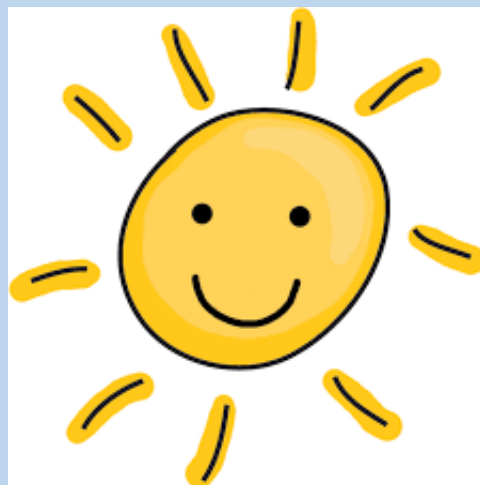


Silent Visitor



Summer 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: On Maternity Leave
&
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

Discerning the Spirit

The Spirit of God is an incredibly powerful force, but we limit the possibilities if we only think of it as the spectacular. If we only think of the Holy Spirit in terms of dramatic events, and the purview of the charismatic and Pentecostal traditions and movements within the Church – we are denying the awesomeness contained within the gift of life we too often take for granted.

The Spirit of God is alive and well, we just need to be reminded of our complete reliance upon it and be open to letting ourselves be overwhelmed by it. This is true in our daily lives, our worship lives, and also when we gather as church meeting.

In our tradition we stridently declare that we gather in council together to discern the will of God. We are not a democracy. We are not trying to get our own way. We are placing ourselves before God, and each other, to listen for where God's Spirit is urging us towards.

Archbishop William Temple said: "The Church is the only institution that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not its members." We not only exist for other people; we exist to serve the will of God. This is both an awesome privilege and responsibility.

In our Bible study on Isaiah 6 we explored the challenge of God's judgement and were given the example from a sermon on the book of Hebrews by Dr. Fred Craddock who 'alluded to the vinedresser of John 15. ... going into the vineyard with a big, curved pruning knife. Sometimes he would cut off branches that were unfruitful and without value. At other times, he would prune parts of the vine so that the branch could grow better and be more fruitful. "Now, the vine doesn't know if it is being cut off and discarded because it is fruitless, or if it is being cut in an effort to prune it and make it more fruitful. In either case, the knife feels the same."

Discerning the will of God, truly being Church, does require thinking and acting selflessly. Sometimes it will require us to stop doing things that we personally value, to start doing things that other people seem to appreciate, to alter our priorities, reapply our energies and resources and alter our mind set to give expression to where we think the Spirit is leading us.

The fundamental realisation within all this is that we are not relying upon ourselves, we are relying upon God. Sometimes the most faithful thing to do is to just stop. To put down all of the activity that can fill church life up and just embrace the silence of God and be open to taking a step of faith.

Some of the most dramatic changes in direction come in the face of endings. Before I came alongside them, one of my first churches got to the verge of closure. They were down to a handful of people and a building that was an overwhelming burden. They are now a small but vibrant congregation engaged with their community in a small building provided by a developer who built houses on the rest of their original site.

It is a source of great sadness that many congregations do not face impending challenges before they are overwhelming:

- The hurried merging of traditions when a roof collapses, is the worst way to start an ecumenical project seeking to better express the unity and vision of Christ.
- Waiting for a final funeral before just putting a building up for sale and the money being absorbed into an already wealthy Synod trust.
- The cobbling together of multiple congregations into pastorates to try to appease unachievable and contradictory expectations of ministers and being church.

The best time to grab the nettle and engage with the reality before you is always 5 or 10 years ago. The second best time, is now. Who knows where we will be next year or in five years' time? We are called to be faithful, and we are faithful by listening out for God's word to us, being open to the Spirit and following Christ's way within it all. We know we face challenges. We know we have a variety of views and expectations. We know we are called to be Church, to seek God's will and serve the community around us. We know all this. Now we need to find ways to attentively and respectfully listen to each other, discern God's Spirit, and together step out in faith wherever that may lead us.

With every blessing, Rev'd David R. Coaker

News of the Family



Owen has a baby brother and Charlotte and Glen are the proud parents to a second son. Evan Charlie Webb was born on Wednesday 19th June and weighed in at 9lbs 10oz.

Congratulations Charlotte, Glen and Owen.



We think of those members and friends who find it difficult to come to church for one reason or another. We think especially of Doreen Thomas a long time member of this church who celebrated her 97th birthday at the end of June.

There are many friends and members who we seldom see these days, but despite that, they are still in our thoughts and prayers.

Some of our members and friends are receiving regular medical treatments which are not always comfortable or may be on a waiting list for a procedure – and some just "ache" from time to time!!

Whatever we feel is difficult in our lives we ask for the support of the Lord Jesus to sustain us through these times.

Lord Jesus, we ask for your love and strength to engulf us as we go about our daily work and routines in and around Grays and further afield.

