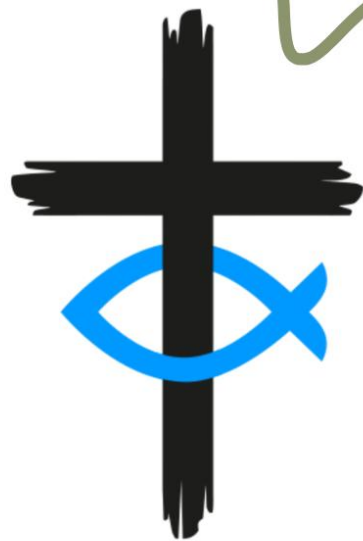
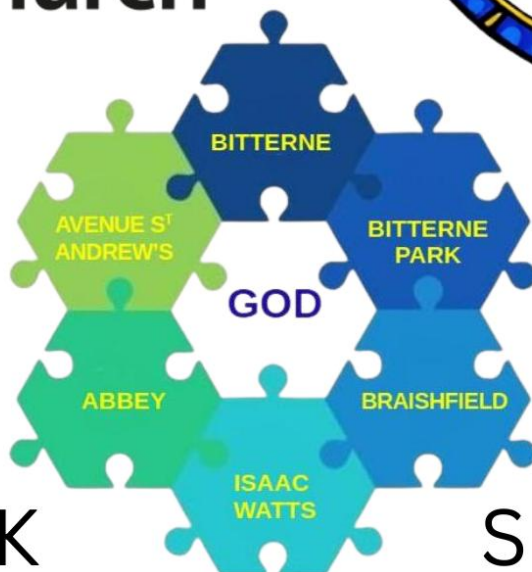




Bitterne United Reformed Church



Part of the
Southern
Fellowship



of United
Reformed
Churches

OUTLOOK

SEPT 2026

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

Church Diary

September

Wed 2nd	11:30am	Wednesday Worship
Thu 3rd	12 noon 2pm	Community Lunch Senior Citizens - Draw
Fri 4th	7:30pm	Uganda talk with Anthony
Sun 6th	10:30am	Morning service led by Revd. Brian Parfitt
Tue 8th	2pm	WAVE Mixed Ability Worship – all welcome!
Thu 10th	2pm	Senior Citizens - Tea/Coffee/Cake Chat
Sun 13th	10:30am	Morning service led by Nikki Fisher
Wed 16th	7:30pm	Elders meeting
Thu 17th	2pm	Senior Citizens - Bingo
Sat 19th	11:30am	Women's Group meeting
Sun 20th	10:30am	Morning service led by Revd. Mike Perrott with Holy Communion
Wed 23rd	3pm	Property Maintenance meeting
Wed 23rd	7:30pm	Bible study
Thu 24th	2pm	Senior Citizens - Southampton Health Choir
Sat 26th	7:30pm	Saxophony Concert - 40th Anniversary events
Sun 27th	10:30am 11:45am	Morning service led by our inclusive group for Disability Awareness Sunday Church Meeting

October

Thu 1st	12 noon 2pm	Community Lunch Senior Citizens - Draw
Sun 4th	10:30am 12pm	Harvest Festival / Creationtide Morning service led by Revd. Mike Perrott Harvest Lunch
Wed 7th	11:30am	Wednesday Worship
Sun 11th	10:30am	Morning service led by Revd. Sarah Hall
Sat 17th	10-3pm	Eco Festival - 40th Anniversary events
27th – 31st	10-3pm	Jigsaw Puzzle Festival - 40th Anniversary events

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.

Message from an Elder

Dear Friends,

September is the time of year when those who work in education ready themselves for the next academic year. Those among us whose time is no longer influenced by the academic year or who are retired may still be returning from holidays, hopefully refreshed and rested.



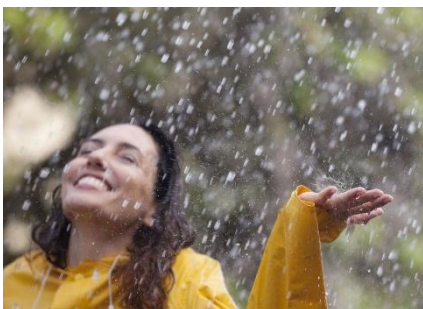
Some of us will have been fortunate enough to visit new places and have new experiences to thank God for. For others, life may have been as busy as at any other time of the year.

I am sure that many of us have been saddened by the wildfires and are concerned about water supplies and the

welfare of wildlife. We are longing for some rain to provide much needed relief.

The Bible reassures us, in Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 that 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a

time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.' It goes on to list many other different actions, most of which are, have been or will be a part of our own experience.



