

Mar-Apr 2025

**St John's**  
United Reformed Church

# Record

Somerset & Mowbray Roads, New Barnet, Herts., EN5 1RH

## Lent, Spring and Rebirth

**A**s we enter the season of Lent, which for Christians down the years has signified the forty days of fasting and prayer leading up to Easter, we note that the word Lent has Germanic roots meaning the 'lengthening of days'.



And so we look forward to the warmer weather and longer hours of daylight which Spring brings. Spring also brings rebirth as the natural world, which has lain dormant during the winter, bursts into life once more. It is no accident that we celebrate Christ's death and resurrection at this time of the year.

*'Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'* John 12: 24 (NRSVA)

As the hymn has it:

*Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.*

*John Macleod Campbell Crum*

Jesus' resurrection from the dead gives us hope of new life.  
*'Jesus said ..., 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live ... John 11: 25 (NRSVA)*

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### Trusting God by:

Walking the way of Jesus  
Putting faith into practice  
Valuing all people equally

## Contacts

**Website:** [www.stjohnsnewbarnet.org.uk](http://www.stjohnsnewbarnet.org.uk)

**Record Editors:** Richard & Janet Harvey, email: [churchrecord2023@gmail.com](mailto:churchrecord2023@gmail.com)

**Church Secretary:** Alison Bond, Tel: 020 8440 1941 email: [aegbond@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aegbond@hotmail.co.uk)

**Church Administrator:** Alison Cousins, Tel: 07816 115 817 email: [info.stjohnsurc@gmail.com](mailto:info.stjohnsurc@gmail.com)

We have mourned the passing of several of our members at St John's these last few months. But we are assured by Christ's resurrection from the dead that we will be born into new life with him.

A while ago the following meditation by John Bell was used in a service at St John's. Several people said it would be worth hearing again and so we reproduce it here.

*"... I believe it is better for all of us to embrace death rather than live in fear of it, I think that we have to find language for people today to somehow hold the mystery of the experience.*

*It must be sixteen years or more ago when a friend of mine, a very diligent and caring pastor, phoned me in a dilemma. He was chaplain to a high school. The day before, he had learned that four teenagers from that school had all been killed in a car crash. One, perhaps two, were people of faith, two were not. The school was going to assemble and he had no idea what he might say to this mixed group of grieving teenagers. So I sent him the following meditation which puts the much-feared mystery of death in the context of the better-loved mystery of birth."*

I never wanted to be born.

The older I grew,  
the fonder I became  
of my mother's womb  
and its warmth  
and its safety,

I feared the unknown:  
the next world  
about which I knew nothing,  
but imagined the worst.

Yet, as I grew older,  
I sensed in my soul  
that the womb was not my home forever.

Though I did not know when,  
I felt sure that one day  
I would disappear through a door  
which had yet to be opened,  
and confront the unknown  
of which I was afraid.

And then,  
it happened.

In blood, tears and pain,  
it happened.

I was cut off from the familiar;  
I left my life behind  
and discovered ...  
not darkness, but light;

not hostility, but love;  
not eternal separation,  
but hands that wanted to hold me.

I never wanted to be born.

I don't want to die.

The older I grow,  
the fonder I become  
of this world  
and its warmth  
and its safety.

I fear the unknown:  
the next world  
about which I know nothing,  
but imagine the worst.

Yet as I grow older,  
I sense in my soul  
that this world is not my home forever.

Though I do not know when,  
I feel that one day  
I will disappear through a door  
which has yet to be opened.

Perhaps having come so safely through  
the first door,  
I should not fear so hopelessly the second.

# Betty Fanning - *Obituary*

14<sup>th</sup> August 1926 — 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Betty was born in East Barnet on 14 August 1926. Her parents, Charles and Ethel Roberts, bought a house in Hadley Road, where Betty grew up with her younger brother Bill. Betty found childhood quite restrictive as in those days children were expected to be seen and not heard. After leaving Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Barnet, where she met one of her longest and dearest friends, Phyllis, she worked in an optician's factory in Mornington Crescent.

Betty joined a choir and there met Eileen Fanning, whose brother Bert used to meet them after choir practice and escort them home. Betty and Bert's friendship blossomed into love and they were married on 12 June 1948.

