



Wilmslow
United Reformed Church

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NEWSLETTER



Spring Edition 2026



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Chapel Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 1PR

Church Office Telephone: 01625 532600

E-Mail Address: wilmslow.urc.office@gmail.com

Web Site: www.wilmslowurc.org.uk



Sunday Worship in our Church

We welcome everyone to our worship in church on Sundays at 10.30am. We also livestream services from 10.25am. These can be accessed via our website

[Wilmslow United Reformed Church](http://wilmslowurc.org.uk)

[\(wilmslowurc.org.uk\)](http://wilmslowurc.org.uk). Follow link in 'Worship with Us'

for live worship or for previous services. [Live Services – Wilmslow United Reformed Church \(wilmslowurc.org.uk\)](http://wilmslowurc.org.uk)

Information on our services is available on the website [Bible readings for the coming month \(wilmslowurc.org.uk\)](http://wilmslowurc.org.uk) in WURCing week emails or via the Church Office 01625 532600.

The Knots Prayer

Dear God,

Please untie the knots
that are in my mind,
my heart, and my life.

Remove the have nots,
the can nots and the do nots
that I have in my mind.

Erase the will nots,
may nots, might nots
that find a home in my heart.

Release me from the could nots,
would nots and should nots
that obstruct my life.

And most of all, Dear God,
I ask that you remove from my mind
my heart and my life all the "am nots"
that I have allowed to hold me back,
especially the thought
that I am not good enough.

Amen.

Author unknown, read in church by Peter Bradly

Wilmslow United Reformed Church

A warm welcome to all those who worship with us, in person or online, who enjoy this publication and are friends of this community. If you worship elsewhere, please give our greetings to your home Church.

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you.

Jin and I have now begun our new chapter amongst you, following my induction on 21st February 2026. Moving from Aberdeen to Cheshire has been a significant change for us. At times everything still feels a little unfamiliar, and we are aware that settling takes time. Yet we trust the Lord's continued leading, and we believe that, in his good time, this new place will become a place we call home.

From the moment we entered the manse, we sensed your love and care. The welcome basket, the beautiful flowers, and the thoughtful card from Wilmslow URC touched us deeply. Jin has appreciated this warm gesture of welcome so much that she has already mentioned it many times. Several of the elders generously gave their time to help us resolve practical matters in the manse, and because of your care we are beginning to feel more settled. We now have curtains, so we no longer feel the need to crawl around the bedroom to avoid being seen by our neighbours! We are now able to rest well, eat properly, and enjoy a normal rhythm of life.



I would also like to express once again my deep gratitude for the joy and beauty of the induction service. So many of you worked diligently behind the scenes. You gave yourselves to every detail: from organisation and preparation to catering and warm hospitality. It was a day we will never forget.

I believe with all my heart that the Lord has sent me to Wilmslow URC, and that I have been sent to you to serve you. I am here to care for your well-being, to pray for you and with you, to share in your joys and sorrows, to listen to your stories, to make disciples, to watch over you, to journey alongside you, and to tend you faithfully through God's Word.

Although my ministry will also take me to Lymm URC and to Macclesfield and Bollington URC at times, please know that you can always contact me if you need me. I will do my very best to respond and to be present. I am committed to remaining visibly engaged in the life of our church. You have my heart in this ministry, and I want you to be assured of that.

My focus in my first year of ministry is to strengthen the spiritual life of our congregation, both collectively and individually. I will preach the Word of God, which is the wellspring of our spiritual nourishment. My vision as your minister is to see you grow, thrive, and bear fruit like a tree planted by streams of water (Psalm 1:3). I also aim to visit each member personally. I value the opportunity to get to know you, to learn your stories, to understand your lives and challenges, and to remember your names and the names of those you love. I trust that these visits will allow us to build trust, friendship, and a strong pastoral bond. I value each person who makes up our faith community, and I want you to know that I care for you personally.

I look forward with hope to our joyful journey of faith together. May the Lord bless us, unite us, and guide us as we continue to extend his love to the people in our community and beyond.

With gratitude and every blessing,

Juan

Elders' Devotions – A Reflection

As a church, we stand at the meeting point of memory and hope. We give thanks for the faithfulness of God in our past - the prayers offered, the burdens carried, the quiet acts of service that have sustained this church. And yet, God reminds us that His work is never finished. He is always calling His people forward.

