

Pathway



The
United
Reformed
Church



*Newsletter of Broadstone United Reformed Church
August & September 2025*

Dear Friends,

I'm writing at the very end of the school term, something that is ingrained in our family life as I'm the only person not in education! It's a great moment of celebration, of endings and looking ahead to new possibilities - but first, holiday time!!

My mind was almost instantly drawn to the famous words of Ecclesiastes 3: "*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens*" ... This season, for just about every student in the UK, is holiday or at least time to not be at school. What about church though?

The last 'season' of our church has been very much marked by building work. You'll all know how long that season has been, how much of a focus it has had over the years, but that season is nearly over, all the critical work is done and the ramp and new spaces are in use! I hope you are enjoying them!

Moving out of that season and into something new is going to be exciting, but not without its challenges. It's not always easy to name a season of church life before you've really got into it. I hope that we are moving towards a season of Mission. The Mission House will definitely help us change seasons and at very least will push us to ask more challenging questions about how we can engage in mission, outreach and evangelism. What do these themes mean for us and how can we develop

the way we do them so they are authentic to us and the faith that we share?

Moving into a season of Mission may feel challenging in the beginning, but my prayer is that this season is one of fruit, that it's got more of a focus on harvest than on sowing the seeds; a season of welcoming in and seeing faith flourish!

Please do pray for those meeting and planning over the summer, those moving into the former manse, and for a very clear sense of direction for the first few months of the new term.

Please also pray that everyone is able to balance all the possibility and excitement with some rest, refreshment and holiday!!

Have a blessed summer.

Andy

We remember in our prayers those who are, or have recently been, injured, in hardship, unwell or in hospital, including **Caroline Foster, Gwyneth Maling, Charles Meachin, Sheila McMahon and Tony Mesher.**

FAMILY NEWS

Eileen Thurston also sadly passed away in June, after a short time in hospital. Eileen was a stalwart member of Broadstone URC and will be greatly missed. There is an obituary for Eileen on page 6.

It is with a sadness we learnt of the death of **Nancy Cunningham** at the end of July. Nancy may not be known by all as she was unable to attend services in person in the later years of her life, but she long supported the church and we remember her family and friends in our prayers.

On page 5 there are words remembering **Ann Shield**, whose death was recorded in the previous edition of *Pathway*. Janet, David and family asked to include this message:

Thank you for all the cards, kind words and prayers following the passing of my Mum, Ann Shield. We were glad that so many of you were able to come to the Service of Thanksgiving for her life.

Mission House Update

We are very excited that the Mission House project is coming to fruition this month and Taylor is looking forward to moving in at the end of August to start working for the church in September. A few key dates:-

Sunday 24th August – the Mission House will be open after morning service for members of the congregation to have a look round. This will be the only opportunity.

Monday 25th August – Taylor will be moving in and spending the rest of the week settling in.

Sunday 31st August – Commissioning service, followed by Ploughman's lunch – an opportunity to meet socially with Taylor once again. Janet would welcome donations of puddings, please.

Monday 1st September – Taylor officially starts working for the Mission House for 20 hours a week.

Tuesday 2nd September – Taylor meets with the management group to discuss the first steps of the project.

Taylor will be arranging to visit all the groups connected to our church during the first few weeks, to get to know everyone and to build a picture of what happens within our fellowship. This will also extend to visiting the other churches, schools and other groups from the

wider community to develop an understanding of the provisions within the wider community.

A major concern with only one participant, which I am sure you will all share, is for Taylor to develop a social life with younger people and Emily Meachin will support this by taking on the role of House Friend.

Ruth and Mary from the Synod have various contacts and they will endeavour to fill a further space, at least for a short-term period, with a placement. We do have someone who is very interested in starting September 2026 and has an application form to complete. Additionally, once the project is underway the strongest advocate for attracting further candidates will be Taylor, who will be presenting to Synod, Youth Assembly etc. on the project.

What can you do to support?

1. Please pray for Taylor and the team as we embark on this exciting project together to further bring the word of the Lord to the community of Broadstone.

2. Given that Taylor will be living alone in the Mission House for the first few months, please do offer hospitality if you are able, perhaps offering an invitation for a meal or a cuppa.

Gill McDonald

My sponsored walk

I have always enjoyed walking. So, when we started fundraising for the recent building work I thought why not do a sponsored walk. Living just under a mile from the River Stour and having walked to Hengistbury Head several times, I thought why not do the whole of the river.

