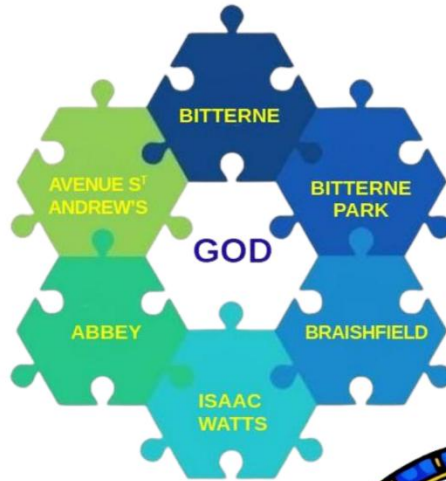


Southern Fellowship of United Reformed Churches



Bitterne
United
Reformed
Church



OUTLOOK

APRIL 2026

This magazine has cost approximately 50 pence to produce and a contribution towards its cost would be much appreciated

Church Diary

APRIL

Wed 1st 11:30am Wednesday Worship

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Thurs 2nd 12noon Community Lunch
2.00pm Senior Citizens – Draw
7.30pm Dave White - Service of Holy Communion

GOOD FRIDAY

Fri 3rd 11am Churches Together Walk of Witness Starting from Holy Saviour Church
7.30pm Tenebrae Service to be led by Dave White
Sat 4th 1pm Great Bitterne Bake Off – cake sale!

EASTER SUNDAY

Sun 5th 8am Dave White - Service of Holy Communion
8.30am Easter Breakfast
10.30am Jill Abrahams - Family Service
Thu 9th 2pm Senior Citizens - Tea/Coffee and Hot Cross Buns
Sun 12th 10:30am Morning Service led by the Leprosy Mission
Thu 16th 2pm Senior Citizens - Bingo
Sat 18th 11:30am Women's group meeting
Sun 19th 10:30am Morning service led by Revd. Dr. Sarah Hall with Holy communion
Wed 22nd 7:30pm Bible Study House Group to be held at the home of Ian and Jill
Thu 23rd 2pm Senior Citizens – New Music Makers concert – all welcome
Fri 24th 7:30pm **Solent Fellowship Band of the Salvation Army Concert - 40th Anniversary events**
Sun 26th 10:30am Morning Service led by Nikki Fisher
Thu 30th 2pm Senior Citizens – Tea/Coffee, cake and chat
MAY
Sun 3rd 10:30am Morning Service led by Adrian Stephens
Wed 6th 11:30am Wednesday Worship
Thu 7th 12noon Community Lunch
2pm Senior Citizens - Draw
Sun 10th 10:30am Morning Service led by Christian Aid
Thu 14th Senior Citizens - Outing to Oxford
Sat 16th 7:30pm **Quiz Night in Support of Christian Aid - 40th Anniversary events**

Items for April OUTLOOK need to be emailed to Nikki Fisher at BURC_CommunityOutreach@outlook.com by Sunday 19 April 2026. OUTLOOK to be photocopied Saturday 2 May 2026.

MISSION STATEMENT

Bitterne United Reformed Church exists to praise and worship God, to reach out into the community in love and service so the joy of Christ Jesus may be shared.

A Message from an Elder

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter. Easter is my favourite time of year – and no, not because of the Easter eggs. It's the time of when Jesus was put to death, but death could not hold Him and He rose to show us that He was the Saviour.

Hallelujah Christ is risen!!

New life is beginning. You can see new life in the gardens, in the woods, and on the farms. But as we go to print there is war. Unnecessary loss of life is happening. People are dying. Homes are being destroyed. This is not the world Jesus wanted for us but there are people who are greedy and who think they want to rule the world.

We pray for peace in the world.

Life for us goes on. Day in and day out we go about our daily lives and as Paul's letter to the Corinthians says *'Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless'*. We have just had the churches AGM where people have volunteered for a particular job to do for the church. We would like to thank everyone.

May Gods blessing be with you.

God has plans for us. We may not know what these plans are but if we love the Lord we must trust Him and follow Him in all that we do.

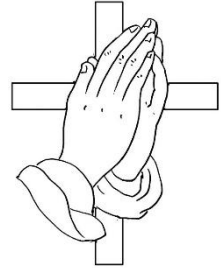
Let us go forward in His love.
Happy Easter.

