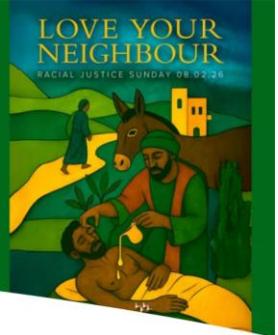


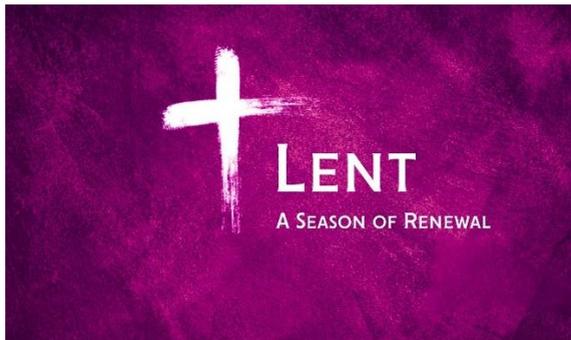
# MAGAZINE OF UNITING CHURCH SKETTY : FEBRUARY 2026

**Racial Justice  
Sunday**

**February 8<sup>th</sup> 2026**



**God has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God. [Micah 6.8]**



**Uniting together - Caring for all  
- Seeking God**



**Minister:** The Revd Louise Gough

**Senior Elder:** Pat D

**Senior Steward:** Maggie C

**Church Related Community Worker:**  
Adella P (Swansea Region of URC Churches)

**MARCH 2026 MAGAZINE:** All items for inclusion in the next edition of the Magazine to be sent to Noel D by 17<sup>th</sup> February at the latest, but sooner if possible. Issue date: Sunday, March 1st.



**Contacting us:** Uniting Church Sketty, Dillwyn Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9AH. Website: [www.unitingchurchsketty.org.uk](http://www.unitingchurchsketty.org.uk)

---

**The building development was funded by the following**

The **Methodist Church**



Ariennir gan  
Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Funded by  
Welsh Assembly Government



**The refurbished hall was funded from the sale of the Bethel building**

---

# LETTER FROM THE MANSE

## Dear friends

Sunday nights are always special – Evening Prayer on Zoom at 7pm. It means a great deal to me to gather with others and to pray and bring all our concerns to God.

In January and February, Sunday evenings also feature a spot of relaxing television - “The Great Pottery Throwdown”. It’s a well-worn formula which caters for a number of creative outlets – but in this case, people completing challenges in clay to be crowned “Potter of the Week” or be given a warm farewell, until the Grand Final is reached.

There’s something about pottery which speaks to me. Maybe because the material is so fragile and the process so unpredictable. On the work benches or wheel, clay can collapse, be knocked out of shape, made too thick or too thin. In the kiln, cracks can appear, parts can fall off, or pieces can simply shatter – and carefully applied glaze can come out in unintended and undesirable colours.

Despite all the risks, it heartens me no end to discover that the judges find great beauty even in the pieces that, for one reason or another, don’t go quite according to plan. Something can be cracked but intricately decorated, or have a wonderful form even when the glaze has gone rogue. Sometimes, the most beautiful pieces are the imperfect ones.

All this reminds me of the words in 2 Corinthians 4 about treasure in clay jars. The passage suggests that out of our fragility and imperfection, the light of Christ shines, and God’s power is made evident. Later in 2 Corinthians, there are words about God’s power made perfect in weakness.

The treasures made on “The Great Pottery Throwdown” are fragile and easily broken – and though we are also resilient and strong, so are we. In days gone by, the culture was very much about never showing weakness, putting a brave face on things, and not letting words or actions harm us. But we are easily hurt. Words, actions, encounters and experiences can do a great deal of damage. Our world is also easily hurt, and we have rendered earth’s ecosystem dangerously fragile. We are well aware of the problems and challenges from our daily news.

