

THE OPEN DOOR

The Magazine of the Lymington United Reformed Church



Part of the January lunch spread

**FEBRUARY /
MARCH 2026**

Our Open Door Vision Statement.....

"Our vision is to be a church with an Open Door for all people to come in and for us to reach out, responding to the needs of the community and spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ."

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Firstly, may I begin by wishing you and your families a joyful, bright and happy New Year!

I recently reviewed one of my services as the lectionary readings come round every three years and I wanted to see what I had said about the same readings last time I had preached on them with one of my other churches.

The theme of the service was about reflecting on the past year, and what the year ahead might look like for us if we keep God at the centre of all that we are doing. It was optimistic and hopeful, encouraging the congregation to make the most of the work that had been happening that was starting to reap rewards. It was positive, something to encourage us all as we shared in the expectation of what God might be offering to us in that place at that time.

The service was actually two cycles ago in the lectionary calendar, which was six years ago – it was in January 2020, and in case you have forgotten, about two months later in March the whole country locked down and all those things we had put energy and effort into dissolved overnight.

It was difficult to see where God was in the events around Covid – of course we recognise that there was a human element to it, certainly in how we responded to it and the decisions made to keep everyone safe – but all that work seemed wasted, the impact on what it might bring to us as a church, shattered.

But looking back I wonder if the focus was in the wrong place? What about all those lives we had touched leading up to that? Perhaps the exposure to our faith gave those people who were starting to be part of our church a bit more strength through those times? Maybe they recalled acts of faith and were doing more for others as a result?

So even though they did not come back after lockdown, which made us feel we were missing out, maybe they were not missing out – perhaps the few moments of connection with us were what was needed to change their lives.

We can all take encouragement from this. When we focus out mission and outreach on what it gives to others – leaving God to take care of the rest – we can look back and feel positive about what we achieve. When we focus in on what it brings us – and leave ourselves to take care of the rest – then this is when we lose sight of God and can be disappointed.

So as we head into 2026, remembering we don't know

what events might take place over this year, lets put God at the centre. Let's see where God is around us, and encourage God to be part of our community's lives through all that we do.

Many Blessings,

Paul

SECRETARY'S BITS AND PIECES FOR FEBRUARY/ MARCH.

A very belated 'Happy New Year'. Christmas and the New Year are probably a long and distant memory now! February possibly isn't one of our favourite months, but it is short and daylight hours are starting to increase. The daffodils are definitely starting to flower – spring is on its way.

Paul is re-starting his series of bible studies that some of us attended in the autumn. The dates for the next series are February 10th and 24th and March 10th and 24th. These are on a Tuesday morning at 10.00 in the sanctuary and last for just an hour.

Easter is much earlier this year than last and Lent commences on Wednesday February 18th. It is intended to hold the CTLP service for Good Friday, April 3rd, on our forecourt, but this will obviously be weather permitting.

There are several people unfortunately standing down from the roles they have held in the Church for many years. Jack Gordon and Gerry Copperi are both standing down from the Finance and Property committee. For those who don't know, they both project managed the rebuilding of the hall and refurbishment and renovation of the Church back in 2009 and have continued ever since, Jack with his knowledge of all things to do with the building and Gerry with the AV system. We thank them very much for their years of service Their knowledge and experience will be hard to replace.

Shelagh Richardson has had to sadly give up her flower ministry responsibilities, due to failing health. We thank her very much for her years of organising the flower provision and for her talent in floral arrangement. However, Janet Taylor has kindly offered to take over from Shelagh to enable the flower ministry to continue. A big thank you to both of them.

Our Centre Manager, Andrew Collins is also standing down – he has decided to retire. Andrew will leave us at the end of March and when he leaves, he will have been with us for exactly seven years. He has seen us through thick and thin, including the pandemic, keeping the building running and latterly the finance. His expertise and knowledge will be greatly missed. His wife, Becca, is also retiring and we wish them a long and happy retirement. They have no plans to move from the area and he has promised to pop into the ODC for coffee and a slice of lemon drizzle!

