

CHRIST CHURCH

United Reformed and Methodist

CHRIST CHURCH
LINK

February 2026

March 2026



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www.christ-church-lewes.org

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The publication date is normally the final Sunday of the preceding month, and items for inclusion should be sent to the Secretary by the Wednesday before that date.

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MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS



In October's newsletter, I reflected on the flags that were gracing the lampposts of our towns and highways, and how they had become a divisive symbol for folk. Whilst we should be rightly proud of our nation and heritage, the flags had become a symbol of something more uncomfortable, because they were being to exclude rather than unite.

We find ourselves several months on, still dealing with the same pressures trying to divide our communities. At Think Tank in January, Canon Dr Peter Sills spoke about a Christian response to Christian Nationalism. Peter defined Christian Nationalism as “an ideology that seeks to fuse national identity with a specific form of Christianity. It typically argues that a nation's laws, culture and institutions should reflect Christian values”. On the face of it, this sounds quite attractive. Who wouldn't want our nation to be shaped by Christian values. It is what every Christian would like. But is it? The question becomes more complex when we ask the question, who decides what are Christian values?

Given that “Christian values” are currently being espoused by a lot of those on the political right, largely Far-right, it is safe to assume that their idea of Christian values might differ from those held by our fellow Christians in more mainstream British denominations. Which begs the question, who is shaping these Christian values?

It seems to me then, that we are facing influences from elsewhere in the world, who bring a very different view of Christianity. It is a difficult time for us, because on one hand there is something pleasing about hearing that more people are interested in what Christianity has to say. On the other hand, it is far too easy for us to find that Christian values are being dictated by those with an agenda and are using our faith as a vehicle to deliver their views.

When we study our scriptures, we chose to reflect on them through different lenses, this is how we “do” theology. We read scripture by comparing it with other scripture, and seeing how different passages can inform each other. We look to tradition and what the theologians of our traditions can tell us, to help us understand what we read. We use

logical reasoning, and we also use our own experience to interpret the words we read, and work out what they mean in our own lives. This scripture, tradition, reason and experience when used together help us to understand what it means to be a Christian. However, when we introduce political ideology into this mix, it is easy to see how tradition, reason and experience can be squeezed out.

Why should this matter? It has not been controversial in more recent centuries to believe that God loves all people, and God wants the best for us. In believing this, Christians have tried to seek to serve one another, caring for each other. It has been the basis of the charity work we have been engaged in; both home and abroad. Charities such as Oxfam and Christian Aid have been formed from these beliefs. However, with the rise of Christian nationalism, we are seeing an attempt to return to a much older tradition, which does not hold this view. It sees God as having preference for one particular group, and with a desire to suppress or reject all others. Given that it is often those on the political right who hold this view, we can see how this can lead easily to community division.

We can see this playing out on the streets of Crowborough at the moment. As a camp for asylum seekers is being opened to house those who are having their cases assessed; on the streets we see large marches in opposition to their presence. Whilst some in the protests may have very legitimate concerns about capacity to house or support these asylum seekers, others have very different views. They come dressed as Crusaders, and use slogans borrowed from Christian ideas. It seems anomalous then that Christian slogans are used to reject the most vulnerable in our society. It seems so very counter-intuitive to the Christian love and action that has characterised the last 150 years.

There are no easy solutions to all of this. But Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second commandment is this, "you shall love your neighbour as yourself". There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31). If we abide by these, we won't go far wrong.

Barbara

FROM THE SECRETARIES

The New Year is seeing some changes at Christ Church.

Hannah Clark has started as our new part-time Lay Worker and will work alongside Claire Bell for a period until Claire steps down in April. This will enable Hannah to be gradually introduced to all the different elements of the job before she takes over full responsibility in the spring.

Hannah has done very well in her first week or two. With Claire away on urgent family business , Hannah took the "Second Sunday " service on January 11, leading an excellent service of worship on the theme " Hope Refreshed " and then led the Prayer Meeting and Bible Study class on January 14. Welcome to Christ Church !

