 URCGrays
www.graysurc.org.uk

Minister: Rev'd David Coaker
07378 348191
drcoaker@gmail.com

Silent Visitor

Happy 50th Birthday

United Reformed Church

1972 - 2022



September / October 2022

A week with Grays URC

Bradleigh Avenue, Grays, RM17 5XD

Sun **Worship** 10.30-11.30am
(1st Communion, Scout & Guide - 5 per year)
(1st) 9.30-10.10am Young Families

Tue **Play Den** 10-11.30am
(activities for pre-school children)
Mature Movers 1.45-2.45pm
(Gentle Exercise Class, £4)

Wed **Coffee morning** 10.00-12noon
Worship 11.00-11.30am
(1st Dementia Friendly)
Discussion groups 1.00-2.30pm
(see notice boards for details)

Messy Church 3.30-5.30pm (Termly)
Crafts, stories, food and fun for 0-11 year olds
and their families. Denise: 07806 739959
(see notice boards for details)

Grays URC: a place to pause, and then step forward.

Grays United Reformed Church - Worship Plan

Date	Led by	Time	Notes
04.09.22	David Coaker	9.30	Young Families / supported by Denise Beckley
04.09.22	David Coaker	10.30	Holy Communion / Baptism Bethia Flemmings
07.09.22	David Coaker	11.00	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
11.09.22	Denise Beckley	9.30	<i>Young Families</i>
11.09.22	T.B.A	10.30	
14.09.22	David Coaker	14.00	Piggs Corner Complex
18.09.22	Denise Beckley	9.30	<i>Young Families</i>
18.09.22	Kathryn Taylor	10.30	
25.09.22	Denise Beckley	9.30	Young Families / supported by David Coaker
25.09.22	David Coaker	10.30	Church Meeting
02.10.22	David Coaker	9.30	Young Families / supported by Denise Beckley
02.10.22	David Coaker	10.30	Holy Communion
05.10.22	David Coaker	11.00	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
09.10.22	Denise Beckley	09.30	Young Families / supported by David Coaker
09.10.22	David Coaker	10.30	Harvest & Parade
16.10.22	Denise Beckley	10.30	
23.10.22	Alf Pryer	10.30	
30.10.22	George Semain	10.30	

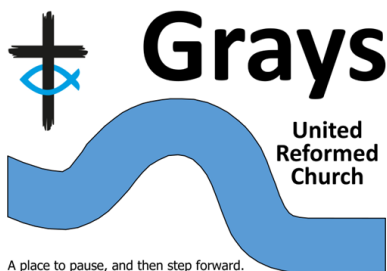
Family Worship:

9.30-10.10am

1st Sunday - young families service

10.30-11.30am

1st Communion,
Scout & Guide - 5 per year



www.graysurc.org.uk



Hall bookings: **Charlotte Webb**
07843 559011 graysurc@gmail.com

Minister: **Rev'd David Coaker**
07378 348191 drcoaker@gmail.com

Duty Elder Rota

Date	On Duty	Communion
04.09.22	Janet Semain	Janet Semain
11.09.22	George Semain	
18.09.22	Elaine Barcz	
25.09.22	Alf Pryer	

Community Café: Wednesday 10am-12noon – all are welcome! Dementia friendly worship: 11am first Wed of month

Church Meeting: Sun 25 September following worship.

Elders' Meeting: Wed 7 September at 12.30 for 1pm start.

Baptism – we are delighted that our worship on the 4th September will include the Baptism of Bethia Flemmings.

November / December SV - If you could please email or phone through your contributions by **Friday 22 October** to Janet Semain, 01375 373532, geojan321@sky.com

A Prayer for Our Church Family

Let us remember in our thoughts and prayers all those from our Church family who are feeling frail and unwell. We ask you, Lord Jesus, to hold those people close to you that they may feel the love and warmth of your continued support.

In Jesus' name - Amen

A Toad in the Pot

by Gina Nottage

I thought I'd work in the garden today

The Autumn leaves on the path lay

Into the shed for gloves and broom

I thought I'd sweep until noon.

There in the corner stood a pot

One I'd forgotten to put with another lot.

I bent forward and lifted, shook out the debris

When all of a sudden it leapt at me,

I jumped, he jumped, we both were in shock.

