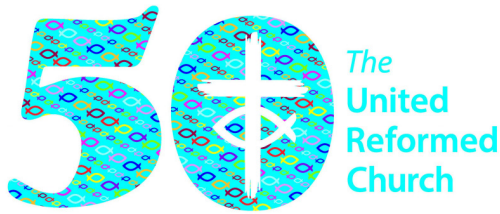


**Part of East Cheshire and Derbyshire
Borders Missional Partnership
(United Reformed Church)**



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972

THE LINK



APRIL

HE IS RISEN!

2026

"The East Cheshire and Derbyshire Borders is a Christian Church, living out the love of God by reaching into the heart of each community and responding to its needs"

Dear Friends,

Easter approaches, and I find myself wondering what the women at the tomb would make of our world today. They came with spices; only to be met with bewilderment, surprise, and the beginning of something utterly new. If they were to open the morning news in 2026, I suspect they might recognise that same mixture of fear, confusion, and a fragile hope.

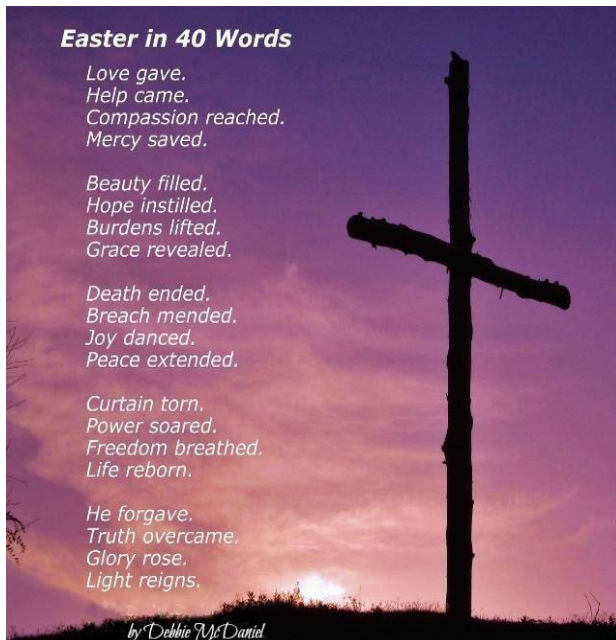
We do not have to look far to see that our world feels unsettled. Conflicts rumble on, communities struggle with uncertainty, and the pace of change can leave us confused; can we believe what we hear and read or is it 'fake news'? Closer to home, we carry our own worries—family, finances, health, and the future of our churches. And yet, Easter speaks precisely into moments like these.

Christ's resurrection isn't a tidy ending but a surprising interruption. God does not wait for everything to be calm and orderly before acting. Instead, new life breaks in while the world still looks bruised and complicated. That is good news for us.

It means that hope is not something we have to manufacture by sheer optimism or determination. It is something given—quietly, persistently, sometimes even cheekily—by a God who specialises in turning expectations upside down. After all, if God can bring life out of death, then perhaps there is hope for church meetings that run over time, for hymn choices that nobody quite agrees on, and even for the perennial mystery of who used the last of the teabags without replacing them!

As a partnership of churches, we are called to be people of resurrection in our communities; not by having all the answers, but by trusting that *God* is still at work. An act of kindness, a word of encouragement, a shared prayer is a small echo of that first Easter morning.

To close I share with you 'Easter in 40 Words'.



With every blessing for a joyful and hope filled Easter.

Margaret Dexter-Brown

Finding God in Scripture



THE CONQUERING SPIRIT

*We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated.
2 Corinthians 4 v8 NCV*

The Brooklyn Bridge, which links Brooklyn to Manhattan Island is one of the most famous bridges in the world. When it was first conceived in 1867 bridge building experts throughout the world told the designer, a creative engineer by the name of John Roebling, that his idea wouldn't work. Roebling convinced his son Washington, who was also an engineer, that his idea had merit.

The two of them developed a concept, resolved the problems others had forecast and enthusiastically hired a crew to build the bridge. After only a few months of building, a tragic on-site accident took John's life and another event months later severely injured Washington who became unable to talk or walk.