Don't forget the United Warblers meet fortnightly on a Monday at 10.00 in the hall. If you feel you have no particular talent for singing but love to sing, do go along. You'll get a really warm welcome. Likewise, the prayer group – we meet every Wednesday at 9.15 in the sanctuary. Come along for a quiet time, away from the problems of daily life.

And finally, we also have our men's group MerriMENT, that meets regularly for all sorts of meals! It's a great place to go for company, fun and food. If you've never joined them and would love to go along, please contact Pete Midd on 07916 270934.

And finally, don't forget the clocks go forward by one hour, to British Summer Time, at 1.00am on Sunday 29th March.

A big 'thank you' to everyone for keeping our Church going.

Margaret

FELLOWSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

The Fellowship and Fundraising group are hoping to host a Talent Show alongside their Spring lunch on March 1st. If you have a talent, hidden or otherwise, and feel able to help entertain us, along with others, after our lunch, please see Gill or phone her. It can be a reading, a song, a magic act - or anything!

LYMINGTON URC DIARY

Free Wi Fi connection to the internet available in the Open Door Café, balcony, main hall and cottage meeting room areas. Just ask for the required passwords!

**CLOSING DATE FOR APRIL/MAY 'OPEN DOOR':
19th MAY 2026**

COFFEE MORNINGS:

The Open Door Café, hopefully every morning except Thursday, from 10 a.m. (See poster below)

WORSHIP:

Note: The Prayer Group meets on Wednesday at 9.15 a.m. at Church.

FEBRUARY

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------|---|
| 1 st : | 10.30 a.m. | Worship including communion
led by the Worship Group |
| 8 th : | 10.30 a.m. | Worship led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor |
| 15 th : | 10.30 a.m. | Worship led by Mr Gerwyn Davies |
| 22 nd : | 10.30 a.m. | Worship led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor |

MARCH

- 1st: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by the Worship Group
- 8th: 10.30 a.m. Worship including communion
led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor
- 15th: 10.30 a.m. Worship for Mothering Sunday
led by Rev'd David Newman
- 22nd: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Mrs Linda Lee
- 29th: 10.30 a.m. Worship for Palm Sunday
led by Mrs Christine Brown

NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION (NCI) – “Eyes Along The Coast”.

Deserving Recognition of our 2025 Achievements.

National Coastwatch is a charity staffed and managed by volunteers whose mission is to help save lives at sea and around the UK coastline. If you, a family member or friend uses the coastal waters or the shoreline – maybe kayaking, paddle boarding, fishing, boating or even walking on our beautiful but sometimes treacherous coastline – we are watching and keeping you safe.

National Coastwatch is a key part of UK Search and Rescue. We work alongside HM Coastguard, the RNLI, other

Independent Lifeboats and the 'blue-light' emergency services to assist in the protection and saving of life at sea and along the coastline of England and Wales.

From the 01/01/25 to the 31/10/25, the National Coastwatch have initiated or supported 862 incidents across our 60 active stations, an increase of 117 or 16% on the same time last year. Through our diligence and support so far this year we have initiated or assisted in the rescue of 284 persons and assisted 547 others. That's a total of 831 people who have benefited from our help and vigilance with 353 incidents requiring the launching of a lifeboat.

The "Top Five" incidents to date involved issues with

1. Yachts.
2. Tidal Cut-Offs.
3. Paddle Boarders.
4. Vulnerable Persons.
5. Missing Persons.

The NCI as a charity has also been running a Water Safety campaign over the last two years which includes visits to local beaches, seaside events, etc. and giving safety advice.

Back in July 2024 the NCI Board of Trustees agreed that an award "Certificate of Merit" should be made to Watchkeepers who through their actions helped to not just rescue but to save a life or lives. Since its creation in July 2024 four awards have been made to 8 NCI Watchkeepers.



In the specific area of South Coast Needles, which includes the New Forest NCI Stations based at Calshot Tower QAVS (Calshot Spit) & Stone Point (Lepe Country Park);

Persons Assisted = 122

Persons Rescued Total = 44

A total of 166!

