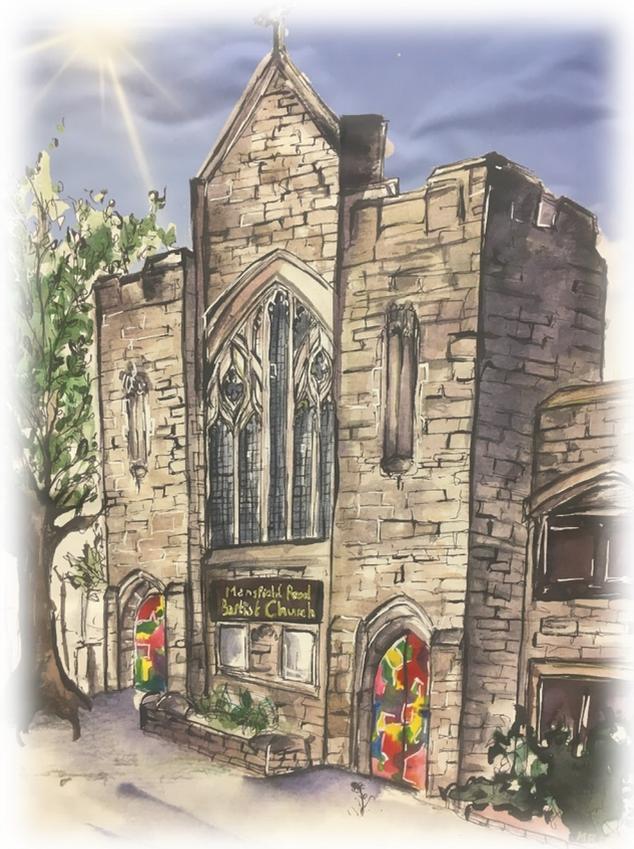

MRBC

CHURCH MAGAZINE—APRIL 2026



Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Thought for April from our Minister

The sun is shining! I can't promise that will still be the case as you read this, but at this moment of writing it's a beautiful day outside. Recent weeks have brought us the shift from snowdrops to daffodils, and I'm guessing somewhere there will be lambs bleating, although I can't hear them from where I sit in my office at church. I find this time of year a very optimistic time, with Spring underway, and the memory of Winter beginning to pass. After what feels like a long, dark and wet few months, this shift brings a sense of relief.

In recent years, I've become increasingly aware that I find the tail end of winter difficult as I desperately long for the hope of something new, I think many people share that experience. This year we have also experienced a shared sense of loss in our church as we mark the passing of friends with whom we've shared pews for many years. And when we look further afield, we see relentless and continuously unfolding tragedy across the globe, as conflicts rage, and civilian death tolls rise. It's easy to feel a sense of despair! But, the sun is shining! There is new life – out of the darkness, there is light.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the event that we refer to as The Transfiguration – a moment in which the glory of God is revealed in Jesus as *His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light* (Mt. 17: 2). The SON is shining! For the onlookers, Peter, James and John, that was an incredible moment which they wanted to preserve forever, but they needed to return to the mundane and normality of life!

This momentary experience, took place before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, and the disciples had no idea what was to follow. But for us, having just shared Easter together, we do know. The SON, resurrected and reigning eternally is shining in all his glory. We see glimpses of this in the beauty of creation around us, but whether Winter or Spring, the hope of the risen Christ shines within those who call him Lord.

We will still have moments of grief and despair, but the God who made us, is with us in those times, and the promise of Jesus remains, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (Jn. 8: 12)

CHURCH DIARY for APRIL 2026

Sunday Service each week at 10.30am with groups for the children and young people.

Maundy Thursday—2nd April—Reflective Communion Service—7.30pm

Good Friday—3rd April—Readings and reflection—10.30am

Easter Day—5th April- Morning Service at 10.30am

Shalom Fellowship—5th April— 3.00pm

Church Ramble—Monday 6th April—see back cover

Toddler Group—Mondays— 13th, 20th, 27th April—10.00am-11.45am

Renew Wellbeing Café—Each Thursday in April—1.30pm-4.00pm

Reflective Prayer Meeting—Thursdays —9th & 23rd April— 11.00am

PRAYER POINTS

- 1) Pray that the Holy Spirit gives us hearts that burn for grace and service to God our father.
- 2) Pray for God to soften the hearts of those who govern the world we live in, to give them vision and understanding for all mankind.
- 3) Pray that God’s love will spill out through your church to the world giving teaching, advice and counsel.
- 4) Pray for our link missionaries, “Arthur and Reeta” and “Andrea and Ian” in their work with BMS World Mission.

Snowdrops to Daffodils

Matt mentions “snowdrops to daffodils” in his message—and here is a photo taken in the same spot as Alan’s snowdrops of last month.

Alan took this photo when he and Donald took a walk out from the Renew Café on a sunny Thursday! A beautiful display!



Updates from March Church Members' Meeting

- 1) **Sad news** – four church members have recently passed away (Alf, Audley, Ruby and Frances) and we remember their families and friends at this difficult time.
- 2) And **good news** – Matt has fourteen (yes, 14!) applications for church membership – Ig, Charity, Gazetta, Evadne, Denise, Ian, Vera, Jessica, 'Gbade, Rekha, Money, Raseela, Mamta and Amit. All were given formal approval and will be welcomed into membership at forthcoming communion services.
- 3) Update from Ricky on **PFA matters** –
 - (a) Work in the Crypt to alleviate the damp problems would commence in April. Expenditure for this major works of £10,000 had been previously approved.
 - (b) Quotations had been sought for two serious roofing problems with water ingress. The first is the roof on the right-hand side of the church hall and the other is in the corridor with the domed roof. Repair work is likely to cost upwards of £20,000 and some grant funding is being sought. However, if successful this would not cover all, so it was proposed to initiate a **“CHURCH ROOF FUND”** to encourage donations to enable work to go ahead.

