

# ST. ANDREWS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield, S3 7RQ

# MESSENGER

Price £1.25

SPRING 2025



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## CALENDAR

We thank all the service leaders who give us inspiration, guidance and hope, and much to think about each Sunday. We enjoy a wide range of approaches, and they all contribute to our understanding of our faith. So far this year we have heard Rev Canon Adrian Alker, Rev Dr Michael Bayley, Professor Clyde Binfield, Rev Inderjit Bhogal, Mrs Jenny Carpenter, Rev Fleur Houston, Mr Chris Limb and Rev Dr David Stec. The first Sunday of the year was snowed off and the Worship Group have taken two services.

### APRIL

Sun	6	10.45 am	Mrs Jenny Carpenter
Mon	7	2 pm	Elders meeting
Sun	13	10.45 am	Palm Sunday - Worship Group
Sun	20	10.45 am	Rev Dr David Stec - Easter Day - Communion
Tues	22	10 – 12	Broomhall Community Choir
Sun	27	10.45 am	Mr Chris Limb
Tues	29	10 – 12	Community Choir

### MAY

Sun	4	10.45 am	Rev Canon Adrian Alker
Tues	6	10 – 12	Community Choir
Sun	11	10.45 am	Rev Dr Walter Houston
Mon	12	2 pm	Elders meeting
Tues	13	10 – 12	Community Choir
Sun	18	10.45 am	Rev Canon Geoffrey Harbord followed by the Annual Church Meeting
Tues	20	10 – 12	Community Choir
Thurs	22	10 am	Management Team meeting
Sun	25	10.45 am	Mr Kit Owen-Smith (Leprosary Mission)

### JUNE

Sun	1 <sup>st</sup>	10.45 am	Mrs Jenny Carpenter
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## FLOWERS

We have a lovely arrangement of artificial flowers in place for Sunday services but if anyone wishes to provide fresh flowers to commemorate some special date or memorial, please do so, and then write your name on the list on the back of the vestry door.

There is also the opportunity to bring a small fresh bunch to give to the visiting preacher; again, if you do this, please sign in the relevant column on the list.

## COFFEE

Sheila Cooke is keeping the rota for coffee after service on Sundays. Please tell Sheila if you would like to help.

## SERVICE SHEET ROTA

Jan, May, September	Judith Adam
Feb, June, Oct	Sheila Cooke
March, July, Nov	Margaret Fall
April, Aug, Dec	Douglas Jones

Please tell the person for that month if you have any notices.

## FAMILY NEWS

The editor apologises for the long gap in production of the Messenger. There is a lot of news to catch up on now. A brief overview of our activities at the end of last year is on page 16.

A number of our members have had a hard winter with chest infections, flu and falls, and some have been in and out of hospital for various tests. We hope that spring sunshine and the chance to get out and about more will help their well-being.

It is good to hear news of families (some of whom were with us on Christmas Day) and who have helped to celebrate a number of BIG birthdays recently - **Sheila Dunstan** is 80, **Ian Cooke and Alan Sandland** both 90 years young and **Bill Smyllie** reached 100 on 21 April. Bill is no longer able to come to church regularly and unfortunately has had a spell in hospital with a chest infection, but he is home again now and we hope to bring him to a service soon. Congratulations and best wishes to them all

Congratulations also to **Josh Middleton** who graduated from Hallam University in November in International Tourism Management.



And a surprise celebration! As Jean Dickson puts it: "On 18 January **Graeme and Claire** turned up at the Town Hall and had a Civil Partnership. They then had lunch with their two witnesses and came to see me. What a surprise!! They told me all about it. I was very happy for them." And we wish them all the best.



We also congratulate **Firas Sharefy** who on 13th March was presented with the Lord Mayor's Award for his Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community over the many years he has been in Sheffield, since seeking sanctuary here in 2008. Firas is the Project Lead for Open Kitchen Social Club which provides the lunch here every Monday for asylum seekers.

We were delighted to see **Billy Aryanto** again when he came for his doctoral graduation in January with his parents, and we held a delicious bring-and-share lunch after the service. At the moment we are enjoying the presence of three young Indonesian women, post-graduate students, joining us on Sundays. **Halvina** sings in the choir and **Natasha and Jeklin** sometimes read the lesson.

