

In Touch

The magazine of the URC congregations in
Maidenhead and Marlow



Summer edition

Our new Minister will soon be with us!

By the time the next edition of In Touch comes out our new Minister, Rev. Chris Parker, will be with us - we really look forward to this. His first service with us will be on Sunday 31 August. This is a joint service with Maidenhead and Marlow congregations, held at Maidenhead.

Plans are well in hand for Chris's Induction Service on Saturday 20 September at 2.30pm at Maidenhead. Lists of all those attending are being finalised from all four churches in the pastorate, together with visitors from Synod and Chris's previous congregations.

We have employed the services of an outside caterer so that everyone can enjoy the day rather than having to spend time in the kitchen, reloading plates and making numerous cups of tea and coffee.

John Holton & Valerie Brownridge

Church Secretaries

Open Doors asks for prayer

Every day, millions of Christians risk their lives to follow Jesus. In more than 70 countries, Open Doors supports them by supplying Bibles, providing emergency relief and helping persecuted believers stand strong for the long-term. In the UK and Ireland, Open Doors helps the church to pray, give and speak out for those who share our faith but not our freedom.

Please pray for the Syrian Christians injured and killed by a suicide bomber at their evening service on June 22. "I lost all hope that there is any life left here for us," said a young, terrified Christian woman who heard shots and the explosion. "It's just the start of the end," said another woman. "Nothing can describe the fear that we felt yesterday, the heartbreak over the people we knew. Innocent people who were killed only because they are different in their beliefs, because they love Jesus."

Source: www.opendoorsuk.org

Worship at Maidenhead and Marlow

All services start at 10.30am unless stated otherwise.

Date	Location and worship leader for Maidenhead	Location and worship leader for Marlow
29 June	Joint jazz worship at Marlow: Geoff Cronin	
6 July	Bob Robertson Communion and Church Meeting	Berenice Frey
13 July	Pam Breen and Irene Pullin	Rev Ray Stanyon Communion
20 July	Rev Stephen Thornton joint worship at Maidenhead URC	
27 July	Rev Ray Stanyon Communion	Linda Jackson
3 August	Irene Pullin and Pam Breen	Bob Robertson
10 August	Rev Paul Murphy	Valerie Brownridge Communion
17 August	Zoom service led by Marlow	
24 August	Andrew Gibb	Anna Crawford
31 August	Rev Chris Parker Joint worship at Maidenhead URC	
7 September	Gordon Campbell and Bob Robertson Commitment for Life and Communion	Hilary Hunt
14 September	Nick Gough	Rev Chris Parker Communion Church Meeting

Marlow diary dates

Ukraine collection days: Marlow is open for donations for Ukraine on Fridays from 10-11am and Sundays from 4.15-5pm.

Ukraine vigil: In the Marlow church garden at 4pm every Sunday.

House Group: House Group will meet at Doreen's house on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 10.30am. Please contact George Flett for details.

Marlow Elders: Monday, 14 July and Monday, August 11.

Church Meeting: Church Meeting will be on 14 September.

[Maidenhead diary dates](#)

Ukraine collection days: Saturdays from 10am-12 noon.

Coffee Morning: Garden coffee mornings (see below)

Maidenhead Elders: Monday 7 July 2.30pm (no meeting in August).

Church meeting: Sunday 6 July

[Summer Coffee Mornings in Maidenhead](#)

Now that summer is here and the warmer weather lifting our spirits, it feels like the perfect time to resume our Wednesday coffee mornings in the comfort of one another's homes or gardens.

Alison and I would be delighted to kick things off and warmly invite you to join us at our home on Wednesday, 9 July, any time from 10.30am onwards. The forecast looks promising, so with a bit of luck we'll be able to enjoy the morning in our garden. If you're able to bring along a chair, that would be helpful, just in case we find ourselves short, whether indoors or outside.

I would encourage others to consider hosting a coffee morning over the coming weeks. Let me know if you would like to volunteer for a July or August Wednesday.

Looking forward to sharing good company, coffee (or tea), and conversation. Of course anyone from the Marlow congregation will always be welcome too.

