



London Street

United Reformed Church

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



FOCUS

December, 2016 / January 2017

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - www.basingstokeurc.org.uk

MINISTER:

Revd Kay Blackwell (*Day off - Monday*)
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CHURCH SECRETARY:

Mr Owen Collins
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TREASURER:

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HALL LETTING:

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FOCUS:

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Tadley (Old Meeting) URC

10.00am Prayer Time followed by Worship at 10.30
every Sunday

“TASTE” Youth Event at 7pm at the Point (behind the Community
Centre)

Minister:

Revd Kay Blackwell

Church Secretary:

Paul Gross
22 Pelican Road, Pamber Heath RG26 3EN
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Treasurer:

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View from the Manse:

“.....Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:14-15 NIV)

Throughout the season of Advent and the Christmas festival, our theme will be ‘*Counting on Christmas*’. As Christians, although we celebrate Christmas as a festival in which we mark the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must not lose sight of its real meaning. The fact is that it is highly unlikely that Jesus was born on the 25th December. But we must be mindful that we are celebrating the birth of Jesus as a divine intervention into human history over 2,000 years ago. As we journey towards the celebration of Christmas day once more, we remember, one at a time, all the significant steps that pointed towards the event as it was about to happen and indeed after it happened. Each are significant and noteworthy steps on a journey towards a history changing event that held within it a narrative relevant to all of humankind. We may not be able to count on the date of Christmas day, nor on much of the frippery and tradition that has been built around that day, but what we can count on is the story that it surrounds (and often now obscures!) God breaking into human time and space through the birth of Jesus.

Many people in our local communities today have lost sight of the true meaning of Christmas. They carelessly extract the Christ out of Christmas and are left with a celebration that makes no sense. They deck the halls with boughs of holly, light up their homes with all manner of lights that twinkle and flash, put up trees, baubles, tinsel and a myriad of things that twinkle glisten and glow. They stuff the fridge and cupboards with more food and drink than they should reasonably consume. They gather for festivities and parties together with family friends and neighbours. All of that is fun, exciting and full of anticipation. But as the countdown to Christmas begins, if it ends in just a feast of consumerism, the whole point of the festival has been lost! This can only then lead to disappointment. That awful ‘morning after the night before’ let down. What does all that debt inducing expense and over eating lead to..... If not Christ? It leads to emptiness! Jesus is the true light that came to offer us eternity, free from the burden of sin and in the presence of our creator God. Jesus was ‘*the kingdom of God come near*’. This is the good news **we** need to live, share and celebrate. God made God’s self-vulnerable to human kind by coming as a baby into the world, to be protected by very ordinary and lowly guardian parents who even lived as homeless refugees in Jesus’ early

years. God doesn't make mistakes. This setting was chosen by God for a reason. Jesus came as God's love on earth and relied on the love of others to protect and nurture him through those early years. Love is at the very core of Christ's mission on earth. Love must be at the very core of who we are as Christians and in the body of Christ in our fellowships of faith.

The 'Night light Winter shelter', commencing in December and running through to the end of February, is a new and exciting ecumenical project being piloted in Basingstoke Churches. We together will be providing food and shelter to the fifteen of those who would otherwise be homeless, cold and hungry. The pop-up shelters will run Thursday to Tuesday each week, five nights, for thirteen weeks. It will be run by a significant gathering of cross-denominational Christians working together in loving service. Together they are going to be witnessing to the wider community the good news we live in Jesus Christ. My prayer is that it will be key in transforming us, the wider Christian community. I pray that it makes us more aware of the good news that we carry from within. That we are transformed by the service we give by working together under the authority of Christ and by those whom we seek to serve, that is the homeless of our town, the ones often ignored, scorned, treated as a nuisance and even disliked by society.

At Tadley Mark and Julie Ward will be busy coordinating another fantastic team of cross-denominational Christians in order to serve a traditional Christmas dinner to those who would otherwise be spending Christmas alone and lonely. Through this work they too demonstrate God's love in a very real and tangible way. They too share the good news of the true meaning of the Christmas.....that is love.