The river runs from Stourhead in Wiltshire to Hengistbury Head near Christchurch - 63 miles. As my backup team (also known as Dave) drove me up to Stourhead I began to think what have I taken on? I decided to do the walk over six days. This would mean just over ten miles a day. So, the plan for the first day was to walk to West Stour. That was the plan, but I got lost and could not find the way out of the Stourhead estate! After walking around for over an hour, I headed back to the car park to have lunch in the car while we sorted out what to do. Having seen how far I had walked we decided I needed to walk another seven miles to get the mileage in. So, using Google Maps planned a walk from Gillingham to East Stour. As it turned out, a lot of this route was part of the Stour Valley way.

Once home we looked at the route again and found an app for my phone that would tell me the route to take. However, it would finish its day in the middle of nowhere. So, some days would end up slightly longer/shorter than ten miles so I could get to a town to be picked up.

My day would start as usual taking the dog for his four mile walk, then a quick shower and a cleaning of walking boots due to bird flu in that area, before heading in the car to that day's destination. Dave would then read for a while or have a look around before driving to the end of that day's walk. Meanwhile I would walk the 10 or so miles. The plan for Dave was that he would pick me up for the first three days then after that I could get buses home, however he would take me onto the start for the next two as this cut

down the time it takes to get there. Each day brought its challenges, but I was grateful to see the turquoise and orange Stour Valley Way signs as I walked.

The app I used was helpful, not only showing me the way but correcting me in a stern teacher-like voice that I was going the wrong way and to 'look at the map'. It could also be annoying when that route was impassable due to a burst waterpipe, or telling me the route was only 200 yards in front of me but taking me through someone's house, garden and over a hedge. However, I met lovely helpful people who would tell me how to get back to the route the correct way.

The weather was just right for walking, not too hot and not too wet either. Some paths were well kept while others not so much having to walk through nettles; I was glad I had long trousers on. Some of the walk used the old railway tracks, while this made walking easier the views weren't so good as they were usually tree-lined.

I passed four watermills on my journey, three hill forts, two on the same day just yards from each other. I also went passed a farm that from the 80s had farmed with wildlife in mind, even stopping using a Victorian barn so barn owls could breed. I circumnavigated one school and walked across the playing fields of another, walked two golf courses and crisscrossed the river, main roads and foot paths. One moment I thought I was miles from anywhere only to be passed moments later by an Asda home delivery van.

I am not sure which was my favourite part. I loved walking through the water meadows with their lovely array of wildflowers, mainly buttercups, and being surrounded by dragonflies and butterflies. Least favourite - not sure I have one apart from getting

(continued on page 4)



My sponsored walk

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lost, oh yes, and having to turn back when confronted with a field of yearling bullocks. Then, seeing they had moved to the other end of the field walk quickly back and very quickly walk across their field grateful to climb over the next stile.

Getting to the end at Hengistbury Head was strange as I was surrounded by people having been on my own for the last 6 days. Joined now by Dave, we celebrated with a sausage roll from the Hiker's cafe, before catching the buses home.

I would like to thank all the people who sponsored me. I have collected £340 so far but

with gift aid this will increase. My biggest thank you goes to my backup team of Dave for his support and transport without whom I would have had to take a lot longer as public transport would have added many hours to my day. Thanks again.

Jackie Harkison



The gatehouse of the Stourhead estate



Over last Christmas I spent a few nights in Winchester, and on Christmas Day went to the United Church. There I found a small book '50 Prayers', which the United Church had compiled for their 50 years anniversary. The church is a shared congregation of Methodist and United Reformed churches. The following prayer is from this booklet.

Pat Johnson

A "Handy" Prayer

By Brian Draper, used with permission.

Closing both hands tight, and then opening them digit by digit (on both hands together), line by line, pray:

Little finger, **Confession**:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."

Ring finger, **Petition**:

"May I be well, may I be peaceful, may I be joyful, may I be loved."

Centre finger, **Intercession** (for those on your heart):

"May YOU be well, may you be peaceful, may you be joyful, may you be loved."

Index finger, **Gratitude**:

"Thank you for sunshine, thank you for rain. In all things, thank you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) List a few more, besides.

The thumb, **Praise**:

"I praise you, for you will never let me go." (John 10:28)

Hold out your unfurled, empty, open hands, and then bring them together, in embrace.

Feel the warmth.