In a few short weeks, we will be entering Lent. For us at UCS, this will begin with a service on Ash Wednesday (Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February, 10.30am), when we are invited to receive the sign of the cross made in ashes, with the

words “remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return – turn from sin and be faithful to Christ.” These are very sobering words in a liturgy that reminds us, movingly, of our true place before God – that we are not God, that we are fallible – things human beings as a whole are prone to forgetting! Yet we are infinitely loved by God, and so we are invited into the season of Lent when we make time to examine ourselves before God, to think about our lives, and attend to our relationship with God, as a means of growth.

Whatever is going on for you at the moment, remember that you are God’s treasure, God’s work of art. And that in your broken and vulnerable places, the light of Christ shines through. You don’t have to be perfect to be truly beautiful. Each crack, each scar, each sign of damage, tells your story, and it is a story of grace – yours and God’s. And when the heat is on, God promises to be with you in the fire (Isaiah 43:2) – the same passage from Isaiah also says, “for I am your God, and I love you.”

## Every blessing Louise

### **WORSHIP SERVICES DURING FEBRUARY**

February    1 Revd Louise Gough - (Communion)  
                  8 Revd Linda Woollacott (Racial Justice Sunday)  
                 15 Revd Simon Walkling  
                 18 (10.30) Ash Wednesday Service - Revd Louise Gough  
                 19 (10.30) Thursday Communion - Revd Louise Gough  
                 22 Revd Louise Gough (First Sunday in Lent)

All services are in UCS at 10.30am unless otherwise stated.

Evening Prayer is held on Zoom from 7.00-7.30pm every Sunday, unless otherwise stated.

### **PASTORAL CONCERNS** (from Gwen D)

- We remember those who are in hospital, in care homes and nursing homes, those who are awaiting treatment and those who are convalescing. We pray that they will know God's strength and peace, and be able to trust in God's presence with them.

- We pray for those who are recently bereaved, especially during the Christmas period. May they know 'the peace that passes all understanding', through Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.
- It's good to know that Joyce J is now back at home and feeling much better after a spell in hospital. Joyce would like to thank her church family and friends for their care, love and prayers.
- Congratulations to Adella and Alan on the birth of their first grandchild, Austin David born just before Christmas. We send them all our love.
- Best wishes, too, to the Revd. Simon and Sue Walking on the birth of their first grand-daughter, Anna Meinir Llwyd.

## **COMMUNION COLLECTION FOR FEBRUARY**



Methodist Homes (MHA) is a charity that provides care and support for older people, offering a range of services from residential homes to community outreach. With a strong focus on dignity, respect, and compassionate care, MHA helps those in later life live as independently as possible,

while also offering a sense of community and belonging.

**SATURDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY - COFFEE MORNING 10AM-12 noon.** Proceeds for City of Sanctuary.

## **DATA CONSENT AND NEXT OF KIN/EMERGENCY CONTACT**

**INFORMATION:** If your contact details, or the information you have previously provided regarding next of kin/emergency contact have changed, could you please let Gwen know. If you are unsure of the information we hold, please speak to Gwen.

## **NEW BOOKINGS**

On Thursday, 11th December we had a booking for a pre-Christmas reunion of three choirs, using our Wesley Room. This looks likely to result in two ongoing bookings:

1. On Thursday evenings, 6.15 to 7.45, Croeso Choir. A mixed group, singing unaccompanied harmony songs, all learning done by ear, no musical experience needed. Weekly, alternating between the Hall and Wesley Room. There is already one church member in this group.
2. On Tuesday mornings 10.00 to 11.30, Singing Mamas with Janina. A singing community for mums to connect and be nourished through singing

simple harmony songs together in a circle. No musical experience or previous choir singing needed, no solos, no auditions, everyone welcome. Babies and small children welcome. In the Hall or Bethel Room, depending on numbers. Cake and tea afterwards. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in either group, Jeff C can give you details.