Neil was born and five years later Michael arrived. These were happy years, with a growing family, and although not well off, they enjoyed annual holidays to Swanage in Dorset.

In the mid-1960s, Bert was unemployed for a time. Ever resourceful, to maintain the family income, Betty invested in a knitting machine and began to make bespoke jumpers and cardigans to customers' specific designs. As her family aged, so Betty spent much of her time caring for her grandmother, mother, father and uncle. Her positive outlook on life and her devotion to her family must have been a great comfort to her relatives in their declining years.

In 1974, Neil married Sally and her granddaughters, Alexa and Rosa, were born some years later. As a grandmother, Betty delighted in her grandchildren, introducing them to art and crafts, holidays in Swanage, and cats.

Sadly, her husband Bert died unexpectedly early, in 2003. This was a great shock to Betty. During their lives, Bert and Betty had worshipped regularly at St Mark's Church in Potters Road and now, at this time of great sadness, she found comfort and support at St John's. This became her spiritual home and over the next twenty years she became a much loved member of this fellowship.

In rebuilding her life, Betty renewed her interest in arts and crafts and became much more involved in the Women's Institute. She joined a book club and began researching the family history. In an interview with the Barnet Society, recalling her childhood memories, Betty describes life in the 1930s, as she made her way to the shops in High Barnet along footpaths through farmland with cows grazing in the fields.

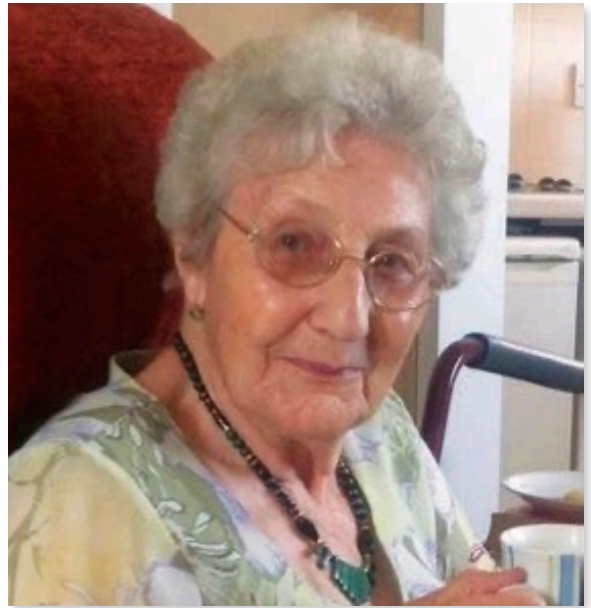
Betty will be remembered for her love of her family, her interest in arts and crafts, her love of poetry, her quiet presence, her personal warmth, her concern for others, her devoted support to Michael, her very positive outlook on life even when facing challenging circumstances, her resilience and above all for her Christian faith which ran, as a golden thread, throughout her life.



From the eulogy given by Rev'd Roger Orme at Betty's funeral service

## Pearl Watts - *Obituary*

16<sup>th</sup> December 1921  
- 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025



**P**earl was born in Glasgow and had a twin brother Arthur and an older sister Elsie. Her father was an electrician and the family lived in a tenement block. Pearl suffered with ill-health as a child and often missed school. She left school at fourteen and worked in a shoe shop and later went to work as a telephonist. In this role she was encouraged to lose her Scottish accent but she never did! She met her husband Stan during the war when he was in the Royal Corps of Signals and they married in 1944. They went to live in Whetstone and later Stan became a telephone engineer. Pearl was very happy to find St Augustine's Presbyterian Church where she became a regular attender and made many friends. She enjoyed Scottish Dancing and Stan played accordion in a Scottish dance band. Their daughter Rona was born in 1949 and the family moved to a house in Potters Bar which they bought for £2,750. Pearl enjoyed being a homemaker but still came back to worship at St Augustine's Church and later she joined the Potters Bar Townswomen's Guild. After Stan suffered a stroke in 1993, they moved to a Retirement Home in Potters Bar. Stan died in 2008 but Pearl continued to live in Potters Bar until 2017 when she moved to be nearer to Rona at St Ives in Cambridgeshire. She lived at Rose Cottage Care Home and celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday there in 2021. She lived to be 103 and was our oldest member.

