



Skinner Street United Reformed Church Poole

August 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.



View towards Torbay from the
National Trust gardens at Colyton Fishacre, Devon
July 1st 2026

Dear Friends

A few weeks ago Dave Harkison led a Sunday service dedicated to oppression and slavery which was inspiring and even enjoyable given such a troubling subject.

I especially enjoyed the American Spiritual music such as “Let my people go” as I had the pleasure of regularly attending a Spiritual Church in Rochester, New York when on my gap year many years ago and this brought back very happy memories of the members of that congregation.

One of the hymn we sang was of course “Amazing Grace” John Newton’s inspiring words, accompanied by the tune we are all used to, telling of sin and redemption that is to be found in God’s love. As it is the anniversary of his birth in 1725 on 4th August, I thought I would tell you a little about him, his life and his conversion to a true Christian life.

He was born in Wapping, East London where incidentally I lived for 10 years while working in London. His father, also John, was a prosperous shipmaster and at this time that area was the hub of England’s trade with the rest of the World. His mother, Sarah, was a non-conformist and a devout church goer and she raised John junior in her faith taking him to Sunday School where she started his education, both religious and generally.

Sadly, Sarah died just before John’s 7th birthday and he was initially sent to boarding school before joining his father’s new family in Essex. When he was 11 he joined his father on his voyages and continued this for many years before himself becoming a seamaster.

Interestingly, and not generally known I think, John himself was a slave to Princess Paye of Sierra Leone, a common phenomenon at this time as explained by the speaker who came when the Friends of Dorset Historic Churches visited recently.

On his escape he nevertheless returned to the sea and was involved in the slave trade and prospered. However, in 1748 his ship, The Greyhound, encountered a ferocious storm and John thought he would die. On being rescued he experienced a profound religious conversion, renouncing his life and committing the rest of his life to God. He became a fervent abolitionist and lived to see the abolition of the African slave trade in 1807 just before his death at 82.

He was ordained as a minister of the Church of England and served as parish priest in Olney Buckinghamshire.

It is during that time that he wrote the words of Amazing Grace and it is thought that originally it would have been a chant, with music only being added later, possibly when it became popular in America in the 1820/30s.

It's strong message is that redemption is possible regardless of the sins people commit and that the soul can be delivered from despair through the mercy of God and is a favourite of many for that very reason.

God bless John Newton on the anniversary of his birth."

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

Chris Proudley

Worship and Prayer in August

SERVICES Sundays at 10.30am

2nd Ian Pethrick

9th Tricia Knapp

16th Tricia Knapp *Holy Communion*

Servers: Janice Williams & Shirley Marden

23rd Sue Harman

30th Revd Martin Ambler – Skinner Street hosting
joint service with Swanage & Wareham URC's

Followed by Lunch

There will be Coffee and Fellowship after the other services

DUTY ELDER and VESTRY PRAYER

2nd Patricia Arnold

9th Shirley Marden

16th Janice Williams

23rd Chris Proudley

30th Shirley Marden

DOOR STEWARDS

2nd Vera

9th Ross

16th Ross

23rd Ross

30th Ross

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

6th Patricia

13th Chris

20th Tricia

27th Shirley

Note for you diaries: On 20th September Sally and I will be leading the Annual Pet Service. In the garden – weather permitting!

Front Cover Picture: If you have taken a photo highlighting God's wonderful world and you can email it to me I will endeavour to use it.

Tricia

AUGUST 2026 PHEW! FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER

‘Phew’ could be due to the lovely weather we have been experiencing or for the fact that the refurbishment work to the hall, Parlour, Kitchen and toilets has (almost!) been completed and we can get back into these rooms.

And it seems we have pretty well kept within budget. We did put £10,000 aside for contingency and this will be needed as the cost of sorting the asbestos that had to be removed had been an unknown factor.

The bank account is holding up, luckily the utility bills have been lower due to the time of year and less use! Thanks to Tricia Knapp for leading many of our services too.

Though, as I often say, we cannot be complacent. Thank you to all who continue to support us. It has been very uplifting for those who have been members at Skinner Street for many, many years, to be welcoming new faces.

It was also great that we have a new Elder in Patricia Arnold. Her recent induction led by our Moderator Rev Michael Hopkins, was a moving service attended by her son, Mark, and Sue, a close friend from her church in Paignton. Shirley and Chris also renewed their commitment as Elders for the next three years.

Moving on to the coming months, a weekend in September, 12 and 13, is going to be a busy one with our church being open both days✳. It is the Dorset Historic Churches Ride and Stride on Saturday and also Dorset Architectural Heritage Week. Both these events bring many folk through our doors.

I, along I hope with other members, will be asking for sponsorship for my R&S challenge. I plan to visit all the ‘sister’ churches locally that Skinner Street were party to setting up. Some have sadly closed and others changed hands but they can still be visited! I will tell you exactly how many and where next month!

Looking further forward to our 250 Anniversary of the building next year, a number of you have already found pictures of family weddings that took place here, as we intend to have a display to show how we have been closely involved with the local community for many generations. I have also included in this newsletter some questions that can help us record how you are connected to the church today which, I am sure, will show how diverse the congregation is and always has been! We will need a lot of help next year so hope, once we do get some dates finalised, you will offer to help.

My best wishes to you all and trust to catch up with you soon.

Thank you,

Gail Nuttall

Skinner Street United Reformed Church BH15 1RQ
Lloyds Bank Code 30 96 73 account number 00208804

Gail Nuttall. grn23g@gmail.com 01202 707231 - 07774 283 179
23 Crichel Mount Road, Poole Dorset BH14 8LT

✳ We will be decorating the windows for Dorset Architectural Heritage Week and Dorset Historic Churches Ride and Stride with the theme of the church and world history 1787 to 1917. If you would like to help please let me know. Tricia

Pastoral Notes

I think this lovely weather is a challenge for many as the heat can make life difficult. We pray for all who find it hard to get a cool space. Please remember you are not alone. Looking after a partner whose health is poor can make life seem very lonely. We are here just to chat to at any time and can visit if you wish. Just make contact.

Please complete and return to Gail, if you wish.
MY SKINNER STREET URC (CONGREGATIONAL)
CONNECTION

Name and maiden name if
wish.....

I arrived at Skinner Street Church
with/because.....

.....

In those days the activities
included.....

The Minister
was.....

I was involved
in.....

I am still friends with
.....

Major changes to the area during my time
include.....

I came
from.....

Today I
enjoy.....

Or any other things you would like to share!
If you would like 'help' please ask, as we can record you talking
about things too.



Renovations update

As we go to press, the project to renovate the Community Hall and facilities is nearing completion and we are starting to move back in.

You will see that the works have really brought our facilities up to scratch and there will be a fuller report, with pictures, in the September edition.

A special word of thanks to Gail who has steered the project so diligently.

We can all now enjoy what has been done to the full and with that in mind we are planning a “hot” lunch after the service when Wareham and Swanage join us on 30th August!

Christopher Proudley

Deadline for September newsletter Thursday 27th August

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