Many of our experiences of life are beyond our control:

whether we are experiencing good times or bad, drought or flood. Just as we cannot stop the passing of the seasons of the year, much of our lives are influenced by things beyond our control. The key to finding peace in all seasons is



learning to accept things as they come, recalling that good times follow bad, and bad times follow good, and that God is with us in all those times. Solomon suggested that, as we cannot predict what life will bring, we should remember that life is a gift from God which we should make the most of. This involves finding balance and not allowing worry, anxiety or stress to overwhelm us, robbing us of laughter and joy.

It is important to make time in our busy days for prayer and meditation, for fellowship with family and friends, and for rest, relaxation and fun.

We can bring more balance to our lives by inviting God into our daily routines. Focussing on our blessings enables us to trust God more; trusting God's plans and timings. Balance is also about finding joy in simple things, spending time with God, and setting priorities that honour God.



How are you doing at balancing your life? Are there things you need to change?

May we ask God to guide us to use our time in ways that honour Him. May God teach us to discern our priorities and make time for work, rest and play. Amen.

Penny

Church Family prayer

Loving God

As a new school year begins, we pray for our teachers and students. Refresh their minds, bodies, and spirits after their time of rest. Fill them with energy, enthusiasm, and hope. May this year be filled with achievement, kindness, and encouragement for all.



We lift up our church family all who are facing long-term illnesses, anxiously awaiting test results, or coping with injury and illness. We ask for Your tender love and healing power to surround them. Bring comfort to their bodies and peace to their spirits. We remember especially those struggling with mental health challenges. Lord, bless them with strength, patience, and grace as they learn to manage each day. May they feel Your presence always, and may Your peace fill their minds.

We pray for those who have recently experienced loss and are grieving deeply. Hold them close in this difficult time. And for those who silently bear their burdens without asking for help, we trust You see them and watch over them with endless compassion.

We also give You heartfelt thanks for those on the path to recovery, for the good health returning to them, and for the positive test results and grades received. May Your blessings continue to follow them. Amen.

In all things, may Your love be our guide, our strength, and our hope. Amen.

(From the URC) As schools go back, we offer this prayer:

New classes, new teachers, new schools;
new friends to make.

For children and young people,
their families and carers,
for teachers and school staff
facing new beginnings,
we offer the certainty of your
encircling care,
loving God.

We pray that we may all know your
guidance
as we walk down new corridors
and enter new spaces,
in the knowledge that you are present
in all things new,
a constant horizon
and our welcoming embrace.
Amen.



Church Life Updates

Feedback from General Assembly

Going to General Assembly is very interesting and a lot of discussion is held that involves everybody present. You learn so much about how the United Reformed Church operates and how decisions made affect us all. It's good for resources, networking, worshipping,

meeting new people and getting questions answered! Amongst all the papers that were tabled the following were discussed at our Church Meeting for action:

Paper P2 – Keeping Trans people

safe, was brought to the meeting citing Resolutions 53, 54 and 55 which can be found on urc.org.uk general assembly, or clicking on General Assembly papers - United Reformed Church. if you receive this by e-mail. If you are unable to access this link I have the information in book form, just ask. Church meeting agreed we will alter our 'welcome' information.



Paper K3 Involvement with the Welcome

Directory, was brought to the meeting citing

Resolutions 50 and 51. The Welcome

Directory, in line with the guidance in the

URC's safeguarding Good Practice document,

helps prison leavers with joining faith communities.

Church meeting agreed we become involved with the Welcome Directory. Any queries please ask me, or an Elder for more information.

Paper J2 Celebration of Creationtide was

brought to the meeting citing Resolutions 41

and 42 with the General Assembly

encouraging all United Reformed Churches

to observe the Feast of Creation in Christ on

the first Sunday in September, commencing



in 2026. Whilst this is a bit too short notice for us, the Church Meeting agreed this would be celebrated in our Church later this year and is something we will include in our Calendar for future years.

Many papers were brought before General Assembly and you will hear about them in due course, or you can read about them on the link given earlier. Paper K1 The Basis of Union, the document on which the URC is formed, will be reviewed by various committees of Church House, to review the use of gendered language in the document.

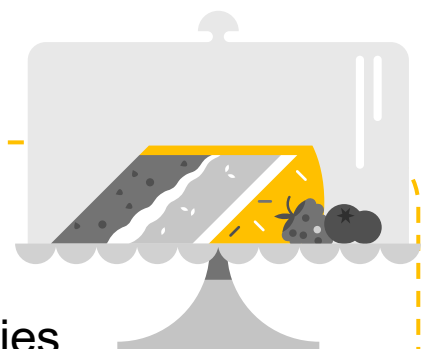
There is a good camaraderie with everyone who attends General Assembly. Whilst the days can be long, because there is a lot of business to get through, it is always managed with the right amount of formality and friendliness making everyone relaxed and willing to take part. Oops, I almost forgot to mention, you also get very well fed!

