



TORRIDGE THIRD AGE GROUP <https://u3asites.org.uk/torrige> **NEWSLETTER**

Issue 550

February 2025



Comments from the Chair

Cleaner; I am pleased to report that we have now employed a Cleaner for the Upper Room, who will perform these duties on a bi-weekly basis. However, it will be appreciated if members continue to ensure they leave the Upper Room in a fit state after their group activity

Volunteers Needed! - Chris Peacock has stood down as our Technical help due to health issues. If you attend our Lunches at the Royal and wondered who organised the PA system and screen, connected the Speakers microphone, laptops and system; - That was Chris. He has been a non-committee member for many years, happy to organise all the technical stuff and also Tested all our U3A equipment to ensure we were 'legal' under Health and Safety legislation. I hope you will all wish Chris well as he undergoes treatment.

So - Is there another member out there who is willing to take up this Technical position? Or maybe two people can share the job as the equipment is bulky? Training on the equipment will be given.

Electric Fires in the Upper Room. Please can I ask all groups using the upper room to switch off the convector heaters before pulling the plug out as this can potentially trip the Mains RCD box. For reference, the Circuit Breakers are down stairs, beside the Garden door and require someone tall to reach them.

Finally, two of our groups have had to finish as their Leaders have stood down for health or other reasons and no-one is willing to take up the baton. Leading a group is not and should not be onerous. If you have any suggestions about new interest groups, or restarting ones that have closed down, please contact Dennis Pavitt or another member of the committee. We welcome anyone who would like to volunteer some of their time to help with the organisation of Torrige U3A.

Best Regards

Graham Thompson
Chairman, Torrige U3A

We welcome the following new members this month: Dawn Hatchett, Doreen Harbour, Julie de burton, Kim Brown, Laura Tuite-Dalton, Linda Sweetland, Pauline Giles, Philip Tuite-Dalton

Important message from the Treasurer

Please note that if you pay your membership by BACs there is a new account number you will need to use. Please do not pay until 1st April, this is just a message to tell you about the new number.

Sort Code 30-90-78

Number 40683160



Future coffee morning 2024

(Provisional dates@ Northam Hall from 10:00am, Saturdays)

- 22nd March, 24th May, 11th October, 22nd November

Chairman Graham Thompson	Secretary Carolyn Kelly	Membership Secretary Julie Thompson	Newsletter Editor Andy Robilliard
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This month's notice board:

Monthly Lunch :

This month's lunch is on **19th February** — please arrive in time to take your seat in the dining room by 12 o'clock.

Our Speaker will be David Carter on The Pubs and Inns of Appledore

Please remember to **book-in with Helen** before taking your seat, **who will collect the £1 speaker fee.**

Lunch will be served at **1 o'clock.** (Cost **£18.50** for two courses plus coffee). As usual — Please pay at reception prior to making your way through to the dining room.

Please could those interested in attending :

- Order their choice of meal by **14th February** if they haven't already done so.
- Contact Helen Summerhayes as follows
- Text or email (preferred)
- Please advise Helen if you are unable to attend, having booked lunch in order that the hotel can be given the correct numbers. Payment to the hotel on the day can be made by cash, card or cheque (payable The Royal Hotel). If you are paying by cheque you will need to present your cheque guarantee card, this is essential and cheques will not be accepted without it.

MENU — 19th February 2025

- Thick slice boiled ham and parsley sauce with vegetables and minted new potatoes
- Battered Cod Fillet , Garden Peas , Fries and tartare sauce
- Jacket Potato with cheesy baked beans, bistro salad and house coleslaw
- Macaroni cheese , panko herb topping and garlic bread
- Mixed meat or Cheddar cheese salad, boiled egg, pickled onion, chutney, coleslaw and minted new potatoes.
- Warm Treacle tart with Devon Cream
- or Banoffee Pie
- or Cheese and Biscuits
- or Ice Cream or Fruit Salad
- Coffee

Miscellaneous: you do not receive your electronic version or have queries regarding the printed Newsletter, please contact; - **Graham Thompson**

Availability & Booking of the Upper Room : - For details, see website, programme in Upper room or contact: - Graham Thompson

Group leader changes : -Please send note of any change in name or contact details to the group leader co-ordinator : Dennis Pavitt

Upper Room payments : - Payments due for the Upper Room, etc. should be passed to the Treasurer : - **Heather Williams**

Proposed events : - If you are planning to hold an event, please contact Graham Thompson first to ensure that there are no clashes.