John Holton

[Aid for Ukraine – lorry number 16](#)

The two churches were able to send our 16th lorry recently as, on top of our normal collections, we received over 60 boxes of food from FoodShare in Maidenhead. FoodShare are having to move from their base in the Nicholson Centre to a location which is much smaller and offered us items that could be sent.



Thanks to all who helped move the heavy boxes back to the Church in West Street. Ros and Chris managed to push 5 boxes each on wheels through town, much to the amusement of the public.

We now have a further 50 boxes from FoodShare ready to go, as well as the now twice a week collection from Waitrose Maidenhead, and once a week collection from Tesco Taplow. We are still receiving regular donations from the congregations and public. Marlow organises a range of fund-raising events (see Ukelele report

below) which allow goods to be bought from a Cash and Carry as well as their weekly collections. We will send our next joint truck in the second half of July as we have filled up the Quiet room, space in the Link and now space at the street end of the Sanctuary.

Ewa continues to send us regular pictures of where the goods are going which is very reassuring.



Receiving the donations

Mike Liddle

Ukulele Mondays' fundraising concert for Ukraine

We were again treated to a wonderful evening of music and fun when Ukulele Mondays returned to Christ Church URC, Marlow to give their fourth fundraising concert for Ukraine. We raised a magnificent £1,000! This brings the total which Ukulele Mondays has helped us to raise for Ukraine to £4,500. It took us less than an hour to spend £1,000 at Booker Cash and Carry. The food we bought will go to Ukraine in our next lorry which is likely to be in the second half of July.



A huge thank you to Ukulele Mondays who give their time and talent to us for free. We really appreciate their continuing support. Thank you also to all those who helped on the evening, who donated raffle prizes, who bought raffle tickets and who came along on the evening to swell the audience.

We could not have raised this much without all of you. And the good news is that Ukulele Mondays have offered to return later in the year to do another concert. I will keep you posted.

Valerie Brownridge

Betty Aiken

It was with sadness that we heard of Betty's death on 11th June, at the age of 90. She lived life to the full and was an active member of our Maidenhead URC community from her arrival in Maidenhead in the 1960s until a few years ago, when with failing health she moved to Devon to be near family.

In the mid-70s my first job brought me to Maidenhead and to the church here, and from the beginning I have



looked on Betty as my second mum. She was so caring and helpful and I have treasured our close friendship ever since. On many occasions we would “sort out the world” and we shared many a laugh. Even in her later years her smile radiated.

She and I started up the Guides at the church on 11/1/77 (the Brownies had started a few years earlier) and what great memories I have of these days, meeting in the old halls, lining the route with torches at the Queen’s Silver Jubilee celebration in Windsor Great Park, taking the girls camping, the list goes on. Fun times!

She will be missed by all who remember her. We send our good wishes to daughters Fiona and Morag, and granddaughter Gemma.

Alison Holton

Lighthouse Marlow 4-8 August

As Lighthouse Marlow draws closer we are looking for your support with donations for refreshments and craft activities. This will help Lighthouse Marlow’s week-long holiday club organised by local churches run as smoothly as possible.

Donation boxes can be found at the Ark Café and All Saints Church porch Marlow, or speak to Hilary Hunt at Christ Church URC, Marlow.

Thank you for all donations, we really appreciate all and anything we receive.

The Lighthouse Marlow Operations Team

Refreshments

Instant Coffee, Tea bags, Instant Hot Chocolate, Squash and Biscuits

Craft

Empty cereal boxes

Fabric cut offs from sewing projects, any colourful pattern welcome

White paper cups (8 oz or 12oz)

Pritt sticks (not other glue sticks please)

PVA glue

Sharpies (strong colours, not pastel)

Paper serviettes (colourful, not white)

Sellotape Double sided tape
Acrylic paint
Large flat stones (8cm min length)
Crepe paper
Sequins
Small buttons
Wool
Material for collage
Newspapers (broadsheet)
Electric tea lights
Shiny stickers
Felt pens
Crayons

Other

Toilet rolls, Large (80 litre) strong bin liners, Liquid soap, Large shopping bags (eg Ikea), Picnic blankets, Baby wipes, Antibacterial spray, Breadsticks, Kitchen rolls

Worship in the Park

For some years now, Churches Together in Marlow has held an outdoor service in Higginson Park on the Sunday of the Marlow Regatta weekend. Although the Regatta - and therefore the service - takes place in June, we have not always been blessed with dry or even warm weather. But the sun shone for us this year.



