



 URCGrays  
[www.graysurc.org.uk](http://www.graysurc.org.uk)

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# Silent Visitor



## May 2022

## Grays United Reformed Church - Worship Plan

Date	Lead by	Time	Notes
08.05.22	Alf Pryer	10.30am	
15.05.22	Kathryn Taylor	10.30am	
22.05.22	David Coaker	10.30am	
29.05.22	George Semain	10.30am	
05.06.22	Denise Beckley	9.30am	Young Families
	Alf Pryer	10.30am	Communion
12.06.22	David Coaker	10.30am	Baptism
19.06.22	Kathryn Taylor	10.30am	
26.06.22	David Coaker	10.30am	Parade
03.07.22	David Coaker	9.30am	Young Families
	David Coaker	10.30am	Communion / CM
06.07.22	David Coaker	11.00am	Dementia Friendly

To help us run smoothly on a Sunday morning a member of the elders' meeting will be on duty each week:

Date	On Duty	Communion
08.05.22	Margaret Pryer	
15.05.22	Elaine Barcz	
22.05.22	George Semain	
29.05.22	Janet Semain	
05.06.22	George Semain	Janet & George Semain
12.06.22	Alf Pryer	

**Community Café:** Wednesday 10am-12noon – all are welcome! Dementia friendly worship: 11am first Wed of month. We will miss 11th May & 1st June - with helpers being away.

**June SV** - If you could please email or phone through your contributions for May SV by **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June** to David.

**Elders' Meeting:** Wed **22<sup>nd</sup> June**, 12.30 for 1pm start.

**Worship Team:** the next meeting will be on **Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> June** between 10am-12noon. All with an interest in our worship are welcome to participate in the conversation.

**Baptisms** – we are delighted that our worship will include baptisms on 12<sup>th</sup> June of Tekla & Sandor Zaveczeni, 17<sup>th</sup> July of William Lowe, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> September of Bethia Flemmings.

**Jubilee Service:** Sunday **5<sup>th</sup> June**. Our communion service will include marking the Queen's jubilee and will be followed by an, only just, afternoon tea. The elders also intend to plant an Acer tree in the church garden to mark this occasion.

**Church Meeting:** Sun **3<sup>rd</sup> July** following worship.

## **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](https://bit.ly/urc50)

# Elders' Meeting

We had the first gathering of the newly formed elders' meeting on Wed 4<sup>th</sup> May with our elected elders: Janet, George and Alf, our co-optees Elaine and Margaret, and myself.

We began sharing lunch together, along with Charlotte and Ewan, and caught up on property matters. Following that, we created an agenda as we went along. Of course, the paper was not completely blank as we had all of our previous discussions about eldership, church meeting minutes, and other things that had come up since.

As a church, we owe a debt of thanks to those that are willing to serve on the elders meeting, in whatever capacity, and I hope we can rely on your support and encouragement going forward.

One thing we did not do. I repeat did **not** do, is appoint a church secretary. Janet has agreed to be responsible for the minutes of church and elders' meetings. Elaine has agreed to be the external contact person and to pass on requests / information to the relevant people or the elders' meeting. All of the other tasks a church secretary might undertake, will be covered by the elders' meeting. So please bear this in mind and share any questions or suggestions you have with any member of the elders' meeting who will then bring them to our next meeting.

We did set up a rota so that someone will be on duty each Sunday to help ensure things run smoothly.

We also agreed that our decision-making and dementia friendly working parties have run their course and formally agreed that the worship team shall continue with delegated responsibilities from the elders' meeting.

To mark the Queen's platinum jubilee we decided to have scones after the service Alf will lead for us on Sun 5<sup>th</sup> June.

It was felt that we should encourage Kee to take the lead for us with Sight Loss Friendly Church and feedback actions for us to take.

The possibility of applying for a Synod mission grant was raised, and it was agreed that we should look into this further.

We also set our next meeting date, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, and for church meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

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



# Eastern Synod Update

## **Elders / Leadership Training**

Online, Mondays 7.30pm

Recently elected, re-elected, or long-serving and feeling a bit weary? Join us for an overview of the different aspects of church leadership. Recommended for whole teams, as well as individuals. Sign up for individual sessions or the whole series with Lindsey, [training@urceastern.org.uk](mailto:training@urceastern.org.uk).

