

CONNEXIONS

The magazine of

Lavington

United Reformed Church

Bideford

www.lavingtonurc.org



FEBRUARY 2023

50p

FEBRUARY DIARY

Sun.	5 th	10.30am	Family Worship & HC - The Minister
		11.30am	Church Meeting – see page 9 for details
Sun.	12 th	11.00am	Family Worship – Revd John Robinson
Wed.	15 th	10.30am	Elders Meeting
Sun.	19 th	11.00am	Family Worship – Mr Eric Moore
Sun.	26 th	11.00am	Family Worship – Sabrina Gröschel

WEEKLY ACTIVITY

Tuesdays	10am – 1pm	Coffee and lunches mornings and Warm Space
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Mission Statement

Lavington's mission is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness encompassing the love of Christ and to share this through worship and service.



We are a Fairtrade Church

Answers to Christmas Quiz

1. December 26th
2. Advent
3. Holiday Inn
4. White
5. Gabriel
6. Sandringham
7. Bethlehem
8. Mexico
9. Norway
10. Panettone
11. Elizabeth
12. 364
13. Cupid
14. 1840s
15. Egypt
16. Switzerland
17. Jacob Marley
18. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
19. Balthasar, Melchior, Casper
20. Brazil
21. Deep and Crisp and Even
22. Cupid
23. St. Nicholas



Dear Friends,

After a lovely Christmas celebrated with all our family, unfortunately both Suzy and I were struck down by Covid. We were both grateful that we were up to date with our vaccine injections - I am in no doubt we would have been even more unwell if we had not received the vaccine. We are both feeling much better, just some fatigue still reducing our energy levels in the evenings. It has certainly made me more aware of the struggles that many other people have had with Covid over the past two years. There seems little doubt that we will all have to learn to live with Covid, just as we do with various flu viruses each year.

The beginning of the year is a time to look forward; both Suzy and I are looking forward to our sabbatical this coming May, June and July. This is only the second in my ministry, as the URC encourages all its Ministers to take a three month sabbatical every 10 years. A sabbatical is an opportunity to reflect on one's ministry and to use the time for spiritual renewal and refreshment.

Ten years ago our focus was on Reformation history, looking at the impact of significant people such as Martin Luther (in Germany), Ulrich Zwingli (in Switzerland) and Jean Calvin (originally from France, he was based in Geneva). This time our focus will be on different types of spirituality found in different retreat centres. We will be travelling around France, Switzerland and Italy with a caravan (which we have recently bought). We both enjoy camping and this gives us freedom to stay for shorter or longer periods, rather than being tied to a strict itinerary.

We will be away from 1st May until 31st July. During that time I have every confidence in the Elders who are well prepared for these three months and I am grateful for their leadership and ministry.

What plans do you have for 2023? where do you think God might be leading? Are there things you might stop doing this year, or things you might start doing? Are there aspects of your faith journey that you'd like to address? This month is a good opportunity to take time to reflect and take action! Wherever your plans take you, may you know the presence of God in all things.

Every blessing

Rob Weston, Minister

MONTHS OF THE YEAR

January brings the snow;
Makes the toes and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,
Thaws the frozen ponds again.

March brings breezes loud and shrill,
Stirs the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,
Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs,
Skipping in their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses;
Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings cooling showers,
Strawberries and gilly-flowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the Harvest Home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit,
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasant;
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast,
Then the leaves are falling fast.

Chill December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire and Christmas treat.

From a magazine

THANK YOU!

You will recall that in late in 2022 we took a Retirement collection for the Pakistan Floods appeal. The Treasurer was able to send £300 via the Disasters Emergency Appeal (DEC).

Also, at Harvest time from the sale of perishable items we raised £150 which we sent to Shelter Box.

Printed below are extracts from 2 letters of thanks from the two charities.

DEC (Pakistan)

Dear supporter,

Thank you very much for donating to the DEC PAKISTAN Floods Appeal. Thanks to your generosity, DEC have been able provide life-saving aid to the people of Pakistan. Your support is helping us to provide such things as clean water, food, emergency shelter and health assistance.