We also hope to start the process of **recruitment for a part-time Administrative Support Worker** in February . This post will take over a range of administrative tasks previously part of the Lay Worker role and free up the latter post to focus on mission , pastoral and community matters

Neil Fisher has informed Church Council that he will stand down as Church Secretary at the Annual Church Meeting in May after 11 years in the role .

The church owes a great debt to Neil , who has worked tirelessly over this long stint , which has included two lengthy periods without a minister and all the upheavals of the covid pandemic. Over the last 11 years , the role of the Church Secretary has become more complex and demanding. Thank you , Neil, for all you have done – LF

A new secretary will be elected in May. If you are interested, please talk to either Neil or Lindsay, to find out a bit more about the post. We would certainly not expect a future church secretary to remain "in harness" for anything like 11 years . It would be much healthier all round if the church leadership posts rotated much more frequently.

At its meeting on January 14 , Church Council discussed our **Vision and Work Programme** for the coming year . Discussion focused on initiatives to "grow the church ". One idea was that we should revive house groups (largely consolidated over the last two years into the

Wednesday Bible Study class) . Another idea was developing our Wednesday morning “Ukraine Café “ into a wider “Community Cuppa” initiative , open to all sections of the community and offering a “warm space” during the winter months . We discussed those groups in the community we might seek to reach and different ways of showing them a welcome and meeting their needs . (Our Ukrainian friends will – of course – still be welcome at the church) This will be a focus for our work over the coming months.

Our Advent and Christmas events went well. Thank you to all the church members whose hard work helped to make them a success, particularly Claire , who did much of the organisation behind the scenes..



- For “**Carols on the Green** “on Sunday December 14, the doom-laden weather forecasts of heavy rain and high winds earlier in the week didn’t materialise. We were blessed with better weather than we have had for a number of years on a dry and mild afternoon at Nevill Green. Brass Sparks - the youth section of the

Lewes, Glynde and Beddingham Brass Band - provided the musical accompaniment and Rev Ben Brown of St Anne’s gave the address. We attracted about 75 people from the neighbourhood.

- The **Community Christmas Party** event on Wednesday December 17 attracted 72 guests (mostly young families) , plus about 12 helpers , mostly from Christ Church. The event provided a festive buffet meal and drinks , craft activities , a nativity trail in the church , Father Christmas and a film show. It was very much enjoyed by all on a dank mid-winter afternoon when it was dark by 4.00pm and our Christmas trees (see below) looked their “all lit up “best . Thanks to Claire and the Fitzjohns Food Partnership for organising the party

- **Our Carol Service** on Sunday December 21 benefitted from the presence of a large Ukrainian choir of all ages , who sang both traditional Christmas songs from their homeland and more familiar Christmas carols . There were around 55 people in church for the service . The singing was all the more poignant as the war started by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 continues to drag on, with death and destruction from attacks all through the festive season, and – as yet – no peace agreement in sight. Several Ukrainian visitors expressed their thanks to Christ Church for providing a place where war refugees coming to Lewes could meet, since their first arrival in the spring of 2022.



Christmas party crafts

- Throughout the festive season, we had a **Christmas Tree Festival** in the church, with imaginative displays by both church groups and hall users. On a vote, the favourite tree was **Ping for Parkinson’s**, who hire our hall to provide table tennis for people suffering from Parkinson’s Disease and other cognitive health problems. Their display was wittily called “Ping Pong Merrily on High “. Thank you to Alison Byrne for leading this initiative , which – hopefully – can be continued and expanded in future years

The **manse in Seaford** , previously occupied by Rev. Andrew Mills up to spring 2022, has since been rented out commercially . The URC Southern Synod has indicated that , as it is no longer required for a

minister , they would like to sell it off . Both Cross Way and Christ Church have agreed to this proposal, on the basis that URC have promised they will purchase another manse in the local area , if one is needed for a minister in the future

Church Council discussed aspects of **Hall Hire policy** at its December meeting . We will check whether hall activities involve under 18s and – if so – require a copy of their safeguarding policy. We will provide a copy of the church’s own safeguarding policy to all hall hirers for their information . We will not hire out of tables and chairs for events like weddings and parties , but will consider making them available to community groups in return for a donation to church funds

We are grateful to Lewes Town Council for the award of a **£500 grant from Lewes Exhibition Fund / Blunt’s Charity for the Poor of Lewes**. We propose to use this grant for more community events in July, October and December 2026, building on the success of recent such events at the church .

