



Grays

United
Reformed
Church

A place to pause, and then step forward.

Silent Visitor



Summer 2018

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
& Mobile No: 0784 3559011
Hire of Halls: graysurc@gmail.com

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

Leaders of the Uniformed Organisations:

Group Scout Leader: Mr Tim Webb 01375 391031

Guide Leader: Miss Gill Davidson 01375 384253

Brownie Leader: Ms Madeleine Loin 07971139384

Generally Assembled

Between Friday 6th and Monday 9th July people from all over the United Reformed Church will be gathering in Nottingham for General Assembly (GA). Some will be going as they serve the denomination in some way, others as invited guests and the vast majority will be elders and ministers from local churches throughout the UK. The purpose of General Assembly is the biennial assembly of the United Reformed Church, meeting every two years to celebrate, discuss, and make decisions on, the life and work of the denomination.

(if you would like to explore what will be discussed:

<https://www.urc.org.uk/general-assembly-archive.html>)

I will be attending this year as a visitor. A non-voting member, with a specific task. Two years ago, when GA met in Southport, an elder from a nearby URC was elected as one of the two Moderators. Following this Mr Derek Estill asked me to support him as his chaplain. This is a very non-specific role, but mainly means being supportive and helping to share worship within the denomination's meetings. So, over the four days I will be participating in the opening worship and induction, morning and evening devotions, a Sunday service and closing worship. This has been prepared in collaboration with others to agree the readings and hymns, and parts I have structured and written. As well as all these preparations, when Derek is chairing sessions I'll be sat alongside him being supportive.



When I agreed to be his chaplain, I had very little idea of what lay ahead and the majority of it I could not have predicted. This is the beginning of two years where Derek, alongside Rev'd Nigel Uden, will be serving in a significant leadership role within our denomination and I, and every member of the URC, has a part to play in supporting them through it.

The theme of GA is mirroring the emphasis of the whole denomination: Walking the Way, living the life of Jesus today. While GA meets you will be able to watch proceeding over the

internet and afterwards the resources we have prepared will be available to us. For me it will probably be a very stressful weekend, but hopefully it will serve to inspire and enable our denomination as we move forward.

With every blessing, Rev'd David R Coaker

Study Groups

Our Minister, Dave, has organised two series of Study Groups.

The first of these is entitled "What it means to be Christian" and is spread over 5 sessions commencing on 4th July and then fortnightly respectively on Wednesday afternoons from 1 - 2.30pm. There are resource materials available in the Church to support these sessions.



The second series is entitled "World War 1 Centenary" and will run from September on Wednesday afternoons from 1 - 2.30 pm and there will be five sessions (exact dates to be notified).

2018 commemorates 100 years since the end of World War 1 and these sessions should help us to remember and reflect.

For more information about these Study Groups see the posters on the next two pages of this edition.

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

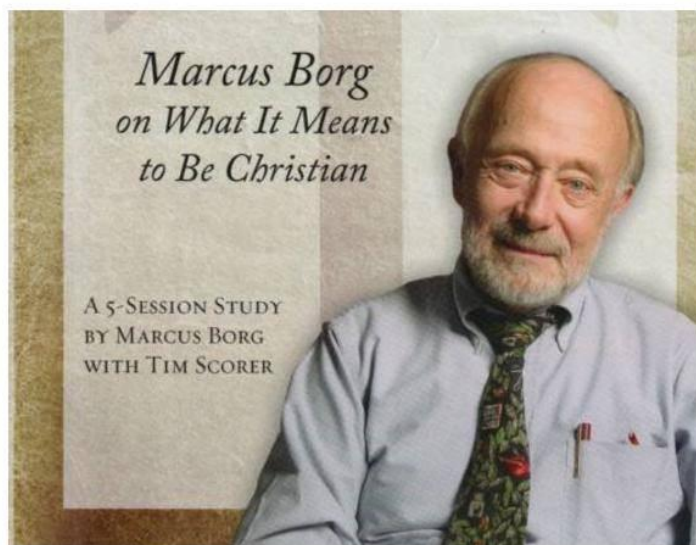
Bradleigh Avenue, RM17 5XD

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

World War 1 Centenary

**Remembrance Sunday this year will mark 100 years
since the end of the 1914-18 war.**

**To help us remember, reflect and respond, we will be
watching some tv programmes together and holding a
brief discussion after each one from September.**