Your gift will make a real difference to the people in Pakistan. On behalf of all those your donation will support: we want to say thank you once again.

Saleh Saeed, DEC Chief Executive

SHELTER BOX

Dear Revd Biggs,

Thank you so much for your incredible donation of £150 raised at your Harvest Tea. Your decision to fundraise in this way means that we can continue to help vulnerable people feel more in control of their futures at a time when things feel uncertain and changeable.

When disasters or conflict rob people of their homes, we cannot wave a magic wand to replace what was lost but we can provide people with the tools necessary to enable their recovery and to offer a sense of comfort and relief, giving them space to heal from physical and emotional trauma.

Without the support of donations like yours, we couldn't help as many families in many different countries. Without you we simply wouldn't exist. Thank you once again to you all at Lavington United Reformed Church.

Rachel
Care Support Team

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Each year we receive a few cards from friends of Lavington and in addition to the church family personal greeting on the middle pages of the Christmas Connexions we also had cards from –

The Lavington Family - P C
J D
J H
S H
R Q
Frequent visitor C B – *from Sussex*
Lavington friends Revd and Mrs J R
“ J S
Tuesday Café helper J W *recently moved to Lancashire.*

RECYCLING CHRISTMAS CARDS

Just a reminder that all your Christmas cards can be recycled from your doorstep in your cardboard bag. Unfortunately cards with any glitter on them cannot be recycled.

It's also worth remembering that all cards throughout the year can be recycled in the same manner. *Ed.*

OooooooooooooooooooooooooooooOoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

THINGS GOD WON'T ASK YOU TO DO

God won't ask you what kind of car you drive,
He will ask you how many people you drove who didn't have transport.
God won't ask you the square footage of your house,
He will ask you how many people you welcomed into it.
God won't ask you which diet you were on,
He will ask you how many hungry people you helped to feed.
God won't ask you how many friends you have,
He will ask you how many people you befriended.
Makes you think, doesn't it?

from a church magazine



The committee wish to let you know that the Christmas Carol Concert at High St Methodist church in December was highly successful. After an enforced break of a couple of years due to the pandemic, a really enjoyable evening was appreciated by a large audience. Taking part were two local schools children's choirs and three adult choirs all of whom were clearly relishing the opportunity to perform again.

In the interval, Katrine Musgrave who is the Christian Aid Church Engagement and Fundraising Officer, Devon and Cornwall, spoke passionately about the Malawi Appeal and how most families in Malawi depend on farming, making them extremely vulnerable to the climate change crisis. The money raised that evening from the collection will help lift many, many families out of hunger.

As folk left after the concert, a collection was taken when the amazing amount of money raised on the night was £474.39. Thank you to everyone and especially to YOU if you were one of the contributors!

J P.



Well, here we are again! Geared up and ready to go through another year to add to our age.

Love 'em or hate 'em, we can't do without 'em!

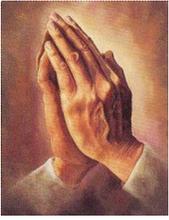
February is a lean month as far as birthday folk at Lavington are concerned. We only have two lovely ladies celebrating - mind you one of them was a Valentine-day baby!

LC 2nd
HV 14th

Girls, your Lavington friends wish you many happy returns of the day and send you both love and good wishes for happy days. Enjoy yourselves.

There is just one Wedding Anniversary in February and that is of L and K B, on 24th. L and K we all send you love and happy memories on your own special day.

