



London Street

United Reformed Church

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



EASTER BLESSINGS

FOCUS
April, 2017

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - www.basingstokeurc.org.uk

MINISTER:

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

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Treasurer:

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View from the Manse:

The challenge of travelling light

He (Jesus) sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, 'Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic.' (Luke 9:2-3)

When I was a young teenager my brother, who was quite a bit older than me, went off on a hitchhiking adventure across Europe that eventually led him to Tehran. I'll always remember him packing his rucksack with scrupulous attention to detail. I witnessed him sawing off the handle of a toothbrush in order to minimise the weight in his backpack luggage. I knew then that backpacking wouldn't really be my thing! I am very much one who likes to take along the copious amounts of bits and pieces 'just in case'.....As many of you have witnessed I am sure, I rarely travel light! I am always lugging around my Bible, computer, paperwork, folders, and books in the rather vain hope that I may have a moment to catch up on the reading or planning that I need to do and, in truth, probably should have done already.

In my reading and preparations through Lent I have been thinking about the stuff we carry with us that sometimes becomes a bit of a burden. Perhaps some of the stuff we carry may be more of a hindrance than we realise. Actually, Jesus instructed his disciples to travel light, 'no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money'. To do such must have made the disciples feel very uncomfortable, vulnerable and perhaps even ill-prepared for the task ahead. But it would also have given them humility. Humility from having to live in total reliance upon God and the hospitality and generosity of others.

I feel quite challenged, as I read in Luke 9:1-6, that Jesus sent out the twelve disciples, giving them 'power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal', yet they could take nothing with them....no props! Their commission was to proclaim the 'Kingdom of God' plain and simple and for that Jesus equipped them with all the power and authority they needed, even authority over demons and health. Through Jesus we too are commissioned to do likewise. We are given that power and authority by the power of the Holy Spirit. Power in human thinking is often used to manipulate others and, sadly, I think it has often been used in such a way in the church. However, that is not the sort of power Jesus speaks of here. He speaks of spiritual power, power over

the forces of evil, not power over one another. We, like the disciples, must travel light. We must not allow ourselves to be hindered by the stuff of this world, material things or even spiritual things that are weighing us down, such as guilt, unforgiveness, anger, resentment or fear.

So, what is hindering you on your journey with Christ today? Lent is a season in which to do a spiritual review. To ask some of those difficult questions of oneself. To consider what spiritual or physical things you have allowed to take precedence in your life over and above God. What feelings and emotional habits have you allowed to dominate in your heart to the detriment of your relationship with God? Lent is a season when we can take a good hard look at ourselves and our relationship with our Lord. Jesus was in the desert fasting for forty days and nights, being tempted by the devil through his human physical need for food, through his human desire to test God's protection over him and through his human inclination to seek physical power and authority over others. Jesus resisted the Devil's taunts. We are not always so wise in spotting the things that will lead us astray.

Jesus travelled very light, never even having a home to call his own. At his trial he was stripped of all he had, that is the clothes he stood up in. He was nailed to a cross, a sign of humankind's inhumanity to fellow humans. He died, but death had no hold over him. In his death sin was crucified, in his resurrection death was defeated. He proclaimed and lived, died and was resurrected as a sign to us of the power of the Kingdom of God. No props, no unnecessary frills, just truth. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. In Jesus we see a glimpse of the Kingdom of God. He is the bridge between the heavenly and the earthly. By the power of the Holy Spirit Christians too become that bridge. Jesus has deferred that power and authority to us now, we are the ones to proclaim the Kingdom of God, to heal the sick, cure diseases and have authority over all demons. Until Jesus returns, when the Kingdom of God will come in full, we, his people, must continue in this commission to be Kingdom carriers.

So this is the time to repack our spiritual rucksack for our ongoing journey with God. What do we need to take? Nothingjust a lot of faith! Scary isn't it? But when we have the courage to do so and feel that vulnerability, wear that humility, we also experience great blessings.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.....Hallelujah!
Kay

Blessings to you all in this Easter season.



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

Short Term: Richard, Antonia, Grace and Zach Holland (Claire Macro's family in Canada); Claire Macro; Richard Morgans; Pam Ralph; Doina Rasnita; Hyacinth Ridguard on the death of Eaton on 9th February; Suzanne Tolley on the death of Chris on 17th February; Mark and Julie Ward.