Spring brings travel and **Barbara Macmillan** tells an entertaining account of her recent jaunts, on page 13.

Greetings and good wishes to everyone have been received from Robert Beard, Amy Cook, Paul Hanna, Wilma Love, and John Price.

Sadly, we have two deaths to record.

**Mrs Marjorie Green** was a good friend to St Andrew's and a personal friend to many of us. She had suffered from a failing heart for several years, with increasing weakness over the last few months, and she died in the Northern General on 9 February, aged 92. There is an obituary on page 15.

The death of a younger person is always extra sad. We remember Aileen Austin, who was a member for many years and sang in the choir. Her son **Richard Austin** has died. Some of us knew him too because he sometimes sang in the choir to support us. Richard had a severe stroke about 8 years ago and had to move into a care home to meet all his needs, and after Aileen died, he moved to a care home in Belfast where his sister Marion lived and where he was very happy. He had another severe stroke from which there was no recovery and died there on 11 April. Our deepest sympathy to Marion and her family.

## **OUR CHARITIES**

### Roundabout

At Christmas we gave our money in lieu of cards and the collection on Christmas Day to Roundabout, which looks after homeless young people and helps them to find homes, skills training, jobs, and to regain their self-worth.

### Shoebboxes

We also gave 14 shoebboxes of Christmas gifts to Link to Hope, which distributes them to families or older people in Eastern Europe. A national total of 25,633 Family & Elderly shoebboxes were delivered safely to their destinations, over 2,000 of them from our region.

### Ethical Much

In 2023 we heard in a service a practical and inspiring story about a charity that works in Cambodia helping people who have very little to create a better, healthier life with simple improvements like a blanket or a toilet.

### Local

Last year we built services around speakers from Parish Nurses, the S6 Food Bank, St Wilfrid's Centre and Roundabout and heard about their work, ethos, and the people who need their services. On these occasions, the church gives a donation and we also hold a collection for them. The dedication of those who work for these charities is inspiring but the depth of need is sobering.

## S6 Food Bank

We received a lovely card from the food bank. They are always so grateful for any donations. They always need tins, long life milk, baby food toiletries, sanitary products - and treats are always welcome. Jean Dickson says Many Thanks for all you give to the food bank

## Commitment for Life

Members contribute to the URC charity Commitment for Life, which is part of Christian Aid. CfL focusses its work on three particular regions of the world, : Bangladesh, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (IOPT) and Zimbabwe.

## **LOOKING BACK**

Our services have been thought-provoking and uplifting, with meaningful hymns and music. Adrian Alker is continuing the theme of Journeys and at the start of Lent asked us to think about perilous journeys and being in a Wilderness. Jenny Carpenter marked the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Nicaea which produced the Creed which is the unifying statement of the Church.

Several of our preachers have referred to Bishop Budde's sermon at the presidential inauguration on Washington in January, which we have all found inspiring and brave. It is printed here in the middle pages so it can be detached if you wish.

Rev Inderjit Bhogal has led four Lent study groups on the subject of Hospitality and Sanctuary. Inderjit was instrumental in Sheffield becoming the first City of Sanctuary in the UK and he is encouraging St Andrew's to apply to be a Church of Sanctuary, in light of the number of groups (faith and secular) we host which offer support to strangers, refugees, and others in need. We are not sure if we meet all the complicated criteria but have submitted an application.

Our Good Friday service which we share with Trinity URC was at Trinity this year. This is always a simple and moving reading of the crucifixion narrative and hymns. On Easter Sunday trumpeter Gordon Truman joined us again for the communion service.

For our friends in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church of St Michael. Holy Week is a very significant time and marked with great observance. Nearly 200 people attended the joyful Palm Sunday service (including at least 80 children) and then the church is open all week for prayer and readings, and there is a more or less continuous service from Maundy Thursday to the early hours of Easter Day. On Maundy Thursday the priests wash everyone's feet, Good Friday and Holy Saturday are marked by solemnity, and the culmination is midnight mass to welcome Easter Day. They also fast through those three days.

