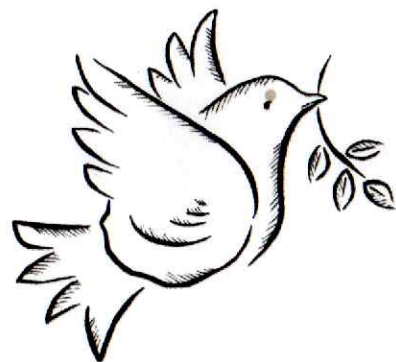


Proclaiming the Gospel. Growing in Faith
Reaching out in Service



CONNECT NEWSLETTER

for
Abbey Lane URC
incorporating
**Saffron Walden
Methodist Church**



March 2026



Dear Friends,

Daily we thank God for his many blessings but, following an exciting weekend in early February, we have a further great blessing, another Minister for the four Rivers Partnership.

We look forward to welcoming Abigail Perrow into our midst to work alongside Phil and Mark, and the six churches. Votes in her favour were one hundred per cent across all the churches, and she readily accepted our call. Abigail still must complete her training at Westminster College; she is currently on placement in Somerset. Her ordination and induction into the Partnership is likely to be in late August or early September. Abigail will preach on the second and fourth Sundays at Abbey Lane, the first and third at Water Lane, and fifth Sundays alternately.

God has given us renewed hope, and I particularly, along with the other Elders will be grateful for ministerial support from Abigail, wonderful as Nigel Uden was as our Interim Moderator. This will be Abigail's first pastorate, and we will need to offer her support as well, as she gets to know us, so that we can move forward together reaching out to one another at Abbey Lane and in the community around us.

Val

In the Issue 8 of the URC magazine Reform 2025 there was an interesting article entitled 'A church reborn'. It resonated with me and is certainly worth reading and pondering on.

One line stood out. "This could entail that most dreaded of words ... change."

I have left a copy at the back of the church for people to take and read. Please do.

Coffee Morning
10-12
Saturday, 28th March
Abbey Lane URC

Marion and Janet are holding a Coffee Morning
to raise money for the

Arthur Rank Hospice in Cambridge.

It is widely known that government funding has been withdrawn, resulting in nine beds having to close in 2027. As a result, the Hospice will have to rely on gifts and fund raising events to compensate for the loss of revenue.

We would like to raise as much money as we can from our Coffee Morning, so please tell your friends and neighbours about this event, in order that we at Abbey Lane can play our part in ensuring that all beds are kept open for this very special Hospice.

We have been given a framed watercolour painting of Abbey Lane URC by a local artist, which we hope to sell to boost funds.



Angels on Horseback

This isn't going to be about food but embroidery! Amongst all the angels in the church during Advent and Christmas there was a picture of my favourite piece of embroidery, an angel playing a lute while seated on a horse. It's a beautiful piece of embroidery, though much faded, and the horse has a delightful expression on its face. The embroidery is part of an altar frontal belonging to a church in Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire but is now on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. There is another angel on horseback at the other end of the frontal. This second one is playing a fiddle and is less decorative, the angel looks rather sad and the horse a bit grumpy.

The embroidery didn't start as an altar frontal but was made as a cope around 1330-1340. A cope is a large semi-circular ecclesiastical garment with a single fastening, called a morse, at the front to hold it together. Along the straight edge of the semi-circle and so showing at the front edges when worn, there is often a decorative panel called an orphrey. These angels were on the orphrey as part of a matching though not identical pattern. It is very high-quality professional embroidery worked in silk, silver and silver-gilt threads and small pearls. Such a luxurious item would have been made for a wealthy patron, rather than the village church where it was found in 1844. This type of embroidery is called Opus Anglicanum, ie English work, and was exceptional in the quality of materials, designs and workmanship.

There are plenty of pictures of angels playing musical instruments and some pictures, in illuminated manuscripts, of angels on horseback but these are the only example of angels on horseback playing musical instruments. This image of the lute is said to be the earliest English depiction of a lute, though there may have been some artistic licence with the number of strings shown.

Continued

Angels on Horseback

Continued

I cannot include any pictures here because of copyright, but if anyone is interested in seeing more of this type of embroidery I have a rather large book with lots of pictures. I'd be very happy to bring it along one day.

Mary Duxbury



Although Mary can't include photos because of copyright, this is an adaptation of an image from the V&A website, which hopefully will give some idea of the subject.

I've changed the colour of the angel's gown (it's blue in the original), but think I've still managed to retain the rather forlorn expressions of both horse andd angel!

Calendar for March

Sun. 1st	Morning worship at Abbey Lane led by Alison, with Scout Parade	10.30a.m.
Sun. 8th	Morning Worship at Abbey Lane, led by Robert Pope	10.30a.m.
Mon. 9th	Bible Study in Vestry	10a.m.
Sun. 15th	Morning Worship at Abbey Lane, led by Rev. Michael Lovegrove Scrabble Afternoon in the Vestry Evening Iona Service	10.30a.m. 2.30-4.30
Sun. 22nd	Morning Worship at Abbey Lane, led by Alison, followed by church meeting Messy Church at the Baptist Church	10.30a.m. 3-4.30p.m
Mon. 23rd	Bible Study in the Vestry	10a.m.
Sat. 28th	Coffee Morning at Abbey Lane for Arthur Rank Hospice	10-12
Sun. 29th Palm Sunday	Morning Worship at Abbey Lane, led by Rev. Tricia Troughton	10.30a.m.
EASTER DAY	Morning Worship at Abbey Lane Afternoon Tea at Abbey Lane	10.30a.m. 2.30p.m.

