

# THE REVIEW

## EASTER APRIL 2022



**WADDINGTON STREET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,  
DURHAM CITY DH1 4BG**

**Church Website: [www.durhamurc.org.uk](http://www.durhamurc.org.uk)**



## Dear Friends,

Many people have asked me ‘what can we, as a church, do for Ukraine?’ Indeed, folk at each of my congregations have asked the same thing. The answer is: ‘watch this space’—conversations are being had, meetings are being arranged, and I hope that a co-ordinated, manageable, appropriate, and effective response will result. In the meantime, we look with increasing concern at the desperate situation in Ukraine and can but pray with lament at the destruction, suffering, and loss caused by a nation’s lust for power, fuelled by their leaders’ despotic desire for domination.

As we come face-to-face with refugees from this crisis, we would do well to remember that exile is in our faith DNA. We are descended from a nation in exile and much that is written in the Old Testament concerns the uprooting of the people of God, the trudge through wilderness, the ramifications of forced relocation, followed by the eventual rebuilding of a nation humbled by trial and defeat. The examples we follow and seek to learn from are those where God’s people have been empowered to be the best they can be—devoted to God and loving each other.

Likewise, we look to Jesus and the examples of Christian faith to be inspired by love that endures even in the face of persecution. The power of God that worked through the Holy Spirit in Jesus is very different from earthly power. The clash of the two led to the Cross—with the graceful, loving power of God ultimately vindicated with the hope of resurrection. This message lives on and the light cannot be extinguished, such is the victory of God.

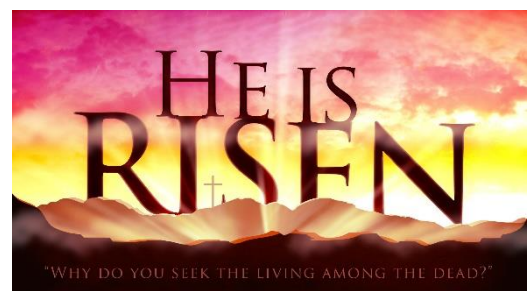
The world looks to exploit, control, and punish. In contrast, the nature of God is to encourage all to thrive, to liberate to create, and to forgive to move forward together. The power of God is enabling—gifts are discovered and released. The energy of God is spread wide for the benefit of all. God’s dynamism flows freely through those who humble themselves and empty themselves of all but love. Empires, tyrants, dictators, power-mad rulers come and go. But love remains. That is the endless victory that we sing out loudly, with the way of death conquered by the enduring power of love.

This, however, is cold comfort to those currently crushed under sorrow’s iron rod. The temptation in those circumstances may be to seek earthly triumph and vindication. But if so, we will be sorely disappointed. It’s only when we’re truly powerless that we discover God’s true power. When in the bleakest darkness, the light of resurrection power shines more brightly—glimpsed in small mercies, meaningful gestures of solidarity, in practical support, and generosity when needed most.

As we approach Easter, preparing to sing “endless is the victory...risen, conquering Son”—and we will sing this with great gusto—be absolutely confident that death has been conquered, for death dies every time someone seeks to be the best example of humanity even in the midst of dehumanising destruction—devoted to God and loving each other.

Yours faithfully,

*Marcus*



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY AND CHURCH NEWS

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**Ministerial Services – Revd. Marcus Hargis** is contactable in the following ways:-

Phone: 0776 949 2629 and 0191 366 4930 (messages can be left on either).

Email: [marcushargis@outlook.com](mailto:marcushargis@outlook.com) For routine pastoral matters, please first approach your Elder.

**Time of Sunday Services – 10.45 a.m. To Zoom into the service remotely please use Meeting ID: 766 703 2324. Password: DurhamURC.**

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**COPY DATE FOR THE MAY REVIEW IS – SUNDAY 17th APRIL 2022.**

**Please be aware when submitting articles that our Church Magazine goes on the website and is available for anyone anywhere in the world to read.**

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Reverend Marcus Hargis will lead a Tenebrae service in Waddington Street Church at 7 p.m. on Maundy Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Marcus will also be leading us in worship at the Easter Sunday Communion Service.

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***Apology for an omission in the March Review.***

*The following paragraph should have ended the excellent joint profile from Charles and Alison Jolly:*

“The pandemic not only slowed us down but demonstrated how isolated we were with one family in Cornwall and another in Dubai. Clearly it was time to downsize. Nic and Emma very kindly invited us to move closer to them (and our grandson Joe) in Durham. It was a huge wrench to leave so many good friends and we felt a little like Abram and Sarai going they knew not where in their old age (although we already have three children and far fewer sheep), so here we are in a Swedish Eco-house in Bowburn and our welcoming new spiritual home in Waddington Street. Hopefully our boots have a little metaphorical mileage in them yet.” **Charles and Alison Jolly.**

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A CHRISTIAN AID LUNCH -  
Will be held in our Church Hall  
after morning service on  
SUNDAY 8th MAY.  
All are welcome to share  
in this simple fundraising lunch.



***Advance notice of visits to Waddington Street URC by Revd. Fiona Bennett.***

On **SATURDAY 18TH JUNE** the Moderator of the General Assembly of the URC will attend a Meet and Greet session in the Church Hall at Waddington Street, including Afternoon Tea 3-5 p.m.

On **SUNDAY 19TH JUNE** the Moderator will lead the service and preach at 10.45 a.m.

Please put these dates in your Diary!

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***Songs for Ukraine - A recital to raise money for The Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal Disasters Emergency Committee. SATURDAY 14TH MAY AT 7.00 P.M., AT ELVET METHODIST CHURCH, OLD ELVET, DURHAM Tickets £15 at door, CASH ONLY, or email***

***[kim@kimportermusic.com](mailto:kim@kimportermusic.com) by Thursday 12th May. [Part of the group The Sixteen.]***

Artistes: Kim Porter - Mezzo-Soprano, Alex Chisholm-Loxley – Piano, and Helen Roche – Violin.

Beautiful songs by Purcell, Handel, Fauré, Sibelius and Strauss. [Notified by Anne Cramb.]

[Group have sung in the Cathedral, in The Sage, Gateshead and on Classic FM.]



