 URCGrays
www.graysurc.org.uk

Minister: Rev'd David Coaker
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Silent Visitor



January 2022

Grays United Reformed Church - Worship Plan

Date	Lead by	Time	Notes
09.01.22	David Coaker	10.30am	
16.01.22	George Semain	10.30am	
23.01.22	David Coaker	10.30am	Church Meeting
30.01.22	Kathryn Taylor	10.30am	
06.02.22	David Coaker	9.30am	Young Families
	David Coaker	10.30am	Communion
13.02.22	Alf Pryer	10.30am	
20.02.22	Denise Beckley	10.30am	
27.02.22	George Semain	10.30am	
06.03.22	David Coaker	9.30am	Young Families
	David Coaker	10.30am	Communion

Community Café: Wednesdays between 10am-12noon – all are welcome! (Will not be running **19th Jan & 16th Feb**)

Refreshments: there is a signup sheet for those able to organise and help with Sunday morning refreshments on the noticeboard by the worship space door.

Hall floor: it is being re-sanded and sealed w/c 17th Jan, so we will not be having refreshments on Sunday **23rd Jan**.

The next **South Essex Pastoral Committee** will take place at Hadleigh (Southend) on the 23rd February 2022 commencing at 7.30pm – we need an elder (serving or non-serving) to attend to represent the church.

Sunday 23rd January – following worship we will gather together as church meeting. Papers on table in worship space.

Worship Team: the next meeting will be on **Thurs 27th Jan** between 10am-12noon. All with an interest in our worship are welcome to participate in the conversation.

February SV - If you could please email or phone through your contributions for Jan SV by **Friday 4th Feb** to David.

Initial Questions?

For the last few months we have organised ourselves through church meetings, seeking volunteers, and, if all else failed, hoping for the best and seeing what happened. Our intention is to have come up with a clearer plan in time for our next Annual Church Meeting (ACM), which would normally be in March / April.

If nothing else, hopefully this time has provided a clean break with 'what we've always done' and we can put together a way of organising ourselves which can work for us moving forward.

Having said that, the piece of paper is not totally blank as we're working with all of our existing, and potential, activities, people, wider community, and what makes us a United Reformed, rather than any other church. Foundational to that is the participation of everyone in every aspect of church life (membership) and setting aside certain of our number to take responsibility for it all (eldership).

I pray that by phrasing it like that we can each discover, and together determine, what membership and eldership means to us and cast aside past burdens and assumptions.

In all things we start from where we are, aim for the ideal, and see where we end up. (And then keep on striving after the ideal.) It may well be helpful if we view the plan we're seeking to put forward to the ACM as a first step which we can then review as we move forward.

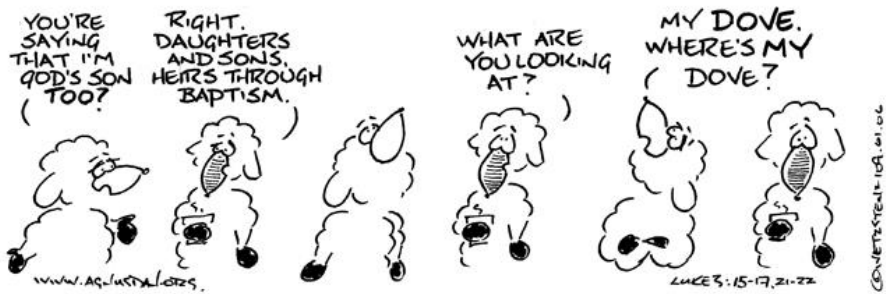
We need to be clear about where we are. It would be marvellous if at our next church meeting we had several people seeking membership, testing a call to eldership, and wanting to serve as church secretary. That is always our hope, but experience advises that we have a backup plan. As part of that, please give prayerful consideration to these two questions:

1. Do you feel part of Grays URC? If so, and you are not formally a member, please talk to me or someone else within the church about membership. If you're not sure, we can double-check the list.

Knowing why people have chosen to not be members can help us to better define what it means to make it a positive choice for us all.

2. Do you know what makes Grays URC tick, who everyone is, and are willing to make connections and pass on messages? That could be the definition of a church secretary ... could it be you?

With every blessing, Rev'd David R. Coaker



Agnus Day appears with the permission of www.agnusday.org

In the wilderness, your Word came.
 The priest's son, Elizabeth's child,
 discovered his part in God's your intent.
 Not in the Temple, not in his father's shadow,
 but in the wilderness your Word was revealed.

In the wilderness, your Word was declared.
 By the bank of the Jordan the preacher stood,
 calling the people back and baptising them clean.
 Challenging, renewing, upending;
 in the wilderness, the movement gained hold.

