 URCGrays
www.graysurc.org.uk

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Silent Visitor



"where have they taken our Lord?"

April 2023

Witnesses to the Wonder

While they were talking, Jesus came;
Intrusive, uninvited, standing there,
telling them not to be afraid.
Never mind afraid, they were terrified.
Everyone knew he was dead.
Someone had whispered, 'Jesus is alive,'
Someone had said they had seen him, but
Expecting him to be there, never!
Such things did not happen.



'Touch my hands and feet!'
O such doubt!
'Touch me, see I am real!
Have you anything to eat?
Everything written about me is fulfilled.'

Witnesses to the wonder,
One by one they realised!
Now they could see.
Drawn to touch, they had been touched,
And their eyes were open.
Repent and believe, your sins are forgiven.

(As published in the URC Prayer Handbook "Bridge of Love")

Grays United Reformed Church - Worship Plan

Date	Led by	Time	Notes
02.04.23	David Coaker	9.30	Young Families Supported by Denise Beckley
02.04.23	David Coaker	10.30	Fellowship time
05.04.23	David Coaker	11.00	Dementia Friendly
06.04.23	David Coaker	18.30	Maundy Thursday Communion
07.04.23	David Coaker	14.30	Good Friday
09.04.23	David Coaker	9.00 10.30	Easter Day Breakfast Communion
16.04.23	Denise Beckley	10.30	Cafe Style in the Hall
23.04.23	Kathryn Taylor	10.30	Family Service
30.04.23	George Semain	10.30	Family Service

The Church in Holy Week

As we journey through the events of Holy Week we can see within them images that can be symbolic of the Church, and foundational to our faith, how we express it, and how we understand it.

On Palm Sunday Jesus arrives in Jerusalem surrounded by the cheers of the crowd urging him to free them from Roman tyranny. Within this is the image of the Church supreme over all worldly authorities, beyond reproach, with no need to listen to society and respected without question.

As the week progresses Jesus clears the Temple of the traders who are abusing the rituals and laws of God's house for personal gain, rather than to enable the people's devotion. Here the image of the Church is counter-cultural, standing with the oppressed and excluded, immersed in society, militant and politically engaged.

In the gospels we also have this as a time of teaching and healing. In this we see Jesus explaining, declaring, and creating, the good news of God. It offers the image of the Church as the bearer of tradition, of wisdom, a place of debate, exploration, and discovery. An image of the Church offering welcome, companionship, and encouragement; a place of support, comfort, and peace.

On Maundy Thursday Jesus celebrates Passover with his friends and establishes Communion, the central sacrament of the Church. This ritual can be seen as an image of the Church, held together through time and space in Christ, living and reliving his life together.

Later that evening Jesus seeks the peace of the garden of Gethsemane to pray. Here the tradition of pilgrimage and the monastic movement can be an image of the Church. The Church centred in its devotion to God, holding the world before God, seeking peace and unity within hearts and communities.

That night, and the following morning, Jesus is put on trial by the authorities of his land, both religious and secular. Here the image of the Church is two-fold, at war with itself and finding itself irrelevant to

society. The Church focussed on what divides its body and unaware of the needs and spiritual longings of its community.

The result of those trials is Jesus' crucifixion, the ultimate punishment for treason and insurrection under Roman law. Here the image of the Church isn't just of standing with the oppressed and excluded, but as one with them. The Church without power or influence, yet still responding as Christ did; praying for those who persecuted him, caring for his fellow sufferers, and offering words of comfort to his mother and friends.

Saturday has to be the most troubling day of the Christian year. Jesus' body is in the tomb, the rock covers the entrance, his followers are in hiding, and we are left alone in this silence, darkness, and absence; left between death and resurrection. We can see this as an image of exile, a running theme throughout the Old Testament, where the Jewish people long for return to Israel, to God's Promised Land flowing with milk and honey, and freedom from the oppression, compromise and humiliation of living in a foreign land. We can see it as the image of the Church journeying through the wilderness, like Moses and Jesus, learning to live closer to God's way, rebelling against God, being tempted, and deluding ourselves that it was better when we were in Egypt.

The journey through Holy Week ends with Easter Sunday, Easter Day, the day of Resurrection; a day of transformation, renewal, wonder, mystery and hope. The tomb is flung open, angels share joyous news, and disciples rush, stand in awe, burst into tears, doubt, are disbelieved, and ultimately hear the words and feel the presence of Christ. The image of the Church on this day combines and transforms all of the images throughout the week and within every other festival within the Christian calendar. This image is of how the Church could be. A place of transformation and renewal, of peace and unity, filled with tears and laughter, words spoken in love, and acting as Christ to each other and to the community around.