Church Council’s suggested **church charities for 2026** are **Crisis** (home charity tackling homelessness in UK for a second year) and a **suitable Kenyan charity** suggested by Karen Terry as our overseas charity . These will be discussed further , and a final decision made , at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday February 2

Church Council has agreed that the bread used in communion services will be **gluten free for everyone** . This is another small step for us in becoming a more inclusive church.

Our Eco Group has started discussing a **Site Management Plan** for the church buildings and their surroundings. One aim of this work will be to promote nature conservation on the site. We have identified the chalk grassland banks along Fitzjohns Road and Prince Edwards Road ,and the beech hedge along their top, as our two main natural assets and will be looking at ways of improving their management , along with other initiatives to make the site more “nature friendly”. An initial report should go to Church Council in March or April and will also be available for comment to the wider congregation .

Neil Fisher Church Secretary

Lindsay Frost Administrative Secretary

CHRIST CHURCH WALKS

Our traditional New Years Day walk to Mount Caburn attracted seven walkers on January 1. It was a sunny ,but very cold , day with a strong wind on top of the Downs. Well done to all for completing a hard 4 mile/ 6 km walk with some steep climbs. The views were fantastic . Here are the walkers on the return journey , passing Lewes Golf Club .



New Year walk

After a very cold start to the New Year , our regular monthly walk on January 18 was done in milder cloudy conditions. We did the “ *Lewes Architects Walk* ” .This is a self-guided walk promoted by the Friends of Lewes, the town’s local conservation and amenity charity. It is very local to us, focusing on the Wallands and Pells areas of Lewes and the work of Samuel Denman and Rowland Halls, two local architects in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, together with some more modern houses by local architects. This 2 mile /3km walk was a good choice for mid-winter , when conditions out in the countryside can be muddy and very exposed.

This is the proposed programme over the next two months:

- **February walk** – Feb 15. A walk on the downs above the Nevill Estate and the Old Lewes Racecourse . Glenda Pett will lead this walk .
- **March walk** : Telscombe Tye – Mar 22. A walk from Telscombe village down and across the Tye , a large area of common land with great views out to sea . (postponed due to poor weather in October). The March date has been put back a week to avoid a clash with Mothering Sunday, which is on March 15

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Our current Bible Study focus , through to the start of Lent, is the A Rocha NZ/Aotearoa “Rich Living” booklet on “Waste”. This started on January 14. This is the last in this series. We will be looking at the amount of waste that modern societies generate and its impact on the environment , both locally and globally.

As part of that effort , we are arranging a visit to the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility (or Incinerator as most people know it) to see how waste which cannot be reused or recycled is used as a fuel source for generating electricity into the national grid.



Newhaven ERF

The visit will be as part of the facility’s 2026 Open Day . We are waiting for the operators – Veolia- to notify us of the date and detailed arrangements for the visit .

Lindsay Frost

URC SOUTHERN SYNOD FUN DAY OUT – SUMMER 2026

***** SAVE THE DATE *****

SATURDAY JUNE 20 2026

THE HOP FARM, BELTRING , TONBRIDGE, KENT TN12 6PY

The URC Southern Synod is delighted to invite all congregants to our upcoming Synod Day Out on **Saturday 20th June 2026, at The Hop Farm Maidstone Road, Tonbridge TN12 6PY between 10:00 to 16:00**. A joyful gathering designed to strengthen our bonds across the churches, celebrate our shared faith, and reflect on the work God is doing among us, as well as share food and fun together.

This special day will include:

- Worship and communion
- Celebration and showcase of ministry initiatives from across congregations
- Family-Friendly Fun: Games, food, and activities for all ages
- Quiet space to pray/reflect.

