

The monthly magazine of

Groby

United Reformed Church





Megan Edwards celebrates her birthday in February



Happy Birthday to You May the Good Lord Bless You

Sue Lawrence-Brooks

Pause for Thought from Mary Pringle

This is a moral universe, this means that, despite all the evidence that seems to be to the contrary there is no way that evil and injustice and oppression and lies can have the last word.

God is a God who cares about right and wrong. God cares about justice and injustice. God is in charge.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Our Church website can be found at https://grobyurc.com/

Our Facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/grobyurc

A link to recordings of our services can be found on both our church Website (click on the 'worship' Tab at the top) and on our Facebook page.

WELCOME FROM SUE, CHURCH ELDER

Welcome to our Contact magazine for February - the month when we really can look forward to the onset of Spring and I'm already spotting so many visible signs of it!

I'm even taking advantage of the odd sunny



days to clear the debris of wet and soggy leaves, tidy up and prepare my tubs, pots and baskets for Spring planting - no doubt that those of you with gardens will be thinking of doing the same.

LENT falls midway between Winter and Spring and is also a time of spiritual preparation - this unique 40 day period before Easter is a time when we can take an inventory of our lives and have a clear out of anything that may muddy our lives and distract us from our commitment to Jesus.

A time when we are invited to prepare the soil of our lives for growth and renewal, just as we do our gardens.

BUT it has to be intentional! Do we have the desire to follow the way of Jesus more closely or do we just coast along hoping to stumble across Him here and there – perhaps just for that hour on a Sunday morning at church?

"Come near to God and He will come near to you." (James 4v8)

He truly wants to be there for you.

He is waiting to welcome you each and every day, wherever you may be and whatever you may be doing.

During this season of Lent, can we intentionally and deliberately make more room for Him in our lives - or are we so busy that there is no time to pray, no time to spend time with Him and no time to reach out to others?

LENT is a time to clear out any dross, to plant new seeds, to put things into place that will help us to better connect with Jesus and then to nurture those seeds until they grow and bear fruit – and we'll no doubt all plant different seeds as each of us has a different



role to play within our fellowship and the wider community.

As each garden is unique and made beautiful with its variety of colours, flowers and bushes so each of us is unique, but together with our different skills, personalities and characteristics, we make up the body of Christ here in Groby.

What new seeds will you plant? Make Lent a fruitful and positive season for yourself and for those around you.

Every blessing to you all,

Sue







Friday 7.30 - 9:00

At the URC

Chapel Hill, Groby, LE6 OFE

| Who for? | Dates |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Top Primary and | 19 th January |
| Secondary | 2 nd 16 th February |
| (Year 5 -11) | 1 st 15 th March |

Contact: Ruth Scott 07792376059

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SUNDAY MORNING TEACHING AND READINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2024

| Feb 4th | Matthew Ch10 vv 1-25 Mission | Anne Willmott |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Feb 11th | Matthew Ch10vv 26-42 Discipleship | Riffat Zamurad |
| Feb 18th | Matthew Ch11 vv 1-19 Who is Jesus? | Stephen Burrage |
| Feb 25th | Matthew Ch11 vv 20-30 The fate of believers and non-believers. | Rev. Paul Ellis |
| | The service includes sharing All Age Holy Communion. | |

We're very grateful as ever, to the visiting preachers who come and share their insights into the readings planned for each Sunday.

And of course we will be welcoming Rev. Paul back from his travels on February 25th, a service which will include sharing All Age Holy Communion to include our young people.

Please remember in your prayers those who diligently and conscientiously bring God's word to us each Sunday.

