



**Skinner Street  
United Reformed Church  
Poole March 2026**

Guided by the Holy Spirit we aim to show the love of God the Father for everyone by sharing the work of his Son, Jesus Christ, among our neighbours in Poole and the wider world.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,

he restores my soul.  
He guides me in paths  
of righteousness  
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk  
through the valley of  
the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me; your rod  
and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:1-4

CCL544280

Dear Friends,

I have hardly had time to wish you a Happy New Year and I find myself having to think about what I should write in preparation for Lent. According to my Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Lent hasn't always been a period of forty days, indeed it probably didn't become so and hence associated with Jesus' Temptation in the Desert until the mid-fourth century.

Initially the observance of the fast was rigid - only one meal per day was allowed and flesh-meat and fish were forbidden. This was gradually relaxed, especially in the western church until in 1996 the Roman Catholic church restricted the fast to Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The Reformation of course brought an end to the observance of Lent as such, being non-Biblical - perhaps that's where the connection between Lent and Jesus' Temptation came from to allow Protestants a time to prepare for Easter.

The period of Lent has a strong penitential nature. It is a time of abstention from festivities. A time of giving to the needy. And a time for devoting more time than usual to religious exercises.

It could be said that we are perhaps particularly good at the latter two. Throughout Lent, it has been the practice of many churches to have a 'hunger' lunch once a week (although when I have attended such events, I have seen little sign of anyone going away hungry) and giving donations to a charity such as Christian Aid.

Additionally, it is a time when many churches ensure they have Bible Study groups often with ecumenical partners.

But giving up festivities? We can hardly be said to be good at that. We may just about decide to give up sweets, chocolate biscuits, etc. but that can hardly be said to be giving up festivities.

My prayer this Lent is that you will find the strength to give something up for Lent and perhaps donate the money saved to charity; and that you will make the time to devote more time to religious exercises whether it be in a formal time of worship or in your own personal devotions,

Your friend and servant in Christ,

Revd Dave Harkison

Interim Moderator Bournemouth Pastorate



# Worship and Prayer in March

## SERVICES Sundays at 10.30am

1<sup>st</sup> Revd Julian Macro *Holy Communion*

Servers: Chris Proudley & Shirley Marden

8<sup>th</sup> Revd Sally Taylor

15<sup>th</sup> Mrs Tricia Knapp *Mothering Sunday*

22<sup>nd</sup> Revd Martin Ambler

29<sup>th</sup> Joint Service at Wareham URC also at 10.30am

*There will be Coffee and Fellowship after the services*

## DUTY ELDER and VESTRY PRAYER

1<sup>st</sup> Chris Proudley

15<sup>th</sup> Shirley Marden

8<sup>th</sup> Janice Williams

22<sup>nd</sup> Tricia Knapp

## DOOR STEWARDS

1<sup>st</sup> Vera

15<sup>th</sup> Ross

8<sup>th</sup> Ross

22<sup>nd</sup> Ross

## THURSDAY PRAYERS 10.15am *(Followed by coffee and fellowship)*

5<sup>th</sup> Vera Brown

12<sup>th</sup> Revd Dave Harkison and Revd Sally Taylor –

Affirmation Service for Anne

19<sup>th</sup> Patricia Arnold

26<sup>th</sup> Shirley Marden

## Diary For March

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> After the service – Church Meeting

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Lent Lunch after the service. This will be with our friends of the Garden Church.

## Can you Help?

We are missing some duplicate records from our archives. If you think you might have the Marriage, Baptism or Death folders from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we would be grateful if you could return them so others can research their families. Thank you. Tricia & Alan

## **MARCH 2026 NOTES FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER**

No longer the new year but March is the month when we hope that real Spring is on its way, sunny, dry and daffodils and other lovely bright flowers showing us their cheerfulness.

At Skinner Street we are looking positively to the next couple of months as we should hear about the CIL grant so we can proceed with, not before time, with the up grading of the hall, toilets and other areas. This will help ensure ourselves and the local community groups who use the hall are kept safe and all is compliant with current regulations. Although our income is holding up, costs, especially for Gas and Electric, have risen substantially. We will be monitoring these closely over the next couple of months. We had to replace the photocopier but the regular costs of insurance, Ministry and Mission, cleaning, gas and electric are close to £2600 each month.