If you can help on the day, please contact Ruth Armstrong on ruthlucy@live.com

URC SOUTHERN SYNOD TRAINING PROGRAMME 2026

A letter from Revd Charisa Hunter-Crump, Training and Development Officer, URC Southern Synod:-

After nine months in post as your Training and Development Officer, I am very excited to announce our new curriculum for 2026 created in consultation and collaboration with your other Field Workers

The detailed information about these training events is now available on the Training and Development section of the Synod Website, including the sign up process for each course (link below)

<https://southernsynodurc.org.uk/training-and-development/>

Flyers for your church buildings will be going out soon. I look forward to working alongside you in this venture in the coming year.

- **Locally Recognised Worship Leader Training (4 in person and 8 online)**
A year-long course to train to become an LRWL to lead worship for your local congregation; assessment of your participation and work, and a concluding assessed service, are required at which time a certificate will be presented to all passing students
- **Sacraments Training (1 online and 1 in person offered twice a year)**
Training in the meaning and conduct of the sacraments of baptism and communion for anyone interested, with option for authorization to preside at communion, and refresher session for those already authorized
- **Stepwise and Southern Synod Stepwise Peer Support Group (online)**
Stepwise is a URC course taken through the introductory *Faith-filled Life* Peer Support Group will be offered from January to March; this course and attendance at the Peer Support Group must be completed to participate in the *Faith-filled Worship* Support Group from April to early August and the *Faith-filled Community* Group from September to early December. In 2027 Peer Support Groups for the other two Stepwise Courses, and a repeat of the introductory *Faith-filled Life* course, will be offered.

- **Eldership Training: A Training Series (5 online and 1 in-person offered twice a year)**

Trainings in what it means to be an Elder; as it is hard to cover everything an Elder needs to know in a single session, training topics will be split into five different online training sessions, each offered twice a year, plus one Area Elders Training in person for each Synod Area. Below are the five online sessions.

- *Introduction* to the scriptural basis and the URC interpretation of Elders
- *Worship and Pulpit Supply*
- *Governance*
- *Mission*
- *Spirituality and Pastoral Care*

- **Lent Carbon Literacy Study: A Five Week Lenten Study (in person)**

Thursday evenings, February 26 - March 26.
Watch for details coming soon.

- **Preaching and Worship Professional Development (1 online and 1 in-person)** Two classes annually, one online and one in person, originally intended for continuing education for AALP and LRWL, but now also open to LCLs, MWSs, CRCWs and Elders; topics for 2026 will be *Creating Inclusive Worship* and *Leading Holy Worship for Body, Mind, Spirit and Heart*

- **Safer Sacred Spaces Mandatory Training (online twice a year)** For all who are mandated to attend SSS Training including MOWs, **CRCWs, LRWLs, AALPs, Elders, LCLs, VCs and IMs**; the training will be offered three times annually

- **Resources for Churches: A Training Series (online)**

These are ten stand-alone training sessions to help resource specific people with specific tasks and responsibilities; all are welcome; come to just one or attend them all; topics are: *Pulpit Supply Training, Compliance Training, Ecojustice Training, Mission Fund Training, Finances Training, Governance Training, Communications Training, Vision and Mission Training, and Employees Training*; each training will be offered twice a year

- **Jesus-Inspired Church: A Training Series (online)**

A series of twelve classes over the next three years helping congregations look deeper at what it means to be like Jesus in its life together and in the world in the 21st Century; the 4 classes being offered in 2026 are *Inclusive Church, Antiracist Church, Green Church, and Intergenerational Church*, with the rest in 2027 and 2028, *Welcoming Church, Relational Church, Missional Church, Spiritual Church, Scriptural Church, Theological Church, Generous Church, Pastoral Church*