Everyone thought the project would be abandoned, since the Roeblings were the only ones who knew the dynamics of building the bridge. Washington, however, could still think and he had a burning desire to see the bridge finished. As he lay in his hospital bed, he had an idea. He would communicate with the engineers by using one finger to tap out in code on his wife's arm what he wanted her to tell them. Washington tapped out his instructions for thirteen years until the bridge was built! That's the conquering spirit. The Apostle Paul talks about it this way:

We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated. We do not know what to do, but we do not give up the hope of living. We are persecuted, but God does not leave us. We are hurt sometimes, but we are not destroyed (v8-9 NCV).

Those words constitute the conquering spirit - the spirit God can give you.

Taken from the UCB Word For Today, written by Bob and Debby Gass. Free copies are available in the UK from United Christian Broadcasters, UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF or at ucb.co.uk. Used with permission.



Message from Barbara Aspinall

On Saturday 14th February, Edgeley Community Church held their Celebratory Service to celebrate all that has happened over the years at this church. There were over 80 people present where we had an act of worship followed by refreshments in the hall where people shared their memories of the church. We were entertained by the Rainy City Barbershop Choir and lots of photographs to peruse.

It was lovely to see friends from United Stockport Circuit, East Cheshire, Derbyshire Borders Missional Partnership, past members.



In 1971, Castle Street and Edgeley Road Methodist Churches joined together; and in 1974 Edgeley Park Methodist Church join to become Edgeley Methodist Church. Then in 2008, Edgeley Road URC joined to become a LEP as Edgeley Community Church. We began our service at Edgeley Rd URC, along with Edgeley Methodist Church on Pentecost Sunday. We sang part of 'Moses, I know you're the man', then walked up Edgeley Road together to the Methodist Church where we finished the hymn and the worship.

Unfortunately, due to falling numbers and trying to find people to take on leadership roles, it was decided at the 2025

AGM to close. The community groups have been able to meet until it goes on the market and some have found other places to meet.

A sad time but the Celebratory Service was a great way to finish

Coffee and Cake, Conversation, Games and Jigsaws - every Wednesday during school term time, 10am-12noon at St. Martin's Church Hall, Brabyns Brow, Marple Bridge.

A celebration of Penelope Abraham's life at Marple URC on Friday 13th March.

Penny was remembered very fondly at this Celebration Service and she requested that people should wear her hats. Everyone wore a hat and this can be seen in the following pictures. Thanks to Margaret Dexter-Brown for leading the Service and to all the family.





From Margaret Bailey (MB)

The recorder group

**The next meeting will be on Thursday 23rd April at 2p.m.
at my house.**



Date for your diary

CHRISTIAN AID PLANT & CAKE SALE 2026

At Marple Methodist Church, Church Lane SK6 7AW

Saturday 9 May 2026

10.00 am – 12.30



INVITATION TO GARDENERS AND PLANT GROWERS

It's that time of year again to prepare for the annual Christian Aid Plant Sale. This is a general request to all gardeners and growers. Please can you plan to have some extra bedding plants to sell or find some herbaceous perennials that you can split and pot up for the Plant Sale to support Christian Aid.



Articles from Members of the Missional Partnership.....

NB: last date for May is April 19th. Would people mind sending articles for the Link before this date if possible, as I struggle getting it finished for printing. Thanks, Barbara x

From Ian Kenna (M)

A PRAYER FOR EASTER DAY

**God who is always creating,
Always redeeming,
Always bending the arc of history
towards justice, You
have raised our buried hopes from
the dirt.**



**While it was still dark,
When all seemed lost,
Dawn broke, fresh and filled
with birdsong,
And a new day was born.**

**Death lingers on.
In towns reduced to rubble,
At bedsides and gravesides and in hospital corridors,
The sound of weeping echoes still.**

**Christ the gardener,
Teach us how to tend to grief and trauma.
How to kneel in the dew beside the broken,
Offering safety, gentleness, and peace.**

Cara Heafey

URC Prayer Handbook

From Lynne Cruickshank (MB)

A Brief Report of the Main Points of Information Pertinent to our Missional Partnership Churches from the North West Synod Meeting on Saturday 14th March 2026 at Oasis, Salford.