February's Helping Hands

| | Elder | Music | Media | Welcome | Coffee |
|------------------|---------|--------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Feb. | (Kathy) | (Tim) | (Tim) | (Joy) | (Joy) |
| 4th | Mark | Sue | Dave | Linda & Hilary | Peter & Margaret |
| 11th | Wendy | David | Barry | Sue & Mike | Hilary & Dave |
| 18th | Phil | Debbie | Tim | Joy & Peter | Mary & Trevor |
| 25th | Mary | David | Mark | Barbs & Anita | Pat C & Linda |
| Sunday Flowers | | | "The | e Clean Tea | m!" 🦪 |
| (Barbara Conlon) | | (Ka | ithy Du Boula | y) (200) | |



| | () | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|--|
| A CONTRACT OF | Week Beginning | | | |
| Feb 4th: Rachel & Mark | Feb 5th: Our Chores | | | |
| Feb 11th : Rachel & Mark | | | | |
| Feb 18th : Joy & Peter | Feb 12th: Ruth & Ann T | | | |
| | Feb 19th: Our Chores | | | |
| Feb 25th: Tim & Linda | Feb 26th: Joy & Pat | | | |

SUNDAY FLOWER MINISTRY

Distributing the flowers after a Sunday service is an important and valued ministry. Anne Brandon, who has taken on this role, asks if those who provide the flowers would also kindly remember to leave the paper in which they are wrapped, so that it can be used again after the service when the flowers are given out. Thank you!

AMAZING RESPONSE!! To our Tearfund GROWING HOPE CHRISTMAS APPEAL Thank you for putting your compassion and concern into action.



CALLED BY GOD TO TAKE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT:

Our giving focuses on Church and Community Transformation Training. Our grand total of £1834 which includes gift aid pledges and two generous donations sent directly to Tearfund, will help fund equipment and training for people like the family on the opposite page, who say "God has blessed us, a real change has come".



UNDERSTANDING POVERTY: In communities around the world, churches like Groby URC are supporting some of most vulnerable people in places where organisations struggle to reach.

EXTREME WEATHER is getting more frequent and severe. This is having a destructive effect on the communities Tearfund works with - people who have done least to cause man-made climate change!



Four years ago Rene and Odile from lvory Coast were plagued by fear and worry. They worked hard to farm their land and raise their children, but struggled to make a living and could barely afford to put food on the table - let alone pay for school fees, or for medicine when their children got sick.



Are already working with 25,000 churches in some of the poorest areas of the world but have a vision to see 250,000 churches trained up

through the Church and Community Transformation training.



There were plenty of Fairy Stories re-told!

(Enderby's Version of Cinderella)



Several renditions of Twelve Days of Christmas

(this one ended in divorce!)



(Alan's 'prince' - the same prince who was a bit of a sucker for a heroine in at least 3 fairytales!)



There were cakes & mince pies to be eaten





Conversations to be had!



And Carols to be Sung!

A Big Thanks to all who organised or took part and made the afternoon go with a Christmas Bell! Mary received an emailed Christmas Card to everyone just before Christmas from John & Gwen Hall, including the text below:

God bless you this Christmas Our love and best wishes John and Gwen

A few weeks ago, we were standing at the war memorial in Trentham and our vicar was speaking to the scouts and guides on "parade" with about 100 other people. I was thinking about what I would say to give them some hope for the future. And all I could think about was Ukraine and Gaza and 2 world wars.

Then last week I was preaching about Jesus' 2nd coming from Mark 13 and I was getting thoroughly depressed by all the warnings he gave about what would happen before he came again. Then I remembered what Jesus said in Luke's version (21:28) "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

And I encouraged myself to look up.....

... to see the angels rejoicing at the saviour's birth.

... to see God's self-sacrifice on the cross winning eternal life for all those of us who trust him.

... to see the risen Jesus exalted in heaven praying for us. and to see Jesus coming again to deal with all the pain and suffering in the world and destroying all that is evil.

I still can't promise the scouts peace in our time. But I can encourage them to celebrate Christmas and Jesus' birth into our world to win everlasting peace for all of us. 2023 has held many good things for us as a family, but it also dealt us one of the worst blows we have ever experienced. Our grandson, James, while training for a triathlon, had a serious cycling accident. It put him in hospital for 6 months and he is now in a wheelchair completely paralysed from the chest down. But his faith in Jesus is wonderfully strong. His positivity and commitment to the future are humbling. And he and his fiancé are planning a fruitful and fulfilling life together.