Sponsored Swim

Lent is not just a time to give up something, it can also be a time to take something on, to rise to a challenge. Jesus spent a lot of time either traveling round or on the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is 13 miles or 21 kilometres long; that's the equivalent of 840 lengths at the local swimming pool. So, this year, for Lent, that's the distance Alison will be covering as part of a sponsored swim in aid of the charity WaterAid. This also coincides with the UN World Water Day on Sunday 22nd March, whose theme this year is "gender and water".

Along with decent toilets and good hygiene, a reliable supply of clean water is essential for health, dignity, and a life full of opportunity. But 696 million people don't have clean water close to home. 1.5 billion people don't have a decent toilet. And 1.7 billion people can't wash their hands with soap at home. A situation which disproportional affects women and girls.

If you would like to make a donation, there will be envelopes at church or visit Alison's just giving page
[https://www.justgiving.com/page/alison-jiggins-3?
utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=020](https://www.justgiving.com/page/alison-jiggins-3?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL&utm_campaign=020)

Thank you.



The David Nott Foundation

Last year we were able to support the work of the David Nott Foundation with a coffee morning and the Christmas Day offeratory. Each month they send out a newsletter, and this is from February:

**'The fingers of a lady, the eye of an owl, and the heart of a lion'.
War Doctor**

Surgery is a fundamentally creative act. For Professor David Nott, co-Founder of the David Nott Foundation, his dexterity manifested itself in childhood through his love for making model aeroplanes. As an adult, he is the world's most famous war surgeon, and this same dexterity has enabled him to save thousands of lives in both peacetime and war.

'Operating is very much like art, you can make beautiful structures, which is part of the anatomy of the human body - it is a beautiful organ. And to be able to make it work again is amazing. That's the beauty of surgery.'

Dr. Koma Akin from South Sudan is an old friend of David's, and here they met again during a surgical training in London, which was attended by surgeons from all over the world, including Somaliland, Ukraine and Palestine.

Dr. Koma explained how cultures where crafts such as embroidery, crochet and sewing are still practised widely in commities, often produce extremely dexterous surgeons - particularly when it comes to suturing. There are techniques used in sewing, such as using different types of stitches - interrupted, continuous, mattress and subcutaneous - which have direct counterparts in surgical procedures. For instance, a 'subcuticular' stitch is used to create a neater, less visible scar.

Historically, the dividing line between crafting and surgery was slim. Early techniques for blood vessel repairs were influenced by lace makers, and surgeons in the 19th century would keep sewing needles in their lapels.

Continued

Abbey Lane Book Group

When Karen suggested the Church should form a Book Group, several members enthusiastically agreed. It was decided that we would not follow the usual practice of reading a selected book once a month. Instead each member would recommend to the group a book they had already read, with the understanding that they were prepared to lend it. This has proved to be a great success, as there is always a variety of subjects - both fact - fiction which creates much discussion.

For example, in February the books selected were:

'When you are Older' by Catherine Ryan Hyde

'Newton' by Michael White

'The Mouthless Dead' by Anthony Quinn

'Another Man's Poison' by Anne Cleeves

'Sleep No More - Six Murderous Tales' by P. D. James

Our meetings are held in the Vestry on the first Wednesday in the month, from 2.30 - 4.00pm. We have refreshments after the session giving us the opportunity of more discussion on a variety of subjects - Trump included!

Mary Brooks

The David Nott Foundation

Continued

Just as a tailor or fashion designer must understand how different fabrics such as silk or cotton behave, surgeons must understand how different tissues (skin, fat, muscle) react to being sewn.

In a world with increasing conflict and catastrophe, to focus in on the graceful 'hands of a lady' is mesmerising, and to listen to men with 'hearts of lions' talk about their experiences saving lives in war zones, never fails to engender a sentiment of promise and hope.

Afternoon Tea Easter Sunday

2.30-4.30

Abbey Lane URC

**Tea!
Cakes!
Paintings!**

All welcome to this event,
being held in aid of church funds.

**Delicious cakes, friendly chat
and sale of paintings
by Freda Clarke.**

JarsRUs



Following discussion at Church Meeting, we finally have a £1 jar!

If you are able, please donate a weekly £1 coin (or even a £2 coin!) to help supplement our church funds.

Thank you.

also -

Marion and Janet have put in a request for **jam jars**, preferably 340gm and 454gm size, which they will collect if necessary.

They're getting ready for the 2026 Preserve Season! •

George and Marion

George and Marion send their very grateful thanks for the money raised for the Revival Centre from the sale of cards.

Having received a most distressing report from a vet in Ukraine who is looking after more than 400 abandoned cats and dogs, Marion is now seeking to raise £3000 for some vital medical equipment needed to support this task.



ABBAY LANE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
incorporating
SAFFRON WALDEN METHODIST CHURCH

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