



 URCGrays
www.graysurc.org.uk

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Silent Visitor



September 2021

Thurrock's Memory Walk 2021



Who will you walk for?

Memory Walk is back! Take part in Memory Walk this autumn and walk for a world without dementia.

Come together with friends, family and thousands of others, to make a difference. Every step you take helps provide vital dementia support for those who need it most.

Location: King George's Field, Blackshots

Date: Saturday 25th September 2021

Time: 10am - 8km / 11.30am - 3km

Alzheimer's Society
United Against Dementia

Memory walk

- ★ **Registration:** Free. Just turn up on the day!
- ★ **Fundraising:** Thurrock Dementia Action Alliance will be raising funds for the Alzheimer's Society should you wish to donate or raise sponsorship for your walk. Feel free to share this link/QR code:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/thurrockdementiaactionalliance2021>



- ★ **Accessibility:** Blackshots Leisure Centre is providing access to their toilets and café as well as available parking outside the Leisure Centre or the Civic Hall.
Both walks are mainly on flat, concrete terrain with a small proportion of the route on grass.

Re-opening Summary

Communion: Our first in-person communion service will be on Sunday 5th September.

Re-opening for Worship – Working Party: Denise Beckley is taking a lead with this and the next gathering will be in the church hall on **Wednesday 8th Sept** from **10.00-12noon**.

Refreshments: As yet, we do not have a timing or a plan for how to reinstate our after Sunday worship refreshments.

Parade: the next uniformed groups parade service will be on Remembrance Sunday, 14th November.

Bible reading: we will carry on with finding volunteers to read as everyone arrives on a Sunday. If you would like to read on a specific Sunday, please get in touch with the leader of worship beforehand.

Flowers: we will be reinstating the opt-in rota. If there is a particular Sunday you would like to offer flowers for, please sign up. Otherwise we will have plants or artificial flowers.

Church Meeting: the date of our next church meeting will be on **Sunday 12th Sept**. The agenda will include Treasurer and Property reports, and updates on, and discussion of, our Re-opening Roadmap. At 10.30am we will begin with our meeting and then conclude our time together with worship.

(The following church meeting will be on Sunday 10th October – the format and timing is yet to be decided upon.)

Through our monthly church meetings, we will review our life together, make and implement decisions.

Community Café: our new activity will commence on **Wednesday 15th September**, between **10am-12noon**.

Please contact David to volunteer to bake and/or to help with refreshments.

Grays United Reformed Church - Worship Plan

Date	Lead by	Time	Notes
05.09.21	David Coaker	9.30am	Young Families
	David Coaker	10.30am	Communion
12.09.21	David Coaker	10.30am	Church Meeting
19.09.21	Alf Pryer	10.30am	
26.09.21	David Coaker	10.30am	
03.10.21	David Coaker	9.30am	Young Families
	David Coaker	10.30am	
10.10.21	David Coaker	10.30am	Church Meeting

Shining a light ...

In most years there is a sense of restarting when September comes around. It is even greater this year. The concern and confusion that was in the air in July has settled down after positive vaccination and hospital admission numbers, good weather and entertaining sport. It finally does feel as if we are turning the corner and, even though Covid is still with us, we are finding ways to live with it.

So, as this September dawns we can feel hopeful, reconnected, and ready to re-engage. As we have been oft reminded, this is the 'new' normal and we should rightly embrace our familiar routines that have been put aside for the last year or two, but we should also do so with critical eyes. (Critical in the sense of careful evaluation and judgement rather than just calling attention to errors and flaws.)

The pandemic has shone a light on our priorities and on what is possible. We have heralded the people who truly make up the bedrock of our society in our NHS, emergency services, local services, supermarkets, supply chains, social services and all those areas that support the greater good. We have seen the results of what our dramatically reduced consumption

and travel have had on our local and global environment. But I do fear that these lessons may be again entering the shadows as we hear of effective pay cuts, the rush to holiday abroad, and the ever growing long grass around dealing with social care and climate change.

There are lessons to be learned that often the right decisions are also the unpopular ones, and that it is the role of leaders to mould consensus rather than follow the populist path.

Hopefully lessons can be learned by our leaders from the pandemic as we engage with the 'new' normal to better support each other and with the overwhelming need to reduce our impact on the planet.