Pearl's funeral service took place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February at Huntingdon Crematorium and was led very competently by Revd Derek Newton, a 95 year old retired URC minister from the St Ives Free Church. We continue to remember Pearl's daughter Rona and all the family in our prayers.

Valerie Mills



## Marjorie O'Connor

We were all shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Marjorie on 30<sup>th</sup> January. Her funeral will have taken place on 28<sup>th</sup> February at St John's. She will be greatly missed for all she contributed to the life of this church and the wider community. An obituary will appear in the next edition of Church Record.

Editors



## Patricia Anne Picken - *Obituary*

### 6<sup>th</sup> July 1939 - 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025

**P**atricia was born, grew up and was educated in Staffordshire, near Wolverhampton, the eldest of four children. She had two brothers, Roger & Keith, and a sister, Gillian.

When Pat left school she went to college to train as a caterer. For many years she worked in catering and willingly contributed her catering skill to the various voluntary bodies with which she engaged. After working for many years in catering she changed careers and became a telephonist.

Nigel and Pat were married in 1963 at Codswall Methodist Church, Staffordshire. They had both been members of the church Youth Club. They had two children, David and Suzanne, and were very proud grandparents of Jamie and Eddy, Summer, Caitlin and Liam; and great grandparents to Leo and Emmy. Pat and Nigel celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

For many years Pat was a member of St John's URC, New Barnet.

She was always very musical and was a valued member of the church choir.

A former member of the choir, upon hearing of Pat's death has written:

*'I admired Pat so much for her resilience ... her support for her sister, and her care for Nigel during his recent health difficulties. She was such a warm, engaging and interesting person. I will particularly remember the fun we had on the church trip to Prague when Pat's sister joined us. Her death will be sad news for so many people whose lives Pat touched.'*



Pat was always very involved with a number of voluntary organisations which included Amateur

Dramatics. She was a member of the U3A Theatre Group and organised many visits to the theatre.

How very sad that just after Pat and Nigel moved into an apartment at the Care Home in Honiton, Devon to be nearer their daughter Suzanne her life ended so dramatically and suddenly.

Pat will never disappear from our lives. Her love will always stay deeply embedded within our memories. Her presence will always live with us! We don't deny the pain that her passing brings but God's eternal presence with whom, and in whom, Pat lives on is also part of the fellowship of which we too are part.

Taken from the address given at Pat's funeral  
by Rev'd Michael Diffey

The Life and Mission Choir  
joyfully presents

# TIME FOR JESUS

The Musical

Music and Lyrics  
**PAUL WARBOP-DAV**

Script  
**JOHN COX**

**25th ANNIVERSARY PRESENTATIONS**

**Saturday 12th April 2025 7PM**  
St James' Church, East Barnet Road, EN48RN

**Sunday 13th April 2025 7PM**  
St Mary's Church, Church End, Hendon, NW4 4JT

**ADMISSION FREE**      [lifeandmissionchoir.com](http://lifeandmissionchoir.com)

# HOLY WEEK



### Palm Sunday

13 April: 11am Worship led by Paul Elsdon

### Maundy Thursday

17 April: 8pm United Service  
at St John's URC

### Good Friday

18 April: 2pm A Service of Reflection  
led by Rev'd Roger Orme

### Easter Day

20 April: 11am Worship  
with the Lord's Supper  
led by Sarah Beaumont

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2025 The Cook Islands



Saturday 8 March, 2.30pm  
at Holy Trinity Church,  
Lyonsdown



East Barnet Anglican-Methodist Partnership  
LEARNING IN PARTNERSHIP  
An East Barnet lent course

## IMAGES OF THE INVISIBLE GOD: UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN BELIEF THROUGH ART

Wednesdays  
12, 19, 26 March and 2 April

12:45 light lunch

1:15 lent course

St Mary's, East Barnet,  
in our new community halls

[stmaryseastbarnet.org](http://stmaryseastbarnet.org)

## Fellowship: TITANIUM with Barry Campbell

St John's Fellowship, which meets every month, prides itself on the range and expertise of its speakers. Every session provides the opportunity to learn something you did not know before.