THINKTANK

Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 7.30 pm

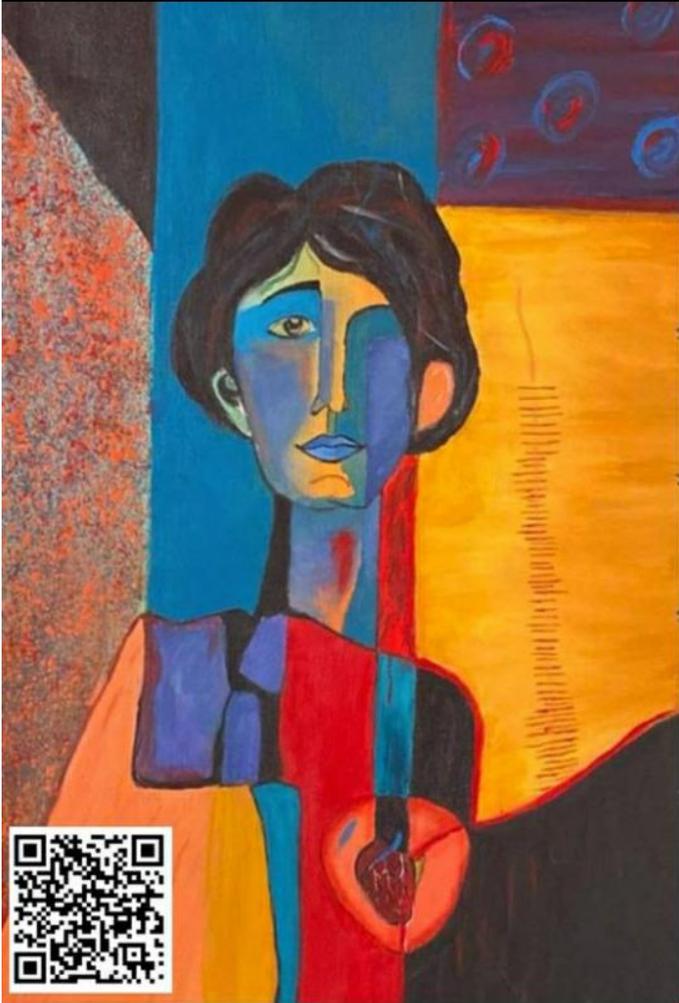
Jim Attwood

will be speaking on

“The work of Citizens Advice”

Jim has been a teacher in Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Brunei Darussalam. On returning to the UK he moved into IT and worked on administrative systems at the University of Sussex. He has been a volunteer with Lewes District Citizens Advice since 2016. He will be talking about what Citizens Advice does - helping many people each year to find a way forward by providing advice, education and support - and what kinds of cases get referred to it.

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Book launch

We Are Still Here

Edited by Dr Jacob Norris
& Dr Zahid Pranjol

Join us
for a powerful
afternoon of poetry
and insights from
university students
in Gaza

chaired by Dr. Zahira Jaser,
University of Sussex

Book signing – artwork by the students –
Palestinian market with gifts and cakes

Saturday,
7th February
1.30 – 3.30pm

at
Friends Meeting House
32 Friars Walk,
Lewes,
BN7 2LE

100% of proceeds support our students in Gaza, Palestine

Contemplative Prayer

Former Archbishop Rowan Williams was asked 'What is prayer?' He replied 'Prayer is connecting with God, it's putting yourself where God can get at you, it's giving time to God and it's trying to align yourself with God's own mind'

Prayer takes many forms. In a church service there are prayers of gathering and adoration. Then prayers of penitence (saying sorry) and prayers which assure us of God's forgiveness, prayers of thanksgiving and prayers of intercession where we ask things of God.

In *Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps for Everyday Life*, Abbot Christopher Jamison writes that 'meditation' and 'contemplation' are both used to mean the self-conscious use of certain techniques to raise heart and mind to God. However, he distinguishes contemplation as being the fruit of the self-conscious technique of meditation.

Abbot Jamison then writes about one of the great teachers of prayer, the sixteenth century Spanish nun Teresa of Avila who describes the soul as a garden, where the presence of God is water that the garden needs to flourish. The water comes to the garden in four different ways: drawn from a well, by a water wheel, from a spring and by heavy rain, each of these four is a method of prayer, each is less laborious and more fertile. The first three are forms of meditation while the last is contemplation, when God alone is at work and we are the passive receivers of his presence.

Teresa of Avila sees meditation leading to contemplation leading to a generous spirit in daily life. Similarly, the Quakers talk about contemplation leading to action.

