



London Street

United Reformed Church

**BASINGSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE RG21 7NU
and
TADLEY (OLD MEETING) URC**



Peace on Earth



DECEMBER, 2015 / JANUARY, 2016

FOCUS

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - www.londonstreeturc.org.uk

MINISTER: Revd Kay Blackwell (Day off - Monday)
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Tel: Vestry - 01256 242152
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Basingstoke RG21 7AZ
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Tadley (Old Meeting) URC

10.30 every Sunday

"TASTE" Youth Event at 7 pm in the Immanuel Centre

Minister: Revd Kay Blackwell

Church Secretary: Paul Gross
22 Pelican Road, Pamber Heath RG26 3EN
Tel: 0118 970 0809
e.mail: paulg@silchester.org

Treasurer: Mark Ward
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View from the manse -

'The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God.' Mark 1:1



So the season of advent and Christmas is suddenly upon us once more. I'm sure the years get shorter as you get older! It is a wonderful time of year. Christmas is full of hopefulness and expectation. Sadly though, we adults do get very weighed down with the busyness and extra burdens and demands of this world at this time of year. It is so easy to lose sight of the truly amazing message and wonder of the Christmas story...it just gets somehow lost in the mountain of Christmas wrappings, twinkly lights, tinsel and overabundance of food.

I love the way that children, young children especially, come to the story of Christmas with that wide eyed wonder. That excitement and anticipation that something wonderful *is* just about to happen. And of course they are right to be excited. We are going to hear the stories re-read and re-told and remembered of the most astounding event in the history of world. God sending to earth Jesus, his son, to live among ordinary mortals as fully human yet fully divine. Jesus, God with us (which is what Emmanuel means), came as a helpless babe to be for us a glimpse of the Kingdom of God on earth. Before Jesus humans were permanently separated from God. Only priests, on certain feast days, and after extensive ritualised cleansing and sacrificing, could enter the holiest of holies in the temple where the Spirit of God was believed to reside. But even then they could only enter for a short period of time.

Humankind was permanently separated from God by the sin of this world. The birth of Jesus changed this all forever. The new-born Jesus came that we all might one day become born again in his name. By his name we can be adopted forever into the family of God. So really Jesus came as new life in the form of a human baby, and one day he would offer all humans new life in his name. New life in personal relationship with God. He is our pathway to the Kingdom of God! There is no greater story, no greater gift. No amount of twinkling lights, tinsel and feasting could capture the gloriousness, the extravagance of God's gift to us in Jesus!

However, for many the Christmas season has lost its glow! For many the talk of joy, hope, love and family, brings into stark focus their own reality of aloneness, of sadness, of lovelessness, and feelings of hopelessness. A family celebrating in joy the delivery of a new baby may just highlight for some that they are not part of a family with whom they can celebrate. They are perhaps not even allowed to shelter in the lowliness of a stable. Their reality may be huddling on the cold stone paving slabs under the shelter of our church porch! For many

Christmas Day is just another day...made somewhat harder by so many things being shut and so many people being too busy to talk to them. This year both London Street and Old Meeting are providing a Christmas Day for those who are alone, lonely or unable to cook their own Christmas dinner (and that includes couples too who would like more company for the day). We will become, for them, their family for that day. They will find with us a traditional Christmas feast, people to chat to, and quizzes to join in, games to play if they wish. There will be music and singing and probably some laughter shared too. So if you want to join us or know of a friend or neighbour who might benefit from lunch and company then speak to Joy Williams at London Street or Mark and Julie Ward at Old Meeting URC in Tadley. The day will be free to the guests, run by local Christians from many churches working together. This is a gift to the community from believers in the Good News of Jesus Christ, God's greatest gift to the world. Jesus came that all, through his name, would be healed from the hurt, pain, injustice and sin of this present in this world. We, as Christians, are the atmosphere changers, bearing the light of hope, the promise of salvation in Jesus' name. It is through us as a community in Christ, that those who have not yet heard the Good News should see a glimmer of the Kingdom of God. And so we pray 'May your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.

So may God bless you, and all who are dear to you, with a very happy, healthy, peaceful and joyous Christmas and New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Kay



CIRCLE OF PRAYER

Please remember the following in your prayers, together with their families, friends, carers, doctors and nurses:

Short term: Abi; Elena; Elspeth and Derek Anthony; Judith Best (mother of Mark Best); Beverley; Jean Holton; Lizzie John; Claire Macro and Richard,

Antonia, Grace and Zach Holland (her family in Canada); Ron and Rosemary Martin; family and friends of Gwen Redstall who passed away on 13th November; Helen Rolton.

