

Silent Visitor

**United Reformed Church
Grays**



June 2018

Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue

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Pentecost: story or strategy?



When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. **Acts 2: 1-4 NRSV**

After Jesus' arrest the disciples hide away. On Easter Sunday the resurrection presence of Christ was before them, and they were amazed. In the days that followed their faith was renewed, they had doubted on Good Friday but now they were filled with courage and conviction. Then Christ leaves them again, that vital, powerful, resurrecting force that had overwhelmed them, ascends to heaven. The disciples are left looking up to heaven wondering what to do next; and decide to look down to earth and hold an election for Judas' replacement.

The day of Pentecost finds the disciples again gathered behind closed doors. The passion that had filled them between Easter Sunday and Ascension has diminished, and they gather to organise themselves and enjoy each others company.

This quiet and ordered scene is violently disturbed. A fierce gale fills the room, flames rush in dancing over their heads, and suddenly they are gibbering at each other using words they don't understand.

Then they go outside. Leave the comfort of there cosy, safe, well-loved space, and go out into the street still speaking these strange words. It is only then that the words make sense, the people outside understand them, and even more amazingly these strange words cause the hearers to question their whole understanding of life and they become followers of Christ.

So, is the story of Pentecost simply that, a nice story of how things worked years ago, or is it a strategy for how we should be Church today?

When Pentecost happened to them, the disciples had no idea what was going to take place or where they might be led, but they did have a foundation to support them. They had been blessed with

knowing Jesus, experienced his life, death, and resurrection, and had organised themselves giving leadership roles to key people.

All of us have had an experience of Christ in our lives, however we struggle with the words to express that experience and its meaning for us, and we have different people within our fellowship that support our church. So, we can say that we are in a similar situation to those first disciples.

But are we? Do we look at their story and let it wash over us, a nice tale of how things used to be?

If the disciples as they sat comfortably in that room had decided to keep their door closed, remain comfortable, the fire that had filled them and the words they were speaking would have been wasted. We may struggle to find a direct connection between the drama of the first Pentecost and our fellowship, but, if we have nothing we want to share with the world around us, what is our purpose?

The Jesus we read of in the gospels, the Church that we see in Acts that spread in his name, the kingdom of God that calls us towards its fulfilment, is not to be kept behind closed doors. Closed doors are there to keep us safe, so we do not get disturbed by the world around us. The gospel we as Christians are called to live is one of disturbance. Jesus challenged the complacency of the religious leaders of his day and disturbed the status quo that held following the rules in higher regard than helping people and caring for them.

We cannot look at the world, at the community in which we live, and not see that there is a desperate need for compassion.

Christ has no hands and no voices but ours, do we keep the doors closed or do we step out in faith?

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

What it means to be Christian

In a series of studies we are invited to join author and Biblical scholar Marcus Borg to revisit Christianity's most fundamental questions.

Wednesdays 1.00-2.30pm

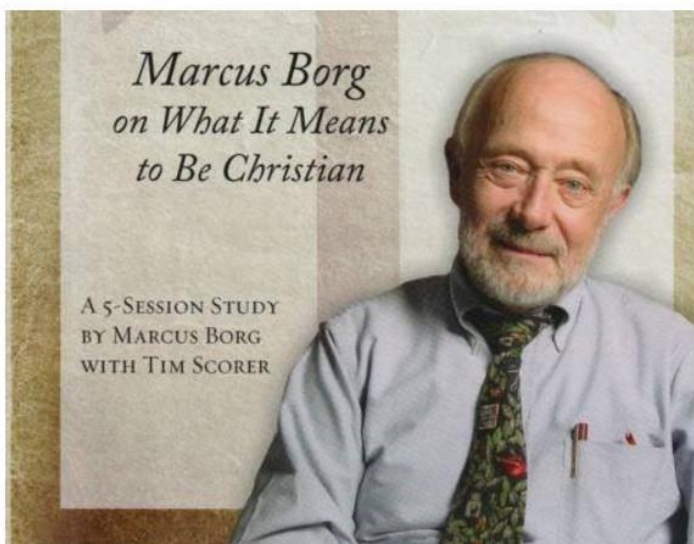
**Grays United Reformed Church
Bradleigh Avenue, RM17 5XD**

God	Jesus	Salvation	Community	Practice
4 July	18 July	25 July	8 Aug	15 Aug

The study addresses fundamental questions that adults struggle with as faith matures: Who is God? What does salvation mean? What place does Jesus hold in contemporary Christian faith?