We thank you Lord for encouraging our Minister, Dave and his family to move to Grays. We thank you for our Elders and Church Secretary for the time they spend on church matters.

We thank you for all those who do the thankless tasks who may go unnoticed.

Everyone is equal in your eyes – help us to undertake our roles with humility and love.

Amen



Some Dates to Note:

Sunday 7th July after Morning Service there will be a visit to Rainham Marshes. There is a cafe at the RSPB Centre and it is hoped that there may be a guide for our visit.

The **Isaiah Bible Study Sessions 6 and 7** will be on **Wednesday July 10th and 17th** from 1 pm – 2.30 pm in the side vestry.

The **Isaiah Bible Study Sessions** will take a break during August and continue on **Wednesday 11th September**.

Copies of the book being used are at the back of the Church and also see the notice board in the Church Hall for more information.

Church Meeting: The next Church Meeting will be on **Sunday 14th July** following Morning Service.

Baptism – Gertrude and Emmanuel will be bringing Nyla Bampoe to be baptised on Sunday 18th August.

Eastern Synod Youth Fun Day 14th September at the Playground, Haysborder Road, Barrow, Suffolk – suitable for 11 – 18 yr olds. Cost £5 per person. Further information contact Nicola Grieves – 07515721172.

There will be a **Church Meeting** on **Sunday 15th September**.

Our **Harvest Service** will be on **29th September** and will be followed by a BBQ or Paella Lunch. An invitation will be given to groups and building users to share a decoration or display.

Please come along to help decorate the Church on Saturday 28th September. (Time to be arranged).

Forthcoming Attractions – Watch the Notice Boards for more information about:-

The Church may be 'open' between 6pm – 8pm once a week for anyone who would like to come in and have a coffee/tea and chat. Details still to be confirmed.

During September a **Retreat Day** will be organised at the Church on a Saturday. Date to be confirmed.



Contact for the Elderly

On Sunday 2nd June, the Church hosted an afternoon tea for a group of older people and their drivers/helpers.

They all seemed to enjoy the afternoon tea and especially enjoyed the concert given by Richard Wade who played a variety of songs, hymns and tunes on the piano. Which provoked a sing-a-long from time to time.

Within Thurrock there are eight tea party groups – these are labelled as "a lifeline of friendship".

Most groups will go out to tea at least once a month and the venues vary.

Lorraine, the leader said:-

"Contact the Elderly Thurrock 1 Tea Party Group were given such a lovely warm welcome today by the Reverend David Coaker and his fabulous congregation to their beautiful church. We were all treated to a delicious tea and an afternoon of entertainment. Thank you to Richard, their very talented pianist, who treated us all to a selection of lovely hymns, old time music hall songs and the very moving rendition of You'll Never Walk Alone 😊"

Thank you to all our lovely volunteers for driving guests today. We all had a wonderful afternoon, thank you all so much. xx 😊 😊"



What we do in Bible Study

As part of our Bible study exploring the book of Isaiah (particularly Isaiah 7: 1-17 and 9: 1-7) we had a go at some poetry! The style we attempted is called cinquain (sin-can) and has the following structure :

Line 1 = a single word that is the subject of the poem

Line 2 = two adjectives describing the subject

Line 3 = three action words related to the subject

Line 4 = four feeling words related to the subject

Line 5 = a single word that acts as the conclusion or summary

Here are some of ours, and you may wish to try it yourself:-

Peace

Complex Ungraspable

Bewildering Heart-breaking Consuming

Blessed Holy Patient Whole

Heaven

Trust

Foundational Instinctive

Enveloping Unexplainable Grounding

Comforting Steeling Courageous Unquestioning

Amen

Trust

Whole hearted foundational

Selfless Interconnected Inclusive

Compassionate Hopeful Welcoming Accepting

Pilgrimage

Immanuel

Wonderful Counsellor

Born Authority Everlasting

Peace Justice Righteousness Forever

Jesus

Hope

New Life

Controlling Authoritative Supporting

Peace Joy Understanding Omnipotent

Jesus

Rev'd Dave & Others

Messy Church

I had never seen myself as someone who would be spending a few hours at Messy Church. The main reason for this was that I no longer felt I had the patience to spend time with a large group of children in the Church Hall!

However, it is odd how you can get roped into something that is out of your comfort zone. A voice in the Church Hall after the morning service asked for a favour:- "Would you be available to come and take the names and details of the mums and children as they arrive for messy church on Wednesday please."

So after a Bible Study and a quick cuppa at the garden centre I returned to sit and smile nicely at the mums, dads and children as they came to enjoy two hours of fun, some time in the church and then some food.

It wasn't at all messy – it was all very well organised – Denise has a reliable band of helpers (and I know she would like more volunteers) who prepare the activities in advance and then assist the families to paint, cut, colour and make origami boats, (Dave). Jean Olly had painted pictures in advance for the children to use and Richard was there when needed to play the piano for their time in church.

