

# **THE OPEN DOOR**

## **The Magazine of the Lymington United Reformed Church**



**Keyhaven Marshes**

**APRIL/  
MAY 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,

As we enter the season of Easter, there are some obvious things that I could reflect on in my letter to you. Good Friday and Easter Day itself spring to mind, the change in the weather which seems to tease us with a few better days before becoming cold and rainy again, or perhaps a reflection on the outcome of the Lent Course.

However, I do like to try and spot something different, that maybe I haven't spotted before, and maybe you haven't either.

At High Cross, we are fortunate to have a connection with our local primary school, Somerford, and three times a year they join us for a service of celebration at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. This year I looked back over the previous Easter services we held and realised that covering the main Easter story was too obvious for them. They always knew the answers to questions about Easter because the school does a great job of explaining this in RE (alongside other faith festivals of course), and only the week before the service, the Open the Book team shared the story of Easter morning with them.

Last year as the school service was very early due to the

timing of the holidays, I explored the meaning of Lent (with a refresher on Easter of course!) and this year wanted to share something they may not have learnt much about.

I chose to share with them the story of the Last Supper. For us it might seem obvious how important it is as of course it is the basis of Communion, but I wonder if we skim over it a bit with all the other services we share at Easter time. I know that we celebrate Maundy Thursday in our churches, but do we really reflect on the meaning or what that event looked like for the disciples?

I remember some feedback as a student from a participant at a service prepared, and they were disappointed that it was too chatty at the beginning, expecting a sombre service reflecting Jesus' time in Gethsemane and His arrest. I recall explaining that actually the Passover celebrations would have been buzzing with excitement, the disciples looking forward to seeing what Jesus would do in celebration of one of the key events in their story, before the mood changed as betrayal, broken bodies and the blood of a new covenant was shared. Perhaps the worship reflected this too – and the mood change as we realised the reality of the event helped us to be disciples too.

So, as we reflect on Easter this year, what will surprise you? Perhaps you could try out one of our Maundy Thursday services if you have not before? Or maybe as

you take in all that happens over Good Friday and into Easter morning, look for something you have not realised before?

After all, Jesus was all about flipping things on their head, and surprising the disciples – and the resurrection was of course the biggest surprise of all!

Many Blessings,

Paul

## **SECRETARY'S BITS AND PIECES FOR APRIL/MAY.**

As I write this, we've just come to the end of a period of beautiful sunny weather, after one of the wettest starts to the year on record. It's April already and we're now a quarter of the way through 2026!

Easter is our main focus this month. Our Palm Sunday service on March 29th will be led by Mrs Chris Brown. On Maundy Thursday, April 2nd at 7.00 pm we will come for our Tenebrae communion service, again led by Chris Brown. This is an incredibly moving service as we reflect quietly on the Last Supper and Jesus' arrest, sharing bread and wine by candlelight.

We shall gather, as usual, on Good Friday 3rd April at 11.00 am, when the Christians Together in Lymington and Pennington join together to worship and to remember Jesus' death on the cross. This service will be on our forecourt, weather permitting. If wet, the service will be in the sanctuary.

On Easter Sunday, we meet again at 10.30 am for our celebration of Easter Day, including a special Easter communion, led by the Worship Group. We hope that you will be able to come to at least one of our special services.

A reminder that the prayer group meets on Wednesday mornings at 9.15 in the sanctuary. Do please come along for a time of quiet and prayer away from the busyness of daily lives. Some of us have enjoyed a series of bible studies, led by Paul. These will continue after Easter, but no dates as yet.

The next Church meeting is on Sunday, April 12th, immediately after morning service. Church meetings are a very important part of Church life, where you get the chance to have your say and find out what's going on!

As Spring marches on, and the church garden bursts into colour we're hopeful that we can open the Garden Café in a few weeks. No date has been decided for this, but we'll let you know!

A warning to all Saturday coffee volunteers that we are approaching the time when we'll be welcoming back our regular Saturday car-booters. We all know what this means –

no parking on the forecourt on Saturday mornings! We don't have a date as yet but I'll give you plenty of notice.

The Finance and Property committee meeting in February saw the end of an era when both Jack (Gordon) and Gerry (Copperi) retired. Jack has been the chairman since 2010 and handled relations with the trust on all matters concerning our listed buildings. Gerry was the official secretary and most experienced and versatile member, in particular with his knowledge of all things to do with the Church's AV system. Words can't express our gratitude to these two gentlemen for all they have done over the years to keep our building up and running, but they have both said they are happy to continue to give advice.

Another retiree...our Centre Manager, Andrew, is retiring after seven years. He has handled the day to day running of the Church and office with hard work and professionalism, not least when faced with all the problems the pandemic caused. He'll be greatly missed by the Church family and hirers alike and we wish him a long and happy retirement.

