Pathway

The United Reformed Church

Newsletter of Broadstone United Reformed Church
June & July 2024

Dear Friends,

Waiting can be immensely frustrating, especially if something is running late and you were expecting it to start or arrive hours earlier. We're often completely helpless to do anything about it except wait. I think that's especially true of summer! I was recently informed by a cycling friend that there are way more than the four seasons everyone assumes there to be. Winter, spring, pre summer, post spring winter, pre summer winter, spring part two, quick weekend peek summer… the list goes on. Every year we wait for summer to come. I wonder how well you cope in those times? Are you the kind of person who is able to just relax and not worry, or do you become unbearably tense and irritable? Probably somewhere in between!!

Pentecost, the great moment of Holy power in the Church's life, was a while ago, but as with all Christian festivals it remains an ongoing part of our lives. We still have to both wait for and live in the power of God's Spirit; there isn't a big summer we wait for that arrives perfectly on time and doesn't go away. Instead, there is a coming and going. Times of spiritual awakening and renewal, and times of faithful waiting.

Broadstone URC has over the last few years done a bit of waiting. This is perhaps especially true of the building project which has forever been on the horizon, and is still only close but not quite there. Perhaps we label this as a buildings and facilities project and therefore deem it 'non-spiritual', but I think that would be a mistake. Every part of our lives together needs to be lived in God's time and in the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. It's okay that sometimes things don't come together when we might have liked. There may be a better time and a clearer purpose.

Waiting can be frustrating, but at the same time can lead us into a more prayerful direction. I'm very glad that in the last year, some of us have been able to gather to think and talk about prayer. We managed our first prayer meeting in May and will hold another on 27th June. (Details TBC - keep an eye out!). I really pray that prayer can increasingly be the foundation of our church's life. That even the building project might be built on prayer! That the strength of our youth, children and families work grows, being built on prayer, and that everyone might feel that they are in some way held in prayer before our faithful God.

So let us keep walking in prayerful faith as we wait patiently for the summer of God's blessing upon Broadstone.

Andy

FAMILY NEWS

We remember in our prayers those who are, or have recently been, injured, in hardship, unwell or in hospital, including **Charles Meachin, Tony Mesher, Michael Shutt,** and **Mike Wanstall.**

It is with enormous sadness that we learnt of the passing in May of **Revd Barbara Meachin**. Barbara has been part of the United Reformed Church, in Broadstone and elsewhere, for many years. There will be more words to commemorate Barbara in the next issue, but I have included below her final poem, written shortly before her death, which her family have shared.

A thank you to the church

Following our donation to the charity *Rivers of Living Water*, who work in Zimbabwe to supply clean water to those in need, our treasurer Martin Sales has received a letter from the General Secretary and founder, Revd Alan Clarredge.

He thanks us for the donation and tells of their work to re-establish those contacts that were lost during Covid, and their continued efforts to maintain a water treatment plant.

If you would like to read the full letter, feel free to email pathway@broadstoneurc.org or ask Dominic Casey.

You can't be too careful

The snippet below is taken from 'Welcome to the Real World' by Godfrey Rust. This book was recommended by the late Revd Betty Williams to our Poetry Group a few years ago, and the book is certainly worth reading.

Sheila McMahon

<u>You can't be too careful</u>

The old lady
In the pew
Exchanged the peace with me

But went up for communion
Clutching her handbag
Just in case

Everlasting spring

Spring is always somewhere,
Earth awakens
Shoots appear, green leaves,
Tiny yet, they herald life,
A life which is to come,
The sleeping earth is risen again,
We must rejoice,
For each new day is ours.
A gift,
And we live on
Until our earthly time
Has run its course,
And even then, what we were
The being in our heart and soul,
Remains,
Becomes part of the eternal present.
No tears please,
Life has been rich and full.
Fond memories, people, faces fun,
Of laughter, tears, numerous deeds.
Do not grieve,
Rejoice with me in Kingdom come
Live your lives in full
Each hour, each day,
For you also are a thread
In the everlasting tapestry of
An eternal God.

