

December 2024 / January 2025



OVERVIEW

Depicting the life and witness of the church.

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

www.winsfordurc.org.uk

Please note the web address has a slight change,
there is now no full stop between winsford and urc



15th Dec 10.30 **Lessons & Carols** Rev Garry Wareham. Refreshments served after the service.
24th Dec 7.00pm Rev Garry Wareham – service includes Communion
25th Dec No Service on Christmas Day

Contact Information

Rev Garry Wareham garrywareham@gmail.com
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Editor – Sally Bebbington mis.tigg09@gmail.com

**We are here to worship God as disciples of Jesus; to welcome,
love and serve the community, and to share our faith.**

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah 9:2)

As I write this, the season of Advent looms large. I know this because I have dusted off my carol music, put the High Street School assemblies in my diary, and the major retail outlets have all released their Christmas adverts. (I love Kevin the carrot!) Whilst the start of Advent heralds a busy time for me, Advent is precious and important – it is the season of waiting. Waiting for Christmas, yes, but also waiting for something much bigger—the arrival of Jesus Christ, both as the baby in the manger and as the King who will come again.

If you are anything like me, waiting is not your strong suit. Some of us struggle to wait for the kettle to boil, let alone for the arrival of the King of Kings. Waiting isn't easy; just ask the Israelites. Forty years wandering in the wilderness? That's a long time to wait for a promised land. And let's not forget Abraham and Sarah, who waited 25 years for Isaac to show up, and when he finally did, they probably needed a good nap. We are invited to join the faithful through the centuries in anticipation, clinging to Isaiah's prophecy: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah 9:2).

Have you ever had that frustration of fumbling in the dark trying to find the light switch? The moment that you flick the switch brings feelings of relief and peace as light fills the space. It seems to me that Humanity is fumbling around in the darkness - hunger, loneliness, and strife that still mark the human experience – still unknowingly looking for the ‘light of the world’. For those of us who worship Jesus, Advent invites us to embody hope, joy, peace and love, to be vessels through which God's light and justice can flow into a hurting world.

However, waiting is not passive; it's an active, hopeful posture. It asks us to clear away distractions and make room for Christ to enter not just our homes but our lives. John the Baptist might remind us, our real task is to “prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him” (Mark 1:3) which, let's be honest, sounds easier than untangling last year's Christmas lights. We are called to examine our priorities and to ask hard questions: What truly brings peace? Where do I see God's light breaking into the darkness? How can I be a light to others?

On each Sunday of Advent as part of our worship, we will light a candle of the Advent wreath. My hope is that as each candle is lit, they will ignite a deeper longing for God's presence in us and in the world. My prayer this Advent is that it will be a time of joyful anticipation, honest reflection, and renewed commitment to live as people of the Light.

Yours in the hope of Advent, **Garry**



To all my Friends
I wish you all a very Happy
Christmas, and a Healthy and
Prosperous New Year.
Very Best Wishes
Hilda (Johnson)

Thank you for all the love
and care which I received
during and after my
operation. God bless the
church family.
Mara

FROM THE SECRETARY

An extraordinary church meeting was held on Sunday 10th November following the Remembrance Day service when the meeting agreed to extend Garry's ministry from 25% scoping to 50% starting in January. Garry's circumstances had changed, and he had been in discussion with Mersey Synod about increasing his ministry in the URC. The Pastoral Committee agreed to extend his ministry and then asked Over if we would like to increase the scoping. It has been a difficult time for Garry offering only 25% ministry. In practice this allows the minister to offer one service a month, attend meetings, conduct a few services such as weddings and funerals, and to support those in pastoral need. In reality, with the number of funerals we have had at Over for the first half of the year, Garry has exceeded his 25% scoping. However, Garry offers a vocational ministry and does not count hours, although he does recognise that he cannot achieve everything he would like. This increase in ministry will provide the opportunity for Garry to walk with people, to encourage their faith journeys and offer more to the church, starting with **the Advent Fellowship Groups** which began **on Tuesday 26th November meeting from 1.30-3.30pm**. The group will continue to meet on **Tuesday 3rd, 10th, and 17th December**. Garry will now lead two services a month, except when he is on leave. Being available during October and November Garry has in fact taken two services a month in a voluntary capacity and will do the same in December. Synod will also require Garry to undertake work for them from time to time, but this will not be specified in the Terms of Settlement (a minister's equivalent to a contract). This is a wonderful opportunity for the church, and we thank Garry for his support. With this time, we can develop our mission and increase our discipleship, both vital for any church active in the community.

