

Minister Rev'd David Coaker  
[drcoaker@gmail.com](mailto:drcoaker@gmail.com)  
07378 348191

# Silent Visitor



# September 2020

## 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  
e-mail: graysurcsecretary@outlook.com

**Treasurer:** Mr Alan Beckley

**Serving Elders:** Mr Ben Marshall; Mr George Semain; Mrs Janet Semain; Co-opted: 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  
Tel: 01375 391031

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

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

## Turning and Re-Turning

A simple explanation of the word repentance is to turn back. The ideal of righteousness is to perfectly walk in God's ways, but as that is impossible for us, except in exceptional moments and lives, we always need to check the direction we're travelling in. Sometimes that requires a slight adjustment, and at other times a complete about turn. It is also an incredibly personal choice which is much more likely to be chosen through the example and encouragement of others than their disapproval or denouncing. The act of turning can be hard in itself, as it may involve embarrassment, shame or guilt, but even harder is discerning the path you are on and how it relates to God's ideal.

How do we know that the path we are on tends towards the good?

Absolute confidence is the path of hypocrisy and self-righteousness, and to making God conform to your own ideals. Humility and faith, trusting in God in the face of the unknowing, is the path that tends more towards following the example of Christ.

On this side of eternity, we will never fully know the mind of God but that should never stop us striving to discern it. We have the example of our forebears in Scripture, the history of the Church, our communities. We have insights from Creation around us and how it is comprehended by science, We have the stories and experiences of our friends, families and neighbours who can inspire us. There are a multitude of ways of discerning, but all of them rely on our having open hearts, minds and senses.

All of us can point to examples of people, words or experiences that have great meaning for our faith but they can never fully encompass God. They may warm our hearts, enlighten our minds or overwhelm our senses, but there is always some other aspect of God's nature they miss. Only God fully knows God, and though we may crave certainty it is an illusion and we will be much better off embracing the journey, being open to new revelations, and being ready to turn from the path we are on to better follow where God is leading. This can be a humble, but also realistic, pattern for the life of faith.

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

## Community Governor:

At the beginning of the year I put my name forward in the parent governor election at Little Thurrock Primary School but was instead appointed to be a community governor.

## Going Electric:

In March we obtained a new car – a Nissan Leaf. We got it as part of a project to trial using electric car batteries for feed-in to the electricity grid – vehicle to grid (V2G). This is all part of the Powerloop project led by Octopus.

<https://www.octopusev.com/powerloop>

Basically to charge the car when demand is low and then discharge it when demand is high. A trial to make sure it works ahead of when electric car usage becomes much more prevalent and could make a real difference in balancing energy demand. We now have a charger capable of doing it, (and thanks to the elders for giving permission for it to be fitted at the manse) a 40kWh battery in the Leaf, and are just waiting on the app to control it all.



**From: Ian Hardie, Treasurer of the United Reformed Church and John Piper, Deputy Treasurer  
August 2020**

**To: The members and friends of all our 1,400 URC congregations**

**'THANK YOU' for your unique and vital contribution to the life of the United Reformed Church, and for the work of the kingdom which we are able to do together in God's name.**

We are living through an extraordinary and challenging time – a very anxious time for everyone; a difficult time for many; and a time of suffering and loss for some. Yet the main purpose of this letter is to say **'thank you'**, to each of you for all that you have done for the Church in the past; for all that you continue to do even in these difficult times; and for what you will do in the future.

As we are treasurers, you will not be surprised that the focus of this letter is on finance. But we recognise that finance is only a means to the end which is our doing of God's work together.

**'Thank you' for your giving and the giving of your local church last year.** In 2019, over **£19.4 million was given by local churches and synods to the Ministry and Mission Fund.** The total contributions from local churches reduced very slightly but the average giving by member has, once again and remarkably, gone up by more than inflation.