May God Bless you all.

Barbara

Your garden in June & July

Based on the RHS monthly gardening tips & advice

As the weather heats up, gardening jobs for June include pruning many spring-flowering shrubs, staking tall or floppy plants, and harvesting lettuce, radish, other salads, and early potatoes. Plant up summer hanging baskets, and pinch out sideshoots on tomatoes.

Keep plants in bloom by regularly deadheading bedding plants and repeat-flowering perennials, and as we move into July, you can start to harvest courgettes before they become marrows, and any apricots and nectarines you may have grown. Throughout the summer, don't forget to also open greenhouse doors and vents to keep them cool, and shade them where you can.

Building with kindness and love: Olam Chesed Yibaneh

About 6 years ago, while watching a livestream of the Central Synagogue in New York (something I still enjoy!) I discovered a new song. Cantor Dan Mutlu and Senior Rabbi Angela Buchdahl were singing a prayerful mantra "*Olam Chesed Yibaneh*", a Hebrew phrase that more literally translates to “God’s love is everlasting”, but in this song is recontextualised to mean “I will build this world with love”.

This song takes its inspiration from Psalm 89, the main theme of which is praising God and declaring one of the main characteristics of God is his loving kindness and faithfulness.

The song *Olam Chesed Yibaneh* was written by Rabbi Menachem Creditor and was released in 2015. However, it was originally penned in 2001 for his newborn daughter, just after the devasting 9/11 attacks in the United States.

As believers in God, we will try to fulfil our purpose through acts of reverence for God, such as worship, vocation, serving and doing good. We all want peace for our world, particularly for the tragedies we have seen recently: wars, poverty, mass shootings, earthquakes, tornados and terrorist attacks. Last year over the period of Hanukkah, I sang *Olam Chesed Yibaneh* whilst lighting the candles of my menorah each night, yearning for peace around this world.

The moving lyrics of this song take the declaration of God’s everlasting love from the original psalm, and subverts it to be about our own human love. It urges listeners to take action, to make a positive impact around the world through not just divine love, but grounded human acts of kindness.

Olam chesed yibaneh
I will build this world from love
And you must build this world from love
And if we build this world from love
Then God will build this world from love

To me, this represents a common good and shared call for world peace and loving kindness. Like another Hebrew phrase, *Tikkun Olam,* which translates to “repairing the world”, it calls us through faith in God and in humanity to bring Godly qualities to the world. Just give this little prayerful song a try and you could make a big difference to humankind.

Saz Holland

My First Visit to Frankenthal

On Easter Monday, Dave and I set off for London to stay overnight before heading to Frankenthal. This would not be our first church twinning event, but our first with Broadstone. So, it was with some knowledge about twinning we set off the next morning for St Pancras, just across the road from our hotel, along with the Hall party.

Arriving in plenty of time to buy lunch for the journey at M&S, the station was packed with excited children all heading for the Paris train and Disneyland Paris. A short time later the station became quiet as the Paris train left before ours, and we also joined up with Martin and Cecilia Casey. The station soon filled up again and it wasn’t long before we were finding our seats on the train to Brussels, and from there a train to Köln (Cologne), and a third train to Mannheim.

The journey so far had been smooth but with the train to Mannheim running late we were worried that we would miss our connection to Frankenthal. Well, although late, so was the train to Frankenthal! And just to make us feel at home we had to change from one side of the station to the other. It was here we were joined by Jim and Margaret. Once at Frankenthal, it was lovely to see the joy and love of old friends meeting up. We met our host family Borgny and Frieder Hochbaum and headed off to their lovely home next to the prison in Frankenthal. After a lovely meal it was off to bed for a rest before the start of the visit on the Wednesday.