In November we successfully applied for a Mersey Synod Small Mission Grant. This is for the bags we hang on the gates to the graveyard at Christmas and Easter and invite visitors to take one home with them. The bags are for both children and adults and include leaflets about the meaning of Christmas, Garry's

Christmas message, details of our Christmas services and prayer leaflets or bookmarks. Sally Bebbington has had her drawing pen out and this year the children's bags will include four Christmas cards to colour, which depict scenes from the nativity. The bags will include envelopes and felt pens. The children's bags also include a copy of one of the Bible Society booklets telling the story of the nativity. If you would like to take bags to give to family and friends, please do so. It's a simple but effective way of reminding people what Christmas is really about. The grant also included a sum to purchase the Bible Society Nativity story for distribution to children present at the Nativity and Gift service on 8th December.

During the **week of 9th -13th December** we will be welcoming High Street School as they come to perform their Christmas nativities. Different classes will present different interpretations. Thank you to everyone who is helping to open up and operate the sound desk. The staff really appreciate this opportunity to bring the children to church and families love to see their children participating. Garry will be present each time and will speak to the children at the end of the service.

Details of our Christmas services at church can be found on the back page of Overview. **The Nativity and Gift service on 8th December** is your opportunity to bring gifts which will be passed on to the Salvation Army for distribution around the town to families who are struggling to make ends meet. Gifts may be for children or young people spending their first Christmas in their own home after having been in care. Items of Christmas food will also be welcomed by the Salvation Army for inclusion in the hampers they prepare. Alternatively, if you do not want to go shopping you can place a cash donation in an envelope marked "Salvation Army" and they will use it to buy items for their hampers or buying gifts.

It's a busy time but let us not forget to thank God for the gift of his son, Jesus Christ, in our preparations. Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas, Ros.



TUB2PUB



We're all guilty of indulging in chocolate, sweets and crackers over the festive period, and in the UK we are buying tens of millions of these plastic tubs every year! Make sure your tubs don't go to waste and bring your clean, empty plastic confectionary and cracker tubs to any Greene King managed site in January 2025 to be recycled. Simply leave your tubs with a Greene King staff member at the bar or welcome station within one of their locations.

All tubs will be collected and taken to a plastic reprocessing centre where they're shredded, before being sold onto plastic manufacturers to use in place of virgin plastics. All money raised from the sale of Tub2Pub plastics will be given directly to Macmillan Cancer Support.

If you have any tubs of sweets or plastic boxes of biscuits, did you know that these can be recycled to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support. I am happy to have these given to me and I will get them to a local collection point. They can also be dropped off at "The Brighton Bell" (opposite Winsford Station), The White Barn (near Cuddington station) The Blue Cap (Sandiway) or any pub connected to Greene King brewery, nationwide, during the month of January.

If you have not emptied them by January why not put the sweets into a smaller box or bag and pass on the tub.

The tubs can be dropped off at the pub between Jan 1st & Feb 11th.

Ruth Hatton

Manchester Marathon

Hi all,

After getting back into running and completing my fourth half marathon I have decided to do a big run in 2025 - the Manchester Marathon. I have also decided to run for a charity this time with the charity being Macmillan Cancer Support. As most of you will be aware, my wife Emma (Finney) lost her father Martyn to cancer last year, six weeks before we got married. Macmillan played a huge role in making Martyn comfortable through all the stages of his cancer, as well as providing his wife Sandra vital support and around the clock contact whenever she needed it. There was always someone from Macmillan there for Martyn during the good and bad times.

Without Macmillan's support those difficult times would have been far harder for the whole family. Macmillan helped provide medication for Martyn, helped to make him comfortable when he struggled to walk and also provided a hospital bed so he could stay at home where he was happiest.

We all know someone who has been affected by cancer in some way, and the support that Macmillan can provide is vital for families going through any stage of cancer.