They are an amazing example to us to focus on Jesus - born in Bethlehem - crucified outside Jerusalem – risen and exalted in heaven – coming again to take his brothers and sisters home. An example to look up and know that our redemption is near.

Look Up!



We hope this finds you well and looking forward to the Christmas celebrations – as well as love and peace in heaven.

John & Gwen Hall

Louise Brown Introduces Herself

Louise is our new Children and Youth worker in Groby in the continuing joint work between St Philip and St James in Groby and the URC. She writes to introduce herself:

'I'm Louise, and I am really looking forward to joining you as Children & Youth Worker.

I have been a Church Children & Youth Worker for 10 years but have worked with children for over 30 years.

I grew up in Quorn and currently live in Hinckley, but will hopefully be moving to the area in the not too distant future.



I have a 12 year old tabby cat called Molly, who likes to join in Zoom calls.

I enjoy running, singing, reading and the theatre.

I also love drinking good coffee and eating cake (vegan carrot cake is my absolute favourite!)

I studied Theology at the University of Manchester and Chaplaincy at Birmingham Newman University.

I am a Cursillista, having made my weekend in 2012 so I love butterflies!

We look forward to welcoming her when she starts with us on Monday 26th February and I am sure everyone will do all they can to support her in her work as we seek to continue to build the Kingdom of God.



Groby URC Prayer Sheet

"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit." Psalm 51:12

Welcome to our February prayer sheet.

As our January prayer sheet was a double issue with December this is the first prayer sheet to go out this year, as such it seemed appropriate to encourage us all to give thanks for the year that has passed. Alongside this there are prayers for the church leadership team and prayers resulting from our Hope Christmas Appeal.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

As many of you will have seen in the reports submitted to our AGM there is much to be thankful for over the last 12 months. There have been so many things going on over the last 12 months it is hard to know where to start thanking God. So, here are some of the highlights for you to use as inspiration in your prayers:

- Having had Paul with us as our minister for 12 months
- New members joining
- The continued work with young people including; Y Church, Noah's Ark, Catch, Open the Book & Rock Solid
- The great work being done by Tasters
- Other outreach events, including the men's breakfasts & ladies' afternoon tea
- Alpha
- Christmas events including the Carol Service, Christmas Eve Family Service & Carols Under the Tree
- Many social activities we have enjoyed as a church family
- The recruitment of Louise Brown as Children & Youth Worker

As one of the Elders pointed out all of the above has been made possible because of all the hours of hard work put in by the many volunteers we have within the church – if we were to add up the cost for all those hours it would be a very large sum indeed! So let's also thank God for all those who give their time selflessly for our church and for Groby.

Above all let's thank God for His Faithfulness throughout the last year.



Prayers for our Church Leadership Team

As we start looking to the year ahead it is important to remember those who lead the church and to lift them up to God in prayer:

- Pray for Paul as he leads Groby and the other four churches in the West Leicester Group. Ask that God will equip him with the skills and knowledge he needs for the work he does within all of the churches.
- Thank God that he has called Louise Brown to be our Children & Youth Worker. Ask that he will bless her as she prepares to start the new role with us and that he will show us how we can support and encourage Louise as she sets out in this new chapter.
- Pray for the Elders who do so much work both seen and unseen to ensure the church, the building and the fellowship are looked after, lead and guided. Ask God to bless them as they work in the role he has called them to and ask that he will renew them with his Spirit and his vision for the church here in Groby.
- There are many others throughout the church who lead different groups and activities, pray that God will give them all a fresh passion and purpose within the roles they work in for him.

PRAYERS RESULTING FROM OUR HOPE CHRISTMAS APPEAL...

The Voice for Justice Team are humbled by the result of the Christmas Appeal on behalf of Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation Training (CCT) and give thanks to God, for the generous response.

The donations have now been forwarded and we follow through with prayers for the distribution to the world's poorest peoples:

GIVE THANKS to God for Tearfund's prompting and pray for the training that local churches will receive in order to help their communities.

WE THANK you Lord, for encouraging us, here in Groby, to participate in the training programmes via our giving.

