



November and
December 2024

In Touch

The magazine of the URC congregations in
Maidenhead and Marlow



Further update on Vacancy

I am picking up the story where I left off in the September/October newsletter. As you know, all four churches in the Pastorate approved the Pastorate Profile so we were able to finalise it and send it off to the Synod Pastoral Committee (North Eastern) in good time for its meeting on 12 September. At that meeting, the Committee accepted the Profile and declared the vacancy.

The vacancy had already been accepted by the Mission and Learning Committee so we were able to move forward to the next step. The Profile was tabled at the October Moderators' meeting and we were told that introductions to a Minister may come from the November Moderators' meeting.

The Moderators are planning to circulate the Pastorate Profile in October but before they do so, they wanted to know whether the churches in our new Pastorate would be willing to consider an application from a candidate in a same-sex marriage or same sex relationship.

It was made clear to us that churches were allowed to say that they are not prepared to consider a candidate in a same-sex marriage or same sex relationship, but if that was the case then the Moderators needed to know before they advertised the post. We were told that whatever we decided was absolutely fine; Moderators just needed to know what each church's decision was. I know that Marlow, Maidenhead and Windsor have all considered the issue and fed back to our Interim Moderator, Rev Michael Hodgson. I suspect that Bracknell have done so too.

This should mean that the Profile will be circulated to Ministers in October as planned and that we may indeed receive introductions as early as mid-November.

The next meeting of the Pastorate Vacancy Committee which is made up of three representatives from each of the four churches and the two Interim Moderators will be on 6 November. At that meeting the Committee will focus on the process for taking a decision on whether to invite any potential candidate to

visit the Pastorate, arrangements for any such visit, the process for taking a decision on whether to invite that person to preach with a view and arrangements for preaching with a view including the voting procedures. It could be a long meeting!!

The only other point I should mention is that Synod has accepted that the manse in Maidenhead is not fit for purpose. There are two other manses in the pastorate – one in Bracknell and the other in Old Windsor. Synod has agreed that the new Minister should be involved in the decision as to which of those will be used as the Pastorate manse.

As always, we will keep you posted as things move forward.

Valerie Brownridge

Welcome to Worship

It's a busy time ahead, so do get your diaries out! Here are a few dates of note: **Remembrance Day (November 10)** most Marlow members attend the CTM Cenotaph service and John Holton will lead worship in Maidenhead. The Scout Group will be joining us in Maidenhead. Any Marlow members not wanting to go to the Cenotaph are welcome to join the Maidenhead service.

24 November sees a special opportunity to hear Rev Michael Hopkins, Wessex Synod Moderator, lead worship. Our sister church at Windsor has invited all the Joint Pastorate churches to join them when he comes to Windsor. His preaching slots are booked two years ahead, so do take this opportunity to come and worship together and share refreshments afterwards!

1 December is the **first Sunday in Advent** and we will welcome Geoff Cronin to lead an **Advent Jazz service** in Maidenhead, joined by Marlow.

Please note that Maidenhead's December Communion service will be on December 8 instead of the first Sunday.

Christmas services are explained in the calendar below. Thank you to the many members who are leading worship in the next few weeks so that we can all enjoy preparing and celebrating.

We are sharing several services so please check where you are going!

December 29 will be something new for most of us. We have all been invited to the final service of 2024 at **Bracknell URC**. We are looking forward to meeting old friends from Bracknell and making new ones.

If you would like help with transport, do let John or Valerie know.

Worship at Maidenhead and Marlow

All services start at 10.30 unless stated otherwise

Date	Location and worship leader for Maidenhead	Location and worship leader for Marlow
3 November	Bob Robertson, Communion followed by Church Meeting/AGM	Rev Alan Bolton, Communion
10 November	John Holton Remembrance Service	No service at Christ Church CTM Service at Cenotaph, Marlow
17 November	Zoom Led by Maidenhead	
24 November	Joint Service at Windsor URC Rev Michael Hopkins, Wessex Synod Moderator	
1 December	Geoff Cronin Joint Jazz Service at Maidenhead	
8 December	Bob Robertson Communion	Rev Bradley Croucher Communion
15 December	John Holton	Judith Inman
22 December 10.30am	Joint Service at Marlow URC Nine Lessons and Carols	
22 December 7.30pm		Evening Community Carol Service, at Marlow Led by JAM

