

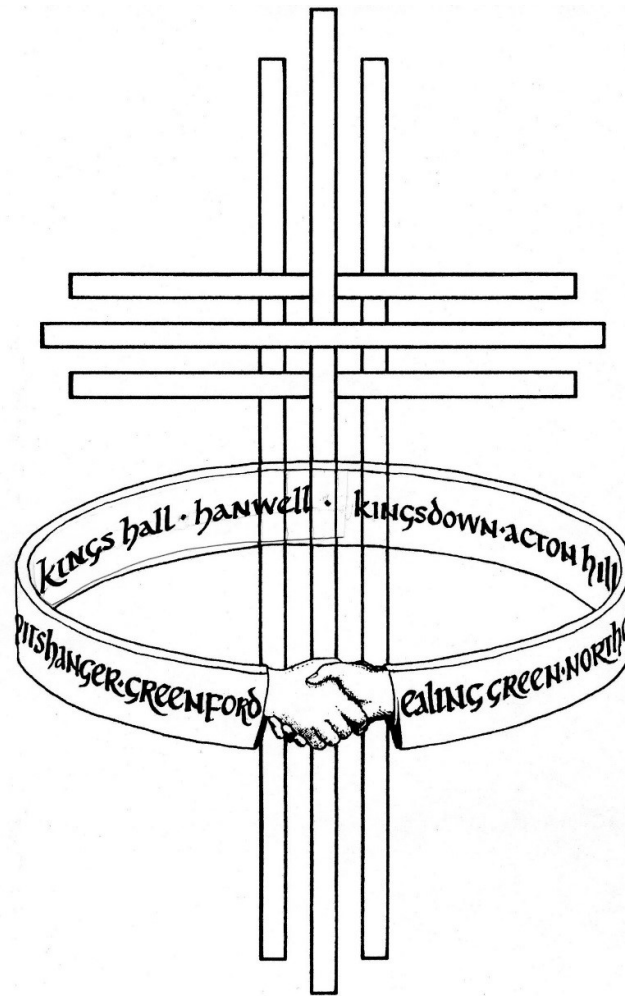
# In-touch

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No 97

March - May 2023



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The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

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**Circuit website: [www.ealingtrinity.org.uk](http://www.ealingtrinity.org.uk)**

*Front Cover designed by Marion Narain*

## From the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

I remember being stood in a church vestry more than a decade ago. I'd made a small mistake and apologised first saying I was sorry and then, "We all make mistakes. It's part of being human."

The steward half yelled, half spat out his response, full of anger and disapproval, "You're a minister you shouldn't make mistakes!"

Was he really saying I wasn't human? Did he really believe that the church, the Christian faith, had no space for mistakes, failure, forgiveness and renewal?

Did he really think that the God we follow expected everyone to get things right first time and that there was no room for error or experimentation?

I hope not because if he did I'm not sure what Bible he'd been reading, surely not the same one as me! The Bible I read has story after story about those who fail, feel lost, wander off and are found, where all who fail are sought and welcomed.

We live in a culture that is increasingly characterised by fear of failure and by the blame game where those who fail are named and shamed. Yet we all make mistakes, big and small.

It's not possible to escape failure, or to eradicate it. Indeed, if we don't risk failure we'd never learn to walk, run, speak, ride a bike... the list is endless.

Just watch a toddler attempt to walk and try to count the number of times they fall and clamber back up - I can't imagine any parent saying to that child "You shouldn't try to get up, you'll only fall again". Can you?

No, instead we encourage attempt after attempt, fall after fall. We rub better sore knees and encourage trying again.

This Lent we are studying Emma Ineson's book 'Failure'. Emma encourages us to think more deeply about failure. In the first chapter she writes,

*"This book aims to ask some questions about failure. What is it? How do we live well with it? What does God think about it? What do people think about the Church and failure? How do Christians think about failure? What happens when your get up and go has got up and gone, your energy to learn from*

*failure is at its lowest ebb and failure seems to be the default for humanity? How do we live well with that?"* (Emma Ineson "Failure" (p. 19). SPCK. Kindle Edition.)

Why not join us as we explore this together in our churches or online?

May God bless you this Lent.

May you be surrounded with people to encourage you to get up and try again and those who will join you on the floor and tend to your bruises!

And may no one discourage you from making mistakes.