Just as the pandemic has shone a light on our personal and national priorities and possibilities, there is the opportunity for us to review our life as Grays URC in the months to come too. Through our time in worship, socially and meeting together we have the chance to re-open our eyes to where Christ is calling us, both individually and collectively, as a fellowship.

With every blessing, Rev'd David R. Coaker





Could you join us live from Glasgow Cathedral, as we celebrate over 1600 churches in Britain and Ireland who have held Climate Sunday services this year?

We'll be joining in worship, sharing our commitments and challenging government to take action. If you've been part of Climate Sunday so far, it's a great chance to celebrate how your contributions are part of the bigger picture.

<http://www.climatesunday.org/post/introducing-climate-sunday>

Eastern Synod Moderator



Revd Lythan Nevard will be inducted as Eastern Synod Moderator on Sat 4th Sept at Stowmarket URC at 3pm.

The service will be live streamed and can be viewed through the Synod's You Tube channel link:

<https://youtube.com/channel/UCtYncbpZJ4PKBBjrjrcXBHrw>

The Revd Lythan Nevard was serving at the Cornerstone ecumenical project in Cranbrook, Exeter, and previously a minister in Hartlepool, Romford, Brixham and Babbacombe.



Lythan Nevard was a member of the URC's Ginger Group in the 1980s, a group of young people that visited churches around the country, leading a variety of church related projects, based at Yardley Hastings. She grew up in the United Reformed Church – her father is the Revd Ivor Rees who served at Clapham, Ewell, Swansea and Bamford.

Her husband, the Revd Phil Nevard, is a URC Minister who has accepted a call to serve three churches in the Eastern Synod - Castle Camps, Whittlesford and Sawston. Lythan and Phil met while serving together on the URC's Ginger Group.

Lythan said: "The Holy Spirit has led me on many adventures, and I am both delighted and awed that the next one is as Moderator of Eastern Synod. I'm really looking forward to working with the churches and Ministers of the Synod and finding out how we can grow in discipleship and serve God's kingdom together."

Eastern Synod Clerk, Keir Hounscome, said: "We are delighted that Lythan has accepted the call to be our next Moderator. She impressed us all on the interview panel with her spirituality, integrity, vision and leadership qualities and we are looking forward with excitement to her joining us."

www.urc-eastern.org.uk

Isobel Beynon

31/01/1946 - 19/07/2021

It was a bittersweet when we gathered on 2 Aug to bid farewell to Isobel, who passed away aged 75 on 19 July. Sad to know she would no longer be walking in with her characteristic smile, but happy to see the church so full that we needed extra chairs, and to hear the swell of so many voices in song.

Isobel was an integral part of our church life, be it participation in the Christmas Market, taking her turn to greet the congregation as she distributed hymn books, or of course being a stalwart of the Beginners' Sunday School, where she touched the lives of many children over so many years. It was always a pleasure to hear the sweetness of her voice when she read the Bible passage in church.

Older members of the congregation also came to know Isobel's mother, Margaret Farr, who visited and eventually stayed with and was cared for by the family. My father always commented on the pleasant, quiet chats he had enjoyed with her, and she became part of the Wednesday afternoon Fellowship group. After retirement, Isobel too took an increasingly active part in those afternoons, occasionally ferrying other ladies to the meetings, taking turns in leading the prayers, and providing accompaniment for the hymns. A special moment was the prayer she read on what would have been her mother's hundredth birthday, from a scrap of paper Mrs Farr had carried in her purse and which Isobel had come upon by chance.

Isobel was quite a private person, but with a wicked sense of humour. She shared with us some of the highs and lows of her girls Katie and Emma and their families, and some of her own moments of rejoicing (retirement, I seem to remember).

She herself was always “fine” and made light of any perceived difficulty. Well, goodbye Isobel, and thank you for the hymns you chose for our Songs of Praise services, and for being a part of our lives.

The family asked for donations in Isobel’s name to the Parkinson’s UK and St. Luke’s Hospice.

Elaine B



Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Supporting Children in Bangladesh

Child Friendly Space, managed by Christian Aid's partner Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), runs art and other activities in Jamtoli camp, Bangladesh. Christian Aid continues to help people displaced by violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State supporting Rohingya refugees who have crossed the border into Bangladesh.

Why is there poverty in Zimbabwe?

It is important to understand the context that fosters inequality in Zimbabwe. The poorest are embedded in systems of governance that are repressive, and sometimes violent. The space for civil society action is shrinking. The drivers of poverty, says a Christian Aid Ireland report on adaptive programme management, are linked to inequalities between elite power holders and marginalised communities, violations of human rights, and lack of public accountability. Political violence is common in the informal sector and areas affected by mining.