That is why I am running the Manchester Marathon for my father-in-law Martyn.
Rob

If anyone would like to sponsor Rob, you can follow the link below or pass on any donation to Sandra.

Link:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/robert-breareley?utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=page%2Frobert-breareley&utm_source=copyLink&utm_campaign=fpf-share

From the Treasurer

When I gave the possible costs of Garry's ministry increasing from 25% to 50% to the church meeting. I talked about M & M costs. What is M & M, I hear you ask. Well to give its correct title, it is Ministry and Mission (M & M) Fund. I will try to explain what it is.

At this time of year, December and especially January are the busiest time of the year for me as Treasurer. I must prepare the end of year church accounts ready for independent scrutinization. Also, trying to prepare our church budget for the coming year. This is not as easy as it first seems as trying to work out the increase over the next year is a guess, at best.

Costs like energy are easier, as our Gas and Electricity are on a 3-year deals. So, I can work it out by multiplying the price by the units used the previous year.

Others, I receive notification about what the coming year will be. One such item is the M & M contribution.

Like me, Church House must work out the URC budget for the coming year. The fund must cover the cost of Stipendiary Ministers and Church-related Community Workers. Including their stipends, pension, National Insurance contributions and ministerial training, which represents around 80% of total expenditure. It also covers other work funded centrally including discipleship development, children and youth work, ecumenical and international links, governance, and administration. When Church House has calculated the total budget, they calculate what the required suggested average contribution per member is to be. Synods are then able to calculate what their contribution will be towards the total costs of the URC.

As a local church we contribute financially towards this total, based on the number of members in the previous year's annual returns to Synod. Around November time, I get the information so I can budget for it in next year's expenditure.

I cannot stress enough; you must not look upon it as a membership fee. Financial stewardship plays an important part in the life of the URC and works on a basis that all give according to what they can afford as we sense the call of God on our own finances.

Finally, we pay the M & M whether we have a minister in post or not (in a vacancy). It is the

largest regular payment we have and takes up almost half of our total annual Sunday collection contributions. I hope this has made the term M & M a little clearer.

Pray for Winsford

Hi everyone,
We as Overflow Church, have really been stirred by God to pray for Winsford, Winsford Academy and for all the churches in Winsford. We are believing that God's heart is calling us to greater unity in the area and that His heart is to transform the lives of all those who live, worship, work and go school in the area. We believe that God is wanting to transform Winsford, and to do this, we need to come together as churches to pray for the area and for all the churches.

Our heart is to meet once a month at a different church each month.

I feel excited about what God is doing in Winsford especially with Open the Book which is being co-ordinated by Churches Together, church leaders starting to gather to pray together, so feel this praying together as wider churches is important.

We would like to invite you to come pray together with us at **7:45 till 9:15pm (start praying at 8pm and finish praying at 9pm), on Wednesday the 3rd of December** at Winsford Academy. We have given extra time before and after to chat and get to know each other better.

The focus of the evening would be praying around **2 Chronicles 7:14**. As we are in the Academy it would be a great opportunity to pray for the school and teachers too.

We would also create opportunity for each church represented to be prayed for.

We would love for praying together to be a regular activity and to rotate to other church buildings to pray. Please let me know if you would like us all to join at your church. Based on diaries we are looking at the **1st Wednesday of each month at 7:45 till 9:15pm.**

Thanks Paul

Overflow Church

Please reply to

paul.stevens@overflowchurch.org.uk

SYNOD REPORT

The Synod theme for the last two years has been “Talking Faith” and the October Synod meeting looked at how we will transition from “Talking Faith” to “Living Faith”, the theme for the next two years. Synod officers spoke about people in their lives who have encouraged them in their faith journey, explaining how important it has been to them to have a friend they could talk to, who would support them particularly through times of trouble, from a Christian perspective. In the last two years, Synod has hosted various events which encouraged us to talk about our faith and develop our discipleship. This will continue as more resources and events are planned for the next two years, enabling us to develop our own discipleship as we grow as individuals whilst equipping us to live our Christian lives in the communities in which we are located. The message came across loud and clear; if you want a particular event, let us (Synod) know and we will do our best to provide it. So, if you have ideas about how we can strengthen our faith and our mission here at Over please talk to me about it and together we can pass the idea on to Synod.