Yours in Christ, *Jill*



CHURCH FAMILY PRAYERS

We have friends and family we pray for each week who are ill, going through difficult times, or facing new challenges feeling uncertain and needing help. Let us continue with our prayers, God, You know the hearts of the people we love— their worries, their wounds, their quiet hopes. Thank you for being close to every one of them, even when life feels heavy or uncertain.



Wrap our friends and family in your comfort. Let your peace settle over their minds and your gentleness steady their spirits. Where there is pain, bring healing. Where there is fear, bring calm. Where there is exhaustion, bring rest. Let hope rise again in their hearts, and let your presence be the steady ground beneath their feet.

Amen.

OUTREACH COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP

Dear Friends, Nikki has been working hard to share the story of all we do here at Bitterne URC—helping our community discover who we are, what we offer, and that we're here to support them.

To help her continue this important work, we're hoping to form a small group of people who can encourage her, share ideas, and lend a hand where needed. If you feel able to support Nikki in this way, we'd love to hear from you.



**CHURCH
VOLUNTEERS**

Anne



On the 1st March, our **Christian Musical Sing-Along** was a truly joyful afternoon, filled with familiar faces, laughter, and the warmth of old friends reconnecting. It was wonderful to see former cast and crew members gathered together again — sharing memories, spotting themselves in the old photos, and delighting in the clips from the original productions.

A huge thank you to Jill for the delicious cakes, to Ian for gathering the photos and memorabilia, to Helen for copying out all the lyrics for us, and to Tim for painstakingly rescuing the old video footage (with all the trials of uncooperative vintage tech!) and converting it into a sustainable digital format for future generations to enjoy.

It was also lovely to have newer members — and some who weren't even born when the musicals first took place — experiencing the community spirit of those shows for the first time. There was plenty of excited chatter about reviving a musical or creating something new of our own, so watch this space!



COME AND SHARE IN THE JOY OF EASTER

MAUNDY THURSDAY (2nd April)

7.30pm Communion led by Dave

GOOD FRIDAY (3rd April)

11.00 Walk of Witness around Bitterne, followed by tea and coffee and hot cross buns in our church.

7.30pm Tenebrae Service led by Dave

EASTER SUNDAY (5th April)

8.00am Easter Communion led by Dave.

8.30am Breakfast will be served with fellowship and fun and a full English breakfast. Please put your name on the list in the corridor.

10.30am Come and share the joy of Easter at our family service
EVERYONE WELCOME!



COMMUNITY LUNCH – First Thursday of the month
This month: **Thursday 2nd April at 12.00 midday.**
The cost is £6 for a main course and dessert.
Everyone is welcome.





The Great Bitterne Bake Off!

Bring your best bake and join the fun!

Judging • Prizes • Cake Sale for Donations

All ages welcome Raising funds for future CTiB community events



Easter Saturday,
4 April



Drop off
10-10:30am



Cake sale!
1-3pm



Bitterne United
Reformed Church

Free to Enter!

Scan
me!



How to Enter

- Optional **pre-registration** available
- Or register on the day
- Please bring an **ingredients/allergens** list
- You'll be given a **colour code** on arrival for anonymous judging
- Judges will award category winners based on highest scores
- All bakes will be sold for donations to support future CTiB community events.

We can't wait to see your creations!



AWAY DAY! - 2 MAY 2026,

PETERSFIELD URC Dear Friends, We'd love you to consider joining us on an away day. The date is a few months away, which gives you time to consider, plan and sign up. Feel free to suggest a theme for the

day and let us know beforehand. This is a time for everyone to have fun and fellowship in a relaxed environment. We are hoping to provide transport.

DONATIONS TO SCM BASICS BANK:

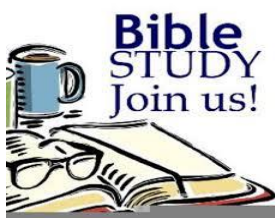
As always, please use the donation drop-off point at church.

They have shared that there is an urgent need for:

- Tinned Meat and fish
- Toilet rolls
- Noodles
- Soup
- Cook-in sauces
- Coffee, sugar, tea bags
- Jams & spreads
- Dog & Cat food
- UHT milk
- Large nappies sizes 4-6
- Tinned vegetables & fruit esp tomatoes
- All toiletries, esp deodorants

Alternatively, if you would rather, they can accept monetary donations

via their website <http://southamptoncitymission.co.uk/give>

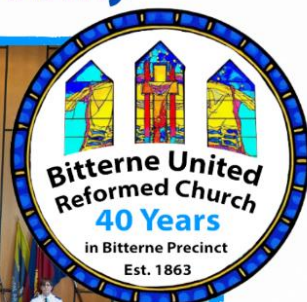


**Bible
STUDY**
Join us!

Our next Bible Study meeting is being held on 22nd April, 7:30pm at Jill and Ian's house.