**Wednesdays
1.00-2.30pm**

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



37 Days Drama revealing the complex behind-closed-doors story of the final weeks before the outbreak of World War I. (3 x 1 hour episodes)

The Last Day of World War One Michael Palin tells the story of how soldiers continued to be killed in battle for many hours after the armistice had been signed. (1 hour)

The Passing Bells In this drama at the outbreak of war, two teenage boys - one German and one British - defy their parents to sign up. (5 x 30 min episodes)

Armistice - The End Game of World War One David Reynolds takes a fresh look at the extraordinary events and personalities involved in the Armistice. (1 hour)

Long Shadow David Reynolds traces the legacy of the Great War examining how the war haunted a generation and shaped the peace that followed. (3 x 1 hour episodes)



Outline of time together:
Welcome & refreshments
Watch episode (1 hr approx.)
Brief closing discussion



Joyce Fraser

The Church has received a message from Elaine and Stephen and their families who wish to thank everyone for Joyce Fraser's funeral service on 24th May. They reflect that the Church was a great comfort to Joyce even when she could no longer attend and it was wonderful to see members of the congregation as well as people from other areas of Joyce's life at the service.

They thank particularly Rev'd David Coaker for conducting the service; Richard Wade for the music, Colin Baker for reading and George Semain for the eulogy. They also thank Denise Beckley and helpers for organising the food and refreshments.

David Rees - Farewell Service & Tea

Message from Jean, Church Secretary, Christ Church, Rayleigh

Dear Friends,

David and Birgit came to Christ Church, Rayleigh in 1999, as joint ministers. David later became the sole minister at Rayleigh, and more recently was also called to minister at Bridgewater Drive.

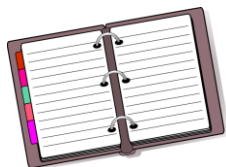
You may already be aware that David has accepted the call to four churches in the Ipswich Area. His final service will be at Christ Church URC Rayleigh on **Sunday 29th July 2018 at 3pm** followed by a farewell tea.

We hope that you and some of the members of your congregation will be able to join us on that day.

As you probably know our car park is quite small so it will be for disabled parking only. Please approach the Church by coming down Crown Hill and enter the car park by the 1st (top) entrance which is on the left, on the bend, immediately after the church building. You may drop passengers off but then please park in one of the town car parks (free on Sundays).

To help with seating and catering please reply by **Sunday 22nd July**.

If you are unable to attend, you may like to send good wishes for the future to David, Birgit, Rebecca and Sebastian.



Some Dates for the Diaries

- **July & August: Study Groups at 1 – 2.30pm on Wednesdays 4th; 18th; 25th July and 8th and 15th August.**
- **July 25 – Messy Church** (see Denise for further information)
- **July 29 - Farewell Service & Tea for Rev'd David Rees at Christ Church, Rayleigh at 3 pm** (Please let Elaine Barcz know by 22 July if you will be going)
- **September - Sunday 16 – Harvest Lunch (following Parade Service)** (more information to be given in notices)
- **September - Tuesday 18 - Social Lunch 12 – 2 pm "pie & peas/beans"** (See Denise for more information)
- **September (Date to be confirmed) – Messy Church**
- **September 30 – Church Meeting** following morning service

Harvest

Our Harvest Service will be on Sunday 16 September. We would ask for both fresh and non perishable food to be brought as gifts to this service.