24 December, 7pm	Joint Prayers and Poems Service at Marlow URC, 7pm for mince pies before the service Pauline Wyllie and Kailey Milne	
25 December	Joint Christmas Day Service at Maidenhead URC Irene Pullin	
29 December	Joint Service at Bracknell URC	
5 January	Bob Robertson Communion	Martin Beck
12 January	Catherine Johnson on Christian Aid	Hilary Hunt & Valerie Brownridge Communion

Community Carols, Christ Church URC, Marlow, 22 December

Christ Church URC, Marlow, is going to be the venue for a special event at 7.30pm on Sunday 22 December – a community carol service led by the youngsters from JAM theatre group. We hope this will attract a large number of people, both young and old, from our local community, including many who do not normally go to church.

This is a great opportunity for you to invite family, friends and neighbours to come to church with you. Tea and coffee will be served after the service. We understand that there will be no charge, but a collection will be made. All donations will go to Wycombe Homeless Connection. Please put the date in your diary now!

Valerie Brownridge

Marlow diary dates

Ukraine collection days

Marlow is open for donations for Ukraine on Fridays from 10am-11am and Sundays from 4.15pm-5pm.

Ukraine vigil

Sundays at 4pm in the Marlow church garden.

House Group

Meets on the first and third Tuesdays every month at Doreen's house. Please contact George Flett for details.

Marlow Elders

There will be Elders meetings on 11 November and 9 December.

Maidenhead diary dates

Ukraine collection days

Saturdays from 10am-12 noon.

Coffee Morning

Come and enjoy a coffee on Wednesdays at the Premier Inn from 11am.

Maidenhead Elders

Elders will meet on Tuesday 12 November and Tuesday 3 December, both at 2.30pm.

Church meeting and AGM

Sunday 3 November.

Ukraine update

The next lorry should be going at the end of November with an emphasis on winter and Christmas. We have also agreed to provide a set of winter tyres and wheels for Ewa's van which was recently donated by people from Sweden as snow is about to fall.

Maidenhead and Marlow are still collecting donations for Ukraine and we are still getting regular weekly donations from Waitrose in Maidenhead and Tesco in Taplow. But we



Our partners in Ukraine have asked for:

- FOOD** (long life)
 - FIRST AID & MEDICATION**
 - NAPPIES**
 - ADULT INCONTINENCE ITEMS**
 - CLEANING PRODUCTS**
 - Pens/Pencils/Crayons/Notebooks**
 - TRAINERS** (10-16 year olds)
 - BEDDING**
 - MEN'S WINTER CLOTHING**
- NEW OR VERY GOOD CONDITION**

Our next truck goes in November 2024

still need more donations to be able to part fill our next truck. Please see the list of items requested.

Mike Liddle

Ukelele Mondays – Ukraine fundraising concert

Hot off the press! By popular demand, Ukelele Mondays have agreed to put on another concert at Christ Church URC, Marlow at **7.30pm on Friday 13 December** to raise funds for Ukraine. Please put the date in your diary now!

Ukraine Fundraising Concert – Gill Love Band

The Gill Love Band kindly put on a fund-raising concert for Ukraine at the Marlow British Legion on Thursday 17 October. It was a great evening with Gill and the band performing their usual eclectic selection of music. It was hard to stay sitting and indeed quite a few people couldn't resist the music and found themselves having to get up and dance! Sadly, it was quite a small audience – quality not quantity - but we would have liked to have seen a few more people there, particularly as the band had given up a lot of time and effort to prepare for and play at the concert.

We nevertheless raised £300 for our Aid for Ukraine project which will be very much appreciated by those we are supporting in Ukraine. Many thanks to everyone who did come along to the concert and, of course, to Iain Lemon for making it all happen.

Valerie Brownridge

Commitment for Life 2024



On Sunday 29th September we held our annual service for Commitment for Life and included a bread and cheese lunch at Maidenhead. We saw the work being done by Christian Aid together with the

support given to ArtPeace stone carvers by our sister church in Marlow.