**'Thank you' for your continued giving this year.** We fully understand that circumstances this year are difficult. Most local churches have been unable to meet for over five months. We have not had the usual opportunities to make our offerings for the work of the Church. But most of the costs of the local church and of the denomination have not reduced and some have increased as a consequence of the pandemic. We are also aware that some have lost income or work this year and are therefore in great financial difficulty. But there are others on fixed incomes who are actually better off than they might otherwise have been. **So, please continue to give what you can in whatever way you can – or save it up until you can hand it over.**

Any giving of ours is a response to the amazing generosity and love of God which we see in Jesus. Nevertheless, **it is important to say 'thank you' to each and all of you.**

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

*Yours in Christ, Ian and John*

## **Financial Report - August 2020 - Alan Beckley**

The bank balance stood at £8,000 as of 31<sup>st</sup> July. When cheques written but not yet cleared are taken into account, and the M & M is paid, the balance at the end of August will be lower than this.

Regarding the M & M (Ministries and Mission) contribution, it has now returned to the original level of £2,000+ a month, which will be an additional outgoing of £1,000 a month. All this will mean a further sale of our investments to meet the shortfall.

On a brighter note, we have received a donation from Elaine, Joyce Fraser's daughter, for £620. It is understood this will be put towards equipment for our new kitchen. Also, Charlotte tells me that a few of our regular hirers are making plans to return.

I urge all of those who can, to add up any missed weekly giving amounts and send a cheque for the total. It is now much easier for me to pay in cheques and this would help with meeting our outgoings at this difficult time. If anyone needs a new book of weekly giving envelope to help with this, please let me know and I will happily deliver them to you.

As usual, if anyone would prefer to pay by standing order or bank transfer, please let me know and I will be pleased to provide bank details. Thank you once again for those who continue to arrange their regular giving in this way.

Arrangements are in hand to audit the 2019/2020 accounts in due course.

If anyone has any queries please let me know and I will do my best to answer them.

*Alan Beckley, Treasurer*

## **Remembering Joyce Fraser Elder Emeritus – A Change of Plan**

When Joyce Frazer suffered a severe stroke we lost the physical presence in our church buildings of a vibrant and energetic lady, who continued to beam and welcome her visitors, whether in hospital or during her years in Carolyne House.

Joyce loved her garden and her flowers, so her daughter Elaine, who wanted to make a gift in her mother's memory, originally suggested a wooden bench where people could sit and enjoy the peaceful surroundings. There have often been times of course when the grounds are far from peaceful, and we look forward to the return to their bustling activity, particularly of our uniformed organisations and the nursery. Joyce, with her equally dedicated colleagues, worked for so many years with the children of our church that the occasional uproar would be familiar to her.

Plans were in place, and a bench selected but not ordered at the end of last summer as we thought it a good plan to wait for spring. In the meantime, Elaine's husband, Hugh, has had serious health issues, and then we were in lockdown. Elaine, in Bristol, had been following church news in the Silent Visitor, and noted the kitchen improvements and expenses, so came up with a practical suggestion, a donation towards 'white goods' for the kitchen. One of Joyce's very practical activities was to produce vast amounts of jam and marmalade in her own kitchen, to be sold for charity from its place by the serving hatch (Elaine Fraser is still using the recipe book). So it was agreed that a dishwasher would be a useful addition and Elaine has made a hefty donation towards this.

Thank you, Elaine. We send our best wishes to you and Hugh.

### **Addendum:**

When we were negotiating arrangements with the Treasurer, I remembered the tales from Joyce of her friendship with Dr Beryl Chalkley in her time as Treasurer, when counting the cash and doing the books was a regular and occasionally tempestuous Sunday afternoon pastime for them. If they were a penny out in their calculations, it was back to square one for Beryl, with Joyce tearing her hair out in exasperation. Two very strong, outspoken and much-loved ladies.

(Elaine Barcz)



## Food Bank News

Helen Watts from the Thurrock Food Bank emails a regular update called 'the Wednesday Wire', so this is part of her August 19 message.

Welcome to this week's Wire brought to you from a very quiet warehouse. We are still well blessed with good food stocks. Thank you to all the Churches and individuals who are still finding ways to give to us.

**Shortages** – our shortages are sponge puddings, packets of mashed potato, cooking sauces and tinned fruit.

**Prayers** – we are still asking for prayers for the continued good health of our volunteers. We ask for wisdom as we meet to discern the way forward for the food bank and for a remedy to our storage issues and a smooth path to moving our longest dated food off site.

We join the rest of the country in praying for our young people receiving their A level and GCSE results at the moment and the life decisions they will be making in this COVID affecting school year. We know it is often children from disadvantaged backgrounds who struggle the most and we pray they will get the education choices they have worked hard for.

