

Silent Visitor



December 2019
January 2020

Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue

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Treasurer: Mr Alan Beckley

Serving Elders: Mr Alf Pryer, Mrs Denise Beckley &
Mr Ben Marshall, Mr George Semain &
Mrs Janet Semain

Organist: Mr Richard Wade

Facilities Manager: On Maternity Leave
&
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Silent Visitor: Mrs Janet Semain 01375 373532
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Leaders of the Uniformed Organisations:

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A Merry Stress Less!

I'm writing this after spending the weekend serving as a chaplain at our Mission Council, and in the week running up to our Christmas Bazaar and Cafe Worship/church meeting. Then the Sunday after we begin Advent, and what feels like a dash to the 25th begins.

When things get busy it does feel as though time vanishes. We just manage to get ourselves prepared for one thing and then we're running late for the second, and the third is hot on its heels. It can be hard to be fully present within it all. To focus on each moment, every encounter, and be open to God's spirit moving within it all. Too often we can end up on auto-pilot and life becomes a blur until the busyness passes and before too long starts again.

We can but try to keep ourselves present within it all. To put to one side the next thing, and keep our attention on what is before us. It is a lot easier said than done, but we must try. There will, of course, be inevitable compromises, but we owe it to ourselves, those closest to us, each other, and the people we meet along the way, to attempt it.

For instance, before Mission Council I was endeavouring to plan our upcoming services, and I forgot to double-check that a handout was in-hand. Fortunately smiling sweetly at a receptionist remedied the situation and it was sorted before the meeting noticed. This week we'll be opening our doors to welcome people to our Christmas Bazaar and then be back to engage together with cafe style church worship and our church meeting, and both will take much effort from us all.

So in the coming weeks let us be kind to each other. Take deep breaths, count to three, or however high is required, and always hold before ourselves that the important thing is the message that Jesus was born and that we are seeking to celebrate and share that fact. Christmas can be a stressful time, and we need to try to not increase that stress to each other.

So now I'll just finish off the latest issue of Progressive Voices, look through the Isaiah Bible Study, get some mince pies and prepare for Saturday, check that I, and the elders, are ready for Sunday, and see what else happens today! Peace be with you.

With every blessing, Rev'd David R. Coaker

Cafe Worship / Church Meeting – Sunday 24th November 2019

Feedback

Our thanks to everyone for taking part in our first shared experience of cafe worship and including church meeting within it too.

The Elders will discuss it when they next meet including their impressions from our conversations about church and membership, and we'll see where we take it from there.

	Maybe	Yes	No
If we had another service in this style, are there people you'd feel comfortable to invite?	4		1
Did you feel welcomed?		5	
..... relaxed?		5	
..... engaged?	1	4	
..... worshipful?	1	4	

Comments:

Well worth trying again.

Nice first try. But not good idea to combine with church meeting in the middle as it made people leave and miss the closing worship. I missed confession (or was I asleep?) and the Lord's Prayer. A good experience to sit and talk to people about church.

The informal way this service took place I think made people talk about situations and views more openly.

It was a relaxed atmosphere and a good chance to talk things through. I hope some good will come from it.

Video was very fast – difficult to take in. Opportunity for discussion was great – talked to people I don't normally speak to.

Rev'd Dave Coaker



Dates for Diaries

Wednesday 11th December Christmas Messy Church

All our services for Advent are listed on our poster but just in case you have missed any of the notices here is a reminder:-

Sunday 1st December @ 9.30 Christmas Service for Young Families

@ 10.30 Advent 1 - The Bigger Picture
(this service includes Holy Communion)

Sunday 8th December @ 10.30 Advent 2 – Change Direction! Gift Service. All gifts of toys, toiletries or money will be donated to the Women's Refuge

Sunday 15th December @ 10.30 Advent 3 – What do you see? – Parade Service. A second opportunity to bring gifts if you missed the opportunity the week before.

also @ 6.30 pm Carol Service with the **Tilbury Band**. Refreshments of tea/coffee & mince pies followed by a short Concert by the Tilbury Band.



Sunday 22nd December @ 10.30 Advent 4 – Christingle Service – Family Worship

6.30 pm Service of Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve 24th December @ 3 – 3.30 pm Family Christmas Worship

Christmas Eve @ 11.30 pm - Midnight Service

Sunday 29th December @ 10.30 – Family Worship

"Come along and Join us!"

