

Silent Visitor



October 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: 078141 06604
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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

Taking Stock

Taking Stock is the booklet I filled in as part of my Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal. A process that has been URC policy for a while, but my first time going through in 15 years since ordination. It is 'designed as a means of helping those in all types of ministry to reflect on that ministry and to strengthen and develop it.'

It is the partner process to Local Ministry and Mission Review which seeks the same for congregations, and they should flow together.

The three items that I came up with, after going through the process, that I think we need to talk about at elder and church meetings are:-

- Deepening the opportunities for commitment to Grays URC (i.e. membership etc.) to Messy Church and the Young Families service.
- If we can only support an eldership of 3, implement alternate ways of organising church life to suit.
- Review Mission Plan, prioritise and find ways of minimising effort to maintain status quo to allow greater activity seeking growth.

This does tie in with the themes that ran through our church meeting in September. Alan shared that we haven't met our full share of the M & M pot that funds the life of the URC, for the last two years, and that our elders feel we need others to join them to share the load.

We have responded by agreeing an increase in our contribution and reopening nominations for eldership to be put before the meeting on the 13 October. But those decisions require subsequent actions from all of us if they are to be effective.

As a rule of thumb our offertory should cover our M & M contribution, but we rely on gift aid and our rental income to cover most of it. A bit of maths was done in the meeting which suggested everyone putting £2 extra per week should cover it.

This is one way but the guidance the URC offers is the Biblical principal of tithing your net (after tax) income to offer 5% to church and 5% to other charities. We give as we are able and meet our contribution together.

This is linked to the first of my items for discussion. If we only look to the 10.30am service attenders to fulfil the rights and responsibilities of membership, we are potentially overlooking people who are seeking ways to express a commitment to our life together who faithfully attend Messy Church and the Young Families service.

The second item depends upon the result of our call for elder nominations. If we significantly increase our eldership we will have much more confidence in being able to fulfil our basic tasks and effectively engage with how we move forward. Which is the third item. If we don't, we will need to discern another way of organising ourselves so that the role of eldership is covered in a different way.

We are living beyond our means and asking too much of a few of us to keep things going. This is not where we want to be.

We are fortunate that we have time to reflect upon many little changes, as individuals and collectively, to remedy this situation. But this window of opportunity is not unlimited.

The sooner we change course means it will take less effort and be less drastic. The longer we delay means the effort will increase and the solutions will inevitably be more drastic. Just as with simple maths the £2 per week figure was arrived at, dividing our reserves by our annual deficit could give us a deadline of sorts.

This is all part of our stewardship as part of God's Church. It is very business-like and not very spiritual. For some Christians their first response is to step forward in faith and trust that God will provide. I'm not wired that way. I truly believe that God can move through what we do together and we can be taken in unexpected directions as we discern the Spirit, but I also believe that you need to prepare the ground properly first. I'm all for taking leaps of faith and not knowing where I may land, but I want to be able to trust the point from which I am leaping to ensure that I don't stumble instead.

So in the coming weeks, please give prayerful consideration to all of these things. How can we support each other, meet our obligations and strive after the kingdom of God in this place, in our community and throughout the world?

With every blessing, Rev'd David R Coaker

Ministry and Mission

At a recent Church Meeting, the Treasurer, reported that the amount to be paid to the URC for Ministry and Mission will be £25,380 for 2019/20.

Over the passed few years the church has found it difficult to meet the sum requested for one reason or another and the Treasurer had asked for this to be reduced to £22,000 for the last two years. This was accepted.

The Missions and Ministries funds are normally paid from the offertory collections, but in our case these do not fulfil the need and the gift aid and hiring fees are included meet our financial commitment to the URC.

The Treasurer approached the meeting with this information and explained it could be embarrassing to go back a third year and ask if they would accept £22,000 again.

A suggestion made at the meeting was that with the number of members in the Church it would only require an additional £2 a week added to their giving to resolve the deficit.

