



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Tavistock U.R.C.

Russell Street, Tavistock PL19 8BD

Founded 1652

Loving God,

Encouraging Questions, Welcoming all.

CONTACT

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Synod website: www.urcsouthwest.org.uk

Church Website: www.tavistockurc.org.uk

August 2024

Our Church is open for worship on Sundays at 10.30am.

The Service of Worship will be emailed or posted to those who want it.

4 th August	Led by Mr Mike Dennis with Holy Communion
11 th August	Led by Revd Elizabeth Kemp
18 th August	Led by Mrs Suzy Weston
25 th August	Led by Mr Peter Fox

Thank you, Lord,
for Steve and Jenny
and the music they provide each Sunday



Dates for Your Diary

Sunday 11th August 11.45am – 12:30am Dementia Friendly Training after the service

Saturday 18th August 10am -1pm Spring Cleaning at our church

Church Meetings: 20th October.

Elders' Meetings: 29th September and 24th November.

Letter from our Minister

Dear Friends

There is a moment in CS Lewis' story, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, when the characters hear that Aslan is on the move. At this stage in the story, the children – Edmund, Peter, Susan and Lucy – do not yet know who Aslan is. We are told: 'the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different ... At the name of Aslan, each one of the children felt something jump inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realise that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer.'

I wonder how do we react to this God who refuses to be confined? This God who refuses to be pinned down to the image and expectations we might have? We've noted many times that God refuses to be confined to the wonderful buildings we have created? Do we feel scared, like Edmund? Brave and adventurous, like Peter? Uplifted, like Susan? Or giddily excited, like Lucy?

Which leads me to wonder what can we do, in our personal and corporate church life, to make more space for the God who is on the move? How can we be more open to a God who refuses to be pinned down but nonetheless promises to be with us always, to the end of time: just as he promised to David and his descendants.

Of course, it's not easy to 'pull up the tent pegs' and move on to where God leads. Many of us will know the difficulties of packing everything up in boxes in order to move house. And the longer we have been in a place, the more we tend to accumulate and the longer we hold onto things that we no longer need or have use for. I've begun to look through the many theological books on my shelves, in a bid to reduce the number in my collection. Some of the books are well used, many have only been consulted briefly for a particular time or project. Some are like old friends, in whom I find comfort, their presence is reassuring and it is hard to let go. But I know it's time to make space for what God is doing now. To let go of books of the past in order to venture out on new pathways, perhaps with new books to guide me.

Whether you are on the move this summer, or at home busily clearing out those things that are no longer required, may God bless you!

Every blessing,
Rob Weston

South Western Synod News

Our new Synod Moderator, Revd David Downing is to be ordained and inducted at Westfield URC in Bridgwater on Saturday 5th October. We have invited David to come and preach at Tavistock URC in 2025, hopefully everyone will have a chance to meet David soon.

Premises news

Work on refurbishing the pipe organ is progressing well and our restoration team have assured us that the organ will be as good as new when it is returned. As previously reported the work will take 9 to 12 months, so it will be a while before the organ recitals can begin. We are also aware that we only have a few months to get the wall behind the organ repainted. This needs to be completed so that they can start the rebuild process.

The work on the vestry refurbishment is due to begin on 12th August, this will involve updating the serving area and repairing the plaster on the wall.

Prayer Diary for August

w/c 5-08-24

We pray for our sisters and brothers in the many faith communities within our town, may they be guided by the Holy Spirit in their worship and witness.

w/c 12-08-24

We pray for the work of Amigos as they assist farmers and trainee farmers in Uganda to learn about conservation farming, business skills and life skills.

w/c 19-08-24

We pray for all who care for loved ones, remembering especially those with Dementia and their carers.

w/c 26-08-24

We pray for young people preparing to return to school, remembering especially those who are anxious about starting in a new class or a new school, may they be comforted by God's presence.

Environmental Talks and Films

Calstock Arts Centre in Calstock are continuing an environmentally based series of events.

9th Aug 7:30pm - 'Wilding' a film based on Isabella Tree's best-selling book by the same title.

19th Sept 7:30pm - 'From Honey Bees to Dairy Cattle' A double bill featuring two speakers, vet Michael (Spike) Head on The Challenges and Solutions of Dairying in the 'New World', and apiarist Dale Wood who will speak on 'Honey Bees...and Almost Everything Else'.

