



OVERVIEW

Depicting the life and witness of the church.

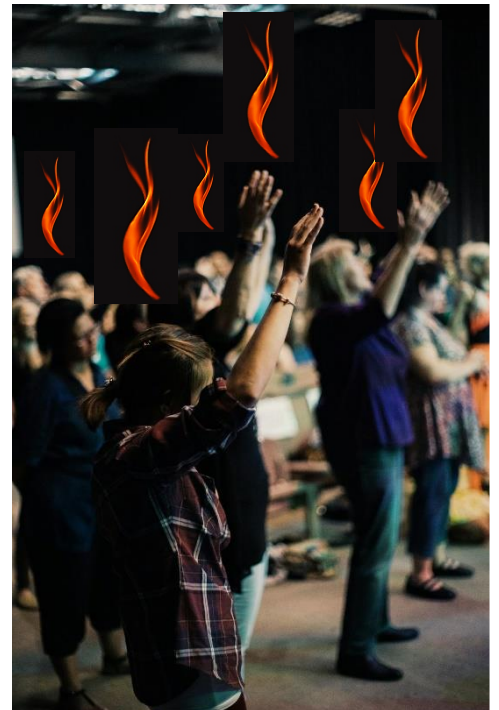
The United Reformed Church Swanlow Lane, Over, Winsford CW7 1JE

www.winsford.urc.org.uk



Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds flying: around they do not sow seeds, gather a harvest, and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth much more than birds?
Good News Bible

Matthew 6:28 And why are you worried about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grownot even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. Good News



Pentecost Sunday 19th May.

Acts 2:3 Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. 4 They were filled with the Holy Spirit. Good News Bible

Contact Information

Rev Garry Wareham garrywareham@gmail.com

Secretary – Ros Ellison 01606 543982

Treasurer – Maurice Boughey 01606 551263

Editor – Sally Bebbington mis.tigg09@gmail.com

And God was pleased for him to make peace by sacrificing his blood on the cross, so that all beings in heaven and on earth would be brought back to God.

Colossians 1:19-22 Contemporary English Version

When you go on holiday and you are away for the Sunday, do you still go to church? I confess this can be an issue so I was delighted when firstly I saw that the Sunday's of our recent holiday were sea days, and secondly that there was to be a service of worship. On the first Sunday this was led by the Captain and on the second Sunday by the Deputy. Some of you would have loved it because there was no sermon! Amidst the prayers and hymns and a reading from the Lectionary, the following poem was read:

Heaven's Grocery Store By Ron DeMarco

I was walking down life's highway a long time ago.
One day, I saw a sign that said "Heaven's Grocery Store",
As I got a little closer, the door came open wide,
And when I came to myself, I was standing inside.
I saw a host of ANGELS. They were standing everywhere.
One handed me a basket and said, "My child shop with care".
Everything a Christian needed was in the Grocery Store,
And all you couldn't carry, you could come back the next day for more.
First, I got some PATIENCE, LOVE was in the same row,
Further down was UNDERSTANDING, you need that everywhere you go.
I got a box or two of WISDOM, a bag or two of FAITH.
I couldn't miss the HOLY GHOST for it was all over the place.
I stopped to get some STRENGTH and COURAGE to help me run this race.
By then my basket was getting full, but I remembered some GRACE.
I didn't forget SALVATION for SALVATION is free,
So I tried to get enough of that to save both you and me.
Then I started up to the counter to pay my grocery bill,
For I thought I had everything to do my MASTER'S will.
As I went up the aisle I saw PRAYER and I just had to put that in,
For I know when I stepped outside, I would run right into sin.
PEACE and JOY were plentiful; they were on the last shelf.
SONG and PRAISES were hanging near so I just helped myself.
Then I said to the Angel, "Now, how much do I owe?"
He just smiled and said, "Just take them everywhere you go".
Again, I said, "How much do I really owe?" He smiled again and said:
"MY CHILD, JESUS PAID YOUR BILL A LONG, LONG TIME AGO!"

At Easter, we are reminded that it was on the cross of Calvary that Jesus paid the price. Thank you Jesus. More than dying for us, he rose again giving us hope for all eternity. Happy Easter.