## STUDENT EVENINGS ...

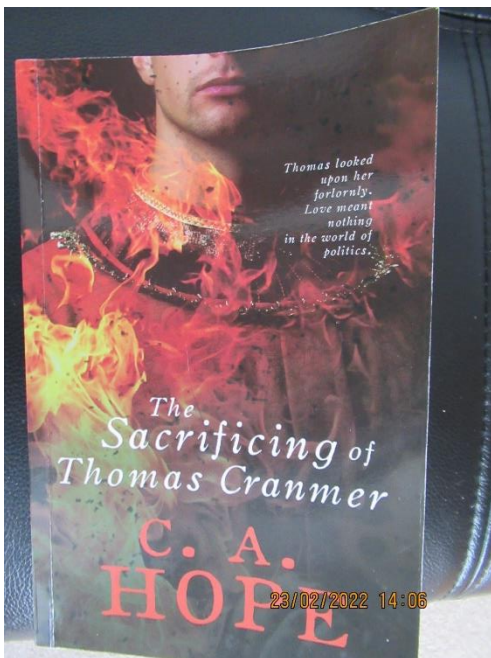
Our student evenings continue to evolve but we keep some of our successful seasonal activities alive; recounting occasions such as Bonfire Night, All Hallows Eve, Christmas, the Chinese New Year and Burns' Night - interspersed with tasty bites and an inquisitive, sometimes quirky, look at some of our collective cultural heritage. Bridging the inter generational spectrum of our student and church community involves a shared understanding of our life experiences and the values which hold us together.

The main theme for the February event was linked to Valentine's Day but we also paid an annual homage to pancakes and forthcoming Shrove Tuesday festivities. Mention was made of the romantic date set aside in China (4th August) in the form of the 'Qixi Festival'.

On the 15th March the students were treated to a prospective view of Easter, the surge of Spring and the spirit of ingenuity or inspiration.

### *David Thornborrow*

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#### ***The Sacrificing of Thomas Cranmer. Author: C.A. Hope***

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 1556: Thomas Cranmer is alone in his cell in the Bocardo Prison, Oxford.

The first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury.

The first Archbishop of Canterbury to have a wife.

The first Archbishop of Canterbury to have legitimate children.

Tomorrow, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1556, he will pay the ultimate sacrifice. He will be the first Archbishop of Canterbury to be burned at the stake.

(On cover: Thomas looked upon her forlornly. Love meant nothing in the world of politics.)

ISBN number. 978-1-80378-015-3. Price is £10.99, Kindle edition £2.99. Published by Cranthorpe Milner.

This book is historical fiction but is well researched and has had good reviews by professional reviewers. Available from bookshops and Amazon.

The author is a Church Warden at a local Washington church.

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### ***Some quotations from Bethel URC Magazine ...***

"We proclaim the resurrection of Christ when his light illuminates the dark moments of our existence." — *Pope Francis*

"The very first Easter taught us this: that life never ends and love never dies." – *Kate McGahan*

"By grace, we are saved through faith." – *Kevin DeYoung*

"I am the resurrection and the life."- *John 11:25*

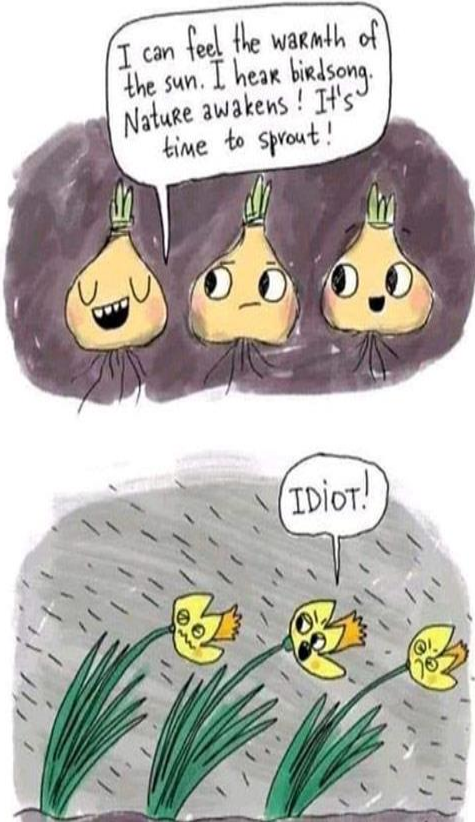
[With thanks to Judith Ashby at Bethel URC, Chester le Street for this item.]