With donations and Gift Aid we raised £3,245 for support for farming and schools in Zimbabwe.

Gordon Campbell



Induction of Revd David Downing as Moderator of South Western Synod of the URC

It's official! Our David is now Moderator of the South Western Synod of the URC. I had the privilege of attending in person David's induction on 5 October along with a number of others from Marlow and Maidenhead URCs. I am glad many of



you were also able to join us via Zoom. Bridgwater URC where the induction service was held was packed with family and friends. Jo was there, of course, as was her mum and David's mum and Dad and his son, Josh. And it won't

surprise you to learn that the Ministry were out in force. So many dog collars! Many of David's new churches were also represented – it was really lovely to see Jean and Martin Ashford - Bristol is part of David's new bailiwick.

The service was led by the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Revd Timothy Meadows. The Revd Jenny Mills gave a really good sermon. One of the messages she gave to David was that he should not change. And having spoken to David's new PA, I can reassure you all that he has not changed one bit!

After the service we were treated to tea/coffee and a scone (scone as in gone not scone as in stone – sorry David), jam and cream. As it is obviously a very sensitive issue, the choice of whether to put the jam or the cream on first was

left to each individual. I am not going to reveal what I did as I don't want to upset anyone!

David and Jo are slowly settling into their new home – they still have some boxes to unpack and are struggling to find space for everything as their new house is smaller than the Maidenhead manse. But the good news is that the train set has been unpacked and been allocated some of the precious space!

As part of their induction into West Country life, David and Jo have already travelled on the West Somerset steam train and have sampled the local cider – more than once.



David and Jo asked me to pass on their thanks to everyone for their good wishes and to say hello to all of you. I think they miss us – sort of!

Valerie Brownridge

Big Birthday congratulations

Many congratulations to Molly White who celebrated her 100th birthday in September. Molly is sadly no longer able to join us at church on Sundays, but we do still keep in touch with her. Thanks to a team of carers, Molly has been able to stay in her own home which is what she very much wants to do. We all salute her for having reached this amazing milestone and send her our best wishes.

Valerie Brownridge

Maidenhead Prayer Chain: a reminder

If you have not told Linda Nightingale that you want to continue on the prayer chain or join it for the first time, please let her know. To join the chain Linda will need your phone number and email address (if you use email).

If you would like to receive the prayerful support of others, please also let Linda know.

Farewell Mateusz ...!

It is a sad fact of life that all good things must come to an end, and Maidenhead's current church music is no exception as at the start of November Mateusz Rettner, our music director leaves us to return to his native Poland.

Mateusz has been with us for over eight years now, playing for us at our services, leading occasional practices of our small band of singers and delighting us with both solo piano recitals as well as concerts including some of his many musical friends and acquaintances. He will be a difficult act to follow but we wish him well as he moves away to join his new wife in Poland.

He is giving us a 'Farewell' Concert at 7.30pm on 2nd

November and his final service will be on Sunday 3rd November - I do hope you will be able to come along and support him as we finally say goodbye.

John Holton

Quench

You may remember the Quench Christian bookshop in Maidenhead that had to close its branch here. They bring a pop-up shop every year with Christmas cards, Advent calendars, children's books and advertise it through Churches Together in Maidenhead.

MAIDENHEAD
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
"Farewell" concert by our Music Director

Mateusz Rettner

Mateusz is leaving us to return to his native Poland - a sad loss to our church community. He will be giving a farewell concert for us on:

Saturday
2nd November
7.30pm

West Street,
Maidenhead, SL6 1RL

Tickets £10
on the door



His programme will include piano music by
Scarlatti, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms,
Debussy and Gershwin

**Please come along and give him a good
send off!**

secretary@maidenheadurc.org.uk



If you wish to order something specific to pick up at one of the pop up shops, please email Ali on admin@quenchshops.com.

Or just come along and pick up what you need with a coffee and a chat at the Salvation Army, East Road, Maidenhead SL6 1PJ.

There are only two dates (so don't miss them!)