In memoriam

Ann Shield

27th January 1937 - 11th June 2025

In June, our dear friend Ann Shield passed away in The Potteries Care Home after declining health for several years. Many of us knew Ann from when her husband Revd. Tony Shield became minister of this church in 1973 and they moved here from Sompting with their young family.

Ann, firstborn of Bert and Win Osgathorpe, was baptised Margaret Ann, but always known as Ann. The family lived in Woking and attended Woking Congregational Church (and when Revd Frank Shield later became minister, a young Tony could sometimes be seen). At the age of 11, Ann moved to Nottingham when her father changed jobs, and there attended Sherwood Congregational Church, where Ann sang in the choir. After finishing school, Ann studied at Goldsmiths College, London where, through the Congregation Church students group, she met (again) Tony Shield, who by then was training for the ministry at New College, London. The rest, as they say, is history...

Ann taught at a Junior School in South London for two years after qualifying. Ann & Tony were married in 1959 at Woking Congregational Church. Tony was ordained, and inducted into the pastorate of Epping Congregational Church on 26th September 1959, and in their time there, Janet, Tim and Jeremy were born. In 1965, Tony was called to be the minister at Sompting Congregational Church and the family moved to Sussex. While she was there, Ann was very much involved in the youth work of the church as Junior Church Leader, and in the Junior Club and Playgroup.

After many happy years at Sompting, Ann and family moved to Broadstone in 1973, into the 'old' manse that will soon become the Mission House. Tony was inducted as minister of Broadstone URC on 1st September. Ann again took on many roles in the church life – alongside looking after their three children. Ann helped as Junior Church teacher, in the Luncheon Club,

Prayer Group and sang in the Music Group from its inception. Ann instituted the Open House group, which due to popularity split into two groups. The Manse was frequently used for a range of different meetings; Ann was always most generous with her hospitality (including sandwiches for young Elders coming to meetings straight from work).

The family memories read at the Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving for Ann noted that Ann was renowned for her embroidery and dress-making, and had made at least three wedding dresses; we can vouch for one, which Ann so kindly made.

Ann and Tony moved to Hythe in January 1985, when Tony was inducted as Minister of Word and Sacrament at Hythe URC. Characteristically, Ann was fully involved in the life of the church there, and particularly the innovations at the church. When Tony was taken ill, Ann's focus was supporting Tony throughout his illness until his untimely death in 1994. Although initially remaining in Hythe, in 1996, having been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Ann moved back to Broadstone to be nearer family.

At Broadstone, Ann was made welcome amongst old friends and new, and was welcomed back into membership. Ann involved herself in the life of the church; although living only a short walk from the church, mobility issues began to restrict what she was able to attend. Due to further deteriorating health, Ann moved to The Potteries Care Home in 2022 where she was well looked after and where she passed to higher service.

We pay tribute to a wonderful friend and example of Christian living, whose faith shone in all she did. Loved by friends and family alike, our thoughts are with Janet, Tim and Jeremy, and the wider family at this time.

Martin Casey

In memoriam
Eileen Thurston
27th March 1930 - 12th June 2025

Eileen was born on 27th March 1930 in Windsor to Ada and Ted Day; the eldest of three daughters. She was nine years old when the Second World War began in 1939. Like many young children at the time, the war was a formative event shaping her into a resilient and hard-working young person, with strong hope for the future.

After finishing school, Eileen attended secretarial college and subsequently started work as a shorthand typist at a local engineering company. It was there she first met her future husband, Peter Thurston. However, at the age of 22, Eileen put plans for marriage on pause and set sail to work for 18 months in the new office the company had opened in Cape Town, South Africa. A huge adventure for a young woman in 1952!

Returning to England in November 1953 romance blossomed; Peter and Eileen were married in the pretty village church of Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire in May 1954. They launched into family life — the following year, they welcomed their first-born Mark, closely followed by Neil, then Caroline and finally Sarah, completing their family of six. As Peter's career developed, they moved first to Broadstone and then in 1970 to Cheshire.