Long Term: Christine and Tony Addis; Harry Bowers; Morag Hill; Marian Kenward; Maggie Morgans and family; Rachel Patterson; Hyacinth and Eaton Ridguard; Molly Shaw; Betty Shipway; Joyce Smith; Fay Spurr; Chris and Suzanne Tolley; Rachel Walker (granddaughter of Les and Iris Wenham); Tish and Martin; Elwyn.

Prayer Focus 2015/16

Isaiah 9: 1-7 ...The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the shadow of death a light has dawned.

This is a prophesy fulfilled in Matthew 4: 12-17. It is such a familiar reading from this time of Advent. It is a time of expectancy, of looking forward to that which is promised, a time of hopes fulfilled. But the reading speaks of the coming of light, light that will enlighten, bring new understanding, new direction perhaps, a new dimension, new strength and fulfilment.

A child at this time hopes that their parents will give them a particular present, maybe the latest something or other. I can remember that hope, looking at the top of the wardrobe where the presents were stacked. Oh the longing. Sometimes I was disappointed, sometimes surprised and sometimes delighted. Mostly they had chosen well and the present was a long-lasting favourite, or something that led me into new activities and skills. They were wise and far-seeing parents!

Continued on page 6.

Continued from page 5.

The gift of Jesus would never have been what the people of his time, or indeed ours, would have expected or chosen but that gift, so quietly given, is for the least and the greatest, for young and old, and for the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. The light he brings is wonderful and far beyond our understanding.

Be still in expectation, and let the light in this Christmas. I pray that we will all see something new in His coming this year – more light for the New Year and beyond.

Ian and Carol Scott and Liz Nathan would like to say 'thank you' to Kay for a beautiful service for the wedding of Lucy and Morgan. Also Peter Dixon, Owen Collins and Alison Jamieson and her team of flower arrangers.



Basingstoke is now on the map in Australia!!

Happy  Birthday



Dick Davey, 82 years on 11 December
Kaye Millward, 92 years on 17 December
Barbara Taylor, 93 years on 27 December
Amelia Ann Green, 5 years on 19 January (Owen's granddaughter)
Megan Blackwell, 21 years on 28th January

Thank you:

I would like to thank the church congregation for all their prayers for my broken leg etc. It is so good to know folk are praying for you. Thank you to all those who sent get well cards; phone calls and text messages.

Special thanks go to Joy Williams for driving to Bournemouth Hospital with Alison Jamieson, to rescue me and bring me back to Basingstoke. Special thanks also to Alison for driving me to my hospital appointments.

With much love and gratitude from *Lizzie John*.



I would like, on behalf of my late mother, Netta Dickson, to extend a sincere 'Thank You' to London Street URC for all the support and love she received from the Ministers and Congregation of the Church. She moved from Leeds to be near our family when she was 85 years old. Over the following 16 years the Church and its members helped in a huge way to make this transition a happy one for her by the warm and inclusive way she was accepted and made to feel part of the Church Family. Thank you too for all the kindnesses and concern our family received from friends at London Street when she died in September.

Elsbeth Anthony

May the miracle birth of our Lord Jesus Christ bring joy at Christmas and guide and protect you through the coming year.



Flower Rota - January:

3 rd	Mrs C. Holt	24 th	Mr R. Williams
10 th	Miss G. Springthorpe	31 st	Mr I. Scott
17 th	Mrs K. Cook		

Liz Lindsay

FLOWER MINISTRY —

Every Sunday, except during Advent, we have a flower arrangement in the Apse. I wonder if you have ever wondered why? How? Who pays?

The flowers are bought with donations from various people connected with our Church, quite often in memory of a special loved one, a happy memory or just to donate. Would you like to help in this way? Perhaps you could speak to one of the committee listed below.

This flower committee work out each year who will be the donor and who will arrange the flowers. If you opt to give the flowers you can choose the particular colour or flower that you would like to be included; this is particularly done by people remembering their wedding anniversary. Bear in mind that this is subject to availability in the shops but we do try to do as you have requested. If you are able to make your own arrangement we are very happy about that.