The Church will be open on Saturday 15th September from 2pm for gifts to be brought along and anyone who would like to undertake decorating areas of the church with their produce will be welcome to do so. All produce will be donated to charity – non-perishable products to the Women's Refuge and fresh produce to St Luke's Hospice. Both of these charities are always very grateful to receive our gifts.

After the Service on Sunday 16th there will be Harvest lunch after Parade Service (details of the cost will be known nearer the time).

Do come along and enjoy some fellowship at Harvest-time!

All are welcome.



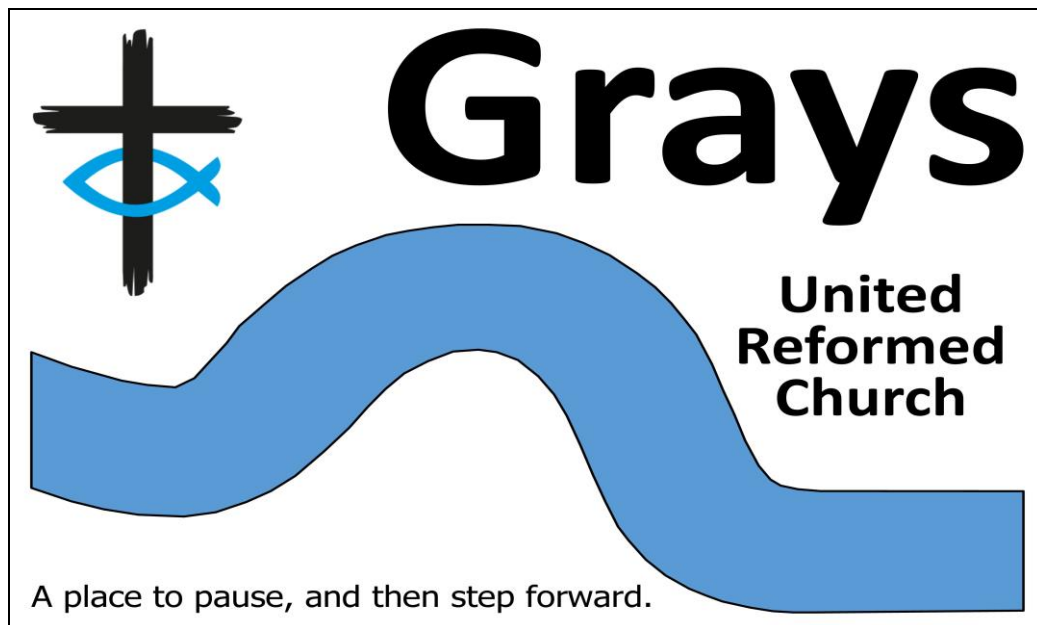
Mission Statement and Plan for Grays URC

After a series of discussions Grays United Reformed Church, gathered as church meeting on Sunday 1st July 2018, agreed the following:

1. Mission Statement

A place to pause, and then step forward.

2. Logo



3. Mission Plan

1. to explore ways of deepening our faith, through bible study/house group, as well as corporate worship.
2. to build our fellowship by further engaging with building users and the community, including other local churches.
3. and while acknowledging that many in our fellowship prefer traditional worship, after thoughtful discussion we are experimenting with less traditional styles, with a view to bringing the Word to a wider audience.

Initial questions for further reflection:

1. How can we make ourselves more accessible and known?
2. How can we develop our space and what we already do, to better enable people to 'pause'?
3. What do we need to explore to help people pause, but then be able to step forward in ways that draw them towards, or help build, the kingdom of God?

Following on from our Church discussion about the Mission Statement, we began a conversation about the kind of church we think we are. We know we are a United Reformed Church, with a Congregational heritage, but whilst that may be understood by fellow churchgoers, it may not mean much to people with no church experience. Three statements were mentioned in the meeting and we offer them here for us to reflect upon over the summer.

