



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Tavistock U.R.C.

Russell Street, Tavistock PL19 8BD
Founded 1652 Loving God,
Encouraging Questions, Welcoming all.

CONTACT

Minister: Revd Robert Weston Tel: 07798 2622949
Church Secretary: Mike Dennis Tel: 07344 712528
Administrator: Bob Stride Tel: 01822 841263
Synod website: www.urcsouthwest.org.uk
Church Website: www.tavistockurc.org.uk

September 2026

Our Church is open for worship on Sundays at 10.30am.
Some services of Worship are available on the Church Website (above).

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 6 th September | Service is led by Suzy Weston |
| 13 th September | Service is led by Kit Harbottle |
| 20 th September | Service is led by Revd Rob Weston |
| 27 th September | Harvest Thanksgiving Service is led by Revd Rob Weston |

Thanks, Lord,
for the sunshine,
for the rain and
for the harvest.



Dates for your Diary:

Saturday 12th September Heritage Society Walk . URC to be open

Sunday 20th September Elders meeting after the Service

Saturday 26th September 10-12 am, Decorating the Church for Harvest

Saturday 26th September 1 - 2pm, Organ Recital at Tavistock URC by Dr Sean Sweeney

Sunday 27th September Harvest Lunch at Blacksmiths Arms, Lamerton

Monday 5th October Midweek Topics at Mike and Jenny's home at 7.30pm.

Sunday 11th October Church meeting after the service

Sunday 1st November Elders meeting after the Service

Saturday 28th Nov 1 - 2pm, Organ Recital at Tavistock URC by Shaun Brady (played in Nov 25)

Saturday 30th Jan 2027, 1 - 2pm, Organ Recital at Tavistock URC by Stephen Tanner,

For the following 12 months we will be collecting for St. Luke's Hospice at the Organ Recitals.

From Our Minister

Dear Friends,

As this year's scorching summer gives way to autumn, we notice the changing colours of the trees and the shortening days. This year's harvest started earlier due to the heat and many of the crops have been reduced. Harvest remains a special time for giving thanks: for the food on our tables, for the beauty of creation and for all those whose work enables us to enjoy its fruits.

Living here in West Devon, we are especially aware of the importance of the land and of those who care for it. Farmers, smallholders, growers and producers work through climate challenges and uncertain circumstances to provide food for our communities. At Harvest, we have an opportunity to remember them with gratitude and in our prayers.

But Harvest also reminds us that God's gifts are not shared equally. While many of us have much to be thankful for, others in our own community face difficult choices about how to afford food and other essentials. Our harvest thanksgiving therefore calls us not only to **give thanks**, but also to **share generously**.

At Tavistock United Reformed Church, this is particularly close to our hearts. Our church seeks to put the good news of Jesus into practical and caring action, welcoming all and serving our community. The work connected with the Lower Deck Cafe and Foodbank are important reminders that the gifts we receive are gifts to be shared.

Perhaps the challenge of Harvest is to look beyond the abundance before us and ask: *How can I help ensure that others may share in God's goodness too?* This may be through supporting local producers, choosing fairly traded and sustainably produced goods, caring more thoughtfully for creation, or simply sharing what we have with someone in need.

Jesus often used images of seeds, fields and harvest to speak about the kingdom of God. A seed may appear small and insignificant, yet, when nurtured, it can grow and bear fruit beyond our expectations. The same can be true of our acts of kindness and generosity.

So, as we celebrate Harvest this year, may we be thankful for all that sustains us. May we remember those who produce our food, those who are struggling and the wonderful but fragile world we share. And may our thanksgiving lead us to action. So that, through generosity, justice and care for creation, we may help bring even more of God's love into our community and our world.

With every blessing.

Premises news

At our Church Meeting in July we agreed to various small works that are in need of attention, these include: upgrading the kitchen floor with non-slip vinyl, replacing the slipped tiles on the roof and clearing a blocked gulley, installing emergency pull cords in the accessible toilets, changing the pipework for the heating so that only specified areas are heated, installing an outside tap. In total the cost of these projects is £25,000 and we agreed that we would apply for a Synod 50% Facelift Grant. The grant application will be considered by the Synod Property team in September.

Hugh and I continue to tackle a list of simple maintenance tasks, as we are able. Most recently replacing the hinges on one of the toilet cubicle doors in the Lower Deck Ladies' toilets. As usual the job was more than a five minute task and the edge of the door needed planing so that it would close properly. One of the extractor fans in the Ladies loo needs the attention of an electrician and this is on the list for when the emergency cords are installed.