GROUP REPORTS



Badminton – Group Contacts
Wednesday: Diane Care
Anne Scott

We meet each Wednesday at 10am for an hour of fun badminton at the Atlantic Racquet Centre, Bideford where we use 3 courts. All equipment can be provided free of charge, each session costs £2. We are full at present but have a waiting list if you're interested in joining



Bird Watching Group
Group Contact: **Irene Hahn**

At the time of going to press, we have not yet held our January's meeting so nothing to report there. The Group is full of enthusiastic birdwatchers, but I am happy to add to a waiting list. It may be a long wait though.



Book Group 1.
Group contact: **Pat Pavitt**

This month we read 'The Good Liar' by Nicholas Searle. Roy is an elderly conman and fraudster. He has met Betty a wealthy widow online and hopes to con her out of her savings. Things don't go to plan and it ends with a twist. One we were not expecting. Coralie Dean



Book Group 2.
Group contact **Hazel McLellan**

Our meeting this month took the form of our annual New Year coffee and lunch at ND Golf Club. It is always lovely to catch up with the group after an extended break and this year was no exception. Nine of us met and managed to report on a few of the books we had read since the last meeting. There was a definite leaning towards the murder/mystery/detective genre in the holiday reading this year. Most involved well known authors - Val McDermid, Peter James, Rachel Lynch and Andrea Camilleri to list a few. We were sent to the Highlands, Lake District, Brighton and Sicily amongst other places. There were other topics as well as the mysteries. A book by Ruth Jones about four generations of a family set in Wales and Australia, the fourth book in the Deverill family set in Ireland and America, and one by Pamela Vass recording the Suffragette story in N Devon. Our reading for the next month is **Now We Shall Be Entirely Free** by **Andrew Miller**.

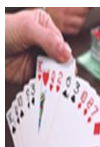


Book Group 3.
Group contact **Jo Sampson**

Equal Rites by Terry Pratchett

This book is the third in Pratchett's Discworld series of 40+ stories with the genre of fantasy. Most members of the group enjoyed it but would not return to the series for further reading. We all appreciated the author's humour, play on words and the attention given to equal rights for those who identify as female, albeit as a battle between witches and wizards.

Pratchett was very clever and his characters are well defined, but we questioned whether this particular book was better suited to young adults.



Bridge for Improvers
Group contacts: Linda Nicholls on
Sandy Madden

Tuesday evening Improvers Bridge is now starting at 6.45 for 2 hours finishing at 8.45 in the Upper Room. We are very happy to welcome new members. We are a friendly group. Over the past year we have sadly lost a few of our members and we would welcome anyone who might think of coming to actually come and 'try us out'. We play standard Acol and are a friendly group enjoying light hearted bridge. Yes there is such a thing! Please come and see for yourselves.



Canasta
Group contact : Christine Davies

We are chugging along quite happily with a convenient number for more good games. The Group is currently full so lookout for vacancies here.



Crafty Cards & Creative Craft Class.
Group contact **Alison Tamplin**
or **Carolyn Kelly**

Crafty Carding Group

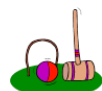
This month members tried out a new technique and we made lace cards using complicated dies, I am always amazed how different the creations are using virtually the same materials.

Next month Wednesday 18th February we will be making Easter and Spring cards new members are always welcome and we supply all materials and equipment. For more information please contact Alison- or Carolyn



Creative Craft

This month I thought we were again doing something new - Indian Block Printing, but it turned out we had done this many years ago. This did not deter members from having a lovely morning trying out the ancient technique and getting quite messy in the process.



Croquet.
Group contact: Anne Young

New month Thursday 20th February we will be knitting Easter gifts, eggs included, working in DK. If you have your own knitting needles please bring them with you.