Most Marlow churches were represented and it was good to see so many young people. There was a special focus on Lighthouse, a holiday club for children run by Christians from local churches, including Hilary, Ailsa and

Kailey from Marlow URC. We sang some of the Lighthouse songs, including a few action songs with Kailey out front showing us the actions which I managed to capture on film! Three of the teenage Lamplighter volunteers led us in prayer and one teenager spoke about how Lighthouse had changed his life. The main talk was based on the parable of the great banquet. We also sang some familiar traditional hymns.

It is hard to tell how many people who do not normally go to church were tempted to join us, but there were certainly a few people hovering around the edges!!

Valerie Brownridge

Rejoice and Sing Celebration

Can you remember back to 1991 when our hymn book, Rejoice and Sing, was launched – nearly 35 years ago? This year, on 3rd May, the URC celebrated the anniversary in Coventry, at the Methodist Hall. John and I volunteered to sing in



the choir, just formed on the day to lead the large congregation ... and what a great day out it was!

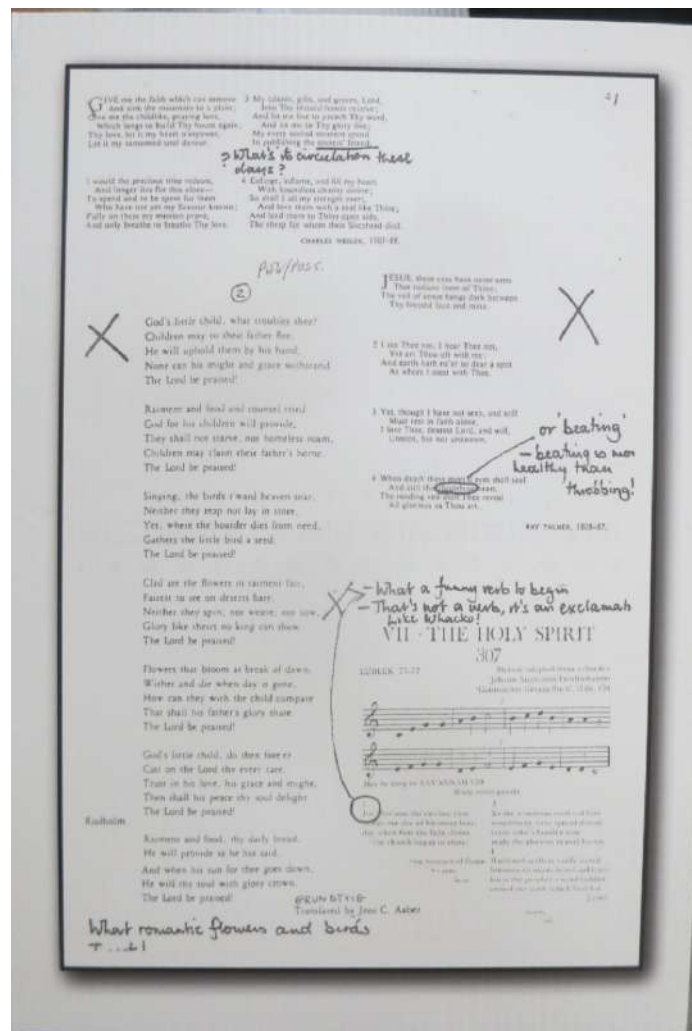
For two hours we sang a varied selection of 19 hymns and heard from various speakers. Rev

Prof David Thompson enlightened us that it was very nearly 40 years ago when he was asked if he would be willing to chair the hymn book editorial committee. He was advised that “completing it would win him no friends as he would never please everybody and would be lucky to please anyone”! (When have we heard that before in relation to hymn/song choices?)