If you would like to try contemplative prayer, find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Sit up straight, relaxed but alert. Close your eyes lightly, breath naturally. Silently repeat a word or phrase for example, 'Maranatha' - Ma-ra-na-tha in four equally spaced syllables in rhythm with your breathing.

Maranatha is the Aramaic word from the language Jesus spoke, it means 'Come, Lord'

When thoughts or images come into your mind, don't dismiss them, just let them go by saying 'Maranatha'. Daily practice is important. You can start at 5mins and over time increase to 20-30mins, twice a day.

Contemplative Prayer at Christ Church each week from Friday 6 February at 8am for 20mins followed by optional said Morning Prayer.

Tom Lunt

The Lewes Area Churches Prayer Chain

Christ Church is part of The Lewes Area Churches Prayer Chain.

Each church has a Prayer Link person and each month the Prayer Link sends a list of prayer requests. Our Prayer Link is Claire Bell.

Here are the churches we will be praying for the next 12 months:

St Michael's	February
Quaker Friends	March
St Pancras	April
St Thomas's	May
Eastgate Baptist	June
Trinity	July
Ouse Valley Benefice	August
St Anne's	September
Christ Church	October
St Mary's Ringmer	November
Kings Church	December
Hamsey Benefice	January

Please remember these churches in your prayers -
"Through our prayers we can "encourage one other and give each other strength" (The Bible 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Liz Lunt

Church Calendar for February 2026

- Sun 1 10.30 am Morning worship led by Tom Lunt
11.45 Congregational Meeting
1 pm Church lunch
- Wed 4 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Bible Study
- Fri 6 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 8 9.30 am Prayer Meeting in the Quiet Room
10.30 am Second Sunday worship
- Wed 11 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Bible Study
7.30 pm Church Council
- Fri 13 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 15 10.30 am Morning worship led by Ian Srodzinski
1 pm Church Walk
- Wed 18 Ash Wednesday – start of Lent
10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lent Bible Study
- Fri 20 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
- Sun 22 10.30 am Morning worship with Holy Communion
led by Rev Dr Richard Goldring
- Wed 25 10 am - 12 noon Ukraine Café
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lent Bible Study
- Fri 27 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots

Church Calendar for March 2026

- Sun 1 10.30 am Morning worship
- Wed 4 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lent Bible Study
- Fri 6 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 8 9.30 am Prayer Meeting in the Quiet Room
10.30 am Second Sunday worship
- Wed 11 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lent Bible Study
7.30 pm Church Council
- Fri 13 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 15 10.30 am Mothering Sunday worship
- Wed 18 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lent Bible Study
7.30 pm Thinktank
- Fri 20 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 22 10.30 am Morning worship with Holy Communion
1 pm Church Walk
- Wed 25 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lent Bible Study
- Fri 27 8 am - 9 am Contemplative Prayer in the church
9.30 am - 11.30 am Christ Church Tots
- Sun 29 10.30 am Morning worship led by
- Wed 1 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm Lent Bible Study

Rotas for February 2026

	1	8	15	22
Welcoming	Linda B	Andrew	Brenda	Graham
Vestry Steward	Irene	Irene	Irene	Irene
Coffee	?	Rod & Aly	Judy & Ian	Linda B & Janet
PowerPoint	Tom / Irene	Neil	Graham / Neil	Irene
Organ	Norman	Second Sunday	David	Norman

Rotas for March 2026

	1	8	15	22	29
Welcoming	Janet	Brian	Linda B	Andrew	Brenda
Vestry					
Coffee	Brenda & Alison	Brian & Joan	Glenda & Alan	Lindsay & Viv	Rod & Aly
PowerPoint	Tom	Neil	Graham / Neil	Tom	Irene
Organ	Norman	Second Sunday	David	Joy	Norman

CHRIST CHURCH

(United Reformed and Methodist)

seeks to proclaim the Gospel and serve
the community around it.

The Minister, Layworker and Church
Council members would appreciate
information about those who need
pastoral care and will endeavour to
answer the questions of those who want
to know more about the Church's life and
witness here in Lewes.