With love and prayers,



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## **All We Can – Turkey and Syria Earthquake Appeal**

At dawn on Monday 6 February, a catastrophic earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 struck close to Gaziantep in Turkey, causing thousands of structures to crumble in both southern Turkey and north-western Syria. The seismic shock was followed by numerous strong aftershocks. Another quake of magnitude 7.5 hit the area nine hours later. A further quake of magnitude 6.4 struck on 20<sup>th</sup> February near the town of Antakya on the Turkey-Syria border. Thus far the disaster has claimed over 44,000 lives and the toll may yet rise further.

Following this devastating news, All We Can is responding to the earthquake and rescue efforts. Their initial response has been centred in Syria that they have access to existing networks for the most vulnerable through their partners in the region. All We Can have supported refugees prior to the earthquake and will continue to support them during this time of extended vulnerability.

To donate to All We Can's Earthquake Appeal go to:

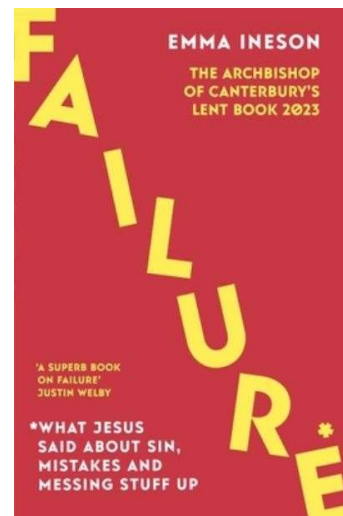
<https://www.allwecan.org.uk/donate/syrian-earthquake-emergency-donations/>

## Lent to Easter 2023

Join a group to read together and discuss Emma Ineson's book – "FAILURE – What Jesus said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up"

Emma Ineson is an Anglican Bishop. In 2019, she wrote about ambition and what it means for Christians to be successful. And then there was a global pandemic .... Suddenly, failure began to feel very much more familiar than success.

The following is taken from the back cover of her book:



*But what is failure? And what did Jesus think of it? At the start of this hugely engaging book, it is suggested that our tendency to lump all kinds of failure together is rather unhelpful. Moving "towards an (imperfect) theology of failure; Emma offers a more nuanced understanding, as well as practical advice on how to live well with the mess of everyday life. She looks at questions of whether sin is individual or corporate, God's purpose for the church, and what to do about the church's divisions and decision making.*

*As the book nears an end, we are drawn deep into the mystery of Holy Saturday and what appears to be the greatest failure of all. Yet gazing at Jesus – who knows and loves us in all our guilty imperfection – we may discern, in the heartache, vulnerability and humility of failure, the glory of the cross*

Each session will last no more than 1½ hours. In preparation for the session you will need to read a chapter of the book, to come with one insight or question from the chapter that you would like to share or explore with others, and then there are questions for us to consider together.

Here are the titles of the chapters for each week

- Chapter 1** Why I wrote this book
- Chapter 2** What is failure?
- Chapter 3** Sin, guilt and human nature: towards an imperfect theology of failure ( sort of)
- Chapter 4** The failing church
- Chapter 5** The greatest failure of all
- Chapter 6** How to fail really well

The different groups and their session times for each chapter across the Circuit as follows. You can do different sessions in different groups as you wish.

**Monday mornings 11.15 am at Ealing Green Church led by Rev Sue Male**

March 6; March 13; March 20; March 27; April 3; April 17

**Monday evenings 8pm on zoom led by Rev Sue Male** (email [susan.d.male@gmail.com](mailto:susan.d.male@gmail.com) for link)

March 6; March 13; March 20; April 3 (ch 4 & 5); April 17

**Thursday evenings 8.00pm on zoom led by Rev Rachel Bending** (email [rachelbending@hotmail.com](mailto:rachelbending@hotmail.com) for link)

February 23; March 2; March 9; March 16; March 23; March 30

**Sunday evenings 6.30pm at Greenford led by Rev Rachel Bending**

February 26; March 5; March 12; March 19; March 26; April 2

'Failure' by Emma Inesen is the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2023 and is available from bookshops priced £10.99 or online from:

Coles Books (<https://coles-books.co.uk>)

Waterstones ([www.waterstones.com](http://www.waterstones.com))

Amazon ([www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

Church House Bookshop (<https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk>) – price £8.99

**Acton Hill Lenten 'Tea and Biscuits'**

As part of their outreach, Acton Hill Church is offering a 'Tea and Biscuits' session on Wednesdays from 3.00 – 5.00pm during the six weeks of Lent for the local community, starting February 22nd. Anyone who would like to come along and help (or just come and have a cup of tea!) would be most welcome.