The Treasurer is asking members if they would kindly look at their giving and decide whether they are in a financial position to make an increase so that a full payment may be made to the URC in due course.

The Church Meeting agreed to the Treasurer asking the URC if we could pay a smaller reduction of £24,000 for 2019/20.

Included in this Edition of Silent Visitor is a copy of the memo sent to our church thanking us for the contribution we make to the URC.

Alan Beckley
Treasurer

Thank You Letter to Church Members:

From: United Reformed Church Finance Committee

Date: August 2019

To: The Members and Friends of each local URC congregation

'THANK YOU' for what you help us achieve together in God's name.

The purpose of this letter is to say 'thank you' to each and every one of you for all that you do for the Church and especially for your help in **raising over £19million in 2018 for the URC Ministry and Mission Fund**. For Christians any giving of ours is in response to the amazing generosity of God in pouring out his love through the life death and resurrection of Jesus and through the risen life in the world and the church today, through the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is important to say 'thank you'.

The United Reformed Church is like a big family – about 46,000 members in 1,400 churches served by just under 400 ministers. In any thriving family, the members support each other and want the best for each other. In the URC, we are all seeking to 'Walk the way: live the life of Jesus today' – and to enable others to do so as well.

For most of us, the idea of the church as family is most easily seen in the life of our own local church. That is where we regularly worship God and also seek to serve our own community and share God's love with them. There are 1,400 different ways in which this is happening and a colossal amount of worshipping and witnessing and working for the kingdom happening in URC congregations across our three nations. **'THANK YOU'** for all you do for the kingdom in your local churches.

A crucial part of what your local church does, like any family, is support you in all that you do in your daily lives. That is where we all *'Walk the way'*. **'THANK YOU' for all you do for the kingdom in your daily discipleship.**

But the wider family of the United Reformed Church is more than the sum of its parts. We belong to each other under God and through our sharing of resources as well as burdens, opportunities as well as challenges, we achieve more together. You can get a flavour of this from the reports of the last Mission Council on the URC website – from new resources for Pilots and children to disinvesting in fossil fuels, from the challenge to be better at safeguarding to the need for a new General Secretary. **'THANK YOU' for all you do for the kingdom through the wider Church, including your giving which enables your church to give to the Ministry and Mission Fund.**

You might ask 'how much should I give?' That is a matter for you. The Church has sometimes suggested 5% of after tax income, but that is only a guide. If your church is looking at 'Holy habits' then one of those covers giving. If not there are other resources on the stewardship pages of the URC website.

The URC Finance Committee is responsible for the oversight of the finances of the central United Reformed Church. Each year, our local churches raise almost £20 million for the Ministry and Mission Fund. Over 80% of this money is used to pay for stipendiary ministers and church related community workers and their training.

For a long time, the number of ministers in the URC has been falling at roughly the same rate as the number of church members. What has fallen more dramatically over the years has been the average size of URC congregations – now around 35. So, the challenge which is exercising people across the Church is not so much a shortage of ministers, but how to make the best use of ministers we have got in the context of small, often widely dispersed congregations.

It is an extraordinary demonstration of commitment and generosity that the average giving per member to the Ministry and Mission Fund continues to go up each year. Although the number of URC members has been going down by a few percent each year, the total amount raised has been going down much more slowly. The total raised in 2018 was less than 0.5% lower than the total for 2017. These contributions are voluntary but they are not optional. They are an expression of our commitment to each other. The United Reformed Church could not function without them. **'THANK YOU' for your church's contribution to the Ministry and Mission Fund.**

NB: the contribution to the Ministry and Mission Fund requested from each local church is a matter for its Synod. The central Church is not directly involved.

If you have any questions or comments from this letter then please speak to your church treasurer, who has been provided with more detailed information. If they are not able to help then they will get in touch with the finance team at Church House.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Hardle
Treasurer

John Piper
Deputy Treasurer

News from Margaret Datlen

Many of the Congregation may remember Molly Williams who used to come to various activities at the Church with her younger sister, Mia and her parents, Nigel and Trudy Williams.

