

# Silent Visitor



The presentation of Jesus in the Temple

## February 2019

## **Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue**

**Minister: Rev'd David Coaker**  
**Mobile No: 07378 348191**  
**E Mail: drcoaker@gmail.com**

**Secretary:** Mrs Elaine Barcz 01375 400903

**Treasurer:** Mr Alan Beckley

**Serving Elders:** Mr Alf Pryer & Mrs Denise Beckley

**Organist:** Mr Richard Wade

**Facilities Manager:** Mrs Charlotte Webb  
&  
**Hire of Halls:** Mobile No: 0784 3559011  
graysurc@gmail.com

**Silent Visitor:** Mrs Janet Semain 01375 373532  
geojan321@sky.com

### **Leaders of the Uniformed Organisations:**

**Group Scout Leader:** Mr Tim Webb  
Tel: 01375 391031

**Guide Leader:** Miss Gill Davison  
Tel: 01375 384253

**Brownie Leader:** Ms Madeleine Loin  
Mobile No: 07971 139384

## The Mystery of God



On the 6<sup>th</sup> March we will begin our Lent Course to delve deeply into the mystery of God, seeking to rediscover what it is that draws us in our search for God. We will follow Jesus through the Lenten Bible readings, allowing him to draw us, in love and wonder, into the mystery of God. We will have the opportunity to share together on Wednesday afternoons and during some of our Sunday services.

The material we will be using was prepared by the Mission Theology Advisory Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. In 2017, they ran a mission project for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. It was called "the 95 missional theses project" and every day for 95 days before the anniversary on 31 October 2017, the group issued a statement, based on the five marks of mission about the sort of Church we might believe in.

The statement which, overwhelmingly, got the most attention, was:

***We believe in a Church that is more concerned with the mystery that is God than its own success.***

Just as Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas, so Lent is for Easter. We eat pancakes, traditionally to remove ingredients we would have abstained from, but now more symbolically to prepare us for Lent to begin. Then we begin with Ash Wednesday, holding in tension the delight of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem we marked at last year's Palm Sunday and the grief of Good Friday. Then we begin our journey towards Holy Week in prayer, reflection and discussion.

It will also be a time for us to reflect on our congregation's life. We will just have had our Annual Church Meeting to reflect on the past year, prepare for the year to come, our finances, and elect elders to serve. The outcome of that meeting, whatever it is, will require changes in how we live together. If we have more elders, we can better share out the responsibilities and try new things. If we have less, we will need to prioritise what we do attempt and discern an effective way to organise ourselves. We have much to pray about in the coming weeks even before Lent begins. But we do it trusting in God. We step forward in faith to do God's will and to follow Christ.

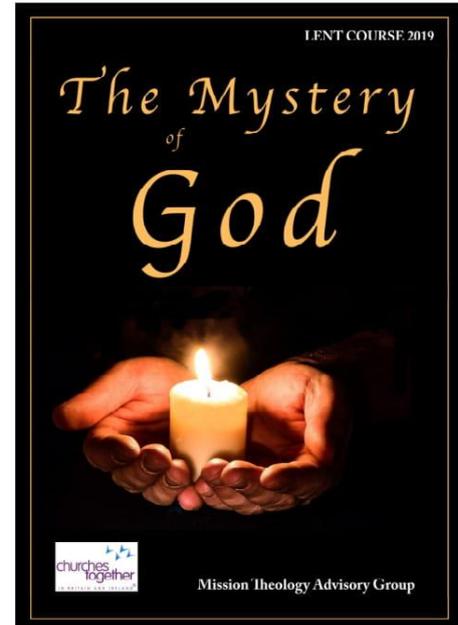
***With every blessing, Rev'd David R Coaker***

# The Mystery of God

## Lent Journey

Over the 6 weeks of Lent we will delve more deeply into the mystery of God, seeking to rediscover what it is that draws us so deeply in our search for God. We will follow the Lenten Bible readings to be drawn in love and wonder, into the mystery of God.