A new chapter in the life of the church is not about abandoning what has been, but about trusting the same faithful God in a new season. The calling of our elders is not simply to manage change, but to discern together where the Spirit is leading, to listen deeply - to God, to one another, and to the needs of our church and local community - and to lead with humility, courage, and love.

May we go forward together open to God's "new thing," confident not in our own wisdom but in God's guidance.

Prayer: Gracious and faithful God,

We thank You for Your constant presence in the life of this church. We place ourselves before You - our plans, our concerns, our hopes for the future. Grant us wisdom to discern Your will, patience to listen well, and unity of spirit as we serve together. As we look forward to a new chapter in our church life, help us to trust You fully and to follow where You lead.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen *Carole Carne*



A special visitor at the Undercroft Cafe



Juan and Jin's Welcome Basket

The Colours and Seasons of the Church Year – Part 2

Have you ever wondered what the hangings at the front of the church mean and what they symbolize? The hangings are based on different colours and represent different seasons in the Church Year. They are known as liturgical colours, and they change over the year.

Season/Event	Colour	Meaning
Lent (40 days before Easter)	Purple	Repentance, reflection, preparation for Easter
Holy Week (Good Friday)	Red/Black	Passion, sacrifice
Easter	White/Gold	Resurrection, new life
Pentecost (The Sunday 50 days after Easter, when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit.)	Red	Holy Spirit, power

White/gold symbolises celebration, joy, purity, resurrection, and light. Christ's glory and divinity.

Red/Black represents the Holy Spirit (the Fire of Pentecost) and martyrdom (blood), so you will see it used at Pentecost in Holy Week especially Good Friday. It represents the passion and power of God:



Palm Sunday



The Easter hangings, white represents the resurrection and new life



Our Pentecost and Good Friday hangings shows the red burning flame and the black wreath and nails

Amanda Dean & Liz Mair

Offering Online



When I was growing up in East Lancashire, the main source of contributions in Congregational Churches was the system of pew rents. The practice began in the nineteenth century, as a family rented 'their own pew' by way of a quarterly payment. As in the theatre, those who had the better positioned pews, paid the most. In some vestibules, there was a board displaying the seating, with rows of holes and pegs inserted in the seats taken. My mother and I had the privilege of sitting in the one pew reserved, at no cost, for the minister's family. Upstairs, in the gallery, were free seats for visitors and,

more particularly, for those who couldn't afford to pay for a pew. This was often used by the domestic servants of the wealthier members. They came to the evening service as they had been busy in the mornings preparing the Sunday dinner for their employer. However, they were faced by a collecting plate which ensured that they did not escape without contributing their pennies.

In the mid-twentieth century, the practice of pew rents was ended and the plate was passed to everyone. Then it dawned on astute Church Treasurers that, unlike under the pew rent system, absentees were not contributing on the Sundays they did not attend. This led to the introduction of the weekly envelope which could be filled on every Sunday, whether present or not.

I am now delighted that we have also ended the direct collection of contributions for God's work through the church. Visitors who are not used to our services must have regarded the practice as bizarre. Amongst our prayers and reading of the scriptures, we suddenly sent out the heavy mob with open plates, to make sure no one escaped without coughing up! Not only that but, in a church where the worship is simpler and without the prescribed liturgy of other traditions, we invented a routine, whereby in parallel sweeps, the chosen four worked the pews, sending the fifth, the youngest, up to the gallery, followed by a solemn procession down the aisles to hand over the day's takings. While everything is good about the gift of money for God's work through the church, making an actual collection by passing a plate to everyone, old and young, rich and poor, regular or visitor, seems crude. As gradually more and more of us chose to give by a direct debit from our bank account, the embarrassed muttering of 'Season' was sometimes heard, as not even a token coin was dropped on the plate.

Our present method of encouraging the use of a direct debit, an entry in the digital tool, or cash on the single plate seems to be working well. Our standing for prayer, as the plate is brought forward is symbolic of our offering to God ourselves and our financial giving. Placing it on the Table is both dignified and an end to the shame of greeting visitors with a plate under their nose.