The talk in January, given by Barry Campbell, differed slightly from the norm in that it was scientific and technical, while most of our lectures deal with the arts of every kind. Barry, a qualified physicist and engineer, spoke about titanium. While the chemical formulae and technical terms might well have been above the heads of his audience, he still interested and intrigued them with the vast number of applications titanium fulfils in our lives, and his slides and examples provoked interest and searching questions. Many were aware of medical applications like hip replacements or use in making crowns for dental purposes. They were less aware of its use in pigments and aerospace.



We were told how everybody is affected somehow by titanium. The minerals occur in sand deposits all around the world. The largest usage is as white titanium dioxide pigment used in paints, paper, pharmaceuticals, sporting goods. The metal is light compared to steel and is strong, non-magnetic and doesn't corrode. It is used in aircraft, medical implants, industrial equipment and jewellery. Various compounds of titanium turn up in MRI machines, cigarette lighters, phones and sonar systems.

Titanium ores are purified by reacting with chlorine at high temperature to form titanium chloride, a really nasty liquid, this is burned in oxygen to form titanium dioxide for use as a pigment. It can also be processed to extract the metal using the Kroll process. Metal production, forming, including superplastic forming, and 3D printing was covered.

The discussion after the talk covered the density of titanium compared with steel, usage in implants and bicycle frames, and the future of 3D printing.

Barry & Barbara Campbell

## Wedding of Anthony Shepherd and Sonal Lea 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024

The editors would like to join with St John's members and other readers in offering their congratulations to Tony and Sonal on their recent marriage. Such lovely news! Tony is a long-time member of St John's and a former Elder; Sonal has become involved in St John's Church over the last three years or so, and is a regular member of the singing group on Sundays. Their own account of the big day follows:

It was on a cold but bright day just before Christmas that we were married. Our paths had eventually crossed after busy lives where God had both tested and blessed us, and we discovered that we share many interests such as walking, music, literature and history.

The marriage, attended by a small number of family and close friends, took place at Enfield Register Office, a beautiful Georgian house in the conservation area of Enfield dating back to the eighteenth century. Andrew Mills was the best man and ensured Tony arrived at the venue in plenty of time. After carrying out duties as an impromptu parking warden, due to a bit of confusion over the number of cars allowed to park at the venue, Sonal also arrived looking only slightly dishevelled.

The civil ceremony was held in the elegant Admiral's Suite, named after the most distinguished resident of the house: Admiral Sir Edward Thornborough (1754 - 1834), who was a contemporary of Nelson. It included poems by Sappho, Christopher Marlowe and Wendy Cope, read by Valerie Mills, Sonal's brother and Tony's sister respectively; the music was by Elvis Presley *The Wonder of You*, Stephanie Mills *Never Knew Love Like This Before*, JS Bach *Prelude in C Major*, Handel *Eternal Source of Light Divine* and Albinoni *Adagio from Oboe Concerto in D Minor*. We also made our own personal vows. We were very fortunate in that a good friend of ours, who is an ordained minister, kindly agreed to conduct an adapted Christian marriage service afterwards in the courtyard - finishing just in time before rain and darkness set in.

The wedding party then repaired to nearby West Lodge Park Hotel, where we enjoyed afternoon tea and speeches from the groom, best man and Sonal's son Matthew. It was a wonderful day, and we will cherish the memories forever.



Tony and Sonal



# A JOURNEY OF FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP: MY VISIT AND EXPERIENCE IN THE UK

On the morning of February 4<sup>th</sup> I arrived at Heathrow Airport, eager and excited for my visit to the United Kingdom. My generous hosts, Mr Tony Shepherd and his wife, had suggested I take a train to Cockfosters station, a journey that initially felt daunting as a first-time traveller. However, with the help of a kind stranger, I obtained an Oyster card, navigated the train system, and reached my destination successfully. The experience of taking a train for the first time, observing people rushing in and out, and capturing moments on camera was fascinating.

