



# **Silent Visitor**



**May / June 2019**

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

**Minister: Rev'd David Coaker**

**Mobile No: 07378 348191**

**E Mail: drcoaker@gmail.com**

**Secretary:** Mr Ben Marshall      Mobile No: 07841 06604  
e-mail: graysurcsecretary@outlook.com

**Treasurer:** Mr Alan Beckley

**Serving Elders:** Mr Alf Pryer, Mrs Denise Beckley &  
Mr Ben Marshall

**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  
Tel: 01375 391031

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

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

## Faithful Days

It could be argued that the Church year is over. We've had Christmas, Lent and celebrated Easter. We've marked Jesus' birth and death, so now we are just waiting for Advent to roll around again! The key events are covered in our Church calendar in the space of four months, and we could make a case for the Jesus story neatly fitting into a week? It could also be argued that the different strands that make up the breadth of Christianity find their roots in this week?

The week in question is of course Holy Week. The time between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. It is a week of absolute joy and total despair, of reconciliation and rejection, and holds within it the breadth of human reaction and divine inspiration.

On Palm Sunday Jesus enters Jerusalem on the back of a donkey to the cheers of a crowd. He, and his disciples, are affirmed and welcomed. The crowd are then confused, with some delighted and some worried, as he clears the Temple of the money-changers. Both this and the manner of his entry will have caused concern amongst the ruling Jewish and Roman authorities. Especially as his entry would have marked contrast to Pilate arriving shortly before with Roman soldiers to reinforce the Jerusalem garrison in preparation for the crowds attending the celebration of Passover. The heartfelt cheers of the crowd for Jesus would have infuriated Pilate after the probably muted response to his 'triumphal entry'.

The next few days are spent teaching the crowds in the Temple and his followers in private, and making preparations for celebrating Passover together.

Thursday holds within it the intimate celebration of Passover and the poignant call for Jesus' followers to remember Him in the breaking of bread and pouring of wine; an event that was attended by everyone in Jesus' inner circle. The male disciples that would betray and deny Him. The female disciples that would follow Him to the place of execution and inter Him in the tomb.

The evening gets even more intimate when Jesus invites the disciples to accompany Him to Gethsemane to pray and to support Him in his agonised prayers to God. At possibly Jesus' most emotionally vulnerable point, His request for companionship is met with snores and a secret meeting to arrange his arrest. Jesus then

actively accepts the point of no return and in the darkness of the garden approaches the militia and allows himself to be taken.

Jesus' intimacy with God in the garden descends rapidly to the pits of human cruelty with rounds of questioning, beatings, and sleep-deprivation. False accusations, a show trial, and the most politically expedient and brutal sentence, crucifixion. Crucifixion was a tortuous, humiliating, painful and very public form of execution. It was used to make an example of the victim. The Romans had plenty of other ways to kill people, but crucifixion in its public brutality was a warning to others. (As Jesus alone was crucified, and that his followers were not rounded up too, points to Jesus' non-violent message. Armed rebellions against Rome resulted in mass crucifixions, non-violence resistance saw only the death of the leader.)

With the approach of sunset Jesus is carried to the tomb and we enter into the emotional and theological abyss of Easter Saturday. This is the bleakest of all days in the Christian calendar and can only be met with silence and the absence of light.

Then Resurrection happens! Jesus' followers experience something so real, so transformative, that they break out of their hiding place and start telling his story, and don't stop whatever the hardship or persecution they face.

In our Christian journey, and in our approach to faith, we can place ourselves within this week. We might focus on the sense of liberation of entering Jerusalem or the righteous anger in the Temple on Palm Sunday. The wisdom of his teaching for the right living shared in the Temple during the week. The centrality of communion and heartfelt prayers of Maundy Thursday. An interpretation of Good Friday that either offers us the ultimate experience of true living or a pre-ordained cosmic transaction. The transformative power of Easter Sunday affirming that change is always possible, whatever the situation. But also the despair of Easter Saturday and the sense of failure leading up to it after the disciples desert Him.

Whatever place you find yourself, know that all the others are there too. Be affirmed, be confronted, try to hold them in all tension and see the love of God within them all.

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

## News of the Family

You may remember John and Debbie Bennett and their daughters Emily and Tara who worshipped with us regularly until recently.



Sadly John died on the 17 March and the service at South Essex Crematorium on the 13<sup>th</sup> April was a service of celebration of John's life. Emily, their elder daughter, spoke in tribute of her Dad. She mentioned all the things he did for Debbie, Tara and herself and how much he enjoyed being with his granddaughter Charlotte.

John was very active in the Church and worked in the Junior Church for sometime. I remember he produced the musical "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dream-coat" casting the members of the Sunday School in the roles. (It must have been a thriving Junior Church in those days.) I also believe he may have cooked a full English breakfast after an early Easter Sunday service on at least one occasion. Well done John and thank you!