**Harvest** – we know churches are still fathoming out their "new normal" at the moment but if you have decided to donate your harvest food to us we would appreciate it if you could share the date with us as soon as it is fixed so we can plan for it's coming into the warehouse.







## From Margaret Datlan News of the Family

Earlier in the year, just after lockdown began, the Church presented Colin Baker with two pens inscribed with his name. These were given as a gift to Colin for his wonderful work as Church Treasurer for many years. A more formal presentation will be made once we can return to "normal" again.

Anne French recently celebrated her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday and a colourful bouquet of flowers were sent to Anne on the 20<sup>th</sup> August from the congregation.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020, Alf and Margaret Pryer will be celebrating their Diamond Wedding Anniversary (60 years)! Alf and Margaret will be celebrating with their family.

A Jungle Orchid has been sent to Janet from the Church which we hope she enjoys now she is at home convalescing.

*Margaret Datlan*

### Prayer

***Dear Lord, we ask your blessing on our Church and its congregation whilst we are unable to meet together. We miss the time we spend together and look forward to when once again we can enjoy worship and fellowship together.***

***In the meantime Lord, we praise you and ask your peace and love to fill our hearts and minds.***

**Amen**

### From Janet:

I would like to thank everyone for their cards and good wishes whilst I was in hospital. A special thank you to the members and friends of the Church for the lovely orchid which I will do my best to look after – it is beautiful!

## A New Normal

In previous issues of the 'Silent Visitor', it has been my pleasure to share with you my cycling experiences. The bicycle I rode was an old friend, an impulse buy of about fifteen years ago, inexpensive, small frame and purple. Not a bicycle high on the list of an opportunist thief. Therefore, I intended to use the bicycle for shopping, church, and local journeys. I soon found the bicycle frame suited me well and I would use it for longer journeys and take it on holidays. I have cycled many a kilometre beside a French canal on my shopping bike.

Although lacking in use of late, lockdown found me once more enjoying cycling. Empty roads, good weather and time to wander added miles to my bicycle. So, time I thought for it to have a service! Many other people had the same idea and the bicycle shop could only fit me in three weeks hence. A sad day when I finally took my old friend for its makeover. Instead of my looking forward to riding my bicycle in tip top condition, the bicycle was given the last rites and together we plodded home. I would need to continue with worn gears and buckled wheel until it was possible to purchase a new 'shopper'.

Much to my surprise, Alan, shopping for my birthday, found what we both thought to be the same make and model of bike on line. I lost no time in ordering and it was not too long before I had my shiny new bicycle. It was then I discovered some differences. The first outing to Bulphan proved that Alan would need to make a few adjustments! Adjustments made, I found the ride a little more to my liking, but still not totally sure. Mounting and dismounting can be a challenge, as it was sometimes on the old bicycle – but I was used to the ways of the old one. Gradually I am beginning to get used to the new frame and feel a little more confident. I can enjoy my cycling even though the roads are a little busier and the bicycle requires more of my concentration. I am, however, experiencing much of the joys I rediscovered of cycling in lockdown. It is fun!

Why am I telling you all this? Do you need to know? Maybe as I speed past you I am not sure about stopping as I look! I can relate the experience to how we may feel when able to meet again to worship in Grays URC. We may wish the make and model to be the same. The paths we have used, familiar and comfortable.

The return to church as we know and love and much looked forward to. In reality a few adjustments will be required. In reality our tried and tested adjustments may need adjustments. We will, as we endeavour to get used to new ways and restrictions be with God. God will be with us. We will experience the joys of worship – albeit – a new normal!



Denise Beckley

### Answers to the Quiz in the August edition:-



1. Six
2. Six
3. Esther (8:9)
4. John (11:39)
5. Nine
6. Twelve
7. Thirty-seven
8. Ninety-five
9. One Hundred and Twenty
10. One Hundred and Fifty-three

## Corona Virus Lockdown 2020

Looking back in my diary over the last few months, I can now appreciate the many good times we had to compensate for the not so good.

On Friday March 12<sup>th</sup> – the Thurrock Arts Society enjoyed our Annual Dinner at Top Meadow restaurant. It was a great evening to remember in the following months when we would be unable to meet.