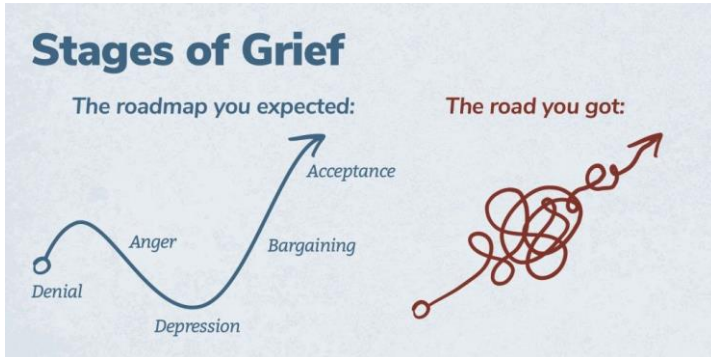
In the wilderness, ancient words were renewed.
 The Baptist cried, Prepare!
 Look to God! Draw close!
 In the wilderness, the scene was set.

In the wilderness, God, prepare your way afresh.
 Renew your ancient words.
 Call us back and draw us close.
 Come, Word of God, come.

David Coaker (URC Prayer Handbook, 2018)

How long does grief last?

This is one of life's unanswerable questions. There are many platitudes, rules of thumb, and theories. The most prevalent model is the one proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, 5 stages of grief: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance.



You can't put a date in your diary for when it will pass. You can't predict how it will make you feel. You can't measure your grief against someone else's or grieve the same way as them. My dad died sixteen years ago. I remember the flood of grief that enveloped me then, and the waves that wash against me when I am caught unawares by a thought or situation since then, and to this day.

When coming alongside families for funerals I fall back on assuring them that there is no one way to grieve, that the emotions often come as waves, and that they change but never truly go away. I also try my best to remain calm and to place them first within all of the planning and arranging a funeral can entail.

Just as we grieve for friends and family, we grieve for church. We grieve for the people, but there is a broader sense of loss. We grieve because of the changing activities, patterns, atmosphere, tasks we no longer feel able to undertake, and a whole host of other losses. We grieve as individuals, and also as a community. As individuals we will all be at different stages, but collectively we may be at another. This is a call to be compassionate with each other, and also a gentle reminder that we need to move through the stages. Part of that could be to acknowledge where we are, as individuals and collectively, holding that within the love, peace, and hope of God.

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

URC 50th anniversary service

1 October 2022



Free tickets are available for the URC's 50th Anniversary Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving taking place at Methodist Central Hall Westminster, where the Uniting Assembly took place in 1972.

The day starts at United Reformed Church House at 86 Tavistock Place,

London WC1H 9RT with an Open Church House event, packed full of jubilee related talks and activities, as well as to meet the team that work at the office.

There will be a Walk to Westminster with a guided tour before gathering for the service that starts at 2.30pm.

The intergenerational thanksgiving service is free and open to all in the URC. Book your tickets through the Eventbrite booking system here: bit.ly/urc50

United Reformed Church **Commitment for Life** January/February 2022

MOVING STORIES

Committed to supporting our global partners in:

ZIMBABWE

Sheila Murimoga, Senior Programme Officer for Gender and Inequalities for Christian Aid Zimbabwe writes:

'There is a joke circulating on WhatsApp suggesting that corruption is so endemic in Zimbabwe that if someone is supposed to procure a bomb, they are more likely to pocket the money and buy firecrackers instead.

It is not a funny joke. Two lives were lost and at least 45 people were injured when a bomb detonated at a rally during the 2018

elections. So why the dark sense of humour? My colleagues at Christian Aid Zimbabwe and I agree that the reason lies in an exhausted capacity to cope. For the last 10 years Zimbabweans have had to cope with multiple economic and political crises.

Commitment
for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches continues to expose human rights violations. It has developed a good working relationship with the Police Election Command Centre to enable swift action against those who interfere with elections. Christian Aid continues to invest in understanding the context, engaging partners on their security and planning ahead for every scenario, with the ultimate goal of promoting sustainable peace for Zimbabwe.'

PALESTINE/ISRAEL

Noura Amin Sa'ad lives in the occupied Palestinian village of Beit Skariya in the West Bank. Her home is surrounded by illegal Israeli settlements. Noura, and other Palestinians like her, find themselves almost completely cut off from access to essential services such as healthcare and education. How long Noura must wait for justice is uncertain...

Zochrot is one of Commitment for Life's partner organisations working in the West Bank with the support of through Christian Aid. They helped over 2,000 people to increase their knowledge of the rights of Palestinian refugees, and the need for transitional justice approaches to any future lasting peace and security for Israel and the Palestinians. Zochrot used online educational materials, virtual tours, provocative discussions via blogs, podcasts, and other digital spaces. They campaigned on the connection between oppression, marginalisation, and the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Prayer Time

God, I am angry at the loss of innocent lives; that people don't have enough to eat; at the police for not executing justice, with the very rich for hoarding wealth and then oppressing the helpless; at the stupid military forces for making people homeless. I am angry with the unequal distribution of resources around the world. God, this is damn unfair! Amen. (Edited from Liturgies from Below: praying with peoples at the ends of the world p190. Claudio Carvalhaes)

Financial Report Dec 2021 / Jan 2022

The bank balance at the end of the year was a little under £25,000, which is comfortably above my preferred minimum balance of £10,000.