Donations can be made by BACS with “roof” as reference. **Bank details: Sort Code 40 35 18 Account 21761862.** Donations could also be made by cash or cheque to the treasurer, into the church office, via the SumUp machine or using QR code here:
- 4) **Finance** – Matt presented a summary of the figures for the first 2 months of the year. Expenditure was running roughly with budget, but Income, although slightly up on last year, was running below budget. However, it was encouraging to know that more members had signed up to Gift Aid, and we would see the benefit of this in due course.



Remembering Frances Dalton

Frances Dalton (née Pell), became a member of MRBC following her baptism in 1958 at the age of 16. Before that she had attended with her aunt, Edie Pell. She died recently and her funeral was held on March 25th, and as input from the church wasn't requested by the small number of family members remaining, it seems right to record in the church magazine an outline of the significant contributions she made to the life of MRBC.



Frances married a fellow member of the church, Frank Dalton, in the 1960s. Whilst he was heavily involved in the Sunday School, Frances was a member of the choir which existed at the time, and the subsequent singing/music groups. She also served as a Deacon several times, finally stepping down in 2013.

Perhaps her most significant role began when she took over as organiser of the Contact Centre, which from 1993 ran here for just short of 20 years. Briefly, the Contact Centre, one of several throughout the country, provided a weekly Saturday meeting place where there was a need for members of broken families to have access to children on neutral ground, in situations where it was inappropriate for this to take place in the homes of either side. The role of the organiser was not only to ensure that there were enough volunteers, with appropriate toys and refreshments, but also to mastermind contacts with solicitors, courts and families. It was a hugely important role which Frances readily took on and at which she excelled.

Personally, I can testify to another gift - that of encourager. I still have, and will always treasure, letters of encouragement and thanks that she sent.

Sadly, her declining health meant that she was unable to attend church in recent times. Those who knew her well have missed her. May she rest in peace.

Sharon Joddrell

Reflections on Matthew 27:45-51

“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani” My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (v46)

Many theologians believe that the midday darkness over the land (v45) indicates that on the cross our sin separated Jesus from the presence of his Father. However, the tearing in two of the thick curtain of the temple which kept people out of the holy place ended that separation for all mankind. The death of Jesus destroyed the barriers between us and God.

I read a book some time ago about a woman called Debs. She had led a life doing whatever she pleased, and ended up in one destructive relationship after another. She was desperate, high on heroin and contemplating suicide. She stumbled upon a Gideon New Testament bible and discovered that, after death, she would have to give account for her wasted life. This so terrified her that she crept into the back of a church where a Good Friday service was taking place. She heard these verses from Matthew’s gospel, and it changed her life forever. She sobbed uncontrollably, realising that she was no longer someone rejected, but God’s beloved daughter.

Jesus had been forsaken on the cross because of our sins. Thanks to him, we are united with God, our shame removed and never truly alone again.

Dear Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice. Because of it, I can never be separated from God. Amen.

Hazel O’Connor

Divine Inspiration

In John’s Gospel, Chapter 17, we find Jesus’ longest recorded prayer, twenty-six verses long. It includes a prayer for Himself, prayer for His disciples (or at least the eleven loyal ones), and it concludes with His prayer for all believers, and that means all future believers including us!

This concluding section includes some challenging phrases. Take verse 21: "I pray that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." Christian believers should have the unity that has the effect on outsiders that convinces them of the mission and reality of Christ. This verse from Jesus is a rebuke of the groundless, and too often bitter, divisions among believers.

In the following verse, the Lord emphasises the importance of unity among His followers and makes clear that the standard is the unity of Father and Son! Verse 23 includes: "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." Once more, the emphasis on unity with an evangelistic aim.

Challenging stuff for Easter meditation, and thereafter, well directed action.

John Sheppard

Angels in Disguise

Sometime ago I was listening to a talk on the radio and heard the quotation: "Be kind to strangers, because they could be angels in disguise." I wrote the quotation in my bible so I would remember it.

Why I am reminded about these words so frequently is because in this church on the corner known as MRBC I have seen this come true Sunday by Sunday. I am talking about those brothers and sisters who give lifts to those who otherwise could not attend. No fuss, no bother, just getting on with it. In rain, snow, sunshine they go out of their way to look out for others. Why do they do it? For me, it is as the quotation says, they are our "angels in disguise."

May the Lord bless and keep them safe as they give help to others.

Norma Watson

Church Ramble

Easter Bank Holiday Monday 6th April—Clumber Park

There will be a ramble around the much visited Clumber Park where we should be able to see spring flowers pushing through as well as having lovely views over the lake. It will be 4-5 miles long in total with no hills.

Please come prepared for a walk on tracks which could possibly be muddy. Wear appropriate footwear - trainers will be fine if you don't mind getting them dirty. Watch the weather

forecast and dress according to what you hear - a waterproof coat may well be necessary. Bring a packed lunch so we can have a picnic along the way.

If you would like to come, I'd be grateful if you could let me know. We may be able to offer lifts depending on places available and willing drivers.

Meet on the church forecourt at 9.30 on Monday 6th April to share lifts.



Alan Davies

A big “thank you” to all contributors this edition. Please continue to furnish us with YOUR news, YOUR pictures, YOUR poem, YOUR story, any articles of interest to others. Please give to Susan Bye or Sharon Joddrell at church or post or send by email to susan@msbye.co.uk, to arrive by 15th April for the May edition.

© Mansfield Road Baptist Church, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham NG7 6JN

Website: www.mrbc.org.uk