Helena Carr

THE MINISTRY of FLOWERS

From Congregational days the present.

The ministry of flowers has always been a very important part of our Church family life.

It began some 80 years ago when a small group of young mums with children in pushchairs began arranging flowers for

Sunday Worship. Not only did they begin the flower ministry, they also started the Saturday coffee mornings, in an effort to help the Church funds. They worked in a very small dark kitchen and served cups of tea on a small serving hatch half way up the wall, where, in the hall the thirsty shoppers would lift them down and find a chair to sit on.

If the ladies made £3 they were very pleased, it was all in a good cause! I feel blessed to have known three of these ladies.

Our kitchen is now the third edition, without steps down from the hall and is a modern airy place to boil the kettle. (And much more!)

Throughout the years the flower ministry flourished, the flower girls giving bunches away after Church, remembering birthdays, and special occasions, Thankyou flowers, well done flowers and feel better soon flowers etc.

In 1993 when my husband Don and I joined the Church membership, I became one of those flower ladies, under the watchful eye of Maureen Kerr, the then current leader, who encouraged and put me right many times.

Church Festivals brought the whole team together and the five of us dressed the Church appropriately, I remember it as a truly joyful time. I served with Maureen for ten years, and with retirement came ill health and she stepped down, leaving me to carry on, now with six arrangers, all amateur but with skill and dedication.

Our Church congregation grew, and with that the need for flowers increased, with two full height pedestals each week, giving 5-6 bunches of flowers.

I imagined that I would be arranging church flowers for ever, but when my husband passed away, unexpectedly, I needed to step back from several responsibilities within Church and the reins were passed to one of the other arrangers.

I am now very fortunate and honoured to take on the flower Ministry once again and will, with the generosity of the Church Family be able to give 2-3 bunches every Sunday, from just the one pedestal of flowers.

I am more than happy to arrange flowers for you, please put your name on the calendar, let me know the colours you would like, and I will be glad to buy them and arrange them for you. The small amount of foliage I will need I can obtain from home, or the Church garden.

If you prefer to arrange them yourself, please do, but I must ask that in order to give 2-3 bunches each week, we would need to spend the very minimum of £10.

My aim is to give every lady in the church at least one bunch of flowers a year.

With every blessing.
Janet Taylor

WORSHIP GROUP

Christmas was coming along fast, the whole year seemed to have gone by in a blur, and we hadn't managed to meet socially since Pete arrived back from Australia! We meet for practice on the first Saturday of every month to prepare for worship the following day during the morning service.

However, these practice sessions are busy and there isn't time for too much frivolity, although usually there's often more frivolity than serious practice!! So the Worship Group decided there was an urgent need for a party! Consequently, we all trudged wearily along to The Sail Inn on Wednesday 17th December for our Christmas social.



In amongst the laughter and stimulating conversation, which on some rare occasions was quite sensible, there was a serious element to the event. This took the form of an Awards and Presentation Ceremony in several categories:

The ‘I’ll Try Anything Award’ – awarded to Gill Wiseman. For acquiring a new guitar in the hope that it will come with more correct chords and notes. It does!!

The ‘Give Everything’ Award – Awarded to Chris Brown. For despite having significant health issues, continually strives to give every last breath in order to complete a section... or bar.....and still sounds really good.

The ‘Sense of urgency’ Award. – Awarded to Elaine Turberville. As she is always in a hurry to get to practice sessions and gigs.....and to get to the end of a piece!!

The ‘Most Loyal Supporter’ Award – Awarded to Steve Turberville, as he attends every time that Elaine plays ... and films her!

The ‘Most Grateful Person’ Award – Awarded to John Wiseman. For showing immense gratitude when Gill starts practicing as it provides motivation to force him out in the garden.

The ‘Most Practical Person’ Award – Graham Brown, as he takes the dog out when Chris practices!

The ‘Most Shocked Person’ Award – Awarded to Carol Fitzpatrick, who is still coming to terms with what she’s let herself in for!!