After the service the flowers are wrapped into three or four bunches and then taken to people. These include people with celebration, those who are unwell or people whom we feel would benefit with this reminder of the love of the congregation.

I never imagined I would be one of the team but, after Karen had an open day to make a Christmas Wreath and then an Easter arrangement, I discovered I had found a small interest in something artistic. Like many others my first attempt was done alongside an experienced arranger. I think it took me about 2 hours. Now, four or five years later, it is usually about 1-1.5 hours. Personally, I find it enjoyable asking the person I am arranging for which colour or flower they would particularly like to be included. Then off to see the availability of colours in Basingstoke on that weekend. Once in the church we arrange the flowers in a pedestal arrangement to give thanks to God.

Previously we sent flowers to people in hospital but nowadays they are not welcome there. Many people in our membership are housebound and they really welcome a bunch of flowers showing them that they are remembered.

Once the flowers have been wrapped up the artificial arrangement is put back into place for during the week. Some churches leave the flowers in situ for the week, but this seems a pity when they can bring love into the home of 3 or 4 people.

We are very lucky that we do have some very competent arrangers as well as those of us still learning. In the past couple of years we have had the pleasure of making arrangements for weddings. The laughter and friendship between everyone whilst we spend a lot of time making the arrangements is really good.

The first time you come on to the rota the choice of dates can be limited but we do attempt to get as near as possible to a date you prefer.

A few times a year we decorate the window sills and many start with helping there and then come on to do pedestal arrangements – is this something you would like to do?

The flower committee, led by Liz Lindsay, consists of Alison Jamieson, Valerie McKenzie, Julie Bath and me, Joyce Cook.

Daily Bible Readings for December:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1 st	139	Revelation	1	16 th	34:11-22	Revelation 12
2 nd	32	"	32	17 th	144	" 13
3 rd	63	"	3	18 th	36	" 14
4 th	140		4	19 th	145	Reflection
5 th	33:1-12	Reflection		20 th		"
6 th		"		21 st	38	Revelation 15
7 th	65	Revelation	5	22 nd	146	" 16
8 th	141	"	6	23 rd	39	" 17
9 th	33:13-22	"	7	24 th	70	" 18
10 th	66	"	8	25 th	147	" 19
11 th	142	"	9	26 th	40:1-8	Reflection
12 th	34:1-10	Reflection		27 th		"
13 th		"		28 th	71:1-13	Revelation 20
14 th	67	Revelation	10	29 th	148	" 21
15 th	143	"	11	30 th	40:9-17	" 22
				31 st	71:14-24	Rejoice!

Ffald-y-Brenin



The Alliance of Basingstoke Churches

Traditional Christmas Day Lunch

1pm to 4pm

London Street United Reformed Church

If you are alone for Christmas or unable to cater for yourself why not come and share Christmas with us in a relaxed and family environment?

The lunch is free but you will need to register by using either the tear off slip from a flyer and sending it to the lunch administrator:

Mrs Joy Williams, 9, Montague Place, Basingstoke. RG21 3DS

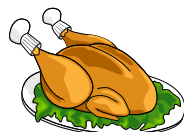
or by contacting her direct on 01256 326746 to complete registration.

(She will ask you a few questions – any dietary needs, transport, name of a contact in case of emergency, where you heard about the event and of course your name and address.)

So what shall we be doing?.....

- We will have quizzes and games for those who want to join in.
- We will sit down to a three course Christmas feast with all the trimmings.
- We will have people to cater for you, friends to wait at table, clear away and wash up for you!
- We will have carols and entertainment.
- We will have plenty of people to chat with.

p.s. If you would like to help before or on the day please contact Joy. She will send you the necessary information and volunteer application form.
Email: joyamwilliams@gmail.com



Friendship Hour —

In view of declining and ageing membership and a desire that this fellowship should continue, members of Friendship Hour voted, at their meeting on 4th November, to meet only monthly on the 4th Thursday, with effect from 28th January. They also voted to meet at 2pm instead of 2.30pm during the winter months (GMT), all to be reviewed in March and July.

It is hoped membership will increase so that a varied programme, with speakers, can be drawn up and be of interest to men and women. Everyone will be most welcome.



Christ Church, Chineham

Christmas Tree Festival

Saturday 5th December 10am to 5:00pm

Sunday 6th December 10:30am

Come and see our Christmas Trees decorated by local people and vote for your favourites! Prize giving will be at 4:30pm on Saturday. This year our theme is *'What does Christmas mean to me?'*

We have choirs and other activities for adults and children throughout the day. Refreshments will also be available, including home-made soup and delicious cakes.