News of the Family

Good news, Doreen Thomas is back home after her stay in hospital. We all send Doreen our love and best wishes.



On Sunday 17 November, Charlotte, Glen & Owen brought baby Evan to be baptised by his Grandmother, Denise. The packed congregation offered their love and support to Evan over the years to come. It was a lovely occasion and everyone enjoyed the sumptuous buffet afterwards.

Many in our congregation are suffering in one way or another and we wish all those who are feeling unwell a speedy recovery.

*Jesus, new-born child of all time,
We greet your birth with wide-eyed delight,
You are precious beyond words
For our world needs your presence more than ever.
Let the angels' promise of your good news
Offering joy and peace to all the world
Be heard by those who lead and guide.
Let kings bow down and all creation greet this holy moment
As we seek to grasp its magnitude.
For you are God's gift
Silently delivered to every human heart*

(From Further Everyday prayers)


Christmas Bazaar



A big thank you to all those who supported the Christmas Bazaar this year – to all the stall holders and those who came and purchased items from the stalls and contributed in any other way. This event still helps to raise funds for the work of the church.

The total amount raised will be announced in the notices as soon as Colin has done his sums!

Christmas Messages

	<p>We wish you all "God Jul och Gott Nytt Ar!" Best wishes from Inger & Alan Collier (donation has gone to Crisis)</p>
<p>Wishing you all a Joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year. I wish to express my thanks for your prayers and for your messages to me during this last year. Best wishes, Doreen Thomas</p>	<p>Bob and Margaret Datlen wish all their friends at the URC a very peaceful Happy Christmas and New Year. We would also like to send our thanks for the prayers & support at the end of 2018 and the earlier part of 2019 (British Heart Foundation, Water Aid, Salvation Army & Southend Hosp. Cancer Breast Unit)</p>
<p>Elaine and Berne Barcz send warm greetings for Christmas and the New Year. (This year we have paid for a toilet, through Embrace who work in the Middle East)</p>	<p>Gina Nottage sends best Christmas wishes to all. (donating to various charities)</p>
<p>Ruth and Roger Hunwick wish everyone a very Happy and Joyful Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy 2020. (our charity is Water Aid)</p>	<p>Jill Keane & Colin Baker wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy healthy New Year.</p>
<p>We wish all our friends a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year, With love Frances and David (Macmillan Cancer Support)</p>	<p>A very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year. With love from Anne French</p>

From Members and Friends of Grays URC



<p>Tony and Jean Olley wish all at Grays URC a very Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year. (St Luke's Hospice in lieu of cards)</p>	<p>Pat and Bill Boag wish everyone at the Church a Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.</p>
<p>SEASON'S GREETINGS to all from Isobel and Clive Beynon (Parkinson's UK)</p>	<p>Maureen and Bryan Overland wish all readers of the Silent Visitor a very Happy Christmas and Peace in the year to come. (Guide Dogs for the Blind)</p>
<p>Richard Wade and family send warmest Christmas greetings to all friends at the Church. (Meningitis Now in continuing memory of Andrew)</p>	<p>George and Janet send their love and best wishes to all for a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year (Crisis)</p>

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Broken

**We will watch the BBC series
and explore the issues raised together.**

Wednesdays 1.00-2.30pm

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

Poverty and Morality	Suicide and Gambling	What is Truth?	Theft or lying?	Reconciliation	Justice and Forgiveness
22nd Jan	29 Jan	12 Feb	4 Mar	11 Mar	1 Apr

The TV series, Broken, written by Jimmy McGovern and starring Sean Bean is set in an estate parish somewhere in north of the UK.

The series focuses on the life and ministry Father Michael Kerrigan, a Roman Catholic, priest who, despite past trauma and anxiety about his own inadequacies, attempts to bring the light of Christ into the lives of the people amongst whom he ministers.

The series portrays real life at its most gritty and unvarnished, and in doing so raises many questions along the way about how to live faithfully when life is very hard.

The course aims to provide the space to pick up the questions raised in the series and to explore how they might want to answer them.