The Reports presented to the meeting explained about the Large Projects Panel (LPP), a group supported by the Resources, Pastoral Support and Mission & Discipleship Committees. The start of any such project requires the church to discern its mission and role in the local community. This might begin by engaging with a review under the Synod process of Being Church. A collaborative process has been identified to review and assist churches developing large projects which includes a written application, site visit and review. Up to now any churches involved in expensive development projects have been limited to a maximum of 20% grant from Synod. The LPP process will allow this threshold to increase. The first church to participate in the process is Seacombe URC, Wallasey and other projects are also being supported at Lymm and St David’s Eastham.

It was good to hear that the somewhat burdensome Quinquennial Surveys are being extended to take place every 7 years and

become Septennial Reviews. However, in the discussion group for the Cheshire area, which took place later in the day, there were concerns that this time gap was too long and could lead to problems arising to premises when recommendations and repairs identified in earlier surveys are not completed.

The Resources Committee have identified £250,000 per annum for the next 5 years to be set aside as grants to fund development projects at local churches to enhance mission. Churches were also encouraged to apply for grants from Synod for mission work and once again we have successfully submitted an application for a small mission grant for the bags, we hang on the graveyard gates at Christmas and Easter.

The Safeguarding Report noted that 97% of churches in the Synod have a Church Safeguarding Coordinator and a Church Safeguarding Policy which includes both children & young people and vulnerable adults. The majority of these policies are reviewed annually, as is ours. A number of our members have recently undertaken Safeguarding training to Intermediate level and there are some other people who have Foundation level training as well. This is important as the URC moves towards creating safer spaces for worshippers and communities who use the building.

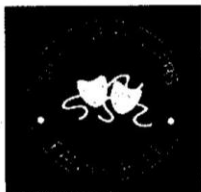
Steven Mitchell (CYDO) presented Charlotte Sampson with the Lundi Memorial Award. This award is given by the United Reformed Church to children and young people under the age of 26 who have undertaken significant church work or local community.

There is always a time of prayer at the start of the Synod meeting, which included prayers for Rev Tim Meadows, minister at Allerton URC, who is now serving as Moderator of General Assembly and Rev Philip Kennerley for his long ministry, amongst others.

Rosamund Ellison

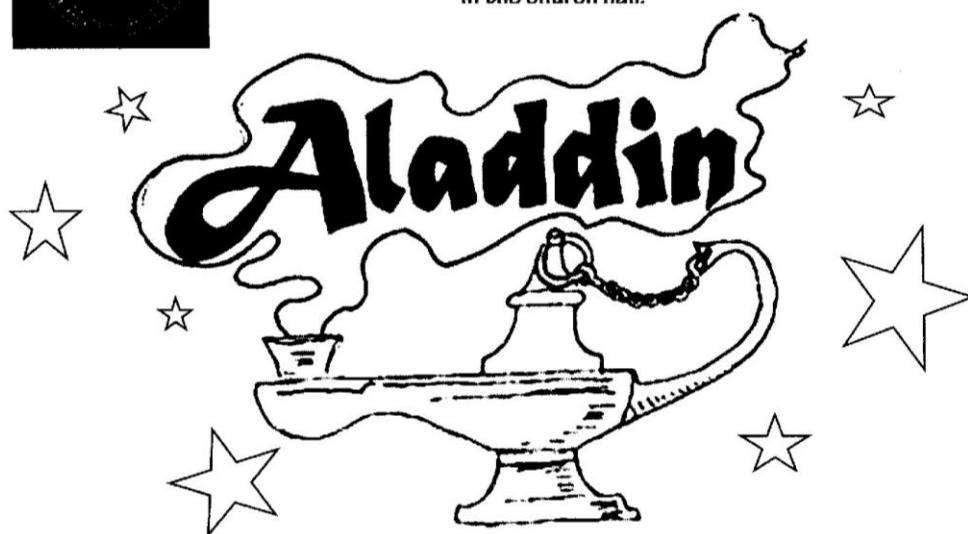


King of Kings



In 2025 - The U.R.C Overplayers present:-

At The United Reformed Church, Over. CW7 1JE
In the church hall.