On the Sunday we have a special Christmas Tree Service at 10:30am when our very own Hands Up: Puppets 4 Jesus will be performing.



ENTRANCE FREE

ALL WELCOME



Carols with Harps

played by Wessex Harpers

Come and join us to sing
some traditional carols



**Saturday, 5th December
at 2.30pm**

Immanuel Centre,
United Reformed Church,
Tadley

Everyone welcome

Entrance and refreshments
free

Voluntary donations in aid of
St Michael's Hospice

Greetings from Marchwood
where we are happily settling
in at 7 ST JOHNS COURT,
MAIN ROAD, MARCHWOOD,
SOUTHAMPTON SO40 4SG
(tel: 02380 428333). Let us
know if you're in these parts
and call in for a coffee/tea
break - we'd love to see you.

Thanks to our friends at
London Street for their good
wishes and the garden tokens,
which will be put to good use
in the Spring.

Meanwhile, Happy Christmas
and best wishes for the New
Year to you all.

Gerry and Eira McCaughey



SAVE the DATE - Barn Dance

Saturday evening 6th February, 2016

The Basingstoke Foodbank are arranging a fundraising **Barn
Dance.**

A ploughman's supper will be included (bring your own drinks)
£10 adults (under 14s £5)

Tickets will be available in January, but numbers will be limited.
There will be more information to follow regarding venue and times
but, in the meantime, have a word with Alison Jamieson if you have
any questions.

Prayer Shawls

Until recently I had always associated prayer shawls with the Jewish faith. A short time ago Jenny McCloy asked me if I had heard of prayer shawl ministry. Being totally ignorant of prayer shawls with any Christian connections, I came home and turned to Google. I discovered that The Prayer Shawl Ministry was started in America.

In its simplest form, the shawls are made by members of any Christian organisation and then passed on to anyone with a pastoral need. The shawls may be knitted or crocheted, any shape or any colour. The important ingredient is that prayers are said whilst working the shawls, which are then passed on to those who have need of comfort. Experience has shown that they have been beneficial at a time of bereavement, a serious illness or some family crisis. They have also been given to very new mothers who may be feeling a bit lost and out of their depth. The creator of the shawl sometimes writes a prayer to be given anonymously to the recipient of the shawl, just as a personal link from one to the other.

It seemed a very simple and practical way of reaching out to those in need and if anyone at London Street or Tadley would like more information or to join in creating a Prayer Shawl Ministry I would be delighted to hear from them.

Isobel Martin (tel: 01256 355312) email: m.isobel.martin@gmail.com

Isobel Martin's Plea for Help

So far we have donated 135 blankets to May Place hostel. Our knitters have been so prolific that I am a bit swamped with squares and would be delighted to have some help with sewing them up into blankets. It takes 5 strips of 9 squares to make a blanket. I crochet round the edge just to finish off and would be happy to do that if anyone feels they can help with the sewing up but not the finishing off. Please contact me on 355312, at m.isobel.martin@gmail.com or personally in church, if you feel able to help. With the winter approaching just one blanket would be a big help to the homeless in May Place as well as a relief to me.

Forward dates for your diary - Church Away Weekends:

23rd to 26th September 2016
at Lee Abbey, Lynton, Devon

8th to 10th September 2017
Sarum College, Salisbury

More details will be available at the January Church Meeting



You may have read this tale before but it bears repeating:

Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young boy paused and looked up. "Throwing starfish into the ocean," he answered, "The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can't return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water."

The old man replied, "But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference."

The boy bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, "It made a difference to that one!"

An inspirational little story, perhaps one that you've heard before, with a message of encouragement to do what you can, when you can, and not to be daunted by thoughts of how great is the need and how slender are your own resources. "It made a difference to that one."

But how poignant it is today to hear a story of a little boy on a beach who makes a difference. For even as we hold in our mind's eye the heartening mental image of a starfish being thrown back into the sea for safety, it jostles for attention now with another image, a heartbreaking and all-too-real image alongside it: the news footage of a little child given up by the sea, washed up lifeless on the shore.