GIVE THANKS for the Tearfund pastors trained to lead CCT training in their churches. Ask for discernment, wisdom and patience for Tearfund as they plant and nurture skills and resources.

PRAY for the ripple effect across poor communities as they recognise the skills and resources God has given them.

PRAY for Odile, Rene and their children (see elsewhere in this Contact). **Give thanks** to God for helping them break poverty's grip and for the changes CCT has made in their lives. **Ask** for a blessing on their endeavours as they pledge themselves to help support their local community by doing God's work.



PRAY for yourself/our fellowship that we will have a greater insight into the world's poverty, and help us to understand how we can play our part in making a difference.

A fun time was had by all at Tasters Christmas session on 23rd December



Here are some of the team looking festive!





Sunday Service Take Aways

A Meditation (Paul read this during our Christmas Day Service)

What you first must understand about the face of Jesus is that it is so small. His milk teeth are not yet showing beneath his gums. His lungs are well developed as Mary and Joseph and the animals have already discovered.

But he has no language beyond his crying.

He, the Word of God, cannot say "Mamma".

He, the son of God cannot call him "Abba" let alone argue with Rabbis and Priests in the Temple, the finer things of heaven. He is the Love of God and yet he cannot smile though sometimes when he gets the wind, his face crumples up as though he can. His eyes cannot focus, and yet, and yet if you kneel beside his manger (you will be far too high above him if you stand) If you kneel so that, so that your face is close to his, then you will find yourself looking level eyed into the face of God.

A second feature of his face to have imprinted on your soul, the laughter lines that play about his eyes. Some keep their Christ pickled in piety or paint him stern as a schoolmaster in Dickens on a bad day unbending, uncompromising, unforgiving.

Why then is he such good company?

Why does he tell such stories?

Why does he teach the lame not just to walk, but dance the tango? Why does he turn water into wine?

And speak of living life to the full?

Why does he bend so low this 'unbending' man, that he can wash the disciples' feet?

Why will he always compromise if that means touch someone in their need?

Why is forgiveness his Alpha and Omega? His beginning, middle and his end?

Why does he fill his own tomb with such merriment that we can only call it 'resurrection'?

See his whole face dances with the laughter lines of God.

The third marking of his face you cannot miss. I mean the pain, the bewilderment, the sorrow the sheer anguish of it.

Such is the expression we have left him with, now we have strung him up on that heavy cross beam he has lugged along those narrow streets to Golgotha. His hair is hidden behind black thorns. His teeth are gone, knocked out in the beating the soldiers have given him, and his lungs rasp for breath and soon will lose the fight.

We have robbed him of his language too, left him with just a few last words with which to hurl his loneliness at heaven.

He cannot smile for we have wiped all smiling off his face. And yet, and yet, if you stand yourself beneath his cross (oh, do not kneel or bend your head, but raise your eyes and see). If you stand on tiptoe, then you will find to your great sorrow, but his small comfort that you can reach to soothe the very face of God.

By Trevor Dennis (with thanks to Janet de-Bie)



Welcome to our Christmas Eve Family Service!









Well Done to Richard Knott and the families for a great service!

JESU

News from the West Leicestershire Churches

Apart from our separate Christmas celebrations, what joy we had together at our joint *Christmas Capers*, when each of the five Churches rose to offer two contributions...and we all saw the Enderby congregation in a new light!

Some of you already know that our elder daughter, Hannah, has been serving God in Cambodia since just before I moved to Leicestershire. Jill and I are off to visit her at the end of January, so I shall be on annual leave and out of contact from 30th January until 14th February inclusive. You certainly all knew of the arrival of our granddaughter last summer, and I shall also take off the last Sunday in January for Lydia's infant dedication.

Christ Church enjoyed a typically full build up to Christmas, including welcoming the Lord Mayor of Leicester to their community carol singing: I sang *Silent night* with Christ Church eight times in all! On Christmas Eve, I ordained Doug Hill as a new Elder there.