The ‘Best Female Vocalist’ Award – Awarded to Margaret Clark, because her enthusiasm and sense of enjoyment is fantastic, and she’s also brilliant. Could be strong competition next year for this award.

The ‘Best is Dave Best’ Award – Awarded to Andrea. For running the café and ensuring there are sufficient supplies for the Group after practice, and for running the FUNd Raising Group and ensuring we have additional gigs and no spare time to get bored!

The ‘Best Male Vocalist’ Award – To Dave. For being the only man in the Group ... and thriving on it!

The ‘Most Deluded Person’ Award – Awarded to Tony Clark, as he always tells Margaret that we sound quite good after listening to us on YouTube!

The ‘Best Newcomer’ Award – Awarded to Bridget. An answer to prayer for at last bringing some musicianship and decorum to the Group, and providing much needed competition for the ‘Most Sensible person’ Award. The ‘Most Sensible Person’ Award has never so far been awarded as there have never been any nominees!

The ‘Person most likely to be in for a treat in 2026’ Award

– Margot, as she enthusiastically gets herself embroiled into the Lymington URC church family with Bridget.

The ‘Nicest Person’ Award – There was strong competition for this. There were 14 nominations for this award, but there can only be one winner. And the winner is everyone – because you are all really nice people, most of the time. Thank you for the fun, friendship and fellowship that we’ve enjoyed together.

A good time was had by all and everyone left the pub really quickly leaving Pete and landlady Sue to sort out the bill!! We are all looking forward positively to future events in 2026 as the Group evolves.

However before next year, our next ‘gig’ was the Candlelight Carol Service on Sunday 21st December 2025. This too, was a really good and meaningful service depicting the true meaning of Christmas at a frenetic and busy time of year!

From Pete Middleton



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

It's time once more to turn the page
To see what lies ahead;
We make our peace with yesterday
And put the past to bed.

Nothing's quite as sure as change;
We'll take things as they flow,
Trusting in a greater plan
That isn't ours to know.

The future is a mystery,
Its story yet untold,
But the present is a gift to share,
Worth more than any gold.

Laura Tapper,
Reproduced from Quiet Thoughts, Winter 25/26

Fancy a cuppa and a chat?



Lymington United Reformed Church

"God's Open Door at the Centre of the Community"

Our Open Door Café is open
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Fridays
(Closed Thursday)
10am to 12noon



Lymington United Reformed Church,
High Street, Lymington, SO41 9AG.
01590 676306 or www.lymurc.org.uk

Design Donated by Renouf Design
www.renoufdesign.co.uk

What's been happening?



Over thirty of us came together after the morning service on Sunday 4th January, to celebrate the start of the new year. We enjoyed a marvellous buffet of ham, quiches, salads and jacket potatoes followed by berry meringues as well as tea, coffee and chocolates!

After dinner, we were entertained with music, courtesy of Pete and Elaine before Pete led some singing. What a fabulous time!



What better way to end our time of fellowship and to celebrate a new year, than to dance the Hokey Cokey and to end with Auld Lang Syne? Looking forward to a fabulous 2026!



We're holding a continuous tabletop sale in the Open-Door Cafe, to raise money for church funds. There are some lovely bargains to be had and most items are £1-£3. The sale operates while Café is open, weekdays and Saturday mornings. Why not pop in and have a look? If you have any small, good quality items we can sell, please speak to one of the Fundraising Team.



We need your used paperbacks! Our church offers used paperbacks for sale at 50p each. Many church members and visitors who use the premises during the week love to pick up a book or two from our shelves, but our stock is running very low, so why not have a clear out and bring unwanted books to church? Just leave them in the Open-Door Cafe or give them to Dave Best.

FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY

Join us for a delicious cottage pie lunch followed by ice-cream dessert and coffee to finish

£10 per person

Vegetarian/ gluten free options, please request in advance



Sign up on the list in the hall or let us know you are coming

Sunday 1st March



ROTAS FOR FEBRUARY

COMMUNION SUNDAY: 1st

COMMUNION ELDERS: Margaret and John

DUTY ELDER

1st Dave Best
8th Margaret Clark
15th David Bywater
22nd Chris Brown

READING IN CHURCH

Andrea Best
Margaret Clark
Ken Evans
Pat Weaver

STEWARDS

1st Anne Simmons
8th Gill Wiseman
15th Peter Middleton
22nd Anne Gaines

SOUND SYSTEM

DW/MC
DB/GC
WD/MC
DW/MC

ROTAS FOR MARCH

COMMUNION SUNDAY: 8th

COMMUNION ELDERS: David and Dave

DUTY ELDER

1st John Wiseman
8th Dave Best
15th Margaret Clark
22nd David Bywater
29th Chris Brown

READING IN CHURCH

Dave Best
John Wiseman
David Bywater
Judith Baker
Wyn Davies

STEWARDS

1st Judith Baker
8th Lizbeth Eason
15th Janice Perkins
22nd Kate Noon
29th Trish Hopkins

SOUND SYSTEM

DB/GC
WD/MC
DW/MC
DB/GC
WD/MC

Whilst every care is taken to ensure information within the advertisements and posters on display in the magazine is accurate, Lymington URC does not accept any liability to any party for any errors or omissions. Lymington URC does not officially endorse the advertising material included on any external organisations' adverts/posters.

If you wish to advertise in The Open Door magazine (6 issues per year), please contact the Lymington URC for more details. Competitive rates, both mono and colour adverts accommodated in quarter, half and full page sizes!"

Photography & Design
www.renoufdesign.co.uk
01590 678912
Wedding Photography from £900 with album and online gallery
Free portrait, Engagement, Baby and product photo shoots,
 bespoke web site, business cards, invitations, brochures...

Photography & Design
www.renoufdesign.co.uk
01590 678912
Wedding Photography from £200 with album and online gallery
Free portrait, Engagement, Baby and product photo shoots,
 bespoke web site, business cards, invitations, brochures...

Photography & Design
www.renoufdesign.co.uk
01590 678912
Wedding Photography from £200 with album and online gallery
Free portrait, Engagement, Baby and product photo shoots,
 bespoke web site, business cards, invitations, brochures...

options,
ce

the list in the hall or let us know v

£10 per person
Vegetarian/ gluten free
please request in advance

The United Reformed Church
Sign up on



Please order online using the URC Bookshop's new easy-to-use website www.urcshop.co.uk or by calling 020 7916 8629.



Jubilee Scarf - By popular demand from scarf wearers and those wanting fabric for other purposes, a lightweight polyester scarf measuring 2m x 80cm in the new anniversary blue and multi-coloured fish design. £7.99 +p&p.

A pair of jubilee socks, designed by Holy Socks. Each pair comes with details about the URC and a reflection on Faith, Hope and Love by Holy Socks founder Margaret Wyllie. Available in two sizes, 4-7 and 6-11. £5.95 +p&p.

(Other 'Jubilee' items available)





TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

PLEASE NOTE: This magazine is printed on paper from renewable sources out of our concern for the environment.

CONTACT DETAILS

Minister: Rev'd Paul O'Connor
e-mail: revpauloconnor@yahoo.com

Church Secretary: Margaret Clark. Tel 01590 676306
e-mail: secretaryurclym@btinternet.com

Magazine Editor: Wyn Davies. Tel 01425 616384
e-mail: WynBDavies@sky.com

Church web site: <http://www.lymurc.org.uk/>
Tel 01590 676306
e-mail: adminurclym@btinternet.com

Other web sites that list the church:

<http://www.joinmychurch.com>
<http://www.findachurch.co.uk>
<http://www.searchchurch.co.uk>

Centre Manager: Andrew Collins.
adminurclym@btinternet.com

Basics Bank web site:
<http://www.basicsbank.org.uk/>
Tel 01590 610008
E. admin@basicsbank.org.uk

Charity No: 115017