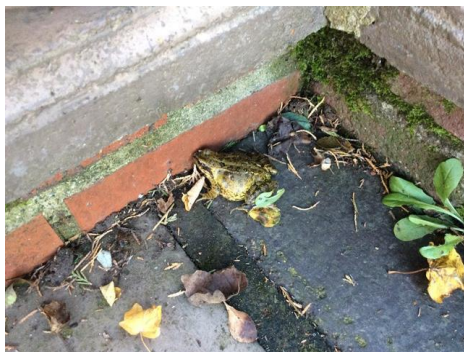
I stilled my thumping heart and took stock.

From his home the little toad was gone

I felt I'd done an awful wrong.

Into the pot I put the leaves up to the rim,

Hoping this would once again be a home for him.



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



Exploring Together

At our last church meeting we revisited our Mission Plan. It is a framework upon which we flesh out how we seek to be 'a place to pause, and then step forward' as we seek to live out the way of Jesus and encourage others to live it out too. In it we have committed ourselves:

1. to explore ways of deepening and expressing our faith.
2. to build our fellowship by further engaging, through events and initiatives, with building users and the community, including other local churches.
3. to encourage varying styles of worship, with a view to bringing the Word to a wider audience.

Our task is to reflect, pray and explore ways in which we can carry out each of these. What activities, conversations or studies would help us deepen and express our faith? What community events could we encourage, offer or participate in? What opportunities are there to engage with our brothers and sisters in Christ locally? What different styles of worship could we try out? These questions, and more, will be raised during our worship, fellowship, meetings and in SV in the coming months. What do you think?

We are starting to explore these issues. In the autumn we will be gathering to explore 'Everybody Welcome' a four-part course to help us reflect on our life together, our building, and how we can be truly welcoming. We are also being accompanied by the wider URC to explore our Mission and how the Synod may be able to offer us support to develop and fulfil it. We are enabling our neighbouring congregations and the community at the Piggs Corner Complex to gather to determine the potential of a worship service there.

This month also marks the first anniversary of our community café. Our thanks to all who have supported it, in a whole host of ways, and we may even add a candle to the cake we offer on the 14th!

As you know, last month I was appointed Synod Clerk and the Moderator in her announcement asked for prayer and patience. Thank you especially for yours, as I navigate these new waters and seek to balance the demands of both of these roles.

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



Dementia Friendly Community Café

The community café was started over a year ago on Wednesday 15th September 2021. It is still continuing to offer support and chat, over a slice of cake and refreshments, every Wednesday between 10am and midday. The community café is very well attended each week with regular people and receiving new people who come in by recommendation.

On the 1st Wednesday of each month at 11am, there is a short dementia friendly worship, with well-known hymns and bible readings, which is very well received.

A special thanks to all the helpers, agencies, organizations, guest speakers, for giving their time and support.

I have had lots of wonderful chats and enjoyed getting to know various people over the past year. There is a lot of positive joy, warmth and kindness. If all people remember, when leaving the community café, are the happy feelings whilst there, then that is all that matters.

Kee Cheung

Proverbs 11:25

A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed

Guest Speaker from Guide Dogs



Our Church has been pursuing the possibility of becoming a Sight Loss Friendly Church and was pleased to welcome Chris and Mick Bennett with his assistant dog, Usher, to our service on the 7 August.

At the beginning of Mick's sight loss journey, he was in a difficult place in his life and not able to come to terms with losing his sight. He began to lose confidence in himself. About 5 years ago, Mick's life started to turn around. He was paired with Usher, a wonderful assistant dog from Guide Dogs. This was the start of their wonderful adventure together. This has helped Mick to gain back full independence and confidence to live life without sight.

Chris and Mick Bennett, with his assistant dog Usher from Guide Dogs, visited us in August, and during a Sunday service, gave a talk on Mick's sight loss journey. At the beginning of this journey, he was at a difficult place in his life, and not able to come to terms with losing his sight. About 5 years ago, however, Mick's life started to turn around when he was paired with Usher his wonderful assistant dog.

Mick has done several fundraising events for the Guide Dogs charity, such as tandem parachute jump, zip wiring down a quarry and wing walking while strapped to the top of a biplane. Usher is always with Mick, and he watches from a distance, with Chris.

His next fundraising is a 'blind drive'. He will be driving a James Bond Aston Martin DB9 car in August. Yes, he will be driving blind at full speed with sighted assistance, to fulfil one of his lists of amazing achievements.