Concert by

**The Solent Fellowship Band
of the Salvation Army**



Friday 24th April — 7:30 PM
Bitterne United Reformed Church,
Bitterne Precinct (above Iceland) 446 Bitterne Road,
Southampton SO18 5EF

**An uplifting evening of brass music from this renowned
local ensemble.**

Please reserve your tickets by emailing:
ianbitterne@gmail.com or phone us on 023 8042 1844

For more info please
visit our website



Could You Be a Bible Auntie or Uncle?

We're looking for a few caring adults to support the girls moving up into our n:gage group (7–11). In Girls' Brigade, Bible Aunties and Uncles play a simple but beautiful role, to represent the church family—offering encouragement, prayer, and a friendly face as the girls grow in faith.

You'll be paired with a girl, keep her in your prayers, and present her with her first Bible at our awards ceremony as she takes this next step.

If this sounds like something you could offer, we'd love to hear from you. Please speak to Rosie or Nikki for more details or to sign up. It's a small commitment with a big impact, and a wonderful way to bless the next generation.

the **GIRLS' BRIGADE**
ENGLAND & WALES



Would you like the opportunity to read from the Bible during the service on a Sunday? Please make Dave aware and he will pop you on the rota as a reader. With thanks.



Could You Be Our Next Editor? We're looking for someone who might enjoy taking on the role of editor for our monthly *Outlook* magazine. If you're curious about what's involved, you'd be very welcome to chat with Maria or

Janet. You might even like to try being a guest editor for a couple of editions to see whether it's a good fit. It's a lovely way to contribute creatively and help shape how we share our church's life with the community.

A quick update from Anthony about how the Seedbeds course is going.

In the first weekend of March, I went up to Birmingham for another instalment of my course.

I find it very useful, since each module covers a different topic, and is presented in a very different way due to a different person presenting each subject.

However, this module was not only classwork!

I already knew we were having a tour of the neighbourhood near to the host church, to get a better understanding of what the community is doing, has done, and is aspiring towards. But there was something not on the timetable...

We, as a group, were invited to take part in Big Iftar, where followers of the Muslim faith break their fast inside their mosque in a shared setting. We went to the Darul Barakaat Mosque, which is near to Birmingham City FC's stadium.



It was a beautiful, refreshing, eye-opening and humbling experience. I have never seen how other faiths perform worship, and to be treated as a guest and equal whilst being in their sacred space made the experience all the better. The food was incredible, but that wasn't the main point. The welcome that was provided to myriad faith groups, and representatives of local organisations and institutions made it feel like we were all one big family. It seems there are more similarities than differences.

Hopefully this can be the catalyst for beginning inter-faith relations, something I am keen to explore.

Time to build those bridges!



Outreach Summary – January to March 2026

Hello everyone,

It's been a full and encouraging start to the year, with lots happening across our church, our community partnerships, and our celebrations for the 40th Anniversary of our church building in Bitterne Precinct.

A real highlight was our **inclusive service on 1st March**. I helped lead the service alongside Rev. Sarah Hall, Penny, Chloe and Gail, as I shared reflections on the readings. This was followed by our **Christian Musicals sing-along** — a joyful way to begin our anniversary events. I've since



created a video celebrating the day and gathered feedback, which has been wonderfully positive and has even inspired other churches to explore similar inclusive services. Planning continues with **Wave for Change** as we look ahead to more inclusive worship and mixed-ability activities.

I've also been supporting conversations around **dementia-friendly groups**. We're exploring the possibility of a carers café, working with Caraway and local Memory Café leaders, with the hope of launching a group called *Care and Connect* to support unpaid carers in our community.

Work has continued on the **Children and Youth Friendly Church Award**. Our team has begun shaping our responses and reflecting on how we can grow our youth and children's work here in Bitterne.

Community connections have been growing too. I've been coordinating with Churches Together in Bitterne as we prepare for the **Great Bitterne Bake Off** — an event we hope will raise funds for more community activities. I've also been engaging with local conversations about revitalising

Bitterne and arranging meetings with the Edge Hub team to explore collaboration.