I seemed to 'top and tail' Advent at **Enderby**, from an impressive five-course Christmas dinner in the Church Hall through to Christmas Eve midnight Communion. Before all of that, I had the exciting experience of a Remembrance Sunday service for a chapel packed full with children and their parents.

Groby held a Christmas Eve children's service for the first time since the pandemic, led by the Synod Children's & Youth Development Officer, Richard Knott, who lives nearby in Markfield, and was rewarded with a good turnout of families.

St Stephen's now boasts a new notice board on De Montfort Street (shared with the other Church that uses the premises on Sundays). It was a delight to conduct Andrew and Tina's wedding there at Christmas, and all the more so because they attend St Stephen's frequently.

Braunstone's oldest Church member, and only non-serving Elder, Sandra Fulleylove, died in October. One of her twin daughters, Sheena, is their Church Secretary.

The Nursery that meets at Braunstone URC kindly invited Rob and me to both their nativity play and their Christmas dinner.

The representatives of the five Churches are reminded of the next Liaison Meeting, at my Manse on Thursday 18th January at 7.30 pm: please bring significant dates for your Church's calendar for the second half of 2024.

Speaking of dates, now you have your new diaries, remember our Resource Area *Quiet Day* at Launde Abbey on Thursday 25th April, to be led by Rev Mike Playdon, which is open to everyone from the five Churches, but limited to 40 places in total.

Finally, however far into 2024 you are reading this, please accept my best wishes to you for a joyous New Year and another twelve months enjoying working together to worship and to serve our Lord Jesus in the West Leicestershire Resource Area of URCs.

Yours in His service,

Paul.

Enjoying refreshments together during Christmas Capers.





THE HEADLINE NEWS IS: This year is Fairtrade's 30th birthday, so they want to use the occasion to highlight 30 years of working together to help make a life-changing impact for farmers across the world.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2024 will be moving to September as part of the year-long celebrations.

This yearly two week event is aimed at increasing awareness of fairtrade and to get us to use fairly traded products not just during the fortnight, but all year round.



We are a Fairtrade Church and this change of date gives us all more time to think of activities to raise awareness in Groby. Please put your thinking caps on and speak to Kathy and Joy if you have any ideas for activities we can initiate. Why not check out the website too? www.fairtrade.org.uk

New date for Fairtrade Fortnight is: Monday 9th - Sunday 22nd September 2024



A woman drives her Reliant Robin to the local garage and asks. "Can I have a spare hub cap for my car?" The mechanic says, "**Sounds like a fair trade**"

Grief is hard. Death can impact all of life.



7 Sessions of films and discussion for anyone bereaved anytime

Topics include:

- Attachment, separation and loss
- The pain and responses of grief
- · Anger and guilt
- · Coping with others' reactions
- · Delayed and suppressed grief
- · Adjusting to change
- Moving forward healthily
- Faith questions a Christian perspective (optional)

To find out more visit: thebereavementjourney.org

Running soon:

Starting Friday 9th Feb 7-9pm at Ratby Church Rooms, LE6 0JF

For further details and to book please ring Joan Hawkins (course leader) Tel: 07545 909868.

Sponsored by Anstey and District Funeral Services Ltd.



The choir had a very successful end to 2023, performing *Groby Sings at the Opera* at a new venue - English Martyrs' Catholic School on Anstey Lane. The plentiful parking, accessibility, good acoustics and comfortable theatre seating proved to be a popular choice for both audience and choir members.

The programme consisted of a selection of songs from *The Phantom of the Opera, Les Miserables* and various other numbers with a loose connection to 'the opera' but the choir really enjoyed the opportunity of singing a real operatic aria, *Nessun Dorma* from Puccini's *Turandot,* in Italian. We're now wondering what challenges are to come as we embark on our next project, the *Groby Sings European Tour* which will feature songs from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and 'hits from around the continent'. Will we be learning more languages we wonder?! We can't wait to find out what our next selection of songs will be but we know we'll have fun learning them together as always.