Ed.



w/c 5th

Dear Lord, we are just leaving the season of peace and goodwill toward all men, a season which both the Russians and Ukrainians have largely ignored. We pray that somehow peace can be brokered between the two warring countries by the United Nations or similar organisation, in a war where the casualties have reached serious proportions, including many civilians and where destruction of infrastructure and buildings is vast. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall see God.

w/c 12th

Dear Lord, the NHS seems to be in the middle of yet another crisis with Covid and flu hitting patients at the same time as nurses and paramedics are striking or are off ill themselves; the perfect storm. It appears that the NHS and the social care system are both in need of a serious overhaul. Please send us someone who has a vision and a plan for our medical system before it collapses into chaos.

w/c 19th

Dear Lord, let us spare a thought for the poor, the ill and the elderly who are deciding to turn their electrical devices off and stay at home in the cold, rather than tot up large bills which will send them spiralling into debt, but at the expense of their own health. May a satisfactory solution be found for this unacceptable situation. May they make use of the warm spaces available to them run by Town Councils, Churches and other voluntary bodies.

w/c 26th

Dear Lord, we now begin our journey into Lent which starts with Ash Wednesday (on the 22nd Feb) and ends forty days later on Easter Saturday. Let it be for us a time of quiet contemplation and study of the mysteries of the faith and issues concerning the wider world, of the throwing away of old and bad habits and the taking on of new and better ones. We ask all of this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. AMEN

C

MUSIC

For those of us who enjoy listening to the music that Sally plays each week, she has decided that for “special services” she will let us know what she is playing. She will choose the music which she feels is appropriate to the occasion.

For example, her choice for Remembrance Sunday was spot on for that Sunday.

Before the service it was –

Allegretto from Beethoven’s Symphony no.7
Dido’s Lament from the opera Dido and Aeneas Henry Purcell
Nimrod from Elgar’s Enigma Variations
Pie Jesu from Requiem op. 48 Gabriel Faure

During the Offertory it was the Theme from the film, *Schindler’s List*

After the Service was over, we had –

Benedictus from the Armed Man – Karl Jenkins
May choirs of angels come to greet you - Ernest Sands
Pack up your troubles (and smile) – Felix Powell

If the titles or composers don’t mean anything to you, the music probably will. On Remembrance Sunday, I went to Sally after the service to ask the name of a piece that she had played and that I knew very well but didn’t know what it was called.

If you ever need to find out anything about the music, please do ask her, she will be only too pleased to tell you.

On the Special Services when Sally does this, she will list the music and leave copies of it in the vestibule for you to take a copy, should you wish to.

I sometimes feel that perhaps we all take the music each week for granted. So here is our opportunity to learn more about the music that is played and to thank Sally for all her services week after week, year after year. Thank you, Sally.

Ed.

FEBRUARY ROTAS

MINISTRY of FLOWERS

We thank those who are providing flowers for the sanctuary this month and those who arrange when asked to do so.

5 th	M J S
12 th	*Vacant date
19 th	*Vacant date
26 th	*Vacant date

*Please speak to Jill if you would like to donate flowers on any of these dates

SIDESMAN DUTIES

5 th	Mrs H M / Mrs E B
12 th	Mrs J C / Mrs L C
19 th	Mr P J / Mr C W
26 th	Mrs A B / Revd C B

VESTRY DUTY

5 th	Mrs A B
12 th	Mrs J C
19 th	Mrs J P
26 th	Mrs L C

COMMUNION

Preparation	5 th	Mrs J D / Mrs A B
Servers		Mrs A B / Mrs J D

READERS

5 th	Mrs J P
12 th	Mrs J D
19 th	Mrs S M
26 th	Mrs J Pr

OFFERTORY STEWARDS: Mr R and Mrs J C

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



The World Day of Prayer Service will be held on Friday March 3rd. It will be held in Bideford Baptist Church at 2.00pm.

This year the service has been written for us by the Christian Women of Taiwan and they are inviting us all to be a huge

Wave of Prayer which circles the earth for at least 38 hours. It

will begin in Western Samoa and Tonga in the Pacific Ocean and will end at dusk in American Samoa. We will be in the middle somewhere – celebrating and praying. I'm sure we would all agree that our world needs much prayer at this time - and we might all be a part of that glorious Wave of Prayer. Please join us in this celebration of United Prayer.

Light refreshments will be served after the service.

