

April
2022

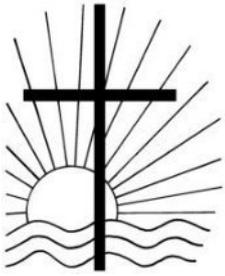
St John's United Reformed Church

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NEWSLETTER FROM ST JOHN'S URC

Ministers: Rev David Rees & Filled Vacancy July 2022



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New Life

When does the season of Spring begin? For those who like things organised and fixed this has been an issue as seasons slowly merge from one to another, with fits and starts. Signs of spring, such as daffodils flowering can abound in February, only to be killed off in March with a cold snap.

Those who like to bring order to chaos will put a calendar date on it and this year in the northern hemisphere it was either Sunday March 20th on the astronomical calendar or 1st March on the meteorological calendar. The March 20th date comes from the equinox, that is the time when the sun crosses the plane of the earth's equator, making night and day of approximately equal length all over the earth. The March 1st date is simple based on the monthly calendar and allow for easier statistical comparison (ie spring in 2015 was warmer or drier or cloudier than an earlier year).

Either could have been technically correct while outside winter reigned with a foot of snow and minus degree temperatures, and we continued wearing heavy coats gloves and scarfs. In fact in England it is statistically more likely to have snow at Easter which is often in April, than it is to have snow at Christmas.

Apart from longer (and warmer) days, Spring also reminds us of budding leaves, blossoming flowers and gambolling lambs. (NB I had to look up 'gambol', it means run or jump about playfully.)

Spring reminds us of new life. And that is part of the reason that Easter has many symbols of

new life:- Eggs, bunnies, chicks, bonnets with flowers on.



Like many cultural traditions, Easter is a mixture of secular and sacred, 'pagan' and Christian.

Though Christians believe at the heart of Easter is a story of Jesus death and resurrection, the church was integrated images and motifs from Spring and from earlier religions to help us understand the consequence of the Easter events. Sometimes of course, the images get in way of our understanding. Eggs may remind of new life; chocolate eggs, less so; giving a box of chocolates has even less symbolic meaning.

The other side of Easter though, when we and our children and grandchildren have finished our chocolate eggs and the Easter long weekend is a distant memory; it is quite easy to forget that new and abundant life is the promise of Jesus' resurrection. We might actually be in Spring, we might acknowledge Easter has happened, but we act as if winter were still all around. The new life that is supposedly celebrated at Easter with all the symbols, feels as sad as a forgotten chocolate Easter egg that has been left in the sun on a window sill.

Friends, life may not be full of surprises like an Easter egg hunt, but it is full of promise. Jesus says 'I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

David

Church Secretary's Notes

The first thing to say is that the Ordination service for our new minister, Adam Earle, will be at St Johns on Sunday 24th July at 3pm. So please get this date in your diaries. There will be people from all the five churches attending, although the service will also be live streamed. There will be refreshments in the upstairs hall after the service. We will need several helpers, with car parking, door stewarding and helping with the refreshments. We will also be inviting the mayor, local dignitaries and church ministers. A big day to look forward to! If you can help in any way please let me know.

The service on the 3rd April will be live streamed from Castle Hill, with Sara Pells leading the communion part of that service in our Worship area.

Our Good Friday service on the 15th, will be live streamed from Castle Hill and the Easter Sunday communion service on the 17th will be at St Johns (with organist).

Our first coffee morning since the pandemic was very successful and enjoyable. Thanks to Brian & Lesley and all the stall holders. We now hope to get back into the routine of holding a coffee morning on the second Saturday of each month. This means that the next one will be on April 9th at 1030am. Unfortunately Brian & Lesley will be away, so we are looking for volunteers – please let me or Brian know if you can help.

Looking ahead: the church will be used for the local elections on May 5th but on a brighter note we are planning a walk and afternoon tea at Felixstowe on May 18th. Finally, on behalf of you all, I would like to wish Peter D a good rest and a speedy recovery. Take it easy!

Adrian

Wednesday afternoon, 18th May

Please make a note of this date as we're planning a visit to Felixstowe with tea and



cake! Look and listen out for more details – just make sure you keep the afternoon free!

Val V

TREASURERS REPORT

You are thanked for Offerings in February totalling £1,795.51

Generous donations to the March Communion Fund for the Ukrainian Appeal amounted to £880. This has been sent to The Link to Hope Charity which has direct established contacts in Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria.

Our annual charitable donation from Church funds (previously we supported Angie and Brian's medical students in Tanzania) was deferred from last year to this - and with Church Meeting approval, this has been donated to Christian Aid. This money was "ringfenced" in last year's accounts, pending a decision on its destination and does not come from this year's accounts.