Molly has recently passed her degree with a 1st in Chemistry at Leeds University.

A card has been sent to her from the Church congregation congratulating her.

Molly is staying in Leeds as she has been given a placement at a Grammar School to start her 2 year teaching practice.

Well done Molly and best wishes for the future.

Margaret Datlen says: If anyone knows of someone who is unwell or has not attended church for a while, or who has a special birthday or anniversary, please let her know and she will contact them.



Margaret may be contacted by;
e-mail: margaret.datlen@hotmail.co.uk

Mobile: 07527 104589

Footnote: Margaret sends greetings cards as appropriate to members and friends of the Church but to do it she has to have the help and support of us all by keeping her in touch. Thank you Margaret. Ed.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE READING ASSOCIATION 2019

I should like to remind readers that the order for I.B.R.A. 2020 Bible Readings will be sent off on the 1st November.

Books for present members will be ordered as for 2019 unless I hear to the contrary. New members are always welcome.



Again they are producing just one set of daily bible readings and notes for adults, called **Fresh from the Word: the Bible for a Change.**

It offers a fresh approach to Bible reading and is written to support all readers of the Bible, from new Christians to those seeking to deepen their faith and relationship with God. Bringing together over 50 international writers to give you new insights every day, Fresh From the Word contains Bible verses, notes, prayers and action points

Fresh From the Word gives global perspectives on carefully selected passages from the Bible. The writers include theologians and biblical scholars, church leaders and activists for peace from across the world, all of whom share a passion to bring the Bible into conversation with day-to-day concerns. This helps you grow in your knowledge and appreciation of the Bible and carries on the 135-year-old IBRA tradition of encouraging people around the world.

IBRA International Fund

Giving through the International Bible Reading Association (IBRA) International Fund enables you to help spread the Word across the globe.

Our partners are based in 11 countries but benefit flows over borders to at least 32 countries. They work tirelessly, driven by their hope and their passion for distributing good teaching through Fresh From the Word. They organise the translation, printing and distribution of IBRA Bible study notes and lists into many different languages from Ewe, Yoruba and Twi to Portuguese, Samoan and Telugu!

We guarantee that 100% of your donations go to support our international brothers and sisters in Christ.

An envelope will be included with your readings, or you can give your donation to me before 1st November. The subscription cost is £10. If you want to know more please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ruth Hunwick

Going Away on Holiday

Many of us go away on holiday in the UK. I don't mean in order to stay with relatives or visit friends but to see new sights and new places. We also like to visit familiar areas that remind us of personal events in our lives or even childhood memories.

Sometimes we are away on a Sunday and may seek out a local church to visit for one of their services. But, what denomination do we select? Perhaps one of the "Free Churches", with their many different styles of worship. Possibly the Salvation Army, often with the band accompanying the hymns. Or what about one of the Pentecostal Churches with much clapping and demonstrative styles.

In the back of our minds is the thought, "What will their service be like? What sort of welcome will we have? Will we know the hymns selected, or the tunes? Have they an organ, piano, guitar group, a choir, a band or even CDs? Which Bible edition is read from?" So many questioning thoughts. But, one thing is certain in our minds and that is, we are all worshipping One God; Jesus the Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit.

Very often, after the service, there are refreshments served, where we will meet the 'Locals'. We may also meet other visitors like ourselves. Margaret and I once visited a small town in the West Country. We went to a service in an upstairs chapel. There was a pianist and one other 'local' – the preacher. We were the only English couple there. Others were from Scotland, Wales and even a couple from Australia. But our praise and worship is universal, wherever we come from, or whatever 'style' we use.



Alf and Margaret Pryer

Another Holiday – Another Cathedral

Our last holiday break took us to Knaresborough in Yorkshire, a pretty town boasting a highly photographable railway viaduct over the river Nidd, giving rise to the name of the long valley of Nidderdale.