For more information please contact Alison- New members are always welcome and we supply all materials and equipment. For additional info contact Alison or Carolyn as above

The group meets weekly at Barnstaple Croquet club, Raleigh Meadow, off St. Georges Road, Barnstaple, EX31 4UX. Tuesday, weather permitting, during the summer from 2pm to 4pm. No experience is necessary and all equipment and coaching is provided. The cost is £4 to join or rejoin the group and £4 for every session you attend. Come along to meet friendly people for a fun afternoon



Devon Inns.

Group contact: Peter Mills

Or Marilyn Clarke

The groups first outing for 2025 at The Quay Inn, on Marine Parade, Instow, proved to be a popular venue with 25 members enjoying the views out to Appledore and the river, overall the food was good, with allowances for some issues over kitchen power supplies ? which left 2/3 of us disappointed with our belly pork. It is a cosy venue, decent beer, very good service from friendly staff, it can only become more popular under the new ownership.

I do believe in exploring a wide range of options as potential venues for the group and have made a choice for our lunch in February on Thursday 13th very much with this in mind, we are having lunch @ The Guillemot, Latitude 51 on the Green at Westward Ho, EX39 1GW, we will be meeting in the Restaurant area, on the 1st floor, there is a lift if needed, with great views out over the beach and bay. Members will receive a message very soon with a menu to enable pre-ordering as requested by the venue. Members are welcome to bring guests.



Digital Camera Group 1 & 2

Group contact: Nigel Tompkins

Photography Group 1

Thank you to all who attended the 1st group meeting of the month. A number of valuable members were either unwell or in hospital. We wish you all a speedy recovery.

The images shown were again superb. The subject was 'Buildings, bits of Buildings, Doors and knockers.

Below are the 3 Images selected for the Newsletter



1 Atelier Doorway by Melvyn Lowther



2 Carisbrooke Castle by Michae Hatcher



3 Oil Lamp by Jane Irvine

Photography Group 2

Again we had a good turn out. We welcome to the Photography Group both Andy and Chrissie Robilliard. It was lovely to see a selection of the images they had taken in the past.

A great selection of images were shown by all members.

The 4 in this case that have been selected for the Newsletter are



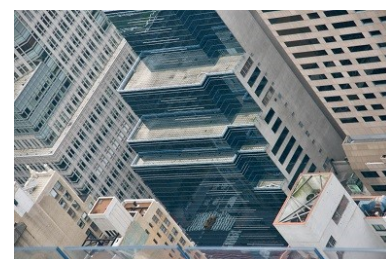
1 Tintern Abbey by Nigel Tompkins



2 Sparkling Stars by Paul Green



3 Bethlehem by Mandy King
4 Building Reflections by Peter De-nard



Discussion Group.

Group contact: Irene Baxter

The discussion was Child Abuse. We started by discussing the sex gangs. Followed by the enquiry of Judge Alexis Jay and the points she brought forward. These were not implemented. Sex abuse in institutions where it is covered up and which is a criminal offence should be declared as mandatory. DBS checking should be instigated for all people working in this situation. Discussed compensation for abused people. Child Protection Authority have little money so needs changing. There should be a Minister for Vulnerable People. Be able to call up data bases. Barred list of Unsuitable. Ethnicity is a problem. People arriving from different countries should obey our rules. Judges are too soft with their penalties. Crown prosecution need evidence before going to court. Instead of spending more millions on a new report action should be taken on Alexis Jay's report. Currently P.M. not encouraging it.



First Friday Walkers

Group contact: Margaret Curtis

Our walk on 7th February will be led by Margaret. Meet at the long lay-by just past Instow on the B3233, ready for a 10.30 am start. There is a steady climb up to the village, then the remainder of the walk is level or downhill, with beautiful views. The distance is 3.5 to 4 miles with no stiles. Although most of the route is on a hard surface, there may be a few wet or muddy patches.

Lunch will be at the Westleigh Inn. Although they don't want a pre-order, they would like to know numbers and if anyone has a food allergy. If you would like to join us please contact Margaret by Tuesday 4th February. Please let her know if you are walking and lunching and if lunching, please let her know

if you have a food allergy.



French.
Group contact **Jo Sampson**

Our group is conversation based and members have a reasonable level of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. We also listen to native french speakers via you tube. It is not suitable for beginners.