However, as always, there is further expenditure coming, the hall floor works will need paying in January, and Charlotte has warned me that further essential electrical repairs and upgrading work on the exterior lighting is required.

The fact remains, that at the moment our normal monthly outgoings are mostly met by our regular giving and hirers income.

I hope to meet our accountant in February to start work on the 2021 year-end accounts.

The bowls club: Edna Lazell ran the bowls club in the church hall for many years, until its demise in 2021. The 2020 accounts show that the church account held a little over £3,300 on behalf of the bowls club. At the moment this money remains within the church bank account, and I have asked Edna to consider what should happen to this money. I will talk to Edna later in the year to establish what has been decided.

Also, I can confirm that the regular giving by the congregation amounted to £11,931 in 2021, and following the decision of church meeting, 5% of this, plus the £160 collected separately, will be donated to our chosen charity CAP (Christians Against Poverty). I have rounded the amount to £12,000, and will forward a cheque for £760 (£600 + £160) to CAP in due course.

Please be thinking about who could be our chosen charity for 2022?

I think that is all for now, other than the usual thanks to those who contribute so generously to Church funds each month, to Alf and Bob for any help required, Charlotte for organising the lettings and Elaine for the invoicing.

If anyone has a query regarding Church finances please contact me and I will do my best to help.

Alan.



As we look forward into 2022 it is a very exciting time for us at Thurrock Foodbank.

We will be moving into our refurbished Warehouse within the next few weeks.

Now as a Pathfinder Foodbank we will be implementing new ways of interacting with the people that we work with, agencies, clients.

Our van unfortunately has been off the road and we are looking forward to that being returned to action on Monday.

It was extremely busy before Christmas and we were so grateful to all those that stepped in and helped, it demonstrated a real community spirit.

We have also been so grateful to all those that have helped us over the past few months, it really does make a difference to our work, we really couldn't do it without you.

As we look forward to the new year, we will have more room to operate, so if you are thinking you can offer a few hours whether that is in the Warehouse dating or sorting or helping on the van we are looking for some additional people to help spread the workload.

This is exciting times as we further develop Thurrock Foodbank to help serve the people of Thurrock, so if you are thinking about what you could, please make contact and have a chat, there is always something you can do here.

Items that we have lower stocks on this are: Long Life Milk, Sponge Puddings, Mashed Potato, Coffee.

We thank you for your continued support and prayers as we take Thurrock Foodbank into a new era and the new opportunities that may bring.

If you would like any clarification or further information on our work please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards, Pete Newall, Operations Manager Thurrock Foodbank
01375 416200 <https://thurrock.foodbank.org.uk/>

When hearing gospel stories told

Tune Melita (88.88.88)

When hearing gospel stories told
We journey there to days of old,
And being there we listen for
Good guidance well beyond the law;
In Jesus' words he pointed to
New insights as to what is true.

Back then, when listening to his word,
They were impressed with what they heard;
He stated to them publicly
The purpose of his ministry;
Yet his first teaching caused offence;
And opposition grew intense.

The stories Jesus chose to use
Were ones where God ignored the Jews;
Instead God worked with gentiles, and
With them, God did what had been planned;
Those listening let their anger grow;
Their prejudice began to flow.

Can we sit in the judgement seat?
Is racial friction obsolete?
The challenge Jesus gave that day
Still haunts the world in every way;
We dare not limit God's rich grace;
God's love abounds for every race.

George Stuart - <https://sites.google.com/site/george007site/>
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It is with deep sadness that the United Reformed Church (URC) announces the death of Peter Pay, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, a former Synod Clerk and an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher who was a member of Salisbury URC. Mr Pay had been living with a malignant brain tumour for some time and had bravely continued with his commitments until he was forced to step back towards the latter part of the 2021. He died on 18 December. Peter is survived by Jo, and their four children, Mark, Michele, John and Matthew, and grandchildren.

Mr Pay grew up in the Kingston upon Thames area where his parents were active in the local Congregational Church. His parents had met and married there, and Peter served the church as a Sunday School teacher in his teens. One of his last commitments as GA Mod was to preach at his childhood church.

He became Moderator of the URC General Assembly, with the Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of the Wessex Synod, in 2020, and remained an active lay preacher.

“Peter has been a valued colleague and friend in various capacities over the years. His clear thinking and ability to ask pertinent questions has been a real asset to the life of the United Reformed Church. He brought a serious mind, tempered by a well-developed sense of humour to dealing with difficult issues. He will be much missed within Wessex Synod, the wider URC, and ecumenical partners.” Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of the URC General Assembly

Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue

- Minister: Rev'd David Coaker
07378 348191
drcoaker@gmail.com
- Secretary: Vacant
- Treasurer: Mr Alan Beckley
- Elders: Mrs Janet Semain, Mr George Semain
The functions of Elders' Meetings are temporarily
combined within church meetings
- Organist: Mr Richard Wade
- Facilities Manager: Mrs Charlotte Webb
0784 3559011
graysurc@gmail.com
- Silent Visitor: Mrs Janet Semain
01375 373532
geojan321@sky.com