Thanks to everyone who supports Groby Sings on a regular basis, in particular the Groby Club and local churches, the Groby & Field Head Spotlight and other local businesses which help with publicity, Groby Library and, of course, to our loyal audiences who share with the choir the enjoyment of concerts like *Groby Sings at the Opera*. As a testament to the impact that Groby Sings has made to the community, we were proud to be recognised recently at a Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council event, 'Making a Difference 2023', our second community award following the Radio Leicester event in September. Five representatives of the choir, management team and trustees attended and were presented with an award for '*Creating a Sense of Community*'.

The next season starts after the February half-term on **Wednesday 28**th **February** at **The Groby Club** and, as always, we invite anyone and everyone to join us to sing, socialise and eat cake!

Enquiries via our website www.grobysings.org.

Groby Sings is a Registered Charity no. 1180490







Church AGM and Church Meeting: Thursday 25th January, 7.30 pm at church. All welcome

Prayers for Ukraine: Thursday February 1st, 15th and 29th at, 6.30 pm in church

Rock Solid: Every alternate Fridays, 7.30 - 9 pm at our church. For Year 5 - 11 children. February 2nd and 16th.

Messy Monday's: every Monday (term-time) 3.15 - 4.15 pm at Ratby Parish church

Save the date - Thursday April 25th - Area churches Quiet Day at Launde Abbey to be led by Mike Playdon.

Contact Distributor

Barb Lomas has been organising the distribution of Contact for many years. When I asked, Barb and others, we don't seem to know how long but we think 20-25 years! That is a long time of loyal service and we are very grateful to Barbara for making sure that those who wish, receive a printed copy of Contact 10 times a year, for all of this time. However, she feels now is a good time to stand down from this responsibility.

It now means we are now looking for someone who is able to take the job on . I usually collect the magazines from Groby College who print them for us, drop them around to Barbara, who puts them into bundles ready for those who do the actual delivering. After organising the bundles, Barbara has been taking them to church where most deliverers collect their bundle the following Sunday. Its not complicated or too onerous, but is vital. Barbara has the numbers for each deliverers bundle.

If you feel this is a job for you, please talk to Barbara or me (Kathy). Many thanks

March 2024 issue

The deadline for the March issue of Contact issue will be SAT 17th February 2024 but happy to accept articles sooner if prepared and ready to go!

Please submit to <u>magazine@grobyurc.com</u> or to Kathy (5 Hawthorn Rise, Groby) Preferred via email.

Print or Hard Copy of Contact?

Contact magazine is published in print and on the church website, grobyurc.com. If you would like to be added or removed from the monthly hyperlink email list, please let Kathy know at the magazine email address <u>magazine@grobyurc.com</u>

If you receive a paper copy and no longer wish to, please let us know through the magazine email address.

Paul read this moving piece during our Christmas Day service.

LIGHT LOOKED DOWN

From *Cloth for the cradle* by The Wild Goose Worship Group, 1997

Light looked down and saw darkness. 'I will go there,' said Light.

Peace looked down and saw war. 'I will go there,' said Peace.

Love looked down and saw hatred. 'I will go there,' said Love.

So He, the Lord of Light, the Prince of Peace, the King of Love, came down and crept in beside us.

Groby United Reformed Church member: Evangelical Alliance UK La family friendly Church www.grobyurc.com, LE6 0FE



CONTACTS

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SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Our Sunday morning services start at 10 am and are recorded. A link to the recording can be found on our website and Facebook page (see page 2 for details of this.) Our worship includes monthly Holy Communion

The church building has a loop hearing system, wheelchair access, a toilet for the disabled & baby nappy changing facilities

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Mon: Noah's Ark parent & toddler group - 9.30-11.30 (term time) Thurs: 'Fair Cuppa'* at Groby village Hall-10.30-12 am Fri: CatCH* parent & toddler group-9.30 - 11 am (term time) Fri. (alternate Fridays during term time) 7.30 pm Rock Solid Games and Grub for children in Years 5 - 11.

Sat: Tasters* Coffee, hot cobs, Kids activities -10-12am

There are also regular Homegroups running throughout the week. Our Secretarial Contact has more information.

* These activities are run jointly with St Philip & St James as part of 'Churches Together in Groby'.