Earlier in the day, members of our congregation met in the church hall to set up stalls for the planned mini-market the next day. There was a discussion on whether the event should be cancelled as some people feared it was risky to hold a market at the start of the corona virus lockdown and probably not many people would come. It was decided that as the event had been widely advertised and many people had worked to provide goods for sale, the event should take place. Fortunately it was well attended and a very happy occasion to remember over the coming months.

In the following weeks, we had to become accustomed to queuing for shopping, or going online and not having visitors or gatherings, or to see the family sadly, but the long spell of sunshine arrived to cheer us and open the flowers early, giving much pleasure to many. For the fortunate people with gardens there were long sessions of gardening, and chats over the fence. For the housebound, many people volunteered to do food shopping or gardening. People kept in touch by telephone or learning to use SKYPE! or email.

I had a daily early morning walk to the paper shop for my exercise, and made a great effort to spring clean one room each week. I started to paint a new picture of "Santorini" for rainy days and battled with the queues at the "Pensioners Hour" at the supermarket.

There were regular calls from Rev'd David and members of the congregation, and a weekly visit from my son, Tim and his family on their bikes from Meesons Lane, to chat from the end of the drive or sit on the front lawn (a highlight of the week).

In May we had the V E day street party which was a very happy occasion and was enjoyed by so much of the population lucky enough to have a garden.

In June, the big event was getting Tony to the barbers for a haircut and I won £25 on the Premium Bonds.

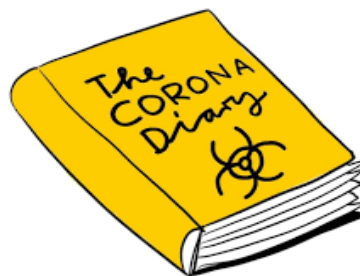
My 80<sup>th</sup> birthday present in July was meant to be a short holiday in Cornwall with my sons, daughter in law and grandchildren which they had booked. Unfortunately, Tony and I were unable to travel for health reasons, but I insisted they should go to celebrate for me if the lockdown finished in time (it did).

The Art Society arranged a visit to Orsett Church gardens to sketch and paint, which was very enjoyable.

Of course, there were many down times such as when my son, Simon, was in hospital and I was unable to visit – but he had his operations just before the wards closed down except for corona virus patients. People we know were losing their jobs or being furloughed for months, and it was very sad that many schools closed down for the duration; causing problems for many.

Looking back, I think we have so much to be thankful for and look forward to. Thanks be to God.

Jean Olley



## From Gina Nottage – 1950s Sunday School Outing

The Coaches have come  
The kids are onboard  
They've got their "cossies", a towel and something for lunch.  
It's the St Nicholas Church Sunday School Outing.  
A quick head count and we're off, to Maldon



We arrive loudly cheering and  
a quickly thwarted scramble to  
get off.  
Once disembarked we are  
herded to the nearest toilets,  
Then it's swimming gear on  
and jumps into the sea water  
swimming pool

After clothes are back on and a head count  
(just in case someone had drowned without anyone noticing!)  
We form a "crocodile" and are marched to the playing fields.  
Once full of "pop" and sandwiches we run it all off with games –  
Rounders, tag & tug of war

It's time for food again and we are taken up Maldon High Street  
to a cafe for tea.

There are sandwiches, bread and jam, cake and ice cream  
All washed down with yet more pop

We reluctantly walk back to the coach  
A head count is taken as we board.  
We arrive back at Laindon  
Tired but happy  
Greeted by parents ready to take us home to baths and bed!

**" A little piece of nonsense that might bring a smile in these awkward times...."**

## **A Lockdown Experience:**

An elderly lady, on her own, living in a small village,  
A neighbour rings her to offer to get a some shopping for her.  
She replies yes, and says she will leave a list on her own doorstep.  
She looks around to see what she requires, and compiles a list.

She finds that some soup would be useful, and some veg, a cauliflower.

She looks in her fridge, but could not see much as the bulb had failed.

As she is writing her notebook falls apart, so she needs some elastic bands.

She is out of eggs too so puts them on the list. Also some frozen peas.

She also needs some peppermint sweets for her bad breath.

She makes out the list and places it on her doorstep,  
With a stone on top so that the wind does not blow it away.