Chris is a self-published author and has written 2 books about Mick's experiences with his guide dog. The books are called; 'Usher You're A Star' and 'Usher our Cruising Star'. Yes, Usher had been on a cruise with Mick and Chris where he also met the ship's captain.

If you want a copy of either book, and also any information on Guide Dogs, you can email Chris.

us.bennetts81@outlook.com

Thanks to Chris, Mick and Usher for a wonderful talk.

Kee Cheung



Grays URC has registered with Torch Trust Sight Loss Friendly Church, a charity that helps Christians dealing with sight loss and to grow in faith with God.

To find out more information use link below.
<https://torchtrust.org/> For further advice with sight loss, you can contact RNIB helpline 0303 123 9999.



Mick Wing Walking

From Ministries & Mission

To: All members and adherents of United Reformed Churches and our Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Dear Friends, Is anyone back to normal?

After two years of pandemic and lockdown, and Covid still with us (thankfully, for most, in a much weaker form), we can now worship together in person and find fellowship again. But for most of us it is not simply a return to how it used to be; some people have not returned to church, some have died or become too frail, some churches have closed and others considering it.

Now we have significant European turmoil and its likely effect on fuel and food prices for us in the UK.

Thank God that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13 v.8). Whatever else changes, He is our rock, our cornerstone.

Financially, things were extremely tough for churches in 2021. Plate offerings had collapsed; some regular givers had to reduce or entirely stop giving to support God's work; and those churches which hire out their premises had seen income from that source disappear. Even those churches where the majority of the giving was by standing order or bank transfer (if you have not considered regularising your giving in this way, please do - it helps your treasurer significantly) may have seen a 20%+ drop in income.

If this had been replicated in giving to the M&M Fund in 2021, we might have been faced with a serious financial crisis last year.

But no, through the generosity of individuals, churches and Synods, we can report that income only fell by 4.4%. With a similar reduction in expenditure the M&M Fund result was a deficit of only £80,000

(less than one-half of one percent of income), a deficit that can be comfortably covered by reserves.

So, thank you to all who continued to contribute to your local church, thank you to all those churches who met their commitment for 2021 in full, and thank you to all those who, in adversity, continued to treat the M&M Fund as the first priority and paid what they could.

With churches and individuals under financial pressure, 2022 is not going to be an easy year either. The M&M Fund budgeted income (based on Synods' projections) will not be sufficient to cover expected costs and we are reconciled to dipping into our reserves more seriously as a result.

However, if we "ordinary Christians" are to fulfil the call of Jesus to be His witnesses in the world around us we need ministers and other workers "on the ground" and we need shared resources which are often best created centrally. That all comes from the M&M Fund.

Again, thank you all!

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 Hardie, Treasurer & Vaughan Griffiths (Deputy Treasurer)

Financial Update August 2022

As of 31 July the bank balance stood at a little over £21,000, comfortably above my preferred minimum balance. As always though, we never know what unforeseen expenses are around the corner, not to mention some hefty heating bills in the coming winter.

Synod has agreed our compromise M & M figure of £23,500 per annum as discussed at Church Meeting. They also noted our willingness to make up the difference to the original figure of £24,948, should the 25% Synod rebate be approved later in the year, and subject to approval of church meeting. Otherwise things are quite stable financially at the moment.

Printed elsewhere in Silent Visitor is a letter from the Synod Treasurers which explains amongst other things, the effect of Covid on the URC finances. Please spend five minutes reading it, thank you.

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, to 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 Beckley



Thurrock Food Bank

Grays URC are in receipt of weekly news reports from Peter Newall, Operations Manager at Thurrock Food-bank.

The "Weekly Wire" provides information of how things are at the Food-bank and of any special events. An example being when they were presented with a cheque for £1,000 from the Griffin Foundation and then after they had shown them around the Food-bank, they decided to double their donation to £2,000! That was certainly very generous

There are obviously concerns expressed as to how the impact of the rising cost of living will affect the demands on Food-banks in months to come.