And so began the long five-year project with a 14 strong group meeting monthly, poring over thousands of hymns (and tunes) and shuffling them between the Possibles, Probables and Yes lists. Selected pages from their early working

documents were on display in a little exhibition in an adjoining hall. It was fascinating to read some of their often strong-worded hand-written comments! (Computers were in their infancy then.)

Along with reflections from others involved in compiling the hymn book, we watched a specially recorded interview with hymn writer Brian Wren – we still sing several of his hymns today. It has since been acknowledged that the so-called hymns included for young people are “hymns that older people think that young people like to sing” ... but they generally don’t! It was also pointed out that time moves on and, with the advent of new musical material, many churches now include other hymn/song books too, just as we do at Maidenhead.



The anniversary celebration was recorded so if you would like to watch it, sing along and hear the interesting reflections of those who contributed to the compilation of Rejoice and Sing, click this link, (although you may need to cut and paste it into your browser):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsQpKWAEQMQ>

Alison Holton

Maintenance in Marlow!

Your Marlow Management Committee is working in the background year-round to keep the building running and to ensure our church looks nice and tidy for our members, visitors and users. We organise and manage gardeners, cleaners and bin, gas, electric and phone contracts and inspections for the lift, fire and electrics.

Once in a while we have some larger problems to deal with. Just this month we have completed major repair work on the church facade facing Platts petrol station around the old blue door and staircase. Over the years the sandstone around the door has weathered and cracked, particularly on the pillars around and above the door. The stairs had become uneven with most of the grouting broken or missing. So we searched for local stonemasons with experience in church repairs - they are not easy to find! We did find three companies which inspected our building and put a repair estimate forward. The estimates varied widely and after some discussion we selected the company from Luton. They came to do the repair in early June and the work took 8 days. They needed a skip and a scaffolding and they brought new sandstone pieces. Several crumbling sandstone elements were completely replaced and the walls were cleaned. New grout was used and the stairs were aligned and regouted. We think this repair



has given the old entrance a much needed facelift and it also preserves the area from further deterioration. The floor in the worship area also needed attention because the layer of varnish had

been rubbed off the floor over the years. Thousands of feet with their outdoor shoes that go in and out all the time eventually scrape through the paint. The floor was repainted in 2011. We were younger then and four of us got stuck in and did the job. This time we asked a local repair man who has done other repairs for us before to sand down the entire worship area floor and then varnish it. We blocked out the worship area for a whole week so that he could work undisturbed, let the dust settle, paint and then let the varnish dry. Do take a look at the work that's been done the next time you are in the building. We hope you agree that the building appearance has benefitted from this work. We think the building is more presentable and welcoming. You probably already know that building maintenance is never done and it won't be long before the next area will need our attention.

Martin Beck

Visit to Rouen at the time of the Jeanne D'Arc festival

The city of Rouen was “en Fete” for four days from the 29 May to the 1 June. I was visiting Rouen with four other town twinning friends, including Carole Bailey.