Garry



On Mothering Sunday these lovely little bags were handed out. Thank you to Simone for getting the items and putting them in all the little bags.

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FROM THE SECRETARY

By the time this edition of Overview is circulating, the Church Annual Reports and Accounts for 2023 will be available in church. Please take one copy per household and read it prior to the AGM and church meeting which will be held on **Wednesday 17th April** commencing at **7pm** in the lecture room. Thank you to everyone who has contributed a report or worked on accounts and especially to Stephanie Smith for compiling and editing the document and Gwen Bushill for helping with the photocopying.

The church meeting will be considering a new Safeguarding Policy. At the church meeting last year, we approved the continued use of the existing Safeguarding Policy. However, since then the United Reformed Church has produced a new guidance document, Good Practice 6. The various sections of this guidance can be found on the URC website. Within those documents is a draft policy for churches to use and alter to suit their needs. In producing our own new policy from this template, we have only altered a small amount of text and the policy largely follows that of the template. It includes sections which state who the policy applies to, the principles underpinning the policy, reminds us of the duty of care and confidentiality which go with Safeguarding, and explains what the church will do to ensure that we create a safe culture around the church life, provide safe activities and recognise and respond to concerns as well how we will manage potential threats and support victims and survivors of abuse. The policy concludes with essential contact information. It is only four pages long and is a clear statement, more specific than its predecessor. The Elders considered the policy at their March meeting and recommend that the church meeting adopt this as policy for use by all users of the premises. Please take a copy home and make time to read it before the meeting in April. It is important that everyone knows what to do if you see something which could be potential abuse. If you do see or hear of something which causes concern speak to Diane Parkey or myself about it. We have access to Good Practice 6 which will help us to decided what to do next. We can also contact Julie Rafferty the Synod Safeguarding Advisor for additional help.

The URC states that all



volunteers should undertake Basic (Foundation Level) safeguarding training, and this can be found on the Mersey Synod website. Pastoral workers/visitors are required to do the Basic and Intermediate levels of training. The Basic training can be found on the URC Learning Hub: <https://www.urclearninghub.org.uk/course/view.php?id=24>

Craft N' Chat meets on the **third Tuesday in the month** in the lecture room. Everyone is welcome to join us whether you come with craft or just for the chat. In February we were discussing what events we could do as a church since some of the regular events which took place before Covid have not resumed. Do we want to engage with Heritage Open Days in September again? Could we decorate the church windowsills at Christmas, like we do for harvest, to make the church more festive? There are numerous activities we could consider, and it would be good to have some new fresh ideas. If you are interested in starting something, please chat amongst your friends and see if we can get a group of interested people together to bring something to fruition. Although I have not yet prepared the agenda for the April church meeting it would be an ideal opportunity to have such a discussion. There has also been some interest in participating in Heritage Open Days as we did not do this last year. We need to know if sufficient people would help with organising this and offer time on the day to make this possible.

Finally, I have written about the theme of Eco church in my report from the spring Synod meeting. If anyone wants to know more about this, please look at the A Rocha website and speak to an Elder. This is something we should be moving forward. We only have one planet, and we need to change our practices to protect it. However, with the reduced number of people serving on the Eldership it is not possible for this work to be taken on by the Elders.

Ros Ellison

A Tribute to Eileen Stringer



Eileen came to the U.R.C nearly fifty years ago. She took over the Dramatic Society after Liz Jackson moved to Reading. She became Choir Mistress after Jack Piggott, left to live in Peterborough and remained in the position until a shortage of numbers. It was agreed that the remaining members still sat in the choir pews. Then came lockdown!

Eileen produced many shows, all well-known Roger Jones musicals, "A Grain of Mustard Seed" and many more for the Choir Anniversary and at Christmas.

In the church hall Eileen produced many shows such as "The Sound of Music", "Irene", "Brigadoon", "Joseph and His Amazing Dream Coat", "Oliver", "My Fair Lady", and many varied concerts. Her talents were endless.

Choir practice was hilarious at times, with Len and Philip our bass singers talking and not knowing when Eileen returned to various sections which needed more practice. They would ask Jean, or I what page were we on. Eileen told them to pay attention in future. The men said, "it will be all right on the day" and it was. Such happy times. I can imagine that Eileen

will now be leading the Heavenly Choir.