On 4 May Adrian Alker concluded the theme of Journeys with 'Stages in Life's Journey', using among other readings Shakespeare's 'All the world's a stage' speech. The full range of ages was present as we were delighted to have Victor and Aimee Li and little Luke (2) and Linda Callear's grand-daughter Sophie (3).

Adrian's next theme will be 'Oppression and Freedom'. We are invited to think about it in advance.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

On 18 May we shall hold our Annual Church Meeting after the service.

Saturday 7 June sees the URC History Society hold its annual conference with us. The main speaker this year is of particular interest for St Andrew's as it is the Rev Fleur Houston talking about her recent-published biography of the Rev John Wood Oman. Our church members are welcome to attend. Open Kitchen are catering the lunch which we could enjoy too for £15.

Two of our members sing or play in the following two events:  
The next concert by Sheffield Symphony Orchestra is on 14 June at 7.30pm at All Saints Church, Ecclesall. The programme is: Debussy - Claire de Lune, arr. Caplet;, Glazunov - The Seasons, and Holst - The Planets.

"Whatever the Weather!" Sterndale Singers Summer Concert is on Saturday 28th June 2025 at Holy Trinity Millhouses Parish Hall. Featuring music to celebrate all types of weather...from sunshine to storms!

## **THE WIDER CHURCH**

The Rev Zaidie Orr retired at the end of March from the Sheffield Team Ministry, leaving only the Rev Barry Welch for the moment. A vacancy process is under way.

On Saturday 3 May there was a hymn-filled service at Coventry Central Hall to celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the URC hymn book Rejoice & Sing. Although Douglas is not too keen on some of the musical arrangements, there are some wonderful hymns in it.

The World Day of Prayer took place on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March and was marked in services all over the world. The service is prepared by the women of a different country each year, this time by the Christian women of the Cook Islands.

## The Nicene Creed

Easter often falls on different dates because the Western and Eastern churches use different calendars but this year the two calendars coincided and all Christians celebrated Easter on the same Sunday. The Presidents of Churches Together in England (CTE) have issued a pastoral letter to mark the joint celebration of Easter 2025 and the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea. In a world-wide Church divided, they “draw strength to face the realities of our divisions with a new hope of reconciliation . . . and pledge to look to the unity of the faith. as did those divinely-guided individuals seventeen hundred years ago.”

On 23 March we looked at bible readings and poems about reading - the Bible and books in general. Here's one of the poems:

### **How to Read the Bible**

I'll read the Bible with a microscope,  
The many hidden blessings there to find,  
The gold that well repays my searching hope,  
The jewels of the heart and of the mind,

With telescope the Bible I will read,  
So far and vast its shining glories are,  
So swiftly truths to ardent truths succeed,  
A bright-heaped galaxy of sun and star.

I'll read the Bible with a garden spade  
For hosts of seedling thoughts are growing there.  
Transplanted to my life, they give me shade  
And healthful fruit, and flowers richly fair.

I'll read the Bible with a light-poised boat,  
With crowding sail or with a labouring oar,  
For it has many a fairy-land remote,  
And many winding channels to explore.

I'll read the Bible with a miner's pick,  
For deep in solid rock its wealth is found;  
But ah, the secret veins are rich and thick,  
And glorious Eldorados here abound.

All instruments, all modes of eager quest,  
Find here their recompense of high reward,  
Find here the wisest, worthiest, and best,  
The free and waiting treasures of the Lord.

*Amos Russel Wells*



## **BISHOP MARIAN BUDDÉ'S SERMON at President Trump' s inauguration**

20 January 2025

Again, my warm welcome to all who have gathered in this House of prayer, for all people and for those who are joining us via live stream. As a country we have gathered this morning to pray for unity as a people and a nation, not for agreement, political or otherwise, but for the kind of unity that fosters community across diversity and division, a unity that serves the common good. Unity in this sense is a threshold requirement for people to live in freedom and together in a free society. It is the solid rock, as Jesus said, in this case upon which to build a nation. It is not conformity. It is not victory. It is not polite weariness or passive passivity born of exhaustion. Unity is not partisan, rather unity is a way of being with one another that encompasses and respects our differences, that teaches us to hold multiple perspectives and life experiences as valid and worthy of respect, that enables us in our communities and in the halls of power to genuinely care for one another even when we disagree.