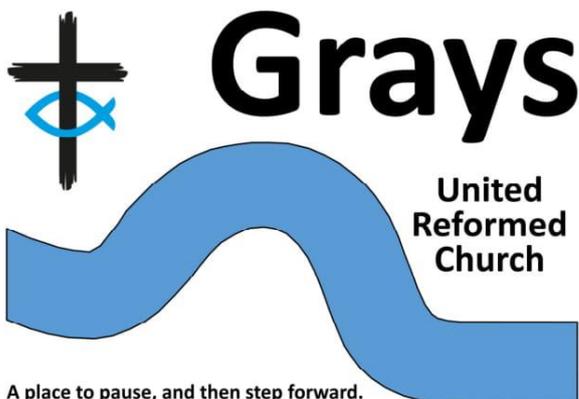
The material has been prepared by the Mission Theology Advisory Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.



**Wednesdays 1.00-2.30pm**  
**Sundays 10.30-12noon (within worship)**

**Grays United Reformed Church**  
**Bradleigh Avenue, RM17 5XD**

<b>Wed 6<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>The Mystery of Life and Death</b>
<b>Wed 13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>The Mystery of Good and Evil</b>
<b>Wed 20<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>The Mystery of God's Glory</b>
<b>Sun 24<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>The Mystery of Sin, Suffering and Hope</b>
<b>Wed 27<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>The Mystery of Relationship and Reconciliation</b>
<b>Sun 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>The Mystery of Parenthood and Adoption</b>
<b>Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> April</b>	<b>The Mystery of Love and Sacrifice</b>
<b>Sun 14<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>The Mystery of Joy and Salvation</b>



Copies of the discussion material are available at the back of the Worship space.

The material is a mix of conversation starters and things to think about, prayer and engagement with Scripture, reflection and an invitation to deepen and develop your devotional practice.



***Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
and there are varieties of services, but it is the same  
God who activates all of them in everyone. 1  
Corinthians 12: 4 – 6***

We are never too young, never too old, to explore and engage with where God's Spirit is leading. We are never too male or too female, clever or not so clever, too busy or unemployed, too British or too foreign, to play an active part within the body of Christ, the sign of God's kingdom, that we limit by just calling it 'going to church'. I'm not saying that we should all expect to be bearing children anytime soon, leading large groups of people across a desert, taking over the country in our old age, that we should arm our younger members with slingshots or send them in to debate on Newsnight; but I am saying that we shouldn't expect it not to happen!

It may well be that if we set off to do something it changes path, doesn't take us where we thought it would, but that happens when we trust in God and go where God leads us, rather than where we want to go or, the more likely, want to stay.

God trusts us even when we don't trust in ourselves or completely trust in God. Trust is hard to earn, hard to give, but it is the foundation of our faith. It is our faith, our trust in God, which grounds everything else. It is that faith which we lean on in times of hardship, fear or confusion. It is that faith in which we delight in times of ease, joy or clarity. It is that faith that gives us the confidence to ask questions, to doubt, to try something different, to put all of our fears to one side and step forward anyway.

As Church we gather to discern God's will. If together we feel God's hand with an activity then we should step forward in faith, and if it is of God and we keep discerning the Spirit, it will be a blessing to us, to the community around us, and be a true sign of God's kingdom. We discern by debating, praying and deciding. Our Church is not a democracy, no simple yes or no vote; we are called to engage with God, with issues and with each other.

Our discussion should always be 'I agree because ...'; I disagree because ...'; I don't know because ...'. We should always try to express a reason for why we think or feel something, or are unsure, to share at a deeper level what we believe, to better help us all discern where we are being led as a fellowship. At least

then we will have a better idea why, or why not, we are doing something.

Following the way of Christ is a decision that we remake each and everyday as we seek to discern God's will and remain in tune with the Spirit. We all have a part to play. All of us have gifts, all of us have the light of God's Spirit within us, all of us can through our personal devotions draw close to God, all of us can support the declaring of God's kingdom, and we are all part of the same body, the body of Christ, the Church.

To paraphrase Paul's words, words that are true for individuals, and for each of us at different times: In some of us it is easier to see the Spirit at work, others we can rely on for a level head in a situation and a sensible solution, in different areas some of us have great knowledge and expertise, others just radiate their faith, some are a good companion in difficult times, others just seem to walk into amazing situations, some just seem to always have the right words, others can see the gifts within people, some just let the Spirit direct their voices and action and rely on the gifts of others to make sense of it. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

We have all been blessed with gifts from God, how we use them is how we offer praise back to God. So who can't take part in the Lent Bible studies? Who shouldn't consider becoming a church member or elder? What ideas are too daft to consider?