The list of items, for the food-bank, when shopping include the following :-

Noodles & condiments

Tinned Potatoes

Tinned meats - Spaghetti Bolognese, Tinned Curry, Sausages & Beans etc,/ Tinned Ham, Corned Beef

Desserts: Sponge Puddings/ Jelly's, Angel Delight

Tinned Custard

Tinned Fruit

Jams & Spreads

On Saturday 1st October at Socketts Heath Baptist Church there will be a concert by CDOT " You Raise me Up" in aid of Thurrock Food –Bank. Tickets are £8 which includes refreshments and can be obtained from Helen on

01375 677284 or warehouse@thurrock.foodbank.org.uk

Another Cathedral/

ELY

This year gave us an opportunity to visit two more cathedrals, Ely and Peterborough. The latter will feature in the next edition of SV.

Previously we had made two attempts to visit Ely to no avail. This time we were successful and made our visit accompanied by two previous members of this church, Claire and Stanley Trencher, on a very wet afternoon.



A cathedral of the Fenlands, Ely rises visually from the flat expanses of the Cambridgeshire fens. Although its diocese is centred in Cambridge, it also includes some small parts of

Bedfordshire, Essex, Norfolk and Peterborough.

It was in 675 that a 33 year old princess, Ethelreda by name, here founded a double monastery for both nuns and monks. 400 years or so later, this was where Hereward the Wake made his stand against the Normans.

The present building was started in 1083 and was mostly completed by 1189, although a number of major improvements were added later. Two of these are quite singular. One is the

ceiling of the nave, made of wood and painted (free of charge by two Victorian artists) in the nineteenth century. This nave is exceptionally long – 246 feet, one of the longest in the UK.

The other architectural feature mentioned is an octagonal 'lantern' topping a tower. In 1322, the square Norman central tower collapsed. It had been built on unstable ground. Local people thought it was an earthquake! It was decided to replace it by a lighter structure. The result was an octagonal tower rising from a wooden vault. On the top was an octagonal lantern, over 60 feet high. It is difficult to show this in a photograph so to get the full effect a visit is recommended.

One further feature worth mentioning is a Victorian unicursal maze (a maze you can only walk one way – not a lot of people know that!) It is on the floor at the West entrance and the distance from the start to the centre is the same as the height of the tower above it. Before we left, our friend Stanley walked the maze!



Picture of nave and lantern

It was a lovely visit and highly recommended! *George Semain*



A British Icon

"Psst – wanna buy a phone box? I can get you one for a quid!" Thus might have been the words of Private Walker, the lovable "spiv" of 'Dad's Army'.

The red telephone box is now recognised as a British icon. It was designed by Sir Charles Gilbert Scott and was launched in 1936 to celebrate King George V's silver jubilee. It soon became a familiar sight, not only on the streets of the U.K. but also on those of Malta, Bermuda and Gibraltar. Whilst its normal colour was bright red, to make it visible, the Post Office, the then proprietor, was forced into allowing a less strident grey for areas of natural and architectural beauty. Ironically, some of those areas which have preserved their telephone boxes, have now painted them red! Today they may be contracted to purchase from BT for the consideration of £1. You may now come across such preserved icons in many places throughout the country.

One such became of particular interest to Janet and myself. It is located in the small village and civil parish of Postling, in Kent, within a couple of miles of the M20 motorway. Postling is mentioned in the Domesday Book as being part of the lands of one Hugo de Montfort. It is within an area of outstanding natural beauty. To those of us who hail from industrial urban areas, this terrestrial paradise is a stark contrast to 'those dark satanic mills'. Our particular interest is that within Postling is a small caravan site, licensed by the Caravan and Motor-home Club to take up to five caravans or motor-homes. The site is owned by sheep farmers Mr and Mrs Hobbs. They both sit on the Parish Council, Mr Hobbs being the chairman. So both have been instrumental in organising the refurbishment of the local telephone box.

Rather than housing a public telephone, it has now become a point of interest displaying details of the history of Postling, very professionally set out on a typical English Heritage style tablet. The sign, 'Telephone', normally displayed below the roof line, has now given way to 'POSTLING'. It may have been acquired for £1, but the refurbishment costs have run into four figures.

One of the meanings of 'heritage' is, 'valued objects and qualities that may be passed down from previous generations, especially relating to things of special architectural or historical value that may be preserved for the nation'. It also includes, 'features belonging to the culture of a particular society, e.g. buildings, which come from the past and are still historically important'. On that basis, the Parish of Postling can be said to have made a valued contribution to our heritage, notwithstanding that it has never contained a shop nor a pub! (See photograph below of the Postling box in its relation to the Parish Church).