That day was the visit to Speyer to see the work of the church there. We were shown around the

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My First Visit to Frankenthal
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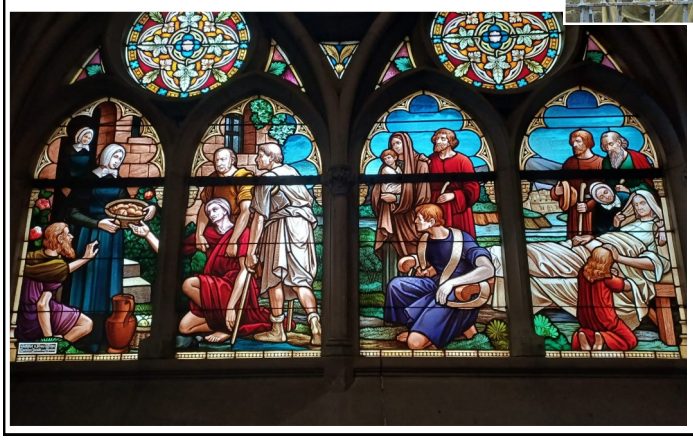
complex run by the Church, and one of the new sisters told us the history of how a minister in the late 1800s set it up, having seen that there were many single older women with no prospects, giving them an identity as the Diakonissen. With their black dresses and caps they lived together and ran a hospital, kindergarten and farm, as well as attending the sick in the community. In their chapel we found out there are now only six sisters left. They are a nonprofit organisation still running hospitals, hospices, kindergartens, schools as well as old people's homes away from the compound. Their work is based on Matthew 25:40 - "*Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seem, you did it for me.*"

Following a lovely lunch there we moved on to the Catholic cathedral with its amazing windows and candle holder. Outside is a beautiful stone statue of Jesus and the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. A short walk from this took us to the synod office where we were shown around and given '*Kaffee und Kuchen*', along with a book, pen and keyring to remind us of the visit. The party then went its separate ways, and we visited the Lutheran cathedral with our hosts, where one window even depicted the Diakonissen doing their work. By the end of that busy day we were beginning to get to know our hosts better.



Thursday saw our joint study day looking at how we get on with people of other faiths, particularly Jewish people in the context of how they have been treated in the past. It was during this time that one of the people from Frankental reminded us of how when visiting Broadstone, one lady had said she had never thought she would sit down and share communion with a German and how good that had been.

Following a lovely pizza lunch at a restaurant all together, we considered these ideas more by going to explore the Jewish grave site in the pouring rain. It rained so hard that I felt I was back in Cumbria! The trip was then cut short as we headed home to dry out.

Friday was a free day and we were taken to the wonderful Heidelberg Castle. This extremely large castle had once been the home of a British princess, Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of James VI & I. I think it was from this marriage to her German Prince that we get the house of Hanover, whose line goes all the way to our present King. The castle is now part ruin from wars and lightning strikes. Being a Friday there were a number of weddings taking place at the town hall, and letting off balloons as is their custom. We also tried their local cake which was a new experience for our hosts as well. Thankfully, the weather was good, much improved from the day before.

Saturday's weather was the same. We went on a journey around Hinzweiler, which took us to the countryside to see a number of churches. It