Please ask if you want to know more.

Anne

Four Charities Tea

A BIG THANK YOU from Jill and Ian to everyone who supported the Four Charities Tea in August. £450 was raised which was shared between Countess Mountbatten Hospice, The Alzheimer's Society, The Girls Brigade and The Salvation Army Music Man Project.



WAVE Social Taster – A Joyful Afternoon at Bitterne URC

At the start of August we hosted our very first WAVE Social Taster, and what a joyful afternoon it turned out to be! The sunshine made a perfect backdrop for crafts, cake, outdoor games, and plenty of relaxed conversation. It was wonderful to see people of all abilities joining in at their own pace and enjoying time together.



We were especially grateful to Sophia and her son, who travelled a long way from WAVE for Change to support the event. WAVE is a national initiative helping churches create mixed-ability spaces where *all are valued equally* - something that sits beautifully within our own vision for inclusive community life here at Bitterne URC.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our volunteers and church family whose kindness, energy, and welcome made the afternoon feel so special.

We're looking forward to inviting you all to the **WAVE Worship Taster on Tuesday 8th September, 2–3:30pm**. This will be a gentle, creative, and interactive time of worship designed so everyone can take part. We hope it will continue to grow into a regular mixed-ability gathering where friendship, faith, and joy can flourish side by side.

Nikki

Girls Brigade News – Swanage Camp

At the end of July, we were joined by 1st Totton, 1st Eastleigh and 1st Chandlers Ford girls for our week away in Swanage. We enjoyed carnival celebrations, tag archery, sun-filled beach days and ice creams were plentiful. We appreciated all prayers and donations towards our camp as it helped our 8 girls (along with 7 others from the other companies) enjoy another faith-filled week away. The



girls explored the fruits of the spirits during our sessions and how this can be applied not only at camp, but in their lives moving forward. As always, the GB work never stops so we are already planning our next adventure in 2027. If you would like to make a donation, to make this possible, please speak to Rosie, Gail or Nikki.



Our next Bible Study meeting is being held on Wednesday 23rd September 2026, 7:30pm at Maria Boys' house.

Message found by Mary Abraham from The Parish Church of Cricket St. Thomas:

Church is...

Where your PARENTS bring you to be baptised,
Where your FRIENDS bring you to be married,
Where your RELATIVES bring you to be buried,
Why not try coming on your own sometime?



Upcoming events

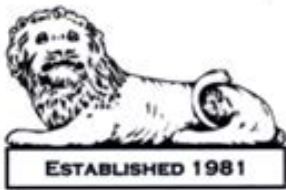
Ugandan talk 4th September

Anthony warmly invites everyone to join him on 4th September as he shares stories from his recent visit to Uganda and unveils plans for an exciting group trip in August 2027. Come be inspired and explore how you could be part of this adventure!



Heritage Open Day

Bitterne Local History Society invite you to join them as they celebrate National Heritage Open Days on Saturday 19th September. Their museum in Peartree Avenue will be open from 10am-4pm with special displays of photographs and artefacts from their collection which are not normally available. Entry is free.



Harvest

Harvest this year will be on Sunday 4th October. Please bring gifts of non-perishable food items.

There will a harvest lunch after the service so if you would like to come, please put your name on the list in the corridor. There is no set charge for the lunch, but we are asking for donations to cover the cost and hopefully to support our chosen charity. Please bring your family and friends too. Thank you.





**Bitterne
United
Reformed
Church**

WAVE Bitterne Worship taster event

For people 18 and over
with and without learning disabilities

**Tuesday 8th September
2-3:30pm**

**Bitterne Precinct (above Iceland)
446 Bitterne Road, Southampton, SO18 5EF**

An interactive worship group where everyone can explore faith through creative activities, drama, music, and reflection, offering time to connect with others and enjoy some cake.



Saxophony CONCERT



**Bitterne
United
Reformed
Church**

**26TH
SEPTEMBER
7:30PM**

TICKETS £5

**CAKE, DRINKS AND ICE CREAM
TO BE SERVED
IN THE INTERVAL**

Please reserve your tickets by emailing:
BURC_CommunityOutreach@outlook.com
or phone us on 023 8042 1844
(answerphone)

For more info
please visit our
website:
<https://bitterneurc.org.uk/40-years-in-bitterne-precinct/>





Bitterne
United
Reformed
Church

Jigsaw Puzzle

FESTIVAL

Tues 27th Oct to Sat 31st Oct 2026

10am - 2pm

£1 entry | Free return visits | Kids go free!