As Christians we will each find different aspects of Holy Week attuned, to a greater or lesser extent, to our faith and spirituality. They will also speak to us in different ways throughout our lives and in

different circumstances. Our hope, goal, and desire within all of our life together is to live with Easter Day in our hearts. May this be our prayer and the motivation for all that we do.

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

The Eulogy as read at the service of celebration for the Life of Roger George Hunwick

19.11.1947 – 26.01.2023

Roger was the third son born, on 19 November 1947, to Alfred James Hunwick and Florence May Harris who lived at 162 South Road, South Ockendon.

He attended the village primary school in Peartree Close.

He later attended the Aveley Technical High School passing 'A' levels in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry.

His favourite subject was Chemistry, and he went on to do an HND, LRIC and then a graduate course for the Royal Institute of Chemistry at North East London Polytechnic.

It was while he was doing one of his sessions of six months' work experience at Van Den Berghs and Jurgens that he met Ruth who had a holiday job there.

After he graduated in 1972 he worked first of all as Raw Materials Chemist at R White's Lemonade Central Laboratory in London SE 15 and then as Works Chemist at the Beckton bottling plant, travelling to work on his motorbike.

Then he joined Distillers Company Carbon Dioxide at Dagenham in February 1974 as Works Chemist.

He was in charge of four assistants and responsible for the analytical control in the production of solid and liquid carbon dioxide, absolute alcohol, methylated spirits and other organic chemicals. He was also responsible for the boiler and cooling water treatment, and the analysis of raw materials.

Ruth and Roger were married on 28th of July 1973, here at Grays United Reformed Church and celebrated their reception at the Village Hall in Orsett.

In February 1978, after being employed the required number of years in Chemistry, he was made a member of the Royal Institute of Chemistry and Chartered Chemist.

When technology arrived the laboratory was closed down and Roger became a self-employed gardener and a house husband in 1983. This meant that Ruth arrived home from Collier Row (Forest Lodge School) where she taught, to find he had prepared a lovely meal.

They lived in Southend Road Grays and then moved, in 1981, to Bradleigh Avenue.

He enjoyed cycling (a life-long interest), and later motorcycling, starting with a BSA Bantam and ending with a Triumph Trident, with Ruth happily riding on the back.

They both loved cycling in Norfolk on the country roads (single lanes with grass growing up the middle!) and later bought a tandem, allowing them to roam further afield in a day, south to the Broads and west to Hunstanton from Kelling Heath Holiday Park where Ruth's mum owned a caravan.

Roger's main interest was growing vegetables, having helped his father on his allotment as a boy. Their first allotment was next to the Methodist Church in Dock Road behind the houses. (Ruth's grandma lived in a cottage behind the church.)

Then they moved to Belmont for a very short time, then the one in Pym place and finally to the Ward Avenue allotments, taking over first one of Bryan Overland's allotments and then the second one before self-management was brought in. They grew many different fruits and vegetables organically and were very nearly self-sufficient, buying only the odd brussel sprout at Christmas.

They went to church regularly in the evening on Sunday and made many new friends and Roger helped people with allotments like Ernie Hughes (who lived in Bradleigh Avenue).

Roger took over from Bryan Overland and mowed the grass for several years before Phil King kindly took over. Roger and Ruth then did weeding and general maintenance.

Always a kind and loving husband, nephew-in-law and uncle.

Some memories and thoughts from family and friends:

Susan Taylor, Elsie and Peter's daughter:

We had not see Uncle Roger for a while and I was already missing our conversations in my Mum's garden, which he very kindly tended for many years following the death of my father.

He was so incredibly knowledgeable; the kind of person you would love to have on your quiz team. We would chat about current affairs or wildlife, and I would always learn something new while spending time with this kind and calm man.

When we were younger Uncle Roger would visit on Christmas Eve. The Hunwick family would gather round the dining table for food and cards. I will always remember Roger's roar of laughter when the game reached the climax, and the loser was revealed.

Such happy memories will always remain of my Dad's younger brother. Rest now Uncle Roger.

Tim Webb:

It is with sadness that we learnt of the recent loss of Roger. He was a great supporter of 7th Grays Scout Group and in particular helping with the jumble sales both beforehand with leaflet delivery and sorting, and on the day with the sale.

He will be remembered for his ability to always find a suitable hat to wear!