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My First Visit to Frankenthal
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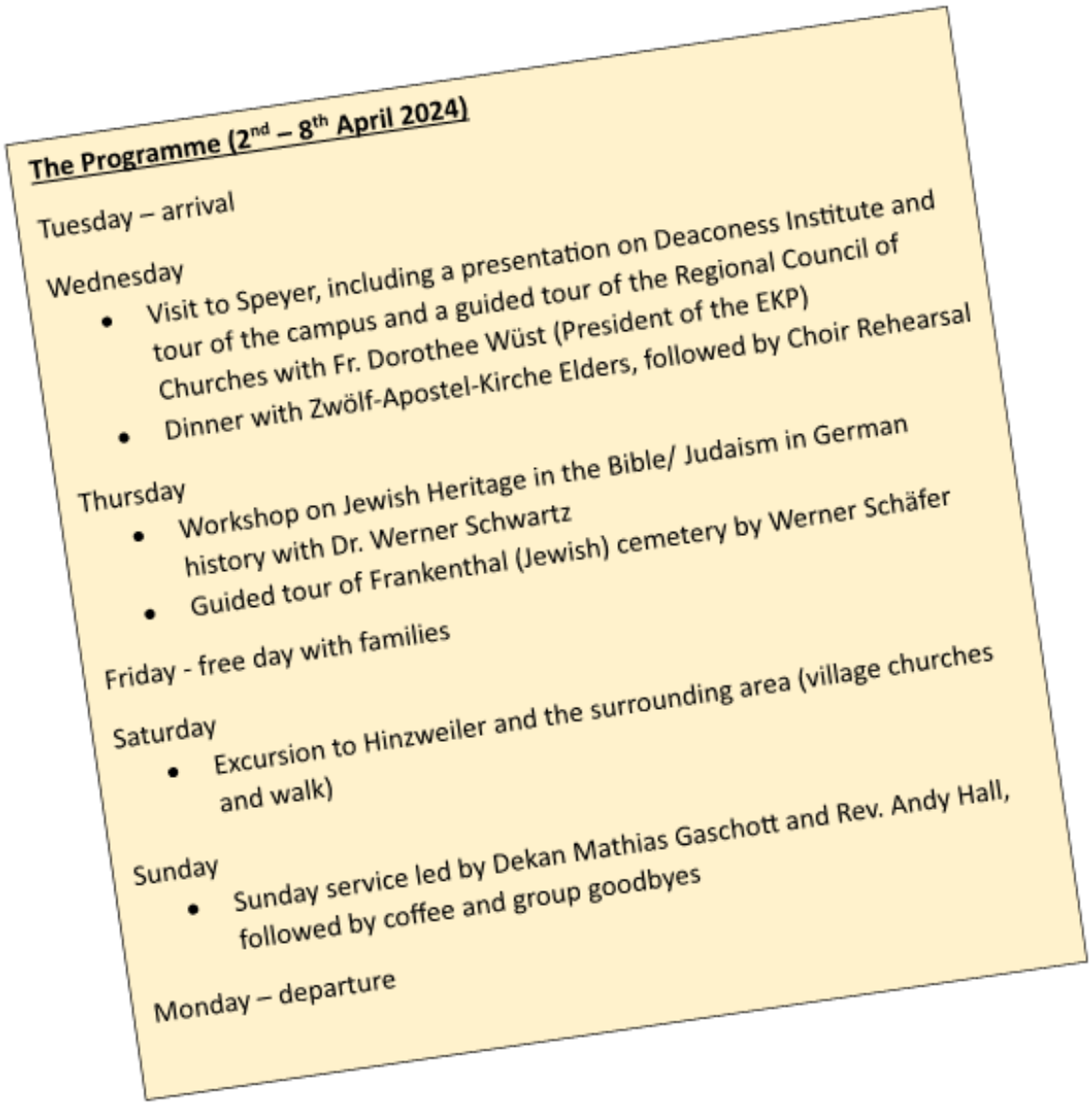
seems that there are similar problems with people moving away and finding jobs in the towns and cities. We ended with a walk around a national park.

Sunday saw our last day with a lovely service, including a joint choir, and with Andy helping lead. After *Kaffee und Kuchen*, we said our goodbyes. We were all going our different ways in the morning, some straight back to Dorset, some on to other destinations. We spent the rest of the day with our host family going to an ice cream parlour in a walled village not far from Frankenthal.

Monday saw us meeting up at the station with Jim and Margaret, who were heading for the airport, and Martin and Cecilia, who were going for a short stay in Köln. We headed for Mannheim then to Wiesbaden, from where we got a train to Geisenheim am Rhine. There to meet us as we got off the train were our friends of 25 years Klaus and Iris Schmid, who we first met thought town twinning. That joy and love of old friends meeting up was there to see. I thank God for our time in Frankenthal and know we look forward to meeting our new friends again in the future. My thanks also go to Martin and everyone in Frankenthal who helped organise this trip.

Jackie Harkison

A brief programme for the twinning visit to Zwölf-Apostel-Kirche has been included below, and if you would like more information please speak to Martin Casey. There are also more pictures from the trip on page 6!