### **CELEBRATION BANNER**

As mentioned in the previous magazine, the Craft Group is making a new banner to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Church building. We would like everyone to be involved in this project by decorating a leaf in any way you choose – examples will be on display to inspire you. We shall start giving out the leaves on February 1<sup>st</sup> and we would like them returned by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Many Thanks

The Craft Group



(Wesley Chapel, Sketty, from the UCS website)

### **CHURCH MEETING DATES FOR 2026 ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

**12th February, 21st May (Annual Meeting) and 15th October.**

**All members and friends are welcome to attend.**

# **FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP FOR LENT**

**I know what you're thinking: We haven't finished our Advent and Epiphany programme yet – by the way, we had an average attendance of 22 people! – and here we are announcing our Lent Studies! But the reality is that Easter is early this year and Lent starts at the end of February.**

**We have agreed that, rather than follow the traditional themes of Lent, we are going to think about**

## **THE BOOK OF AMOS.**

**Amos was a prophet working in the eighth century before Christ. He had some sharp words of judgement and hope for those who heard him, both the influential and powerful, and ordinary people like us. His message is as relevant to us today as it was then. If you would like to prepare for these sessions, read the Book of Amos, slowly and carefully, and think about what it says to you. How do you respond to it?**

**Five sessions, led by Noel D, will be held as follows (all from 10.00 until 11.30am in the Wesley Room):**

**February 24, March 3, March 10, March 17 and March 24**

**THE BOOK OF AMOS : SOME GUIDELINES FOR YOUR READING**

Amos was a shepherd and fig tree farmer ([Amos 7:14](#)) who lived right near the border between northern Israel and southern Judah. The north had seized its independence about 150 years earlier ([1 Kgs. 12](#)) and was currently being ruled by Jeroboam II, a successful military leader. He won battles and new territory for Israel, which generated lots of new wealth. But in the eyes of the prophets, he was one of the worst kings ever. His wealth had led to social apathy, and he had allowed idol worship of the Canaanite gods, all of which led to injustice and neglect of the poor...

## The Big Idea

Though God confronts humanity's evil, his long-term purpose is to restore creation and create a new family. Amos' words are a call to embrace the true worship of God that should always include acts of justice, righteousness, and love for one's neighbour.

## Amos 1-2: Accusations Against the Nations and Israel



The book of Amos opens with a series of short poems that accuse all of Israel's neighbours of violence and injustice, which seems odd because the book's opening line said that Amos spoke against Israel. As Amos names all these neighbouring nations (*marked with an arrow*)—Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah—the map shows that he's drawing a circle with Israel (*marked with a star*) in the centre, like a target in the crosshairs. When he does get to

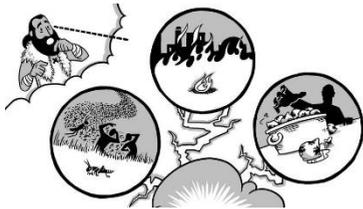
Israel, Amos unleashes a poetic accusation three times longer and more intense than any of the others... 'The party's over, Amos says. God's done putting up with this.'

## Amos 3-6: Exposing Israel's Hypocrisy and Injustice

The opening to the next section explains why. God says, “I chose you Israel, from among all the families of the earth ...” ([Amos 3:2](#)). It’s an allusion to [Genesis 12](#), when God called the family of Abraham to become God’s blessing to all nations. God continues the thought by saying, “... this is why I will punish you for all your sin.” Israel had a great calling that came with great responsibility, and so their sin and rebellion will bring great consequences.

Amos says that it’s all a sham and that God hates their worship because it’s totally disconnected from how they treat other people. God says that a real relationship with him will transform a person and how they treat others. Amos’ call to true worship is to “let justice flow like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream” ([Amos 5:24](#)).