She looks out later and the box of shopping is on the doorstep, the list complete.

The note is still there, undisturbed.

She rings her neighbour to thank her and asks why she did not take the list with her.

The neighbour replies that she sang her way through the list.

She asks what was she singing?

Easy, she replies.

Soup a colly fridge elastic eggs peas halitosis!

**SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS**

Just like Mary Poppins –



*Wishing you all well – Alf Pryer*

## Moving Stories

### Central America

Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua & Guatemala

### Institutional Violence Increases in Nicaragua

[A recent report by Amnesty International](#) has highlighted the government's strategy of repression, excessive use of force, extrajudicial executions and control of the media. Most recently, pro-government armed groups have been used to halt protests in the streets.

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the western hemisphere after Haiti. It is one of the three countries in the world worst affected by weather catastrophes, and the UN has warned that storms here will only get worse. These emergencies push back the country's economic development.

*Commitment for Life* partners with Christian Aid in four countries in Central America – Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. We are working with around 30 partner organisations, from community-based groups to larger organisations operating across the region and beyond.

Our partners include indigenous communities, small farmers' associations, development organisations, research institutions and faith-based organisations.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Commitment for Life in support of global justice.

### Crazy Climate Children's Resources Download: Age: 7-11

If you are in search for climate resources for the children, you may want to try <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/crazy-climate-all-resources-english>

#### Subject areas

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)/Global Citizenship

Geography/Environmental Studies

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE)/Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

Religious Education (RE)/Religious Studies

#### The pack includes

- Activities
- Case studies
- Country profiles
- Climate facts
- A climate poster
- A presentation
- Teacher info
- Worksheets



### The URC's very own Diana Paulding

(pictured above) is part of Christian Aid's Prophetic Activist Scheme. These young Christians are working for climate justice. The activists launched the Stop Fuelling the Fire Campaign, which is petitioning the UK government to end using UK Export Finance to fund fossil fuel projects overseas. Diana feels strongly about this issue, and with training from Christian Aid has, in collaboration with other activists, organised a petition to Boris Johnson. Please do sign their important petition at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/SFTF>



## Moving Stories

### Zimbabwe

[Rebecca Kapaira](#), is from the village of Shamva in Zimbabwe. “Being a single mother, I have to work doubly hard,” she says. “Our economy is so unstable it becomes difficult for us to survive.”

Under lockdown, Rebecca fears not being able to put food on the table. Rebecca is a farmer, and like most Zimbabweans, she depends on just one, increasingly unreliable rainy season each year.

However, climate-induced droughts mean only one season in five has normal rainfall. Experts predict that the upcoming 2020 harvest will be even poorer than those preceding it. “For the past two years we haven’t harvested anything,” says Rebecca. “Our community hasn’t been able to predict rainfall patterns. Our timing seems wrong every time. The crops never mature enough to make it to harvest.”

Life has become harder each day for Rebecca and her children. Hyperinflation has sent food prices soaring. Rebecca is one of the over four million Zimbabweans experiencing emergency food insecurity.

“At the end of the day, women and girls are at the receiving end of the coronavirus. It will affect us more than anyone else. Why? Because it’s us women who do the household chores all the time.”

“We are the ones who fetch firewood for cooking from the bush. We are the ones who fetch water from unprotected wells, and it needs two to three people to pump

it. We cannot do social distancing. We are the most at risk.”



Pic: Zach Vessels Unsplash

Commitment for life supports Christian Aid’s phenomenal work in Zimbabwe, which includes implementing the [Resilience Framework](#). This framework focusses on climate-resilient agriculture and natural resource management, in addition to the sustainable management of land, water, soils, forests, agriculture and agro-pastoralism that reduces poverty and hunger in the face of climate change.

**The URC’s very own Diana Paulding** is part of Christian Aid’s Prophetic Activist Scheme. These young Christians are working for climate justice. The activists launched the Stop Fuelling the Fire Campaign, which is petitioning the UK government to end using UK Export Finance to fund fossil fuel projects overseas. Diana feels strongly about this issue, and with training from Christian Aid has, in collaboration with other activists, organised a petition to Boris Johnson. Please do sign their important petition at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/SFTF>



## **CHURCH CALENDAR**

(not valid during lockdown period)

### **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	To be advised

### **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	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**



**URC Grays**