Our Annual Accounts for 2021 have been approved by Elders and independently audited.

Full details will be given at our forthcoming AGM -

abbreviated paper copies will be available.

We can advise that we made a sizeable surplus of income over expenditure in 2021 of £7,746.

This is in reality, however, for all the wrong reasons in that we were not using the Church premises!!

We successfully claimed on our Insurers for "loss of income" due to the pandemic in amount of £3,800, we received a grant from Ipswich Borough Council of £1,250 to help with additional costs of re-opening premises to our other user groups and of course our expenditure on utilities and in particular cleaning was considerably reduced.

If anyone would like a full copy of accounts (8 pages) - please let Richard know, and a copy can be sent via email.

As always, many, many thanks for your generous financial support.

Mary A and Richard W



Editors Note: Many thanks from me for responding to the Link to Hope Appeal - it was an amazing response from St John's

Overall £69,000 had been given to them by Wednesday 30 March by 715 donors. So you can see we are making a difference. There are some very encouraging stories of what has been achieved with many pictures. I would suggest you visit this link: <https://linktohope.co.uk/home/about/ukraine-updates/> to see them perhaps before your prayers. I have put some examples on page 6.

Communion Offering

At Church Meeting on 17th March, my proposal was accepted to sponsor a charity for a year* and for 2022 it will be TWAM – Tools with a Mission. This organisation collects unwanted, usable tools from across the UK, refurbishing them as trade kits to send to African skills training centres where they help people earn money and feed their families.

The charity's team of more than 400 volunteers across the UK works hard to send 18 containers, full of around 15,000 tool kits, to Africa every year. The containers are costing more to send and this is

where we can provide some financial help.

If you would like more information about the organisation, I have put a newspaper article on the noticeboard in Room 1.

*The year would exclude May, September, November and December when we support Christian Aid, Water Aid and Ipswich Night Shelter.

Val Vertigans

Bible Study

Our April Bible Study will be on Tuesday morning April 12th at 10.30 am on Zoom. As this is in Holy Week and will be the only time we meet over the Easter period I thought we would approach it differently. Rather than taking the lectionary Gospel reading for one Sunday we will keep in mind the whole Easter Story including all of Holy Week up to and including Easter Sunday. This is the heart of our Christian faith and obviously more than we can study in detail in just one hour. The lectionary readings for that period all come from John's Gospel, from chapter 12 to the end of chapter 20.

My suggestion therefore is that everyone chooses a particular passage from those chapters for us to discuss. Have your choice in mind as you come to the meeting and if you are able to say why you have chosen those verses that would be interesting, but not a necessity. Any part of the narrative will have so much meaning for us and should provoke good discussion and sharing of insights, understanding and faith.

So do join us that morning and enjoy a time of Christian fellowship and sharing. You will be most welcome.

When logging on the meeting ID is 889 953 6542. If you have no internet you can use your phone by dialling 02034815240 or 01304601196 and when prompted enter the number 889 953 6542.

Elaine T

The monthly coffee mornings

are back!! The first one held on 19th March was a bit special as we had books, cards, cakes, knitted goods and dressed dolls on sale. The coffee mornings will be back to normal on the second Saturday of the month from now on and we hope to repeat having the stalls another couple of times later this year.



I would like to thank everyone who helped and a special thanks to Brian and Lesley who were back in the kitchen providing their delicious bacon rolls and cakes.

We raised £171.27 but the best part of the morning was the wonderful atmosphere. The church was really buzzing and it was good to see the ladies from St John's Court there.

Please come and support us for **the next coffee morning on Saturday 9th April.**

Mary Aldous

February 2022 CENTRAL FUND UPDATE

from the Revd Paul Neshangwe

Background (Lindsey): Eastern Synod has a long-time partnership with the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. We have good friends there, trying to make the Presbytery self-sufficient. They have roughly the same number of ministers as us, but much larger congregations. These congregations, however, can rarely afford to pay their minister's stipend. The Presbytery has established a Central Fund to try and support the churches to a) pay their ministers and b) support the mission of the church. They have established a number of businesses (farms: cattle, agriculture and chickens) in order to support the Fund.

This article is intended to keep you updated on the work and concerns of our partners in Zimbabwe, and to keep them in your prayers. If your church was also interested in raising funds, you will see that they are all quite large sums: churches could work together to support a project, or have their own target to reach to contribute to a particular area.