One day I should look back 10 years to compare the costs!

Thank you to those who have sent donations for their occasional use of the car park. Please let me know if your registration has changed though. Bank details are at the end of this note!

The BEETLE DRIVE held on 14 February, was great fun and we may repeat it in the future. Thank you to those who helped in many ways. Our next 'event' is the Lent Lunch on Sunday 8 March, after the service. This will be with our friends of the Garden Church. Although not fundraising, both these are an opportunity to get to know more people who come into Skinner Street.

We had a Group 27 meeting recently and plans are being firmed up for the 250 Anniversary displays and activities. Hopefully having completed the upgrade to the hall etc. and with the garden being so successful, we will be able to really showcase Skinner Street as we are today but remind visitors of the amazing history of this Church. It has played a huge part in local religious history as well as social. The fact we are still worshipping here today indicates how important Skinner Street has been and is to our lives.

I hope to tell you the outline of the plans soon. All contributions and comments are most welcome but a good number of volunteers throughout 2027 will be required as we will need to have the church open as much as possible! Early warning!

Thank you, Gail Nuttall

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### **Pastoral Notes**

Sadly as I write this 3 of our members are in hospital. We wish them a speedy return to their homes. As we know, age comes with its joys and sorrows and health problems. All those we know, family and friends, are remembered in our prayers.

We do try to keep in touch with all but please call an Elder or any listed in this newsletter if it would help to talk. Each of you is important to us.

### **From our Interim Moderator for Skinner Street, Wareham & Swanage URC Pastorate**

While I write the television news has been dominated by two events. There is, of course, the Winter Olympic Games that rightly celebrates sporting prowess and a sense of nationhood among competitors and spectators alike. Despite the inevitable controversy that sometimes threatens to steal the journalistic limelight it is something to be treasured that people from different nations come together to take part bringing a sense of living beyond borders while celebrating distinctive cultures and accepting the discipline of the rules of the games.

The other has been the deepening realisation that one wicked person can infiltrate the economic and political life of several nations compromising otherwise respected institutions and threatening the stability of elected governments.

These contrasts speak to me of the importance of doing things together and within an accountable and transparent structure. One of the great treasures of the URC is our conciliar structure which requires us to meet as Elders, Church Members and in the wider councils of the church to discern where God is leading us and make decisions – it makes us talk to each other and keeps individuals and local churches in contact with each other. The structured approach to finding and calling a stipendiary minister can seem frustratingly slow. It does, however, have the advantage of being thorough and accountable firstly through the delegated responsibility of your vacancy group members and secondly through the decision of your Church Meeting. The resilience of all three churches in the pastorate during this vacancy is something that I will be able, as Interim Moderator, to emphasise to any prospective candidate.

I think that it is likely that, if the world's press had been reporting the first Easter they would focus on the negative and suffering aspects of the events we follow. While this is, rightly, a crucial part of the significance of the Passion it is nothing without the positive of victory over the worst that humans can do. Perhaps a fitting way to respond to this central part of our faith would be to resolve to look for the good, the positive and the opportunities in our own lives and the lives of others. The sacrifice of not scoring a point over somebody else or accepting what we don't like for the sake of others could be transforming.

Tim Meachin

# A Lenten Reflection...



- Give up complaining; focus on gratitude
- Give up harsh judgments; think kindly thoughts
- Give up worry; trust divine Providence
- Give up discouragement; be full of hope
- Give up bitterness; turn to forgiveness
- Give up hatred; return good for evil
- Give up negativism; be positive
- Give up pettiness; become mature
- Give up jealousy; pray for trust

***Deadline for April newsletter Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March***

*Contributions to Tricia: 01202 632399*

For church matters or to discuss arrangements for a Baptism, Wedding or Funeral: Shirley Marden 07980 923217

For Hall Lets and Carpark: Gail Nuttall 07774 283179