Wed 29th Jan + Thurs 30th Jan All tickets £6 Starts at 7.30pm

Fri 31st Jan Tickets- Adult £8 Child/ Conces £6 Starts at 7.30pm

Sat 1st Feb - Matinee Starts at 2:30pm

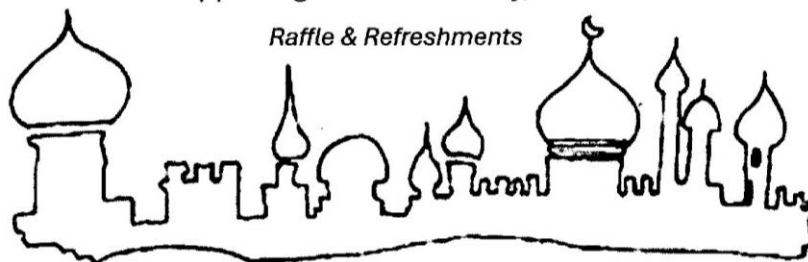
Tickets - Adult £8 Child/ Conces £6

**Uniformed Organisations - £7.00 per child. Tuck Bag included in the price.
Leaders Free**

**TICKETS - Box Office - 07488908284 or
email – overplayerspantotickets@gmail.com**

Supporting St Lukes Charity, Winsford

Raffle & Refreshments



**May you
experience the
Presence and
the peace of
Jesus Christ
this Christmas
and throughout
the New Year
Stephanie**

**And also, a thank you...
Colin Clarke would like
to thank everyone for
their kind Get Well
wishes and cards
following his knee
replacement surgery.
He very much
appreciates your
thoughts.**



**Happy Christmas
from
Maurice & Helen
Boughey.**



**Wishing all our
friends at Over
the best of
Christmases and
every good wish
for the New
Year.
Joan & Syd X**



**Lesley and Colin
wish our friends
at Over a very
Merry
Christmas and a
Happy New Year
and may Peace
be with you all
at this very
special time of
year.**



Duty Rota and Diary dates December 2024 & January 2025					
Date 2024	Vestry Elder	Welcomer/steward	Preacher	Media desk	Preparation media
1 st Dec	Mrs Lesley Clarke	Mrs Fiona Worthington	Rev Dr Jan Berry service includes Communion	Stephanie	Stephanie
8 th Dec	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mr Ian Mason	Mrs Simone Burrows & uniformed groups Nativity & Gift Service	Stephanie	Simone
15 th	Mrs Gwen Bushill	Mr Len Moss & Mrs Barbara Moss	Lessons & Carols Rev Garry Wareham Refreshments served after the service	Simone	Garry
22 nd	Mrs Simone Burrows	Mrs Jean Challinor	Mrs Joan Colwell	Sally	Simone
24 th Dec 7.00pm	Mr Philip Burrows	Mr Ian Tabernacle	Rev Garry Wareham – service includes Communion	Stephanie	Stephanie
25 th Dec	No service on Christmas Day				
29 th Dec	Mr Maurice Boughey	Mr Ian Mason	Mrs Claire Roberts	Simone	Simone
5 th Jan 2025	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mrs Fiona Worthington	Rev Garry Wareham – service includes Communion	Stephanie	Stephanie
12 th Jan	Mr Philip Burrows	Mr Ian Tabernacle	Rev Garry Wareham	Simone	Simone
19 th Jan	Mrs Lesley Clarke	Mr Len Moss & Mrs Barbara Moss	Rev David Spence	Sally	Sally
26 th Jan	Mr Maurice Boughey	Mrs Pam Bird	Rev David Hamblin	Stephanie	Stephanie
2 nd Feb	Mrs Ros Ellison	Mr Ian Mason	Rev Garry Wareham – service includes Communion	Simone	Garry

Overview for Feb/ March 2025

Last day for articles – **Sunday 26th January**

Available in church – Sunday 2nd February

Also **in colour** online at www.winsfordurc.org.uk

**Craft & Chat - 3rd Tuesday in the month.
2pm - 4pm**

Advent fellowship Group -At the church - 1.30 – 3.30pm

Tuesday 26th Nov, 3rd Dec 10th Dec and 17th Dec .

John Bryan sends seasonal greetings to all friends in church wishing them a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. God Bless