15th Nov 7:30pm - Chantal Lyons will talk about "The Return of Britain's Wild Boar"

Further details of all these events and more can be found here: <https://calstockarts.org/whats-on/>

From **Jenny Dennis:**

I am making Motanka dolls (Ukrainian dolls) to put in the shoeboxes this year. I would be grateful for any pieces of floral or bright coloured material and lace to use for the dresses and plain white material for faces and arms. Thank you.

Spring Cleaning Day

Perhaps we should actually call this a Summer Cleaning Day - the date we have chosen to give the church a good clear up and deep clean is Saturday 10th August from 10am until 1pm. There will be some light duties and some heavier lifting, as we clear some of the unused and unnecessary items from the corners of our buildings, so please join us if you can!

I am the result of a denominational compromise! My father was Baptist and my mother a Congregationalist but as I was born in June 1940 in Edgware, Middlesex in war time we went to the nearest Church, which was Methodist. I was christened and I've stayed a Methodist although I am now privileged to be a URC member as well. The minister who christened me was in his first Church having just graduated from Cambridge and he was to play a significant part in my life. When I was twelve my parents bought a hotel in Torquay and I have counted myself as a Torquay boy and a passionate supporter of Torquay United ever since. We went to the nearest Church which was also Methodist, then later to the central Methodist Church which was very lively (and had a good number of pretty teenage girls in the congregation!) In those days we had large congregations, 500 at morning service in the winter and 1000 in the summer and there were lots of midweek activities. Together with my friends I joined the Wesley (now Methodist) Guild and gradually took an increasingly active part. I left school and went to work in the Dunlop research centre in Birmingham. I joined the local Church and one day a local preacher challenged me to consider becoming a local preacher myself. My first appointment was in a small church very close to Aston Villa's ground at Villa Park. Thirty years later I discovered Margaret had been working in the same area as a trainee midwife - how different things might have been if we'd met then!

After four years working at Dunlop I moved to Bristol to work in Martins bank and returned to my old church. The minister challenged me to candidate for the ministry which I did. I enjoyed my time at Birmingham (except for all the exams!) and my theology tutor was the man who 25 years earlier had christened me! From college I had circuits in Newark, north Cornwall and Minehead. In the Minehead Church I was heavily involved with the local Social Services where we worked together on various projects to try to help people in the community. It was then suggested that I should become a "sector minister". I completed the two-year social work training course in Portsmouth whilst retaining my status as a minister preaching regularly in the Bridgwater circuit.

Having practiced as a social worker for two years Somerset were setting up an out of hours duty team. and I was fortunate enough to be one of five chosen for that team, work which I did for two years until moving to lead the social work team at the RDE in Exeter. Being an on-call team meant that we had to be able to cope with anything which arose from (sadly) child abuse to mental health admissions. I really enjoyed it never knowing what would happen next. It also led to some interesting times! One Saturday afternoon I was following the ambulance to the hospital to admit a patient we had "sectioned" but she was in such a state that the doctor had given her medication to send her to sleep. The driver drove through the lanes at speed with blue lights flashing! When we arrived I asked him why the lights as the patient was not in any danger. His reply, "Well, you want to watch the cup final don't you!" I've been with police cars with blue lights on because it was tea break time! On one occasion we had to "section" a man who was on the roof of Taunton police station pouring Jeyes fluid down "to purify the corrupt police". Sadly, we also had our share of child abuse work, which is always painful.

During my time in Exeter my marriage became increasingly painful and I decided to return to Circuit ministry on my own and I was asked to go to Shipley and Bingley Circuit to care primarily for the minister's wife who had been deserted by her husband and the organist whose wife who had gone off with the minister. Kathleen Richardson (later to become the first female President of Conference) was the chairman. Some years later, when she came to stay with us for Methodist conference in Bristol she said, "I didn't mean that you had to marry her in order to care for her!" I was appointed to the Plymouth circuit and then to two Bristol circuits for twelve very happy years. I am very blessed to say that my last Circuit was my happiest, so I retired with good memories. On retirement we moved to Gunnislake and after thirteen years to Tavistock where we were both very pleased to join the URC and as Margaret had often observed, she had "returned to her roots", because she had been brought up as a Congregationalist, and I am delighted to say that we have both been made most welcome.

