

CONNEXIONS

The magazine of

Lavington

United Reformed Church

Bideford

www.lavingtonurc.org

*The
Season
of
Lent*



MARCH 2023

50p

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MARCH DIARY

Fri	3 rd	2.00pm	World Day of Prayer –Baptist Church, Mill St
Sun.	5 th	11.00am	Family Worship & HC – Revd Colin Biggs
Sun	12 th	11.00am	Family Worship – The Minister
Sun.	19 th	11.00am	Mothering Sunday –Mrs Paula Littlewood
Wed.	22 nd	10.30am	Elders Meeting
Sun.	26 th	11.00am	Family Worship – Mrs Alison Biggs

WEEKLY ACTIVITY

Tuesdays	10am – 1pm	Coffee and lunches mornings and Warm Space
Wednesdays	2pm – 3.30pm	Lent Course see details page 3

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



DON'T FORGET TO PUT YOUR CLOCKS FORWARD 1 HOUR ON

SATURDAY EVENING MARCH 25th



Dear Friends,

In the church calendar, we are now in the season of Lent. The beginning of Lent is marked by Shrove Tuesday, which traditionally was a time when rich foods were used up before a period of restrictions. Often Christians have carried on this tradition by giving up chocolate or some other treat. But we can also look at this period as a time to 'take up something new', maybe just for a few weeks.

For anyone looking to take up a short Bible Study, we have a five week course this Lent, shared with our Methodist friends. This year's study is based on John's gospel and will be facilitated by URC and Methodist Ministers. These days there are many ways to enjoy Bible readings, from booklets with a 'thought for the day' through to apps which can be downloaded on your phone (such as Lectio 365). I'm going to try out one of these apps this Lent, I'll let you know how it goes!

You might want to get involved in a community group, such as the North Devon Foodbank, or the Men in Sheds project, or a local conservation group. You might want to join a walking group or a birdwatching group, there are a great number of wading birds to be seen in the estuary at this time of year. The cycle route through Bideford and across to Instow takes you along a great bird spotting pathway.

Other opportunities to volunteer are always available. At our recent Elders' meeting we noted that the Tuesday Cafe is in need of more volunteers to join the rota for serving tea/coffee or to help with taking the orders and serving the meals. Volunteers are not expected to be available every week, you can be on the rota once a fortnight or even once a month, please do speak to Jenny Cawsey if you are able to join the team.

Whether you are 'giving up something for Lent' or 'taking up something for Lent' may you know the presence of God, the guidance of God and the compassion of God in all your days!

Every blessing
Rob Weston
Minister



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT – February 27th - March 12th

Does Fairtrade Fortnight change every year?

While the line-up and dates may change year-to-year, at its heart the Fairtrade Fortnight message fundamentally stays the same: farmers and workers who grow our food – our coffee, tea, bananas, jams, honey, marmalades biscuits etc – need to be treated fairly and paid decently.

This Fairtrade Fortnight, join us in spreading a simple message: choose Fairtrade now and help save our favourite foods.

Did you know cocoa, bananas, tea and coffee could soon be much more difficult to find on our shelves?

Climate change is making crops like these harder and harder to grow. Combined with deeply unfair trade, communities growing these crops are being pushed to the brink but here is the good news:

More of us choosing Fairtrade means extra income, power and support for those communities as they work to build sustainable and prosperous futures.

So not only is choosing Fairtrade best for people and planet, it could help save everyday treats like chocolate, bananas and a hot cuppa!

What are the most popular Fairtrade products?

- Bananas. ...
- Chocolate. ...
- Coffee. ...
- Tea. ...
- Flowers. ...
- Cold drinks and juices. ...
- Clothing....
- Gold....

There are over 6,000 Fairtrade products from coffee and tea to flowers and gold, so when you shop, look for the **FAIRTRADE LOGO** shown at the top of this page.

Ed.

LENT STUDY GROUP

Again, this year we will share the Course with our Methodist friends from High St. Mostly they will be held on Wednesday afternoons starting on March 1st. However, the meeting on **March 14th is on a Tuesday**. Each meeting will be from 2pm – 3.30pm We will be using the York Course on St John's Gospel. Course Books will be available at a modest cost.

Here are the details –

1st March at Lavington led by Rob

8th March at Northam Methodist led by Revd Rob Blackall

14th March High St led by Revd Andrew Vidamour

22nd March at Lavington led by Rob

29th March at High St led by Andrew Vidamour

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.