Knit & Stitch Group.
Group contact: Heather Williams

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday afternoons at 2pm in the Upper Room. We enjoy working on our own projects, finding out about what everyone else is making, having a chat and a cup of tea or coffee



Let's Talk About Books
Group contact **Peter Flacke**

The group heard one member's Desert Island Books (choices: The Times complete World History; Art of Hiroshige ed Matthi Forrer; Song lyrics by Tom Lehrer and Bob Dylan; Far Side cartoons by Gary Olsen; HMS Surprise by Patrick O'Brian; The Charterhouse of Parma by Stendhal; A God who hates by Wafa Sultan; How to survive on a desert island by Jim Pipe). The following books were among those then presented to the group:

Erasure by Percival Everett - A struggling black American author, offended by the success of fake "ghetto lit" books, goes for broke by outdoing them.

Ikigai: The Japanese secret to a long and happy life by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles - A book written by two Spaniards about a Japanese way to achieve balance in your life.

The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher by Hilary Mantel - Heartfelt stories by the much loved Mantel (though not by everyone).

A Boy in Winter by Rachel Seiffert - A fictional account of two Jewish boys attempting to escape a Nazi round up in 1941 Ukraine, and the help given them by native Ukrainians.

Richie Benaud's Blue Suede Shoes by David Kynaston and Harry Ricketts - The contrasting cultures of England and Australia as seen through the prism of the fourth test match of the 1961 Ashes series.

Next meeting 24th February at 2.00 pm. The topic for discussion will be another group member's Desert Island Books.



Mah jong
Morning Grp Contact: **Nicky Heading**

Would you like a morning of fun and laughter whilst at the same time exercising your brain? Mahjong is a good opportunity to do just that so why not give it a go? We are a very friendly group who would welcome any new members, beginners or "old hands". We meet on the first three Mondays of the month in the upper room at 10am until noon. Cost is £2 per session and we have all the equipment you'll need. Just turn up or contact Nicky Heading if you have any queries



Music—Blues/Rock.
Group Contact: David Mclellan

Our meeting this month had somewhat limited attendance but at least this enabled plenty of chat about the artists/bands that we listened to. There are very few of our meetings when Santana doesn't feature and this month was no exception with his band's cover version of *She's Not There*, that was originally recorded by the Zombies. Bob Dylan - another favourite - played *Thunder in the Mountain* from the I Wanna Rock album. *Supermassive Black Hole* represented Teignmouth alternative rock trio Muse and another alternative rock/grunge band, the short-lived Nirvana (curtailed after the suicide of singer Kurt Cobain) were represented by the track *Smells like Teen Spirit*. The Queen track *One Vision* reminded us of the sad loss of the talented headliner Freddy Mercury. American blues artist - based in France - Bernard Allison performed *The House is Rocking* from the album of the same title. The American Southern rock genre was represented by two bands - The Marshall Tucker Band and the Supersonic Blues Machine. The latter formed in 2015 as a spinoff from Steve Lukather's (long term Toto musician) side project Goodfellas. This band notably currently includes hard rock singer/guitarist Kris Barras. Blues & Rock members please note that February's meeting is cancelled. We next meet in March when there will be a theme - **Trains, Planes and Automobiles** - which regularly feature in Blues & Rock.



Photo, Walk and Talk Group
Contact: Alan Gibbons

This group has now closed due the group leader stepping down. We'd like to thank Alan for all his hard work with this group.



Playreading.
Group contact: Christine Holmes

The Playreading Group meets at members homes fortnightly at 2pm. We read a variety of plays including dramas, comedies and thrillers provided by Exeter Library. Currently we have a vacancy for someone to read male roles.