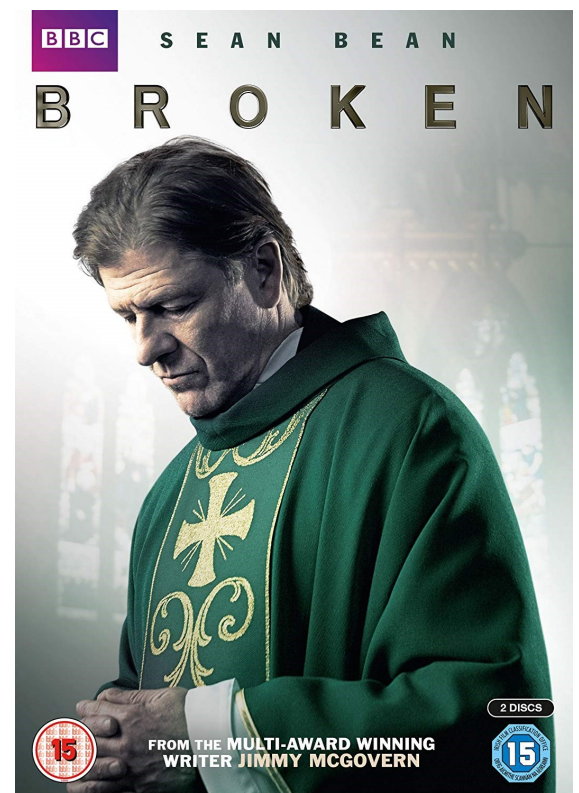
Outline of time together:

Welcome & refreshments

Watch dvd (60mins)

Open Discussion

Closing prayer



2019 – Last Two Cathedrals!

If you tend to think one cathedral is very much like another, think again! Such thoughts could cause you to forgo making a visit, thereby losing out on learning something interesting (not necessarily something particularly religious). That's not to say, however, that things religious are necessarily dull.

The two final visits we made this year (but not on the same holiday!) were to Chester Cathedral and Norwich Cathedral. Chester's proper name is, "The Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary." Norwich's is, "Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity." So already one can pick out an element of theology just from those names.

The Diocese of Chester stretches further than we might think. It covers most of Cheshire; part of Merseyside (the Wirral, where we were staying); tiny parts of North Wales and Derbyshire. It was in this diocese that the Rev'd Elizabeth (Libby) Lane was consecrated as the first female Bishop in the Church of England.

The cathedral is set within the old Roman garrison town of Deva (later Chester), a city which boasts the best preserved city wall in Britain. It once formed a Benedictine Monastery and was such in 1540 when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries. It was saved because Henry then designated it as one of his new cathedrals. The monk's old refectory is now the cathedral restaurant.



Of all the interesting points of the cathedral, the one which prompted our greatest interest was in the cloister garden. It is a very modern sculpture by one Stephen Broadbent, depicting the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well (John Ch. 4). This is not an easy sculpture to describe so

you may make up your own minds about it from the attached photograph. We are still not sure what to think!



Something of an innovation has been embarked upon within the cathedral. It is the creation of a detailed model of the cathedral which is being built with 'Lego Bricks'. It has been in progress for about two years and when finished will be comprised of 350,000 bricks and measure 4 metres in length and 2 metres in height. Visitors were invited to purchase a brick for use in the model. We both purchased a small pane for a window panel - each piece of Lego is a £1. Who said cathedrals were dull?

The Diocese of Norwich includes a small part of Suffolk. The first cathedral church of East Anglia now lies beneath the North Sea off the crumbling Suffolk coast. The present magnificent building was begun by Bishop de Losinga in 1090, after the Normans moved the see to Norwich, thus making the building part Norman and part Gothic in style. Its spire has an unfortunate history. The first was burnt down in 1272; its replacement blew down in 1362; the next was struck by lightning in 1463 giving rise to the present spire which dates from the 1480s and is second in height only to that of Salisbury. Those who are architecturally minded can admire the rare exposed flying buttresses giving Norwich its classic look. Within the cathedral is the oldest Bishop's Throne in England, placed centrally behind the High Altar.

It was from this cathedral that Justin Welby began his 'Prayer Pilgrimage' through six dioceses before his enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury.

At the far east end of the building is a door which leads directly to the grave of Nurse Edith Cavell. She was brought up nearby at Swardeston, being the oldest child of a vicar, by whom she was initially schooled at home. There were not many openings for women at the time, just after 1880, but she was determined to use her Christian service to make a difference in the world. She wrote, "Someday, somehow, I am going to do something useful. I don't know what it will be. I only know that it will be something for people." She fulfilled this many times over, initially by training to be a nurse at the Royal London Hospital in the East End.