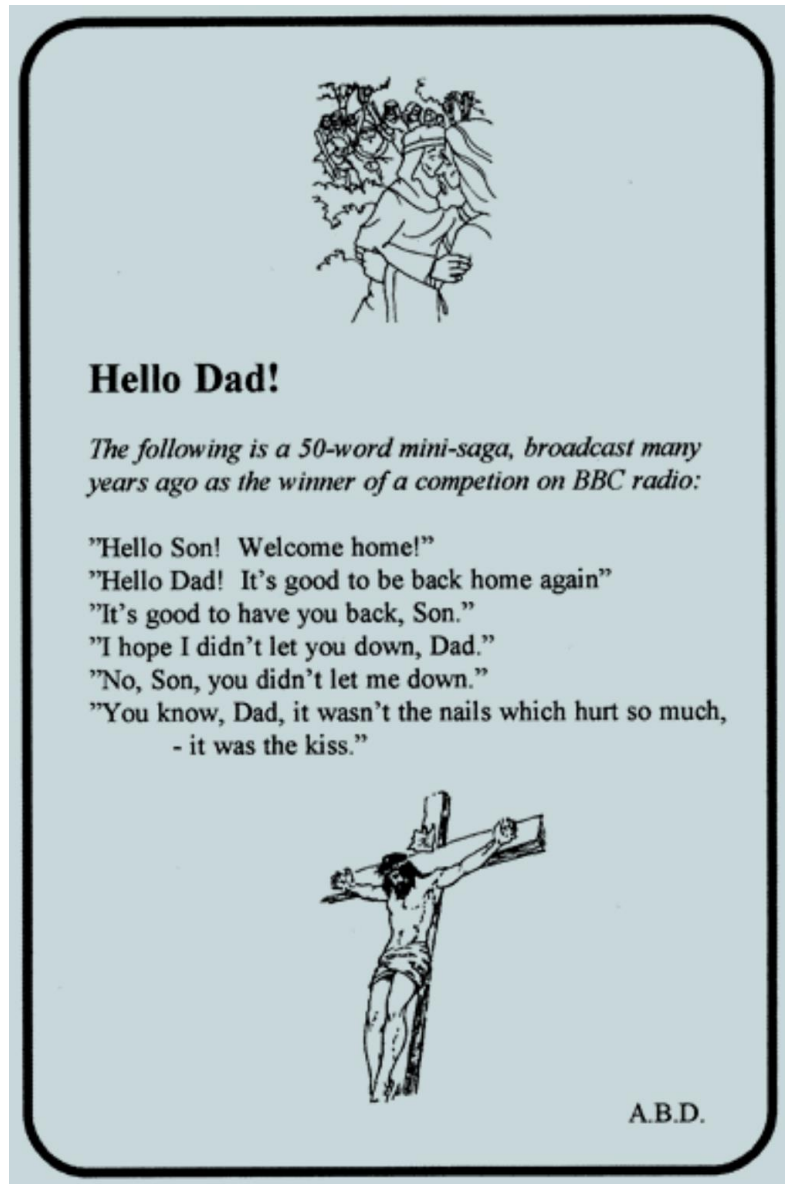
## EDITOR'S LETTER

### DEAR READERS,

After the prolonged and fierce storms which hit the country earlier this year, this cartoon amused me:



On a more serious note – I wish to say “Thank you” to Alex Dobie (via Judith Ashby) for this wonderful, powerful, piece which appeared in the Bethel URC magazine in April 2021. It took my breath away!



#### Puns from America ...

Sleeping comes so naturally to me, I could do it with my eyes closed.

What did the grape say when it got stepped on? Nothing - but it let out a little whine.

What do you call a super articulate dinosaur? A Thesaurus.

I have been fortunate to receive many items from members for the April Review and so my thanks to anyone who has contributed to this month's Review and, please, keep your articles coming – they are very much appreciated.

**Lucille Thomson**

The next issue of The Review will be published on **Sunday 1st MAY 2022**.  
Contributions please to Lucille Thomson at church or BY POST or **Tel. 0191-3861052**  
or e-mail **lesthomson@talktalk.net** – no later than **NOON on Sunday 17th APRIL 2022**.



**Notes from Elders' Meeting on Wednesday 2nd March 2022, at Church and on Zoom.**

1. Kathleen Clasper (Chair) opened with a reading from Isaiah chapter 43 beginning at verse 1 and prayer for Hope.
2. The meeting received apologies from Ruth Cranfield. The minutes of the last meeting on 2 February 2022 were agreed and signed.
3. Jane Rowell- Vision and purpose at Waddington Street – Apologies were given that Jane was unable to address this meeting as she was still co-ordinating the material from the meeting held on 30 March. She will address the Elders' meeting on 6 April.
4. Matters Arising from the minutes of 2 February 2022 – 1) There were no takers for attending this year's General Assembly. 2) COVID measures review – After discussion it was agreed to resume the normal length of service with masks and sanitiser. We will still wear masks for singing. 3) 150/50 years celebrations – Helen advised the meeting that Ray was willing to lead a working party. He has some good ideas and it was decided to form a group, set a budget and pick 4 or 5 events to hold. It was agreed to ask for congregational support at the AGM on 20 March, date events and possibly use these to raise money for good causes to be decided by the church meeting. Helen agreed to talk to Ray. 4) On 18 th June we have been asked to timetable a visit to Durham by Fiona Bennett, URC General Assembly Moderator. Details were discussed and will be put to her p/a for approval. 5) Remembrance Service- The service for those in our church family who have passed away during COVID- Marcus will try and co-ordinate a date and make enquiries who want to be involved. 6) Synod church building report from Graham Hatt- Our False roof and wiring are ok. Erosion was found in the tower- stonemasons need to assess. There is some damp around the place. It was agreed to call in Graham Hatt to survey these aspects. David Woods agreed to assist. We need to spend some money to assess and get advice. The church can spend up to £1,000 without church meeting authority. It was agreed to progress this immediately.
5. District Reports were received and prayers offered.
6. Correspondence – The church had received a card and plant as a thank you for letting the premises for a funeral tea. The Mother's Union also sent thanks for using our premises.
7. Website- 150/50 anniversary agendas to go on the website when known.
8. Safeguarding – more training had been undertaken by Elders. We need to be aware of what we say in our Zoom activities and family news and be mindful in our recruitment of volunteers. Our Accident Book and First Aid kit need to be displayed and booking procedures need updating to show this.
9. Joint Group service to be held on 6 March, 3 p.m. at Bethel, Chester-le -Street.
10. Donations from Ruth Crofton's funeral to be split between Jesmond and Waddington Street URC churches. Her books are also selling well.
11. Next Meeting -Wednesday 6 April at 7 p.m. Richard to Chair and Helen taking Minutes. The meeting closed with the saying of the Grace.





(Above - Chris Eddowes (St. George's Hartlepool), Revd. Dave Herbert, (Synod Moderator), Maranny Jones and Andrew Watson (Northgate, Darlington), Fliss Barker and Revd. Ray Anglesea.

'Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) student Fliss Barker's support group came together for a celebratory lunch at White Church, Durham. The occasion was to congratulate Fliss on her CRCW appointment to Wooler URC, Northumberland. which was ratified at the recent March Synod meeting.

Church members and friends might remember Fliss. During her course of study Fliss spent time at the Waddington Street Day Centre where she enjoyed a successful placement. Fliss completes her 4-year course of study at Northern College, Manchester in the next few months and will be appointed to the Wooler church in the summer.

Members of the group were delighted that the Northern Synod Moderator, Revd. David Herbert was able to join us for the celebratory lunch.

Well done, Fliss. Our warmest congratulations!

***Revd. Ray Anglesea , Support Group Convenor.***

### ***Puns from America ...***

Need an ark? I Noah guy.

I used to be indecisive; now I'm not so sure.

My ex-wife still misses me. But her aim is starting to improve.

The guy who invented the door knocker, got a no-bell prize.