Jenny

ETHICS

A neutral act with good and bad effects may be permissible if the bad is not intended. (*Dr John Fleming discussing the separation of the Siamese twins Mary and Jodie.*)

LOCAL ECO NEWS

A pilot seaweed farm is being established in Bideford with the help of funding from Devon County Council's Green Innovation Fund. The funding is helping [Algapelago Marine Ltd](#) to bring forward its scheme to create a seaweed farm and processing operation in Bideford Bay, with plans to scale up the farm each year following this pilot.

The company is working with academics from Plymouth Marine Laboratories, Portsmouth University and the Eden project to research the potential for the seaweed market in capturing carbon and improving coastal habitats. In addition to its benefit of absorbing carbon the seaweed crop can offer an array of uses, including animal feed, fertilisers, bioplastics and cosmetics – reducing the carbon footprint of these products, due to the low intensity of the cultivation process.

Humphrey Atkinson, Co-Founder of [Algapelago Marine Limited](#), said: "Algapelago Marine seaweed farms are thrilled to be receiving Devon County Council's funding and support to accelerate the development of our pilot seaweed farm in Bideford Bay. Devon County Council funding has helped to bring the seaweed farm with its bioremediation and carbon drawdown benefits from the drawing board to reality as well as giving investors confidence to back the company. We are excited to now scale up the company to bring local jobs and a new industry to the area in the shape of sustainable mariculture in support of the Devon Carbon Plan and its journey towards its Net Zero targets."

Glastonbury URC in Somerset is the latest church in the South Western Synod to receive the Bronze Eco Church award. This is really encouraging as we now have 41% of United Reformed Churches in the synod registered as participating in the scheme - and 50% of those have achieved an award of Bronze or higher. One church in Swindon was recently awarded an eco grant towards double glazing of the church and I've recently heard that the URC in Lynton has installed an air source heat pump to replace their oil fired boiler (I'll be making enquiries to learn more about this eco friendly initiative).

Rob



w/c 5th

Dear Lord, let us pray for all those affected by the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria; for the many thousands of dead and injured, those left homeless without shelter, food and proper clothing in freezing temperatures, for relief workers looking for bodies, dead or alive, amongst the rubble, for the help of doctors and nurses and for governments and charities who are sending in aid of one kind or another. Open our hearts and our pockets for these people, who are so desperate for help.0 and will be for many years to come.

w/c 12th

Dear Lord, let us not forget those areas of the world where wars continue almost unnoticed, but where hunger and famine follow in their wake; in the Yemen, Somalia and South Sudan, whose plight has been overshadowed by even worse scenarios, but where people's lives are worth just as much, especially the children who seem to suffer the most in these conflict zones.

w/c 19th

Today is Mothering Sunday when we think of our own mothers, whether living or now deceased, who brought us into the world and loved and cared for us in our early years and beyond. We think of mothers everywhere, especially those who for one reason or another live difficult lives, who have inadequate maternity facilities or who live in grinding poverty. We think of foster-mothers who give young children without parents, or who come from dysfunctional families, a loving home.

w/c 26th

Let us not forget those in our midst, in our own congregation, who are too old, infirmed or ill to be able to get out and about without help: those who are now living in residential or nursing homes and those who, simply for lack of transport, cannot get to church services or social events. May they be helped.

We ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Great Healer.
Amen.

Chris



Another month gone! The days and weeks come and go quicker and quicker and before you know it, it will be Christmas again. Here are the March birthdays – not one but 2 ladies have significant birthdays this month.

M T	5 th (80 th)
J C	9 th (70 th)
H M	9 th
P H	10 th
L W	16 th

Congratulations to you both on your milestone birthdays, M and J! If you say you are 80 and 70 respectively, who am I to argue with you! Your Lavington friends send love to you all on your own special day and happy birthday wishes. *Ed.*



There is only one wedding anniversary that I know of this month and is that of M and V H who will be celebrating their 64th on 14th. Love and congratulations to you both from all your friends at Lavington. Have a happy day.

Ed.

THANK YOU!

I would like to thank my Lavington friends for the lovely birthday cards I received on the occasion of my 90th birthday. Also, for the beautiful flowers delivered to me by Liz. Your kind thoughts and good wishes are very much appreciated.

May you have God's richest blessings.