We ask the Lord to be with Debbie and her family at this sad time and that the memories they hold dear to them will help them.

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On Mothering Sunday we celebrated Nokovuya's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and enjoyed delicious creamy cupcakes with our coffee and tea after the service. During the service we sang Happy Birthday to her and she was given a bunch of daffodils.

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Some of our congregation have been feeling unwell and unable to be with us. We wish them well and look forward to seeing them back with us again.

Lord Jesus, we ask you to be with all those who are in need of your comfort and loving caring support and that in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, we continue to feel that you are travelling with us through each day and night.

Amen

## Some Dates for Diaries



**The Study Group** will commence a ten-session exploration of key passages from the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Further information about the sessions may be found on the notice board in the Church Hall and on handouts at the back of the Church.

The sessions will be led by the Minister, Rev'd Dave Coaker and will be held on 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> May then 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June at 1 pm until 2.30pm.

Many of the verses of Isaiah are familiar to us as beloved passages we read and sing each Christmas and Easter season.

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**Young Families Service – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 9.30 – 10.10 am – the theme will be "Forgiveness"** – this is an informal service where we will make crafts and explore what forgiveness is all about, sing and share refreshments afterwards.

**The Young Families Service in June will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> June and the theme will be "Freedom".** Refreshments will be shared afterwards.

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**Christian Aid Coffee Morning will be on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May from 10.30 – 12 noon in the Church Hall.** There will be a plant and bric-a-brac sale. Please come along and help raise funds for Christian Aid.



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### **Two Fundraising Events from Thurrock Foodbank:**



Cream Tea at St Catherine's Church, East Tilbury on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm – 4 pm - £5.

Quiz Night Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30 at Grays URC. Teams up to 8 people – Tickets £5. Please bring your own drinks and nibbles. (no alcohol allowed) Tea and coffee available.

To book a table/ticket call Helen – 01375 416200 or email:  
[warehouse@thurrock.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:warehouse@thurrock.foodbank.org.uk)

## Getting Together In June

There are some posters on display on the notice board showing the dates and times of a few more events that need to be added to diaries:-

- On Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June from 3.00 pm to 5.00pm there will be Afternoon Tea as part of "Contact the Elderly".
- On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June there will be a Faith Lunch after the service which will be followed by a Church Meeting.

On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June from 10.30 – 12 noon there will be a Coffee Morning.

This is part of "The Great Get Together" inspired by the late Jo Cox.

This will include a "Mums' Market".



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## Call to Worship - used at the Morning Service on 28 April 2019

Blessed are those who doubt,  
For faith is a journey, not a destination.  
Blessed are those who question,  
For easy answers are dismissed, but truth takes time to discern.  
Blessed are those who have not seen,  
Blessed are those who have come to believe.  
Blessed are those who struggle in their faith,  
For God has called us in the struggle together.  
Come worship God and follow Jesus, who calls us into this life of  
faith together.

## Jonathan Bryan



At our recent Palm Sunday service, Alf told us about a young man called Jonathan Bryan. This story was included in the study material for lent "The Mystery of God" – the Mystery of Joy and Salvation. It explains that:-

"Jonathan, the son of Rev'd Christopher Bryan and Chantal Bryan was severely brain damaged after a car accident when his mother was pregnant. He is, in the eyes of the world, extremely disabled and cannot speak. However, he learned to communicate by eye gaze and has written a book called "Eye Can Write".

He tells a mysterious and wonderful story of how he had a crisis and as death neared he found himself in a wonderful garden with other children and Jesus. Since he could not then communicate, he could not tell his parents or other people about it. Once he was able to write, he shared that he was not afraid of death and looked forward to the joy, peace and liberation he had experienced. Since then Jonathan does not fear death and although he expects his life to be short, looks forward to his life with Jesus his Saviour."

### Song of Voice

As adept fingers point  
My silent soul emerges,  
Like the dawn blackbird's song  
Suddenly breaking the black.

Music buried in the mind  
Sings melodies divine,  
Of ancient tales yet untold  
Unfurled to men astound.

Whose beauty hears my voice?  
What depths saddened my pathway?  
Soaring eagles spread wings  
I fly to my destiny.



## Induction and Ordination



On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April, Ben Marshall was Ordained and Inducted as a Serving Elder at the morning service. At the Annual General Church Meeting, in March, Ben received a unanimous vote into the role of Serving Elder. As Ben had never served as an Elder in the past he needed to be ordained and inducted.

We thank Ben for undertaking the role of Elder and all that entails and particularly for also undertaking the busy role of Church Secretary all in the service of the Church and God.

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## Junior Church



Following on from the success of the Young Families Service there is a gradual increase in the number of children attending Church with their parents. This has promoted the re-introduction of Junior Church once again. Francisca, Rita and Denise have undertaken to organise it. Material for the use of the leaders is available and more will be available as needed.