Those are across our country who dedicate their lives or who volunteer to help others in times of natural disaster, often at great risk to themselves, never ask those they are helping for whom they voted in a past election or what positions they hold on a particular issue. And we are at our best when we follow their example. For unity at times is sacrificial in the way that love is sacrificial, a giving of ourselves for the sake of another. In his sermon on the mount, Jesus of Nazareth exhorts us to love not only our neighbours but to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us, to be merciful as our God is merciful, to forgive others as God forgives us. And Jesus went out of his way to welcome those whom his society deemed as outcasts.

Now I grant you that unity in this broad expansive sense is aspirational, and it's a lot to pray for. It's a big ask of our God, worthy of the best of who we are and who we can be. But there isn't much to be gained by our prayers if we act in ways that further deepen the divisions among us. Our scriptures are quite clear about this: that God is never impressed with prayers when actions are not informed by them. Nor does God spare us from the consequences of our deeds, which always in the end matter more than the words we pray.

Those of us gathered here in the cathedral, we are not naive about the realities of politics, when power and wealth and competing interests are at stake, when views of what America should be are in conflict, when there are strong opinions across a spectrum of possibilities and

starkly different understandings of what the right course of action is. There will be winners and losers. When votes are cast, decisions made, that set the course of public policy and the prioritization of resources, it goes without saying that in a democracy not everyone's particular hopes and dreams can be realized in a given legislative session or a presidential term, not even in a generation. Which is to say, not everyone's specific prayers; for those of us who are people of prayer, not everyone's prayers will be answered in the way we would like. But for some, the loss of their hopes and dreams will be far more than political defeat but instead a loss of equality and dignity and their livelihoods. Given this then, is true unity among us even possible? And why should we care about it?

Well, I hope we care. I hope we care because the culture of contempt that has become normalized in this country threatens to destroy us. We are all bombarded daily with messages from what sociologists now call the outrage industrial complex, some of that driven by external forces whose interests are furthered by a polarized America. Contempt fuels political campaigns and social media, and many profit from that. But it's a worrisome, it's a dangerous, way to lead a country. I'm a person of faith surrounded by people of faith, and, with God's help, I believe that unity in this country is possible. Not perfectly, for we are imperfect people and an imperfect union, but sufficient enough to keep us all believing in and working to realize the ideals of the United States of America, ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, with its assertion of innate human equality and dignity. And we are right to pray for God's help as we seek unity, for we need God's help, but only if we ourselves are willing to tend to the foundations upon which unity depends, like Jesus's analogy of building a House of faith on the rock of his teachings as opposed to building a house on sand. The foundations we need for unity must be sturdy enough to withstand the many storms that threaten it. And, so what are they, the foundations of unity?

Drawing from our sacred traditions and texts, let me suggest that there are at least three. The first foundation for unity is honouring the inherent dignity of every human being, which is, as all the faiths represented here affirm, the birthright of all people as children of our one God. In public discourse, honouring each other's dignity means refusing to mock or discount or demonize those with whom we differ, choosing instead to respectfully debate our differences and whenever possible to seek common ground. And if common ground is not possible, dignity demands that we remain true to our convictions without contempt for those who hold convictions of their own.

Second, foundation for unity is honesty, in both private conversation and public discourse. If we are not willing to be honest, there is no use in praying for unity because our actions work against the prayers themselves. We might, for a time, experience a false sense of unity among some but not the sturdier, broader unity that we need to address the challenges that we face. Now to be fair we don't always know where the truth lies, and there is a lot working against the truth now. But when we do know, when we know what is true, it is incumbent upon us to speak the truth, even when, especially when, it costs us.

