive, and they never died. That was the promise given to us through faith in Him.

David recognised that many found the concept of the soul difficult to understand. We believed it, yet we did not fully understand it, and we struggled with what we could not understand. But we were grateful that God had given us everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Then we moved on to the Induction of Maureen, Janet and Marian.



Vicar of Dibley – The Second Coming – Saturday 5th September



The Potters Bar Theatre Company is presenting a follow-on from last year’s performance of their own version of The Vicar of Dibley, and Chris Ramsay is organising a block booking for church members, to be preceded by a sandwich and cake platter. Hopefully this time they won’t arrange to go on holiday for the event!

All who went last year enjoyed both the platter and the performance, which was hilarious.

If you are interested, please let Chris or David know as soon as possible, so that they can get the booking numbers

right.

It’s Saturday September 5th at 6,30pm for the platter, and 7.30pm for the show.

Tickets for the show are £21.00 and the platter costs £12.00.

Total £33.00 – and well worth it!




Potters Bar Theatre Company proudly presents
an amateur production of

THE VICAR OF DIBLEY

Christmas
The Second Coming

A stage adaptation by Ian Gower and Paul Carpenter
Based on the original TV series
Written by Richard Curtis and Paul Mayhew Archer
Produced by Tiger Aspect Productions

1st - 5th September 2026
at 7.30pm Sat Matinee at 2.30pm



01707645005 www.wyllyolstheatre.co.uk

Guided Visit to Capel Manor 16th June 2026



It was a fine and sunny day for our visit. We were met by our guide, Stephen Dowbiggin OBE - Vice President of Capel Manor College, and former college principal.

Finally, our importance had been recognised!

As befitted a former principal, his focus was on the college, its history and the development of its infrastructure. It seemed that he'd built quite a bit of it with his bare hands – in some cases reusing materials and buildings scavenged from the site of the Chelsea Flower Show after it had finished, like the Roman folly in the picture dismantled in three days and then lovingly re-erected. He'd also dug out the lake over one weekend with a friend and a digger.

He seemed to have been a master of persuasion as

well, recruiting sponsors and other allies (including Lady Salisbury) who inspired many aspects of the college development. They'd started very small: early visitors were met in a wooden hut and charged



£1. Using his contacts to get grants and donations, they'd built classrooms (*they'd started teaching in a greenhouse – too hot in the summer, so they'd shifted the focus to practical work – something the College is renowned for*), bought up extra land to provide space for a range of horticultural projects, so in effect re-acquiring the grounds of the original manor. When you arrive, you are taken to a 'mock up' of the old manor, put together on the insistence of Lady Salisbury, some parts of which had been reclaimed from 'Beckingham Palace'. It had been



erected for a Beckham drinks party, and Victoria Beckham had not realised that it had been intended as a permanent installation. It now features at Capel Manor.



Actually, there was no such thing as Capel Manor. Originally it had been ‘the Manor of Honeylands and Pentriches, built in 1486 and the seat of the Capel family - later the Lords of Essex - hence locally it had been called Capel’s Manor.

Along the way they’d provided a new home for the Princess Royal College of Animal Management and Saddlery, opened in 2015 by Princess Anne. They are now working on workshops and a display area to be able to offer one-year internships to three of the graduating leatherworking students.

Stephen had a wealth of anecdotes – not least a ‘run in’ with Princess Anne, commenting disparagingly about a particular breed of carthorse for which Anne was the Society President – something she’s not let him forget when they meet (*next time at Ascot, don’t you know*).



Stephen told us he’d come from a farming background and ploughing was a favourite pastime for him. He showed us a small horticultural harrow but told us he’d moved on to seed drilling – using a machine for planting individual seeds at specific intervals so they didn’t need to be ‘pricked out’. This required accurate straight lines, since the later mechanical weeding equipment used the same lines and the same intervals between plants.

When the college had been founded, they’d just had the area of the walled garden to work with. Later, with more land for projects, it had been remodelled – roses for the Queen, but a vegetable area had had to be added to satisfy a more traditionally minded Prince of Wales (*as he then was*).



The Manor building had been owned by Enfield Council, but

it needed a lot of TLC. They’d taken a lease for £5 but then needed to raise the ~£1 million to repair the roof and restore some of the interior.





In the Manor garden we stopped under a tulip tree (*more on this later*). There were now a number of large-scale garden areas and a holly and yew maze, paid for by Pirelli, who had used it as a photoshoot site for one of their calendars. They'd had to declare the photoshoot area 'off limits' for the young male students for the duration of the photoshoot!

Stephen had a signed copy of that year's calendar.

Margaret Thatcher had inspired the National Gardening Centre, a permanent collection of show gardens. She felt that the show gardens at Chelsea were only for the rich and wanted gardens that mere mortals could identify with.

Stephen commented that at Chelsea the way the plants were laid out would get a C-

at Capel. Many would not survive much more than the show's weeks as no thought appeared to be given to the needs of the individual plants (light, shade, moisture, soil). We finished up in the College Café – food to meet our needs at very affordable prices!

In the Manor House garden, we'd stopped under a tulip tree – so named because of the unusual flowers, indicative of paradise. Two such trees were supposed to be at the gates of heaven.



Stephen had plucked a bloom for Joan Gooding – not I think that he felt there was any imminent need. She was delighted in any event.

A good outing for all of us!