Upon arrival at Cockfosters I was warmly welcomed by Tony and his wife who took me home, offered me tea, and allowed me to rest. Later Tony gave me a tour of New Barnet, including a visit to the local park, Age UK charity shop, and other key spots. Experiencing the winter weather was a challenge but I was touched by the kindness Tony showed in helping me get warm clothing.

My second day began with a visit to Oakleigh Special School where I met the Deputy Head Teacher, Ms Sandra. It was inspiring to see the dedication of the staff in supporting children with different abilities. I gained valuable insights into how they integrate family support - an idea I hope to implement at Good Samaritan School for the Deaf.

In the afternoon I attended the Interfaith Youth Summit 2025 at the London School of Economics where I met inspiring individuals from across the world. The workshops, especially one led by Ms Lucy Plummer on "Building Faith in a Broken System", enriched my perspective on faith-based climate advocacy. This reinforced my commitment to launching a project titled "Building Green Futures with Children" in Masaka, Uganda.

The following day I enjoyed a children's event at St John's Church before visiting St Paul's Cathedral. On February 7<sup>th</sup> I had the pleasure of meeting Mr and Mrs Attwood, trustees of the Green Christian Group, at St Martin's Crypt. Our discussions on environmental sustainability and their support for my work were heartening.

Later I reconnected with Ms Nia, who had visited Uganda previously. She took me on a delightful city tour, visiting iconic landmarks such as Buckingham Palace and Chinatown. Despite the winter cold I cherished every moment.

On Saturday I presented my climate advocacy project to the Green Christian Barnet Group, focusing on tree planting, climate-smart agriculture, and renewable energy initiatives. The audience, both in person and on Zoom, expressed great interest, and I was encouraged by their enthusiasm.

Sunday was a special day as I joined St John's Church members for a service led by Rev'd Maggie Hindley. Afterward I shared updates on the impact of their support at Good Samaritan School for the Deaf, including the replacement of the children's play area and borehole restoration.

Monday marked my final day, beginning with a heartwarming visit to St Mary's C of E Primary School. The students and staff, who had been corresponding with our school, surprised me by signing and singing in Luganda. Their presentation of the Good Shepherd story in drama form was deeply touching.

That evening I met with the Barnet Rotary Club to discuss their contributions toward the borehole restoration project. Their support, along with that of St John's Church, has been instrumental in improving access to clean water in our community.

As I write this article I reflect on the generosity, kindness and hospitality I experienced during my stay. Special thanks to Tony and his wife for hosting me, to St John's Church members, the Green Christian Group, the Rotary Club of Barnet, and all my wonderful friends who made my visit memorable. Your support continues to uplift the work we do for children with hearing impairments and environmental sustainability in Uganda.



May God bless you all abundantly!

**Rosemary Nakasiita**

**Director, Good Samaritan School for the Deaf, Kitengesa, Uganda**

**FINDING A VOICE**  
**A FILM AND DISCUSSION GROUP FOR LENT**



For this year's Lent course we will be using the book 'Finding a Voice' by Hilary Brand, which is based on the film 'The King's Speech' starring Colin Firth.

'The King's Speech' tells the story of George VI and the challenges he faced as a man with a stammer who happened to be the new King. We see his journey towards greater fluency through the help of his speech therapist. It is a journey of courage, creativity and discovery told in a compelling screenplay written by a man who himself stammers.

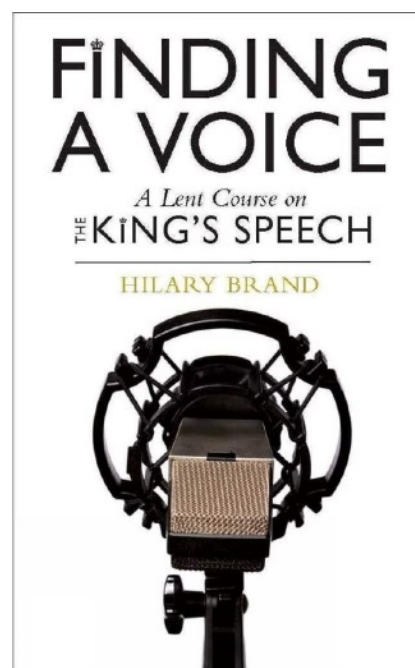
"These days many of us seem to have lost our voice..." announces Hilary Brand at the beginning of 'Finding A Voice'. Inspired by the film, she asks whether in today's world we dare talk about what is "loving and true, when so many other voices challenge and dismiss our faith." Or have we, "lost the sense of who we could become and what together we might accomplish?"