The third and last foundation I'll mention today, foundation for unity, is humility, which we all need, because we are all fallible human beings. We make mistakes. We say and do things that we later regret. We have our blind spots and our biases. And perhaps we are most dangerous to ourselves and others when we are persuaded without a doubt that we are absolutely right and someone else is absolutely wrong, because then we are just a few steps from labelling ourselves as the good people versus the bad people. And the truth is that we are all people. We are capable of both good and bad. Alexander Solzhenitsyn once astutely observed that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, not between classes, nor between political parties, but through, right through, every human heart, through all human hearts. And the more we realize this, the more room we have within ourselves for humility and openness to one another across our differences, because in fact we are more like one another than we realize, and we need each other.

Unity is relatively easy to pray for on occasions of great solemnity. It's a lot harder to realize when we're dealing with real differences in our private lives and in the public arena. But without unity, we're building our nation's house on sand, and with a commitment to unity that incorporates diversity and transcends disagreement, and with the solid foundations of dignity, honesty, and humility that such unity requires, we can do our part and in our time to realize the ideals and the dream of America.

Let me make one final plea, Mr. President. Millions have put their trust in you and, as you told the nation yesterday, you have felt the providential hand of a loving God. In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now. There are gay, lesbian, and transgender children in Democratic, Republican and Independent families, some who fear for their lives.

And the people, the people who pick our crops and clean our office buildings, who labour in poultry farms and meat packing plants, who wash the dishes after we eat in restaurants and work the night shifts in hospitals. They, they may not be citizens or have the proper documentation, but the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals. They pay taxes and are good neighbours. They are faithful members of our churches and mosques, synagogues, gurdwara and temples. I ask you to have mercy, Mr. President, on those in our communities whose children fear that their parents will be taken away, and that you help those who are fleeing war zones and persecution in their own lands, to find compassion and welcome here. Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger for we were all once strangers in this land. May God grant us the strength and courage to honour the dignity of every human being, to speak the truth to one another in love and walk humbly with each other and our God for the good of all people. The good of all people in this nation and the world.

Amen.

### **PSALM 23**

No wonder it is the best known and loved . . .

The Lord is my Shepherd - that's RELATIONSHIP

I shall not want - that's SUPPLY

He makes me lie down in green pastures - that's REST

He leads me beside still waters - that's REFRESHMENT

He restores my soul - that's HEALING

He leads me in the paths of righteousness - that's GUIDANCE

For His name's sake - that's PURPOSE

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will  
fear no evil - that's PROTECTION

For he is with me - that's FAITHFULNESS

His rod and his staff they comfort me - that's COMFORT

He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies -  
that's HOPE

He anoints my head with oil - that's CONSECRATION

My cup runs over - that's ABUNDANCE

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life—  
that's BLESSING

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord - that's SECURITY

For ever - that's ETERNITY

*Source unknown*

## MARRAKECH and GLASGOW

Recently I had offers to accompany walking group friends on trips to these two, very different, places and plans went ahead at a great pace !!

First was to be Marrakech. Memories came flooding back to me of 1969, when a friend and I set off from Scotland with rucksacks and a tent, to make our way to Casablanca (mostly by hitch-hiking when we considered this a safe mode of transport). At one point we visited Marrakech under the care of a kindly policeman we had met in Casablanca. My memory of the market was of intense hustle and bustle - unfamiliar noises, sights and smells and lots of activity. Our policeman friend insisted in helping me to purchase a pair of leather sandals which no doubt saved me lots of dirhams!! My friend and I also had a great time visiting the capital Rabat and a beautiful beach on the Atlantic coast. Looking back I shudder to think of the potential dangers we put ourselves in but I guess the times were different then and we were lucky!

Now for my next visit 56 years later, four of us walkers chose more luxurious ways to travel and live. The all inclusive Tui Blu Hotel was much more suited to our age group than camping. So with comfortable surroundings and lovely weather we were all set. With the help of a guide, I saw Morocco in a different light. He drove us to the town centre and pointed out historical buildings as he imparted interesting, local knowledge. Fortunately, we had done some homework ourselves so were somewhat prepared for this very vibrant, busy, crazy place!!

The traffic system really has to be witnessed to be believed. Although we had been warned about purchasing some of the plentiful, attractive items it, was difficult to resist being conned by very persuasive sellers. I did however come away with an excess of herbal tea!! It was a very enjoyable but exhausting day.