Joining link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4048288587>

May 9 An Overview

June 13 Mission

July 11 Worship

September 12 Spirituality

October 10 Pastoral

November 14 The Secretary

## **Faith in Action Day: Loving God, Loving your Neighbour**

Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup>, Ipswich Road URC Norwich

Save the date for a day of worship, workshops and a marketplace of ideas around what Jesus' commandments can mean to us. With speakers and facilitators from a range of Christian-based justice work, to help us respond to loneliness and isolation, displacement, debt and the climate crisis.

## **The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) Conference**

From the Ground Up: Unearthing Hope and Seeking Justice

SATURDAY 11TH JUNE 2022, 10AM-4PM

ONLINE AND ON-SITE AT OASIS HUB WATERLOO, LONDON

What does social justice look like where you are? Where do we find hope in our neighbourhood? What can we learn from those who are already doing this work? How can local change be part of changing the bigger picture? For more information and to book:

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/conference/>

**Free to Believe National Conference** 14 to 16 July 2022

High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon Herts EN11 8SG

<https://www.freetobelieve.org.uk/index.html>

Keeping Hope Alive Speakers: Fiona Bennett, Karen Campbell, Alex Clare-Young, Helen Garton and Iain McDonald



**“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6**

John’s gospel, the writer who produced this telling of the Jesus story, does make me struggle at times. Some of the words that come out of Jesus’ mouth in John just do not ring true for me. Like in this passage where we have what seems like a declaration of Christian supremacy and exclusivity – there is no other way, there is no truth, no worthwhile life outside of Christianity, and everyone else is beyond God’s care and concern.

I am attracted more to the Jesus of Mark’s gospel. Mark is the shortest gospel, it has no birth story or post-Easter events (at least in its earliest version), and the focus is on the message, and not so much the person. Jesus will accept the title of messiah and Son of Man from his followers, but the message is all about God’s kingdom. About justice, mercy, and liberation, about love, acceptance and equality, about peace, non-violence and community.

It is my foundation in Mark’s gospel that helps me to gain meaning from John’s. When I reflect on John’s Jesus saying: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” I hold it against the Jesus I see in Mark. Jesus declaring God’s kingdom, showing others how to live, teaching them how to discover wisdom, and I will confidently declare Jesus is the way, the truth, the life, and shows us the Father. However, I will do it in a manner that affirms rather than excludes.

In exploring the life Jesus lived, his teachings, actions and attitudes, I have discovered a path, learnt that truth is essential, and that life has meaning. In this, I have had God revealed to me, and through prayer and journeying with fellow travellers, I discover more about the way I should go, and what life is about.

We are followers of the Way of Jesus, we are pilgrims, travellers, and we are people moving towards a destination. We have not arrived. To quote John Robinson as the Pilgrim Father’s left: ‘There is yet more truth and light yet to break forth from God’s holy word.’

There is yet more truth and light to break forth from the Bible, from the wonders of God’s Creation, and from each, and every, one of us, as we seek to live out the way of Jesus.

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



# URC News Update

## **Schoolchildren plant 50 trees for URC jubilee**

A wonderful celebration of the United Reformed Church 50th anniversary has been held at Barrow URC School in Clitheroe. Families, friends and members of the community helped schoolchildren plant 50 trees last month, each marking 50 years of the denomination. A fun tea party followed and a reading of Celebrate Together, the all-age book commissioned for the jubilee.

## **Moderator speaks out on asylum plans**

On 14 April, the government announced plans to send some asylum seekers arriving in the UK to Rwanda. The Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, has issued a statement regarding recent developments around immigration policy, saying “to fail to speak out would be a denial of our gospel calling”.

## **Trans exclusion unjustified**

The Revd Clare Downing joined a group of church leaders in issuing a powerful letter arguing that there was no justification in excluding trans people from the ban on conversion therapy. Last month, the government announced that it was dropping plans to ban conversion therapy entirely. Following major backlash, it made a controversial U-turn saying it would only ban gay conversion therapy, not trans conversion therapy. Clare said: “To exclude trans people from the protection of the law is both discriminatory and unfair.”

## **URC achieves 100% Eco Synods**

All 11 URC Synods in England and the National Synod of Wales have now signed up to become an ‘Eco Synod’. The significant milestone was announced on World Earth Day, 22 April. Simeon Mitchell, URC Secretary for Church and Society said: “It’s brilliant that all Synods are now engaging with the Eco Synod programme as a structure to take forward their environmental commitments.”