Acton Hill Church is on the corner of High St and Woodlands Avenue opposite Acton Police Station.

# The Forgotten Rohingyas

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

Six years ago in 2017 Rohingya Muslims were brutally chased out of Rakhine state in Myanmar by the 'Tatmadaw' as the Myanmar security forces are known. Most fled to neighbouring Bangladesh where the vast majority remain. At the time the Rohingyas were in the headlines and the first item in news broadcasts but since then their plight has largely fallen out of view – the world now has other crises to worry about: climate change, Putin's war in Ukraine, the cost of living, the state of the NHS, ongoing strikes across the public sector and so on and so on.

However, the Rohingyas are still there, stuck in refugee camps carved out of cleared forest south of Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, some 900,000 of them. If anything their plight is every bit as bad if not worse than it was. They had never been accepted by majority-Buddhist Myanmar (aka Burma) and citizenship has always been denied them even though they have lived in Rakhine state for centuries. The Bangladeshi authorities want them to return home as, in fact do most Rohingyas. Although Rakhine state is now largely peaceful, the 600,000 or so Rohingyas that remain there are not living in their villages but in UN-run camps. Not surprisingly the Rohingyas stuck in Bangladesh are not yet ready to return.

Life in the camps is dire. The Rohingyas may have been given refuge in Bangladesh but violence still threatens them. Powerful gangs have sprung up in the camps from amongst the refugees. Part insurgent and part drug smuggling these gangs now terrorise the refugees – around 25, including community leaders have been killed by the gangs since July last year. Kidnapping and extortion are on the rise. It is no longer considered safe to be out at night in the camps.

The Bangladeshi police are supposed to keep things under control but are often a big part of the problem. They are said to be collaborating with the gangs as well as demanding bribes, confiscating goods and, when investigating crimes, framing the innocent. Women can be particularly vulnerable - instances of rape at police stations are by no means unknown.

About half the population of the refugee camps are children. Until last year there were about 30 community-run schools in the camps teaching tens of thousands of children. These were, however shut down last year by Bangladeshi officials. Now only a few schools run by UNICEF and some other NGOs (non-governmental organisations) who have permission to teach the

youngest children basic numeracy and literacy remain. At the same time refugees are not allowed to study outside the camps.

Refugees are allowed to work but only in the camps – they are forbidden to work outside. To travel outside the camps requires a written permit from the local authorities. Such restrictions are not uncommon for refugees in many countries and reflect fears on the part of the authorities that the Rohingya will put down roots in Bangladesh. Many are desperate to get out however, and it is estimated that about 250,000 have got hold of fake Bangladeshi passports and have moved abroad to countries in Southeast Asia and Saudi Arabia. Others pay people-smugglers to take them on perilous boat journeys out of Bangladesh.

Faced with dire conditions and few opportunities in the camps it is scarcely surprising that many opt to move into the semi-darkness of illegal status in other countries in the region. Neither is it surprising that some get drawn into the world of gangs as a way of improving their lot. Either way, life in the camps is storing up problems for the future – young refugees are becoming habituated into being unemployable and vulnerable to delinquency and possibly extremism. Pressure could be put on the Bangladeshi government to improve the lot of the Rohingyas by reducing or removing many of the restrictions placed upon them and allowing them at least some chance of more normal lives. However, with the world's eyes on other issues, this is sadly unlikely.

*Editor's note: in writing this article I am indebted to the 'Banyan' column published in The Economist magazine on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023.*

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## Traidcraft



Traidcraft plc – a Christian group that has spent years campaigning for fair trade – has gone into administration. Traidcraft stands were familiar to many churchgoers, with almost 3,000 churches in the country selling Traidcraft products at some point in their 40-year history. The brand cited the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine and soaring energy prices as the reasons behind the severe financial difficulties.

The work of promoting fair trade and fair trading conditions for producers is continuing through Transform Trade (formerly Traidcraft Exchange) – to find out more go to: [www.transform-trade.org](http://www.transform-trade.org)



# Lendwithcare

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

Since I joined Lendwithcare in January 2011 making regular monthly loans to small entrepreneurs has become somewhat of a monthly ritual for me. Each month I look at how much credit is sitting in my Lendwithcare account and decide on a set of fresh entrepreneurs to lend to. It's not exactly 'big business' but I'm very much inclined to the view that it's a good way to help people out of poverty and improve their lives.