### **Amos 7-9: Visions of the Day of the Lord**



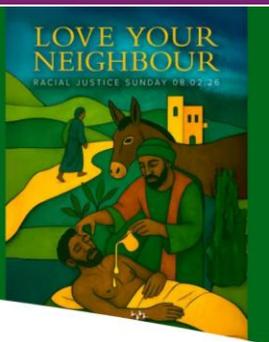
The book closes with a series of visions Amos experienced, which are symbolic depictions of the coming Day of the Lord. He sees Israel devastated by a locust swarm and a scorching fire before being swallowed up like overripe fruit. In the final vision, Amos sees God violently striking at the pillars of Israel’s great idol temple at Bethel, and the whole building comes crumbling down. It’s an image of God’s justice on the leaders and gods of Israel—their end has come.

Yet the final paragraph suddenly offers up a glimmer of hope. Using the image of Israel as a destroyed building, God says that, out of the ruins, he will one day restore the house of David. In other words, God will bring a future messianic king from David’s line and rebuild the family of his people, which, surprisingly, includes the other nations. All of the devastation caused by Israel’s sin and God’s judgment will be reversed.

*From The Bible Project (USA), free to use for non-profit church purposes*

# Racial Justice Sunday

February 8<sup>th</sup> 2026



## Love Your Neighbour

In this year's resources for Racial Justice Sunday, we explore what it really means to love our neighbour, especially given the current narratives of hostility, fear, suspicion and hatred of the 'other', particularly asylum seekers, refugees and anyone who is not British or Irish 'enough'.

We discuss how the Bible provides a blueprint for a world where everyone belongs; where everyone is loved, valued and affirmed for who they are, and not what they look like or have to offer. And one in which our identity is ultimately to be found in Christ, as brothers and sisters of one 'race': the human race.

I believe that this message is 'for such a time as this' (Esther 4:14). It is one that speaks through the 'flags', banners, protests and invective, relaying a message of unity and hope. Just as the greatest commandment speaks about loving God and one another, Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross offers us all the hope of being united with God and with one another.

**Let us use Racial Justice Sunday (and other Sundays) to stand together in love, rejecting those words, actions and behaviours that go against Christ's teachings, and embracing those biblical principles that foment unity, cohesion and engagement.**

*Richard Reddie, Director of Justice and Inclusion, CTBI*

## CLAUDETTE COLVIN: CIVIL RIGHTS ICON WHO REFUSED TO MOVE SEATS ON SEGREGATED BUS DIES AT 86



USA Civil rights pioneer, Claudette Colvin, whose courageous refusal to surrender her seat on a segregated bus in 1955 helped ignite the modern civil rights movement, has died at 86.

Colvin's act of defiance occurred months before Rosa Parks gained

international recognition for a similar stand. On March 2, 1955, a bus driver in Montgomery, Alabama, called the police after two Black girls were observed sitting near two white girls, violating segregation laws. The then 15-year-old Colvin refused to move to the rear, leading to her arrest; the other girl moved seats. At 15 years old, Claudette Colvin was arrested when she refused to give up her seat.

Colvin later became a named plaintiff in the landmark lawsuit that ultimately outlawed racial segregation on Montgomery's public transport system. It was subsequently declared that all segregation on public transport was unconstitutional.

Colvin's actions were not publicized by Black leaders for many years: "Young people think Rosa Parks just sat down on a bus and ended segregation, but that wasn't the case at all," Colvin told the *New York Times* in 2017.

Colvin and Parks knew each other through the NAACP Youth Council, where Parks acted as a mentor to Colvin, who was 26 years her junior. The older woman was seen as a more suitable candidate for a legal test case against segregation, and local leaders threw their weight behind her. She later said she struggled to obtain employment in her home town after taking part in the court case. In 2021, the record of Colvin's arrest was expunged.

 INDEPENDENT  
14 January 2026

## **RULES THAT ARE MEANT TO BE BROKEN**

### **DO YOU REALLY NEED TO IRON EVERYTHING?**

Your obsession with crease free sheets and tea towels might be costing you more than time. Constant ironing uses a lot of energy. Running a standard 3,000-watt iron, every day adds an extra £150 to your annual electricity bill. It can raise levels of indoor pollution too. Depending on the type of iron you use and how well-ventilated your room is, ironing can release small particles, namely plastic microfibres, into the air, which, when heated, can give off VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds). Steam irons may release more particles. Hang items to dry as soon as you remove them from the machine and most creases will fall out.

