

MAGAZINE OF UNITING CHURCH

SKETTY

APRIL 2026

≈ HOLY WEEK AND EASTER ≈



**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)

MAY 2026 MAGAZINE: All items for inclusion in the next edition of the Magazine to be sent to Noel D by 14th April at the latest, but sooner if possible. Issue date: Sunday, April 26th.



Wesley Chapel
1876

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150
years



Uniting Church Sketty
2026

Uniting Church Sketty, Dillwyn Road, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 9AH.

Website: 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

Dear Friends

By the time you read this, Lent will almost be over, and as March turns into April, we will have arrived in Holy Week.

How has your Lenten journey been? I hope it has been a blessed time (in all the various ways that blessings can have meaning for you).

No doubt your thoughts will have been on current events, particularly the conflict involving Iran. The scale of suffering is heart-breaking, and it is certainly not what our fragile planet needs. It is difficult to witness such a destabilising of international relations. The world seems like a more dangerous place every day – the idea of which is a very heavy burden for our hearts and minds.

A week or two ago I attended part of the study day for the forthcoming Bible Month and heard Rev Dr Raj Patta, a Methodist Minister in Stockport, originally from India, say that ‘You can’t hate anyone in the name of Christ’; with Jesus, Rev Dr Raj called for humility and openness to others.

The World Council of Churches recently stated (and it is worth quoting in full) that *“war is incompatible with God’s very nature and will for humanity, and against our fundamental Christian principles. Peace is a moral and spiritual imperative rooted in our faith in a God of justice and compassion, and a gift not achieved through force or strength of arms. Human dignity is sacred, reflecting the image of God. Any assault on civilian life or systematic violation of human rights, whether through external attack or internal oppression, is a direct affront to God-given human dignity and the sanctity of life. In this conflict and in our wider global context, we lament the absence of morality and legality, the prevailing arrogance and ideologies of power, and the replacement of conscience with political utility. As Christians, we do not recognise any divine licence to kill, destroy, displace or occupy. We proclaim the God-*

given human dignity and rights of all people, equally and without discrimination. We reject the brutal logic of war and domination. We seek the gift of peace.”

Amen, I say. Amen and Amen.

When we read the gospel accounts of the last week of Jesus’ life, we see the one who freed people from stigma and all that denied life, and the one who welcomed those who were cast out and rejected, the one who offered forgiveness, belonging, compassion and love, being subjected to the most brutal, cruel and degrading treatment. He was afforded no justice or dignity; his life was taken away in a mistaken and ignorant attempt to preserve worldly power. As we witness the way those events unfold (both in the gospels, and in our Holy Week services), it’s hard not to make connections with the gathering of current storm clouds, where it also seems that the only likely outcome is the triumphing of evil and the snuffing out of good.

Yet in Holy Week, even with Jesus’ death on the cross, that wasn’t the outcome. Evil did not triumph. Good was not snuffed out. Though it seemed impossible, God opened the way through suffering to new life. When evil appeared all pervasive and love seemed dead, Love came back.

We live in the reality of Jesus’ resurrection in a world that seems increasingly bent on crucifixion. With the women who waited with Jesus and wept for him through those terrible hours, and found Jesus raised; with all who thirst for justice and yet retain hope, we long for a better day to come. We must do all in our power to work with God to create it – a day when we once again relate to each other as fully human beings and break down the barriers we so needlessly build, finally recognising that every life matters. A day of resurrection – for the entire planet. As we open ourselves to God

and to one another, especially those most despised and feared, little by little, we will see it.

With Easter blessings, prayers and love

Louise

WHAT CAN WE DO?

As I write this, Al Jazeera news is on the TV (with the sound turned off). There are more planes than usual from RAF Valley (on Anglesey) flying over of our house, and the pictures from the Middle East are multiplying and getting worse.



The British Prime Minister is verbally stoned by President Trump for not being enthusiastic enough to support the attack on Iran, and I have just heard [the President] having another try at justifying the attack, "We were in talks with the lunatics in Iran. But I knew they were planning to attack us, and so I decided to attack them first". And that without telling Congress, or even discussing with his own party. The President of America has obviously reinvented democracy, and redefined international law - and many thousands of innocent people and children are going to pay the price for that.

The language of war and heroic militarism has completely replaced the language of diplomacy and understanding, and the language of reconciliation and love and sympathy is not in the race at all. And the question we ask ourselves - if we believe there is an alternative and more accurate and fairer way to solve humanity's problems - is "What can we do?".

