

**UPTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

44 HEATH ROAD, UPTON BY CHESTER, CH2 1HX

Telephone 01244 373854

## **NEWSLETTER**

# **FEBRUARY 2026**



VISIT OUR WEBSITE



*The*  
**United**  
**Reformed**  
**Church**

AT

[WWW.UPTONURC.ORG.UK](http://WWW.UPTONURC.ORG.UK)

EMAIL

[INFO@UPTONURC.ORG.UK](mailto:INFO@UPTONURC.ORG.UK)

Dear Friends,

I am writing as one of the 3 Interim Moderators for the new Chester North URC Pastorate, which includes Upton, Vicars Cross and Blacon URCs. Interim Moderators are appointed by Synod to work with Church Secretaries and Elders during a Ministerial vacancy: their role is to assist churches through each stage of the process of calling a new Minister, right through to their Induction. It has been for us all a time of working, watching and waiting.

As I write, I am very mindful that we are preparing for a possible candidate to “preach with a view” this very weekend. I am sure we are all hoping and praying that the candidate might feel called to serve our new Pastorate. Equally, I hope that all 3 of our churches may be open to discern what is God’s will for us: is this candidate the right person and do we share in their sense of call to serve God here together. No doubt, by the time you read this, all will be known!

Whatever the outcome, we can be assured that God is faithful and that, in the words of a familiar hymn *“God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year...”*

As I write and I am thinking about that hymn, we have been experiencing some very cold weather recently, with snow, ice and frosty mornings. I must admit that I don’t particularly like the coldest months of the calendar, but equally we have the promise that it will soon be Spring,

the season when we witness new life, which makes us all start to feel better and find new hope. And so, whatever the outcome of this weekend, let us all look forward in faith and trust and in the knowledge that God is the God of Surprises, the God of unfailing love and goodness who knows what is best for us, his children. In closing, be assured that Anthea and I hold you in our thoughts and prayers as you move forward in faith and trust.

Very best wishes from Revd. Alan Wickens

### **STOP PRESS NEWS**

I am pleased to let you know that the result of the vote at the church meeting on 19 January was overwhelmingly in favour of calling Simon Peters to be our minister. Blacon and Vicars Cross churches also voted in favour of issuing the call. Simon has been informed of the result and he is happy to accept the call.

We look forward to his ordination and induction in the summer and working alongside him in the next chapter of the life of Upton United Reformed Church.

Carole Mellor

**It is with sadness that we record the passing of Jean Collyer. She was a faithful and enthusiastic member of Upton United Reformed Church for many years.**

**A THANKSGIVING SERVICE will be held for her at Upton United Reformed Church on Thursday 5 February at 12.30 pm followed by refreshments.**

**All are welcome.**

**It is with sadness we record the passing of Robert Cole, husband of Marian. Bob was a regular attender at Sunday Worship and attended the Men's Monday Meeting, the Thursday Coffee Morning and Food and Fun. We send our condolences to Marian and their two sons.**



When flowers the Damson Tree  
With blossom good to see  
A Cheshire beauties here  
Fine detailed white and clear  
And two seams are shown  
A blossom so lovely grown  
Too quickly gone the light  
That gives true delight  
Around some Cheshire mile  
I make the most a while  
Of damson trees that seem  
Like snowdrifts in a gleam.

*Margaret Barlett*



## UPTON AMBLERS

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December Philip and I led our group for the last time as Group Organisers. We decided to make it a special social occasion, so 13 of us set out and walked along the canal into town, then along the city walls to Northgate Street where we had a break to look at the Christmas Market, and then eventually returned along the cycleway to our cars. It was a route of just under 4 miles, and we were so lucky with the sunny weather on the day, and there were very clear views of the Welsh Hills from the Northgate Bridge. Afterwards 15 of us all enjoyed a lunch at the Little Owl pub.

I hope everyone enjoyed the day as much as we did and it was a very happy way to bring our time as organisers to an end.

CELIA JONES





# *TABLE TOP SALE*

SATURDAY 7 MARCH

10 am - 12 noon

Limited number of tables so book early

**£10 per table**

**Contact Niall Ormerod**

**07528284763**





United  
Reformed  
Church  
Mersey



**Café Jam**

spread some song across your heart

## Café Jam Worship Band dates for 2026

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 6.30pm at Trinity  
Methodist/URC Church,  
High St, Skelmersdale WN8 8AT**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 6.30pm at Ainsdale Village  
Church, Station Road Ainsdale, 90 Station Rd, Ainsdale,  
Southport PR8 3HW**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 6.30pm at Wallasey  
Village URC,  
Wallasey Village, Wallasey CH45 3LP**

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at Alsager URC at 6.30pm  
– 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration! Brookhouse Rd,  
Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2PA**

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at Heckmondwike URC at  
1pm  
139 High St, Heckmondwike WF16 0DY**

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2026 at Albion United  
Reformed Church, at 6.30pm at Stamford St E,  
Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6QQ (in Northwestern  
Synod)**

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2026 6.30pm at Macclesfield URC,  
Park Green, Macclesfield SK11 7NA**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2026 6.30pm at St David's URC,  
Crosthwaite Ave, Eastham, Birkenhead, Eastham  
CH62 9DG**

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2026 at Serpentine Road Family  
Church at 6.30pm,  
100 Liscard Rd, Wallasey CH44 0AA**

**Please contact Rita (07838 103310 or  
[rita.griffiths4@ntlworld.com](mailto:rita.griffiths4@ntlworld.com)) for more information –  
and if you would like the Café Jam band to come to  
YOUR church or event! Our start times are normally  
Sundays 6.30pm.**

**A MERSEY SYNOD INITIATIVE**

Fleet, Hampshire

Dear All

2025 has been for me another year with a lot of interest and challenges, but also with some sadness. I thought that I might not travel far again, but I decided to fulfil a long held wish, to visit Normandy and reflect on the beaches, the cemeteries and all that the suffering of many had made possible for me. So I went with a group in March for five very moving and challenging days. What those people went through during the early part of my life is terrifying and I am grateful for the freedom they have given us. To see those thousands of graves of late teenage folk - the same age as my grandchildren was very emotional. I only hope that we have been worthy of their sacrifice.