Fitting vinyl flooring in the kitchen will involve some disruption to our usual activities for a week in October, our hirers have been informed. The Lower Deck cafe may be closed for two weeks, as all the kitchen equipment will need to be moved out to give the fitters access.

Heritage Open Day in Bideford

On Thursday 17th September we will be opening Lavington United Reformed Church in Bideford, for visitors from 10am until 2pm. You will be most welcome to pop in if you are in the area.

Here's the entry on the 2026 Heritage Open Day website:

Lavington United Reformed Church traces its history back to 1641 when an Independent Congregation was formed under the leadership of Revd William Bartlett. The Great Meeting Chapel building on Bridgeland Street was demolished by the Victorians in order to erect the current building with two spires. Inside you can see the original pews, each one numbered and with doors. The magnificent pipe organ was built originally by William Sweetland of Bath in 1863

There are other events taking place in and around Bideford during the week, including a ship building exhibition at Pannier Pantry in Bridgeland Street and a talk about Dr William Ackland, a nineteenth century doctor.

For details visit: heritageopendays.org.uk

Prayer and Stillness services at the St Eustachius' Parish Hall

Reminder that Prayer and Stillness services, led by Bob and Patti Owens, run on Wednesdays from 2.30 - 3.30pm in the St Eustachius' Parish Centre, Plymouth Road, Tavistock. Followed by tea/coffee afterwards.

9 Sept; 11 Nov; 9 Dec.

From **Mike Dennis:**

The theme for Midweek Topics on October 5th will focus on the sermon delivered by Iain McDonald on Sunday 23 August. There was so much worthy of further thought in that service that it seems good to delve a little deeper into it and reflect on the implications for us. I will circulate copies to all who wish to join us at Mike and Jenny's home at 7.30.

All are welcome.

From **Jenny Dennis:**

I thought a book review might be something new for the Contact - so have attached one. Maybe others can recommend some books they have read recently?

Book Review: We Can Be Brave by Mariann Budde

Mariann Budde is the first woman to serve as the Episcopal Bishop of Washington. The book is written in 2023 following the first term of Donald Trump's presidency.

After Trump's photographic pose holding a Bible outside St John's Church, Mariann mustered up every ounce of authority she could claim in her role. "President Trump does not speak for St John's. We disassociate ourselves from the messages of this president and align ourselves with those seeking justice for the death of George Floyd and countless others," she told The Washington Post. What a brave lady! The book is very readable drawing on the life experiences of her journey of faith reaching out to those of little faith alongside bringing up her two sons with her husband Paul who gave up his job to support her appointment.

Mariann shares stories of others who have faced challenges. A very poignant quote from the late Harvard Chaplain Peter Gomes : "Discovery that faith is not what you believed but what you did for others when it seemed you could do nothing at all."

I was particularly inspired by two statements:

"Sometimes I succeeded, often I failed, but what seems to matter in those moments is that we show up, step up and make our offering despite its limitations and our own."

"As a person of faith, I dare to trust that God is at work amid the most challenging realities of our lives, and that by grace and acceptance, we join God in the holy work of transforming the world."

In this book Mariann offers us the faith and tools to give us the courage to share our faith in our communities.

Look for this book on our Church Library shelves in the very near future (Mike wants to read it first!)

From **Maureen Tulloch:**

Dorothy (Woodyatt) phoned me last week in response to a note I'd put on her copy of the magazine. Yes, she still wants to have the magazine. She sounded well, was cheerful and still full of life. She asked that she be remembered to her friends in the congregation.

Just so you know, I email CONTACT to 28 folk each month and post one to Dorothy, Jenny Summerfield, John Noyes and Garth Sanders. I leave 8 copies in church for distribution to visitors and 10 copies of the first 2 pages in the Lower Deck Café to be put into the folders on the tables on Friday mornings.

Is there anyone I am missing?

May God be with them all.



From **Jenny Dennis:**

Here is a photo of the Knitted Bible project "The Last Supper". The completed project has been on display during the last 2 Sunday services for the congregation to see. Thanks go to Elizabeth, Maureen and Rosy for their help with the knitting and to Jo and Joe for the beautiful wood table.

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

CONTACT items for October; please email them to me (maureen.tulloch@homecall.co.uk) by the 24th September. Many thanks.