

# Silent Visitor

United Reformed Church  
Grays



Tyne Cot WWI Cemetery, Ypres

**November 2017**

## Dancing in the Rain

Have you ever been asked to do something that you have never done before?

When Janet asked me to write the opening article for the November Silent Visitor two thoughts came straight to my mind, why ask me and what would I write. The first answer came quickly in the form of another question, why not me? The second, I answered myself, let's start tapping the keys on the computer and see what comes out. You never know what you can do until you try.

While sitting having lunch with some friends the other day I was looking around the restaurant walls and noticed three posters:-

*Always remember  
you are braver  
than you believe,  
stronger than you  
seem and smarter  
than you think*

*Life is not about  
waiting for the  
storm to pass.  
It's about learning to  
dance in the rain*

*It's never too  
late to live happily  
ever after*

When Jesus chose his disciples, he chose ordinary people like you and me; he didn't look for the highly educated or the professionals, just men from everyday walks of life. The disciples didn't ask why me, or what can I do, or why can't you ask somebody else? They just got on with it, without any real insight into where it would lead them, or what the outcome would be. Now that's what I call trust, or real faith. Jesus called and they answered, "Yes Lord".

During the three years that this small group spent with Jesus, He taught them all sorts of things, but most of all he taught them to love and to trust God. Now imagine how they felt when he was arrested and violently slaughtered. Would we run away and hide and pretend we didn't know Jesus? Or would we stand up and be counted? The disciples sheltered from the storm for a few days, but then with the aid of the Holy Spirit they learned to dance in the rain. They were suddenly braver, stronger and smarter than they could have possibly imagined. Jesus left his disciples with a great commission to go and make disciples of all nations and teach them to follow his commands. If we take up this challenge we will live happily for ever in the presence of God our Father.

*David Lock*

## Friends & Family of the Church

We remember the members and friends of this Church who are unable to worship with us for one reason or another and we remember especially Joyce Fraser and Doreen Thomas.

We also think of Lyn Dainty who is known to some of us from her connection with the Fellowship Meetings, Coffee Mornings and, in days gone by, the Squirrel Club. Lyn is unfortunately in hospital following a fall. We wish her a speedy recovery.

*Lord Jesus, we ask your blessing on all those who are feeling unwell or in need of your love and support. May they feel the comfort of your healing hands.*

## Messy Christmas Celebration

Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> November 3.30 – 5.30pm. All children must be accompanied by an adult.	Enjoy Christmas craft for all ages + worship time exploring the Christmas Story and share a meal together. To book a place please call: 0786739959 or e-mail: <a href="mailto:graysurc@gmail.com">graysurc@gmail.com</a>
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## Details of Christmas Services December 2017

Sunday 3rd @ 10.30 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent – Service of Holy Communion
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> @ 10.30 am	All age Christmas Celebration & Gift Service (supporting Women's Aid) Unwrapped gifts welcome and cash)
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> @ 6.30 pm	Christmas Carols with the Tilbury Band followed by refreshments and a concert by the Band.
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> @ 10.30 am	All age Nativity + Parade Service
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> @ 10.30am	Christmas service for the very young - Bring a Teddy.
Christmas Eve 10.30 am	All Age Service including Christingle
Christmas Eve 11.30 pm	Carol Service – Christ is Born
Christmas Day	No Service

## Sunday 19 November

At the morning service on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> November, Thembe Nkungu and Kee Cheung will made members of our Church. Rev'd David Rees will be conducting this Celebratory Service concluding with Holy Communion. During the service Kee will be baptised.



We look forward to this special day and ask as many members and friends of the Church to be there to welcome Thembe & Kee into membership.

After the service there will be cake and tea & coffee.

*(NB: Please note there will be a church meeting following the refreshments).*



## Christmas Greetings

A reminder that for the past few years members of the congregation have been including a Christmas greeting in the Silent Visitor instead of sending out individual Christmas cards. The idea being that any money that would have been spent on buying and sending cards could be donated to Charity.

If you would like a greeting included in the December edition of the Silent Visitor please let me have your greeting (in writing or e-mail) along with your **name** and the **name of your charity by Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> November.**

*Janet Semain*

## IN REMEMBRANCE



This country, together with other Commonwealth countries, has been solemnly remembering the event of the Battle of Passchendaele (also known as the third Battle of Ypres) which raged between July and November 1917. In particular, New Zealand has formally opened a new War Memorial to this battle which cost them 2,700 casualties, 845 killed and 1900 wounded in the first few hours. That country also held a special Remembrance Service at Tyne Cot Cemetery on 12<sup>th</sup> October last. They referred to "the darkest day in New Zealand's post 1840 history!"