P C

CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS

It was doubtful if L and C W would be well enough to sing carols from their doorstep on Christmas Eve again last year due to poor health. However they did do it and managed to raise £60 for the Devon Air Ambulance. *Ed.*

A LENTEN SACRIFICE

HE SAVED OTHERS; HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE

When the pastor introduced the visiting speaker, an elderly man walked to the pulpit and told this story:

A father, his son, and his son's friend were sailing off the pacific coast when a storm overturned their boat sweeping all of them into the ocean. Grabbing a rescue line, in a split second the father had to make the most excruciating decision of his life – which boy to throw the other end to and which one to sacrifice. He knew his son had accepted Christ and his friend had not. Anguished, the father yelled, *"I love you son"* and threw the rope to his son's friend.

By the time that he had pulled the boy back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the waves. His body was never recovered. The father knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus and couldn't bear the thought of the friend facing eternity without Christ.

At the end of the service a teenage boy approached the old man and said, *"that's a nice story, but what father in his right mind would sacrifice his son's life in the hope that the other boy would become a Christian?"* the old preacher replied *You've got a point, it's not realistic. But I'm standing here today to tell you that story gives me a glimpse into what it must have been like for God to sacrifice His only son for us. You see.....I was that father, and your pastor was my son's friend."*

The Pharisees who watched Christ die said, *"He saved others; himself he cannot save."* And they were right; He couldn't do both, so He chose to save you. Today will you accept His offer of salvation?

From a magazine



Sunset over the Galilee

MARCH ROTAS

MINISTRY of FLOWERS

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

5th	Mrs H V
12th	Mrs P C
19th	The B Sisters
26th	Mrs P F / Mrs W F

SIDESMAN DUTIES

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

VESTRY DUTY

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

COMMUNION

Preparation	5th	Mrs H M / Mrs E B
Servers		Mrs A B / Mrs J P

READERS

5th	Mrs A B
12th	Mrs J C
19th	Mrs H M
26th	Revd C B

OFFERTORY STEWARDS: Mrs A B / Mrs L C

TUESDAY CAFÉ ROTA

	KITCHEN	REFRESHMENTS	COFFEE/TEAS
7th	J D A B	J S J C	L C H M
14th	J D S H	J P J C	A B J S
21st	J D L B	J S J C	J P M T
28th	A B J S	J P H V	L C H M

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CAN YOU HELP?

As you know, our weekly Tuesday Café is a popular time for both our own congregation and visitors. It is also a vital form of income for the Church. It couldn't run, however, without the invaluable help from a dedicated band of volunteers for which we are extremely grateful. We do, however, for various reasons, now find ourselves in a position where we are in need of some additional people to help on the Coffees/Teas and Refreshment stall rotas.

If there is anyone who can help us, I would be very grateful if you would speak to me – even if you can only help once a month, it would be good. Duty hours are 10am to 1pm. Many thanks.

Jenny

THANK YOU!

Thank you to G M and L W for their generous contributions to the Flower Fund which is used to provide flowers in the church whenever no-one has offered to do so on a particular date.

Jill

NEWS OF THE LAVINGTON FAMILY

We were delighted to hear that **P C** enjoyed her 90th birthday with many friends visiting and helping her to celebrate her special day. **V P** is now in a care home in T where she has recovered from covid and is getting some rehab following surgery to repair her broken hip. We hope you will soon be more mobile V and send you our love and prayers. We know that **P F** is still convalescing at G S Care Home following her recent surgery and hope she will soon be able to go home. **P and M J's** son T has recently needed to have surgery. His gall bladder was successfully removed and he is recovering well. Thankfully many of our fellowship are keeping well at the moment. We miss all those who cannot attend worship or fellowship because they are housebound, in residential care, anxious or worried about their own health or that of family and friends. We send you our loving thoughts and prayers. Together may we gain strength and courage from the God of hope, love and peace.

Alison

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WARM WELCOME

It won't be long before we remove the big banner on our noticeboard advertising a 'Warm Welcome' space. This is not because we will stop offering a warm welcome, that will always continue! but simply that the weather is warming up, so there shouldn't be the same need for people to find somewhere to warm up. I suspect that we might want to put the banner outside again from October when the temperature drops once again.

On Fridays, St Mary's Church will continue to offer a free three course meal for those who live alone or feel isolated, those who have hit hard times, or are unemployed or homeless, from 11.30am- 1.30pm. These meals are for anyone; you don't need to be homeless in order to qualify, the warm welcome is for everyone.

Rob

FAVOURITE HYMN: HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! LORD GOD ALMIGHTY

Alfred, Lord Tennyson considered this hymn to be the finest one written in the English language, probably because of its simplicity of diction and clear imagery. It was intended to be sung on Trinity Sunday but can be sung on any day of the year.