I saw an ad for burial plots, and I thought: "That's the last thing I need!"



## In Support of Ukraine ...

Revd. Ray Anglesea sent us this message on 27th February:  
 'This morning I attached to the church railings the URC  
 Northern Synod Moderator's Ukraine Prayers for Peace  
 ... together with ribbons similar to the colours of the Ukraine flag  
 and lit a candle.  
 All good wishes,  
 Ray.'



Prayer for Peace from URC Northern Synod Moderator, Revd Dave Herbert.  
 A prayer as war breaks out in Ukraine:

Eternal God,  
 As we are overshadowed once again by war,  
 We lift up before you  
 The innocent and vulnerable,  
 The victims of violence and cruelty,  
 Along with all who continue to sow the seeds of hate.  
 In the fog of war  
 Where truth is the first victim,  
 May your light, which cannot be overwhelmed,  
 expose the truth.  
 Grant to world leaders and all in positions of power today  
 Not only the wisdom  
 But also the courage  
 To do what is right in your sight.  
 Grant all who turn to you  
 your strength and fortitude,  
 Your inner peace,  
 Along with a continuing faith in your sovereign power,  
 In the face of military might.  
 All this we pray in the name of the Prince of Peace,  
 Jesus Christ, Our living Lord and Saviour.  
 Amen.







## CONCERT IN AID OF UKRAINE ...

A “**Scratch Choir**” which meets in our Church put on a Concert there on Saturday 12th March. There was a good attendance, with the audience using the Sanctuary and the Vestibule. Afterwards refreshments and fellowship were shared in the Hall. All monies raised, so far nearly £1400, will go to the Red Cross appeal for Ukraine. Well done to all who took part in or supported this event. Thanks to Peter Galloway, Kath Ogilvie and Helen Cooper for photographs and details of the event.

Helen said: “I thought I'd send you a photo of the church during the concert for Ukraine held by the Scratch Choir, led by Andy Jackson. You'll see that the event was well attended with only a few spare seats. There followed a delicious tea provided by the Choir. A few Waddington Street URC members were in attendance, helping to provide an extra welcome - and look after the rapidly filling donations bucket! [Audience not shown for privacy reasons. Editor]





## Exploring the Derwent Valley Area



A fine but windy day was promised, so we drove out to the Derwent Reservoir to start our walking. It was bitterly cold, but the air was clear enough for us to enjoy the views. Despite it being nearly Spring, there were very few signs of any change from winter. Thick padded coats, over-trousers, gloves and hats were needed, just to keep warm.



We spotted a line of swans in the distance. After 10 minutes or so, they all turned in unison to face the opposite way.

Once we had walked from Powhill to the Derwent dam and back, we drove over to Blanchland to walk from there up onto the moors. There were a few patches of Snowdrops in the woodland alongside the stream, and catkins hung from the trees.



Despite the cold wind, we managed to find a nice sunny grassy bankside to sit on, out of the wind, by the side of the track. Sandwiches, crisps, biscuits and coffee seem to taste so much better when eaten outdoors. There was very little wildlife, other than a rabbit in the wood and we heard the mournful cry of a curlew. Alongside the track, the roots of a Scots Pine looked like a nest of snakes and up on the hill, a line of sheep grazed their way across the field next to a wall.







At Pennypie farm we turned off the main track to cross a small wooden bridge leading along another well used track. There were some very boggy sections where we had to choose between mud, deep water, or off-track. After nearly a mile, the track started to drop down towards the valley, where we were able to get some shelter from the wind and warm up a little. A flock of Curlews landed some distance away and a few Peewits scurried around in a field of sheep.



Just to remind us that spring was on the way, there were a few gorse bushes flowering at the roadside. This was the longest walk we had completed this year and I arrived back at the car thoroughly tired and aching. It was a good warm-up for longer walks when we return to the Yorkshire Dales in Springtime.

**Angus and Jan Robson.**



Registered Charity No. 1194199

Little Acorns was founded to support babies in families who are facing difficult circumstances. We are a 'baby bank' service providing basic baby and maternity items, receiving professional referrals to support babies aged 0 to 24 months across much of County Durham. You can follow us on Facebook just search for Little Acorns Baby Charity. Our donations wish list is posted on Facebook seasonally for the items we are most in need of. We do need to buy in certain items such as safety gates and formula and any items not

provided through donations. If you would like to make a financial contribution towards this, our bank details are as follows: Little Acorns Baby Charity 08-92-99 67218657

You can contact us through Facebook messenger or email. [Littleacorns.babybank@gmail.com](mailto:Littleacorns.babybank@gmail.com)

Many thanks,

Sally Garlick

Trustee Little Acorns Baby Charity

**[This charity operates out of Bethel URC, Chester-le-Street.]**

**[Our Minister, Revd Marcus Hargis sent this item in for The Review.]**





[Butchart Gardens, Vancouver Island]



[One of the outdoor murals in Chemainus, close to where Phyll now lives.]