Anthony and Nicola Dent:

One of our most abiding memories of our 18 years living in Bradleigh Avenue will be of seeing both of you daily on your bicycles, with all sorts of cargo from shopping bags to garden tools.

We also saw Roger helping out the community in many different ways, such as at the church or with the Scouts.

I am sure that he will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and these types of important contributions to local life that he made will also be missed.

Judith:

Roger's illness made it difficult to see such an active man, who had lived life to the full in such an unselfish way, no longer able to think and care as he had always done so.

He was a devoted husband and a friend to everyone.

Our children remember his acute sense of humour, passion for life, not the material things, but for the meaning of life itself, his care for the environment, and his logical thinking.

Roger had a deep Christian faith which he practised through prayer, worship and practical giving of his love and skills to everyone.

Inger Collier:

I will remember Roger as someone trying to live in harmony with Creation. I think of your self-sufficiency with the allotment and also the work you did to keep the church grounds in order.

I remember Roger and Ruth serving us coffee on Sundays and doing the washing up. Keeping a special antique stall at the Christmas Market and Roger fixing of bikes.

Lynne and Alan: A lovely man, a gentle soul and always a loyal friend.

Janet & George Semain:

Roger could sometimes be described as an enigma, one might find it difficult to determine whether he was being serious or amusing – until, that is, his face lit into that wry smile he often wore.

We have a photograph of that smile whilst Roger, alongside Ruth, was lending a hand at a scout's jumble sale, something he did regularly.

He would also be a regular stallholder at the Church Christmas Market, where he was to be seen in charge of the 'white elephant' stall. He did this so often that he could well have earned the epithet 'the white elephant keeper'.

In this way he was a major contributor to church funds. Roger's humour stood out when seen at the above jumble sale wearing a copy of the top hat usually ascribed to the 'Mad Hatter' at his tea party.

Another regular environmental situation for Roger was at the sink or the counter in the Church kitchen.

Along with Ruth he would be seen providing morning refreshments to the congregation and keeping the kitchen, crockery and cutlery, in glistening good order.

Janet might be called pedantic in how she like her cup of tea and Roger made a point of getting it just right for her, waiting for her expression of approval at the first taste.

Those of us who visit Lakeside regularly might have caught sight of Roger, again alongside Ruth, on his bicycle returning from a shopping trip. Very rarely was he seen in a motor car which we are sure he saw as an environmental menace.

The Church Magazine, Silent Visitor, was often to be noted publishing an article from Roger, advising on aspects of gardening, something which displayed his horticultural knowledge, beneficial to our gardens, allotments and also the church grounds.

One rather special article he wrote spelled out the evils of too much sunlight on our bodies, explaining that the effect of each exposure was cumulative to the previous ones. This article was close to our hearts and we supported every point he made.

Roger's contribution to church life was likely to be underestimated but it was vital during a time of great fellowship and worship. He will be sorely missed.



Worshipping Journey

Over the last couple of months our worship has travelled around our building. We've saved some heating costs, kept warm, and also experienced different styles, places and atmospheres of worship.

Some we will have liked. Some maybe we'd prefer not to do again. But hopefully we've glimpsed what might be possible, and gauged how flexible we might be in the future.

We know we can't please all of the people, all of the time. But things are further complicated by us wanting to please people we haven't met yet. Who don't know that we might be what they're looking for. Or have any sense that faith, let alone expressing it through worship, could be part of their lives.

We've tried different things, and established well-attended monthly young families and dementia friendly services. We also reach out to many families through PlayDen, Messy Church, Fun Fridays, Scouts, Guides and Little Roos. We reach out to older folk through Mature Movers and the Community Café.

But alongside this is the reality that we only have so much time and energy between us to deliver worship.

So how flexible are we prepared to be? (And by prepared, I mean whole-heartedly get behind, make the most of, and invite others to come along to.)

What is crucial is that we come to an honest answer together.

If, hand on heart, we know we'd rather stay with what we've always done, let us decide to do that.

If we are ready to embrace a whole new way of worshipping together, let us decide to do that.

If we'd rather stay the same, but accept we need to do something different for other people, let us work out how we can achieve that by agreeing our priorities, accepting the consequences, and using the resources we do have

accordingly.

By not deciding, and trying to keep everyone happy and reach out to others at the same time, we're not doing ourselves any favours.

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

Financial Report March/April 2023

The bank balance as of 28 February stood at a little over £26,000. I have since paid the annual building and contents insurance for a total premium of £5,200. The last church building gas bill was £1,350, helped by a government energy relief scheme grant of £200, together with the change in worship locations on a Sunday morning. Also, February is a short month.