Knaresborough was only ten miles from Britain's third smallest city (by population), Ripon. Ripon is home to Ripon Cathedral and is known as the cathedral city of the Yorkshire Dales. Perhaps it is one of the lesser known cathedrals but it is by no means the least interesting.

The first church on this site was built in the seventh century by St. Wilfred and was dedicated in 672. The remarkable crypt (see later) is all that remains of the original church and as you make your way inside you have the impression of being in a tunnel that gets narrower and narrower.

That brings us to an interesting point. The father of Lewis Carroll, the author of Alice in Wonderland, was a Canon of the cathedral when Lewis was about six years old. He would have spent much time in the cathedral. If we add together the tunnel of the crypt, the fact that one of the bosses high up in the south transept has the face of a Cheshire Cat and that one of the many interesting misericord carvings in the quire shows a rabbit being chased down a rabbit hole, we can understand that these may have inspired Carroll to write as he did from the white rabbit onwards in his story.

The organ above the screen in the quire was originally built in 1878. It originally had no bass pedals. Unfortunately the organist was seated facing away from the choristers and he was unable to conduct them whilst he was playing. This was remedied by the placing of a mechanical wooden hand facing the choristers which the organist was able to operate by a pedal in order to beat time for them.

The pulpit is another point of interest. It was made in 1913 of bronze held up by marble columns. Around the top are bronze images of four Anglo-Saxon saints who were contemporaries of St. Wilfred; St. Chad; St. Cuthbert; St Hilda and St. Etheldreda.

Knaresborough is only twenty miles from York, which demanded another cathedral visit, this time to York Minster (which is also a

cathedral). When one considers the beauty of such things as Cathedral Organs it is interesting to hear about the organ in York Minster. This organ is refurbished once in about every hundred years and this is currently happening. Organ specialists Harrison and Harrison are undertaking the work and have dismantled the instrument over three weeks and transported it to their workshop in County Durham. That meant dismantling 5,403 pipes which range in length from the size of a pencil to ten metres. This organ overall is one of the largest in the country and weighs approximately 20,000 kilograms.

Seventy of the pipes will be repaired and brought back into use for the first time in over a century. Unfortunately around thirty of the pipes, some of which are on show, were found to be beyond repair and will be replaced. But surely they can't throw such old pieces of heritage away. No! The Minster has decided to auction them off this autumn to help raise funds. So if you are interested in owning a bit of history....!!!

Whilst the organ is out of use a brand new Wilh Steinberg grand piano has been brought over from China, on loan from Bestrode Pianos of Leeds.

Our visit to Ripon coincided with a Sung Eucharist which was already in progress. However we were invited to receive Holy Communion and kneeled at the steps with the considerably large congregation. It was quite memorable. We look forward to our next cathedral visit.

George and Janet.



Poem

During the Summer the following poem was used by Denise. Permission was given for it to be read at the service and also for it to be included in the Silent Visitor.

I went to Church and God was there
He spoke as I was deep in prayer
He asked how much I longed to care
How much of his love I could share.

I went to work and God came too
He told me it was nothing new
He said he's there my whole life through
No matter what I'm going through.

I went back home, God came with me
It seems somewhere he likes to be
The way he moves is a mystery
I think, though, I begin to see.



I went to sleep, saw God in dream
In pouring rain and rainbow beams
In metaphorical refreshing streams
Even in slumber God holds me.

I went for a walk, and there was God
It seems he's there every step I've trod
At first it was strange but now not so odd
To be followed by an omnipresent God.

Wherever I am God's all in all
When I succeed and when I fall
In all of life, the big and small
If i'm still right now i'll hear him call.

Moving Stories

Responding to the crisis in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory

'Rebuild my House'

House Demolitions in by Israeli forces continue unabated in the West Bank. mostly in the name of security.