In contrast, our early morning trip to the countryside had us up in a hot air balloon to witness the sunrise. Although initially a little apprehensive, I'm happy to say I loved that experience and have some great photos taken from our basket. Hot air balloons at dawn are big business in Marrakech so we were in just one of many drifting around in the sky with our driver/pilot guiding ours safely. The Atlas mountains were easily visible and we could see miles of desert too. It was a wonderful experience which I will never forget.

Our trip to the Atlas Mountains was also a very memorable day out. We four had an excellent, elderly driver who amazed me with his ability to speak in many languages.<sup>13</sup>

Luckily one of us had been a language teacher, which helped the travelling time go by quickly as they chatted freely in French. There was a fair amount of trekking required to reach the various stopping points but it was well worth the effort when we reached a beautiful waterfall.

On the way we were invited into a Berber village to enjoy breakfast in the home of a local family, as well as making our way through more souks with shopping opportunities. It was quite a challenging day but we had a very happy time with it ending in a good, well-deserved meal served outside in the sunshine by a river before heading back to the hotel on the outskirts of Marrakech.



After a fun packed week all four of us made it safely back to Sheffield with a couple of weeks to recentre before heading off to Scotland. My job was there to act as interpreter in Glasgow!

For four days of quality time with friends I would recommend visiting this amazing city which was so impressive in many ways. We four pals travelled by train to Glasgow Central Station, a short walk from the Clyde and our accommodation in a Premier Inn in nearby Argyle Street. Using the handy buses to visit the Burrell Museum in Pollock Park, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum at Kelvingrove, plus lots of walking in lovely weather, was excellent. (The subway was handy too and would have been used had we not been so lucky with the weather.) Sadly we didn't manage to fit in the Botanical Gardens, and the People's Palace in Glasgow Green was closed for restoration, but there was never a dull moment. I could recommend eating places too! The Willow Tearoom (Rennie Macintosh) in Buchanan Street and Fanny Trollope' Bistro in Finnieston were especially good.,

Sometimes it's a case of East, West, home's best but I think I came out a winner with both trips. Happy Days are there for the taking !!

*Barbara Macmillan*

## MARJORIE GREEN

We got to know Marjorie when the Rev Leslie Green was appointed Interim Moderator in 2000, in what became a very long (4-year) vacancy. Marjorie and he engaged closely with the life of St Andrew's, attended regularly including social events, and got to know everyone well. We were very appreciative of his wise leadership and became very fond of them both. They remained good friends of the church and Marjorie especially made close friends here. She took her faith very seriously and was always interested in learning more, and often came to our discussion groups and evening talks. Though her we developed a closer link with her own church, Trinity URC.

Marjorie was a caring stepmother to Leslie's three children by his first wife - not an easy task to take on - and delighted in the grandchildren and great-children that followed. She had a genuine interest in people, loved to meet them and find out about their lives. Her career as a chiropodist fitted her love of people and her instinct to help them, and after she retired she volunteered for some time with Samaritans and then Carers UK. She supported Leslie in his chaplaincy work at Hallam University, entertained many of his students and took a keen interest in their progress.

She had many interests, enjoyed travel and seeing new places, and went on many of Margaret's Holiday's. As a keen gardener, she had a beautiful garden. She loved learning new things and belonged to a number of groups and societies over the years. She was very creative and artistic and her house was filled with lovely things that she had made or collected or been given.

Marjorie's life revolved around her family, friends and many interests. She found the isolation of the Covid pandemic very difficult, and her declining health increasingly restricted her activities and pleasure in life. She appreciated all the help she received but was ready to pass on.

We send our sympathy to Christine, Andrew and Ruth and all the family.



Our Easter flowers by Sheila Cooke

## FOR THE RECORD - Images of Christmas

Open Kitchen's Christmas lunch catered brilliantly for nearly 100 people in the hall, and was a model of efficiency in the serving.



The Sunday before Christmas, Sebastian Marek from the Polish Catholic Centre brought us the Bethlehem Peace Light, from which we lit the candles in the service.