J

NEWS of the LAVINGTON FAMILY

Sadly, **E G** and **V P** have suffered falls and both broken a hip. We send them our good wishes and hope they will soon be a lot more mobile. We also heard that **P F** has broken a hip recently and is recuperating at Golden Sands Residential Home. This is where **L G** is settling in well and enjoys visits from family and friends. Church visitors have also met with **A M** who is being looked after well. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all. We have missed **H M** from our activities since the New Year as she has a painful knee which is restricting her movement. Our best wishes for a speedy improvement H and send you our loving thoughts. It is the month for falls as **M T** hurt her wrist in a fall in her garden. We hope you will soon be on the mend and feeling better M. Before Christmas we learned that **B J** had died. B spent many years washing all the dishes after Tuesday mornings lunches and was very reluctant to accept our thanks. Many of our fellowship succumbed to flu, colds and covid over the Christmas and New Year period; too many to mention individually. We hope you will all feel better soon and send our love and prayers for a healthy 2023. We also remember the housebound and all those unable to join us for worship, those unwell or worried about their family or friends. May we gain strength and courage from the God of hope, love and peace.

Alison

FAVOURITE HYMN: LO! HE COMES WITH CLOUDS DESCENDING

This hymn is most often sung in Advent, though it is actually about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and derives its title and content from the book of Revelation (see Ch.1 v.7).

The idea for the hymn and its first version was by John Cennick (1718-1755), the first Methodist lay-preacher, but was heavily revised by Charles Wesley for publication in 1758, then further revised by Martin Madan (1726-90), founder and chaplain of the Lock Hospital, Hyde Park Corner, London. In the version we use today, the first, second and fifth verses are by Wesley, the third and fourth by Cennick and the sixth a combination of them both.

The music for it, called 'Helmsley', was written by Thomas Olivers (1725-99), who was reputed to have based it on a tune that he heard whistled in the street, but that may have been because it bears some resemblance to a concert-room song, *'Guardian angels, now protect me'*.

Olivers was born in Montgomeryshire in Wales. He was only four years old when both his parents died. He had little or no education, lived a profligate youth, but eventually became a cobbler. On hearing one of George Whitefield's sermons he became an itinerant preacher, starting in Cornwall and then travelling the length and breadth of England and Wales, reputedly covering more than 100,000 miles in his lifetime. He became a good friend of John Wesley.

In the 19th century, the hymn was considered to be one of the 'Great Four Anglican Hymns'. In a survey done in 1885 it was found to be in 51 of the 52 hymn-books used by the Anglican Communion worldwide.

It was a favourite of Queen Victoria's. She once heard the hymn played to another tune but didn't like it and insisted that it should always be played to the tune 'Helmsley' in future.

C

WARM SPACES – BIDEFORD

In addition to our own Warm Space on Tuesdays which we advertised in Connexions in the Christmas issue, here is a list of Warm Spaces from Torridge District Council for Bideford and Buckland Brewer as of January 20th. There may be others which we have not heard about.

MONDAYS 12 NOON – 4PM

Bideford Baptist Church Mill St. Access at the Hill Garden Entrance
Warm room and hot drinks

TUESDAYS 10AM – 1PM Lavington Bridgeland St.

Hot and cold food and drinks

WEDNESDAYS 10AM - 12NOON

Buckland Brewer Methodist Church Coffee mornings

FRIDAYS 9.30AM – 11AM Bideford Library, The Quay

Warm room and hot drinks

FRIDAYS 11.30AM – 1.30PM St. Mary's Church Walk

Warm space and 3 course meal

2nd SATURDAY EVERY MONTH 10.30AM – 12.30PM

St. Mary's Church Walk

Warm space and hot drinks

SNOWDROP PLANTING DAY

Tinhay Retreats, Lifton, Devon, PL6 0EL
Home of Rob and Suzy

Join us on Saturday 4th February between 10.00am – 3.00pm

Help us to plant another 500 snowdrops within the grounds of Tinhay Retreats, as we develop our grounds for quiet prayer and reflection.

Come and plant them in loving memory of someone or as a symbol of hope for the future.

No charge, donations invited towards the cost of snowdrops and refreshments.