We live in interesting times, and rather than a Chinese curse I see it as the blessing of God as the Spirit moves within, through and around us as we discern the way of Christ together. Let us discern that path together and step out in faith. We are never too young, never too old, to explore and engage with where God's Spirit is leading.

We are never too male or too female, clever or not so clever, too busy or unemployed, too British or too foreign, to play an active part within the body of Christ, the sign of God's kingdom, that we limit by just calling it 'going to church'.

**With every blessing, Rev'd David R Coaker**

## News of the Family



Over the past few weeks there have been many in our Church family who have felt unwell and who have not had the best start to the New Year. We think of those who are recovering from a stay in hospital, an operation or tests and treatments for ongoing problems and wish them all a speedy recovery.

It was very sad to hear that Jim Mitchell had died and our thoughts and prayers are with Ruth and the family. (Eulogy attached).

It was lovely meeting Penelope, Sam & Stacey's daughter a few weeks ago at a service. Penelope, who was only 9 weeks old behaved impeccably! Sam's Mum & Dad, Sallie and Peter (Marshall) were also back in Thurrock as they had been helping Ben to celebrate his birthday.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February Ben and Laura will be married in the Church and we look forward to seeing the Marshall family back in Grays once again. They are greatly missed since they moved away but it is good to know they are settled in their new area.

*Dear Lord, we value the time we spend together in fellowship.  
We ask you to strengthen our love for one another.*

*We think of those who are unable to worship with us and we ask  
that they feel the comfort and support you offer through your love  
for us.*

Amen



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### A Few Dates to Remember:-



**Pie Lunch the 5<sup>th</sup> February from 11.30 for 12 noon.**

**Messy Church 20<sup>th</sup> February @ 2.30 – 4.30**

Volunteers needed to help serve meals and for making cakes & deserts for the **Annual Lunch for Retired Ministers** on **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 12 noon for 12.30**

**World Day of Prayer 1<sup>st</sup> March** see details attached.

**World Day of Prayer  
(A women led, global, ecumenical movement)**

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019**



**Come – Everything is Ready!**



Praying for Slovenia  
A Service for Everyone

Everything is ready and the invitation is for everyone – men, women and children of all ages to join this Day of Prayer. Women of Slovenia, one of the smallest and youngest countries in Europe, have prepared this year's service and they encourage us to reflect on the barriers they have faced since the end of the Second World War when their country was a part of Yugoslavia, a Marxist socialist republic. They share the challenges they have met and the hopes they have for the future.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world; their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally, at a church near you on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of Slovenia.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world – through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Australia before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later.

**The Churches near us are:-**

**2pm @ Socketts Heath Baptist Church, Premier Ave,  
Grays RM16 2SB**

**7.30pm @ St Mary's Church, Little Thurrock, Dock  
Road, RM17 5PU**

**Everybody is Welcome  
Refreshments after each Service**

## Jim Mitchell



Jim's words: 'Anyone who has conducted funerals will have written or been given a eulogy to read. Most are composed of comments and memories of loved ones and pieced together with a sort of life story. It's not so rare for a person to write their own – more likely they will have written a book. I have been asked to write my own life story more than once, probably because I can spin a good story or two from my life as a policeman. Had such a book been written my title would have been, 'There's Always a Shoe'. (He respectfully found humour in even the darkest situations in his career. He often found himself at the scene of a shout, holding a solitary shoe).

We've taken liberty of adding to Jim's words, with contributions from his loving family and friends, to weave together a story of Jim's life and character. Jim, or Mitch to many was, in his words, born at an early age! He was the son of Ivy and Bob Mitchell, and younger brother to Geoff. He was named James John Mitchell, after the biblical brothers, known as the 'Sons of Thunder', perfect for Jim given the noise he made in this world!! He grew up in post war Poplar, in the East End of London, among people of different nationalities and faiths. Jim was 7 when his father died, the after-effects of his wartime experience. Jim recounted that he enjoyed playing with Geoff and the bigger boys in bombed out houses, frequently getting into mischief.

As a small boy Jim spent time with his friend Inge, and her mother, who didn't speak English, so she labelled things. Jim recalled that one afternoon as his mother peeled potatoes he referred to them as "Kartoffle". His mother was naturally upset, having lost her husband as the result of war. "That's HUN speak! Where did you learn that?" she asked. Jim replied "no its not, it Australian!" Inge's mother was in fact an Austrian Jew!