In the New Year a transformation in the ABC & Network ecumenical partnerships is being proposed. The plan is to amalgamate the ABC and network groups into a new group of Churches together called 'One Church.....many congregations'. London Street and Old Meeting Tadley are blessing our local communities regularly through prayer. Then there is the work of the collective 'Who Cares' ecumenical mission reaching out into the community, planned for later in 2017. I believe God is drawing us together, weaving us into the one body that just worship in different ways, yet are all under the authority of Jesus. Back to the beginning. Jesus, helpless babe born in a stable to ordinary folk, yet everything about Jesus was truly surprising, unexpected, revolutionary. He came to change the world, by loving the people of the world one by one. And this is what he showed us to do in the process. Loving one another within the Christian family; loving our neighbours, friends and colleagues; and loving all whom God sets to cross our path, whether it be someone who lives on the streets that comes as an

occasional guest into our Church building in Basingstoke, or someone from our community that we have particularly been praying for and blessing on a daily basis. We are all here because God has called us into this place to proclaim the good news, the miraculous news of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, and God with us.

May I and the Blackwell family wish you all good blessings, peace and joy this Christmas!

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: Richard Morgans; Pam Ralph; Doina Risnita; Frank Tovey and family and Margaret Westrep and family.

Long Term: Annette Bowers (daughter of Sheila Munro); Beverley Cantwell; Christine and Ron Holt; Maggie Morgans and family; Helen Rolton; Molly Shaw; Sarah Williams; Katherine Witts (daughter of Sarah Williams).

Prayer Focus

Matthew ch 1 v1... A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham

For many of us, I suggest, it is only when the clocks go back that our minds become more focused on Christmas, and the concerns about cards, presents, and Christmas family arrangements, All these preparations and the planning need to be done, but unless we are careful, the spiritual preparations, so important from a Christian perspective, tend to take a back seat.

That is the purpose of the Advent season, a time for the start of the new Church Year, involving a new Lectionary of Scripture readings, and a time for our own spiritual refection and renewed understanding of the birth of the Saviour of the World - God entering our earthly lives in the person of His Son.

The Gospel of Matthew, which is the one appointed for the new Church Year, gives us firstly in Chapter 1 a genealogy for Jesus from Abraham through David, which many will skip in order to get to the real story. We need to remember that, for the Jews, for whom this gospel was written, this was of significant importance in identifying who Jesus was from the human, historical, point of view. It contains some unlikely names, none more so than the women!

Matthew is very clear, throughout his gospel, to emphasise how the coming and person of Jesus, fulfils so many of the prophesies in the Hebrew Scriptures with which his hearers would have been so familiar. So one suggestion for Advent study would be to read the whole gospel right through, with perhaps new eyes and listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us about His own Son.



Flower Rota - December

4th Christmas Decoration :
11th “
18th “
25th “

January, 2017

1st Christmas Decorations
8th Christine Holt
15th Kay Cook
22nd Ian Scott
29th Rob Williams

Anyone wishing to help with the flower arranging or by donating towards the cost of the Church Flower Decorations, please contact Liz Lindsay. Thank you.



Emma Bentall, 15 years on 9 December
Dick Davey, 83 years on 11 December
Amos Grant, 1 year old on 25 December
Barbara Taylor, 94 years on 27 December
Amelia Ann Green, 6 years on 19 January (017)

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH PAST CASE REVIEW:

Ministers and Church Secretaries have recently received a pack of information about the Past Case Review. The following information is given in response to a number of questions and concerns. If you have any questions or concerns about the following information, please speak to the Church Secretary in the first instance:

Why a past case review?

A number of organisations in the UK have faced allegations in recent years that they have not dealt well with concerns about the behaviour of employees or others associated with their organisation.

The United Reformed Church is not exempt from this so, in order to try to ensure that as a Church we take seriously any concerns which may previously have been mishandled, or matters which have never been dealt with, the Past Case Review has been set up. The first phase of this looked at Ministers' files, to see if there were issues that needed to be re-examined: where these were found (and they were very few) they have been investigated.

What is happening next?

The second phase of the Past Case Review started on 4th October when the general public were advised through the media that there is a process for concerns to be raised relating to the behaviour or conduct of anyone associated with the URC since its formation in 1972. The Past Case Review has an A5 leaflet which explains how people can raise a concern, and explains what will happen next. It includes a diagram to explain the process.

What do churches need to do?