- **Revd. Clare Downing, our transitional Moderator will be retiring to the East coast at the end of May this year. Her retirement service will be at Cornerstone, Didsbury, Manchester on 30th May 2026.**
- **Revd. Mike Thomason will then serve as our new Moderator.**
- **Efforts to recruit a new Synod Treasurer are underway.**
- **Leo Roberts is retiring from his long service of work with our young people throughout the Synod.**
- **News of the closure of Edgeley Community Church and St Peter's Church, Oxford Road, Manchester was shared.**
- **The resignation of Revd Jonnie Hill was shared along with the ordination of Revd Margaret Dexter Brown, and our forthcoming vacancy for 2 ministers.**
- **Synod is spending more money than it is bringing in, and discussion was held at length, therefore, on changes to the use of proceeds from the sales of church buildings resulting in the following 3 parts of a resolution being carried:**
 1. **The costs of administering and facilitating the sale of a church building be deducted from the sale proceeds before onward payment of the balance to the recipient.**
 2. **Where the sale of a church building includes the retention of a graveyard, 10% or £20,000 of the sale proceeds (whichever is the greatest) is retained to cover the maintenance and insurance costs of the graveyard.**
 3. **Where a church building is sold and that church has received a Synod Buildings Grant in the preceding 5 years, the grant be**

repaid to Synod from the sale proceeds, before onward payment of the balance to the recipient.

- **Synod representatives from each church were asked to bring to their churches 2 further propositions for the allocation of proceeds of sale of Church buildings, and, after discussion at Elders and Church Meetings, send their thoughts to the Synod Clerk by 18th May 2026. Results from the churches in the Synod would then be discussed at an Extraordinary Synod meeting on Zoom the evening of 9th June 2026. These propositions can be found on Pages 24 and 25 in the Book of Reports sent to all Synod Representatives.**
- **The Meeting looked at the Fostering a Culture of Learning in The NW Synod and also a work in progress - the Synod Strategy.**

From Liz Delafield

Missional partnership news

What's in a name?

Thank you to those who have suggested names for our Missional Partnership. Suggested names included:

- GEM (Goyt, Etherow and Mersey) Missional Partnership.
- Stockport and High Peak Missional Partnership.
- SK Missional partnership.

There were other ideas too, some generated by AI! After some conversation, the Steering Group felt that Stockport and High Peak Missional Partnership would be a good choice. It describes where we are and offers some synergy with both our ecumenical partners (eg United Stockport Circuit) and Local Councils. This would be good for partnership working. Over to you. Do you agree? Have you a better idea? Let your church elders know.

Upcoming events

Saturday 18th April: Journeying through ordinary time with Matthew. A workshop for anyone who leads or plans worship. Short Street URC - 10am-1pm finishing with lunch together. Bring your own packed lunch.

Sunday 17th May 2:30pm: Farewell to Jonnie
We are all sad that Jonnie will be leaving us, and I know we would all like to wish him well. There will be a short worship service followed by tea/coffee/cake on the afternoon on 17th May.

Looking ahead...Saturday 20th June 10am-3pm Albion URC - for those across the South area who would like to explore how we use music to inspire and support mission. More details to follow.

Contact liz.delafield@rwsynod.org.uk for more details of these events.

From Jon Kear (Providence)

Great Manchester Run 31st May 2026

I will be running the Manchester 10km on 31st May in aid of Tearfund. If you want to sponsor me there will be sponsor forms in church.

Tearfund UK (The Evangelical and Relief FUND) produce quality evangelical prayer materials for Christians. Founded in 1967 they partner with Christian organisations in around 50 countries where there is conflict or need. There is now Tearfund Ireland,



founded 2008, Tearfund New Zealand, founded 1975, Tearfund Netherlands, founded 1973, Tearfund Canada, founded 1970, Tearfund Australia, founded 1970, Tearfund Belgium, founded 1979 and Tearfund Switzerland, founded 1984. In 2018 Tearfund announced it was launching Tearfund USA.