Current Business ventures Our open-field farming is also growing at Vimridge. This is largely because of the drip irrigation equipment that we got through donations invested from the Norfolk and Waveney Area Partnership congregations in the Eastern Synod. We now have an agreement with a seed company

called Seed-Co.

a) Vimridge Farm We continue to do greenhouse-based tomato production and other related horticulture producing beetroot, cucumber, onion as well as choumoellier. We also have two fishponds for the production of tilapia. We breed 'roadrunner' chickens as well.

b) Gloag Ranch

We have over 2500 hectares of land. We are currently leasing the bulk of the farm to a neighbouring farmer such that we are only left with 630 hectares shared between our Presbytery Business and Investment Unit and the schools. Of that remaining land we are entering into Partnership with two companies in order to have Dairy farming as well as produce soya beans and canola seed for production of cooking oil.



1st funding / prayer request: any amount contributed towards this will help us get some breathing space to build a good balance, that will see us move from the hand-to-mouth scenario sooner. This will enable our businesses to become stable and help our

Central Fund to remain viable and sustainable.

2nd partner funding / prayer request: if there are congregations who prefer that their funds be invested in the agriculture business for ongoing profits, rather than spend on paying stipends right away this is the area most in need.

Preparing 10 hectares of land = US\$7500. 1 hectare of irrigation equipment = US\$1300.

3rd funding / prayer request: a truck to transport our inputs and produce. We need a one and a half tonne truck to transport material. We have been advised that this would cost at least US\$8000.

Full Article Here

<https://shared.xara.com/djRhUnU31>

To get in touch and send contributions to Advance please use the email

advance@stjohnsurcipswich.org.uk

Please note the deadline for the May Advance is 25th April

Thought for the Day

“To love means loving the unlovable.

To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable.

Faith means believing the unbelievable.

Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.”

G K Chesterton (1874-1936)



Some unedited extracts from website 28/2/2022 - Borziesi, Moldova The request has come for us to help refugees that are coming over the border from Ukraine. As many of you will know we have built a

community centre in Borziesi for the local poor community. This is now being used to house and feed refugees. We also built a canteen in the village of Pervoimascoe and that is being used to feed the refugees. Here are some photos of the mattresses and bedding that your funds have bought.



07/03/2022 - Bozieni, Moldova More refugees have just arrived in Bozieni, Moldova. The original number they were asked to host was 15 but a further 30 refugees have now arrived. The community centre run by Pastor Ion has now run out of mattresses/beds for people. So we have just sent £1,600 of YOUR funds to buy more of them along with all the bedding that is needed. We have been overwhelmed by peoples generosity in giving funds so we can help the people on the ground. Thank you so, so much. Moldova is being overwhelmed by people so YOUR money is vitally important and directly contributing to ensuring the safety and support of refugees.

21/03/2022 - Stauceni, Moldova With YOUR help we are sending funds today to Mihail, our project manager in Stauceni to buy 15 bunk beds to give him an extra 30 beds for more refugees that are coming over the border. For anyone wondering what we are going to be doing with all these beds when this awful war is finally over – then think of all those very poor families who will have a lovely new(ish) bed and mattress to sleep on. This is from Mihai - **“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your financial help, moral support, and prayers.** With tears in my eyes I come to tell you that your help is very important in these days full of pain, tears and despair both for the Ukrainian people and for us in Moldova. Thanks to your support, we can now help refugees in Ukraine.”

Thursday

Forum

at Christ Church
Tacket Street (next to Cox Lane car park)

Thursday Lunchtimes

Refreshments at low cost 12 noon - 1.00 pm
A short talk 1.10 - 1.50 pm

You are welcome to either or both



Season 2021/2022

Mar 24th Cardinal Thomas Wolsey
Dr Philip Roberts

Mar 31st Living in a Silent World
Linda Kirk – voice over by Pearl Kerridge

Apr 7th Springtime Singing
Belstead Singers with Jenny Jones

Forum then takes a break and returns on 28th April

Apr 28th Ipswich Charter Wall Hangings
Isabel Clover

After Service Coffee Rota

Date	Name
03/04/22	Mary A and Pauline
10/04/22	Sheila and Andrew
17/04/22	Mollie and Richard
24/04/22	Jill B and Jenny
01/05/22	Gwen and Jill L

Services

Date	St John's
03/04/22	Live stream from Castle Hill 10:30 Communion (Sara Pells presides at St John's)
10/04/22	Rev David Rees
14/04/22	19:00 Maundy Thursday Zoom
15/04/22	Good Friday ** Live Stream from Castle Hill
17/04/22	Easter Sunday Peter Dawson
24/04/22	Rev Canon David Atkins
1/05/22	Rev John Cook

** Alternatively, you are invited to the joint Good Friday Service at St John's, Cauldwell Hall Road at 10:30

Free Telephone sound only versions of Services
01473 938542 Option 1