Eileen was also Church Treasurer, Elder, coordinator of the Harvest Festival, and leader for the Christmas Fair committee for many years.

On behalf of the Choir and the Dramatic society, Eileen will be sadly missed and will be rewarded in Heaven, for all she did for being Gods servant at our church.

The happy times we shared with Eileen will always be remembered, by so many. Not forgetting our friends from Trinity Church, who helped our Choir, and the Dramatic Society. Eileen you brought so much joy to all, we will always remember you. On behalf of the choir, Drama and our pianist Sandra, we salute you .

Hilda Johnson

Birthday Celebrations We all had a very pleasant afternoon celebrating Audrey's 80th birthday on March 16th. Thank you for all the cards and the thoughtful presents.



Celebration For the Life of Eileen Stringer – prepared by Claire Roberts, lay preacher, and presented by her in her role of celebrant at Eileen’s service on 15 February 2024.

On Thursday 15th February we gathered to say goodbye to Eileen Stringer, to celebrate her life and to lay her to rest.

I think it is appropriate that we think of her rest in a musical sense. A rest which gives us that opportunity for a short period of silence which brings dramatic impact to the music of Eileen’s life. It is true to say that throughout her life, Eileen’s love of music and her deep faith were intrinsically linked. The rest we honour represents the transition that Eileen has made as she takes her place in heaven – welcomed into the glory of God, where I have no doubt, she is already planning her first musical production.

Whilst Eileen spent so many of her years worshipping at the URC in Winsford, she would be sure to let people know that she was actually a Methodist, and proud of it. Brought up in the Midlands her father was an early musical influence on her life and was the choir master at the church. Eileen’s mother & father later moved to Colwyn Bay, Eileen and her brother remained in the Midlands – but that musical influence continued to stay strong. As Methodists are “Born in Song”, it is no wonder that close collaborations with Trinity Methodist Church and the URC were easily made with Eileen as the maestro behind each musical production.

Eileen could never resist the opportunity to influence others through music and she knew the importance that music plays in the flow and pattern of worship. Without music we would fall flat and lack the opportunity to express ourselves in song, or to feel uplifted by words and music as we listen. It is not surprising then to find that on their annual holiday trips to Wengen in Switzerland Eileen and Bernard would seek out a familiar Anglican church, aptly named St. Bernard’s, and Eileen would often arrange the service for the following Sunday. It’s worth mentioning that she didn’t just muscle in, the church still has open pulpit days where anyone on holiday or locally can lead worship. Eileen would be calling home from a payphone for certain pieces of music to be emailed by Yvonne to the hotel. Everything needed to be just right! She loved her trips there and was always willing to contribute to worship. Even after Bernard’s death she continued to travel to Wengen - until she was 92!

According to her son David, this strive for perfection in all things musical was instilled in her from a very young age. Prior to taking her grade 8 violin examination her teacher insisted that she practice for a further 12 months so that she was at peak perfection for the exam. Eileen was good enough to have passed the exam a year earlier, but this principle of ‘practice makes perfect’ stuck with her for a lifetime. It also meant that she set high standards for herself and for her musical productions, so if you were chatting or fooling around when you should have been singing then you would suffer her wrath. I’m sure that there are a few gentlemen who have received the sharp edge of her tongue – but it was done in love and passion for perfection. We have been blessed to have known Eileen, and to share in her lifetime – to engage in such wonderful local musical productions that were heartfelt, fun and entertaining. Those who voluntarily put themselves forward for the art forms that they know and love for the pleasure of others are few and far between, Eileen knew instinctively how to put on a performance, and she never shied away from showing how it should be done.

Having reached the wonderful age of 98, it's difficult to imagine that Eileen played violin as a teenager at the Queen’s Hall in London which at that time was the home of “The Proms” had attracted many brilliant musicians from across the world. Sadly, it was destroyed in the London blitz of 1942 and was never rebuilt. It was after that time that “The Proms” transferred to the Royal Albert Hall. Many years later, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary, Eileen and Bernard were treated by their son David to a performance at the Royal Albert Hall by the Halle Orchestra and Eileen was delighted to see one of her star pupils Gemma Hunter playing viola for the orchestra.