I have not heard from Charlotte when the essential electrical work will commence, but we need to be prepared for another invoice of around £6,000 to be paid in the near future.

Our annual accounts have now been audited thanks as usual to Steve Morgan who is the 7th Grays Scouts and Scout District treasurer.

I have now completed and submitted the 2023 'Fairshare' return to Eastern Synod; this will help determine our M & M contributions for the coming year. Other than that, not much more to report, I will present the annual accounts at the next Church Meeting. If anyone would like to view the accounts in the meantime, please let me know and I will be happy to email them, or provide a printed version.

The usual thanks to all 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 Beckley



Faith – Hope – Love –

The revised date for the 50th Anniversary of United Reformed Church is on Saturday 15 April at the Methodist Hall, London.

For further information please go to the United Reformed Church website at 50@urc.org.uk



Thurrock Food Bank

The Thurrock Food Bank has advised that it is low on stock of the following items:

- Custard, squash, tinned fruit.
- Tinned potatoes, mashed potatoes, jams/spreads.
- Sponge puddings, mixed vegetables, tinned spaghetti, long life milk.

The numbers of families using the local Food Bank has now reached nearly 10,000!!

Prayer

Dear Lord, never let us forget those who struggle to keep their families or themselves warm and well fed and a roof over their heads.

We thank you for those who volunteer, who man the Food Banks and to those who buy the extras to keep the shelves stocked.

We ask that our government understand the plight of so many throughout our country whose lives are very tough.

We ask these things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

Some Quotes from "Smile" by Helen Exley

May no one ever come to you without going away better and happier. Everyone should see kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile.

Mother Teresa (1910 -1897 from the "Heart of Joy")

Smiles are trifles, to be sure. But scattered along life's pathway, the good they do is inconceivable.

Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719)

And now a Joke to make you "Smile"

Hospital regulations require a wheel chair for patients being discharged.

However, while working as a student nurse, a nurse found one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need help to leave hospital.

After a chat about rules, he reluctantly allowed the nurse to wheel him to the lift.

On the way down she asked him if his wife was meeting him.

"I don't know," he said. "She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown!"



Community Café

Grays URC, Bradleigh Avenue, RM17 5XD

Wednesday
10.00am - 12.00noon

We intend for our café to be inclusive and dementia friendly.

With the help of the Alzheimer's Society, and other agencies, we are exploring how we can better support our wider community.

Over a drink and cake come along to find out more, or to just enjoy the social time and the refreshments.



First Wednesday of the month:

Thurrock Adult Social Care  thurrock.gov.uk

11.00am short, informal, worship time

12noon-1pm Pie lunch (order by 11.30am)

Third Wednesday of the month:

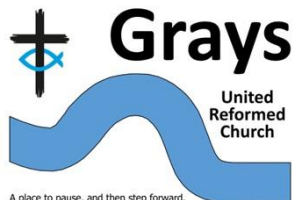
When possible, a range of speakers on matters of interest.



For more details contact: David Coaker

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www.graysurc.org.uk



A place to pause, and then step forward.

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MOVING STORIES

Committed to supporting ISRAEL & OCCUPIED PALESTINE

'Being involved in the project, I have felt a change in myself. It has made me more confident and more able to face challenges with greater confidence.' - Noura Amin Sa'ad.

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.

Beit Skariya stands as an example of the Israeli scheme to 'Depalestinize' an area which might be viewed as a barrier to the expansion and growth of Israel. These illegal Israeli settlements make daily life deeply fragile and uncertain for Palestinians. They ensure that life is permeated with tension, violence, and an impoverishment of the possibilities for flourishing life not only for Palestinians, it should be noted, but also for Israelis.