There is no one obvious answer, as the usual channels that are supposed to facilitate a reasonable and sane discussion have been closed, and the politicians have been blinded and cornered by the one-eyed madness of President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu. The power of arms and money now rules, and the greatness of a statesman is measured in the number of targets bombed, and the number of missiles shot. "We have enough weapons", said President Trump, "to fight the Eternal War". ('The forever war' is the absolutely terrifying expression that this alleged Christian used.) The least we can do (as Christianity 21) is to state absolutely clearly that his Christ is not our Christ.

Apart from the unimaginable loss of lives, the saddest aspect of all this is that there is little mention of the cost of it all. We know that 'living costs' are still rising, and that more and more families are living in poverty. Money is scarce for education and health, the elderly and the arts. Services for the young are being cut, and local authorities have been cutting their budgets for twenty years and more.

But what about the costs of weapons and war? No problem! ...Millions of our scarce resources are spent daily to maintain the useless Trident system, and each of the planes shot down by friendly fire (oh what irony!) in Kuwait recently is also worth many millions. There is an inevitable momentum associated with the arms trade that cannot be stopped - and it has one result, WAR. That is the only way to meet this monster.

Heddwch



Peace

If Christianity has any meaning at all, it is to plead the cause of peace against the urge to war. It is our great privilege to continue to raise our voice for the right of the peoples of the world to live in freedom and peace and joy.

Dafydd Iwan

(from the Welsh language weekly reflection on the Cristnogaeth 21 website, 8 March 2026, and included with the author's permission.)

Dafydd Iwan is a renowned Welsh popular singer, local councillor and political activist, and a local preacher. He lives on Anglesey.)

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT UCS



[Image from [Passion Week Images](#)]

PALM SUNDAY – SUNDAY 29TH MARCH, 10.30am – Journey to Jerusalem with Jesus, the road that takes him to the Cross

MAUNDY THURSDAY – THURSDAY 2ND APRIL, 7.30pm – a unique reflection for Easter, including communion, with Cardiff Methodist Community Choir, who will lead us through the story with a very special performance. This is our Maundy Thursday service, for us at UCS, so please do get there if you can, and also, bring a friend and invite others, as it's suitable for non-believers too! The choir has worked hard to prepare this, and it's not to be missed! (Please note that is unlikely to be available on YouTube afterwards.)

GOOD FRIDAY – FRIDAY 3RD APRIL, 2.30pm – a quiet and thought-provoking act of worship for Good Friday

EASTER SUNDAY – SUNDAY 5TH APRIL, 10.30am – celebrating the resurrection, with Holy Communion.

WORSHIP SERVICES IN APRIL

- APRIL 2** MAUNDY THURSDAY (7.30), Cardiff Methodist Community Choir (CMCC) (with Communion)
- APRIL 3** GOOD FRIDAY (2.30), Revd Louise Gough
- APRIL 5** EASTER SUNDAY, Revd Louise Gough (Communion)
- APRIL 12** Dr Alan Cram
- APRIL 16** Thursday Communion: Revd Louise Gough
- APRIL 19** Revd Louise Gough
- APRIL 26** Revd Linda Woollacott



मुझे कोई कमी नहीं होगी

I'LL NOT WANT

an Easter reflection

Thursday 2nd April

MAUNDY THURSDAY

7:30pm start
DOORS OPEN AT 7PM

Uniting Church Sketty

Dillwyn Road, Sketty,
Swansea, SA2 9AH

FREE ENTRY

THERE WILL BE A RETIRING COLLECTION

Easter Offering 2026

Unbound: a gospel that breaks barriers

Our communion collection for April will be our Easter offering for the work of the Methodist World Church. The World Mission Fund supports over 100 partner churches and organisations around the world. This supports evangelism, schools, hospitals, environmental projects, training and help in emergency situations - for example, to Jamaica after Hurricane Melissa in October 2025.

Susan G

CLIMATE AND NATURE BILL 2025: FROM GREEN FRIENDS

The Climate and Nature (CAN) Bill 2025 may have passed you by. I admit I did not know much about it but offered to find out more for this article. If nothing else, it shows just how long it can take to pass any legislation and the hurdles any new law must navigate. There are five stages for any new law to pass through the House of Commons, a further five for the House of Lords and finally further amendments and Royal Assent.

The CAN Bill was first introduced by **Roz Savage MP** back in 2024 as a Private Members Bill. Roz Savage is a Liberal Democrat MP, known in her previous life for rowing solo across the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans. Currently the Bill is only just starting out at 2nd reading stage in the House of Commons even though it was proposed quite some time ago. It has a long way to go.



What is the CAN Bill?

At its heart, some are calling this a potentially unique and far-reaching proposal. It aims to address many facets of environmental policy arguing that piecemeal legislation on its own cannot achieve real effectiveness in tackling climate change.