Tony Burnham

Christmas Illumination; Enlightenment Even

On Sunday in December Trudy and I attended one of two candlelight carols services at St. George's (Poynton Parish Church) [St George's Church, Poynton](https://www.poyntonparishchurch.org/). We arrived in good time, and this proved to be just as well as the pews quickly filled and, by the start of the service, those who arrived at the last minute had to stand in the side aisles. It is not attendance, as such, that I want to dwell on however so much as the use St George's was making of its three screens. Like us, they have dispensed



with the use of hymn books and instead putting the words of the carols and hymns up on screen. It is what else that was projected however that impressed me. Three themes within the loop of slides particularly

caught my eye and I thought worth considering and adapting for use in our own church. (image from <https://www.poyntonparishchurch.org/>)

1. A slide with a picture of St Georges, granted more photogenic than Wilmslow URC, with just the one word, **Welcome**, written in script across the slide. We have a welcome on the slide every Sunday giving details of the worship leader, organist etc but the St George's slide felt so much warmer than our more formal approach. If we wanted to be more effusive, we could perhaps have, **Welcome, we are very pleased to see you.**

2. There were several slides giving details of regular activities, or at least some of them, that take place on the church premises. We used to have a slide when Messy Church is meeting but how about slides for Undercroft Café, Midweek Reflections etc. every week. This might enable us to reduce the lengthy list, the same every week, of spoken notices. There was even a slide giving details of the Safeguarding Officers, with portraits, and how they might be contacted.

3. The moment the light bulb came on! A slide with a plain background and a design to represent a document in one corner. The wording quite simply invited visitors and newcomers to go onto the church website to register for a weekly newsletter giving details of the church's activities. We talk a lot about needing to attract new members and such an initiative seems, at least to me, a simple action we could take in this direction. We already have working week online so surely it would not be too difficult to extend it to others who are interested. Oaks grow from acorns as the saying goes.

Just some thoughts but perhaps something to consider further as we welcome our new minister.

Colin Shepherd

New Post of Site Supervisor



The church has appointed a Site Supervisor, Dave Galligan, who will be taking up his duties in February. The Site Supervisor will be responsible for care of the WURC estate (buildings and grounds) as agreed with the Estates Team. It's a part-time position of 20 hours spread flexibly over the week. This will ensure Dave's availability when needed to support the activities of church groups and users of our premises.

The diary of activities in our Halls, Undercroft, Worship Area and Church Vestibule (which you can see on the monitor in the Halls entrance) shows just how busy our premises are throughout the week. The level of activity has now outpaced the ability of church members to manage the day-to-day operation of the premises without dedicated support.

So, welcome to Dave who will soon be a familiar face to you all.

Peggy Arnell

from <https://arocha.org.uk/download/32186/?tmstv=1769615538>

MARCH - Take part in a local litter pick or beach clean during The Great British Spring Clean (Friday 13-Sunday 29 March), the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign. Litter picking benefits the environment by removing rubbish that can be hazardous for wildlife and helps bring people together. See if there's a litter pick in your local area or consider organising your own - after church on Sunday or with a youth group for example. Pray for your local area as you do the litter pick and ask God for opportunities to share why you are doing it. Find out more and pledge to pick up a bag at <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/our-work/eliminating-litter/great-british-spring-clean>

APRIL - Celebrate new life this Easter and have a go at growing something! April is the perfect time to try to grow something edible or, if you are a seasoned gardener, to encourage someone else to try. Salad leaves or herbs are a great place to start and will reduce your reliance on those oh-so-convenient supermarket salad bags. For indoor space, try 'micro-greens' (vegetable leaves harvested soon after they open) For greenhouses, try sowing salad leaf seed mixes. For outdoors, beetroot, lettuce, onion and pea plants are frost-resistant so can be planted outside in April. As you sow, thank God for the opportunity to grow food, and pray for those communities that are facing food shortages and famine.

MAY - Support pollinators. Nothing says Spring like the buzz of a bee! But these precious pollinators are declining due to habitat loss, climate change and agricultural intensification. Wednesday 20 May is World Bee Day, so look around to see how you can improve habitats for bees and other pollinators. Read more about bees, butterflies and habitats that support them in our Target 25 resources at <https://arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25/> . Sow a pollinator friendly seed mix, make or buy a bee hotel, let some wildflowers grow in your garden, and don't use pesticides. Pray that our pollinator populations will increase. For more about World Bee Day (May 22nd) visit: [Awareness Days & National Events Calendar 2026](#)

Geoff Aldcroft

Science Museum London Special Exhibition – Future of Food

A new, free exhibition about how food must change to protect the planet.
Now extended until 1 September 2026. [FUTURE OF FOOD | SCIENCE MUSEUM](#)



"Collection of farmland bees – 2024

Ecologist Lynn Dicks and her team (Cambridge University) collected these bees from six different farms. The top three groups came from farms that use fewer insecticides than the bottom three. The top farms had more bees, except for the bottom right, which was located next to a nature reserve." Words from the exhibit description. *Juliet Harris*

Update on our partnership with Macclesfield Ukrainian Aid

www.ukrainianaid.org.uk (photos below from website)

Our church has been supporting Macclesfield Ukrainian Aid (MUA) since the onset of the war in the Ukraine. The charity delivers donations to Ukraine communities supporting soldiers in battle zones and hosting people displaced from their homes because of the war.