On Monday, July 22, 2019, the Israeli authorities demolished buildings in the Wadi al-Humos, the eastern extension of Zur Baher in East Jerusalem.

The move came after the Israeli Supreme Court rejected the residents' appeal and ruled there was no legal barrier to the demolitions. Israel said it would demolish up to 13 buildings, including 14 apartments, the vast majority of which are in various stages of construction.

The buildings were home to two families including 17 people, of which 11 are minors. Some of them were built in Area A, with building permits issued by the Palestinian Authority, which holds planning powers in those areas. Wadi al-Humos is outside of Jerusalem's municipal boundary and constitutes the main land reserve for the development of Zur Baher.

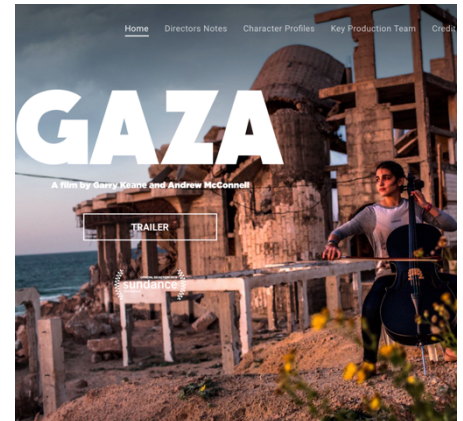
The Zur Baher committee estimates that 6,000 people currently live in that neighborhood – a quarter of the total population of Zur Baher.

These actions are seen by many as more evidence of the impunity displayed by Israel as an occupying force rather than a state that treats all its citizens equally. A video showing the destruction can be viewed here.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=39&v=eX2ZJwQCULU

GAZA: A Film Review

GAZA is a masterfully crafted portrait of Palestinian life, offering a rare chance to be immersed in the heart of this tiny strip of land.



The film succeeds in showing the lives of ordinary people who courageously keep going in the grimmest of conditions, in a world where, as someone puts it, there is a “wall between the people of Gaza and life itself.”

We see a young woman practising the cello, a young man recording rap tracks, a theatre director rehearsing a performance piece, and a fisherman brooding over the dire conditions of his business – he may not fish more than three miles out, leading to a pitifully meagre catch.

The sea is the one border that ought not to be overwhelming for the people of Gaza, but is almost as unforgiving as the Israeli border crossings. This is a sober and even angry film about a people living under a brutal political occupation.

GAZA was released in the UK on the 9th of August 2019.

Commitment for Life is dedicated to the equal treatment, safety, protection, education, and well-being of every person in IOPT. Please pray for Kevin & the other URC members travelling to IOPT in SEPT.

October 2019 - ROTAS

FLOWER ROTA	Please see notice board regarding the Flower Rota. This rota is no longer defined. Please add your name to the flower rota list if you would like to arrange church flowers for a particular Sunday.		
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PREACHERS		Time	
Young family service	6	9.30 am	Rev'd Dave/Denise
Morning Service with Communion	6	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Morning Worship	13	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Morning Worship	20	10.30 am	George Semain
Holy Communion	20	6.30 pm	Alf Pryer
Morning Worship	27	10.30 am	Denise Beckley
November			
Young family service	3	9.30 am	Revd Dave / Denise
Morning Service with Communion	3	10.30 am	Revd Dave Coaker
READERS			
October	6	10.30 am	Ruth H.
	13	10.30 am	David & Frances
	20	10.30 am	Richard & Edna
	27	10.30 am	Anne & Ruth H
November	3	10.30 am	David & Frances

Duty Steward: See details on Notice Board

Hymn Book Steward: Isobel Beynon & Beryl Clarke

This year's Charity is:- Friends of Essex & Thurrock Homeless
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CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY SERVICES

Children's Service	9.30 am	1 st Sunday each month
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 10 th November 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	3.30 pm	See Notices

- 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**



Find us on
Facebook

URC Grays