



**KINDLE**

**Newsletter of the Romford  
United Reformed Church at  
Western Road**

**June 2024**

## *Ministers' Letter*

*Dear Friends*

I have been interested to hear bits of the programmes on the radio about the 80<sup>th</sup> commemoration of D day on 6<sup>th</sup> June this year. One of the programmes was hearing recollections from survivors of the day and although I knew that there would have been casualties, to hear one of the survivors talk about carnage shocked me.

I did some research and discovered that on D Day alone allied casualties were reckoned to be 10,000 with over 4,000 dead. D Day was part of a bigger operation, Operation Overlord, so numbers would have been even greater. Yet D Day also changed the course of the war and led ultimately to the Allied victory in 1945.

Casualties in war are inevitable, the numbers above are those of forces personnel, and through the course of the war there would have been more forces personnel and civilians killed. Sadly we are hearing awful figures from both the war in Ukraine and the war in Gaza/Israel about the number of casualties and it seems to me that it is civilians who are the majority of the casualty numbers, which is appalling. It leads me to despair of our inhumanity to our fellow human beings and to feel helpless.

Is there anything I can do? I am hoping to join a silent walking meditation for peace on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June facilitated by the Quakers and Plum Village UK entitled Walk with me. It is described as "A Multi- Faith Peace Walk in London. We move together in silence for nonviolence, reconciliation & peace." This is an opportunity to remember all those killed in war and show solidarity with all those currently experiencing war and its effects.

We all have the opportunity to express our thoughts, concerns and feelings in the forthcoming General Election. Which candidate/party anyone votes for is a personal matter, but it is important to exercise our right to vote. The Town Centre churches are organising an hustings meeting, date and other details to be confirmed, which will be an opportunity to ask questions of candidates locally.

It can be hard to discern the truth behind the claims of the parties, to get past the spin that is used and the personal attacks, but we have to try as we discern which candidate/party will get our support. I am reminded of Pilate's question to Jesus "what is truth?" In John 19 there is no answer given, I hope and pray that we will be able to discern truth in the coming weeks as we hold onto God's truth seen in

*Alison* —————

# What's Happening

† Thames North Synod

**Eco Day 2024**

***Our Shared Climate***

*Celebration and action for justice*

**8th June 10.00 am—4.00pm**

**Vine Church Ilford**

Exploring actions we can take to preserve human and bio diversity

Activities for all ages - Children very welcome

From more information please email: [modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:modpa@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

Full itinerary for the day will be sent to attendees by end of May

**Saturday 6th July 2024**

10:30am - 3:15pm

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN  
ESSEX & EAST LONDON  
**BRADWELL**  
PILGRIMAGE  
AND GATHERING

**FREE**

*A day for all  
ages  
of reflection,  
worship,  
workshops,  
crafts & walks*

**Your Kingdom come,  
*your will be done...***

**Keynote Speaker  
will be the new  
Bishop of Bradwell,  
Rt. Rev. Adam Atkinson**

*A mini bus will  
be available  
from St. Thomas  
for those unable  
to walk to  
St. Peter's*



Parking is available at the village hall near St. Thomas CMO 7QJ

[www.bradwellpilgrimage.co.uk](http://www.bradwellpilgrimage.co.uk)

[www.cteel.org.uk](http://www.cteel.org.uk)

## RAINHAM HALL, NATIONAL TRUST

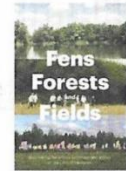
Come along to Rainham Hall Community Garden for a weekend of story sharing and nature inspired art and poetry.



**SATURDAY 22 JUNE, 11.00AM – 4.00PM** **FREE** **YOUNG ESSEX**

### Rainham Story Book

Taking inspiration from *Fens, Forests and Fields*; a partnership project between Thames Chase Trust and Kinetika, which collected 100 stories to celebrate our community. See the Rainham story flags showing the incredible stories and memories already captured. Share your stories and add to a Rainham Story Book. All ages welcome. Free, drop-in, no booking required.



**SUNDAY 23 JUNE, 11.00AM – 3.00PM** **FREE** **WORKSHOP** **YOUNG ESSEX**

### Leaf and Flower Pounding

Join us for noisy, energetic and fun leaf and flower pounding. A great way to get the natural pigments of the leaves and flowers into fabric to create beautiful card designs. All ages welcome, adult supervision required. Free, drop-in, no booking required.