Many people who gathered for the funeral were either taught by Eileen, or given an opportunity to perform, or were encouraged to sing out because she recognised and nurtured the musical gift that was in them.

The music of Eileen's life did not end at her death. At her funeral we stood in that rest between the notes, a rest that makes room for God's presence in a new way, a pause in which God is making all

things new. The music of Eileen's life now simply plays in a different key. For all those who believe in Jesus Christ, who carry their faith with them through this life, who fully use the gifts that God has given to them to preach the gospel with enthusiasm and share those gifts with others in love – there is the certain hope of heaven. The celebration of Eileen's vitality forms part of the never-ending song of life, a song that goes on to our eternity when we accept Jesus as Lord.

When performing in the Holy Land many years ago Eileen spent a fortnight playing violin with an orchestra of around 100 people, plus a choir, performing every evening across different venues. Whilst she was there, she took the time to visit the River Jordan and collected some of the water from the river at Bethany. Eileen and Bernard were blessed with wonderful grandchildren – who they would care for and nurture. When the time came, the water was used to baptise Victoria and Nicholas. She knew the spiritual significance of this water and knew the blessing that comes from it. It was the river where Jesus was baptised by John and the river that the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land.

Eileen has now reached her promised land she has turned her face to heaven. Now she lives in glory with Jesus her saviour.

Eileen,

May you rest now, in peace,
your toil has reached its end.
And a life like yours deserves
a restful glory.

May you sleep now, at last,
the slumber of the loved.
You have lived each chapter of
your wondrous story.

May you pass now, it is time,
If permission speeds your way
we let go with love,
for love is what you gave.

May you know now, in life,
you were treasured every day.
And we daily walk the paths
your footprints made. Amen



Update

Following the report of the death of John Hopkins in the February/March edition of Overview, Revd David Skitt has sent the following information, highlighting the close relationship between URC Over, and the Hopkins family. We are extremely grateful to David for bringing to our attention this significant aspect of URC Over's history. John Hopkins was sent and sponsored for the ministry at Over where he had been an Elder.

The ministry of Michael Jackson was one of several major factors that helped John discern his call to ministry. He trained at Northern College, Manchester, from 1977 – 1980. To help the family out, John, Joy, Siân and Rachel moved into the Manse in May 1978 until July 1979 when we arrived. Joseph Finney and Sons then offered them a flat in Bank House free of rent until June 1980 when John was ordained in June 1980 into Chorley URC where he exercised his only ministry until 2002. He and Joy were in our choir and Joy ran Pilots. As far as I know, in 200 years John may be the only minister we sent, but I may be wrong, but our Church was incredibly formative and influential in his excellent service to God.

Move love and God Bless, Alison, and David

REPORT FROM SYNOD

Synod met at Trinity United Reformed Church, Wigan on Saturday 9th March when the theme of the meeting was Eco Church. Rev Geoff Felton (Synod Moderator) led the Bible Study using firstly the story of the prodigal son and secondly some verses from Genesis 1:24-28. Geoff noted that it is generally accepted by scientists that the recent worldwide rise in average temperatures is driven by human intervention and not just a cyclic variation in temperature. This rise in temperature Geoff considered is down to human want and waste.

In the world today we are subject to the influences of advertising. It is the job of advertisers to convince us that we need something when in reality we may not need it. Advertising creates a desire for more and more encouraging us to want new possessions. But do we really need it or do we just think we need it? As the production of more and more goods develops, we use up more and more of the earth's resources, produce more greenhouse gases and damage the atmosphere and the environment in which we live. As a result of having more goods we also create more waste. In the past we used to fix things, mend broken machines and goods, repair clothes etc. Geoff reminded us that the prodigal son when he returned home having spent his inheritance on riotous living was still welcomed home by his father and forgiven. In telling the story of the prodigal son Jesus was telling us how to live and not lead a wasteful life. However, as the father welcomed the prodigal son home, so God still welcomes us. The Bible condemns wasteful living. As an illustration of the damage caused by single use plastics, Geoff highlighted the Great Pacific Garbage patch – an area of sea some 620,000 square miles consisting of floating waste in the Pacific Ocean. Some 8 million tonnes of plastic enter the oceans every year i.e. the equivalent of 1 lorry load of plastic a minute. The Bible calls for us to look after our neighbour whoever that might be, to be stewards of our world rather than dominating and damaging it. Climate change affects the poor disproportionately. It is those least responsible for climate change and the deterioration of the environment who suffer the greatest. As Christians we should care for our environment as a way of showing respect to God the creator and his creation, we should in turn love our neighbour and act as witnesses to God's love in our day to day living, by taking whatever steps we can to stop the rise in global temperatures and reduce our