From Alan Yates (Treasurer) and Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer), URC

Dear Friends,

Firstly, thank you for all your contributions to your local church in 2023. This includes your financial contribution which plays an important part in the life of the whole church through the Ministries & Mission Fund.

As officers of the denomination, it's good for us to be rooted in a local URC (or LEP) congregation and to work out our faith in the local context, as well as across the entire United Reformed Church. On the other hand, it is good for you in local churches to know that those who serve you nationally understand the local church financial issues as well. And there have been some big issues over the last 12-18 months: inflation, a "cost of living crisis" for many, with energy costs rising unprecedented levels etc. Churches and ministers have had the same challenges as so many others.

The M&M Fund of the URC pays for ministers' stipends, training, Assembly costs and all the central support functions for ministry in the URC across three nations. The M&M Fund's main income is contributions from the churches with some top-up from synods, together with investment income and grants etc.

In 2023 the churches continued to support the M&M Fund to a wonderful level, but there also was significant and generous synod support. Overall, the giving to M&M Fund was slightly ahead of budget at £16.3 million. It was also only 2% down on 2022's result. However, we should note that these figures include the synods' extra contributions this year which amounted to £1.9 million, an increased amount compared to 2022.

The full M&M account for 2023 in summary:

Income – £18.2m – of which 16.3m was from churches and synods contributions

Expenditure – £19.3m

Deficit – £1.1m

2024 is not going to be an easy year either and we are again budgeting for a deficit. We have a commitment from synods to continue their support on top of church contributions and a plan for balancing the M&M budget over the next 5-7 years, including budget reductions of central costs of 3 to 5% p.a.

So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2023 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

Stewardship of our resources, personally, as local churches and as a denomination is rarely easy, but it is one of the challenges we are called to in making our faith real. As the Spirit directs and as our means allow, can the churches once more continue to respond to the call of our gracious, loving and ever-generous God?

Again, thank you all!

If you have any questions or comments arising from this letter, please speak to your church treasurer who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help directly then they can get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

From Maureen Tulloch:

We think and pray for Barry, John, Geoff, Garth, Anne & Peter, Bob and Dorothy. May God be with them all and keep them in His loving care.

Please let me have a brief synopsis of your life – max 750 words – for this magazine.

Sunday Morning Rota for August: (Please ensure that you swap with someone if you are unable to fulfil your duty)

Date	Preacher	Organist	Elder	Welcoming Steward	Reader	Refreshments
4 th August	Mike Dennis	Steve	Jenny	Stella	Steve	Maureen
11 th	Revd Elizabeth Kemp	Jenny	Jo	Sabrina	Jo	Jo
18 th	Suzy Weston	Jenny	Elizabeth	Pam D	David	Peter and Pam
25 th	Peter Fox	Jenny	Sabrina	Mike	Sabrina	Sabrina

From **Mike Dennis:**

A visit to a church hirer.

Many hirers who use the church premises benefit by physical exercises, mental encouragement or social support. Rarely do they reach out to the church to welcome a closer engagement. When Clare from Alcoholics Anonymous extended an invitation, Jenny and I were pleased to accept her offer to attend one of their meetings. Perhaps we expected to receive information or be asked how the church could support them. Well, we would have been wrong. We were struck by the honesty and openness from those who shared their stories, impressed by the mutual support shown by other members of the group and taken aback by the transformation of lives effectively born again. In the church we talk about the need for transformation but here was a group enabling it to happen. We noted that they do not accept any donations from those who are not already members of AA and that in Tavistock alone there are different AA meetings gathering on 6 days each week. Those who recognise the presence of God or a Higher Power evidently found that being able to meet in our church was uplifting for them. We were pleased to share the hour with them and would encourage anyone else who would like to visit their open meeting to take the chance to do so. However, it is only courtesy to pre-arrange a visit and Jenny and I can provide contact details or even accompany anyone who would like to meet and share with the group.
(Well done, Mike and Jenny. I'm glad you accepted Clare's invitation and found the visit to be uplifting)

*Lord Jesus,
You are my warmth in the cold,
You are my light in the darkness,
You are my happiness in sorrow...*
Author unknown

As a Gold Award Eco Church, we email out copies of our magazine and use recycled paper for our printed copies.

**CONTACT items for September– please email them to me
(maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk) by the 23rd August. Many thanks.**