Long Term: Beverley Cantwell; Eric Clucas; Christine and Ron Holt; Maggie Morgans and family; Rachel Patterson; Helen Rolton; Molly Shaw; Sarah Williams; Marion Willie; Katherine Witts (daughter of Sarah Williams).



Eldership: **Non-serving Elders** are invited to the Elders' Away Day at St. Leonard's Church, Oakley on 29th April, 2017. Please let Kay know if you will be attending.

Daily Bible Readings for April:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1 st	54	Reflection		17 th	57	Matthew 7
2 nd		"		18 th	102:1-17	" 8
3 rd	86	James	2	19 th	128/129	" 9
4 th	121/122	"	3	20 th	26	" 10
5 th	99	"	4	21 st	130/131	" 11
6 th	20	"	5	22 nd	27	Reflection
7 th	56	Matthew	1	23 rd		"
8 th	23/24	Reflection		24 th	60	Matthew 12
9 th		"		25 th	89:1-13	" 13
10 th	87	Matthew	2	26 th	102:18-28	" 14
11 th	100/101	"	3	27 th	132	" 15
12 th	124/125	"	4	28 th	28	" 16
13 th	25:1-10	"	5	29 th	133/134	Reflection 17
14 th	126/127	"	6	30 th		"
15 th	25:11-22	Reflection				
16 th		"				

Prayer Focus

Matthew ch 26 v 39 'My Father if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will but as you will.'

In some ways I feel this is the key moment in the whole of the Passion/Easter story.

Jesus has celebrated the Passover meal with his friends and spoken about the impending events. They swear their undying commitment and they go out to a favoured place, the Garden of Gethsemane. 'Ready to die with you' as Peter said.

We need to understand that Jesus has a choice, he is fully human (as well as divine); he has free will. He is confronted with the worst choice a human being ever has to make, and over the centuries there have been many examples of people confronted with a similar choice. Such is the anguish Jesus experiences that Luke describes it as sweating blood.

I always question those Church Liturgies that describe Jesus going to the cross as 'a death He freely accepted'. For me the description of Gethsemane would seem to suggest just the opposite. After wrestling within himself Jesus submitted obediently to His Father's will, and there lies the essential message for us.

Jesus had the opportunity to walk away, just as we, faced with seemingly impossible choices, may have an opportunity to walk away; as the disciples did a moment later when Jesus was arrested; as Peter did when he denied knowing Jesus, despite his earlier assertion.

At the beginning of His ministry, as we read on the first Sunday in Lent, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. His choice there was between the 'easy' way of ministry, or his Father's way; miracles; spectacular feats; worshipping wealth, fame and worldly values, or 'not to be served but to serve'...the way that leads to the cross.

There are times in life when our need to choose may seem overwhelming, we need to be able to say, with Jesus, 'Yet not as I will but as you will.'

Focus for Prayer

Pray that over this Easter Season the message of Jesus' death and resurrection will reach beyond the confines of our Church buildings into the wider community of Basingstoke.

Pray that those within our Churches will be spiritually renewed as we hear again the Easter story.

Pray for Church leaders as they prepare for all the Services and Christian events that they will be filled and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Continue to pray for 'Who Cares?' and the needs of the homeless.



Flower Rota - APRIL

2nd Sylvia Reynolds

9th Marion Willie

16th EASTER/Liz Lindsay

23rd Elspeth Anthony

30th Sonja Knoll

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.

Happy 🕯️ Birthday

Joan Beattie, 91 years on 17th April



Easter Voices:

"I find him NOT GUILTY." - Roman Governor (John 19:4)

"Crucify! CRUCIFY!" - The mob (John 19:6)

"I have sinned, for I have betrayed an INNOCENT MAN." - Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:4)

"He saved others. Let him save himself if he is GOD'S CHOSEN ONE." - The cynics (Luke 23:35)

"Father, FORGIVE THESE PEOPLE! They don't know what they're doing." - Jesus (Luke 23:24)

"This man really was the SON OF GOD!" - The executioner (Mark 15:39)

"Why are you looking in a tomb for someone who is ALIVE?" - The angel (Luke 24:5)

"I am the living one who died. Look. I AM ALIVE FOR EVER AND EVER! And I hold the keys of death and the grave." - Jesus (Revelation 1:18)

"The one who gives life appeared! We saw it happen, and we are witnesses to what we have seen. Now we are telling you about this eternal life that was with the Father and appeared to us. We are telling you what we have seen and heard, so that YOU MAY SHARE IN THIS LIFE with us. And we share in it with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." - Jesus' friend John (1 John 1:2-3)

FORSHADOWING of BAPTISM from the daily devotional "Living Truth".