October 31 and November 21 from 10 to 12.

Greetings from the Ashfords

Jim and I met with Jean and Martin Ashford in the summer. It was so good to see them, we had a lovely walk on the Wiltshire Downs - see photos. Jean and I were



not experimenting with new hair styles, it was very windy

Jean has sent the following message:



'We were really happy to meet with Catherine and Jim on the Wiltshire Downs recently and catch up on all the news from Marlow and Maidenhead. We were just back from California where, as many of you know, we were attending the

funeral of our dear daughter-in-law, Jenny, who sadly died at the end of July after a short but brave battle with pancreatic cancer. We would like to thank you all for your prayers and kind messages of love and support for us during Jenny's illness. It was so good to know that friends who had known Charlie as a little boy in Junior Church were thinking of him. Please continue to pray for Charlie as he adjusts to his new life as a single parent while also grieving for his wife, and also for Jenny's parents as they come to terms with the loss of their beautiful daughter.'

Catherine Johnson

Anniversary at Maidenhead

We were delighted that Stephen Thornton could lead our Maidenhead



Anniversary Service on 13th October – such an uplifting time of worship.

(Of course we had cake to follow!)

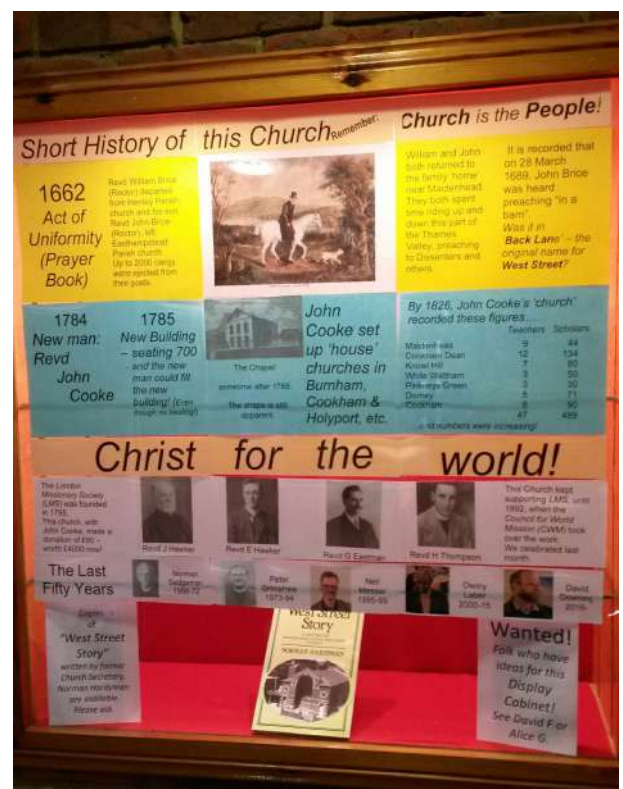
The previous day Stephen was presented with his certificate for 60 years in the ministry at the Wessex Synod meeting. More celebration!

And to add to the occasion, Audrey Finch has sent us a

photo of the poster that David made for a previous anniversary showing the history of the church at West Street.

David has produced many wonderful displays and posters over the years, and it is good to see this one again.

Alison Holton



A special day for Kailey

Saturday 14th September 2024

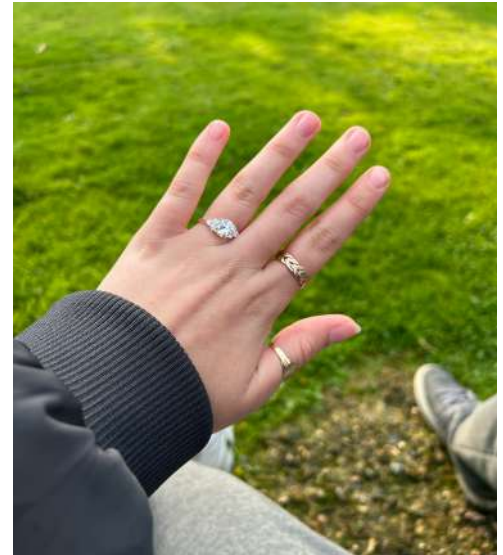
Great Papa's 114th birthday and the day myself and Ronnie got engaged.