On the digital side, the website has had further updates, and social media has been active with Lent, Mothering Sunday, and event posts. **Chloe has joined me for work experience** which has been a joy, and we've been working together on video editing, communications, and odd jobs around the church.

I'm really looking forward to what's ahead and so grateful for the support and encouragement that make this work possible.

**With appreciation,
Nikki**



Volunteers Needed

We are starting a **Care and Connect Cafe: a dementia-friendly carers café** and are looking for warm, friendly volunteers. The café will offer a welcoming space for unpaid carers who support people living with dementia - with conversation, activities, refreshments and listening support.

No experience needed - just kindness, patience and a willingness to learn. Sessions will run once or twice a month on Tuesday mornings or Friday afternoons.

Roles are shared and on a rota basis, training is provided. If you're interested in helping, even occasionally, we'd love to hear from you! Contact Nikki for more information.

Eco Report - Caring for our Planet

Wild animals are secretly mitigating human-made climate change through their natural behaviour. As the planet edges closer to irreversible damage, wild animals around the world are staging their own secret fight against climate change and biodiversity loss. Human activity such as deforestation and extensive animal agriculture has also wrecked biodiversity, pushing many species towards extinction. But behind the scenes, wild animals are using their natural behaviour to help mitigate some of the turmoil we have created. Without them, the future prosperity of our planet is in peril. Here are a few examples of positive animal activity:

Tigers- Forests with native tigers tend to store up to 12 per cent more carbon per hectare. This is due to tigers hunting deer and wild boar, which would otherwise prevent trees and plants from growing.



Green Turtles No longer on the endangered list, green turtles in Australia consume seagrass seeds and transport them elsewhere – sometimes transporting the crucial carbon store as far as 650km away. Dugongs, also called sea cows, also help spread seagrass around, including in the increasingly threatened Great Barrier Reef.



Beavers – Their dam-building ability can act as a natural flood defence. This is even more important in a warming world, as for every 1°C rise in air temperature, the atmosphere can hold around seven per cent more moisture – which can lead to more intense and heavy



rainfall. Last year, a family of beavers made the headlines after building a dam exactly where authorities had been planning one in Czechia. It saved taxpayers around CZK 30 million (€1.2 million). Beavers' dams can also act as a natural firebreak, with research showing beaver-dammed areas are three times less affected by wildfires. This helps vegetation stay green and lush, and protects vital carbon-sucking areas.

Source – Euronews. Maria Boys.

Eco Event

A free community event at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church, SO53 2GJ, on Saturday 18th April, from 10am to 4pm, with a video dome, market stalls, kids' crafts, exhibition of poems, photos and posters, refreshments and an afternoon forum with Helen Stephens from A Rocha and members of Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Romsey and Winchester Methodist churches.

A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips 2026 Calendar - April

Celebrate new life this Easter and have a go at growing something!

April is the perfect time to try to grow something edible or, if you are a seasoned gardener, to encourage someone else to try.

Salad leaves or herbs are a great place to start and will reduce your reliance on those oh-so-convenient supermarket salad bags.

For indoor space, try 'micro-greens' (vegetable leaves harvested soon after they open)

For greenhouses, try sowing salad leaf seed mixes.

For outdoors, beetroot, lettuce, onion and pea plants are frost-resistant so can all be planted outside in April.

As you sow, thank God for the opportunity to grow food, and pray for those communities that are facing food shortages and famine. *For more eco-tips, sign up to A Rocha UK's Wild Christian email: arocha.org.uk/wild-christian*





2026 EVENTS

Bitterne United Reformed Church are celebrating 40 years in the precinct! We've planned a special programme of events in 2026, and we'd be delighted if you can join us!

MARCH 1 – 2:00 PM



Christian Musicals Sing-Along

MARCH 22 – 10:30 AM

Reunion Service & Lunch



APRIL 24 – 7:30 PM

Solent Fellowship Band (Salvation Army) Concert — Ticketed



MAY 16 – 7:00 PM

Quiz Night in Support of Christian Aid



JULY 18 – 10:00 AM–1:00 PM

Summer Fair on the Patio



SEPTEMBER 26 – 7:30 PM

Saxophony Concert — Ticketed



OCTOBER 27–31

Jigsaw Puzzle Festival



NOVEMBER 20 – 7:00 PM

Barn Dance — Ticketed



DECEMBER



Christmas Tree Festival

For the latest updates, please visit our website



Important Information:

Dates and details may be subject to change.
Everyone is welcome — bring friends, family, and neighbours

or follow us on social media.