Its author is Reginald Heber (1783-1826). He was born into a wealthy aristocratic family in the village of Malpas in Cheshire, where his father was rector and he was educated at nearby Whitchurch Grammar School and Brasenose College, Oxford and won the University prize for Latin verse in three successive years. He then went on an extensive Grand Tour of Europe. Afterwards, he was ordained and being a modest man, chose to become rector of a small church in Hodnet, Shropshire. After spending 16 years there, he was then made Bishop of Calcutta, with responsibility for missions in Ceylon and Australia as well as India, where he went to live. However, one day in his third year, after preaching on a hot day in Trichinopoly, he went for a swim in a local swimming pool to cool down, had a stroke and died, at the early age of 42.

After his death, his widow discovered that he had written a number of hymns - 57 in all, at least one for each Sunday of the year, for use in the little church at Hodnet, but the Church of England did not allow the singing of hymns in services at the time they were written, so they were never sung or published; a situation which his widow rectified after his death. The most famous of these hymns was Holy! Holy! Holy! but several others remain in the hymn-books to this day.

The hymn is based on Isaiah's vision of God in the Temple Isaiah 6; 1-5 and John's vision in Revelation 4:2-11 and tells of how all creation sings the praises of the eternal triune God, *'Which were and art, and ever more shall be'*. Note that the rhyme at the end of each line remains the same throughout the hymn.

The tune for the hymn was written by Rev. John Bacchus Dykes, whom we have met before and is called 'Nicaea' because it was at the Council of Nicaea in 325 that the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated.

It is a magnificent tune and is arguably Dykes' best,

There are few hymn books which do not include this hymn.

Chris

PREMISES NEWS

Devon Glass have made some progress with the replacement windows, with the installation of the new window and frame for the Minister's vestry. The room is noticeably warmer already and the new frame should last for many years. I suspect the previous one had been there for around 100 years.

We are now waiting for the triangular window frame to replace the plastic sheeting that is currently forming part of the roof to the hall. By replacing this with glass we are being more eco friendly and the glass should last much longer than the polycarbonate sheeting that was previously installed. I'm also hoping that when it rains we will no longer be deafened by the pounding of the raindrops on the roof!

The proposed work on the exterior of the church (high level coping stone, barge boards and replacement of cement render) has been approved by the Synod's Property Committee and a 10% grant awarded. We have also been granted a 50% grant towards the loop system in the hall.

Rob

'IF' FOR A CHRISTIAN

If you can stand before false accusations,
And lift your head in grace and face the lies;
If you can join in another's celebrations,
While your life falls in ruins before your eyes;
If you can grieve with others who are grieving,
Yet find in Christ a peace beyond all griefs;
If you can love those who are unbelieving,
And yet stand firm and sure on your beliefs;
If you can lose all wealth and earthly treasures,
And count it as the loss of so much dust;
If you can scorn success by mortal measure,
Striving for rewards that cannot rust;
If you can put your hand to Christian labour,
Be buried with Christ, your sins all put to end;
If every day you can love your neighbour,
Then you will receive the crown of life, my friend. ANON

TENEBRAE SERVICE

Please join with us when we have our Holy Week activities.

On Maundy Thursday, April 6th at 6.00pm, Revd Colin will conduct a Tenebrae Communion Service at Lavington and we have invited our friends from the local Methodist Churches to join with us.



GOOD FRIDAY – APRIL 7TH WALK of WITNESS

The Walk will start at Pollyfield, East the Water at 9.30am.

The Walk will take the following route and at each stop, there will be a reading and prayer led by the church group. Readings will be provided and a verse of a hymn may be sung. I include the readings at each stop.

9.30am - Pollyfield - Isaiah 53: v 1-9

10.15am Honestone Street Car Park – Luke 23: 13-17

10.35am Sacred Heart – Luke 23: 18-25

10.50am Lavington – Luke 23: 26-31

11.00am Baptist Church – Luke 23: 32-38

11.15am Jubilee Square – Luke 23: 39-43

11.30am High St Corner – Luke 23: 44-49

11.45am St Mary's for a short Service followed by coffee / tea and hot cross buns.

Our Easter Day Service will be at 11.00am and conducted by our Minister, Rob. It will include Holy Communion.

Please remember to bring a couple of flowers with you to decorate the empty cross. *Ed.*



SAN DAMIANO

San Damiano – Italian for Saint Damian - is a small church near Assisi in Italy which was originally occupied by the Poor Claires, the Sister Order of the Franciscans. It is a church with a monastery and dates back to the 12th century.