From Jill Kenna (M)

FAIRTRADE BIG BREW 2026

Thank you to all who baked, donated, set up, served and bought, and helped in many other ways helped to make this year's BIG BREW event a success. We made £389 on the day and with further donations I was able to send £440 to TRANSFORM TRADE to help them in their work to ensure those in the Fashion Industry get fair treatment. The event was attended by our local MP Lisa Smart who has also signed the petition to get a Fashion Watchdog to protect the rights of workers in clothing manufacture. Thank you again for your support.





Tea, coffee and cakes, fair trade goods, jigsaws, books and bric-a-brac for sale. Lovely morning in aid of a good cause.

From Ian Kenna (M)

GOOD NEWS

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, working with the Wellcome Trust, have announced £435,000,000 for trials of a new tuberculosis (TB) vaccine, covering 26,000 people in 50 sites in Africa and Southeast Asia. TB killed 1.6 million people in 2021 and the only vaccine we have is over a century old.

Sunday Times Magazine

From Ian Kenna (M)

HOLY WHISPERS

MATTHEW 6: 25-34

I've opened my mind too many times
Out of night and into a sinking feeling,
A hollowness into which tumbles
Let's say everything.

I hear the first euphoric notes
Of the dawn chorus
Shine out with such truth
That it makes me ache.



The Birds. They don't worry
About what the day might bring,
Just a faint tremor of light
Is enough to make them praise and sing

And declare goodness over the world.
No resolutions for them, no grand ideas,
No desire to change into something else;
They simply fulfil their beautiful purpose,

Which is enough and always will be.
Why do they fly? Not because they have wings.
They have no plans, no ambitions, no things
To weigh them down.

Gideon Heugh

Used with kind permission of the author and Tearfund.

From Margaret M Jones (Short Street)

Birthday Memories ...

My son came from Scotland to help celebrate my birthday and on one day offered to take me for a drive around some of my favourite places in Cheshire and Derbyshire. We first visited my mum's little signpost, erected by the Footpath Preservation Society. It is just opposite Jenkyn's Chapel, so we popped in there too. Mum was a very keen walker and introduced me at an early age to our wonderful countryside. We continued along the Goyt Valley and then to Macclesfield Forest Chapel, where one of my oldest college friends has a memorial stone. As the 'Cat and Fiddle' is now a gin distillery, we enjoyed a lovely lunch at a nearby restaurant – 'The Dish and Spoon' – very aptly named. As my son had lived in Macclesfield for a few years whilst he was teaching at King's School, we went to look at his cottager, which had been renovated and extended and brought back many memories for him.



The next day was my daughter's turn and she knows that I love Buxton and Long Hill, so we had a day admiring the view and the gardens in Buxton and ended with another great meal at No. 6 Café. Also squeezed into my birthday weekend was a trip to Liverpool to see my granddaughter who was taking part in 'Footloose'. Next day, a family 'get-together' at Cielo Italian Restaurant in Poynton.

Finally to bring my celebrations to a close, a very special trip to the Palace Theatre, Manchester, starting with champagne in the 'Ambassador Lounge', front circle seats, ice cream, programme and nibbles and a magnificent production of 'Barnum' – one of my favourite musicals. Thank you to all my family for making my 87th birthday so special, with many, many memories tucked away in my 'memory box'.



From Keith Whiting (T&L)

Bits and Pieces

On the 29th July 1789 a ship named Lady Juliana set sail from Plymouth for Australia. It arrived in Sydney on the 6th June 1790. The British Government had chartered the ship to transport female convicts to the colony; 226 females arrived and it more than doubled the female population of the colony. The journey had taken 309 days - it had stopped for 45 days in Rio de Janeiro, 19 days at the Cape of Good Hope, plus other brief stopovers. 51 females were aged between 11 and 19; 116 between 20 and 29 and only 8 over 50.