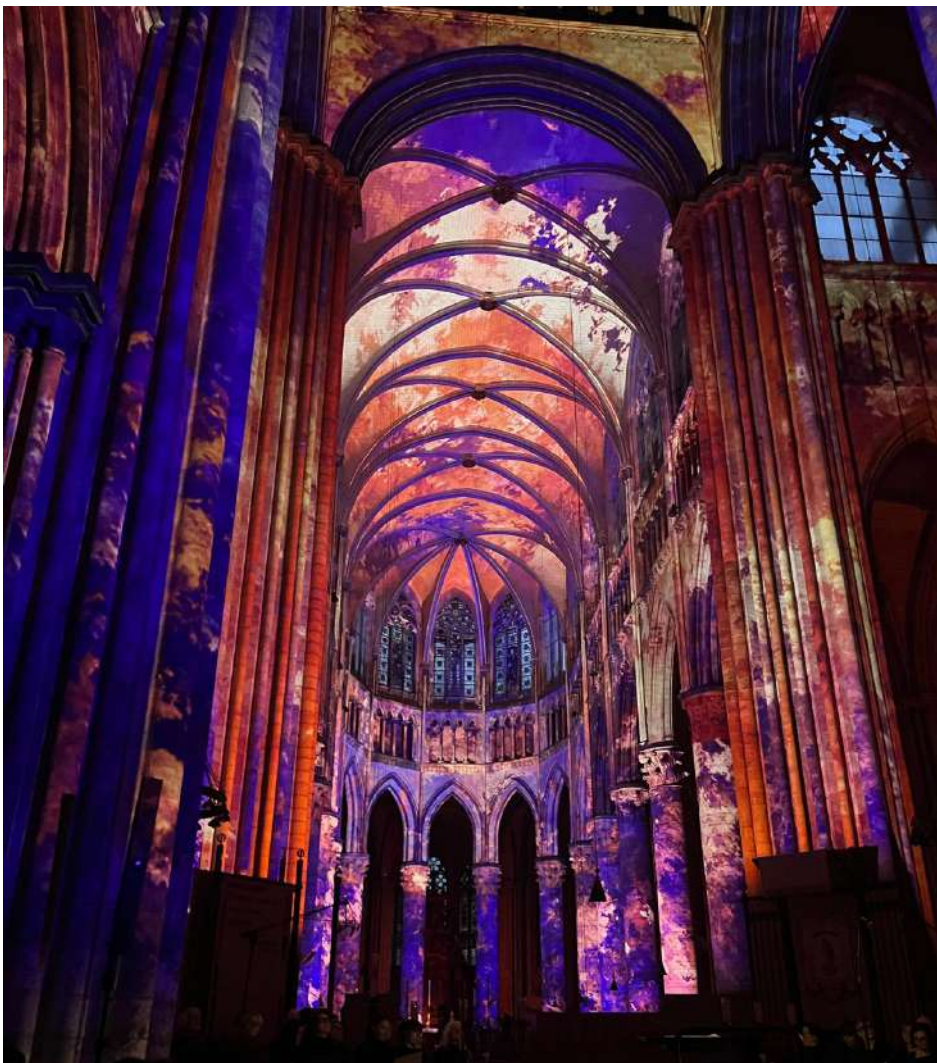


In the 1970s I lived in Rouen for two and a half years and there was nothing that I can recall about Vikings then. However, the Vikings reached Rouen in 841 and developed Rouen as an important port on the Seine for approximately 500 years. There is now a Viking museum and the city has developed a Viking culture. So much so that there were a lot of people just walking around in Viking costume.

In the old market square where Joan of Arc was burnt on the 30 May 1431, in the late 1970s a rather splendid new church was built. The roof on the church is built

in the shape of an upturned Viking ship. Joan's brutal death was carried out by the occupying English Army acting in agreement with the local Catholic cardinal who had declared Joan to be heretic. The stained glass in the windows is from the 17th century. This glass, originally from other small churches in Normandy, had been removed, preserved and hidden during the second world war in farms around Rouen.

In the evening of the 29 May this year there was a wonderful 'Son et Lumière' performance in the cathedral. The narration was excellent describing how the stone masons over a period of some six hundred years spent all their lives



building, maintaining and repairing the very impressive cathedral. Over the centuries it was attacked and damaged on several occasions; at the time of the religious wars during the reformation; during the French Revolution; at the time of the first world war; and also by allied bombing in 1944 in the second world war. Each time the cathedral had to be closed to the public for the repairs to

be carried out. The rededication of the cathedral following the second world war was in 1956. There was a small orchestra and choir but above all the lighting effect of the inside, can hardly be described, breath-taking, stupendous, and soooo colourful it was a magnificent experience!

The following evening in an open area on the left bank of the Seine there was an outdoor bonfire and flying torches performance. It was pleasant to watch and interesting to see the daring moves of several of the flame throwers.

Rouen used to have a castle which was finally demolished at the time of the building of the railways in the 1860's onwards. Only one turret of the original castle still exists today, this was in fact where Joan of Arc was kept the night before her burning at the stake. There are three floors to this turret but due to our knee problems Carole and I elected not to climb the stairs because we knew that we would find it very difficult to come down again!