St. Francis was walking in the countryside nearby when he felt compelled to enter the church and knelt before the Crucifix in prayer. Whilst doing so, he heard Jesus say to him, “Francis, go and repair my church, which, as you see, is all in ruins.” Astonished, Francis looked around and noted that the church was indeed in need of some repair, so he set about renovating the church walls. Only at some time later did he realise that Jesus was referring to the Church as a whole and its total reformation, which thus became his mission for life.

Sal Solo was a pop singer who had friends who had visited San Damiano and found the visit to the church very moving, so he himself decided to make a similar pilgrimage. He entered the church, found people praying there and was so struck by the air of peace and tranquillity he encountered both there and in the surrounding countryside that he had what amounted to a religious experience. He decided at that point to revert to his childhood religion.

In 1984, he wrote the beautiful song ‘San Damiano (Heart and Soul)’, which reached number 15 in the pop charts. In 1987, he became active in the youth ministry of the Roman Catholic Church in England and in 1999, he moved to Chicago where he now works with teenagers and in other parts of the world, speaking on matters of faith and justice and appearing at youth retreats, whilst still giving concerts and writing new songs.

The video that accompanied ‘San Damiano’ in 1984 was the debut appearance of ‘Libera’, the boys’ choir, which is still going strong nearly forty years later. This year 2023, they have announced two tours abroad to the Republic of Korea and Japan.

Chris

THE CHARITY SHOP

Oh, what a wonderful shop to browse,
To try on trousers, shirt or blouse.
See books and second-hand magazines
cutlery, crockery, old sewing machines.

Ties for the neck and pictures for walls,
football and rugger shirts, bats and balls
candlesticks, dishes, saucepans and mugs
quite a selection of fancy jugs.

Underwear, outerwear, jackets and macs
old-fashioned ornaments, some with cracks,
pillowslips, sheets and blankets galore.....
all there to gather cash for the poor.

I gaze and I wonder what tales things could tell,
like this in the corner, a little brass bell:
I picture a maid in a big fine old house
with everything there as quiet as a mouse.
Till she rings it with venom and giggles with glee
as she summons His Lordship and Lady to see

I look at the sheets lying dull in the light,
and see them all smooth and crisp snowy white.
Did these blankets cover a four-poster bed
or these pillowslips prop up a soft curly head?

There's a story behind everything they sell
happiness, tragedy, who can tell?
I simply can't pass one, I just have to shop
to browse and think back in The Charity Shop!

K R Hobbs

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e-mail goodliving@btinternet.com

EASTER TIME

Easter time is here again, but many do not know
what this time really means, or what happened long ago.
Foiled eggs and chocolate treats, are masking the good news,
we get to take its holidays, but its message we may lose.

How many children know the truth, or parents teach the word,
the story of Jesus as a man, who came to save the world.
Our sins he bore upon the cross, to save our souls from hell,
he rose from death to help mankind, spread words of God to tell.

Let our hearts be filled with joy, as its meaning understood,
to be with God for evermore, in presence of such good.
Our fleeting life upon this world, is just a moment past,
but taking God's wondrous gift, it won't be our last.

From a magazine



Fun Page

All the answers contain a colour - e.g. Parking restrictions = yellow lines

1. Flag of the Merchant Navy
2. Variety of plum
3. Stocks and shares of high price
4. Junior branch of the Girl Guides
5. Awarded when wounded in battle
6. An eating apple
7. A sign of cowardice
8. Undesirable in the family
9. Inexperienced
10. They appear after too much drink
11. A tropical infectious disease
12. A type of pontoon
13. Laid out for visitors
14. An attempt to conceal or gloss over
15. The male favourite
16. They race around a track
17. AgNO₃
18. Afternoon snack
19. A camp entertainer
20. An area of parks and farmland
21. A possession no longer required
22. Thick liquid from cane sugar juice
23. Noble or aristocratic descent
24. Part of the industrial West Midlands
25. Basis for calculating time

Answers to February Fun

A. Acre B. Bibliophile C. Chamaeleon D. Delft E. Eagle F. Fable G. Gear
H. Hallmark I. Ibis J. Jersey K. Kung -fu / Karate L. Lancet M. Maize
N. Neptune O. Omega P. Peccary Q. Quicksilver R. Robust S. Snake
T. Termite U. Ulster V. Velvet W. Wild Carrot plant X. Xylophone Z. Zircon

Error: Answers to H and I are reversed. Sorry!

Who's who at Lavington URC

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

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

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

Before or at the latest – **Sunday March 19th**

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