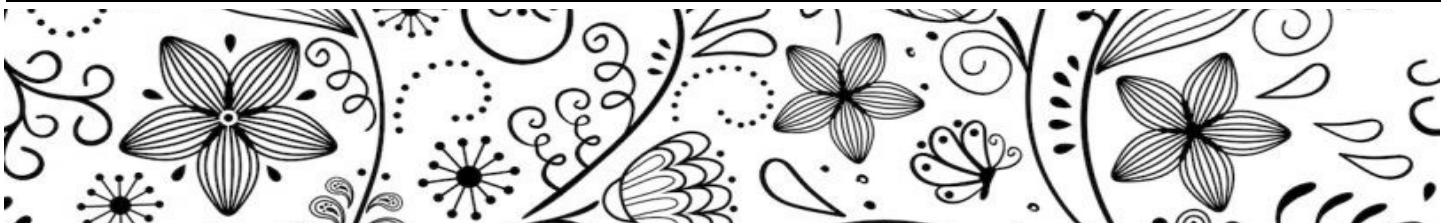
Eileen was always up for a challenge. While living in Cheshire with a garden of clay and mud, she created a beautifully landscaped area

of flowers and shrubs while Peter built huge trellises for the roses she grew. While working for the Crown Prosecution Service in Macclesfield, she took an 'A' level in law at night school to better understand the work. After Peter's retirement in 1981, and a move back to Dorset, Eileen took another A-Level in English and then at the age of 76 enrolled as an undergraduate at Bournemouth University. She committed to driving to Yeovil twice a week during her studies and graduated at 79, earning a BA (Honours) in English and History.

In 1995, Peter and Eileen moved back to Broadstone. They reconnected with old friends, embraced retirement, and travelled extensively. The holidays they loved most were to the Holy Land, to Bethlehem and Palestine, to many European countries and to California and Oregon to visit Sarah and John. Eileen became an active participant in the Townswomen's Guild as secretary and eventually Chairwoman.

Eileen became a member at Broadstone URC in 2004. Her practical skills in catering and needle work were put to good use preparing meals at our Mission Suppers, and as a founder member of the Banner Group creating the banners which hang in our church. She enjoyed foreign exchange trips with members of the church congregation, visiting and hosting families from our twin church in Frankenthal, Germany.

Ian McDonald



Involved in anything coming soon?

Once of the good things about our church community is the chance to find out about and support different local activities through the involvement of our members. If you have an event coming up that you would like to write a couple of sentences about in *Pathway*, and potentially attract some visitors or audience to, please do email me on pathway@broadstoneurc.org.

As always, if anyone has any thoughts, feedback or suggestions for *Pathway*, I'd be delighted to hear them.

Dominic Casey

Ordinary and extraordinary women of the Bible: Ruth

The Book of Ruth is a part of the Biblical canon called *Ketuvim*, meaning 'Writings'. Ruth's story is celebrated during the Jewish festival of Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks, 50 days after Passover.

The story of Ruth relates that she and Orpah, two women of Moab, had married two sons of Elimelech and Naomi, Judeans who had settled in Moab to escape a great famine in Judah. Unfortunately, the husbands of all three women die; Naomi plans to return to her hometown of Bethlehem and urges her daughters-in-law to return to their families. Orpah does so, but Ruth rebels and refuses to leave Naomi, declaring "*Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried.*" (Ruth 1:16-17). Ruth accompanies Naomi home and later marries a man named Boaz.

What do we think of Ruth? Loyal, a kind nature, faithful and caring, to name some of her characteristics. She had good etiquette skills with her companions and society, and wholeheartedly took full interest and cared for the people around her. She was a woman full of compassion and love for the common good.

Proverbs 1:1-5

The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance

Saz Holland

Your garden in August & September

Based on the RHS monthly gardening tips & advice

August will be hot - watering is essential! New plants and containers will especially need looking after. Deadhead flowering plants regularly, and sweetcorn and other vegetables can be harvested as they become ready. Continue cutting out old fruited canes on raspberries, and lift and pot up rooted strawberry runners.

In September it will be time to divide herbaceous perennials, and collect and sow seed from perennials and hardy annuals. Spring flowering bulbs can be planted, and inside you can also start to reduce the frequency of houseplant watering.

Items for the October & November 2025 issue of *Pathway* should be given to Dominic Casey by Sunday 28th September 2025

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

Minister: Revd. Andy Hall
phone: 01202 698638
email: minister@broadstoneurc.org

Church Secretary: Mrs Janet Meachin
email: secretary@broadstoneurc.org

Treasurer: Mr Ian McDonald
email: treasurer@broadstoneurc.org

Organist: Mr Martin Casey
email: music@broadstoneurc.org

Editor: Mr Dominic Casey
email: pathway@broadstoneurc.org

Web: www.broadstoneurc.org

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