Three ships arrived in Sydney a few weeks later and out of the 775 convicts suffering from starvation and terrible treatment, 225 died on the journey and many more died in first few weeks of landing in Sydney. Not so on the Lady Juliana only 5 convicts died. They were well treated, there was a surgeon on board, the ship kept clean and they were free to go on deck and on shore when in port. I guess in much better health than they had ever been.

My interest in the ship is the names of two convicts Mary WADE aged 11 or 13 and Jane WHITING aged 14. They were tried at the Old Bailey on the 14th January 1789 on a capital charge of highway robbery They were arrested for robbing an 8-year-old child of her frock, cap and tippet. The girls pawned the frock for 18 pence! No-one appeared for Jane although Mary's mother did and was reprimanded by the judge. The 8-year-old little girl gave evidence and told the judge the girls had not beaten her or hurt her. The judge told the jury. After a long speech his last words were: "I think it would be dangerous thing to society if you were to be induced by any humanity to lower the offence below the rank of actual robbery" A guilty verdict was returned and the girls

were sentenced to death. Both Mary and Jane were among a group of women discharged from Newgate Gaol on the 7th May 1789 for embarkation on the Lady Juliana. The usual period of transportation was 7 years. Mary and Jane got life - 99years.

A little of Mary and Jane next month, Keith

From Phil Taylor



Sydney Carter was born in Camden Town, London, on 6 May 1915, and educated at Christ's Hospital and Balliol. His well known songs/Hymns sung today are One More Step, When I Needed a Neighbour and Lord of the Dance. He died on 13th March aged 88.



Hope you have a BIG basket for all your eggs.

From Ruth Miller (Hatherlow and George Lane)

Craft-a-noon as usual on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in the month from 2.30 - 4p.m.

Tuesday Club on the 4th Tuesday in the month at 2.30p.m.

Coffee Morning each Wednesday 10-12 am.

All welcome.

Don't forget to put your clocks forward on Saturday night/Sunday morning 29th March



MARPLE NEWS & NOTICES



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

wishes in April go to: Betty Trueman (12th)
Kevin Daily (16th), Marjorie Bennett (20th)

Services in April - Please note Services start at 10.30am

5th Joint Easter Day Service at MARPLE URC led by Rev David Jenkins

12th Joint Service at MARPLE METHODIST CHURCH led by Rev Katie Smith (Communion)

19th Joint Service at MARPLE BRIDGE URC led by Rev Jonnie Hill

26th Rev Jonnie Hill

STRICTLY COME TOGETHER

Wednesday Mornings at Marple URC 10.30am-12.00

APRIL - All are welcome

1st Celebrating Easter

8th Chair Exercises (Jill Kenna)

15th Quiz

22nd Topic tba (Jenny Austen)

30th Your Choice of Music

STRICTLY COME CRAFT

For children and their
families on Saturday 18th
April 4pm -6pm -
at Marple United Reformed Church



MARPLE BRIDGE NEWS & NOTICES



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Wishes in April to

Robert Hughes (6th) Freddie Dodgson (9th) -

Cath & Tim Brown's grandson

Tom Brown (25th) Esther (Bellamy) Amanda's

granddaughter (30th)

Services in April

Please note Services start at 10.30am

**5th Joint Easter Day Service at MARPLE URC led by
Rev David Jenkins**

**12th Joint Service at MARPLE METHODIST CHURCH
led by Rev Katie Smith (Communion)**

**19th Joint Service at MARPLE BRIDGE URC led by
Rev Jonnie Hill**

26th Rev Margaret Dexter-Brown

The next Working Party at MB will be on
Saturday April 11th ... All Welcome



MARPLE METHODIST CHURCH

Services in April- Please note Services start at 10:30am

5th Joint Easter Day Service at MARPLE URC led by Rev David Jenkins

12th Joint Service at MARPLE METHODIST CHURCH led by Rev Katie Smith (Communion)

19th Joint Service at MARPLE BRIDGE URC led by Rev Jonnie Hill

26th Joanne Roy

PROVIDENCE NEWS & NOTICES

Services in April

3rd (Good Friday) 10-11am,

quiet time of music and prayer

5th (Easter Sunday) Revd Adam Scott (Communion)

12th Revd Peter Sharp

19th Barbara Aspinall

26th Revd Mike Aspinall

(Elder's ordination and receiving new members)

Chatty Cafe at Providence

All are welcome to drop in to our weekly chatty cafe on Wednesdays from 2pm-4pm. Good company, and home-made cakes on offer!