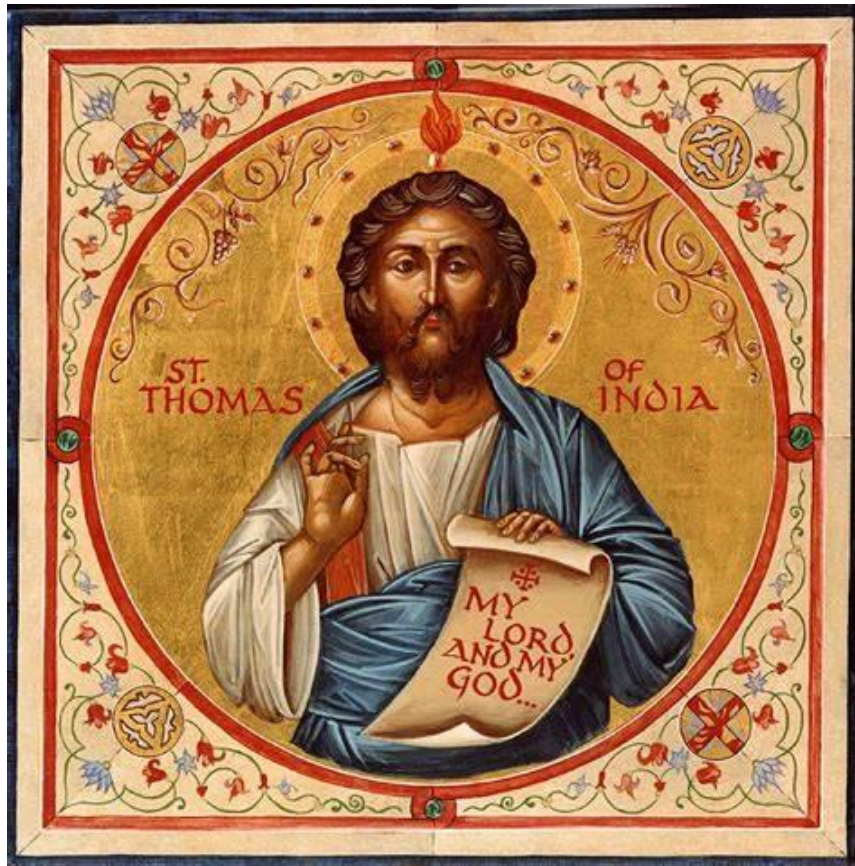
### **Friendship ...**

How old is your oldest friend? Not in terms of age but in length of time of friendship. I lost touch with most school friends when I moved (no social media or mobile phones then) and those I did keep in contact with are no longer with us. I met my “oldest” friend on the morning of Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 1963, a few days before the assassination of President Kennedy. I was travelling by rail from Newcastle to Grantham and at Darlington station, the carriage door flew open and having seen the label on my suitcase, she sat down opposite me. Phyllis introduced herself and we started chatting. We were both, at 17, going to the same place – RAF Spitalgate to join the WRAF, both a bit nervous and glad of each other’s company. Fortunately, we were posted together, had some adventures together and became good friends. Later, Phyll was bridesmaid at my wedding, but we moved house within a year and so our friendship became more of a postal correspondence. In the early 1970’s, Phyll and her new husband emigrated to Vancouver Island in Canada where Ed had relatives. Eventually email and internet happened and keeping in touch became easier and more immediate with photographs being easily exchanged as well.

Time passed, we loved hearing of her new life and seeing the beautiful place in which she lived, a country I had always wanted to visit but had not had the opportunity to see. Suddenly, in the year of my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday I announced to my very surprised husband that this was it, this was the year we were going! (That discussion is another story!) We sourced a lovely tour, taking in the Rockies and western Canada including Vancouver and a few days on Vancouver Island. I emailed Phyll and she and her husband arranged for a house swap with Ed’s sister and her husband in Victoria, who would look after their rescue animals, and so with all details worked out, eventually we were on our way. We thoroughly enjoyed touring the Rockies and seeing the glorious countryside and we met some lovely people but of course my thoughts were on our long overdue reunion. The others on the tour had by now heard our story and I think it added something to their trip as well.

We were due to meet on the morning after our arrival on the Island but suddenly, an hour after we arrived at the hotel, the phone in the bedroom rang, our visitors were there and as keen as we were to meet up again. We laughed and talked, reliving memories, and sharing old photos. Phyll and Ed showed us around their favourite places, some off the beaten tourist trails, and our few days passed far too quickly. They live in a truly beautiful place. Although our time together was far too short and we vowed to go back there, life has a habit of changing our plans and for various reasons we were never able to return. Fortunately, through emails etc, we keep in touch; in fact, many of the contributions for Bethel Magazine came from Phyll. They recently moved house and because of our visit we can see again the town in which they now live. We have photos of Chemainus and Phyll has explained where they live in relation to our photos of the beautiful murals on the walls of the buildings there. Finding those photos again has helped us to relive the holiday. I know that many people have travelled further and much more often to beautiful places in our world, but my trip of a lifetime holds so many memories and was so special that I will remember it for ever.

**Judith Ashby, Bethel URC.** [Thank you Judith for sharing this heart-warming story with us. Editor]



## THOMAS

My heart was so heavy, So heavy with grief. Whatever I did I found no relief.  
 I tried walking the city, And pacing the street, Walking the town with thousands of feet.  
 I strolled in the country, mid rolling hills, Where my Master had taught and cured many ills.  
 I walked to the shoreline, and walked by the sea, Where Jesus had walked on Lake Gallilee,  
 I thought of how Peter had got out of the boat, And walked on water, there was a lump in my throat,  
 I had been one of the twelve, or was it only a dream? For my Master had claimed that he was a King.

But now I was taken in shock and surprise, A turn for the worse, It just wasn't wise,  
 Things over and over last week had gone wrong, My Jesus was suffering intense and long.  
 He was taken and beaten, and unjustly tried, Nailed to a Cross, and eventually died,  
 But why had this happened, I could not tell, Why was He suffering this awful hell?

To make matters worse, a story went round, When they went to the tomb, no body was found.  
 A ridiculous story that he was alive, And at any moment he could arrive.  
 They did try to say I had missed a treat, They'd seen him alive, with pierced hands and feet.  
 But I didn't believe it, it just couldn't be true, That he rose from the dead for me and for you.

That evening they'd seen him, I wasn't there, So broken with sorrow I just didn't care,  
 But today I felt lonely and needed a friend, So I decided to join them there, in the end.  
 I'd stated my case, and made it so plain, Unless I saw the marks, all was in vain.  
 Marks of the nails in His hands and His feet, My hand in His side would make it complete.

Then Jesus himself appeared on the scene, It certainly, certainly wasn't a dream,  
 Thomas, he beckoned look at my scars, Put your hand in my side, stop doubting my powers,  
**'My Lord and my God,'** I exclaimed in great awe, In utter surprise and a wide dropping jaw,  
**My Master has risen – yes, it is true, Has conquered the grave, both for me and for you.**

[From *"Captured by love"* - A collection of Poems by Dorothy Anderson for **tearfund.**]  
 [Used by kind permission of Dorothy Anderson.]



## Tree Planting will Sow a Jubilee Legacy



To mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee everyone across the UK is being invited to plant a tree. This initiative called 'The Queen's Green Canopy' (QGC) started in October last year. The project will create a network of individual trees, avenues, copses and whole woodlands in honour of the Queen's service and the legacy she has built. The venture will also create a green legacy of its own, with every tree planted bringing benefits for people, wildlife and climate, now and for the future.