'Churches Preparation' explains that if someone in a local church discloses a concern from the past, the local church should refer that person to the Past Case Review process (through the secure 'phone, e.mail or website link). Any disclosure about a current concern should continue to be dealt with by the local church Safeguarding Co-ordinator, or the Synod Safeguarding Team - Tom Grant for matters concerning adults and the Church Youth Development Officer regarding children and young people - as has previously been the case.

A suggestion for worship?

It may be that the Past Case Review creates feelings of shock or distress for some people in local churches. 'A suggestion for Worship' offers a simple act of worship for local church use, where an act of worship is felt to be needed as part of pastoral care.

What if we need more help?

Local churches should feel free to contact the Past Case Review Team at Tavistock Place or Revd Clare Downing, the Synod Moderator. There is also a list of Counselling services and helplines available.



www.basingstokeurc.org.uk – Our new church website

London Street URC has a new church website,
www.basingstokeurc.org.uk.

The old website www.londonstreeturc.org.uk remains open for the time being, but it will no longer be updated. Access the old site and you will be directed to the new one.

The purpose of this article is to give you some background as to what to expect when you access the new site.

The colours of the site, blue gold and white, were chosen to match the colours of our beautiful sanctuary, particularly the blue apse with the gold cross and white pillars.

There are nine tabs below the banner of the website: Home; About Us; Worship; Life at London Street; Youth/Children; Community Café; Contact; Search; Links.

Home Page. Here you will find a welcome from Kay together with our mission statement. You will also find a diary of events happening in the week ahead. Click on any entry for further details. To the right, a smaller box with a daily reading. Click on the reference and you'll be taken to the Bible Gateway site with the option of listening to the reading. (Apologies I know it's not a

UK site but the link came with the package when designing the site.) Below is a vacant space which we can utilise in the future to promote events at London Street.

About Us: You will find a message from Kay about our mission work here at London Street. **History** You will find a summary provided by Jean Holton of the history of our church here in Basingstoke from 1662 to the present day. **Outreach** Provides an overview of our work in the community; and **Leadership** gives details of the management and governance at London Street which will shortly include photographs of Kay, the church officers and serving elders.

Worship. Sunday morning Here you will find an overview of what we offer on a Sunday morning together with access to the order of service either for the Sunday past or forthcoming. **Holy Communion** An overview of our Holy Communion service. **Midweek** An overview of our Wednesday lunch time service. **Daily prayer** Provides details of our rhythm of daily prayer and here you will find a link to Ffald-y-Brenin, our daily bible readings, monthly Prayer breakfasts and a summary of the opportunities for prayer at London Street. **Portuguese service** Details of worship provided in Portuguese by the local Brazilian and Portuguese community.

Life at London Street. Craft Group Details of what is offered by the Craft Group. **Little Angels** Details of what is offered by the Little Angels Group for pre-school children, their parents and guardians. **8th Basingstoke Scout Group** Details of what is offered by the Scout Group meeting here at London Street. **Memory Tree Social Club** Details of what is offered by the Memory Tree Social Club for those with dementia and their carers/helpers. **Friendship Hour** Details of what is offered by our social group which meets once a month. **3C's** Details of what is offered by the 3C's which is an opportunity once a month simply to get together for coffee, company and a chat. **Messy Church** Details of what is offered by our bi-monthly messy church group. **Child Contact Centre** Details of the Centre who meet here twice a month. **Photos** Our photo album. **Calendar** Details of events and services at London Street and further

afield. If you hover over an entry or double click on an entry, you will be provided with further details. **Library** Details of books for loan to church members. **Focus** Here you will find the latest edition of Focus our church magazine as well as an archive of previous editions. **Church Secretary reports** Here you will find the latest report from the Church Secretary as well as an archive of previous reports.

Youth/Children This is currently under construction and will include photos of the Junior Church leaders and staff.

Community Café Here you will find details of Oasis and the Youth café, including a menu for Oasis.

Contact Contact Us Contact details for the church, church officers and the main groups who use the church premises. **Weddings, Funeral, Baptisms and Blessings** Contact and arrangement details. **Room hire** Details of room hire and contact. You will shortly be able to apply for room hire online and click on the photos of the rooms for further details. **Find us** Details of the church's location.

Search A search facility for the website.

Links Links to organisations that London Street has an interest in and which you may find helpful.

Finally if you have any comments, suggestions or items you wish to see included, send them to Joy Williams, Stan Marut or myself.

Thank you, Owen.