Alan mustn't be forgotten – he was in the kitchen in charge of the meal which that day was fish fingers, new potatoes and salad, followed by cakes. This was appreciated by all.

Instead of staying for about half an hour I stayed a good bit longer intrigued with the whole afternoon.

Denise and her "gang" deserve a medal – they certainly, apart from being exhausted at the end of the afternoon, must feel quite fulfilled.



Children's art created from Jean Olley's boards revealing fishing scenes on the wall in the church. Ed.

Winchester Cathedral

The holiday season is here again and thoughts are being given to which places of interest might be visited during a summer break. Janet and I will often seek out the nearest of our great cathedrals for such a visit and have not been disappointed yet.



Recently, we visited Winchester Cathedral (not our first visit there) to remind ourselves of some of the treasures it has to offer. This time we joined an organised tour but later we browsed on our own.

I think the most interesting aspect was the fact that the cathedral once nearly collapsed. In the early 1900s it was realised that its foundations were waterlogged and needed underpinning. Early efforts failed to achieve this. The trenches dug by the architect simply filled with water and could not be pumped out. They had to be about 14 feet below the water table.

The solution was to bring in a naval trained deep sea diver. An experienced diver working at Portsmouth dockyard was assigned the unenviable task. His name was William Walker. From 1906, William Walker, with only one or two assistants on the surface, worked under water below the cathedral for six hours a day with very few breaks. He was sometimes 20 feet down, in total darkness, working in muddied water and using his bare hands.



He laboured at this task for no less than six years, excavating the trenches and filling them with bags of concrete. On completion of his work all the groundwater could be pumped out and the subsiding walls further underpinned by bricklayers. It is said of him that he saved the cathedral with his bare hands.

Walker was honoured for his outstanding work. A special service of thanksgiving was held in 1912 when Walker was presented to King George V and Queen Mary. He was made a member of the Royal Victorian Order. He unfortunately died aged just 49 during the epidemic of Spanish flu.

There is a larger than life size bust of Mr. Walker outside the cathedral.

What else has this cathedral to offer visitors?

Whilst visiting this cathedral one can meditate at three memorials to the author Jane Austen who lived in Hampshire. Her novels were hardly recognised until after her death.

Jane became ill at her home and moved to Winchester in order to consult an eminent doctor. But her illness progressed so rapidly that it was too late. She died on 18th July 1819 and was buried in the cathedral, which she greatly admired, in the early morning before services began. Sadly, only four people attended her funeral.

You will have heard of the legend of St. Swithun's day. In about 963, Swithun was chosen as the Patron Saint of the cathedral after having been Bishop of Winchester for ten years. His remains rest in the cathedral. His death gave rise to the legend that if it rains on 15th July it will rain for the next 40 days. Meteorologically speaking, the legend has proved to have no basis in fact!

There is a 'Fisherman's Chapel' within the building, following the burial there of Izaak Walton, (*The Compleat Angler*). This chapel, with its stained glass window, showing the renowned angler seated with his fishing rod, reading, is visited by anglers from all over the world.



Finally, (but not finally at all because there is much else to see!) one can visit the crypt. This is a somewhat bare place but brought into prominence by a statue of a life size man. It is by Anthony Gormley and represents a man contemplating water cupped in both hands. It is life size because although it is made of lead, it was from a plaster cast of the artist's own body. Since the crypt gets inundated during rainy weather, the statue is sometimes up to its knees in water.

George Semain



Desert Island Discs

I wasn't too sure when I wrote about what one of my choices of music might be if I was marooned on a desert island awaiting rescuing whether anyone one would be prepared to share their choice of music in such a situation. Remember you are only allowed eight records to take with you.

However, I am pleased to say that Alan Beckley, who admits to being a long time listener of the programme, has given us the list of pieces he would choose.



Alan says "I have selected four classical pieces and four more modern pieces. A rather eclectic mix, but all hold special memories, and in no particular order they are:-

1. "Nimrod" from Elgar's Enigma Variations (the version written for the organ if possible)
2. Widor's Toccata
3. "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah
4. "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's 9th Symphony
5. "Mandolin Wind" by Rod Stewart (Denise and I saw Rod and the Faces in concert a few times back in the early 70's).
6. "Rocket Man" by Elton John.
7. "American Pie" by Don McLean (full length 7+ minute version please).
8. "Angie" by the Rolling Stones

In true "Desert Island Disc" style if asked to choose just one piece that depends.

I would love to hear other people's selection, so get thinking, it's quite good fun!"

Alan Beckley

*Many thanks Alan. I look forward to others coming forward with their choice!
Ed.*

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY SERVICES

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| Children's Service | 9.30 am | 1 st Sunday each month (except August) |
| Morning Worship | 10.30 am | Each Sunday |
| Holy Communion | 10.30 am 6.30 pm | 1 st Sunday each month 3 rd Sunday each month |
| Parade Service | 10.30 am | Next Parade Service will be on 29 th September 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 nd 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



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URC Grays