Why is there poverty in Central America?

It is important to understand the context that fosters inequality in Central America. The poorest are embedded in systems of governance that are repressive and violent, fostering a growing divide between rich and poor. The space for civil society to address these issues is shrinking. In El Salvador and Guatemala, says a Christian Aid Ireland report on adaptive programme management, the focus is on mitigating the effects of gang violence, especially on women and children, against a background of extreme inequality and high-level corruption.

Christian Aid is committed to providing protection, site-management, food, shelter, health-care, water, sanitation and hygiene. Gender, inclusion, and accountability are also addressed through all activities.

Grays United Reformed Church

Church meeting Agenda: 12 Sept, 2021

Attendance & Apologies on sheet

Notice of matters not already on the agenda

1. **The Minutes** of the previous meeting – Sunday 4th July
2. **Matters arising**
3. **Property report**
4. **Finance report**
5. **Re-opening in light of the Roadmap** updates and discussion
 - a. **Worship**
 - b. **Decision-making**
 - c. **Dementia-Friendly**

Date of next meeting – Sunday 10th October

Re-opening in light of the Roadmap #4

The following seeks to summarise what has been previously shared to enable discussion at our church meeting on 12 Sept.

Three areas of church life are the focus: worship, decision-making, and becoming dementia friendly. Worship is central to the life of a church and grounds all of the other aspects of church life that express our faith. Church meeting is where we gather to talk, explore and decide what it means to be Grays URC. Becoming dementia friendly will hopefully become a journey where we can find ways to better serve our community and live out Christ's way.

Re-opening for Worship

The Worship working party has begun to meet and between them they are organising our upcoming services. Denise will be giving an initial report to the meeting.

Service time is back to 10.30am with an informal 5-10-minute beginning. We are retaining the additional ventilation, are aiming for a shorter 45-minute duration, to sing 3 hymns, and are encouraging people to wear masks and maintain social-distancing.

We will have our first in-person communion on Sunday 5th September.

Our lay preachers have confirmed that they now feel comfortable leading future worship services.

We are looking to Remembrance as the first parade back and will ask the uniformed groups how involved they'd want to be in any Christmas one nearer the time.

Whatever we decide to do will be planned in advance and the congregation shall be informed and introduced to it through church meeting, SV and notices.

There is no intention of making drastic changes just for the sake of it. Our desire is to create opportunities for us to experience ways of worship, that may be new to us, to discover what future patterns of worship may better draw ourselves, and others, into God's presence. We are seeking to evolve our worship rather than drastically alter it.

There is a balance to be struck between the comfort of certainty and the challenge of change, but for us to deepen and broaden our fellowship we must be open to venturing out of our comfort zones.

The following questions are offered to aid our reflection:

- Communion – reinstate monthly?
- Refreshments – how and when to reinstate?
- Timing – are we ready to return to an hour?
- How can we remain flexible and open by offering a range of worship experiences as well as what our existing folk have grown to expect?
- How can we involve other people in sharing in the leading of worship and work more as a team to deliver it together?
- What other patterns of worship could we explore? (e.g. Taize, café style, discussions, craft, Bible study, meditation, silence, testimony (telling our stories), practical (gardening, litter picking, decorating, cleaning), activist (Christian Aid, Amnesty International), prayer walks, films) Any other suggestions?
- Would you be willing to share in leading one of the above? Can you think of someone we should invite to lead one?
- In what ways could we rearrange our worship space to better enable worship?
- What post-covid special services should we consider? e.g. thanksgiving / celebration / memorial at Harvest, All Souls, Remembrance or some other time.

Re-opening for discussion and decision-making

Unfortunately, we were unable to have an interactive ACM on Sunday 4th July and we defaulted into accepting the suggestions for how we could ensure awareness, engagement and ownership of our life together moving forwards:

- We look to holding monthly church meetings as we re-establish and re-invigorate church life.
- We do so with the intention of enabling church meetings to be engaging, informative, decisive, and well attended.
- From September, and running to the next ACM in April 2022, church meeting will be our only decision-making body. (Effectively suspending the elders' meeting for this time.)
- After the initial agenda further ones will be set by matters arising and new business raised by members.
- We solely rely on volunteers from church meeting to undertake tasks and activities on its behalf. (e.g. completing a single task, forming a team to undertake an activity or implementing any decision of church meeting.)
- We discern together the scope of roles that need to be undertaken and how we balance the delegation and oversight of them.
- We look to bring proposals to the 2022 ACM for how we wish to organise and facilitate our life together.