Lendwithcare was set up by Care International UK, one of the major aid charities to provide microfinance to small entrepreneurs in developing countries. These are typically people whose financing needs are too small to interest the main banks. The basic idea is to provide small loans to people so that they can develop business ideas and work themselves out of poverty. Often entrepreneurs work from home and are very often women. They can be involved in many different types of enterprise ranging from small-scale farming to food or clothing shops (which may, in fact be market stalls) to beauty parlours or small-scale vehicle repair shops.

Lendwithcare partners with carefully selected local microfinance institutions (MFIs) who act as the channel for loans made by people like me. Entrepreneurs approach these MFIs with their ideas and plans and, if the plans are sound will be offered loans. These can range from a few hundred to several thousand pounds but are never 'huge'. The MFIs then turn to Lendwithcare to add the entrepreneurs to their website so that people like me can finance their loans.

Lending is spread over many people – a bit like 'crowd-funding' so the amount of money any one lender puts up can be quite small – most of mine are £15 or £30 per loan. All of the money people lend goes to the entrepreneurs they support. Lendwithcare's own operating costs are covered by voluntary donations from lenders.

Over the years Lendwithcare's operations have expanded to include more countries and they now support entrepreneurs in 16 countries around the world. These are:

Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Togo  
Pakistan, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines  
Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru  
Palestinian Territories (West Bank and Gaza)  
Georgia

Looking back over my loan 'portfolio' at some point I've helped finance loans in almost all of these countries (Uganda is the only exception).

Since I joined Lendwithcare I've helped fund 272 loans at the time of writing. Of these 216 have been completely paid back, 65 are in the process of being repaid and 1 is still seeking funding. So far, only 7 borrowers have defaulted on their loans. All of these were in Vietnam and each loan was partially paid back. They represent less than 1% of the total of all my lending to date, so my 'loss' is really quite tiny.

The money I have put in has 'gone round', that is, been lent and re-lent 4½ times. This is one of the things I enjoy about Lendwithcare – you lend, the loan gets repaid, you lend the same money again, and again and again. This is, of course just like investing in bonds or shares or whatever but with the difference that you don't make money out it – there's no financial 'return', just the satisfaction of knowing that you've helped people improve their lives.

More recently, Lendwithcare has added a new initiative – **Climate Positive Grants**.

Poor families particularly in low-income developing countries around the world are already feeling the impacts of climate change. They are seeing first-hand how unpredictable rainfall patterns cause water shortages, reduce harvests and exacerbate hunger. They are witnessing the effects of more extreme weather such as cyclones and hurricanes that destroy their homes, lives and incomes and are having to cope with longer, more severe droughts which kill their livestock and threaten their crops.

Climate Positive Grants provide the opportunity to directly support projects which either prevent CO2 emissions from being released into the atmosphere, or pro-actively absorb CO2 from the atmosphere, while also creating opportunities for low-income communities. Unlike loans, however grants are not re-paid by recipients.

Lendwithcare works with FairClimateFund who verify how much CO2 is prevented from entering the atmosphere by each project. These 'savings' in CO2 emissions generate 'carbon credits' (1 carbon credit = 1 tonne of CO2 'saved') which FairClimate Fund can sell and funds raised used to invest in further projects.

At the time of writing, Lendwithcare is seeking funding for 19 projects, mainly in India and some in Rwanda. All of these are for people or groups of people wanting to fund the purchase of improved stoves for cooking. In India the traditional cookstove or 'chullah' uses a relatively large amount of firewood and produces significant amounts of smoke. Improved cookstoves reduce the

amount of fuel required by 50 – 55% and are very much less smoky. On average they are estimated to reduce CO2 emissions by about 2 tonnes per year. In Rwanda cooking is often done with charcoal and people are seeking to purchase advanced biomass stoves that use pellets made from forestry waste. These stoves can save up about 3 tonnes of CO2 per year and are virtually smoke-free.

I haven't yet got involved in Climate Positive Grants but it's an interesting development and is a way of doing something that directly reduces CO2 emissions.

If you would like to sign up or know more about Lendwithcare go to <https://lendwithcare.org>.