The basic aims of the Bill would be to:

- Require the UK Government to have defined Climate and Nature targets which are legally binding, seeing both aspects as part of the same responsibility.
- Require a CAN Strategy and a CAN Assembly to oversee how these are going to be implemented. The Assembly would include members of the public and rural communities so that they can have a say in what happens.
- Include specific targets such as net-zero emissions but taking into account not only those within UK borders but to include international shipping, aviation, imports and exports.
- An emphasis on biodiversity and natural habitat aiming to not only halt the loss of habitats but actually start reverse it by 2030.

So, what has happened since 2024?

The Bill was due to have a second reading in January 2025. At this point, it was adjourned to the disappointment of many. The official response from the Labour Government was that they hope to promote similar

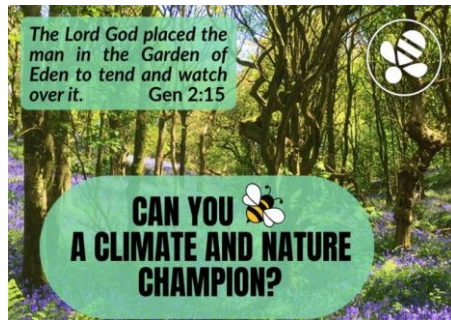
objectives through other pieces of legislation with the support of Roz Savage herself. The Government has not supported the Bill as it stands and MPs do not have a free vote. So despite support from many MPs, it is difficult for them to vote for it. It is due to have the delayed second reading on 29th May 2026. It is perhaps an opportunity to remind our MPs of how important some of these issues are. Despite the fact that the Bill has been adjourned (and some believe it could be adjourned again), the Secretary of State for Energy and Net-Zero (Ed Miliband) gave a written statement in July 2025. In this he gave commitments on:



- The creation of a Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Bill. This was passed in January this year and aims to be the first comprehensive legal framework for protecting marine biodiversity in international waters, including those outside of UK jurisdiction
- A more combined approach between bodies that provide evidence for Nature Conservation and those that highlight concerns over Climate Change.
- An annual statement to Parliament about the State of the Climate and Nature in the UK.

However, some will say that these do not necessarily place legally binding targets and agreements, fail to address the concept of a CAN Assembly and a designated level of responsibility to ministers. It will be interesting to see what happens in May. Now I have researched the CAN Bill, I for one will be looking out for it.

Jackie C



THE GREAT BIG PLASTIC COUNT 2026



This year's soft plastic count has been a success. 2 years ago, we collected 3 green rubbish bags of soft plastic. Since then, collection points are available at more supermarkets.

This year we collected 3 small plastic carrier bags of soft plastic. Well done UCS. Keep up the good work and thanks for taking steps to lead a more ECO lifestyle.

Janet N (on behalf of Green Friends)

TOWNHILL COMMUNITY SCHOOL - WORLD BOOK DAY

Thank you so much to everyone who responded to my appeal for children's books. I know that some of these came from your own collection and others from friends with whom you shared my appeal. Some of you visited charity shops and some even bought for the purpose. Photos never do this sort of event justice, but I hope you can glimpse the effort staff made to set out one of our halls with different types of chairs arranged in attractive groupings. Plants, soft lighting and quiet music enhanced the atmosphere. Windowsills and bookcases were full. The welcome was evident and I am delighted to say that parents responded in their dozens. It was very special to see children enthralled as they read with their parents. You will see from the photos that day was a great success and much enjoyed by parents and children. Hopefully they will all take away the delight of reading together.



Staff asked that I pass on their thanks to everyone. And me? Well, I was proud. Proud that my school knows that my church will always pull out the stops to respond to my appeals and requests, from saving batteries to hospitality, from reading books to listeners for children

reading. Thank you everyone, this is so much part of our community outreach, as we foster and encourage the next generation. *(Images by Jan C., included with permission)* **Jan C**

PASTORAL CONCERNS

- 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. As we approach Easter, may they know 'the peace that passes all understanding', through Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord.

COFFEE MORNING: 4th April 10am-12noon.

Proceeds for Church Funds

COFFEE MORNING: 2nd May 10am-12noon

Proceeds for Christian Aid



COFFEE MORNING ON 7th MARCH 2026 FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PETTIFOR TRUST

On behalf of the Pettifor Trust team, I have been asked to pass on their thanks for the opportunity of hosting the March Coffee Morning which raised £469 for the benefit of the Trust.

Many thanks to those who supported and attended the event.

Special thanks to: Lynne and Les Want who set up the Wesley Room in readiness for the morning, and Jan Chaplin and Chris Hartley who helped set up on the Saturday morning.