The Gospel message is about a coming out of sin and into the fullness of Christ. This is the way baptism is portrayed throughout the New Testament but in the Old Testament we have a wonderful foreshadowing, called a "typology", which are events in the Old Testament history that depict New Testament truths. The typology of baptism depicts this coming out of sin and coming into the fullness of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 Paul talks about the children of Israel who were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them and that rock was Christ. (Exodus chapters 13 & 14) Trapped by the Red Sea in front and the Egyptian army behind, what happens next is a profound portrait of what it means to be baptised.

Moses held the staff of God over the Red Sea all night long, God caused a strong east wind to blow and parted it. The Israelites went down into water on Egyptian territory, where they had been enslaved and are now stepping out of enslavement. They go into the water with their old masters, Pharaoh and his army, trying to round them up and bring them back. After they had made it safely to the other side, tumultuous walls of water came crashing down and their old life, along with their old masters were swallowed by the sea. The Hebrew people come up on the other side onto new ground; a new land with a new purpose and a new life.

This, says Paul, is a picture of what baptism is all about. *We come out of the old life, the bondage of sin, leaving it buried behind us in order to come to new life, the fullness of Christ.* Sadly many people are satisfied with being forgiven, cleansed and saved, but fail to embark on the whole purpose of coming out of the old life, which is to come to the new. *Baptism is not simply identification with Christ's death and burial, so that*

our sins are forgiven and we get washed up on the shores of heaven one day. That still leaves us treading water, trying our best to stay afloat.

All of Scripture leads to Jesus Christ, and the message of the Gospel is receiving fullness of life in Him. The Israelites, over 3,500 years ago, were nourished and sustained by the Spiritual Rock that was Christ among them. *Today, having been raised with Christ, we have the incredible blessing of His presence, not among us, but "in us" for all time.*

News from Synod -

Synod Quiet Day - a walk in the New Forest with our spiritual eyes open. Date: Wednesday 21 June from 10.00am to 4.30pm. Starts and finishes at the Crowe Hill Methodist Church and Retreat Centre at Ringwood. Cost £12. This includes the day's programme, a ploughman's lunch and a cream tea to end the day. You will need to be able to walk unaided on country paths and slopes. If you wish to attend but unable to walk it is possible to enjoy a quiet day at the Centre.

Mental Health Awareness Day at the Beacon Church, Canford Heath on Saturday 7 October, repeated on Saturday 14 October at Woking URC. Starts at 10.00am and finishes at 4.00pm. Theme: Reducing stigma and resourcing the Church.

Synod Retreat Weekend at Old Alresford Place. Date: 27 to 29 October. Theme: Christlikeness - the challenge for Christians today. Looking at events in the life of Jesus to see their implications for living as Christians today. Cost £140. This includes full board from Friday evening meal to Sunday afternoon tea.

More information on these three events can be found on the church notice board or have a word with Owen.

Safeguarding Training opportunities and resources:

Understanding young minds - Unfortunately, more children are suffering from self-harm as a response to the pressures of

growing up. With 60% of parents reporting that they are uncomfortable discussing self-harm with their children, thousands could be suffering in silence. There is an online resource pack and online course available if you want to learn more. Interested? Have a word with Owen for more details.

'Let's Talk' is a brand new mental health resource from the Methodist Church to be used with children and young people. It is a series of short films aimed at encouraging conversations about key mental health topics that raise awareness, understanding and communication about these issues, helping to break down stigmas and encourage young people to access support. Interested? Have a word with Owen for more details.

Details of URC Safeguarding Training Courses for all individuals working with children, young people and adults at risk:

Full one day training courses: Saturday 21st October at Collinwood Road URC, Oxford and Saturday 4th November at Havant URC. Both days start at 10.00am and finish at 4.00pm.

Split training courses run across two evenings: Thursday 15th and 22nd June at Fleet URC. Both evenings start at 7.00pm and finish at 9.30pm. **Participants must attend the two evenings at Fleet to complete the course.**

Calling all knitters and crocheters - A message from the URC Greenbelt Planning Group.