In June I had another journey to north Cornwall to stay with Alison and Mike as in previous years, and they were perfect hosts as usual. We made three fascinating excursions to places of interest. Then in August I went to a sky resort near Geneva where one of the lads from Upton days - Philip - runs the resort. Last time I saw him he was 17 – now 63. We had a good time, with three great walks with sunning views.

And all the time at home I have been leading worship somewhere in the south every Sunday, enjoying walks around Fleet; loving concerts at Basingstoke,

and keeping in touch with the family. Ella and Harris are now 17; they have passed their driving test; enjoy swimming and running respectively; and are exploring universities. Watch this space.

The sadness has been the death of David, my brother, in October, after a 9 month struggle with cancer. It was good to see all the family at the funeral which Jill led - a good celebration of a key member of the family. My cousin Josie's husband also died - born three days after David, and died a month before him.

It will be strange living life without David, but life goes on, and I am grateful to be able to make my contribution. It's a sad and troubled world, but I wish you all a Happy Christmas, and a good New Year living as Jesus would wish, for the sake of peace and justice across the globe.

As ever,

*Stephen Thornton*

Happy  
New Year!

## SYNOD VISIT

### THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY

URC Mersey Synod staff like to visit local churches to get to know the elders, members and congregation better and for the church to learn more about the role of Synod staff and how they can help.

To this end, Synod staff will be visiting Upton URC on 12 February. As part of the visit they would like to meet with members of the congregation informally at 11am. They are interested in hearing about our church activities and worship as well as being shown round our premises. Please come along to meet the Synod staff if you are able. The staff will be having their lunch at around 12 noon and

we are invited to join them (please bring your own lunch if you would like to stay).

### **DIARY FOR FEBRUARY 2026**

	Date	Time	
<b>SUN</b>	1	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Internet Service</b>
Mon	2	10.00m	Monday Men's Meeting in room 3
Tues	3	2.00 pm	Friendship Group -
Wed	4		
Thurs	5	10.00am 12.30pm	Thursday Ladies Group Jean Collyer's Thanksgiving Service
Fri	6		
Sat	7		
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Rev G Welsh</b>
Mon	9	10.00am	Monday Men's Meeting in room 3
Tues	10	10.00am	New Tuesday Group

Wed	11		
THURSDAY	12	10.00am	Community Coffee Morning
FRIDAY	13		
Sat	14		
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Rev D Hamblin (Communion service)</b>
Mon	16	10.00am	Monday Men's Meeting in room 3
Tues	17	2.00pm	Friendship Group
Wed	18		
Thurs	19	10.00am	Thursday Ladies Group
Fri	20		
Sat	21		
<b>SUN</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Ms S Dunbar</b>
Mon	23	10.00am	Monday Men's Meeting in room 3
Tues	24	10.am	New Tuesday Group
Wed	25		
Thurs	26	10.00am	Community Coffee Morning
Fri	27		
Sat	28		

## FLOWER ROTA

1 FEB

### PLEASE NOTE

8 FEB

**There is no Food and Fun on 5<sup>th</sup> February**

15 FEB

**22 FEBRUARY**

**Margaret Hainsworth**

**1 MARCH**

**Janet Cliff**

**8 MARCH**

**Lesley Parry**

**15 MARCH**

**Gillian Moore**

**22 MARCH**

**Carole Mellor**

**29 MARCH**

**Keith Jennerway**

## CAR FERRY

**1 FEBRUARY**

**John Hainsworth**

**8 FEBRUARY**

**Keith Reading**

**15 FEBRUARY**

**Phil Mason**

**22 FEBRUARY**

**Niall Ormerod**

## **UNITY THROUGH PRAYER**

1 FEBRUARY Pray for the residents of Whitton Drive, Sutton Drive, Bidston Close and Greenfield Lane.

For Sunshine Tots, Praise and Play and for all the leaders.

For young families.

8 FEBRUARY Pray for the residents of Gayton Close, Denhall Close and Moorhouse Close.

For the Scouts, Venture Scouts, Cub Scouts and Beavers. For the Ranger Guides, Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade.

15 FEBRUARY Pray for the residents of Shepherds Lane, Thornton Drive, The Beeches and Windermere Avenue.

For the Growth Action Planning in our churches, Commitment for Life, Vision4Life and Fresh Expressions.

22 FEBRUARY Pray for the residents of Rosewood Avenue,  
Whitby Avenue and Egerton Drive.

For those on the brass and flower rotas and  
those who distribute flowers.

For those who clean our churches and halls.

## FRIDAY FILM AT HOOLE URC

**6 FEBRUARY – 2pm**

The Intern (2015, 12A) Comedy Drama

Bored with retirement, a 70 year old widower gets a job as a (very) senior intern at an online fashion company full of much younger colleagues.

The film will be followed by refreshments.

**COPY DATE FOR MARCH NEWSLETTER IS**

**15 FEBRUARY**

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO RICHARD SYKES, PLEASE**

**God's Love is for All**

**Our Mission is to**

**Show it,**

We are in a vacancy at the moment. Please contact Church Secretary, Carole Mellor, for any enquiries

**SECRETARY**

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**Hall Bookings Secretary Deborah Ormerod**

**07580088720**