

MAY-JUNE  
2026

**St John's**  
United Reformed Church

# Record

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



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### Trusting God by:

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

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# We Are the Lucky Ones

Have you ever had one of those weeks when nothing seems to go right?  
Well I had one like that.

On the first day I heard that a very good friend was more sick than we first thought. Yes, we can pray for her but will she have the faith to pray for herself? The second day Ray was unwell. He had a very sore throat and stayed in bed. I had a hospital appointment and was told that yet another scan was needed. Ray was still unwell on the third day and found it painful to swallow, so did not want to eat. Bad for me too because I need encouragement to eat. I hear that my Jewish Tai Chi teacher is still depressed. Wonder if he has the faith to pray himself? Must ask. On Thursday I had my purse stolen from my bag. God was certainly looking out for me as I remembered the banking app on my phone and I was able to see how much had been spent on my card (less than £10) and I was able to put a stop on my card. There had been less than £20 in cash in my purse. On the fifth day I lost my gold bracelet. My fault, I thought, as I knew it had become loose as I have lost weight and I should have stopped wearing it. Still, it's only a possession I told myself. What a week when we were still grieving Pepper, our dog who was put to sleep a week earlier.

I almost forgot to tell you. Ray found my bracelet on our patio on Saturday morning.

I count myself as very lucky, knowing our Father is always looking after us, His children. At the same time, in my bad week, I appreciated having the NHS, our friends and family, our new lawn growing and the tulips I'd forgotten, growing away so cheerfully. How do people without faith manage on their own?

So why are we the lucky ones? We are the lucky ones because I felt God was with me the whole week through, the bad and the good. How do people manage who don't have faith?

Marion Hopwood



# Christian Aid Week 2026



Every **Christian Aid Week**, people across Britain and Ireland raise funds, act and pray for their global neighbours in a celebration of hope for a fairer world. For over 80 years, Christian Aid has been fighting poverty and injustice and been able to offer hope to communities who need it most.

In the crowded and noisy settlements of Nairobi, most parents wake every single day knowing that they must go and earn money, otherwise their children won't eat that evening. With no formal work opportunities, heartbreakingly low pay, and no social support, it's a precarious and frightening daily struggle that no family should have to face. **'When I wake up, I have a lot of worries. Sometimes I don't have food,'** says Fridah Moraa, a recently widowed grandmother determined to support her family on what little she earns.

**'Now I'm responsible for everything.'** With school costs, rent and water to cover, providing food for every meal is a problem that never goes away. But Fridah's faith in God, and in her own ability to provide, is unwavering. With tools, seeds and specialist training from Christian Aid's partner, Beacon of Hope, Fridah is now making the most of a small space in the city to grow a steady supply of fresh vegetables that she can cook for her family or sell on her market stall. Her inner strength, unstoppable resolve, and with a little help from Beacon of Hope, Fridah's overcoming poverty to feed the youngest members of her family and protect them from the threat of malnutrition. Fridah rightly takes pride in all she's achieving: **'When I harvest what I've planted, it makes me happy. Urban farming has changed my life.'**

We are finalising our plans for Christian Aid Week this year at St John's. Some of us will be doing the **Christian Aid London Freedom Walk on Saturday 9 May** which begins at 12noon at St Martin in the Fields church, Trafalgar Square and calls in at several churches along the route. The walk finishes at St Paul's Cathedral in time for Evensong at 5pm. Let me know if you would like to join us on this walk. You can register through this link: [Christian Aid London Freedom Walk 2026 Tickets, Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 12 pm to 5 pm | Eventbrite](#) (Press CTRL & Click to follow the link)



*Fridah tends her small city plot, tucked away at the end of an alley by her home in Dagoretti.*

**Credit: David Macharia/Christian Aid**

## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2026

Our **Service on Sunday 10 May** will focus on the support given by partner organisations of Christian Aid in Nairobi, Kenya. After the service, we invite you to stay for a fundraising jacket potato lunch.

**Donations for Christian Aid Week can be made:**

- Using our Digital Church e-Envelope: <https://caw.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2026/CAW2026-2>
- Or by enclosing your donation in one of the Christian Aid Week envelopes which will be available at church.

Please also pray for the work of Christian Aid and all their partner organisations around the world.

**What could your donations buy?**

**£5** could buy the seeds that kickstart a family's nutritious vegetable garden.

**£10** could pay for the pair of chickens that produce fertiliser for an urban farmer.

**£15** could purchase the hand tools that mean an urban farmer can tend their crops.

**£30** could buy the trio of cone garden planters that host hundreds of plants in a tiny city space.



Alison Bond



## Homeless Action in Barnet Sponsored Walk

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK everyone who sponsored me on a walk to raise money for **Homeless Action in Barnet** and their Winter Night Shelter.

Nearly sixty people and two dogs took part in the walk visiting local churches and synagogues that host the night shelter for homeless people during the colder months of the year.

HAB hoped to raise a total of £10,000 or more from the walk, and I am pleased to say they succeeded. As they do not get any government funding, this walk and other events they organise helps keep their support for homeless people going.