Tyne Cot Cemetery is a very special place. It is the resting place of 11,954 soldiers of the Commonwealth Forces, the largest number of burials in any Commonwealth cemetery of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars. It is the largest Commonwealth military cemetery in the world. It was built on the site of German blockhouses where an uninterrupted view of the town of Ypres was available, covering the British positions within the Ypres Salient, a projection into enemy held territory.

Janet and I visited it this year and it was a sobering experience. To see nearly twelve thousand gravestones arranged with military precision, in white stone, engraved with the names of the personnel who were buried beneath them was dispiriting enough but when we turned our attention to the Memorial to the Missing, in remembrance of 90,000 more whose identities could not be established and who died in the Ypres Salient battle sector, one's thoughts became pensively sad. We were looking at the result of "mud, death and despair": mud that took 26 horses from which to free a gun; death in such numbers as to be almost incomprehensible and despair that man was foolish enough to plough headlong into such a battle from which it would be almost impossible to calculate who "won".

There is an interesting story of one man's personal contribution to the remembrance of Passchendaele. One hundred years after the battle, John Slough, a master gun-maker, who lost his grandfather in the battle, has reconditioned some old British Empire artillery pieces. He is taking more than a dozen of them to the site of the battle where, on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 16 guns will fire 100 blank rounds, one for every year that has passed since the battle

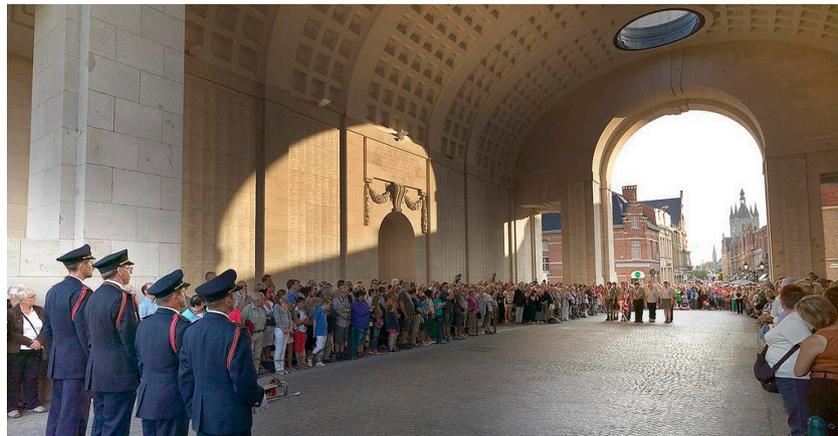
ended. (In fact, more than 4.5 million shells had been fired before the battle ended.) Mr Slough will lead a convoy of trucks from his factory three days beforehand.

Of the 11,954 burials in Tyne Cot cemetery, 8,367 (about 70%) were unable to be identified. Their graves are marked with words which bring a pang of sadness yet which glorifies those who were so interred, "Known unto God". Perhaps the echoes of Christ's Passion and Death explains the catastrophe better. As a historian, Gareth Hughes has said, "Ypres (pronounced 'wipers' by some Australians and Tommies who couldn't get their tongues round the French spelling) is today a wonderful city. A visit to Ypres and its nearby battlefields and cemeteries, is an experience which makes an indelible imprint on one's soul."

**The Menin Gate, Ypres** where the Last Post Ceremony takes place at 20.00 hours each day.

Tens of thousand of soldiers passed through this gate on their way to the front, many of them never to return.

Opened in 1927, the memorial bears the names of 54,896 soldiers who were reported missing in the Ypres Salient. Because the gate was too small to hold the names of all the missing, a further 35,000 names are commemorated on the panels of Tyne Cot Memorial.



*George Semain*

## A Poem Worth Reading

He was getting old and paunchy  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the Legion,  
Telling stories from the past.



Seaham, Co. Durham

Of a war that once he fought in  
And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies;  
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbours  
His tales became a joke,  
All his buddies listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,  
For 'ol Joe has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer  
For a Veteran died today.

He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife.  
For he lived a very ordinary,  
Quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,  
Going quietly on his way.  
And the world won't note his passing,  
'Tho a Veteran died today.

When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that they were young.  
But the passing of a Veteran  
Goes unnoticed and unsung.