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## Silent Visitor

As you will have noticed this edition of Silent Visitor is for two months and is a bit late! The next edition will be our Summer one and will be for three months. This is due to the school holidays when the printing department at William Edwards will be closed.



Once again I would ask readers of the Silent Visitor to consider letting me have any articles that they feel would be of interest to others to read. The SV is published on our website and face-book.

Ed.



## Situations Vacant!

**Messy Church requires the following additions to the team.**

**No qualifications required: Training given.**

**An ability to smile under most circumstances an advantage.**

**Table Setter:** Tables require setting for eight, during the worship time. If you are able to say a brief silent prayer for those leading worship and our Messy Church congregation at the same time the team would be appreciative.

**Cup and Cutlery Washer:** In order to cut down our use of disposable plastic cutlery, we would like to use real cutlery and beakers that we have.

**Greeter:** The ability to remain calm as more people arrive and then deliver the number to be fed to the Chef. (Knowing the Chef will (nearly) always remain calm.)



**Craft Overseer:** Involves "splodging" paint and glue about with all ages.

**Team Congregation**

**Wages:** Fun and fellowship. Joy within our Messy Church. Satisfaction of job well done. Meals supplied. Uniform Ephesians Ch.6 v10-18. Equipment: Galatians Ch.5 v22-23.

All applications for the above vacancies appreciated.  
For further information speak to Denise.



Pictures on the wall in the church made at the April Messy Church.



**Wednesday 5th June 2019**

**3.30pm – 5.30pm**

**Grays United Reformed Church**

**Bradleigh Avenue Grays RM17 5XD**



**Fun activities for all ages,  
exploring bible stories and  
a meal shared together.**

**Fun!  
Songs**

**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)**



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# Stories for Change

*News from our Partners around the World:  
Zimbabwe, Bangladesh & Central America*

kevin.snyman@urc.org.uk  
suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk

## Central America April 2019

**SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras** – In early April, hundreds of Hondurans set out in a caravan for the Guatemala border, hoping to reach the United States. Some gathered at the San Pedro Sula bus station. Some said they could no longer support their families. Others walked through the rain. Many carried sleeping children in their arms or pushed strollers.

Miguel Angel Reyes of San Juan Pueblo said his country's violent crime was one factor in his decision to leave. But mostly, he was looking for a way to provide for his wife and four children. "I'm going because the situation is really hard here in Honduras," said the field worker. "We can't take it. There's no work."

Climate disruption is thought to be a powerful factor in crop decline, leading to even greater poverty. Activist Jonathan Blitzer says, "In the last six or seven years, things really began to change. The weather patterns started to become erratic. The rains didn't come when they were supposed to come. And increasingly, it became impossible for people to grow their staple crops - to grow potatoes, to grow maize. And as a result, they



Pic: Shannonleigh353 Pixabay

had not only nothing to eat but also nothing to survive on to sell. And so as a result, increasingly, people are abandoning their land and heading north."

Christian Aid's partner Centro de Desarrollo Humano (CDH) works with vulnerable communities in the south of Honduras. This area is prone to drought. CDH coordinates efforts with local authorities to reduce communities' vulnerability.

Christian Aid has also established a climate monitoring network and climate change adaptation initiatives with small farmers. **Commitment for Life** is a valued partner in Christian Aid's attempts to address some of the justice issues facing Central Americans.

**Commitment for Life** is the Global Justice Programme of the United Reformed Church, UK

Rev'd Dr Kevin Snyman at Church House 020 7916 2020 ext. 256 or Suzanne Pearson (Tues or Wed) 020 7916 2020 ext. 224

Website <https://urc.org.uk/our-work/commitment-for-life.html>

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## Zimbabwe

April 2019

**Gombe Business Park, Zimbabwe** Nicholas Shamano, Christian Aid's Country Manager, tells the harrowing story of 67 year old Sarudzai Muvandi, one of many women and children affected by the flooding caused by Hurricane Idai. "It was frightening," she said, "waking up from our sleep, unable to make sense of it all." Thankfully her grandson alerted her and her daughter-in-law to the awful fact of their homestead being submerged by water.

Mrs Muvandi also talked about their need for shelter. They could not fit into the government provided house. Her grandson was now suffering from boils all over his body. She concluded her ordeal by pointing to what used to be her home's latrine, now only a slab and pit. The family would need to use the toilets at the nearby clinic.

Nicholas and his Christian Aid team also needed to process this information. The devastation was awful. Who would want to walk 500 m to a latrine in the middle of the night? What if the well owners decided not to share anymore? What did it mean for a whole family to have its crops swept away? Were the infections due to the flooding?