In this five-session, faith-formation resource, participants will witness Marcus, who sadly died in 2015, in dialogue with a small, diverse group of adults as they honestly - and sometimes painfully - confront the big questions and work together toward authentic answers.

Each session includes a 10-minute presentation by Marcus Borg followed by interaction with the group.



Some preparatory work is encouraged and resources will be available to help us "join the dialogue" following the dvd input.

Outline of time together:

Welcome & refreshments

Watch dvd (30mins)

Open Discussion

Closing prayer

Jacob and Katherine's World Scout Jamboree Adventure



Hi everyone. We have been asked to do a little article about why we are fundraising for the World Scout Jamboree and give some details about it all.

The 24th World Scout Jamboree will be held in July 2019 in West Virginia, USA. Katherine and I, along with 6 other Scouts from Thurrock, have been selected to represent Essex as part of their contingent to the Jamboree. The Jamboree is expected to be the biggest one yet with approx. 45,000 Scouts, Leaders and support workers from across the globe attending and will be bigger than the Olympic games.

The idea for the Jamboree event was first suggested to Robert Baden-Powell in 1918 by Captain Melas, the head of the Scouts in Greece. (Hence the Jamboree is held every 4 years like the Olympics). The first Scout Jamboree was held in the Olympia Halls, London in 1920 with 8,000 Scouts attending from 34 different countries. They have been held every 4 years since then with just two exceptions. Between 1937 and 1947 there was no Jamboree due to the Second World War and again in 1979 when the Jamboree was supposed to be held in Iran. Every time the Jamboree has a theme. This year it is Unlock a New World and was thought of by the young people involved in the bid. The theme speaks to the new adventures, cultures and friendships that will be shared during the 12 day event in North America, a continent often referred to as 'The New World'. The 24th Jamboree is unusual because it is being hosted by 3 nations; America, Mexico and Canada. It is the norm to only have one host nation.

Our trip next July will be for roughly 21 nights and made up of 3 parts. The Jamboree will be from 22nd July-2nd Aug. We will also get to visit an American city, which will most probably be New York or Washington, as part of the UK contingent activity. We also get to have some home hospitality with Scouts from North America so we may end up camping in Florida or even the wilds of Canada with local Scouts. It will all be confirmed nearer the time.

To get our places on the trip we had to fill out an application form explaining why we wanted to go. Last September we attended a Thurrock District selection event and 15 of us were put through to Essex County selection in November. We found out that we had been successful just before Christmas. We feel very lucky and privileged to have gained a place. We are looking forward to meeting many people from different nations and learning about their cultures. The trip will also help us gain many skills for life along the way as we experience the opening and closing ceremonies and many activities that we have never done before. As part of the Jamboree experience we are expected to raise the fee to cover our costs of £3800. This also goes towards funding places for Scouts from less developed nations and we also attend 4 training weekends beforehand to make sure we are working well as a team. We have lots of different events planned over the year including a curry night, afternoon tea, race night and Thanksgiving themed dinner and dance which you are all very welcome to attend if you'd like to. Details are attached below. Thank you very much for supporting us and letting us sell our cakes every month at Church Parade. It is very much appreciated. Anything else that you would like to know please ask us one Sunday. Thanks again.

Jacob and Katherine

8 young people from Thurrock have been selected to attend the



Chloe, Conner, Jacob, Katherine, Lewis, Niamh, Rhiannon & Will
would love your support at their future fundraising event

<p>20th May</p> <p>CURRY NIGHT</p> <p>@</p> <p>The Tandoori Parlour Benfleet, From 7pm Tickets £15 All you can eat Indian Buffet.</p>	<p>Details to be confirmed but we will be holding a</p> <p>RACE NIGHT</p> <p>Tickets £3 Adults, £2 children, Family of 4 £8 Race sponsorship and horses available</p>
<p>15th September</p> <p>AFTERNOON HIGH TEA</p> <p>@</p> <p>1st Ockendons Scout HQ Tickets £10 Enjoy an afternoon of Tea & Cake</p>	<p>9th November</p> <p>THANKSGIVING DINNER & DANCE</p> <p>@</p> <p>The Civic Hall, Tickets £30 doors open at 6.30 pm</p>

To purchase tickets or for further information please contact us on
thurrockwsj2019@outlook.com

Remembering Joyce Fraser

This eulogy was heard at her funeral service on the 24 May 2018

I would like to preface what I am going to say with a quotation by Dante Alighieri, the author of "The Divine Comedy", a book nearly everyone has heard of but hardly anyone has read. Dante wrote this, "There is no greater pain than to remember a happy time when one is in misery." As we remember Joyce and the happy times we shared with her, I hope we can prove Dante wrong.