Postling Church and Telephone Box

George Semain

MOVING STORIES

Committed to supporting ISRAEL & OCCUPIED PALESTINE

AN EMERGING DEBT CRISIS IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Debt is strangling the poorest people in Palestine and Israel, and in any sane world would immediately be cancelled.

ISRAEL'S national debt is around US\$208 billion. That equates to 66% of GDP or US\$24 000 per citizen. Each year \$US9 billion is added to the bill.

Palestine's debt to GDP ratio has exceeded 63% - well over the 40% limit set in law. The Palestinian Authority's ability to service that debt is hampered by the illegal occupation and oppression of its people. For both Israel and Palestine, there is an emerging debt crisis that will affect the poorest citizens enormously, brought about by a deeply problematic global financial and economic architecture.

In fact, the global financial system beggars belief. Take the British foreign aid budget. The majority goes not to poor people but to a colonial-era investment firm called CDC that invests in luxury hotels, malls, and restaurant chains. In the end, only 3% of this aid goes to suppliers in the global south, with over 90% being paid to British firms. "This is the real scandal," says economist Jason Hickel. "Aid money is taken from the pockets of British taxpayers and sent straight into the already-gilded coffers of the British business elite. It's a shameful abuse of our most compassionate impulse," he concludes.

Together with Global Justice Now, Commitment for Life works to cancel the debt of the highly exploited nations. Thank you for all you do to bring about justice in our world through effective debt cancellation.

Commitment
for **Life**

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Everybody Welcome

**A four-part course to help us reflect on
our life together, our building, and how we
can be truly welcoming.**

Wednesdays 1.00-2.30pm
Grays United Reformed Church
Bradleigh Avenue, RM17 5XD

Session	1	2	3	4
	21/9	12/10	9/11	23/11

Outline of time together:

Welcome and refreshments
Discussion interspersed
with four short videos
Closing Prayer

Some preparatory reading will be
available

- 1: Discover: Making the church more visible
- 2: The Premises: Making them more inviting
- 3: A welcoming God and God's welcoming people
- 4: Belonging to the church community

How many people 'try out'
our church each year?

Do they feel welcome?

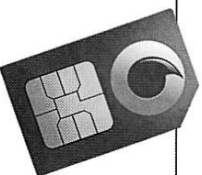
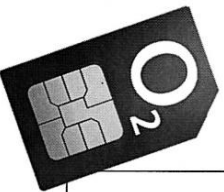
Do they come back?

What would happen if 10%, 25% or
even 50% of our visitors became
regular members of our congregation?





Free Data Gifting



Belhus	01708 851212
Chadwell	01375 842511
East Tilbury	01375 652688
Grays	01375 413976
Tilbury	01375 842612

**Would you like to surf the
net and are from a low
income household?**

Thurrock Libraries can help with free data and a sim card.

If you are aged 18 and above and your phone is compatible with any of the 3 providers
contact one of the above 5 libraries to pick one up!

For more information on the various library services
available, please visit thurrock.gov.uk/libraries



thurrock.gov.uk

Services for young families

Craft, stories, Christian worship.

A time to reflect and connect.

Suitable for all ages



Six Sunday morning services exploring the words of Jesus.

I am



The true vine

The good shepherd



The light of the world

The way, the truth, and the life

The bread of life

Beginning Sunday 4th September

each Sunday until 9th October



Grays

9.30am – 10.15am

Everybody welcome

31 Bradleigh Avenue, Grays RM17 5XD

Who's Who at Bradleigh Avenue

Minister: Rev'd David Coaker
07378 348191
drcoaker@gmail.com

Treasurer: Mr Alan Beckley

Elders: Mr George Semain, Mrs Janet Semain,
Mr Alf Pryer & Mrs Denise Beckley.
Co-opted: Mrs Elaine Barcz,
Mrs Margaret Pryer

Church Contact: Mrs Elaine Barcz
graysurcsecretary@outlook.com

Organist: Mr Richard Wade

Facilities Manager: Mrs Charlotte Webb
0784 3559011
graysurc@gmail.com

Silent Visitor: Mrs Janet Semain
01375 373532
geojan321@sky.com

Assisted by Mr Kee Cheung