The 'plant a tree' strategy is already underway. Already schools, community groups and members of the public have planted more than 60,000 trees since the planting season began. The number of trees planted is continually being updated on BB1 'Countryfile.' The Archbishop of Canterbury chose to plant a fig tree in the gardens of his official residence, Lambeth Palace last month. Five years ago in 2017 the URC Northern Synod planted an ash tree on land at Windyhaugh Farm, Harbottle to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Reformation. To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Waddington Street URC, Durham it is hoped that tree saplings will be planted in the nearby Flass Vale Local Nature Reserve or possibly in the Durham Botanic Gardens to commemorate this anniversary year. *[This and other suggestions for ways of celebrating our anniversary will be discussed at the next Church Meeting. Editor]*

To celebrate the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games some 17 small forests have been planted across the West Midlands by the Severn Trent Authority. The National Trust too has joined the 'Treebilee' scheme and has announced details of 70 new tree planting schemes to enhance their historic gardens and country houses, from green restorations of apple blossoms at the home of Agatha Christie to the pear tree archway created by Rudyard Kipling at his home *Bateman's* in East Sussex. At another location, on the Wimpole Estate in Royston, Cambridgeshire the National Trust intends to plant 90,000 trees of which 2,000 trees will be apple trees, as it aims to become net carbon zero by 2030.

Westminster Abbey too will hold a memorial service this autumn at the National Memorial Arboretum along with the National Forest Company to support their creation of a 25-acre memorial woodland in memory of every person who died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A grove of trees representing the diversity of religions across the Commonwealth will be planted in the woodland, located on a former quarry adjacent to the arboretum. The managing director said the woodland would "heal the landscape as we heal as a nation". The trees will be blessed during the service which will bring together many different faiths in remembering the loss of life and the impact of bereavement in the 2 pandemic years.



Trees are mentioned in the Bible more than any living thing other than God and people. Indeed, more than 36 trees are mentioned throughout the Old and New Testaments and there are 56 verses about trees alone. In the Jewish scheme of the world, trees have always occupied a key and revered role. Indeed, the Jewish nation holds annually a festival, *Tu B'Shvat*, a Jewish holiday, celebrated in January and literally called 'The New Year of the Trees.' In Judaism the age of the tree is important in determining whether you can eat the fruit from it. According to Leviticus

19 v 23-25, the fruit from a tree cannot be eaten for the first 3 years and in the fourth year the fruit is regarded as holy and given back to God. After four years it is permissible to eat the fruit. As a result of this cycle of sustainable rotation it was understood the harvest would be increased. In contemporary Israel the day is celebrated as an ecological awareness day and trees are planted in celebration.



There is an ancient Jewish legend about the Emperor Hadrian. As many of us know, the 1,900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Roman Wall (World Heritage Site) is being celebrated this year. Hadrian was on his way to wage war with his legions when he came across an old man planting trees. "Old man," he cried, "why put in that effort when you will be dead before those trees will mature?" "My master," he replied, "If not I, then my children will eat their fruit."

The first tree mentioned in the bible is the tree of life which God placed at the heart of the Garden of Eden. Trees are about life and hope. In absorbing carbon and giving out oxygen they literally provide the breath of life. "Plant the tree sapling to its full depth," encouraged Matt Baker to the children planting a young oak sapling on *Countryfile*. That instruction reminded me of a saying found in the wisdom literature dating back to the time when Jerusalem was being sacked by the Romans. 'If you are holding a sapling in your hand when they tell you the Messiah has arrived, first finish your planting then go and greet him. There will be no Messiah if there are not enough trees. Planting a tree represents hope and continuity; it is also considered a way to create eternity.'

(Above right: Tree of Life Banner, Elm Ridge Methodist Church, Darlington)



To return to the legend. When Hadrian returned from his wars 3 years later, probably with the trail of death and scorched earth behind him, the same old man greeted him with a bowl of fruit. "God," he said, "has allowed me to see the produce of my planting."

My hope is in this the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Year we plant many trees so that our grandchildren and their children will breathe in the pure air and see the fruit of our planting today.

*Revd Ray Anglesea is a retired self-supporting minister living in Durham.*

*March 2022*

[Below – Stirling supports Ukraine by  
Lighting up the Wallace Monument]



[Below – Poem from Facebook]

## THE PRICE

Ask anyone who walks this Earth, and most will say they just want a peaceful life. A meal at the table enough to fill a belly. A hug from someone they love. A warm bed to sleep in. A home filled with love. A lot of laughter and someone to share a drink with. At the end it is the people who pay for the carnage. The mother who never sees her son again. The father who never comes back home. The brother and sister who will never know the joy of a shared meal again. The aunt who returns but doesn't smile anymore. The friends lost along the way. A thousand homes wrecked and a million memories shattered. All because someone else decided to send a war to knock on their door.

—  
*Nikita Gill*

**Coronavirus guidance from the Synod Moderators  
March 2022**



**Greetings to the saints who form the United Reformed Church. The Synod Moderators met together at the very beginning of Lent, during which time we looked again at the general situation with the pandemic, considered the relevant Government guidance, and offer the following for your consideration.**