As the team tried to get answers to these questions, they were struck by the anguish of these brave women and men. "I was distraught," says Nicholas. "Then something said to me: 'they are in pain, yes, but they have not lost hope. All they need is support and encouragement.'" Nicholas is adamant. The people cannot return to the status quo. We can and must help them with health,



hygiene, shelter, food, gender-differentiated and special needs provision for different groups.

Through ***Commitment for Life***, we are able to make a difference. We do so not only through our giving, but through our advocacy, our prayers and refusing to be silenced by a juggernaut world economy that overwhelms the poor so horrifically.

Another world is possible. The Kingdom of God is coming.



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## Bangladesh

April 2019

**Peter Musgrave**, a member of Vine URC in London, has visited Bangladesh many times.

“On 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2019 the Mayor of London announced a clean air policy. Within 2 days of being in Dhaka, I had got a bad cough. I wondered what air quality in Dhaka had to do with that, as I walked through dust and fumes from traffic and brick factories.”



Pic: by Kevin Snyman

### “Shifting the Power”

One of Christian Aid’s innovative projects in Bangladesh is called “Shifting the Power.” Its goal is for local organisations to have greater representation, voice and recognition to create more effective humanitarian responses. Issues such as air quality may be addressed through programmes like Shifting the Power.

Through Christian Aid, **Commitment for Life** is making a difference in ordinary people’s lives. Every action for justice makes an enormous difference. Thank you for your efforts.

Pic: by Peter Musgrave



Pic: by Peter Musgrave



Brick kilns in and around Dhaka are responsible for a much of the capital’s air pollution, according to research. Altogether there are more than 1,000 brick kilns in and around the capital. The kilns produce nearly 60% of Dhaka’s air pollution, with the rest coming from dust and vehicles, along with other sources.

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## **MAY 2019 - ROTAS**

<b>FLOWERS</b>		Arranged by	Supplied by
<b>May</b>	5	Elaine Barcz	
	12	TBA	
	19	Edna Lazell	
	26	Isobel Beynon	
<b>June</b>	2	Inger Collier	

<b>PREACHERS</b>		<b>Time</b>	
Young family service	5	9.30 am	Rev'd Dave/Denise
Morning Service with Communion	5	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Morning Worship	12	10.30 am	George Semain
Morning Worship	19	10.30 am	Denise Beckley
Holy Communion	19	6.30 pm	Alf Pryer
Morning Worship	26	10.30 am	Alf Pryer
<b>June</b>			
Young family service	2	9.30 am	Revd Dave / Denise
Morning Service with Communion	2	10.30 am	Revd Dave Coaker

<b>READERS</b>			
<b>May</b>	5	10.30 am	Frances & David
	12	10.30 am	Isobel & Inger
	19	10.30 am	TBA
	26	10.30 am	Anne & Denise
<b>June</b>	2	10.30 am	Richard & ?

**Duty Steward:**

**Hymn Book Steward:**

<b>This year's Charity is:- Friends of Essex &amp; Thurrock Homeless</b>
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## **June 2019 - Rotas**

<b>FLOWERS</b>		Arranged by	Supplied by
<b>June</b>	2	Inger Collier	
	9	Anne French	
	16	Pat Boag	
	23	Ann Richards	
	30	Beryl Clarke	
<b>July</b>	7	Denise Beckley	

<b>PREACHERS</b>		<b>Time</b>	
Young family service	2	9.30 am	Rev'd Dave/Denise
Morning Service with Communion	2	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Family Service	9	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Family Service	16	10.30 am	Denise Beckley
Communion	16	6,30pm	George Semain
Family Service	23	10.30 am	David Lock
Parade Service	30	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
<b>July</b>			
Young family service	7	9.30 am	Rev'd Dave/Denise
Morning Service with Communion	7	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker

<b>READERS</b>			
<b>June</b>	2	10.30 am	Colin & Elaine
	9	10.30 am	Jean & Margaret D
	16	10.30 am	To be advised
	23	10.30 am	To be advised
	30	10.30 am	Gill Davison
<b>July</b>	7	10.30 am	Janet & George

**Duty Steward: To be advised**

**Hymn Book Steward: Margaret Pryer**

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

### **SUNDAY SERVICES**

Children's Service	9.30 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday each month
Morning Worship	10.30 am	Each Sunday
Holy Communion	10.30 am 6.30 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday each month 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday each month
Parade Service	10.30 am	Next Parade Service will be on 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2019

### **ACTIVITIES**

Coffee Morning	10.30 am	Every Wednesday
Carpet Bowls	2.00 pm & 7.30 pm	Every Monday (except Bank Holidays)
Prayer Meetings	10.00 am	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday each month (before coffee)
	6.45 pm	Every Friday
Messy Church	3.30 pm	Wednesday, 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2019

- 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](http://Graysurc.org.uk)**



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