Practical Philosophy
Group Contact: **Stuart Mealing**

Or **Irene Baxter**

The philosophy group gathered to tackle the question of the top ten philosophical issues of the 21st century. After a lively debate, they narrowed the list down to topics like climate ethics, AI and consciousness, and the nature of free will in an increasingly deterministic world. But it was the question, What is a person?, that sparked the most intense discussion. Some argued that the definition of a person was becoming increasingly fluid in light of technological advancements. Could an AI, with complex enough cognitive abilities, be considered a person? If so, what distinguishes human persons from non-human intelligence? Others brought up post-humanism, noting how future humans might merge with machines—becoming cyborgs or even uploading their minds to digital platforms. Would such beings still count as human? The conversation turned to robots and the idea that a human could be "reduced" to a machine. Could our emotions, thoughts, and actions be fully explained by biology and computation? If so, was the notion of personhood simply a human construct, one that no longer holds once we understand the body and mind as mechanical systems? Questions of identity, consciousness, and agency blended together. Some argued that being a person involves more than just biology or functionality—it requires self-awareness and social relationships. Yet, as technology advances, the boundary between "person" and "machine" seems ever more porous. The group left the meeting with more questions than answers, unsure of what the future might hold for our understanding of personhood.

This report was generated by an AI bot given only the underlined words.



Science, Technology & Society.
Group contact: **Barry Zussman:**

Last Tuesday, for our first meeting of 2025, a large audience battled the weather to hear my talk about 'Heredity and Health'. As always, I really appreciate your support, and I'd also like to especially thank those members who have already offered to prepare their own talks this coming year. But this will take time, meaning that, in the short term, our meetings will have to be structured around topical discussions and online videos, rather than speaker-driven. So, for our next meeting, on Tuesday 25th February, we'll be taking a look at AI – not the technical side of it, but the potential benefits and risks for mankind.



Short/Soft Tennis - Group Contacts:
Tuesday session: Janet Broomhead (Jan)

Thursday session: Lynn Woolley

We meet at 2pm for an hour every Tuesday and at 3pm every Thursday at the Atlantic Racquet Centre. All equipment is provided free and an hour long session cost £3. No experience necessary. All equipment supplied. Fun and exercise guaranteed



Snooker (Tue & Wed)
Current Contact: Dennis Pavitt

The U3A Snooker Group has two separate weekly sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at the Kingsley Hall in Westward Ho! We spend two enjoyable hours trying to re-capture past snooker skills and enjoying the company of similar snooker enthusiasts. If you would like further information please give me a call or send me an email.



Table Tennis.
Group Contact: **Christine Isaac**

The Table Tennis Group are still enjoying our sessions at the Youth Centre and are gradually picking up numbers again. We would be happy to see any new players that might wish to give us a try



Beginners Table Tennis.
Group Contact: Melvyn Lowther

The Beginners Table Tennis Group meets every Thursday at the Atlantic Racket Centre in Bideford. We have a vacancy for a new member so if you feel like giving us a try please contact me at the above email address and I can tell you about the group. All equipment is provided and no special clothing is required. As long as your shoes will not mark the floor you're good to go!



Third Friday Walkers.
Group contact: **Linda Burgess-Bentley**

The walk on Friday 21st February will be led by Pat Blacker. Details from Pat are as follows:
Our walk today is around lesser-known parts of Bideford. I know it has been done before, but I was trying to keep to pavements, off mud and water. It is approximately 3.5 miles, mostly flat and, I hope, interesting. We meet at the gates of St Mary's Church at 10.30am as usual. There are car parks really close, or alternatively the bus stops on The Quay. We are eating at Belluno's in Bideford High Street at 12.45pm. Their menus are online. **Website: bellunobideford.co.uk/menus** Looking forward to seeing you all.
If you would like to join this walk and lunch please let Pat know by Wednesday 19th February and let her have your choice from the menu. Pat's contact details are:



Ukulele group.
Group contact **Richard Patmore**

The Ukulele Group met twice for practice in the new year. On the first occasion we played a wide range of music from our repertoire and on the second occasion we enjoyed playing Beatles music, which was great fun because many of their numbers are quite difficult to play. The group's new year lunch was held this year at the Cafe du Parc in Bideford, which was enjoyed by all those who attended.



Watercolour Groups 1&2.

Contact: Brenda Cammann

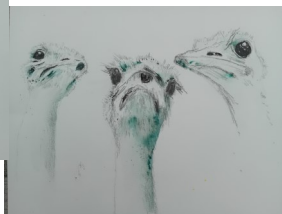
Group 1 created a landscape using a slightly different technique to produce the sky. Instead of doing a plain or variegated 'wash' for the sky area they were shown how to apply water to some of the sky area leaving some dry pristine paper for the clouds before introducing colour. It produced some very effective pictures.