It was good fortune for us when Joyce came to Grays on a posting by the ATS. She married Andy at the little church of St. Mary's, just down the road from where they came to live, in June 1954. Any conversation with Joyce usually started with news of Elaine and Stephen and of her grandchildren, Anna (born to Elaine and Hugh) and the twins Hayley and Kirsty (born to Stephen and Rita). It was clear that she was immensely proud of all of them.

Whilst they lived in Grays, she and Andy shared another interest in young people; Andy through the scouting movement and Joyce through the Sunday School of this church. She became a member of this church, together with Andy, in 1963 and was a leader and teacher in the primary Sunday School for some twenty years, for some of that time ably supported by Beryl Clarke who maintained regular visits to Joyce in Carolyne House. When I told my son, who is getting on for fifty, that Joyce had sadly died, he proudly responded, "Don't forget, I was in Mrs. Fraser's class!"

Some time during or after 1972, Joyce was ordained an Elder of the church whilst she continued to give her services unstintingly. She took on the job of assistant to the treasurer, at that time Dr. Beryl Chalkley, which saw Joyce receiving and counting the collection money with Beryl and paying it into the bank, a service for which Dr. Chalkley was immensely grateful. Joyce became a great friend and confidante to Dr. Chalkley, especially during Dr. Chalkley's later years with us. Continuing her service, in 1993 Joyce took on the not too popular job of pulpit supply, keeping our pulpit filled by preachers until the church could appoint a new minister.

Joyce's contribution to the church and the local community didn't just stop at formal duties. The list included staffing a stall at the Christmas Market; staffing a stall at the Barnado's Bazaar; volunteering at the British Heart Foundation shop in Grays; being a Friend of Orsett Hospital where she worked with the hospital trolley. Now I don't mean to go on to gild the lily, but she became our leading exponent of the art or science of jam making. She was a jam maker par excellence, sometimes being helped in this by her grandchildren when they visited. I don't know when this all started but her production of pots of jam increased from an original two or three pots to what seemed virtually a production line. Joyce had to appeal regularly for jam jars in order to keep up with the demand. Her preserves made a vital contribution to various fund raising ventures by the church. I was just a little surprised that we never had a complaint from Wilkinson's Jams of Tiptree, that Joyce was beginning to drive them out of business.

Another abiding memory of Joyce was her walking. She had no need to drive or be driven, despite many offers. She walked everywhere, at a great pace, even sometimes walking to deposit her recyclable refuse at the Civic Hall car park before the days of wheelie bins. I do believe Joyce could have walked for England.

Joyce had great pleasure keeping her garden looking neat and tidy with flowers around several pathways kept planted and blooming by her proximity to the garden centre which she overlooked and where she was a regular visitor. Part of that pleasure was in sharing her garden with her birds which she kept abundantly supplied with food. More than once I have been asked to help her into her garage with large containers of the finest bird food, to entice her ornithological companions into the garden. She knew the names of all her shrubs and flowers and would show people around her garden like a horticultural expert.



Nothing I have said so far should give the impression that Joyce was a meek and mild lady. She could also be tough. This was exemplified when she had a motorcycle accident. That mustn't give the impression to anyone that Joyce rode a motorbike, she was talented but her talents didn't stretch that far. One of her walks was rudely interrupted when a motorcyclist lost control and knocked her over. Joyce showed what she was made of by getting back to normal in no time at all, continuing her walking whilst bearing the bruises of that incident, uncomplainingly, for some while. She was also tough mentally. Our secretary reminds me that she could sternly put people, at whatever level, in their places when they might be out of order in their remarks.

Joyce's contribution to this church and the local society has been considerable. But it has always been quietly considerable. She never promoted herself into the limelight; quite the reverse; she was always modest about what she did and was always ready to help when the need arose. When she became ill, her services were instantly and sorely missed, as was her personality within the church family. It's not always people in the front line who keep a church or other society going – it's more often people like Joyce who beaver away in the background, not being terribly noticed until they are no longer there.

For this and for much, much more, we will sorely miss Joyce and will remain thankful in the knowledge that we were privileged to know her. We join with her family in sorrow that she is gone whilst being glad to have the abiding memories with which she has left us. My daughter summed things up for me when I told her of Joyce's passing, by saying, simply and affectionately, "Joyce was a lovely lady." I'm sure we would all endorse that. God bless, Joyce.

George Semain



SERVICES

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

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

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



URC Grays