SHORT STREET NEWS



wishes in April go to:

1st Dorothy Farrelly, 5th Joanne Moores

10th Ann. Gibson, 13th Fred Johnson

15th Beryl Flannery, 29th Derek. Starr

Services in April

5th Rev Jonnie Hill

12th At Hazel Grove Methodist

19th Rev M Tait

26th Rev Paul Frampton – Anniversary Service (40 years in current building)

Events

Sunday. 5th April 9am. Egg breakfast, followed by Easter service 10.30 am

Anniversary weekend ...celebrating 40 years in our current building.

Saturday. 25th April. Concert by FRISKY PIGEON. 7pm. Adm £5 incl refreshments.

Sunday. 26th April. Anniversary Service 10.30 am followed by light lunch.

Chatty. Cafe. at Short street

Each Wednesday 10 am to 12. noon until the 29th April.

Tea/coffee and toast.. free... come along and enjoy and have a natter.

TINTWISTLE & GLOSSOP NEWS

Services in April

**3rd Joint Good Friday service at Christ Church,
Tintwistle**

5th Easter Sunday – Revd. Mike Aspinall

12th Alistair Cole

19th Kevin McCann

26th Henry Drabble

HATHERLOW & GEORGE LANE NEWS

Services in April - 10.45a.m. start

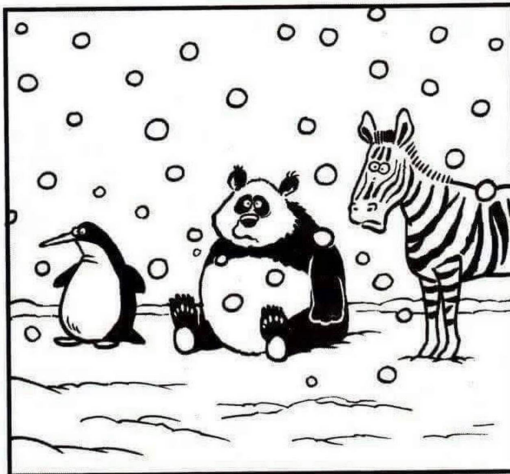
5th Rev Jenny Austen

12th Rev Margaret Dexter-Brown

19th Marilyn Gregory

26th Keith Whiting

And finally



Colouring picture for lazy people.

Please could you send all items for the MAY 2026 edition of the Link to Barbara Northover - (email:northoverfamily@gmail.com) .. Thank you .

**NO LATER THAN SUNDAY APRIL 19th
(earlier if possible, thank you)**



HE IS RISEN!

Please check the Pastorate website for any events, which are happening in all churches:

www.ecdbmp.wordpress.com and scroll down the page. The website is frequently updated

**Part of East Cheshire and Derbyshire
Borders Missional Partnership
Web: www.ecdbmp.wordpress.com**

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Email jonnie.hill@nwsynod.org.uk**

**NSM Minister. Rev'd Mike Aspinall 07929 525909
Email mike54.ma@gmail.com**

**NSM Minister: Rev'd Margaret Dexter-Brown
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**Moderator: Rev'd Clare Downing
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Happy Easter

**Part of East Cheshire and Derbyshire Borders
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07929628723.

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Secretary: Mrs Jill Kenna

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0161 427 7462

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Mellor Road, New Mills, High Peak. SK22 4DP

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Email: providenceurc@nwsynod.org.uk

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01457 862032

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Secretary. Jo Moores

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Edgeley Community Church,

Edgeley Rd, Edgeley **SK3 9NB**

Contact: barbara.aspinall@hotmail.com

The Missional Partnership also includes **Whaley Bridge (Uniting Church)**. To find out more about each church and its activities, please see the new website (address inside back cover)