1. The pandemic is not yet over, and in some areas the infection rates are actually increasing. In other areas, whilst the rates are coming down, and the risk of serious illness is diminished by vaccination amongst most of our members and visitors, they are still at a very high rate, and even now hundreds of people are dying each week with or from Covid-19. The need for continued vigilance is clear.
2. As has been the case throughout, the Elders' Meeting (or equivalent council in Local Ecumenical Partnerships) have the responsibility for health and safety, within the applicable regulations. Even though almost all Coronavirus restrictions have now been removed in England, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey, a duty of care remains with the local church.
3. Even amongst those fully vaccinated, the demographics in most of our churches shows that we have a very high proportion of people who are more vulnerable to the more serious effects of Covid-19.
4. In the opinion of the Synod Moderators, we must remain cautious in protecting ourselves and others.
5. Therefore, we strongly encourage our churches to continue with good practice in reducing the risk of infection to anyone who comes into a United Reformed Church building.
6. Within a local assessment of risk, appropriate measures still include asking people with symptoms of Coronavirus to stay away from church buildings, practice excellent hand hygiene, provide good ventilation in meeting spaces and allow for physical distancing.
7. If ministers or employees contract coronavirus, we would expect them to isolate during the period of their illness and continue to work from home if they are able.
8. The question of whether to wear face coverings seems to be causing the most vexation. In Scotland it is still a legal requirement to wear one in public spaces, including churches. In England and Wales, Government guidance is still strongly in favour of wearing one, especially in crowded places where we are with others whom we do not usually meet. In other public places, it may be the case that the majority of people are choosing not to wear a face covering. That should not be the guiding factor for our churches.
9. We remind everyone that the wearing of face coverings is an appropriate mitigation to risk of spreading the virus.
10. We ask Elders' Meetings to carefully consider the appropriate timing to inform their churches when it is no longer necessary or recommended to wear face coverings. In our opinion it is too soon to do so now (remembering the legal requirement that remains in Scotland).
11. Even when the expectation is lifted, some will choose to continue to use face coverings. They must NOT be subjected to abuse or ridicule.
12. Above all else, love one another.

*The Synod Moderators, March 3, 2022*



[These are the Guidelines your Elders are following to try to keep you safe. Editor]



### Reverend Ruth Crofton ....

“Hello Lucille,

I have enclosed some photos that I took on the 27th February, when I went to Warkworth to visit Ruth's grave. I hope you'll be able to use one, two, or all of them in next month's review so that people can see her final resting place, next to her husband, Ian. Ruth and Ian lie not far from the cemetery gateway, which can be found by going over the river at Warkworth and then turning immediately right after the bridge. Those who view the photos digitally might be able to expand them to show the inscription on Ian Crofton's memorial stone,\* while the photo of the entrance gateway can be expanded to show the grave, revealed by the (still) brightly coloured flowers.

With best wishes,

Helen” (Cooper)

[\* Not possible as I have edited the photograph to enlarge the view of the flowers. Editor]

[Helen also said people asked where they could get a copy of this poem, read at Ruth's funeral.]

One day I will fly  
 I will fly In the air  
     freed from all  
     heavy to earth.  
 I will fly! I will fly!  
 and swoop and float and twirl  
 I will fly! I will fly!  
 But just as the take-off  
 is dangerous in a plane,  
 so there is a place of struggle;  
     a difficult time to come  
     when, burdened,  
 I trundle along the runway  
     of diminishing life  
     to lift-off  
     and  
     to fly.  
 To fly!





[Left – Aztec Emperor Montezuma]

### Chocolate and the divine go back a long way ...

One of the more earthly pleasures of celebrating Easter is the sheer amount of chocolate around. But chocolate was part of other religions long before Christianity. According to ancient Mayan legend, some 3,000 years ago, cacao, or the cocoa tree, which grows in the tropical rainforests of South America, was a bridge between heaven and earth. The Mayan used the beans for a drink called xocolatl, which means 'bitter juice' which means it wasn't hot chocolate as we know it.

The Aztecs in Central America agreed that cacao must have had a divine origin. They believed that their god Quetzalcoatl had come down from heaven on the beam of the morning star, bearing a cacao tree as a gift for human beings, and that whoever drank the hot foaming drink was given divine wisdom. Aztec priests were given cacao beans at children's coming-of-age ceremonies. When Aztec couples married, they exchanged cacao beans instead of rings.

Christopher Columbus arrived in the New World in the 15th century, to find that a slave could be bought for 100 beans. But Columbus never really 'got it' about cacao beans, and when he returned to Portugal, he threw

them away as useless. Meanwhile, back in Central America, the Aztec emperor Montezuma drank chocolate from a cup of solid gold before retiring to his harem. Chocolate was thought to have aphrodisiac properties. It was also considered good for various ailments. The Spanish explorer Hernan Cortes called it 'a drink that builds up resistance and fights fatigue'. A Spanish missionary in Peru in the late 15th century recommended it as 'good for the stomach'.

Finally, the Spanish began to pay attention. Spanish monks brewed up a drink from the beans that was far more acceptable to European taste, sweetening it with sugar and adding cinnamon and nutmeg. Spain and Europe began to fall in love with the cacao bean. In 1624 the Spanish monks were warned that chocolate was an 'inflamer of passions', and certainly the legendary lover Casanova praised it as very useful in his seductions. Congregations even began drinking it during church services. When the Bishop of Chiapas threatened to excommunicate his flock for doing so, the entire congregation simply moved down the road to another church, where the friars also liked chocolate.

Although chocolate was originally only for the wealthy, devout Quakers such as Joseph Fry, Joseph Terry, Isaac Rowntree and John Cadbury had a dream that chocolate could replace gin as a drink for the working classes. Their determination to make this possible was driven by their Christian zeal, and they in part succeeded. Then in the middle of the 19th century it was discovered that chocolate could be made into solid bars! With this discovery, Easter eggs were on the way. Both Fry's and Cadbury's launched them in the 1870s, and the rest is history.



**PREACHERS APRIL 2022**

3rd Revd. John Durell  
 10th Charles and Alison Jolly  
 17th Revd. Marcus Hargis **EASTER**  
 24th Revd. Ray Anglesea

**MAY 2022**

1st Revd Ashley Wilson  
 8th Helen Cooper  
 15th Dorothy Thomson  
 22nd Revd Marcus Hargis  
 29th Mrs. Mary Tribe

**Date****Elders****Door Duty****APRIL 2022**

3rd Mrs. H. Cockburn  
 Mrs. J. Thornborrow

Mrs. V. Hodgson

10th Mr. D. Shirer  
 Mrs. J. Sarsfield

Mr. M. Reay

17th Mr. S. Ogilvie  
 Mr. R. Phua

Mrs. D. Jackson

24th Mrs. K. Ogilvie  
 Mrs. Y. Melville

Mrs. W. Surtees

**MAY 2022**

1st Mrs. D. Jackson  
 Mrs. V. Hodgson

Miss B. Tinsley

8th Mr. R. Todd  
 Mrs. K. Clasper

Mrs. H. Cockburn

15th Mrs. J. Thornborrow  
 Mrs. H. Cockburn

Mrs. K. Clasper

22nd Mrs. J. Sarsfield  
 Mr. D. Shirer

Mr. & Mrs. R. Todd

29th Mr. R. Phua  
 Mr. S. Ogilvie

Mrs. K. Ogilvie

Please arrange your own replacement if unable to carry out your duty on the given date.