### **MAKING THE BEDS**

Making the bed as we get up is a habit drilled into us from childhood. Ironically, however, that neat bed of yours could be inviting unwelcome guests. When you sleep you build up moisture and sweat. A warm humid environment is the perfect breeding ground for microscopic dust mites. So, leave the bed unmade for an hour or two, so that it can air out naturally.

### **CONSTANTLY WIPING DOWN SURFACES**

Scrubbing at your surfaces every five minutes might be doing more harm than good. Research has found that cleaning products can release pollutants, such as VOCs, and nitrogen dioxide into the air, which can irritate the airways. They have been linked to asthma and other breathing problems. Constantly disinfecting surfaces can also encourage microbes to adapt and therefore become even harder to kill. For disinfectants to work effectively, many need to be sprayed and left for a few minutes to enable bacteria to be killed, before wiping then away.

### **WASHING CLOTHES SAFTER EVERY WEAR**

Unless they are sweaty or stained, washing clothes after every wear is not just unnecessary, it can also wear down the fabrics, drive up energy bills, and harm the planet. Up to 35% of global microplastic emissions come from washing synthetic fibres such as polyester and nylon. The particles wash into rivers and oceans, and eventually onto our plates. Clothes that sit next to the skin (underwear, gym gear, and socks) should be washed after every wear. The average washing machine costs £65 per annum to run four washes per week at 40 degrees centigrade. Dropping to 30 degrees

would save 38% of the energy and take £25 off the total cost, whilst washing at 20 degrees cuts the cost by £49.

### **VACUUMING EXCESSIVELY**

A regular vacuum removes the build-up of dust, dirt and pet hair that inevitably starts to build up on carpets and floors. But going overboard worsens the air quality in your home, at least in the short term. Over-vacuuming can also wear fibres in delicate rugs or older flooring. A consistent weekly routine is enough for most homes. Bedrooms and less used spaces can be vacuumed less frequently.

### **DRYING DISHES AFTER WASHING THEM**

The pile of freshly washed dishes, cups and cutlery piling around the edge of the sink might set you off into a flap, but it's best to push the urge aside and let your washing up dry on its own, rather than towel drying (I told my mother this years ago!!). Tea towels can be breeding grounds for germs, particularly when they are damp or used regularly for drying hands. They should be washed frequently. Research found that E. coli was more likely to be found on damp towels, as well as towels used for multiple jobs, such as wiping utensils and cleaning surfaces. Air drying on a dish rack with good airflow is the best way to dry your washing up.

### **USING TOO MUCH BLEACH**

An effective germ-killer, perhaps, but bleach should not be your go-to casual cleaner. Sodium hypochlorite, the main component of bleach, may irritate the skin or cause burning pain, inflammation, and blisters. Reserve bleach for tough jobs and select gentler alternatives where possible. Hydrogen peroxide is a safer disinfectant in some cases. White vinegar is great for limescale, glass and refreshing washing machines, while bicarbonate of soda is good for odours and scrubbing.

Alternative cleaning products can be purchased from the Environment Centre (Pier Street, near Morgan's Hotel), Balance (Eversley Rd) and all large supermarkets.

**Janet N (on behalf of Green Friends)**

*[I'm not sure how we'll all cope with being told to do less housework!! Ed]*

## DOING' URBAN MISSION UCS STYLE

What is Urban Mission? Urban mission is the strategic, often holistic action to share Christian faith and address social, economic, and spiritual needs within urban areas. Some key aspects of urban mission include:

- Holistic Ministry: Addressing both spiritual needs and physical needs.
- Partnerships: Encouraging collaboration between churches and organizations to work as a unified body, rather than in isolation.