# #WePrayForUkraine



## **United in prayer with Ukraine**

Churches and Christians from across the UK and Ireland came together in an act of witness last month, to pray for the people of Ukraine and for an end to the conflict at a variety of national events which took place in London, Edinburgh, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## **URC Youth member wins essay prize**

URC Youth member Victoria Turner has won first place in the World Communion of Reformed Churches 2022 Lombard Essay Prize. About her win, Victoria said she was delighted and had fun writing her essay entitled 'Structural Flourishing or Life Flourishing? A Critical Response to the Popular Tool of Receptive Ecumenism'.

## **Walking for Christian Aid**

An 88-year-old member of Leyland URC has walked 10,000 steps every day for a year to raise more than £1,000 for Christian Aid. In total, Ernest Wrenhall walked 3.65million steps in just 12 months. He added: "Thankfully the support of members from my local church helped me push through."



It was great to meet this week with Nidhi, our pathfinder lead and Sam the Trussell Trust Network Manager for London and South East. It was a very productive meeting reflecting on our work and future plans.

Last Week the Trussell Trust released the End of Year stats which highlights the need for food banks across the UK. The shocking figures revealed that the network provided over 2.1 million food parcels to people struggling on the lowest incomes.

Overall, there was a 17% increase in the number of parcels distributed in Oct to Dec 2021 and a 22% increase from Jan-Feb 2022 this compared to the same periods in 2019-20. This alarming rate has accelerated following the cut to Universal Credit and as the increasing cost of living continues to bite hard.

As well as this, the data also sheds a light on what's going on at a national, regional and local level. The trend in Thurrock which is in line with the national trend and seeing an increase in demand.

One of the advantages of the Trussell Trust system is that the voucher data that our team inputs into the data collection system. That's why it's important that we take a moment to recognise the invaluable role our administrator Helen Watts plays in keeping our records straight, helping us better understand together what's going on in the community, and bringing together evidence that we can use to campaign for change.

We understand this makes challenging reading and are all concerned about what this means going forwards. But regardless of what the data is telling us, we know that one parcel is too many and enough is enough. No one should need to seek support from a food bank, which is why we need to urgently create change so that everyone can afford the essentials.

The Trussell Trust has launched a new petition that will run throughout the summer. Running in partnership with the Independent Food Aid Network and the Feeding Britain network, the petition calls on the UK Government to urgently increase benefits by at least 7% and commit to developing a social security system that ensures no one's income becomes so dangerously low that they cannot afford the essentials, which you can find here:

[https://action.trusselltrust.org/Cost-of-living-petition?mc\\_cid=cdab07295b&mc\\_eid=e2acf9c79e](https://action.trusselltrust.org/Cost-of-living-petition?mc_cid=cdab07295b&mc_eid=e2acf9c79e)

We know how exhausting the last year has been and recognise the sheer amount of pressure that we have all been under to support people in our area with emergency food. That's why we are working closely with the Trussell Trust to get the resources to best support us to deliver our vital work.

We have a big store collection at Tilbury Asda, and I want to thank Sandra and Helen for all the hard work they have done in preparing us for this collection. We're really excited that Asda's annual food drive is taking place on Friday 6th – Sunday 8th May for all food banks linked to their local large Asda store.

Asda will be supporting food banks in nearly 250 stores to not only collect donations but also to engage with customers about the vital work you do to support people in your community.

We have been working with our lovely Asda Community Champion Kim and we do hope that this weekend will be a success getting us lots of items to replenish our stock, with demand up we are getting through our stock at a much faster rate and are constantly having to spend money topping up stock.

This is why every donation, however large or small, is so very much valued and is so important to us.

This week's list of items include:

Long Life Milk, Tinned meats - Spaghetti Bolognese, Tinned Curry, Sausages & Beans etc, Tinned potatoes, Tinned Carrots, Tinned Sweetcorn, Tinned Fish, Sponge Puddings, Tinned Custard, Rice Pudding, Tea Bags, Fruit Juice / Squash

Date for your Diary: Monday 23rd May 2022, from 1:00 pm. The future strategy of Thurrock Foodbank.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support, as we continue to support those in need across Thurrock, it is really valued.

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/>

# Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue

- Minister: Rev'd David Coaker  
07378 348191  
drcoaker@gmail.com
- Treasurer: Mr Alan Beckley
- Elders: Mrs Janet Semain, Mr George Semain & Mr Alf Pryer. Co-opted: Mrs Elaine Barcz & Mrs Margaret Pryer
- Church Contact: Mrs Elaine Barcz  
graysurcsecretary@outlook.com
- Organist: Mr Richard Wade
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