The great fortune of learning "Austrian" at an early age stood Jim in good stead when an exchange programme to Germany was proposed to him during the early part of his police career. Later in life, Jim and I (Ruth) were also able to build strong links with Germany through the church.

Returning to the story of Jim as a young man, whilst his lifelong friend Mike joined the army Jim wanted to join the Royal Navy. He couldn't wait to join the long line of mariners in his family. He joined the local Sea Cadets and applied for any courses away with the RN. His best ever time was with HMS Collingwood, the Electrician's School at Fareham, but he experienced little sea time aboard naval ships. In the end, a career in the Navy was not to be for Jim. At the age of 15, the prospect of signing up for 12 years was quite daunting, particularly leaving his widowed mother. It was a big decision not to join up when his heart was set on going. Surprisingly to Jim, his mother was more upset than he was. His little time at sea was not wasted, however. Jim learned how to rely on others and how to be reliable. The men that instructed Jim in the Navy were experienced by life, and of his father's generation, and were his first mentors, even heroes.

After several brief jobs in and around East London, Jim found an ad in a national newspaper. The Metropolitan Police were recruiting young men into a newly formed Corps of Cadets. He applied and was accepted and we could say that the rest is history. Actually the adventures were just beginning for Jim. His cadet training fell at a time when the Metropolitan Police were trying different ways to make more rounded and capable future police officers. Jim's training encompassed more military style outdoor activities such as canoeing and climbing, map reading and physical pursuits, alongside the traditional police training. This appealed to Jim immensely and did indeed help shape the future police officer. He finished his training at 19, being one of the last cadets at Peel House.

Socially, during this time, Jim had the opportunity to visit jazz clubs, see more live music and played his father's banjo in a Trad Jazz band with other cadets. Jim's first posting was to Chadwell Heath and, on returning home one evening, he commented to his mother that he would need to learn Welsh as every other Policeman at the station was a Welshman. This was not as he expected – there were not a lot of cockneys.

Jim progressed from walking the beat to riding 'Noddy bikes' - so called as it was impossible to salute whilst riding them. He then progressed to vans. Somehow, at a young age, Jim talked his way into a spell at Hendon to become a class one driver. He returned

to division as a surprisingly young area car driver. In seeking further adventure and better pay, Jim joined the Diplomatic Protection Group in the mid-1970s. Jim's recounting of this mainly consisted of freezing in front of an Embassy whilst concealing a small handgun with only 5 bullets in his pocket.

He returned to Ilford and Chadwell Heath around 1978, driving Juliet 4, the area car, in different guises up until the last 2 years of his career. His last extra two years were as enquiries officer mainly based at Wanstead where he was also 'station cat' looking after the various relief's and locking up. His exploits and his cartooning were legendary; many, many people have commented on his humour, his loud laughter but also his total commitment to his colleagues and the public he served. He was well respected and loved by so many. The next generation of coppers have been heard to say 'what would Mitch do' in the situations they faced.

Jim was very keen that people should know he had a life after serving as a Policeman. He married me 6 months before he retired and together we started a new life in Broadway in the Cotswold, where I had a church post. The day after Jim retired, he was sitting under blue skies on top of a beloved steam locomotive cleaning the brass work. During his 10 years with me in Broadway, Jim trained as locomotive fireman and loved every moment working amongst a surprising number of retired coppers, and people from many other areas and professions, with varieties of dialect which of course he could mimic. All Jim's jokes had the accents and dialects added, as many of you will recall.

Jim was also very involved in the life of the church and village. His activities including building scenery in the refurbished Lifford hall, being the back-end of the horse in one panto and wicked bank manager in another and driving groups of young people across Europe on exchange to Germany. He also mentored young people who were experiencing difficulties, and so, so much more. The house in Broadway always had the kettle on and the door open and food available on the pine kitchen table. Jim himself had made the table; it was our first piece of joint furniture. On multiple occasions in subsequent years, he threatened to burn it, because it wasn't up to his pernickety best. If only it could talk, what stories it would tell!

For Jim, family has always been very, very important. Jim always cherished his love for Robert and Stuart, his 2 sons from his marriage to Margaret. He shared his love for trains and model making with his sons and passed on a “can do” attitude towards practical problems. When Robert was on a motorcycle trip around Europe with his good friend Roger, Robert was involved in an accident on his way to the ferry. Jim was there by his side to help him on his road to recovery. And when Stuart was studying to be a train driver, Jim was his devoted revision companion. It gave Jim huge pleasure to see Stuart qualify in that role, sharing his own love of trains.