It's still crazy to think that we are engaged.

Ronnie is a very sweet man and I couldn't ask for anyone better.

Thank you to everyone congratulating us we appreciate it very much.

Kailey



Harvest Thanksgiving at Marlow

Marlow's Harvest Thanksgiving service took place on Sunday 13 October. We were delighted to welcome Anna Crawford from Walton and Weybridge URC to lead our worship. Anna spoke about how none of our harvest gifts would have been possible without water before preaching on Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well and the water of life.



Thank you to everyone in Marlow who brought harvest gifts. The harvest table looked very colourful! And it was brilliantly complemented by Janet's bright floral display. The produce donated included tins and dried goods as well as fresh fruit and vegetables. We also received some beautiful prize-winning

dahlias from Richard Bailey, one of our Aid for Ukraine volunteers. We raised £85 from monetary donations and the sale of the dahlias and perishable goods. Paul kindly took the money plus the non-perishable food donations to the One Can Trust warehouse in High Wycombe. We know that they will ensure that our donations will benefit those in greatest need in our local community.

Valerie Brownridge

Not a sight you see often in West Street ...

Fergus Anderson was moved by his family to a home in Holyport. Given his Scottish Presbyterian roots our URC in West St was the nearest fit in the area. June and myself used to pick him up on our way to services. However, his increasing symptoms of dementia made this difficult and his attendance ceased.

He survived another two years before passing away at the age of 102. At his funeral on 6 September his daughters talked about his great love of animals from an early age, particularly horses, which is why they chose a horse-drawn hearse. RIP Fergus.

Anthony Bodrell



Christian Aid Update

On 15 October I took part in a Zoom meeting, convened by Phil Evans, our regional Christian Aid coordinator, to hear an update on Christian Aid activities. We heard about the situation in South Sudan, Christian Aid's Christmas appeal, and an update on the situation in Gaza.



South Sudan

South Sudan is the focus of this year's Christmas appeal. It is the world's newest nation, and when it was established in 2011 as a result of a referendum, resources poured in on a wave of optimism and hope. However civil war broke out in 2013, undoing a lot of progress, and we heard from Annabelle Grassini, who has worked in South Sudan with VSO, about the challenges the population now face. Two-fifths of the population are under 15, life expectancy

is low, and of the population of 12 million, 9 million need assistance. Travel is difficult because there are almost no surfaced roads. Healthcare is very short of resources and education is limited. A girl is more likely to die in childbirth than finish secondary school.

There are a lot of refugees and displaced people, who do find some support in communities – despite having very little, people share what they have.

Christmas Appeal

This Christmas Christian Aid is supporting people like Shede, a refugee in Wedweil Refugee Settlement in South Sudan. Christian Aid's partner **Smile Again Africa Development Organisation (SAADO)** works in 4 areas: Humanitarian assistance, Building Peace, Preventing Violence against Women and Climate Resilience.

Fancy offering a lifechanging gift this Christmas? Check out the new Christmas Gifts catalogue at caid.org.uk/gifts

Gaza

Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to Christian Aid's Middle East and Gaza Appeals - to date you've raised over £3 million! To find out more about our partners' activities and donate:

www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/gaza-appeal

Since the meeting, a DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee) appeal has been launched and Christian Aid are a partner in this.

You can sign the petition to the UK Foreign Secretary to stop all arms sales to Israel, demand an immediate ceasefire, secure access to aid and halt UK trade with Israeli settlements at www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/emergencies/middle-east-crisis-action

Catherine Johnson

Prayer for peace

Oh God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, oh Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your Kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen

The Very Reverend Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of Saint Georges College Jerusalem

Scout Group News

The Cubs and Scouts managed camps/sleepovers during September but now with the evenings drawing in fewer of their meetings take place outdoors.

However the other week, the Scouts were commended by several passers-by during their litter picking activity. Clad in hi-viz and gloves they came back



with piles of finds ready for the bin.

The Beavers sat very quietly on their reptile evening, and so many of them were content to have a snake wrapped around their neck like a scarf. Not me!