*(summarised AI Overview)*

I thought I would share with you some examples of what I consider to be Urban Mission action being undertaken by members of the UCS Family:

- The running of Sunbeams Parent, Carer & Toddler Group
- Putting on the Messy Church sessions
- Donating to the Clothing Bank or volunteering at it
- The production of Christmas Bags for members of the UiD Community
- Being present at the church's stall at the Green Fair.

This last activity produced some interesting responses from the Green Fair that illustrate urban mission in action:

*'Having never been before, I was most impressed with the Fayre, the imagination people shared, turning rubbish into things of beauty. For example, a gentleman goes through bins for coffee cups which he recycles into paper- dedication !! ... The most heartwarming conversation was with a Christian lady whose husband passed away 6 months ago, she and her granddaughter both had angels, I put a prayer request for her under our tree in the church.'*

*'I think the angels provided a gentle way of engaging people in conversations and introducing them to our church and our interest in green issues. Several people who accepted the angels spoke of bereavement and one of a friend who was having a difficult time. ... One asked if anyone could come to our church. I was happy to tell them that all are welcome!'*

*'I met a gay woman who said she had been to our Church for a funeral and was impressed with the warmth and welcome she experienced. She has been to several other churches but didn't find them so welcoming.'*

*'I gave some angels and tags to a lady from the valley who is into community work, and she said she'd try to come to our December coffee morning to donate some wool.'*



## CHRISTMAS BAGS (from Linda)



Christmas 2025 may already seem a distant memory by the time you read this item. But it's worth remembering what the bags meant to so many people.

The delivery of the Christmas Bags went very well, and they were appreciated when they were given out by Father Christmas at the *Unity in Diversity (UiD) Christmas Party*.

Here are a couple of comments received back:

..." Thank you so much for your kindness and support and thank you for the gift. 🌲 🌲 "

"My family and I thank you so much for the gift" 🥰 🥰

Once again thank you UCS for your very generous support with the project, it was a wonderful team effort.

*The first photo shows the handing over of the Christmas bags to members of the UiD team. The second shows some of the children's bags.*

*[And thanks to Linda and her team for all they did! We hope you're enjoying Australia, Linda. ed.]*



## OUR METHODIST PARTNER IN VENEZUELA



Our Partner church in Venezuela, the *Comunidad Cristiana Metodista de Venezuela, CCMV* (the Methodist Christian Community of Venezuela) is located in the northwestern town of Maracaibo and has confirmed that the strikes have not directly affected its congregations. However, they are deeply perturbed by this US military intervention. The Revd Leonardo Elias Paredes Rivas, the Vice President of the CCMV, tells us “We did not sleep at all last night, but thanks be to God that we are all well...we are praying to God that

his good, acceptable and perfect will to be done in our nation and in our church too”.

When asked how the Methodist Church in Britain can be praying for Venezuela at this time, the Revd Glen Mendoza, the treasurer of the CCMV responded by asking “pray for life and peace - that God would touch the hearts of those who are bearing arms.”

*“Pray for life and peace - that God would touch the hearts of those who are bearing arms.”* (The Revd Glen Mendoza, the treasurer of the CCMV)

### **The President and Vice President of the Methodist Church in Britain**

**STATEMENT FROM THE WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES:** We call on governments and international actors to renounce coercive strategies and pursue dialogue and multilateral solutions grounded in international law. Churches worldwide are urged to continue countering disinformation, amplifying the voices of those most affected, accompanying communities pastorally, and bearing prophetic witness to God’s justice.

In solidarity with Reformed churches in Venezuela and all who suffer fear, displacement, and uncertainty, the WCRC commits itself to prayer, advocacy, and concrete action for peace with justice. It further calls for long-lasting ecumenical solidarity with the churches and people of

Venezuela. It asserts that true security cannot be built through domination, nor peace secured through control of nations or resources, but only through justice, truth, and steadfast love — the love that binds all people together in Christ.