Edith Louisa Cavell 1865 – 1915

The article on Norwich Cathedral above mentions Edith Cavell and her determination to "do something useful for people."

A great opportunity arose for her when, in 1907, she was invited by a leading Belgian surgeon, to become the founding director of the first professional training school for nurses in Belgium, which would have consequences she could never have imagined.

When the Germans invaded Belgium she decided to stay with her nurses, where they cared for war casualties regardless of whether they were allies or the enemy. In spite of the German declaration of death to anyone assisting allied soldiers, she became part of an underground network which assisted those caught behind enemy lines to escape from Belgium. Much of this (she helped around 200 allied soldiers) took place whilst she nursed German soldiers in her clinic.

That was not enough to save her when she was arrested and imprisoned for ten weeks in solitary confinement in a Brussels prison which she bravely described as a time of healing, peace and calm. Along with 34 others she was tried and found guilty of treason. She knew of her fate on the day before her execution and faced her forthcoming execution with calm courage saying, "I have no fear or shrinking. I have seen death so often it is not strange or fearful to me." As Christ had done from the cross, she prayed for the forgiveness of those who would kill her. She said, "Standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone." She was executed by firing squad the next morning and was buried within the execution area, a local firing range.



Edith's body was returned to England in May 1919. A visit to Bodiam Station, looked down on from Bodiam Castle, enables a view of the railway carriage (then a prototype box car) and shape of the coffin, resting on a Union Flag, which contained her body. This box car was also used to transport the body of Captain Charles Fryatt, a merchant seaman who had tried to ram a German warship and was executed for his audacity, causing international outrage almost on

the same scale as Edith's death. Later it brought back the body of the unknown warrior, bound for Westminster abbey.

Edith's state funeral in Westminster Abbey took place before she was brought back to Norfolk where she was buried in the presence of thousands of people in the grounds of Norwich Cathedral.

We visited her grave, just outside the cathedral, the day before a service marking the 104th anniversary of her execution, where we chatted to a dedicated volunteer who was sweeping and cleaning the area in preparation. That anniversary was celebrated with a memorial service which is held every year in her honour.

George Semain



Memorial in the grounds of Norwich cathedral



Dedication of Edith Cavell's new grave in 2016

December 2019 - ROTAS

FLOWER ROTA	Please see notice board regarding the Flower Rota. Please add your name to the flower rota list if you would like to arrange church flowers for a particular Sunday.		
PREACHERS		Time	
Young family service	1	9.30 am	Rev'd Dave/Denise
Advent 1 "The Bigger Picture" (including Communion)	1	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Advent 2 "Gift Service"	8	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Advent 3 "What do you see" Parade & Gifts Service	15	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Carol Service with the Tilbury Band	15	6.30 pm	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Advent 4 "Christingle Service"	22	10.30 am	Rev'd Dave Coaker
Christmas Eve	24	3 - 3.30 Pm	Denise Beckley
Christmas Eve Midnight Service	24	11.30 pm	Alf Pryer
Family Worship	29	10.30 am	George Semain
READERS			
December	1	10.30 am	Edna & Ruth
	8	10.30 am	Elaine & Richard
	15	10.30 am	Kay Watt
	22	10.30 am	Margaret & Alf
	29	10.30 am	Janet & George

Duty Steward: See details on Notice Board

Communion Steward: 1st Dec - Alan Beckley

Hymn Book Steward: TBA

This year's Charity is:- Friends of Essex & Thurrock Homeless
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January 2020 - 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.		
PREACHERS		Time	
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	Denise Beckley
Morning Worship	19	10.30 am	Alf Pryer
Evening Communion	19	6.30 pm	George Semain
Morning Worship	26	10.30 am	Denise Beckley
February			
Young family service	2	9.30 am	Revd Dave Coaker
Morning Service with Communion	2	10.30 am	Revd Dave Coaker
READERS			
January	5	10.30 am	Ruth & Thembisa
	12	10.30 am	Inger & Edna
	19	10.30 am	Janet & George
	26	10.30 am	Margaret & Alf
February	2	10.30 am	Gina & Richard

Duty Steward: See details on Notice Board

Communion Steward: Janet Semain

Hymn Book Steward: Tony Olley

NB: New Charity not yet known

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 15 th December 2019 Gift Sunday

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



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Facebook

URC Grays