**COFFEE ROTA 2022 APRIL**

3rd Malcolm Reay, Anne Cramb  
 10th Ki and Ray Anglesea  
 17th Fred Robinson  
 24th Alison and Charles Jolly

**MAY**

1st Sylvia and Ian Warburton  
 8th Janet and David Thornborrow  
 15th Heather Todd, Val Hodgson  
 22nd Win Surtees, Kath Ogilvie  
 29th Yvonne Melville, Doris Jackson

Please arrange your own replacement if unable to carry out your duty on the given date.

**FLOWER ROTA – APRIL AND MAY 2022**

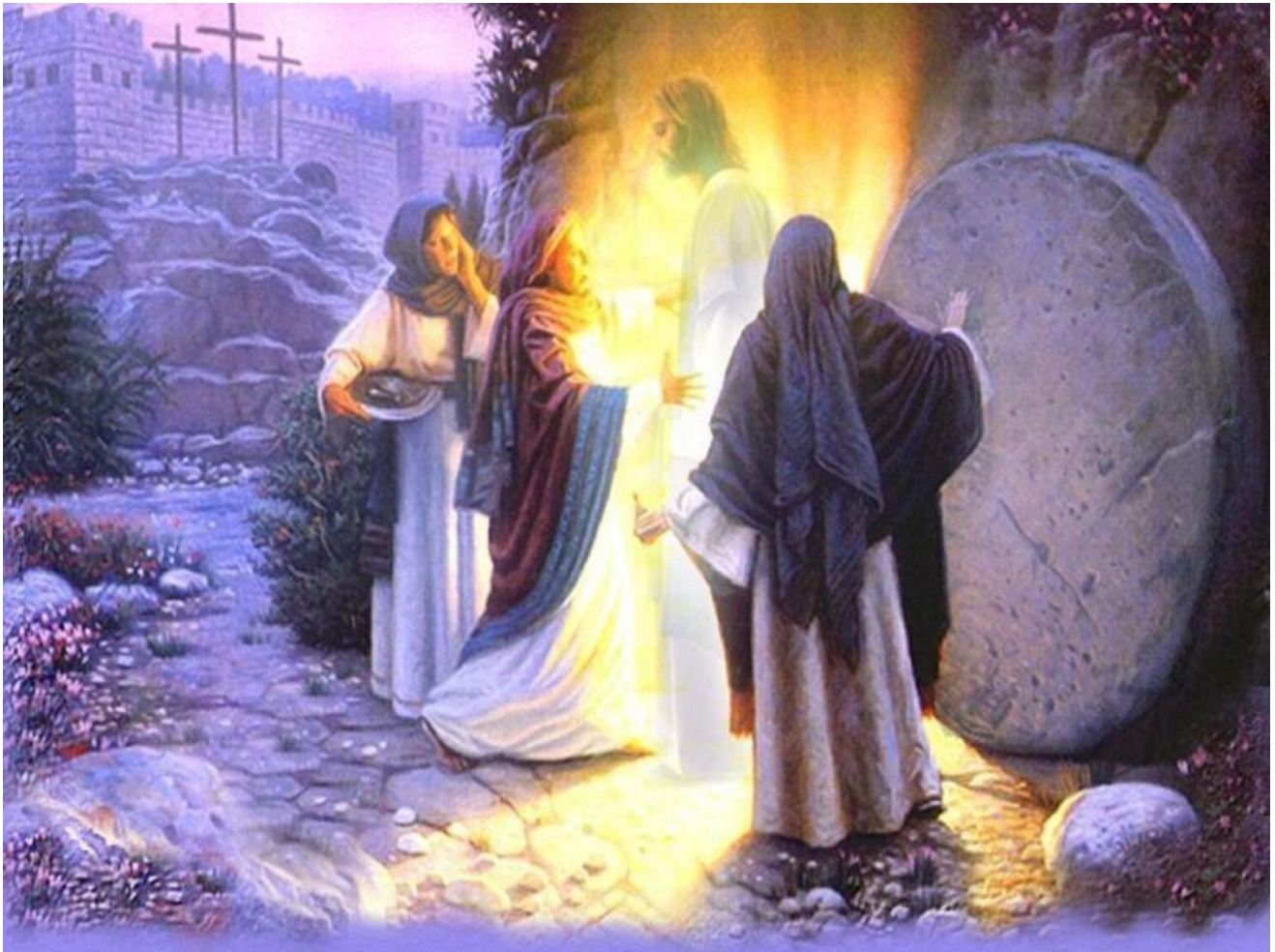
**APRIL** 3rd VACANCY  
 10th Mrs. D. Jackson  
 17th Mrs. J. Graham  
 24th Mrs. W. Surtees



**MAY** 1st Mr. Ian Graham  
 8th VACANCY  
 15th Mrs. R. Cranfield  
 22nd VACANCY  
 29th VACANCY

Please arrange your own replacement if unable to carry out your duty on the given date.





I thought my heart would break when I saw your broken body nailed to the cross.  
 How could this be the same baby I held in my arms in that stable all those years ago.  
 From the time the Angel told me I was to bear a special baby, I feared for you and me.  
 You brought me so many joys, kindness and miracles - I grieved to see you brought so low.  
 They judged you, beat you and hung you on a cross to die, with thieves and murderers.  
 The sky darkened and the earth shook when you breathed your last breath and died.  
 How could it be that one so innocent of any crime could be so mistreated and killed?  
 As I wept a mother's bitter tears, it seemed the earth joined me in mourning and cried.  
 Mary Magdalene, Joanna and I, went together to the tomb to dress your body.  
 We found the stone that sealed the tomb had been rolled aside and the tomb was empty.  
 We thought someone had taken your body away but an Angel appeared and said:  
 "He is not here; for He is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." (L.T.)