**SUNDAY 23 JUNE, 11.30AM – 12.15PM & 1.45PM – 2.30PM** **WORKSHOP**

### Making Natural Dye Solar Jars

Using just the UV light of the sun, solar dyeing uses natural dyes from plants to create beautiful colours on yarn, fibre and fabric. Join us as we guide you through this step-by-step process to create your own solar jar. Take it home and leave it closed for at least one month before revealing your unique colour. Age 16+ . Tickets: £5 per jar

**SUNDAY 23 JUNE, 11.45AM – 12.30PM & 1.30PM – 2.15PM** **WORKSHOP** **YOUNG ESSEX**

### Justin Coe Go Wild with Words

Take your words for a walk on the wild side with this busy-buzzy, fun and family-friendly poetry workshop with poet and performer Justin Coe. Write an unruly rhyme or an excitable ramble inspired by your awesome outdoor adventures today at Rainham Hall. Tickets: £2 per person



© Suzi Corker

**SUNDAY 23 JUNE, 3.00PM – 3.30PM** **FREE** **POETRY SLAM** **YOUNG ESSEX**

### Justin Coe Go Wild with Words Poetry Slam Sharing

Poet and spoken word theatre creator, Justin Coe, reads his fantastic poetry and invites audience members to share their own poems. Free, no booking required

Rainham Hall, The Broadway, Rainham RM13 9YN  
**To Book: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/rainham-hall](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/rainham-hall)**  
**For further information email [rainhamhall@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:rainhamhall@nationaltrust.org.uk)**  
**or telephone 01708 525579.**

# news

## Easter

Here are photos that included in May's Kindle



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## Spring Harvest 24



## **Jamaican government accepts URC's apology over slavery.**



UK churches and the government are being encouraged to follow in the United Reformed Church's footsteps and apologise for their roles in the transatlantic slave trade. Last month, the Hon. Olivia Grange, Jamaica's Minister for Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, accepted an apology delivered by the Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, during an ecumenical service themed 'Reparation, A Journey Towards Repentance, Repair and Reconciliation' at Webster Memorial Church in the parish of St Andrew, an area around Jamaica's capital, Kingston. Dr Henry-Robinson had travelled to the island

with other members of the Church as part of an ecumenical pilgrimage to learn about the legacies of slavery. Learn more about the URC's apology to Jamaica.



## **Myanmar World Watch List 2024 – 17**



The Buddhist-majority country has 4.5 million Christians, which is just eight per cent of the country's population of 55.7 million.

Myanmar remains mired in a violent conflict that is having a devastating impact on the country's Christian minority.

Since the military coup in February 2021, Christians have encountered greater violence and tighter restrictions. Believers have been killed and churches have been indiscriminately attacked, even well-established ones in predominantly Christian states like Chin and Kayah. More Christians than ever have been driven out of their homes and have found refuge in churches or camps for internally displaced people. Some are even forced to flee to the jungle where they are often deprived of access to food and healthcare.

Christians are part of the generally peaceful resistance movement, but fighting has increased across the country and although not all ethnic minority armed groups are involved, some Christian ones are. Government forces have continued to disproportionately attack Christian villages and churches and also killed Christian aid workers and pastors, often in aerial attacks.

Beyond the conflict, converts to Christianity find themselves persecuted by their Buddhist, Muslim or tribal families and communities because they have left their former faith. Communities who aim to stay 'Buddhist only' make life for Christian families impossible.

Non-traditional church groups experience opposition, too, especially those located in rural areas and those who are known for their evangelistic activities.



### Meet 'Ko Aung'

**“Since I have experienced persecution, I can now better understand the pain experienced by Christians suffering for their faith. “KO AUNG was forced to flee myanmar because of intrusive surveillance by the authorities.**

The military's increasing use of sophisticated technology – much of which comes from China and Russia – is presenting another challenge for believers in Myanmar to contend with.

Ko Aung realised he was in danger when his access to

not one, but two banking apps was suddenly blocked. He tried to open a new bank account but couldn't. His fears came true when he discovered that his identity card had been flagged by the authorities. This has serious consequences. “It means I am no longer a citizen of Myanmar,” he says.

The suspicions against Ko Aung emerged following the military coup in February 2021 and centre around his relationship with a group of tribal believers. Having earlier converted to Christianity from Buddhism, he had got to know them after returning home at the beginning of the pandemic and, working as an Open Doors local partner, he helped provide practical and spiritual support for them.

“Before the military coup, me helping Christians would not have been a big issue, but now things had changed,” says Ko Aung. “They [the military] believed I was against them, working with the youth rebel groups.”

As surveillance intensified, Ko Aung was fearful of arrest and even death. “In Myanmar, people are afraid to comment on political issues over the phone,” Ko Aung says. “They are afraid that the military might be eavesdropping their phone calls. We also don't normally use Facebook Messenger, because the military checks Facebook messaging apps and phone call lists whenever they check phones.”

But he is able to see how God is using this environment. “I think that after the coup, the younger generation is now more open to faiths other than Buddhism,” he says.

*\*Name changed for security reasons*



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Vacant**

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Copy for the next issue 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024**