If you would like to know more about the work HAB does you can visit [www.habcentre.org](http://www.habcentre.org) and then click on Homeless Action in Barnet: Homepage.

David Paul

# Bug Hunting at St John's



ST JOHN'S COMMUNITY GARDEN is one of the many gardens that is taking part in the London-wide citizen science campaign to help record biodiversity in food growing spaces. Our observations feed into the wider Capital Growth project which collects data from every community garden that is registered with the scheme.

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April twelve of us were scanning the garden to record as many insects as possible. We found plenty of ladybirds, bees, and some butterflies as well as some earthworms and ground loving invertebrates.

Saturday was also a time of celebration. For it is ten years since Wendy started Incredible Edible Barnet. So what better way to enjoy this celebration than to stop bug hunting for a while, have drinks, chat and eat cake. Many thanks to Janet for the cake.

Next year it will be ten years since the community garden at St John's was started.

To find out more about Capital Growth: [www.capitalgrowth.org](http://www.capitalgrowth.org)

Paul Elsdon



# EASTER SERVICES

## Maundy Thursday



On Maundy Thursday we joined friends at St Andrew's Chesterfield Road for a service led by Rev Cindy Kent, based around the traditional Passover meal. We were warmly welcomed by Miriam and Dominic Grant, and other members of our neighbouring URC, and it was a moving and memorable evening. Our own familiar Communion Service was woven into the sequence of the Passover meal, with hymns, readings and prayers, and the traditional foods such as horseradish, parsley (bitter herbs) and unleavened bread. It's so good to be able to share together in these joint services and we all thanked Cindy for leading, and our friends at Chesterfield Road for hosting.

## Good Friday

On Good Friday we were delighted to welcome Rev Jenny Robinson, and others friends from Holy Trinity Lyonsdown, for a service entitled *An Hour at the Cross*. Each quarter of an hour had a particular theme, inspired by a reading and an area of the church had a prop or visual aid illustrating a section of the narrative of the crucifixion. Candles were placed at the front, to be lit by individuals as they prayed. It was a thoughtful and prayerful event, much appreciated by all who attended, and concluded with fellowship over tea and hot cross buns.



## Easter Sunday

The church was looking beautiful on Easter Day with extra floral arrangements and joyful music as we celebrated Holy Communion together in the sanctuary and on Zoom. Various members had donated chocolate treats to enjoy with coffee after the service and the flowers were distributed.

**Editors**

Thank you for flowers to Gill Hailey on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March,  
Alison Cousins and Valerie Mills on Easter Day.

# Gwenllian Lisabeth Williams - *Obituary*

16th September 1935 – 13th March 2026



Gwenllian was known affectionately to her friends as Gwen. She was born in London and lived in Ossian Road near Finsbury Park. Her parents Elizabeth Blodwen and Joshua Williams were both teachers and had moved to London from South Wales. When the Second World War broke out the family moved to Cambridge and Gwen went to primary school there. They were happy years for Gwen and she especially loved the dog Paddy who lived in the house next door to them.

When the war was over the family returned to London and Gwen attended St Paul's secondary school. Her studies continued at Queen Mary College where she met her friends Peggy and Patsy. Gwen obtained a First Class Honours degree in English Literature and later an MPhil.

She then trained as a teacher doing her PGCE at Goldsmith's College. She taught initially at Hackney Free and Parochial Secondary School and later Coburn High School. She then moved to Wales to lecture in English Literature at St David's University College in Lampeter. She lived with her landlady Bet there for many years and they became firm friends and Gwen looked upon Bet's daughter as a sister. Gwen became godmother to Bet's great granddaughter Rachel and she passed on her love of literature to Rachel by giving her books for Christmas and birthdays.

In the 1970's Gwen returned to London and lectured at Middlesex Polytechnic which later became Middlesex University. She was a kind and supportive mentor to her students with a listening ear and always ready to give advice. She gave them a great love of literature which prepared them for their careers and many of them became teachers too. She kept in touch with some of them after they graduated and was always interested in how their careers were developing.

Gwen loved to travel and often made friendships with fellow travellers which lasted for many years.

In the 1980's Gwen and her mother moved to Cockfosters and became members of St John's United Reformed Church in New Barnet. This was when we first knew Gwen. She was a friendly outgoing lady with a great sense of humour. She was always interested in people. After her mother died she became close to our family and made friends with my mother-in-law and aunt. She often came to us for Sunday lunch after church.

Gwen always had a great love of reading. She loved Dickens and Victorian detective novels. She also wrote stories and did a lot of research for these. She had a large collection of books which she was able to enjoy reading until her death.

Gwen loved music and enjoyed playing the piano and the lessons with her friend Kathy. She also loved painting and drawing.

Sadly Gwen had mobility problems in later life and wasn't able to get out. She appreciated the care given to her by her neighbours Eva and Chris. She will be missed but is now at peace.