BUT, we're very pleased to welcome Sarah (Wakeley) who has taken on the role of Centre Administrator. Sarah will be in the office for three days a week, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, for five hours a day, taking over from Andrew. We hope she'll be very happy with us and our funny ways!

Margaret

# 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 JUNE/JULY 'OPEN DOOR':  
19<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **APRIL**

3<sup>rd</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship for Good Friday  
led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor

5<sup>th</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship for Easter Sunday  
led by the Worship Group

12<sup>th</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor

19<sup>th</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Mr David Skitt

26<sup>th</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor

## **MAY**

- 3<sup>rd</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by the Worship Group
- 10<sup>th</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship including communion  
led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor
- 17<sup>th</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Rev'd David Newman
- 24<sup>th</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship for Pentecost  
led by Chris Brown
- 31<sup>st</sup>: 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Rev'd Paul O'Connor

## **BIRDWATCHING ON OUR LOCAL MARSHES**

Did you know that our local marshes play a vital role in providing a refuge for thousands of ducks, geese and wading birds that migrate here to escape the severe winter weather in Northern Europe, where they breed in the summer months. We are very fortunate to have these nature reserves in the Western Solent so close to us and they provide many people with a welcome distraction from the dreariness of the winter weather. I am a keen Birdwatcher and, whenever there is a fine day without too much wind, I try to walk round the Keyhaven Marshes or Normandy Lake Nature Reserve and I always feel stimulated and spiritually refreshed afterwards. On a walk in late January, I spotted a Dartford Warbler as well as this Kingfisher at the Bath Road slipway.



Climate change and lack of persecution have given us new varieties of birds to add to the scene, such as Avocets, Spoonbills and the now common Little Egrets that were a rarity when I first started to take an interest in our birds.



There are also plenty of other wading birds such as Lapwings and Curlews although, due to human activities, both these

species are in decline due to a lack of areas where they can safely nest and bring up their chicks.

Lord God, you created this beautiful world with all its wonderful inhabitants. Please help us be more caring of our fellow creatures and less wasteful of its resources. Amen.

Mary Ann

## **FLOWER MINISTRY UPDATE.**

Thank you to everyone who have supported the Flower Ministry so far and who have placed their names on the calendar for future weeks. The weekly Church flowers enable us to give bunches to ladies with birthdays and wedding anniversaries, also to say 'thank you' 'well done' and 'hope you feel well again soon' to the church family and acknowledging visiting Ministers taking Services.

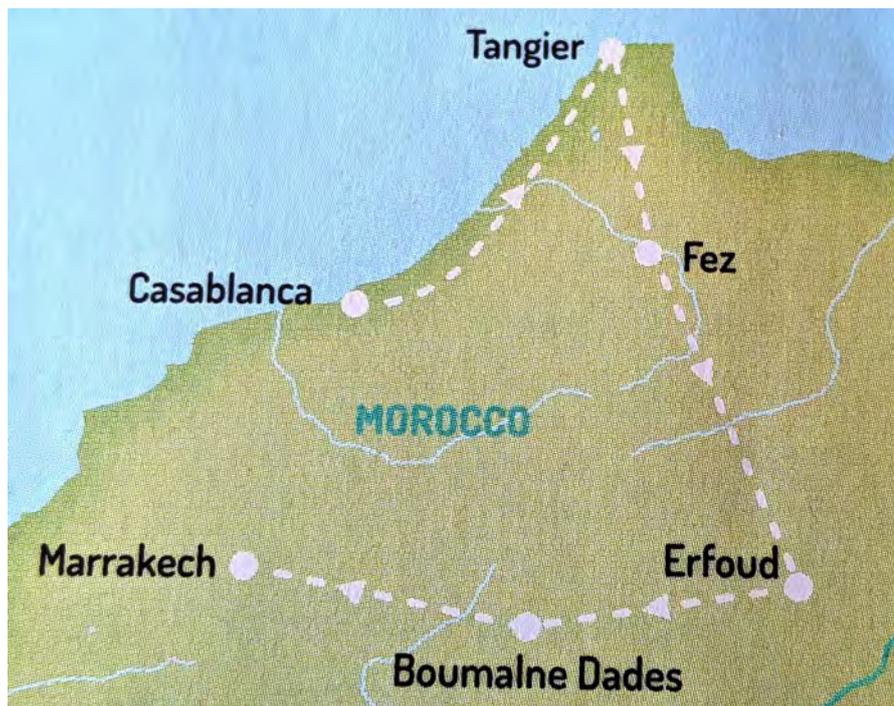
A big thank you to Judith for the pretty bunches of spring blooms on Mothering Sunday.