The Programme (2nd – 8th April 2024)

Tuesday – arrival

Wednesday
- Visit to Speyer, including a presentation on Deaconess Institute and tour of the campus and a guided tour of the Regional Council of Churches with Fr. Dorothee Wüst (President of the EKP)
- Dinner with Zwölf-Apostel-Kirche Elders, followed by Choir Rehearsal

Thursday
- Workshop on Jewish Heritage in the Bible/ Judaism in German history with Dr. Werner Schwartz
- Guided tour of Frankenthal (Jewish) cemetery by Werner Schäfer

Friday - free day with families

Saturday
- Excursion to Hinzweiler and the surrounding area (village churches and walk)

Sunday
- Sunday service led by Dekan Mathias Gaschott and Rev. Andy Hall, followed by coffee and group goodbyes

Monday – departure

Church life in pictures… Twinning visit to Zwölf-Apostel-Kirche, Frankenthal

Above - An unofficial group photograph outside Zwölf-Apostel-Kirche, courtesy of Herr Erb.

Left - Janet & Hugh Watkins, with the Riechert family.

Right - Martin Casey presenting the new *Dekan*, Herr Mathias Gaschott with a Bible (in English).

Left - "The fashion triplets", featuring Margaret Tudor, Traudl Frefat and Cecilia Casey!

Right - A combined choir of English and Germany voices, practising before the service.

Extraordinary and Ordinary Women of the Bible: Hannah

Hannah appears in the Bible at the start of the First Book of Samuel. Like other women whose stories are told in the Old Testament such as Miriam, Deborah and Esther, Hannah's life story has ups and downs, however her faith was her great strength. Hannah's prayer was answered by God and she became a loving mother to Samuel.

In many historical cultures, it was believed having a large family was a blessing from God. Infertility, therefore, was a source of humiliation and shame during these times. Hannah remained childless for many years of her marriage, and to make matters worse, her husband Elkanah had a second wife, Peninnah, who not only bore him children but mocked Hannah relentlessly.

Hannah kept praying to the Lord, but her barrenness continued. Then, on one occasion while praying with deep anguish, Eli the priest saw her and (after mistakenly thinking she was drunk) blessed her, saying "*Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.*" (1 Samuel 1:17)

After Hannah and her husband Elkanah returned to their home at Ramah, she became pregnant, had a son, and named him Samuel, which means 'God hears'.

In her prayers to God, Hannah had made a promise that if she has a son, she would give him back for God's service. She followed through on that promise, giving her beloved son Samuel over to Eli for training as a priest.

God blessed Hannah further for honouring her pledge to him. She had three more sons and two daughters. Enough to make a five-a-side basketball team! Samuel grew up to become one of Israel's greatest judges, and in addition became a counsellor to its first two kings, Saul and David.

After years of praying for the same thing, most of us would get bored of waiting and finally give up. Hannah, though, was a passionate, trusting, and humble woman, and God finally answered her prayers.

Psalm 34:17 tells us "*When the righteous cry for help, God hears and delivers them out of all their troubles*". That's exactly what Hannah did. Hannah teaches us to never give up, to honour our promises to God, and to trust in God's wisdom and kindness.

Saz Holland

Items for the August & September 2024 issue of *Pathway* should be given to Dominic Casey by Sunday 28th July 2024

Weekly Activities

Sunday	10.30 am	Morning Service *Holy Communion celebrated 1st Sunday in the month*
Tuesday	12.30 pm	'Oasis' House Group (*3rd in month*)
Wednesday	10.00 am	Yarn with Yarn Charity Craft Group (*alternate weeks*)
	2.00 pm	Toddler Group
Thursday	10.30 am	Ladies' Coffee Morning (*alternate weeks*)
	8.00 pm	Music Group

Monthly Church Meeting - contact Church Secretary for details.
See weekly news-sheet or get in touch for details of 'Oasis', Ladies' Coffee Morning, and other activities.

Points of Contact

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