Valerie Mills

# The Gift of Art

**W**e have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Romans 12: 6-8

*Art is a gift. David Paul, one of our Elders, attends an art class every Tuesday afternoon at Brookside Methodist Church, along with Michèle Bubb. The following is from the Devotions he gave at a recent Elders' meeting on Christian art.*

'... I know this is a massive subject and I can only scratch the surface but here goes:

Christian art is sacred art which uses subjects, themes and images from Christianity. Images of Jesus and narrative scenes from the Old Testament play a part in the art of most denominations. Images of the Virgin Mary and saints are common in certain denominations of Christianity including Catholicism, Oriental Orthodoxy and Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelical Lutheran-ism. They are less common in other branches of the faith, such as Reformed Christianity.



The oldest Christian sculptures are small reliefs from Roman sarcophagi, dating to the beginning of the 2nd Century. (see image on left)

The largest groups of early Christian paintings come from the tombs in the Catacombs of Rome.

Much of the art surviving from Europe after the fall of the Western Roman Empire is Christian Art, although this is in large part because the continuity of church ownership has preserved church art better than secular works. While the Western Roman Empire's political structure essentially collapsed after the fall of Rome, its religious hierarchy, today's Roman Catholic Church, commissioned and funded production of religious art imagery.

While the Byzantine Empire continued to focus on the creation of Christian art, in Denmark and Norway, the Vikings would see a surge of Christianity, spread to the Vikings through pillaging, missionaries, political pressure and trading with other peoples of Europe. 🖱️

Highlighting the blend of 10th-century paganism and Christianity, the Christ depiction on the Harald Stone from Jelling is vividly presented at the National Museum of Denmark. Source: The National Museum of Denmark (CC BY-SA 2.0)



The Cross in the entrance to St John's Church



Hagia Sophia.  
Photo credit: Raimond Klavins

The Orthodox Church of Constantinople, which enjoyed greater stability within the surviving Eastern Empire was key in producing imagery glorifying Christianity. They commissioned many shrines to be built in Constantinople's honour and lots of well decorated churches. These tended to have extravagant stained glass and paintings covering the walls and ceilings. Hagia Sophia, the worlds largest cathedral during the 15th Century, was decorated almost entirely using mosaics as a way to honour God. Following the fall of Constantinople, it was converted into a mosque, but the wondrous art remained.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 brought an end to the highest quality Byzantine art, produced in the Imperial workshops there.

Orthodox art, known as icons regardless of the medium, has otherwise continued with relatively little change in subject and style up to the present day, with Russia gradually becoming the leading centre of production.

In the West, the Renaissance saw an increase in monumental secular works, although Christian art continued to be commissioned in greater quantities by churches, clergy and by the aristocracy. The Reformation had a huge impact on Christian art; Martin Luther in Germany, allowed and encouraged the display of a more limited range of religious imagery in churches, seeing the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a continuation of the "ancient apostolic church".

From the 18th Century the number of religious works produced by leading artists declined sharply, though important commissions were still placed, and some artists continued to produce large bodies of religious art on their own initiative.

As a secular, non-sectarian, universal notion of art arose in the 19th Century Western Europe, ancient and Medieval Christian art began to be collected for art appreciation rather than worship, while contemporary Christian art was considered marginal. However many modern artists such as Eric Gill, Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse, Jacob Epstein, Elisabeth Frink and Graham Sutherland have produced well known works of art for churches.

Coventry Cathedral's tapestry by Graham Sutherland depicting the risen Christ in the glory of God in Heaven



As I said at the beginning this is a very big subject and I can only speak briefly tonight, but it seems to me that so much human skill and dedication to the Glory of God should at its best help to raise our spirits and maybe strengthen our faith.'

David Paul

# Calendar of Events

## MAY

Thursday 7	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 9	10:00am 12:00pm	Community Garden Christian Aid London Freedom Walk (see article)
Sunday 10	11:00am	<b>Christian Aid Week:</b> Worship led by Alison Bond, followed by jacket potato lunch.
Tuesday 12	7:30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thursday 14	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 17	11:00am	Worship led by Revd Cindy Kent
Thursday 21	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 23	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 24	11:00am	<b>Pentecost Sunday:</b> Worship led by Roz Douglas
Tuesday 26	11:00am	Ladies Coffee Group. Venue tbc
Sunday 31	11:00am	<b>Trinity Sunday:</b> Worship led by Paul Elsdon with URC Sermon Video

## JUNE

Saturday 6	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 7	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Sarah Beaumont
Tuesday 9	7:30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thursday 11	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 14	11:00am	Worship led by David Paul and Richard Harvey, followed by a Church Meeting
Thursday 18	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 20	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 21	11:00am	Worship led by Helen Snider
Thursday 25	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 28	11:00am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon
Monday 29	11:00am	Ladies Coffee Group. Venue tbc
Tuesday 30	7:00pm	Men's/Women's Joint Meet-up at <i>The Railway Bell, New Barnet</i>

## JULY

Saturday 4	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 5	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Andrew and Valerie Mills
Thursday 9	9:30am	Mainly Music