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: Rosemary and Ron Martin thank everybody who came to their :
: Golden Wedding celebrations. Thanks to Kay for the blessing :
: and the Oasis team for the excellent food. It was an enjoyable :
: afternoon. :
.....

GIFT SERVICE - DECEMBER 11TH 2016.

During the Advent season we are thinking and preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Amongst all the commercial side of Christmas we do have the chance of giving to help others enjoy a Christmas – maybe the first time the Church has touched that particular recipient. Most of you reading this Focus are aware that each year we collect gifts to give away and the Elders have suggested that this year we do the same two groups as last year.



Every year many teenagers reach the age to be no longer “in care” and find themselves living on their own. Last year we had a heartfelt thank you letter from the Care Team for our gifts of toiletries, food treats and other items for people in the 16 – 21 age group.

The other group we helped was the Women’s Refuge who were also very pleased with being remembered. It is wonderful that there is a place that women, often with their children, can go and find safety. When they have left their accommodation in such haste they are usually carrying only the bare essentials. Therefore, toiletries, food and toys for the children find a very worthwhile home.

So, please can you donate a gift to help these two very good causes?

Suggested gifts: Toiletries for all ages both male and female. Smaller packs of luxury biscuits as well as the larger family packs, confectionery, toys, puzzle books for all ages.

After the service the gifts will be circulated and bring Christmas greetings to those who are in need.

RIDDLE TIME -

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious as to just how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so ordinary and plain that you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is highly unusual though. Study it and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without looking at on page 14

Reflection:

For many people, differences of background and experience suggest problems. Some people would go so far as to think that those who are different are dangerous, including those who are refugees.

People may especially fear those who have been tortured in their own countries. An asylum-seeker from Zaire was typical of many in that he had been seized and tortured in his own country because he was a member of the opposition to the government and had taken part in a demonstration. He managed to escape from prison and arrived in the UK where he spent six months in prison because he was travelling on false documents. He said 'I thought I had reached safety...my situation was made worse because I could not speak English very well.' Eventually a refugee community organisation arranged legal help and found him accommodation when he was released from prison.

Problems for refugees include the stress they face in being so far away from their homes and often from their families. Like the man from Zaire, they often can't speak the language of the country they are in, they have no money and no way of earning through work. Most of all they lack people to listen to their stories.

From *Sharing Ways and Wisdom*
Barbara Butler

People should never apologise for being refugees, nor should they ever despair or allow bitterness to hinder them. Refugees are often, through their pain, very strong people, and all have something to offer. The great need for refugees is that they should organise themselves, so that they have a framework to their lives and a goal. People who are not refugees may help them to do this.

Bassi Mirzania, a refugee from Iran

At this special time, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord, don't forget the desperation that drives people, adults and children, to leave everything they possess behind to undertake long walks through strange countries, to get onto a boat which is not seaworthy, thinking they will reach a place of safety - and how many never reach their goal.

Remembering Winnie Tovey

Ian and I met Winnie Tovey when we first came to London Street in 1978. Over the years our daughters were welcomed by Winnie and, as they grew up, she was always asking about them and was interested in their lives.

When Lucy asked to visit the Mission Hospital in Mysore, Winnie encouraged Lucy and Alison Honeyball to go. She told them of her life there and about the town of Mysore and India in general. It was amazing what she achieved within her life.

She had gone to China and had to leave in a hurry with a new born baby, travelling back to England via India; in those days no on-board food or drinks!

In India, she had 4 children and supported her husband, Frank. During her time there she developed a shoe for the patients who had Leprosy, so that they could walk safely. She also developed exercises for those patients, even though she was not a trained physio.

One of her remarkable achievements was developing a silk farm after a bad famine in the Mysore region, enabling the villagers to raise money to buy grain and restart their farms; the silk farm continues to this day.

Winnie was an accomplished musician and a beautiful artist, always welcoming, and interested in people.

What a full life for an amazing woman.

Carol and Ian Scott

.....
• Frank Tovey and family would like to thank the Church
• members for the many messages of love and sympathy that
• they received following the sad news of Winnie's death. They
• have been greatly appreciated. They were also greatly moved
• by the large number from Basingstoke who came to the
• 'Thanksgiving Service' which showed how greatly Winnie had
• been loved by all who knew her.
.....