Any surplus will go to A Rocha, the conservation charity.

tinhayretreats.com/ 01566 784990



JUST A THOUGHT

On my way to the newsagents I pass a house that saddens me. The part that I can see appears clean and well-kept but it stands behind a tall hedge and a tightly - closed gate that suggests the owner has pulled up the drawbridge and withdrawn from the world.

What a lot of happy events the owner will miss – a new baby having its first airing on a sunny day, a group of children chatting excitedly on their way home from school, a neighbour popping his head around the gate to ask how we manage to have such a lovely display of roses.

If we keep ourselves too much to ourselves, we are in danger of missing many joyful moments. As the children's author Alison Uttley so aptly put it, "*The world is full of diamonds if we look for them.*"

from a magazine

THANK YOU

As you are aware, the North Devon Hospice was our chosen Christmas Appeal Charity for 2022. The sum of £145 was raised. The Elders then agreed to increase that to £200 taking £55 from Church funds.

It is hoped that a representative from the Hospice will be with us in March to accept our cheque.

Many thanks to all those who donated to this very worthy cause for your generosity.

J



LENT STUDY GROUP MEETINGS

It has been agreed that our Lent meetings will be shared with the Methodists. They will start on Wednesday March 1st and then each Wednesday through to end of March. Each meeting will be from 2pm – 3.30pm. Here are the details -

1st March at Lavington led by Rob

8th March at Northam Methodists led by Revd Rob Blackhall

15th March at Bideford Methodist

22nd March at Lavington

29th March at Bideford Methodist

ECO CHURCH NEWS

Muddiford URC has been awarded the Bronze Eco Church award, which recognises the steps that they had taken before Rob started as their Minister. Parts of their church hall building have double glazed windows and there are some parts with loft insulation to save energy. As the building is much smaller than many church premises, the actual energy use is very low. Like Lavington they are committed to using Fairtrade goods such as tea and coffee. Over the coming months, there will be more conscious efforts to engage with the local community and support eco projects in the Muddiford and Marwood area.

Rob

Fun Page

Letters of the Alphabet

All the answers start with the corresponding letter of the alphabet

- | | | |
|----|--|---------|
| A. | Land measure (4) | ACRE |
| B. | Book Collector (11) | B _____ |
| C. | Lizard (8) | C _____ |
| D. | Thin glazed earthenware (5) | D _____ |
| E. | Bird of Prey (5) | E _____ |
| F. | Short moral story (5) | F _____ |
| G. | Toothed wheel (4) | G _____ |
| H. | Wading bird (5) | H _____ |
| I. | Mark of gold (8) | I _____ |
| J. | Island jumper (6) | J _____ |
| K. | Martial art (4.3) | K _____ |
| L. | Surgical knife (6) | L _____ |
| M. | Indian corn (5) | M _____ |
| N. | Roman God (7) | N _____ |
| O. | 24 th letter Greek alphabet (5) | O _____ |
| P. | Pig like mammal (7) | P _____ |
| Q. | Mercury (11) | Q _____ |
| R. | Sturdily built (6) | R _____ |
| S. | Limbleless reptile (7) | S _____ |
| T. | White ant (7) | T _____ |
| U. | Man's overcoat (6) | U _____ |
| V. | Fabric (6) | V _____ |
| W. | Also known as Queen Anne's Lace (4.6) | W _____ |
| X. | Musical instrument (9) | X _____ |
| Y. | Loud cry (4) | Y _____ |
| Z. | Gemstone (6) | Z _____ |

Who's who at Lavington URC

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Minister

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Church & Hall Bookings

Revd Colin Biggs

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email: lavington.treasurer1@gmail.com

Enquiries for weddings and baptisms are welcomed.
Please contact Church & Hall Bookings Secretary above.

The March issue of *Connexions* is due out
on Sunday February 26th

Please give items for inclusion to Janet Palmer or send by email to
lavington.connexions@gmail.com

Before or at the latest – Sunday February 19th

Connexions is edited by Janet Palmer
and printed and assembled by Jenny and Ricky Cawsey