CHARITY QUIZ *Night*



Saturday 16th May, 7pm

with Ploughman's supper

at Bitterne United Reformed Church

Entry is free!

Donations welcome to support the incredible work of
Christian Aid.

Please reserve your space by emailing:

ianbitterne@gmail.com

For more
info please
visit our
website



<u>Flower Rota</u>			<u>In Memory of</u>
Easter Sunday April	5 th	Kathy Forder	Kathy's husband, Ron
	12 th	Janet Gotham	
	19 th	Janet Gotham	Janet's friend Val
	26 th	Janet Gotham	
May	3 rd	The Snow Family	Kay Snow



Thank you to those who have arranged flowers for Sundays when there have been no special requests and for those who continue to arrange the flowers in memory of loved ones, it is much appreciated. If you would like to be included on the Flower Rota from time to time or maybe in memory of a special person or occasion, please let me know.

If you would like to help occasionally with arranging the flowers and with distributing the flowers, please contact me.

Janet Gotham

Thank you's –



Thank you to Jill Abrahams for providing the lovely colourful posies of flowers which were given out to members of the congregation after the service on Mothering Sunday

BITTERNE URC DIRECTORY

e-mail address	bitterneurc_sec@yahoo.co.uk	
Web site address	Bitterneurc.org.uk	
Church Post Code	SO18 5EF	
Church Telephone Number		023 80421844
Minister	Revd Dr Sarah Hall	023 80768004
Minister	Revd Mike Perrott	01794 512163
Church Secretary	Anne Wood	023 80333810
Assistant Church Secretary	Janet Gotham	07790207962
Boys Brigade Contact	Maria Boys	07817154062
Catering Co-ordinator	Jill Abrahams	023 80431067
Choir Leader	David White	07491865120
Christian Aid Representative	Ian Abrahams	023 80431067
Churches Together in Bitterne	Ian Abrahams	023 80431067
Coffee Morning/Steward Rotas	Janet Gotham	023 80329719
Copyright Officer	Helen Fisher	023 80397192
Fire Safety Officer		
Flower Rota	Janet Gotham	07790207962
Girls' Brigade Captain	Rosie Mabey	07766146993
Health & Safety Advisor		
IBRA Secretary	Maria Boys	07817154062
IT Co-ordinator	Tim Fisher	07971363376
Junior Church Leader	Margaret Whale	023 80455100
Lettings Officer	Ian Abrahams	023 80431067
Mercy Collective Coordinator	Anthony Boys	07561185898
Organist	Dave White	07491865120
OUTLOOK Editor		
Outreach Community Worker	Nikki Fisher	07411975937
Property Maintenance Coordinator	Tim Fisher	07971363376
Safeguarding Officer	Gail Jupp	07435563776
Senior Citizens Contact	Diane Murphy	023 80431727
Synod Representative	Janet Gotham	023 80329719
Holy Saviour Office		023 80685560
Christ the King & St Colman Priest	Father Elijah	023 80449088
Bitterne Park URC contact	Bridget Colwill	023 80477706
Peartree Green URC contact	Eileen Flanagan	07933394310

SERVICES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AT BITTERNE URC

				<u>Times</u>
<u>SUNDAY</u>	Family Worship & Junior Church			10.30am
	Family Worship and Sacrament of Holy Communion & Junior Church (3 rd Sunday Monthly)			10.30am
	Boys & Girls Brigades			10.30am
	Parade/Mosaic Service (as announced)			
	JAFFA Puppet Team (as announced)			
<u>MONDAY</u>	Girls' Brigade	6.15pm	-	7.45pm
	Boys' Brigade	6.15pm	-	7.45pm
<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	Community Café & Jigsaw Drop In	10.00am	-	11.30am
	Wednesday Worship (1 st Wednesday monthly)	11.30am	-	12noon
	Elders Meeting (3 rd Wednesday monthly)			7.30pm
	Bible Study House Group (monthly as announced)			7.30pm
<u>THURSDAY</u>	Senior Citizens Badminton	2.00pm	-	3.00pm from 6.30pm
<u>FRIDAY</u>	Choir Practice			7.00pm
<u>SATURDAY</u>	Community Cafe	10.00am	-	11.30am
	Women's Group (monthly as announced)			11.30am