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## British Sign Language Bible Translation Project

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

Most of us are probably at least a little familiar with the idea of 'signing'. Some TV broadcasts are accompanied by signing for the benefit of the Deaf and during the Covid pandemic the Scottish government had its TV pronouncements 'signed' (unlike the UK government). Beyond that, I don't suppose many of us have much, if any knowledge of how 'signing' works.

### Why is the word "Deaf" capitalised?

The capitalised version of "Deaf" is widely used for those who are Deaf and use BSL. They define themselves as culturally Deaf, with their own language.

Where "deaf" with a small "d" is used, it is typically for people who consider they have a hearing problem and whose first language is English.

Those TV broadcasts use British Sign Language (BSL) which is not just a set of signs for English words but a language in its own right. BSL does not transliterate English, that is, it does not replace individual English words with individual signs. Like spoken languages, BSL has its own grammar and syntax based on the use of handshape, orientation, location, movement, and non-manual features such as facial expression. It is often considered the "dynamic interpretation" of language, meaning it is used to convey thought-for-thought rather than word-for-word. It focuses on feelings and nouns, rather than conjunctions such as "for", "and" or "but". Unlike English and other spoken languages, it does not have a written form.

For Deaf people in the UK, BSL may be their first or 'heart' language and English may be a second language used for reading and writing. Similarly, hearing people may learn BSL to communicate with Deaf family members for example as a second language in addition to English as their first language.

While Deaf people can read the Bible there has not been a version in their own language, BSL. This would be akin to me having access to the Bible in Italian but not in English. When signed in church, the Bible readings are the signers' 'interpretation' of what is being read and will vary with both the individual signer and the version of the Bible being used. The British Bible Translation Project sets out to address this issue and to provide British Deaf people with the Bible in their own language.

Starting from original Greek and Hebrew texts a team of Christian volunteers including BSL linguists, interpreters and presenters has been working with historical and biblical experts to produce a video version of the Bible in which the signing used will not alter. Their aim is to strike a balance between scholarly interpretation of the texts while ensuring the translation is accessible, accurate and looks natural in BSL. So far, the team has translated the Gospel of St Mark and has begun working on Genesis. It will, however be some considerable time before the task of translating the whole Bible will be completed – it took 40 years to produce a version of the Bible in American Sign Language.

Versions of the Bible in English first started to appear in the 16<sup>th</sup> century so those of us who are not Deaf are very used to being able to read the Bible (and any number of versions of it) in our own language. Imagine what it must be like for a Deaf person to be able to 'see' the Bible in their own language for the first time. The effect can be revelatory.

Rev Canon Gill Behenna, a Church of England priest and one of the trustees of the project says, "Although a huge number of Deaf people are bilingual, it's different having the words of scripture in your own heart language - the language you use and you identify with." Furthermore, Janice Silo, another trustee of the project who is Deaf notes that having the Bible in BSL has given the Deaf community a chance to think about its meaning in their own language.

The British Sign Language Bible Translation Project is being financed entirely by sponsorship and is making its translation free to view on its website – go to <https://bslbible.org.uk> to find out more.

Incidentally, you might wonder why the Bible in American Sign Language (ASL) can't be used in this country. It's because ASL and BSL are very different languages with just 31% of signs being identical.

## Ordination of the First Palestinian Female Christian Pastor in the Holy Land

*From the Methodist Church's Mission Partner in the Holy Land - Angleena Keizer*

The 'Living Christianity in the Holy Land' group that visits yearly during Christian Unity Week of Prayer is co-led by the Methodist Liaison Office staff and the Rev John Howard. We had the opportunity to not only visit the holy sites and meet Christians, Muslims and Jews but also attend a variety of Church services. We were thrilled to be invited to attend and witness one of the most historic and significant services on the 22nd January of the ordination of the first Palestinian female Christian Pastor in the Holy Land, the Revd Sally Azar.

Sally was ordained at the Church of Redeemer, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Old City of Jerusalem, by her Father Bishop Sami Azar. The procession of local and international clergy



from around the world was led by Sally and the sounds of the Scout band. The church was packed with local and international guests, including 120 Bishops, of whom a high percentage were women.

Bishop Azar shared that "he was very excited seeing the excitement of other people" and that "it was an indescribable feeling to take this step with the support of the church". He hoped other women would be inspired in different denominations in the Holy Land to join them, although recognising it could take a long time. He shared he was excited at the possibilities of change in Palestine a Patriarchal society. Sally became one of five women ordained in the Middle East, across all denominations; there being one in Syria and three in Lebanon according to the Middle East Council of Churches.