Daily Bible Readings for December:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1st	112	Revelation	2	16 th 7:1:11	Revelation	13
2 nd	4	"	3	17 th 117/118:1-14	Reflection	
3 rd	43	Reflection		18 th	"	
4 th		"		19 th 8	Revelation	14
5 th	74:12-23	Revelation	4	20 th 47	"	15
6 th	91	"	5	21 st 77:1-14	"	16
7 th	113	"	6	22 nd 93	"	17
8 th	5	"	7	23 rd 118:15-29	"	18
9 th	115	"	8	24 th 9:1-16	Reflection	
10 th	6	Reflection		25 th	"	
11 th		"		26 th 119:1-16	Revelation	19
12 th	46	Revelation	9	27 th 79	"	20
13 th	75	"	10	28 th 48	"	21
14 th	92	"	11	29 th 80	"	22
15 th	116	"	12	30 th 94:12-23		
				31 st	Rejoice!	

Preachers and dates to note for Tadley:

			<u>Welcome Rota</u>
4 th Dec	Revd Kay Blackwell - Café Church		Ena and George
11 th	Lionel Goodfellow		Mandy and Dave
18 th	Mark Warner - Sailors' Society		Ladies Cell
24 th 4pm	Revd Kay Blackwell		Ad Hoc
	Christingle Carol Service		
25 th	Revd Ruth Midcalf or Mark Ward		Ad Hoc
1 st Jan	Joining with London Street		
8 th	Revd Kay Blackwell - Communion		Mandy and Dave
15 th	Derek Clarke		Ladies Cell
22 nd	Christine Watson		Janet and Paul
29 th	TBC		TBC
5 th Feb	Rob Lloyd		Ena and George

ANSWER TO RIDDLE: The letter "e" which is the most common letter used in the English language, does not appear even once in the paragraph.

Dates to note at London Street, unless otherwise stated:

December:

Sun	4 th	8.30am 10.30am	Prayer Breakfast led by Alison Jamieson Worship – led by Revd David Marshall-Jones
Tue	6 th	10.30am	Little Angels Nativity Service
Wed	7 th	12 noon 7.30pm	3Cs Christmas Lunch Elders' Meeting
Sun	11 th	10.30am	Parade and Gift Service – led by the Minister
Mon	12 th	10.15am	Last day for Craft Club – reopens 9 th January
Tue	13 th		Afternoon Advent Service for Youth Café
Thu	15 th	12 noon	Friendship Hour – Christmas Lunch followed at 2.30pm by The Minister giving a Christmas Message
		3.00pm	Last day for Youth Café
Fri	16 th	1.00pm	Carol Service for Friday Network Group
Sat	17 th	5.00pm 6.30pm	Tea, followed at by Carols for All
Sun	18 th	10.30am	Worship (including Holy Communion) – led by The Minister
Tue	20 th		Last day for Oasis Café
Sat	24 th	6.15pm	Christingle Service
Sun	25 th	10.30am	Christmas Day Worship – led by the Minister

January:

Sun	1 st	10.30am	Worship – led by Joy Williams
Tue	3 rd		Oasis and Youth Cafés reopen
Sun	8 th	10.30am	Worship – led by Revd Clare Downing, Synod Moderator
Mon	9 th	10.15am	Craft Club reopens
Sat	14 th	10am-4pm	Ffald-y-Brenin house of prayer training at St. Leonard's Oakley (bring your own lunch, drinks provided)

We wish all our readers
a Joyful Christmas
and a Peaceful and Happy New Year

Regular 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

Mondays:

10am-1.30pm

OASIS Café in the Concourse

10.15am

Craft Group

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-1.30pm

OASIS Café in the Concourse

10am-12 noon

'LITTLE ANGELS' pre-school Club (Term time)

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

7-8.00pm

PRAYER MEETING at **Tadley URC or St Paul's**

Wednesdays:

10am-1.30pm

OASIS Café in the Concourse

10.30-12 noon

MEMORY TREE SOCIAL CLUB

10.15-11.30am

3Cs on 3rd Wednesday of each month

12.15pm

Lunch time worship and prayer meeting

3-5.30pm in

Youth Café for secondary school and

Term Time

college students

Thursdays:

10am-1.30pm

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

3-6pm in

Youth Café for secondary school and

Term Time

college students

Fridays:

8-9.30pm

TGIF Youth Club at **Christ Church, Chineham**

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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