wasteful ways. If we take small steps as individuals and as a church, collectively, these will mount up and we can reverse the damaging effects and reduce our impact on the planet. We were encouraged to register with A Rocha as an Eco-friendly church and work to reduce our impacts on the planet. A number of churches in Mersey Synod have registered and the Synod now has the designation of being an Eco-friendly Synod. Some churches have achieved a bronze award and the West Kirby and Wilmslow URC churches have achieved a silver award.

During the day four workshops were on offer, Where to Begin on the Eco Journey, Understanding Climate Justice, Community Church Gardens and Lobbying MPs and others. Some of the steps we were encouraged to do as individuals were recycling and reusing as much as possible, consider the temperature we heat our homes, reducing it by one degree if we have not already done so, avoid single use plastics, reduce our use of gas and electricity, switch to low carbon energy providers, avoid food waste, eat less red meat, travel wisely, try public transport or car sharing, reduce our waste, mend clothes and reduce our purchase of new clothes, choose energy efficient appliances, reduce our use of water, and many other steps. Many of these steps could be undertaken by churches, as well as individuals, but there were other steps we were encouraged to adopt as churches such as going paper light, lobbying MPs to bring about change and providing solar panels (which might be difficult for us as the church is a listed building.)

There were the usual reports about the work of the various committees of Synod and individual



personnel, details of training events available over the year, and information about activities related to "Talking Faith" the theme for 2023 and 24. However the real interest for the day was the focus on Eco church which led to an interesting and thought-provoking day. Ros Ellison

Duty Rota and Diary dates April & May 2024

Date 2024	Vestry Elder	Welcomer/steward	Preacher	Media desk	Preparation media
7 th April	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mrs Fiona Worthington	Rev Jennie Wakefield Service includes Communion	Simone	Stephanie
14 th	Mrs Lesley Clarke	Mr Len Moss & Mrs Barbara Moss	Mrs Simone Burrows	Sally	Simone
21 st	Mr Philip Burrows	Mrs Jean Challinor	Mrs Joan Colwell	Simone	Sally
28 th	Mr Maurice Boughey	Ms Moira McLachlan	Rev Garry Wareham	Simone	Simone
5 th May	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mr Ian Tabernacle	Rev David Spence Service includes Communion	Sally	Sally
12 th	Mrs Gwen Bushill	Mrs Fiona Worthington	Rev Jennie Wakefield	Maurice	Stephanie
19 th	Mr Philip Burrows	Mr Ian Mason	Mrs Simone Burrows Service includes an infant Blessing	Sally	Simone
26 th	Mrs Lesley Clarke	Mrs Pam Bird	Rev Garry Wareham	Simone	Stephanie
2 nd June	Mrs Ros Ellison	Ms Moira McLachlan	Rev David Hamblin Service includes Communion	Simone	Simone



Tea & Chat 2024
15th April: U3A ukelele group
20th May: Don Reid (comedian) going T to talk about his career.

There are a lot of people who are on their own – if you have a friend or neighbour who would welcome a chance to go out and have a few hours with good company, join in activities and enjoy refreshments – then please invite them to Tea & Chat.

Regular Weekly Activities at the Church.

Mon 7.00pm Vale Royal Theatre Group
 Tue 1.00pm Adult Institute
 6.00pm Cubs
 Wed 6.15pm Beavers
 Thurs 6.30pm Brownies
 Fri 10.00am Cantate Choir Rehearsal

Craft & Chat
 3rd Tuesday in the month.
 2pm- 4pm
 16th April
 21st May

We are sorry to report the recent death of Dennis Cain, well known to some of us here at Over. Dennis worshipped at Castle Community Church, and for many years was their Treasurer. We send our condolences to his family and friends.