Dates to note at London Street unless otherwise stated

DECEMBER:

Wed	2 nd	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thu	3 rd	2.30pm	Friendship Hour – Joyce Cook – Christmas Talk
Sat	5 th	10.00am	Decoration of Church for Christmas
Sun	6 th	8.30am 10.30am	Prayer breakfast led by Chris and Mark Best Worship – The Minister – Parade and Gift Service
Mon	7 th	10.15am	Craft Group
Thu	10 th	12 noon	Friendship Hour – Christmas Lunch in the Oasis Café
Sun	13 th	10.30am	Worship – Mr Sydney Shore
Tue	15 th	10.30am	Little Angels Nativity
Wed	16 th	2.30pm	Wednesday Prayer Group (then closed until 6 th Jan)
Fri	18 th	9.30am & 12.15pm	Last meetings of Rhythm of Daily Prayer until 4 th Jan.
Sat	19 th	5.00pm	Elders' Tea followed by Carols for All at 6.30pm
Sun	20 th	10.30am	Worship – The Minister , including Holy Communion
Thu	24 th	6.15pm	Christingle Service
Fri	25 th	10.30am	Worship – Christmas Day
Sun	27 th	10.30am	Worship – led by Revd John Whitton

January, 2016:

Sun	3 rd	8.30am 10.30am	Prayer breakfast led by Owen Collins Worship – The Minister , including Elders' induction and Holy Communion
Mon	4 th	9.30am & 12.15pm 10.15am	Rhythm of Daily Prayer meetings recommence Craft Group
Wed	6 th	2.30pm 7.30pm	Wednesday Prayer Group recommences Elders' Meeting
Sun	10 th	10.30am 7.30pm	Worship – led by Revd Clare Downing Commissioning Service for Community Café
Fri	15 th	7.30pm	Messy Church preparation meeting
Sun	17 th	10.30am	Worship – The Minister , including Holy Communion

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES FOR FEBRUARY ISSUE OF FOCUS

Mon	18 th ?	10.15am	Craft Group
Sun	24 th	10.30am	Worship – The Minister
Thu	28 th	2.00pm	Friendship Hour – Speaker, with photographs
Sat	30 th	3.30pm	Messy Church
Sun	31 st	10.30am	Worship – The Minister

Mission Statement

“To Live God’s Love in Church and Community”

Regular Weekly Events and Meetings
at London Street unless otherwise stated

**The Sanctuary is open for prayers every weekday from 9.30 to 10am
and again from 12.15 to 12.30pm (except 14 Dec. to 1st Jan)**

Mondays

10am-1.30 pm OASIS CAFÉ in the Concourse
2.30-4pm HOME GROUP normally at 39 New Road:
prayer time, Bible exploration and fellowship
3-5.30pm in YOUTH CAFÉ for secondary school and
Term Time college students

Tuesdays

10am-1.30 pm OASIS CAFÉ in the Concourse
10am-12 noon 'LITTLE ANGELS' pre-school Club
3-5.30pm in YOUTH CAFÉ for secondary school and
Term Time college students
5.45pm (BEAVER SCOUTS - 8th Basingstoke Colony)
7pm (CUB SCOUTS - 8th Basingstoke Pack)
7pm (SCOUTS - 8th Basingstoke Troop)

Wednesdays

10am-1.30 pm OASIS CAFÉ in the Concourse
10.30-12 noon MEMORY TREE SOCIAL CLUB
12.30 Lunch time worship and prayer meeting
2-3.15pm BIBLE STUDY - Prayers in the New Testament
3-5.30pm in YOUTH CAFÉ for secondary school and
Term Time college students

Thursdays

10am-1.30 pm OASIS CAFÉ in the Concourse
9.30-11.30am TADLEY LITTLE ANGELS in the Immanuel Centre
10-11.30am CCBBies Parent and Toddler Group at Christ
Church, Chineham
2.30-3.30pm FRIENDSHIP HOUR - 4th Thursday of each month from
January, 2016
3-6pm in YOUTH CAFÉ for secondary school and
Term Time college students
7.30pm PRAYER MEETING at **Tadley URC**

Fridays

8-9.30pm TGIF Youth Club at **Christ Church, Chineham**

Saturdays

8-9am PRAYER MEETING at **Tadley**

London Street URC, Basingstoke seeks to ensure that all content and information published in this issue of FOCUS is current and accurate. The information included does not in any way constitute legal or professional advice and the church cannot be held liable for actions arising from its use.

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