Some of you will remember a similar course we followed based on the film 'Chocolat'. That course was also written by Hilary Brand.

The first session at 3pm on Thursday 6th March will be a complete showing of the film which lasts just under two hours. The following five sessions - all on Thursdays - will start with tea and coffee at 3pm and finish about 4:30pm. All are welcome. You don't have to come to all sessions to join in.

**'The King's Speech' - a complete showing**  
 Thursday 6th March at 3pm

**'Finding a Voice' discussion sessions**  
 - Thursdays at 3pm -  
 13th March  
 20th March  
 27th March  
 3rd April  
 10th April



# Calendar of Events

## MARCH

Saturday 1	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 2	11:00am 2-4pm	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Sarah Beaumont Seed Swap
Wednesday 5		<b>Ash Wednesday</b> - The start of Lent
Thursday 6	9:30am 3:00pm	Mainly Music Film showing: 'The King's Speech'
Saturday 8	2:30pm	World Day of Prayer at <i>Holy Trinity Church, Lyonsdown</i>
Sunday 9	11:00am	Worship led by David Paul and Richard Harvey
Tuesday 11	7:30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thursday 13	9:00am 3:00pm	Mainly Music Lent Course: Finding a Voice 1
Saturday 15	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 16	11:00am	Worship led by Roz Douglas; followed by a Church Meeting
Monday 17	7:30pm	Joint Men/Women Group at <i>The Railway Bell</i>
Wednesday 19	7:30pm	Fellowship: A musical evening with Italian tenor Yuri Sabatini
Thursday 20	9:30am 3:00pm	Mainly Music Lent Course: Finding a Voice 2
Sunday 23	11:00am	Worship led by Helen Snider and Andrew Summers
Thursday 27	9:30am 3:00pm	Mainly Music Lent Course: Finding a Voice 3
Friday 28	11:00am	Women's Group at <i>Oak Hill Park Café, Parkside Gardens, EN4 8JP</i>
Saturday 29	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 30	11:00am	<b>Mother's Day:</b> Worship led by Rev'd Dominic Grant Daylight saving time starts - clocks go forward one hour

## APRIL

Thursday 3	9:30am 3:00pm	Mainly Music Lent Course: Finding a Voice 4
Sunday 6	t.b.c.	Joint Worship via Zoom with Rev'd Filip Keller's Church in Svitavy
Tuesday 8	7:30pm	Elders' meeting
Thursday 10	3:00pm	Lent Course: Finding a Voice 5
Saturday 12	10:00am	Community Garden

## APRIL contd.

Sunday 13	11:00am	<b>Palm Sunday:</b> Worship led by Paul Elsdon
Wednesday 16	7:30pm	Fellowship: 'Pam Edwards and the Old Bull Theatre'. Speaker: Jenny Remfry
Thursday 17	8:00pm	<b>Maundy Thursday:</b> United Service at St John's URC
Friday 18	2:00pm	<b>Good Friday:</b> Service of reflection led by Rev'd Roger Orme
Sunday 20	11:00am	<b>Easter Day:</b> Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Sarah Beaumont
Thursday 24	9:30am 7:30pm	Mainly Music Men's Group at <i>The Railway Bell</i>
Saturday 26	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 27	11:00am	Worship led by Rev'd Malcolm Drummond
Tuesday 29	11:00am	Women's Group at <i>Vibe Café</i> , 6 Greenhill Parade, EN5 1ES

## MAY

Thursday 1	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 4	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Valerie and Andrew Mills



### Thanks for flowers:

From the funeral of Betty Fanning on 24th January  
From the funeral of Marjorie O'Connor on 28th February



## Joining in worship with our friends in Svitavy

It was in July 2023, when our previous Minister, Filip Keller, and his family came over to Barnet by coach with a large group from their congregation. On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April we have the opportunity to join in worship with them at our morning service via Zoom. It should be a great occasion.