Members of our congregation and their friends have been extremely generous with donations of duvets, blankets, bedding and towels.

MUA tells us that soldiers on the front line are in particular need of all types of toiletries, as the army's supply chain must focus on food, medication and ammunition. Therefore, Ukrainian communities near the front lines have taken on the task of supplying toiletries to soldiers.

MUA have appealed to us for donations. WURC Elders therefore agreed at their February meeting to start donating the toiletries from the box in the Church Vestibule to MUA.

The items needed are:

- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Mouthwash and dental floss
- Hand soap and body wash
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Deodorant
- Disposable razors, shaving cream
- Washcloths, wet wipes, tissues
- Hand cream and hand sanitizer
- Nail clippers, files and tweezers
- Germolene, Sudocrem, Vaseline
- Combs/hairbrushes
- Sanitary products (tampons & pads)

Thank-you so much for your continuing support.

Peggy Arnell



Musical Matters at Church

As you may well have noticed our church is becoming increasingly popular as a venue for several local choirs and we can enjoy having such a variety accessible to us. In the last twelve months we have had concerts by the Barnby Choir, the Semitone Singers, the Maia choir from Stockport, Macclesfield Male Voice Choir, Backbeat A Capella and my own choir the Laurence Singers, as well as occasional visits from choirs based in Manchester.

The attraction of the church is for several reasons. I'm speaking for myself but I know other choirs agree the most important factor is the quality of the acoustic. The shape of our church's interior especially the height of the ceilings means voices can fill the space even when singing quietly. There is little echo so words are clear and choirs can take up positions on the 'stage' which audiences can see easily. Also the 'feel' is that singers and audience are connected so there is a greater intimacy than in some venues.

Another important factor is the seating with comfortable chairs (at least downstairs!). Still many people choose to sit on the harder (cushioned) pews in the balcony because they say the sound is even better there. Add to that the different view of choirs, players, etc and the concert experience is very enjoyable. Our church is blessed with good heating and excellent and flexible lighting. The decoration of the sanctuary though understated all helps to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. All this is often remarked upon by the teachers and pupils from Chetham's School of Music in Manchester when they present their twice-yearly Thursday Lunchtime Recitals.

Talking of Lunchtime Recitals and Chet's, our next one by them is on the 21st May when a group of instrumental players will be presenting the Lunchtime Recital. We had the largest audience ever at our last one at the end of January with well over 80 people attending.

Other forthcoming concerts include the Barnby Choir on Sunday 22nd March presenting the Messiah acknowledging the nearness of Easter and then again on Sunday 17th May with works by Elgar -The Music Makers and Vaughan Williams – In Windsor Forest.

The Laurence Singers Concert to celebrate Spring is on Saturday April 11th at 7.30 pm. The programme is a very light one with songs in the first half from, amongst others, Karl Jenkins, John Rutter and Oscar Peterson, as well as excerpts from musicals by Stephen Sondheim, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Willy Russell. The second half emphasises (very gently) humour in music and both accompanists Lauren Turner on piano and Richard Brocklehurst on organ join in the fun. I'm not talking belly-laughs but if we can put a smile to your face and maybe raise a mild snigger, we shall have achieved our goal! Tickets are £15 and will be available from me and Steve Wood soon.

Do come to all these musical activities.

Cliff Crewe

Midweek Reflections

Midweek Reflections are held in the Church Vestibule on the second Wednesday of each month from 11.30am till 12.15pm. Our Spring/Summer meetings are on 8 April, 13 May, 10 June, 8 July and 12 August. The format usually involves a guest speaker who leads on the topic for about 15/20 minutes, followed by questions and discussion within the group. The number of attendees varies between 15 and 20 and everyone is very welcome.

Topics in recent months included 'A selection of Christmas Poetry' read by four members of the group; 'Holy days and Holidays' prepared by Dorothy Duguid and Valerie Searby; and 'WHO?' a question-and-answer session led by Caroline Melliar-Smith. After Easter, leaders will include Alan Watson, Martin Smith and Rob and Marion White, all of whom will provide us, as usual, with interesting and challenging reflections.