Jim was also a devoted granddad. Each grandchild is precious, each with their own unique relationship with granddad. Up until recently, all Jim’s grandchildren were boys until Alice, lovely little Alice. Panic set in at that point for Jim; “what do you buy for a girl?” he asked. Robert’s sons Callum and Finn helped to come up with the suggestions of a pink boiler suit, pink welding gear and a pink tool kit, which made Jim laugh no end. Jim talked of a memorable trip to the London science museum with Stuart’s son Caleb. The tube home had been particularly crowded, and Jim had made everyone laugh by pretending he had a wig, and had lost it in the closing tube train doors; Jim had a gift of putting people at their ease. Then there are Stuart’s sons, Oliver and Charlie, the Colchester boys who Jim loved babysitting for when they were little. They always got up to mischief with granddad – often they had only just got into bed when Mum and Dad came home!

Jim has been known to many of you here as Uncle Jim. He had such a big heart he made those around him feel like they were part of his family. In the wonderful messages we have received in Jim’s memory, many have commented on his strong faith and how it impacted on his life and those around him. At the age of 7 when his father died, Jim recalled his mother overheard him tell God he wanted nothing more to do with him unless his father was back by the morning. His mother was a gentle lady of very deep faith, faced suddenly with bringing the boys up on her own. She vowed to pray that one day Jim would come to faith and know of God’s love for himself just as she knew this within her own life. In 1981 she witnessed her boy kneeling before the Bishop of Barking and being licensed as a reader in the Church of England. Her prayer had been answered some 4 years before, when he had what is often

termed a “Damascus road experience”. Her only complaint was that God had made her wait nearly 30 years! Jim’s faith underpinned everything he did and everything he was. As the years passed his deepest desire was that people should know that they are loved by God and how deep God’s love is for them.

Jim at times would get frustrated with what he called “churchianity” – committees and meetings etc. He just wanted to tell people of God’s love for them in Jesus ‘To know Jesus and make him known’. When Jim himself conducted funerals, he wanted people to understand that God loves them so much, and wanted people to realise how important it is tell others that you love them because one day it might just be too late.

About a month before he went into hospital he said ‘I don’t think I’ll ever preach again’. He didn’t get quite as far with his eulogy as he would have liked, but his choice of hymns are his last sermon, as they speak about the greatness of God and of the depth of his love for each one of us. Love was his watchword and also it is his legacy that lives on in each of us. We all will miss the noise and wonder if we have gone deaf, but stories and humour and love live on, and these are also part of his cherished gift to each of us.

Thank you Jim for sharing our lives, for all the memories, you will always be with us, always loved and never forgotten.

*Rev'd Ruth Mitchell*

## "Scouts Trip Down Under"



Some of the Scouts from 7<sup>th</sup> Grays joined with others across Essex to make a group of about eighty scouts who flew out from

Heathrow on Boxing Day to Hong Kong where they stayed for four nights. Whilst there they visited, amongst other sites, the Tian Tian Buddha and the Funicular Railway which travels 400m above sea level.

They then flew to Cairns in Australia for another four action packed days. They saw in the New Year, explored the jungle, said hello to some crocodiles and swam off the Great Barrier Reef. They also met some Scouts from Queensland who would be joining our Scouts at the Jamboree in Adelaide.

As they flew out from Cairns, several of the contingent from Essex were invested as Explorers (continuation from Scouts aged 14 to 18) and received their Gold Awards for badges obtained whilst being Scouts.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> January they joined with another 10,000 Scouts from all over the world – 19 countries in total. It started with an opening ceremony which looked like a clip from Glastonbury!!! Whilst there they would take part in many events where they would learn how to work as a team and leadership skills.

Some of the 7<sup>th</sup> Grays Scouts acted as Patrol and Assistant Patrol Leaders in charge of Scouts from other countries.

At the end of the Jamboree the Scouts travelled to Sydney for 3 nights then flew home via Hong Kong.