Janet

## ***A POSTCARD FROM MOROCCO***

*Surely it doesn't rain in Morocco! That is the reaction that I have had from a couple of friends when describing my recent bus tour around Morocco. Sadly, the country has suffered from the same excessive rainfall that we have*

suffered in the UK, and it has not only been inconvenient for my bus tour but disastrous for some of the people whose homes and fields have been ruined. We even heard that a whole town had needed to be evacuated due to a flooded river.



So, I didn't find much sun in Morocco, but I found a really interesting country with a varied landscape, a fascinating history and some magnificent buildings. The little map shows our route, starting at Casablanca with visits to Tangiers, where there was even more rain, then the beautiful old capital of Fez with its its Mosques, Palaces and the maze of alleyways in

*the Medina. We were very grateful that our guides kept us from getting lost.*



*After a few days we were driven south over the snow covered mountains on towards the desert, where we finally found warm sunshine. We stayed for a couple of days in a Kasbah style hotel that might have come out of Hollywood and experienced a glorious desert sunset in perfect still weather. This was very fortunate as our Tour Manager had warned us that we might experience a sandstorm.*



*Another bus drive took us over the High Atlas mountains to Marrakesh with its elegant French Colonial style mansions contrasting with the warren of streets in the Souk.*

*Morocco is a country in transition between the strictly traditional customs affecting women and a more modern approach allowing women to have careers. The hijab was worn by most women but very few were veiled. There was a sharp contrast in living standards between the towns and the countryside, where there was evidence of considerable poverty. I found the people to be friendly and helpful, the varied*

*countryside really interesting and the historical buildings magnificent. It was a really enjoyable visit and I would be happy to go again.*

*Mary Ann*

## **MESSAGE FROM LEANNE**

I am hoping to organise Toy Tombola and would appreciate any donations of good quality cuddly toys.

Thank you

Leanne

## **THAWING OUT AFTER WINTER GARDENING**



A big thank you to Anne Gains (and everyone else involved) for keeping our garden under control, even under very trying conditions,.

Editor

# What's been happening?



## *Spring Lunch & Lymington's Got Talent!*

What a wonderful lunch we had, on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March, when we gathered after the morning service for our Spring Lunch. Many thanks to Les and Leanne for producing a delicious cottage pie and to members of the Fellowship and Fundraising Team for helping to prepare, serve and clear up. £299 was raised for church funds.

The Talent Show that followed lunch brought together a wonderful variety of acts providing unrivalled entertainment!

Thank you to everyone who took part including Ann S, Dave, Margaret F, Margaret C and Gill, Carol and Anne G, Kate and Hugh, John and especially to Pete for his accompaniment.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Lymington United Reformed Church

## OPEN DAY

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April  
9.30am- 3pm

- ❖ A chance for us to share our faith and church with visitors
- ❖ Our café will serve hot drinks and homemade cakes all day
- ❖ Many groups who use our church will be showing what they do
- ❖ Fundraising table & tombola



**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

*Join us for*

## Breakfast

*before the service  
9.30am*



Breakfast cooked and served by  
men from the MerriMENT Group

Sign up on the list in the hall to let us know you're coming.



# 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



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High Street, Lymington, SO41 9AG.  
01590 676306 or [www.lymurc.org.uk](http://www.lymurc.org.uk)

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## **ROTAS FOR APRIL**

**COMMUNION SUNDAY: 5<sup>th</sup>**

**COMMUNION ELDERS:** Margaret and John

### **DUTY ELDER**

5<sup>th</sup> John Wiseman  
12<sup>th</sup> Dave Best  
19<sup>th</sup> Margaret Clark  
26<sup>th</sup> David Bywater

### **READING IN CHURCH**

Dave Best  
Pat Weaver  
Margaret Clark  
Janet Taylor

### **STEWARDS**

5<sup>th</sup> Leanne and Les Saunders  
12<sup>th</sup> Liz Griffiths  
19<sup>th</sup> Andrea Best  
26<sup>th</sup> Brenda Nevard

### **SOUND SYSTEM**

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

## **ROTAS FOR MAY**

**COMMUNION SUNDAY:** 10<sup>th</sup>

**COMMUNION ELDERS:** David and Dave

### **DUTY ELDER**

3<sup>rd</sup> Chris Brown  
10<sup>th</sup> John Wiseman  
17<sup>th</sup> Dave Best  
24<sup>th</sup> Margaret Clark  
31<sup>st</sup> David Bywater

### **READING IN CHURCH**

Andrea Best  
Les Saunders  
Judith Baker  
Wyn Davies  
David Bywater

### **STEWARDS**

3<sup>rd</sup> Pat Weaver  
10<sup>th</sup> Anne Simmons  
17<sup>th</sup> Gill Wiseman  
24<sup>th</sup> Peter Middleton  
31<sup>st</sup> Anne Gaines

### **SOUND SYSTEM**

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

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

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Other web sites that list the church:

<http://www.joinmychurch.com>

<http://www.findachurch.co.uk>

<http://www.searchchurch.co.uk>

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