We again took part in the annual Boundary Walk, walking around the old boundary of Maidenhead much of it following open countryside and woods. With the river so high, no boat crossing was possible so it was 15 miles! I was surprised to make it!

If you go to the St Luke's Christmas Tree

Festival, 6 – 8 December, look out for the tree decorated by the 9th Maidenhead Beavers and Cubs.

Alison Holton, Joint Group Lead Volunteer



Fundraising challenge in Marlow

Kailey and Ailsa completed the 30 mile walk challenge in September in aid of Dementia UK. Thank you to everyone who donated!

Kailey Milne

Facebook – can you help Kailey?

Kailey has kindly taken over running the Facebook pages for Maidenhead and Marlow since Marla left. Facebook is one of the ways of letting people know what our churches are doing, how to become involved in them, to offer a word of comfort or challenge and also simply maintain a presence in a different place. The items have to be very short with an image that grabs attention. This is what Kailey is working on and plans to put two messages up every week for each church. Did you know that when people scroll through Facebook, your message has to catch their attention in three seconds or they will have gone past! It's quite a challenge!

If you use Facebook look at our Facebook posts and if you think one is useful or helpful click the 'like' button. Forward a post to a Facebook friend or 'Follow' one of our churches on Facebook. This helps to get us noticed.

Liz Robertson

Just over 60 Quizzing days to Christmas!

We have tried not to talk too much about Christmas in In Touch because it's still quite a long way away, but we had to give in in the end. Gordon's fun quiz should really be kept for Christmas because as you are well aware we have to wait for things during Advent (but you might take a little peek!).

We hope you enjoy some seasonal fun with it.

Gordon's instructions are:

This is meant to be challenging! Do it as a family or friends group, phone a friend, or Google it before turning to the answers at the end.



1. What was the name of the first employer of young Ebenezer Scrooge?
2. On Christmas Day what did Scrooge send out a young boy to get for the Cratchits?
3. In the Vicar of Dibley Christmas episode what was the competition between Geraldine and David Horton?
4. Which 1980 song by Slade has been a Christmas favourite for over 40 years?
5. What is Viscum Album better known as?
6. In the bleak midwinter what did frosty wind make?
7. In "We wish you a merry Christmas" what kind of pudding did we request?
8. In the "Good life" Christmas episode what kind of gift did Jerry and Margot give to the Goods?
9. In "It's a wonderful life" what was the name of George Bailey's guardian Angel?
10. In the same film what did a tinkling bell signify?
11. In "Miracle on 34th St" 1994 version who played the part of Kris Kringle?
12. In the same film what were the words on the \$1.00 bill that saved him from the asylum?
13. Which of "The Chasers" pulled Santa's sleigh.
14. In "Love Actually" who played the part of the Prime Minister?
15. How many ghosts show up in "A Christmas Carol"?

And in case you have forgotten summer already ...

Thank you to all who hosted Coffee Mornings over the Summer months they



have been most enjoyable and very entertaining. Sorry I couldn't help but I'm sure that the ones who couldn't appreciate the great hospitality that was afforded to us all. It was lovely to meet up with Liz and also Linda Williams and catch up with everyone. We have been welcomed back at the Premier Inn. See you all there (until the summer!)

Pam Breen

Careful - QUIZ ANSWERS HERE!

- 1 Mr Fezzwig
- 2 The biggest turkey in the window
- 3 To see who could eat the most Brussel Sprouts
- 4 Merry Christmas Everybody
- 5 Mistletoe
- 6 Moan
- 7 Figgy Pudding
- 8 A cow
- 9 Clarence
- 10 An angel gets his wings
- 11 Richard Attenborough
- 12 In God we Trust
- 13 Jenny Ryan, aka Vixen
- 14 Hugh Grant
- 15 4 - Jacob Marley and the ghosts of the past, present and future

May we share a season of
Remembrance, Hope, Peace, Joy and Love



Contact us

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Church Administrator: administrator@maidenheadurc.org.uk Office: 01628 635781 (For urgent matters contact Church Secretary)	Church Treasurer: Tom Craig
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