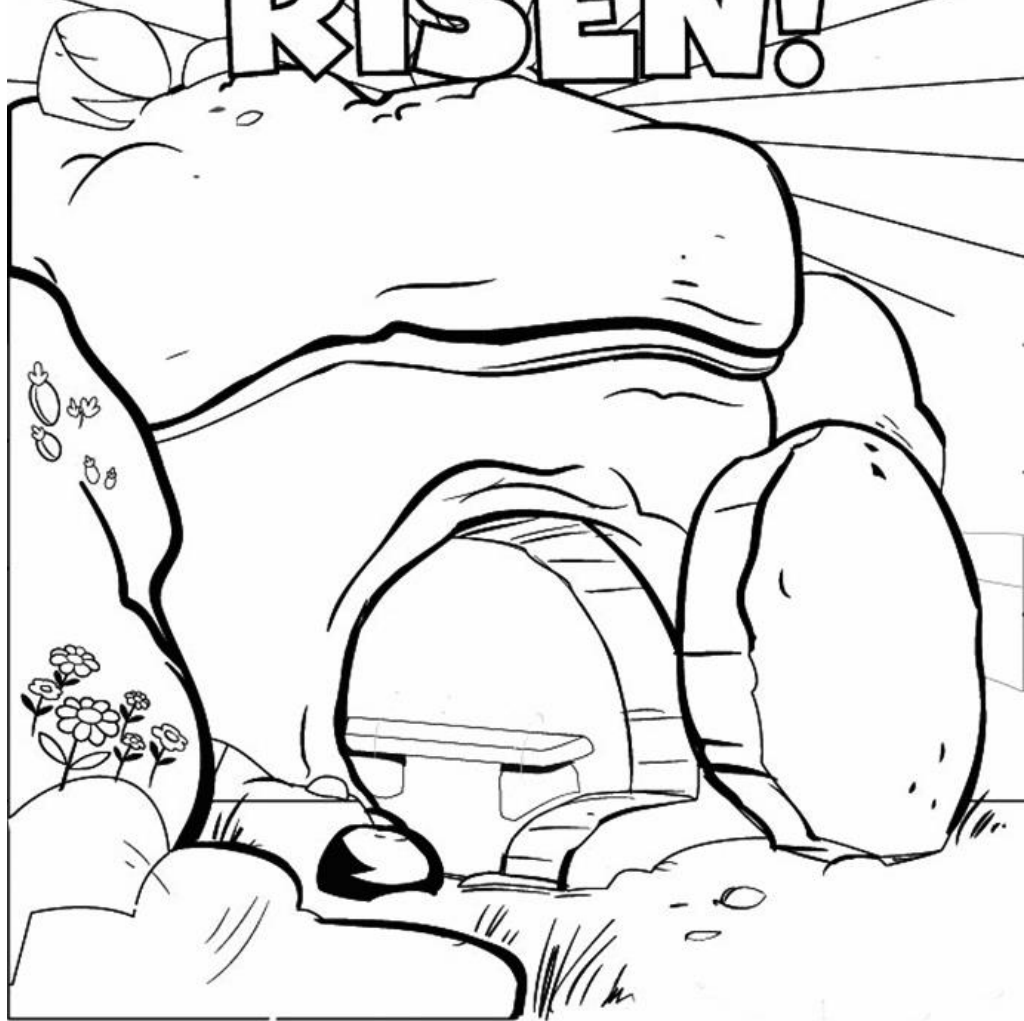
Noura and the community in Beit Skariya (Khirbet Beit Zakariyyah) have been supported by our Commitment for Life partner the YMCA Women's Training Programme to find ways to challenge the Israeli occupation and to build the resilience of individuals faced with threats to their land, lives, and livelihoods.

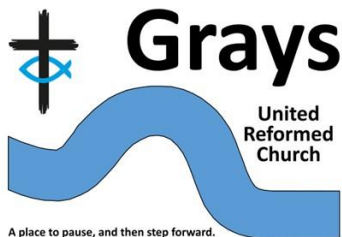
commitmentforlife@urt.org.uk

Commitment
for **Life**

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

**HE HAS
RISEN!**





Easter Services

Palm Sunday

9.30am Young families &
10.30am Communion

Sunday 2nd April

We will complete our Lent Journey marking Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem for Passover.

Wednesday

11.00am **Wednesday 5th April**

We will share in a short and informal time of worship exploring the events of this week.

Maundy Thursday

6.30pm **Thursday 6th April**

We will share in communion together and reflect on the events leading up to Jesus' arrest.

Good Friday

10.30am St Peter & St Paul's

2.30pm **Friday 7th April**

We will meditate upon Matthew's telling of Jesus' execution.

Easter Sunday

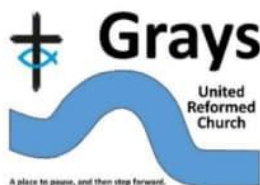
9.00am **Sunday 9th April**

10.30am

A short service marking the discovery of the empty tomb, followed by bacon sandwiches.

We will celebrate Resurrection and share in communion





Grays United Reformed Church

Café Worship
Sunday 16th April 23
10.30am - Noon



All are welcome.
For families and individuals from 0-90.
Refreshment for body and spirit.
Bible based activities for all ages.

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 Alf Pryer; Mrs Denise Beckley; Mr George Semain; Mrs Janet Semain. Co-opted: Mrs Elaine Barcz and, 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