*The World Communion of Reformed Churches includes more than 230 member churches in 109 countries, including the United Reformed Church.*



## Prayer for the People of Venezuela

God of mercy and peace, we come before you today with hearts heavy for our brothers and sisters in Venezuela. Our hearts are with them in their hour of fear. Lord, hear our prayer and bring your peace.

We pray for the families in Caracas and across Venezuela who were awakened by the sound of explosions. Protect the children, the elderly, and the vulnerable from the physical and emotional scars of violence. Prince of Peace, guide us toward a nonviolent path.

We pray for our leaders and the leaders of all nations. Soften hearts that seek power through force and enlighten minds to see the path of dialogue. May they remember that every life is sacred and every act of war is a failure of peace. Holy Spirit, grant them the wisdom to be peacemakers.

Loving God, grant us all the strength to be your hands and feet in a time of darkness. Amen.

*The Mary Knoll Communities are Roman Catholic Religious Orders in the USA*

## A REFLECTION

---

***“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.” [Matthew 13: 44 – 46]***

I can imagine the excitement and joy of detecting – discovering a Roman or mediaeval coin. And you begin to imagine what else might be there. Or will it be just some mediaeval Coke tin! It’s a bit like childhood fishing. You sit there for hours, and the fish are (wisely) deliberately ignoring you. Then one takes the bait. Yes!! What do you do then? Put it back in the river – and go home? Of course not, you stay there. You’re bound to catch more...

This is what kingdom discoveries are like. It’s when you’re not expecting it that the wonder and joy and treasure of the kingdom break into your life, releasing unexpected possibilities. What do we do when this happens? Do we say: “At last! I’ve found faith. I’m content now.” Or do we say, ‘God has more truth and light to break forth from God’s word’. And we continue searching and exploring, trying to detect the treasure and pearl of God’s kingdom at work, in Jesus, through the creator Spirit, bringing flashes of discovery and wonder into our life of faith, inspiring, encouraging and motivating us and others to keep going when the going gets tough.

Our life among the people of faith, and listening to murmurings of the Spirit in the wider community, are ultimately all about providing these opportunities, these moments – for ourselves and for those who unexpectedly join us – for new discoveries, for wonder, and to be ‘surprised by joy’.

Listen to J.S. Bach’s cantata, *Jesu, meine Freude*, (‘Jesus, priceless treasure’) to capture some of this wonder. It’s what R.S.Thomas’ wonderful poem celebrates: ‘I have seen the sun break through/ to illuminate a small field/ for a while, and gone my way/ and forgotten it. /But that was the pearl/ of great price, the one field that had/ treasure in it. I realize now/ that I must give all that I have/ to possess it...’

## **A PRAYER**

Spirit of God,  
in moments of searching and exploring,  
keep my senses alert  
to find, in all around me,  
newness of joy and wonder  
in the love of Jesus, my priceless treasure.  
Wisdom of God,  
may pearls of insight, truth and grace in Jesus  
capture my heart and my imagination anew,  
so that my faith may be enlarged,  
my perspective on your work in the cosmos sharpened  
and my commitment to follow Jesus deepened. Amen.

*The Revd Andy Braunston, who co-ordinates the URC Daily Devotions, which a number of us in UCS use, recently invited new contributors. I offered this reflection which appeared on January 15<sup>th</sup>.*

**Noel**

## **A PRAYER FOR LENT**

Lord of wilderness searching and resurrection newness,  
we come to you as Lenten people seeking your Easter renewal.

You search us and you know us,  
help us to know ourselves as we are  
and to recognise who we could become  
through your grace at work in us.

May the Spirit that led you to the wilderness  
help us to journey through Lent and to know our failures in faith,  
our failures in love  
and our failures in hope.

Open our eyes to see the injustice, oppression, cruelty and self-  
seeking power at work in the world,  
and equip us, through your power at work in us,  
to bear witness in our lives and through our words,  
to God's kingdom of love and justice come and to come in you.

Amen.