'Son et Lumière' in the cathedral

On Sunday 2 June, I attended the morning service held in the Temple Saint-Éloi. This is a remarkable Protestant church located in the picturesque city. With its stunning architecture and serene ambiance, this church not only serves as a place of worship but is said to be a significant tourist attraction. However, when I visited it on Saturday all the doors were well and truly closed. The pews are arranged in a semi-circle very similar in lay out to the catholic church in Marlow. It was well attended with a congregation of approximately 60. The service was conducted by the minister, a diminutive but impressive lady. There were four readings, two addresses, and six hymns, prayers were said throughout the

service some read by members of the congregation. The theme of the service was God's love for us. The first address was given by the minister, and later in the service the second address, by one of the elders, was what we, by our own actions, need to do within the community to show God's love in action.

Following the fourth hymn we were asked to leave our seats in the pews and stand together side by side in a circle around the church. We actually formed quite a large oval. I was puzzled by this and my first thought was surely we are not going to sing 'Auld lang syne'! It was in fact communion. The bread was initially brought in baskets by 8 elders. They gave the bread to the first person then gave that person the basket. So we were each given the bread by the person standing next to us then given the basket which we then passed on. In my case I received first the bread from the person on my left then gave the bread to the person on my right. It truly was communal and a sense of togetherness because I was looking at the people at the other side of the oval. The wine was brought to us by the elders carrying flat trays with slots to hold the small cups containing wine or non-alcoholic wine.

Returning to our seats in the pews we had the penultimate hymn and a prayer then the final hymn was announced. I turned it up in the hymn book trying to sing the French words then I realised by the end of the first line that it was in fact the sung blessing which we use at all our services in Marlow. So at this point I became a rebel and just closed the hymn book and sang in English!

George Flett

Christian Aid

THANK YOU to all who supported Christian Aid week.

This year in Marlow we raised a total of £3758.46, of which £1569.56 came from envelopes, and £858.00 was raised by the Taplow Youth Choir concert at Christ Church.



Thanks especially to our loyal band of envelope-droppers, those who helped with the concert arrangements, and those who bought tickets. It was a wonderful evening.

Catherine Johnson

Back in time – Joni Eareckson Tada

Derek Wensley who leads worship for Maidenhead and Marlow has kindly sent this article about an inspiring woman.

Born in 1949, Joni grew up in Baltimore, Maryland in a tight-knit Christian family, leading an active lifestyle: horse-riding, hiking and swimming. As a teenager, Joni accepted Jesus as her Saviour, asking God *“to accomplish a transformative work in her life”*. During Summer 1967, she and her friends were at Chesapeake beach to swim. However, she misjudged the depth of the water, diving off a raft into the murky shallows. *“I heard or felt a loud buzzing like an electric shock, combined with a vibration.. like a heavy metal spring being suddenly uncoiled...not really a sound or feeling.. just a sensation...I felt no pain.”*

It left Joni permanently paralysed from the shoulder down - affecting all four limbs - requiring multiple surgeries, spending over six months bedridden as her severed spine healed enough to start rehabilitation. She experienced depression, anger, resentment and thoughts of suicide. Her despair over the permanency of her quadriplegia caused her to question God’s goodness and even His existence.

Intensive Occupational Therapy enabled her to write, holding a pen in her mouth and later, to develop new painting & sketching skills. These helped her renew her sense of purpose. Although never regaining the use of her hands, Joni managed to achieve limited arm movement. Able during 1972 to return home, she could feed herself, operate a wheelchair and regain some independence she thought was lost forever.

God provided Joni with a strong support system: Her paintings were displayed at a local Art gallery, which led to National TV interviews including by Larry King. Her autobiography, *‘Joni: an Unforgettable Story’*, released in 1976 has had

5 million sales in over 50 languages. The film *'Joni'* has been seen worldwide, with over 250,000 people finding hope and faith in Jesus.

In 1979, Joni with some dedicated colleagues set up *'Joni and Friends Ministry'* to pioneer ways of supporting the needs of disabled people worldwide, mobilizing the global church to help. They would offer the hope of the Gospel and provision of practical resources, training and relief of suffering for millions of disabled people.