Overview for June /July	Last day for articles-Sunday 26th May.	Out Sunday 2 nd June
Overview for August/September	Last day for articles Sunday 21st July.	Out Sunday 28 th July

Prayer/reflection compliments of my dad.

My father passed away in March 2001. I was going through a box of "stuff" last night and I came across a prayer/reflection that my father had written:

You my Lord

Give me life.

You my Lord,

Ease my strife.

You my Lord

Help the needy

You my Lord even love the greedy.

With You my Lord

My troubles cease.

My heart's at rest

When You grant me peace.

S. Burrows

FAMILY NEWS

We are sad to report the death on 12 March 2024 of Margaret Mounfield. The funeral, will be held on Wednesday 10 April at 10.00 at church, followed by the committal at Birches Crematorium. We send our condolences to Margaret's family and ask you to keep them in your prayers.

DRIVE SAFELY FOR LONGER Lesley and Ros attended Drive Safely for Longer at which we were asked if there would be interest in running such an event at church. It will be free and run by Cheshire West & Chester Road Safety Officers, in a relaxed friendly atmosphere. It will last about 1.5 hours, probably take place on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday in the daytime, most likely May or June. It is primarily for people aged 60 and over but we were not asked about age. The aim is to support those of us who took driving tests a long time ago to continue driving safely in present road conditions. If you are interested in attending, please speak to Lesley or Ros so that we can ascertain if sufficient people are interested. Please ask if you would like additional

AGM AND CHURCH MEETING

The AGM and next church meeting will take place on Wednesday 17th April commencing at 7pm. The Annual Report & Accounts and the new Church Safeguarding Policy which will be discussed at the meeting are both available on the front pew in church. Please take one copy per household and read them before the meeting.

Photograph acknowledgements from unsplash.com.

People worshipping – Matthew de Livera

Flame – Paul Bulai

Lillies – Darius Cotoi



CHESTER ROAD PRESENTS

.....A Variety Show to be held in St Chad's Village Hall in Gladstone Street, Winsford, on Saturday 13 April at 7.30pm. Tickets £6. For more information, please contact either Sue Gillet, 01606 554308, or Sue Ellison, 07766 047919.

*Have a blessed
Easter!*

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

--John 11:25-26

Thinking of Pentecost

Come, Spirit of God,

Open our eyes to the beauty of your creation

Fill our mouths with your words, Burn our

ears with your will, Come, Spirit of God,

Touch our lives with your radiant love,

Enflame our hearts with your passion,

Expand our horizons to meet with yours,

Come, Spirit of God,

Come, Holy Spirit! Come,

Holy Spirit, come,

Breathe into the hearts of

your people,

like a dove, like a wind,

like a flame.

Like a dove, find a

resting place in our land

and around the world, bringing hope and

peace. We pray for all refugees forced from

their homes, living in foreign lands, aching to

return. Come Holy Spirit Like a dove, hover

over them with your hope.

Come Holy Spirit Like a wind, blow

throughout our land and around the world,

bringing justice and peace.

We pray for exiles and political prisoners, and

for the work of Amnesty International.

Come Holy Spirit Like a wind,

swirl around and among all people with your

grace and truth. Come Holy Spirit Like a

flame, rise up in the hearts of the people of

our land and nations around the world,

bringing love and goodness.

We pray for creation, that humanity will

become passionate toward protecting
and preserving it.

We pray for those working to eradicate
poverty, unemployment, loneliness.

Come Holy Spirit Like a flame,

fuel the passions of your servants,

and make us one in your light and warmth.

Come, Holy Spirit, come,

Breathe into the hearts

of your people,

like a dove, like a wind,

like a flame.

Fill us with your

empowering strength,

even when we feel at

our weakest,

When we are sick, or

sorrowful or weighed down with cares.

Come Holy Spirit, come, and send us into the

world proclaiming your truth

in every tongue, helping those in need,

protecting the discriminated and scorned.

Make us a church of disciples

overflowing with your love and hope.

Come, Holy Spirit, come,

Breathe into our hearts this day. Amem

.

Article from the U.R.C Resources

by the Revd Ruth Whitehead, Moderator of

the South Western Synod.

Photo of the dove by Sunguk Kim

unsplash.com