Perhaps just a simple headline  
In the paper that might say,  
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING  
A VETERAN DIED TODAY."

Poem submitted by Gina Nottage from the internet & abridged

# Christmas Market

The Christmas Market this year will be held on  
**Saturday 18 November**  
Doors opening at **10 am** and closing at **1pm**

Make a note of the **date** and **change of time**  
( it is earlier than last year)  
and come along and join in the fun!

There will be various stalls to browse over and will include tombola (Alf & Margaret), holiday gifts/nearly new (Jean & Frances), second hand books (Colin), Christmas decorations and plants (Ruth & Roger). There will also be "guess the weight of the cake" (Inger) and "name the mystery creature" (Jill). As usual donations of cakes will be very welcome.

The Chestnut Guild will have handicrafts on sale and we know there is always something lovely to buy that has been handcrafted to perfection.

Let the stallholders have any donations for their stalls prior to the 18<sup>th</sup>. Ruth and Roger will be looking forward to receiving donations of any cuttings or plants.

Of course, there will be the usual selection of home made cakes to tempt your taste buds. You can either take some home or enjoy them with a cup of coffee or tea.

In addition there will be some activities for children in the church (Denise, Margaret & Robert Datlen).

Please support this event.



## The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm

Timmy was a little 5 year old boy whose Mum loved him very much. Being a worrier, she was concerned about his walking to school on his own when he started at Infant School.

She walked with him the first few days, but he came home one day telling her he did not want her walking him to school every day. He wanted to be like the "big boys". He protested so loudly that she had to find another way to handle it.

She asked her neighbour Shirley if she would surreptitiously follow her son to school at a distance, but close enough to keep a watch on him. Shirley said that, since she was up early with her toddler anyway, it would be a good way for them to get some exercise so she agreed.

The next school day, Shirley and her little girl, Marcy, set out behind Timmy, as he walked to school with his friend Ronnie. This went on for a whole week. Timmy's friend noticed that this same lady was following them every day. Finally Ronnie asked Timmy, "Have you noticed a lady following us all week? Do you know her?"

Timmy nonchalantly replied, "Yeah, I know who she is".

Ronnie asked, "Well, who is she?"

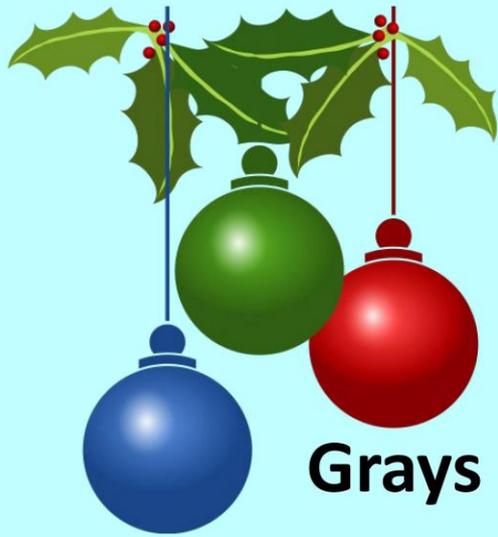


"That's just Shirley Goodnest and her little girl Marcy," Timmy said.

Ronnie enquired further, "Well, why does she follow us every day like that?"

"Well," Timmy explained, "every night Mummy makes me say the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm with my prayers because she worries about me so much. And in it, the psalm says, 'Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life'. So, I guess I'll just have to get used to it."

(This story was told by Roger Brett at a recent service and he kindly agreed that it could be included in the SV)



# Christmas

# Bazaar

**Grays United Reformed Church**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

**10am - 1pm**

Handmade knitted    crochet & craft items

Bric-a-brac & second hand white elephant goods

Books    Cake & bake    Plants & decorations

Tombola & various stalls

Refreshments

Children's Christmas craft activities

& story time, no charge.

Bradleigh Avenue, Grays, RM17 5XD

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



# Grays United Reformed Church



Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017

3.30pm–5.30pm

## Merry Church Christmas Celebration



Enjoy Christmas craft suitable for all ages, worship time exploring the Christmas story and a meal shared together.

Please call, text or email to book  
07806739959 Email [graysurc@gmail.com](mailto:graysurc@gmail.com)

No charge, donations accepted.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Bible stories



Grays United Reformed Church  
Bradleigh Avenue, RM17 5XD



## **SERVICES**

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

Bradleigh Avenue, Grays, RM17 5XD

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

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