*Cliff Potter (Dad of George Potter one of the Adventurers)*





Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019

2.30pm – 4.30pm

**Grays United Reformed Church**

Bradleigh Avenue RM17 5XD



Fun activities for all ages

Exploring Stories from Bible

Share afternoon tea

Come along join in the fun



**Please call, text or email to book 07806739959**

**Email [graysurc@gmail.com](mailto:graysurc@gmail.com)**

**No charge, donations gratefully received.**

**Children must be accompanied by an adult.**

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

 Find us on  
Facebook **URC Grays**

## Something To Cheer Us Up a Bit!

From Alf Pryer

### Hair today, Gone Tomorrow:



Elderly patient: *So, tell me doctor, how bad is it?*

Doctor: *Its not very good, I'm afraid. Your hair loss is increasing and your memory isn't what it used to be.*

Elderly patient: *Oh well, it could be worse, I suppose I could be going bald!*

.....

### Private Treatment:

Doctor: *Would you like a local anaesthetic?*

Patient: *Certainly not, BUPA's paying for this. Give me something imported!*



### The Advance of Science:

As an old age pensioner was making good use of his rail pass and found himself sitting opposite a smartly dressed man on a train to Portsmouth.

The pensioner asked: *"What kind of work do you do?"*

*"I'm a naval surgeon",* replied his fellow passenger.

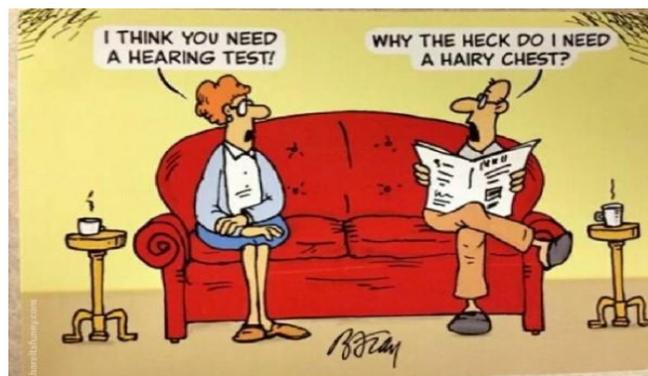
The pensioner looked impressed and commented: *"My word, how you doctors specialise these days."*

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### Trial and Error:

Doctor: And how is your new hearing aid working Mr Smith?

Mr Smith: Half past three!



## FEBRUARY 2019 - ROTAS

<b>FLOWERS</b>		Arranged by	Supplied by
<b>February</b>	3	Lilian Hodges	
	10		
	17	Maureen Overland	
	24		
<b>March</b>	3	Frances Lock	

<b>PREACHERS</b>		Time	
Young family service	3	9.30 am	Rev'd Dave/Denise
Morning Service with Communion	3	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Family Service	10	10.30 am	George Semain
Parade Service	17	10.30 am	Denise Beckley
Communion	17	6.30 pm	Alf Pryer
Family Service	24	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
<b>March</b>			
Young family service	3	9.30 am	Rev'd Dave/Denise
Morning Service with Communion	3	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker

<b>READERS</b>			
<b>February</b>	3	10.30 am	Margaret & Alf
	10	10.30 am	Gina & Richard
	17	10.30 am	Phil King
	24	10.30 am	Ruth & Anne
<b>March</b>	3	10.30 am	Edna & Inger

**Duty Steward: Alf Pryer**

**Hymn Book Steward: Margaret Pryer**

<p><b>This year's Charity is:- Friends of Essex &amp; Thurrock Homeless</b></p>
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## CHURCH CALENDAR

### SERVICES

SUNDAY	10.30 am	FAMILY SERVICE
HOLY COMMUNION	10.30 am	1 <sup>st</sup> SUNDAY EACH MONTH
	6.30 pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY EACH MONTH
PARADE SERVICE	10.30 am	3 <sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY EACH MONTH

### MEETINGS

COFFEE MORNING	10.30 am	EACH WEDNESDAY
BOWLS	2.00 pm & 7.30 pm	EACH MONDAY
PRAYER MEETING	10.00 am	2 <sup>nd</sup> WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH (before coffee)
	6.45 pm	EVERY FRIDAY
MESSY CHURCH		AS ANNOUNCED

- For information about Messy Church – Worship together for families – please contact Denise Beckley on 07806 739959.
- All meetings take place in the Church or the Church hall unless otherwise indicated.

**You can find us at: Bradleigh Avenue, Grays, RM17 5XD**

**On our website at: Graysurc.org.uk**



**URC Grays**