We were greatly blessed to be able to join Revd Sally Azar and her family at this special moment in her, her family and church community lives. We offered on behalf of the Methodist Church congratulations and our continued prayers for Revd Sally Azar's ministry and step of faith.

*Downloaded from the Methodist Church website  
Image copyright the Lutheran Church*

## Where Have People Gone?

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

Each year at the end of November the Methodist Church collects statistics of church membership and attendance. During the pandemic no attendance figures for 2020 or 2021 were collected but this recommenced last year. This gives us the opportunity to compare where we were before the pandemic with where we are now in terms of numbers.

This table compares membership and attendance for our churches in 2019 with 2022.

	Membership			Attendance		
	2019	2022	Change	2019	2022	Change
Acton Hill LEP	42	41	-1	30	25	-5
Ealing Green LEP	58	48	-10	40	30	-10
Greenford	80	53	-27	65	26	-39
Hanwell	43	46	3	35	30	-5
Kingsdown	59	53	-6	45	32	-13
Northolt	49	44	-5	38	23	-15
Pitshanger	12	9	-3	19	12	-7
King's Hall (Hindi/Urdu)	52	52	0	32	35	3
King's Hall (English)	6	0	-6	8	0	-8
<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>-55</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>-99</b>

Clearly both membership and attendance are a good deal lower now than before the pandemic. Most churches have lost at least some members with Greenford having lost the most. Look a bit closer and you can see that attendance has fallen rather more sharply than membership with only King's Hall (Hindi/Urdu) showing a small increase.

We all know that membership and attendance have been declining for a long time. However, the pandemic seems to have pushed numbers down even further. The greater drop in attendance is intriguing as it implies we have people on our books as members but who, for whatever reason have not, or not yet returned to attending worship.

Maybe time to think about where people have gone?

# Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services Around the Circuit

## Maundy Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April

### Acton Hill and Hanwell

United Service of Holy Communion at Acton Hill at 7.00pm

**Kingsdown** – time to be confirmed

**Greenford and Northolt** – United Service - time and venue to be confirmed

## Good Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April

### Acton Hill and Hanwell

United Service at Acton Hill at 10.30am

**Ealing Green** at 9.30am

**King's Hall** at 12.00pm

**Kingsdown** at 3.00pm

**Greenford** at 4.00pm

**Northolt** at 10.00am

## Central Ealing Good Friday Walk of Witness.

The arrangements will be much the same as in previous years with a concluding open-air service in the garden of Christ the Saviour Church from 10.45am - 11.05am (approx). Two processions will walk along the roadways into central Ealing, one from Ealing Abbey and Church, South Ealing.



## **Forthcoming Events around the Circuit**

[as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

### **Lent Course 2023**

“Failure – What Jesus said about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up”

Monday and Thursday evenings online  
Monday mornings and Sunday evenings in person

*For full details, dates and times see page 5.*

### **March**

- 4<sup>th</sup> Sat 10.30am **Ealing Animals Fair at Hanwell**  
4.00pm *Lots of stalls, guest speakers, live music*  
*Admission free*
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sun 4.00pm **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**  
Petar Dimov – piano  
*Programmes at the door £5.00 concessions,*  
*£6.00 adults, £2.00 children*
- 25<sup>th</sup> Sat tba **Hanwell Easter Egg Hunt** – watch for details
- 27<sup>th</sup> Mon 7.30pm **‘Examen’ with Deacon Theresa**  
*Online – e-mail Deacon Theresa for the Zoom link*

### **April**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun 4.00pm **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**  
Solomon Markman – violin
- 24<sup>th</sup> Mon 7.30pm **‘Examen’ with Deacon Theresa**

### **May**

- 7<sup>th</sup> May 4.00pm **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**  
Robert Cart – flute

### **‘Refresh’**

Hosted by Deacon Theresa, 'Refresh' gives an opportunity to meet together to relax and and explore the community. Fridays from 11.00am - 1.00pm  
Welshore Community Hub, 99 Broadway, West Ealing, London W13 9B

Articles for **‘In-touch’ Issue No 98 (June - August)** should be sent by e-mail headed **‘In-touch’** to the Editor, **Gerald Barton**, or as hard copy to the Circuit Office.

Ealing Trinity Circuit Office  
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Office hours: Tues & Thurs 09.00 – 14.00

**Deadline for next issue: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**