In 1982, God brought Ken Tada, a high school coach and History teacher into Joni's life through a series of "*coincidences*". They fell in love and were married a year later. Through the 40+ years of marriage, their willingness to share openly about the challenges and stressors of Joni's disability have been a powerful healing tool for many couples affected by disability.

'Joni & Friends Radio' broadcasts via 1,000+ stations promoting Biblical encouragement and Disability awareness to a Million listeners weekly. President Ronald Reagan appointed Joni to the US National Council on Disability in 1988. Joni also was appointed Senior Associate for *Disability Concerns for The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation*. She shared the platform with Billy Graham for 100,000 attendees at the 1989 Crusade.

In 1994, *Wheels for the World* was launched, providing wheelchairs and hope for people with disabilities in developing countries. Used wheelchairs, collected across the US, are restored with the help of trained prison inmates, then hand-delivered with the Gospel message, a home-language Bible and connection with a local church - 200,000+ have been distributed worldwide. Joni continues to be vocal in campaigns against Euthanasia and Embryonic Stem-cell research.

On 30 July 2017 Joni celebrated 50 years of God's faithfulness since her accident. "*Given that many spinal cord injured quadriplegics don't survive that long in such good health, she is a remarkable testimony to God's sustained love.*"

She continues to write and podcast.

Like another teenage girl from Nazareth 2000 years ago, Joni has found God's transformative work in her life is far, far beyond her wildest imagination.

Rev'd Derek Wensley

Assisted Dying: I'm Confused Lord

I'm confused Lord and don't know what to say;
I grew up believing in the sanctity of life,
that You command us not to kill, and that life is always worth living...
...but if I was in pain with little hope of respite,
or one I loved was living in unimaginable agony,
I'd want that pain to stop.

I'm confused Lord and don't know what to say,
all these difficult choices but they can't properly fund hospice care,
there's always money for bombs though...
...but surely good end-of-life care is a prerequisite of a decent society?
We live our lives as if there's nothing else to come,
clinging to it, forgetting it's possible to have a good death.

I'm confused Lord and don't know what to say,
I'd not want to be a burden when my time comes,
I'd not want to cling on seeking every medical intervention when it was time to go...
...but I'd not want to be despatched more quickly so the Will can be read!
I'd not want to be pressurised to die to save the State money,
nor be seen as dispensable.

I'm confused Lord and don't know what to say,
disabled friends are frightened - fearing their lives will be seen as less worthwhile,
doctors and nurses are trained to save life not to kill ...
...but saying "thou shalt not kill" seems judgy,

to urge for better palliative care seems unrealistic,
and to oppose social trends seems hard.

So, help me Lord, in my confusion,
and give me ears to hear
and words to say. Amen.

The Rev'd Andy Braunston

Minister for Digital Worship, URC. Prayers to help congregations navigate issues around Assisted Dying.





AID FOR UKRAINE

Delivering aid into Ukraine - three years on!

Our partners in Ukraine have asked for:

- FOOD**
Tinned food, Rice, Pasta,
Easy cook products, Cereals, Sweets
- FIRST AID & MEDICATION**
- TOILETRIES & SANITARY ITEMS**
- INCONTINENCE PRODUCTS**
- NAPPIES**
- CLEANING PRODUCTS**
- Pens/Pencils/Crayons/Notebooks**
- POWER BANKS & CHARGING STATIONS**

You can donate:
Saturdays 10am-noon at Maidenhead United Reformed Church,
West Street, SL6 1RL
Fridays 10-11am & Sundays 4:15-5pm at Marlow United Reformed Church,
Oxford Road, SL7 2NL



@Aid for Ukraine

Use this QR code
to donate now:



Spring 2025

Contact us

Maidenhead	Marlow
Maidenhead United Reformed Church West Street, Maidenhead SL6 1RL www.maidenheadurc.org.uk	Christ Church United Reformed Church Oxford Road, Marlow SL7 2NL www.christchurch-marlow.org.uk
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