Homemade cakes & refreshments



hundreds of pre-loved puzzles



Great for your brain, your mood, and the planet

Bitterne Precinct
(above Iceland)
446 Bitterne Road,
Southampton
SO18 5EF

Get Involved



Jigsaw Puzzle Festival

As we get ready for our Jigsaw Festival in October, a big thank you to everyone who has already donated puzzles.

If you'd like to help by making up some jigsaws, please feel free to take puzzles from the church stock along with the right-sized boards. When you've finished, we can arrange collection if needed.

Many thanks, *Ian*

Volunteers For Saturday Coffee Mornings

As there have been gaps on our rota, perhaps you could help on Saturday coffee morning.

Please add your name to the rota on the noticeboard in the porch if you can help spread the load for the 3 or 4 people already volunteering.

Thank you to those who have been volunteering regularly and those who help from time to time.

The coffee morning is a good outreach to members of the public. Please give this your consideration, and if you wish to know more, please contact me.

Many thanks

Janet Gotham





Sponsored walk for Mercy Collective.

Anthony and Maria are taking part in “Walk the Test” on Sunday 27th September. We will be walking along the River Test from Horsebridge to Romsey, which is 8 miles. As the walk is organised by the Rotary Club, they will keep 20% of all funds raised for their good causes. The other 80% will be divided up between the 5 communities under Mercy Collective which Anthony supports in Uganda. This will help with school fees and equipment and help disadvantaged people in the communities. If you would like to sponsor us, the JustGiving page is

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/walk-for-mercy> Alternatively, scan the QR code or there will be a form at church. Thank you for your support.



From Our Local Community

Clothing appeal

The University Hospital Southampton clothes bank for patients needs your support:

“👕 Our linen cupboard is almost bare. We use it to provide clothing to patients who don’t have clean, comfortable clothes to go home in. Throughout the year, there are many people who really value and appreciate



**University Hospital
Southampton**
NHS Foundation Trust

the kind donation of some loose-fitting clothing to go home in. But we can only provide this support with the help of the local community, and through your generous donations.

★ What you can donate:

✓ Jumpers ✓ T-shirts ✓ Trousers ✓ Shorts ✓ Skirts
✓ Jogging bottoms

⊘ Please don't donate:

✗ Underwear ✗ Shoes ✗ Coats ✗ Sequined or sparkly tops.

All items must be clean and in good condition.

📍 Where to donate: The UHS Patient and Family Support Hub, B Level East Wing (near the Eye Unit), open 09:30am - 4pm Monday - Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Or drop off at our community partner: Adjustamatic Beds, 280 Winchester Road, SO16 6TQ. Open Monday to Saturday, 9:30am–5:30pm

Got questions? Call 0800 484 0135 or email

PFSH@uhs.nhs.uk

Your kindness helps us offer dignity and comfort to our patients. Thank you.”

Maria can collect and take donations if you are unable to.

British Science Festival in Bitterne

Highly Sprung's *Castaway*
will be performed in
Bitterne Precinct on **18th**
September at 3:30pm
and **6pm**.

Bitterne
URC is
delighted
to host the
company
behind the
scenes.



People's Emergency Briefing

*Join us for a screening of the People's
Emergency Briefing on Climate &
Nature hosted by Chris Packham,
followed by a discussion with
Southampton scientists about the role
of science in a society-wide response.*

Sunday 20th
September 3:30-5pm
University of
Southampton
Free event - book now!



BRITISH
SCIENCE
FESTIVAL

A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips 2026 Calendar

The Season of Creation (1 September-4 October) is dedicated to God as the Creator and sustainer of all life. Join A Rocha UK's Season of Creation prayer and reflection webinar on Wednesday 2 September to start this season with others.

During this period of the church calendar, many churches celebrate Harvest, thanking God for his provision through the land and the food that it produces. If you are part of a church or community, suggest that a service or gathering has a Season of Creation focus. Prayers, worship, teaching and the offering could focus on creation. Could there be an activity with a creation focus too?

Explore more Season of Creation resources at:

www.arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/season-of-creation

FREE HERITAGE TALKS



**St Mary's
Church**

PARISH OF SHOLING

HERITAGE 160

As part of our 160th year Heritage celebrations,
St Mary's Church Sholing is hosting the following
heritage events.

These events are all **FREE TO ATTEND**, but we kindly ask
that you register in advance to help us plan seating.