Group 2 explored the vast topic of 'line and wash' (also known as 'pen and wash').

They were shown several different tools available for this technique pens, pencils, dip pens, kebab skewers, twigs, etc. Then various media with which to experiment with ... acrylic ink, calligraphy ink, drawing ink, Quink ink, fine liners, compressed charcoal and graphite pencils. Both soluble and permanent inks were used and the merits of both discussed.

Everyone in the group painted an apple then embellished it with some ink 'line' work. They then drew the apple with a pen before using watercolour to complete the image. There followed a critique and lively discussion

which proved useful and constructive.



Members of both groups were given an appraisal form to complete in order to give feedback and an opportunity to suggest topics for future sessions.

DIARY PAGE

ACTIVITY	DATE	START	END	LOCATION
<u>Groups below meet every week</u>				
Badminton	Wednesdays	10:00	11:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
Bridge for Improvers	Every Tuesday evening	18:45	20:45	Upper Room St Margarets
Croquet (Braunton)	Weekly on Tuesday - (May to Sept)	14:00	16:00	Croquet Club Barnstaple
French	Every Tuesday	10:30	12:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Short/Walking Tennis Thursday	Every Thursday afternoon	15:00	16:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
Short/Walking Tennis Tuesday	Every Tuesday Afternoon	14:00	15:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
Snooker on Tuesday	Every Tuesday from 10 a.m till 12 noon	10:00	12:00	Kingsley Snooker Hall
Snooker on Wednesday	Every Wednesday 10 am - 12 noon	10:00	12:00	Kingsley Snooker Hall
Table Tennis	Every Thursday	10:00	12:00	Bideford Youth Centre on the Pill
Table Tennis for beginners	Every Thursday between 10.00 and 11.00	10:00	11:00	Atlantic Racquets Centre
<u>Groups below meet two or three times a month</u>				
Canasta Group	Twice a month on 2nd and 4th Thursdays	10:30	12:30	Westward Ho
Knit and Stitch group	1st & 3rd Thursdays	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Mahjong Morning	1st and 3rd Monday between 10 am and 12 noon	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Play Reading	Every fortnight on Mondays at 2pm	14:00	16:00	private members houses various
Ukulele Group	1st & 3rd Mondays of every month	14:00	16:00	Northam Hall
<u>Groups below meet once a month</u>				
Bird Watching	TBA			Contact Group Leader
Book Group 1	3rd Tuesday in every month	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Book Group 2	4th Thursday in every month	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Book Group 3	1st Tuesday in every month	14:30	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Crafty Cards	3rd Wednesday in every month	09:30	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Creative Craft Class	3rd Thursday in the month	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Devon Inns	2nd Thursday in every month	12:00	14:00	See Newsletter or Contact Group Lead
Digital Camera Group 1	2nd Wednesday every month	14:00	16:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Digital Camera Group 2	3rd Wednesday in Month	15:00	17:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Discussion Group	1st Wednesday in every month	10:30	12:30	Upper Room St Margarets
First Friday Walkers	1st Friday in every month	10:30	13:00	See Newsletter or Contact Group Lead
Lets Talk About Books	4th Monday of the month at 2.00 pm	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Monthly Lunch	3rd Wednesday in Month	12:00	15:00	The Royal Hotel,Bideford
Music - Blues/Rock	2nd Thursday in every month	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Photography Walk & Talk	This group is now closed	10:30	14:30	Contact Group Leader
Practical Philosophy	2nd Tuesday in every month	14:00	16:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Science,Technology & Society	4th Tuesday in every month	14:30	16:30	Upper Room St Margarets
Scrabble	2nd Monday of the month	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets
Third Friday Walkers	3rd Friday in every month	10:30	13:00	See Newsletter or Contact Group Lead
Watercolour Group 1 (Improvers)	First Wednesday of the month	14:00	16:00	The Northam Community Cen-
Watercolour Group 2 (Beginners)	Fourth Monday of the month	10:00	12:00	Upper Room St Margarets