Jon D



PLEASE REMEMBER that **NO MOW MAY** is coming up. Some of the first plants which flower are dandelions and these enable pollinators to do their work.

Thanks. Janet

DANCE ANYONE?



Of late, I have read quite a number of articles suggesting ways in which we can stave off the onset of dementia. Clearly this is a topic that is a concern to most of us. It's also germane to our Dementia Friendly Church project. The following comes from the Associated Press:

“Do a crossword puzzle a day and you may just get good at crosswords. Instead, research increasingly shows that a variety of habits and hobbies are like a cognitive workout, building knowledge and skills that may beef up parts of the brain as we get older.”

One recent study linked a lower risk of Alzheimer’s disease and cognitive decline to lifelong learning, meaning intellectually stimulating experiences — reading and writing, learning another language, playing chess, solving puzzles, going to museums — from childhood into retirement.”

I’ve seen elsewhere that activities like swimming and dancing are good. The inclusion of dancing is great news for me, since in the last couple of years I have started doing quite a lot of it. Friendship with Louise has drawn me into ballroom dancing for the first time, in my mid-70s. It is certainly demanding physically and mentally. Learning dance routines and mastering techniques involves memory and coordination. But I have also joined the

folkdance group at church. I recall that when I first retired, we went to the folkdance group at Bethel, but I was a little intimidated by the virtual absence of other men. The little group that meets each Monday in the church hall is good exercise without being over-demanding, nor technical (unlike my ballroom dancing lessons!).

I am really writing this in the hope that one or two more people might join the group, especially a couple of men!

Come and get fit as well as having fun!

John A

ited

PRAYERS



A sentence from the book “Is that you again, God?” written by the late Richard Adams, struck a real chord with me. I thought you, our magazine readers, might appreciate it. Richard, but I guess it could equally be one of us, is having a “conversation” with God, who ends up saying, “That's how it is with conversations, or prayers if you want to call them that. It's not that prayer automatically makes a difference to the world, but that when it makes a difference to you, the difference it makes to you makes a difference to the world”

Jan C

The Revd Mark Slaney, President Designate of the Methodist Conference, visited the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem and partners in Israel/Palestine from 5 to 17 February. Here is part of his report on the visit.

A visit was made to Tent of Nations whose story is well known amongst many Methodists in the UK, having received the Methodist Peace Award in 2018 and remaining a touchstone of the injustices woven into people's lives over many years. What was new is the development of a settler outpost including a new tarmac road for settler access running along the boundary of the farm; a new gate, in addition to a rubble and rubbish pile road block, to further deny access to the main road; and a new watchtower with cameras directed at the Tent of Nations. Whilst the Tent of Nations, along with many Palestinians, continue to be denied infrastructure and facilities, even the most basic of settler outposts are supplied, by the Government, with access roads, power, running water and 'permission' to build.

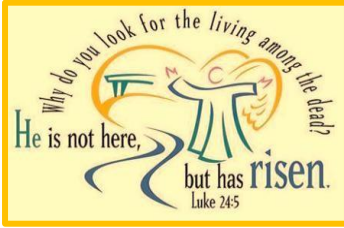


Tent of Nations continues to live by the following four principles:

- We refuse to be enemies.
- We refuse to hate.
- We will act differently because of our faith.
- We are people who believe in justice.

(from the Methodist Church in Great Britain website)

“HE IS NOT HERE!”



Not here? Not at the tomb, where love was lost, despair prevails and future hope seems bleak? Surely, it's here we need him most, our Risen Lord? We need to hear his promise, feel his reassuring presence, know his companionship in sharing bread and love.

Listen! This is true: The sun has risen! It is the dawn of a new day! And in our deepest darkness, Jesus, the light of our world, still shines – no darkness can put out this light; not even here!

And yet! He does not stay among the tombs, where love and hope were lost. And all seems dark. “Follow the light”, he says. “Do not look here for life and love and hope, not here ‘among the dead’.”

“He has gone on ahead of you – to Galilee.” No longer in this place of death and burial and despair. He has gone on: Galilee calls, the future calls, with rising, newness, promise and new life.

Not just for him, of course, but for us too, the future always calls. Look towards the Sun, follow its light, feel its warmth, let its light shine, restore, renew. For us, too, it is a new day!

And Galilee, with its challenges, calls - today's ‘Galilees’ too. Go there with Jesus, be his companions, share bread and love and friendship; be channels – in this broken world – of harmony and peace, welcome and generosity. Go there with him; be signs of healing and of wholeness. Be lights in this dark world. Speak the Good News of love, of light and hope. It is Easter, let **us** be Easter people!

Noel