It was hoped that in this way we can all gain a better understanding of the content, priorities and possibilities of our life together and move forward in a more intentional, effective and supportive way.

George Semain will be taking a lead with this and a meeting date to develop this further will be set when he is able to, in consultation with all those that wish to be involved.

Re-opening to be Dementia Friendly

David will give an update to the meeting.

As a way of re-envisaging and rejuvenating Wednesday coffee mornings is the possibility of collaborating with the Alzheimer's Society to set up a Memory Café and Singing for the Brain.

A Memory Café offers an informal and welcoming space to people seeking particular support, but also provides for the general needs we all have for refreshment, conversation, activity and friendship. Singing for the Brain brings people affected by dementia together to sing songs they know and love, in a fun and friendly environment.

From Wed 15th Sept we have established a weekly community café between 10am-12noon for people to just drop in for a drink or to seek dementia support. Hopefully it could extend so that people could pop along at set times for lunch, to sing, for gentle exercise, to play bowls, to play board games, to knit, make crafts, share in a dementia friendly act of worship, or something else. In this way we could concentrate our efforts, and also mutually support previously stand-a-lone activities.

The following is an update of the initial action plan proposed by elders:

- Alzheimer's Society has undertaken a review of our site to advise on how dementia friendly our physical space is and we will then consider what actions to undertake.
- We consult with the congregation and wider church family to determine which groups could be duplicated or moved into this activity.
- We have advertised this as widely as practicable.
- We look to running in-person Dementia Friends training when practicable.
- We formalise our involvement with Thurrock Dementia Action Alliance.

Summer 2021



Thurrock foodbank provides emergency food supplies to local people in crisis within the borough. Foodbank fills a real and continuing need in our local area, but we need your ongoing help in the way of food donations and financial gifts to enable our work to continue. If you have any questions please email info@thurrock.foodbank.org.uk. Or make contact with our office on 01375 416200. Please also follow or social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter

Thurrock Foodbank has now been awarded Pathfinder status by the Trussell Trust. This will enable us to learn and gain experience from Trussell Trust and other foodbanks to improve the positive outcomes for our clients by providing in-depth advice and support to reach the ultimate goal of a society where no one has to use a foodbank.

We are grateful to our business partners who host collection drop off points and to everyone who donates food or gives financially week in, week out. We only exist due to the kindness of your donations.



Thanks to a grant from the National Lottery we have been able to replace our van with a larger model. Our original van has served us well but our new, bigger vehicle enables to do more pick ups in one go and is more economic as we don't have to cross the borough multiple times in a day which saves both fuel and the time our very kind volunteer drivers are on the road.



Shortages

As we go further into the summer we have quite a few shortages among our basic items. If you can drop one of the items listed below into one of our collection points we would be very grateful.

Tinned Fish
Sponge Puddings
Tinned Fruit
Longlife Fruit Juice
Squash / Cordial
Tinned Potatoes
Longlife Milk (green semi, blue whole)
Tinned Rice Pudding

We are also in need of toiletries, nappies size 4, 5, 6, Toilet Rolls and cleaning / laundry products.

Our partnerships with local schools are continuing and we are already getting booked for harvest pick ups. If you have chosen Thurrock Foodbank to benefit from your school harvest please email Bernadette Terry our Schools Co Ordinator on school@thurrock.foodbank.org.uk who can arrange for our van to collect. We also offer in person speaker for assembly or class talk either by Bernadette or one of our team or we can provide a PowerPoint for you to use.

Building works at our Corringham warehouse start on August 16th. This will create 'Spacious Place', a community café offering a place to 'Eat, Meet and Share'. Look out for information on opening in the next newsletter.

Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue

Minister:	Rev'd David Coaker 07378 348191 drcoaker@gmail.com
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Mr Alan Beckley
Elders:	Elders' Meeting temporarily suspended
Organist:	Mr Richard Wade
Facilities Manager:	Mrs Charlotte Webb 0784 3559011 graysurc@gmail.com
Silent Visitor:	Mrs Janet Semain 01375 373532 geojan321@sky.com