**VICTORIAN
Southampton**

Wed 9 Sept
6.30pm for 7pm start

**WW2
Southampton**

Fri 25 Sept
6.30pm for 7pm start

**TITANIC
Southampton**

Wed 7 Oct
6.30pm for 7pm start

**WW1
Southampton**

Fri 23 Oct
6.30pm for 7pm start

**ROMANI POET
Raine Geoghegan**

Sat 7 Nov
3pm

Register Now!

To register your attendance:
Tel: 023 8044 8337
Email: heritage@sholing.church





Photo by Christian Aid

Prayer for Bangladesh

Loving God,
We pray for the Manta
community in Barisal:
for children learning in
safety, for families
building secure
livelihoods, and for all
who are gaining dignity
and recognition.

Bless the work of AVAS,
and all who seek justice
and inclusion. Open our
hearts to respond with
compassion and
generosity.

Amen.

From invisible to included

Transforming life for Manta families

For generations, the Manta community in Barisal, Bangladesh, have lived on water—floating from place to place, unseen and often forgotten.

Life on the river has meant more than movement. It has meant exclusion. Children grew up on boats without access to education, often tied with ropes to keep them safe from falling into the water. Families depended entirely on unpredictable fishing incomes, vulnerable to storms, climate shocks, and seasonal bans. Without official identity documents, many were unable to access even the most basic public services. For many, it felt like their lives did not matter.

But change is happening. With support from Commitment for Life, working alongside local partner AVAS, 200 Manta families have begun a powerful journey—from isolation to inclusion.



Photo by Christian Aid

cont... At the same time, new opportunities are opening up. Through skills training and small business support, families are no longer reliant on fishing alone. Women and men are learning net weaving, small trade, and other income-generating activities—giving them stability even when fishing is not possible. “Before, we only knew fishing,” one community member explains. “Now we can run our families in different ways. We feel capable.”

Perhaps most transformative of all, families are gaining official recognition. With support to access national ID cards and birth registrations, many Manta people are, for the first time, recognised as citizens. This simple but powerful shift opens the door to education, healthcare, and government support—restoring not just access, but dignity.

As one elder reflects: “Our lives had no value; people used to drive us away. But today, our grandchildren go to school with bags on their shoulders. We have been given not just opportunities, but dignity.”

Safe spaces for children have been created—places where they can learn, play, and simply be children. For the first time, many are holding pencils, writing their names, and discovering a world beyond the river.

“Before, I couldn’t do anything except say my name,” shares one young girl.

“Now I can write it. I can read books. I am no longer tied to the boat.”

Families are also safer. With life jackets, solar lights, and training in disaster preparedness, daily life on the water is no longer defined by constant fear...

“Before, I couldn’t do anything except say my name...”

“Now I can write it. I can read books. I am no longer tied to the boat.”

This is the impact of Commitment for Life in support of Christian Aid. We work with communities to address not just immediate needs, but the deeper causes of poverty and exclusion: from safety to education; from livelihoods to identity, and from invisibility to inclusion.

But there are many more families still waiting for this chance.

You can help make it possible

Your support can help extend this life-changing work, ensuring that more children can learn, more families can earn, and more communities can claim their place in society.

Together, we can help turn the tide. Thank you for your continued support of our valuable Commitment for Life partners.

<u>Flower Rota</u>			<u>In Memory of</u>
September	6 th	Janet Gotham	
	13 th	Jane Byrnell	Jane's Mum Barbara Wheeler
	20 th	Janet Gotham	
	27 th	Kathy Forder	Kathy's parents and brother
October	4 th	HARVEST THANKSGIVING	
		Jill Abrahams	Jill's Mum, Olga Olive

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



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	Nikki Fisher	07411975937
Outreach Community Worker	Nikki Fisher	07411975937
Property Maintenance Coordinator	Tim Fisher	07971363376
Publicity Officer	Nikki Fisher	07411975937
Safeguarding Officer	Gail Jupp	07435563776
Senior Citizens Contact	Diane Murphy	023 80431727
Synod Representative	Janet Gotham	023 80329719
Website Administrator	Nikki Fisher	07411975937
Holy Saviour Office	Jo Ayres-Proctor	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 Parade/Mosaic Service	10.30am	
	(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
<u>FRIDAY</u>	Choir Practice		7.00pm
<u>SATURDAY</u>	Community Cafe	10.00am	11.30am
	Women's Group (3 rd Saturday monthly)		11.30am

Items for October OUTLOOK need to be emailed to Nikki Fisher at **BURC_CommunityOutreach@outlook.com** by Sunday 13 September 2026. OUTLOOK to be available Sunday 27 September 2026.