Coffee is available in the Undercroft Café from 10am prior to our meeting which is a lovely opportunity to meet friends and socialise.

Further details can be given by Liz McGuire or through the Church Office.

The Present

Imagine there is a Bank that credits your account every day with £86,400.

However, it carries over no balance from day to day and every night the bank deletes whatever balance you failed to use during the day.

What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!

Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME.

Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance, and it allows no overdraft.

Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.

There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow." You must live in the present solely on today's deposits. So, invest it wisely each day to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success!

The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realise the value of 1 YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade.

To realise the value of 1 MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realise the value of 1 WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realise the value of 1 HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realise the value of 1 MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train.

To realise the value of 1 SECOND, ask a person who avoided an accident.

To realise the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a medal in the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have! And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time.

And remember that TIME waits for no one.

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called, The present

Author Unknown

"POP UP" choir

February sees a local "POP UP" choir being formed to sing at a concert in April, raising money for East Cheshire Hospice, where, not only will the men enjoy the social and wellbeing benefits of singing, but the monies raised will be for the Hospice's own choir project for those with Dementia called "SONGS FOR THE SOUL"

Weekly rehearsals start on Wed 25th Feb at the Hospice, no experience of singing is required, and with everyone learning the songs together, there should be a lot of fun, and the music should be familiar to most.

The concert is on April 18th at the U.R.C. in Macclesfield and the "All men can sing" choir will be supported by Macclesfield Male Voice Choir on the night.

Wish to be involved? contact Dave Collins dccollins47@btinternet.com

Dave Collins



Wilmslow Wells for Africa

Souperday – Saturday 7th March 11.30 - 2.00

Organised by Wilmslow Wells for Africa charity to raise funds for clean water in rural African communities.

£6 admission includes a choice of soup, roll & butter, hot drink. Our splendid cakes for sale may tempt you too!

At Wilmslow Methodist Church, Water Lane, SK9 5AR.



On Saturday the 7th March 2026, Transition Wilmslow will be hosting another Repair Café, this time, at the halls of St Chad's Church, Handforth (SK9 3ES), between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm (last repair accepted at 12:30 pm).

We offer repairs in electrical items, textiles and clothing, furniture and wooden items, jewellery, bikes, general repairs and computer advice. We also repair the wooden handles of old tools.

There will also be an Action on Local Energy stall giving advice on how to save energy.

Repairs, refreshments and cakes are available free of charge, but donations will be most welcome.

Location: The halls of St Chad's Church, Handforth (SK9 3ES)

Date: Saturday 7th March 2026

Time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

We're really looking forward to seeing you!

**For more information email:
repaircafewilmslow@gmail.com**

Charity Number 1201884



Bin it? No way!

Repair Café dates for 2026

- Saturday 7th March at St Chad's Church, Handforth (SK9 3ES)
- Saturday 4th July at Wilmslow URC on Chapel Lane (SK9 1PR)
- Saturday 7th November at St Chad's Church

Church Weekly Recurring Events

For a full list please visit our website <https://wilmslowurc.org.uk/>

Mondays

The Undercroft Café 10-12 – everyone welcome

Monday Fellowship (Undercroft) 2-3.30pm alt Mondays

Book Club 2pm (2nd Mon alternate months)

Tuesdays

Short Mat Bowls (large hall) 1.45-4.15pm

Badminton - Adults 7.30-9pm (large hall)

Quilting Group (1st Tue of month)

Wednesdays

The Undercroft Café 10-12 – everyone welcome

Midweek Reflections (church vestibule) 11.30-12:20pm – Sep to May

Thursdays

Ladies Badminton (large hall) 10-12

Rainbows fortnightly 5-6; Brownies wkly 6.15-7:30; Guides wkly 6.30-8:30

Fridays

Gardening Team (am)

Beavers 6-7pm; Scouts 7-9pm

Citizens Advice in the church halls on Mon am for drop-in and Wed am for appointments. Free, confidential advice on benefits, work, consumer, housing and other concerns. To book an appointment call 01625 432847.



citizens
advice

To book space in the church rooms please email bookings@wilmslowurc.org.uk or call the office on 01625 532600. Or visit <https://wilmslowurc.org.uk/hiring-rooms-in-our-buildings/>

Thank you for all your contributions, comments and compliments.

Deadline for articles for the next Edition is Fri 15th May 2026.

All contributions to newsletter@wilmslowurc.org.uk