Firstly, a statement from St Leonard's Church, Hythe, Kent:-

- **You are welcome** whatever your beliefs, even if you find organised religion irrelevant
- **You are welcome** whatever your lifestyle & sexuality
- **You are welcome** wherever you may be on your faith journey: believer or agnostic, conventional Christian or questioning sceptic
- **You are welcome** as an equal partner, and we look forward to the ideas and experiences that you can bring
- **We welcome** the variety of ways in which human beings have explored the sacred, and have no wish to promote just one approach to Christianity
- **We think** that the way we treat one another is far more important than the beliefs we hold
- **We think** that it is vital to take seriously the intellectual problems which many people have with Christianity, and encourage ways of understanding religion which feed the mind as well as the soul
- **We think** that religion must be concerned with injustice and suffering and see ourselves as a community helping to build a better world, bringing hope to those Jesus called the least of his sisters and brothers
- **We recognise** that our ignorance is always going to exceed our understanding and find more grace in the search for meaning than in the claim for certainty
- **We recognise** that our faith entails costly discipleship and conscientious resistance of evil, as has always been the tradition of the Church.

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Secondly, a statement from the leaflets that were supplied as part of Back to Church Sunday:-

What do you think of when you think of Church?

Maybe an old stone building. Or old ladies warbling hymns with 25 verses and no book. Or a bunch of morally superior, smartly dressed people who seem to have it all together (but probably behave as badly as everyone else in secret).

Perhaps it's time to think again. There is more to church than building, music and hypocrites.

Church is a family of people adopted by a loving God. Like all families, this one has problems and some fairly entrenched dysfunction, so don't be surprised when you find it isn't perfect. But its lack of perfection means you don't need to worry that you will be the one to mess it up.

Church is made up of people from every nation on the globe. We are united by our faith in Jesus and we celebrate our diversity.

Church is for everyone and you are welcome! Let us show you what it means to belong. Let us convince you that real life can be found in a community of people looking to follow Jesus.

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And finally, the eight points from the Progressive Christianity Network Britain*:

PCN Britain offers these eight points, not as a creed, but as an expression of the Christian life.

We are people who

1. Seek God, however understood, guided by the life and teachings of Jesus.
2. Affirm that there are many ways to experience the Sacred and that we can draw on diverse sources of wisdom on our spiritual journeys.
3. Recognise that following Jesus leads us to act with compassion and to confront evil.

4. Place hospitality at the centre of our communal and worshipping life and see the sharing of bread and wine as an expression of our common humanity.
5. Seek to build communities that accept all who wish to share companionship without insisting on conformity.
6. Know that the way we behave towards others is the fullest expression of our faith.
7. Gain more insights in the search for understanding than we do in certainty.
8. Work together within and beyond the Church to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

*(This is a network that individuals and congregations can affiliate to: <https://www.pcnbritain.org.uk/membership> Our Minister is a trustee and edits their magazine "Progressive Voices – free copies of which are on the table in the vestibule).

Our next Church Meeting is not until Sunday 30th September so there is plenty of time for us to give some thought to the sort of statement we think reflects our church and fits in with our mission.

A Prayer

Lord Jesus, we ask for your guidance as we ponder the Mission Statements and ask that with your love and support we will achieve an honest and meaningful statement.

Lord Jesus, we also remember our friends in the church and our family members who are feeling unwell and we ask that they may feel the comfort of your presence in their lives.

Lord Jesus, we ask your blessing on our Minister as he undertakes his chaplaincy duties at the General Assembly this month.

Amen





Wednesday 25th July 2018

2.30pm – 4.30pm

Grays United Reformed Church

Bradleigh Avenue RM17 5XD



Crafts

Fun activities for all ages

Exploring Stories from Bible

Songs

Fun

Share afternoon tea

Come along join in the fun

Please call, text or email to book 07806739959

Email to: graysurc@gmail.com

No charge donations are welcome

Children must be accompanied by an adult



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