Knitting and crocheting are very popular and fashionable activities at present. So the United Reformed Church's planning group for the Greenbelt Christian Arts Festival will be tapping into this for this year's festival. The URC is an associate partner for two years. Last year we had a very successful festival around the title of 'Scrap the Church?' with one of the activities being a treasure hunt. Festival goers sought out thirteen stars, decorated by our thirteen Synods, and hidden around the festival. Great fun was had by all.

As part of this year's theme of 'More than Welcome' and in keeping with last year's successful hunt, we are preparing a knitted food themed treasure hunt. The hunt will take festival goers to hampers dotted around the site where they will answer questions on food/feast stories from the Bible and collect various knitted food items. They will then be asked to add the food to an empty banqueting area so that over the course of the weekend the area goes from being empty to abundant.

A real strength of last year's URC presence was the fact that the Synods had been involved in decorating the stars so, with that in mind, we think it would be great to get as many URC groups involved with knitting the food as possible. **So this is where we need your help.** There is a lot to knit, the more people involved the better. We will also need a large amount of wool for the festival so if you have any to spare (however small) we would love to hear from you too. **Interested? Want to help? Speak with Isobel Martin or Carol Scott for further information.**

A Poem for Senior Citizens

A row of bottles on my shelf
Caused me to analyse myself.
One yellow pill I have to pop
Goes to my heart so it won't stop.
The blue ones that I use a lot
Tell me I'm happy when I'm not.
The purple pill goes to my brain
Ans tells me that I have no pain.
The capsules tell me not to wheeze
Or cough or choke or even sneeze.
The red ones, smallest of them all,
Go to my blood so I won't fall.
The orange ones, very big and bright,
Prevent my leg cramps in the night.
Such an army of brilliant pills
Helping to cure all kinds of ills
But what I'd really like to know
Is what tells each one where to go.

Author unknown

Croydon Philharmonic Choir
and
Basingstoke Choral Society
present
Bach ST MATTHEW PASSION
at
THE ANVIL, Basingstoke
on

Evangelist: Timothy Langston
Jesus: John Lofthouse

Box Office: 01256 844244
Or book online at
anvilarts.org.uk

Saturday, 8th April at 7.30pm



Ruby Wedding

Sue and Frank Sims, who were married at London Street, reached their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on 5th March, 2017.

Sue is the daughter of Joy and Arthur Harris and both she and Frank were actively involved in the life of the Church before moving away.

We send congratulations and best wishes as their celebrations continue during April.

Your daily survival kit:

1. A toothpick - to remind you to pick out the best qualities in others
2. A rubber band - to remind you to be flexible
3. A pen - to remind you to list your blessings every day
4. A tube of glue - to remind you to stick with it to accomplish that task
5. A tea bag - to remind you to relax daily
6. Bandages and plasters - to remind you to heal hurt feelings - yours and someone else's.

Pause for Thought

A man of 92 years, smart, very well-presented and takes great care of his appearance, is moving into an old people's home today. His wife of 70 years has recently died and he is obliged to leave his home.

After waiting several hours in the retirement home lobby, he gently smiles as he is told that his room is ready. As he slowly walks to the elevator, using his cane, the assistant describes his small room to him, including the curtain for the window.

'I like it very much', he says with the enthusiasm of an 8-year old boy who has just been given a new puppy.

'Mr Todd, you haven't even seen the room yet. Hang on a moment, we are almost there.'

'That has nothing to do with it' he replies. 'Happiness is something I choose in advance. Whether or not I like the room does not depend on the furniture or the decor - rather it depends on how I decide to see it.

'It is already decided in my mind that I like my room. It is a decision I take every morning when I wake up. I can choose to spend my day in bed enumerating all the difficulties that I have with various parts of my body that no longer work very well, or I can get up and give thanks to heaven for those parts that are still in working order.

'Every day is a gift, and as long as I can open my eyes, I will focus on the new day, and all the happy memories that I have built up over my life.

'Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw in later life what you have deposited along the way. So the advice to you is to deposit all the happiness you can in your bank account of memories.

'Remember these simple guidelines for happiness:

Free your heart from hate
Free your mind from worry
Live simply
Give more and expect less.'



April Dates to note at London Street, unless otherwise stated

Sat	1 st	2.30pm	Fellowship tour and tea
Sun	2 nd	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast – led by Joy Williams
		10.30am	Worship – led by Peter Bentall
		12.00	Lunch followed by Annual Church Meeting
Wed	5 th	7.30pm	Elders' meeting
Fri	7 th	Youth Café closed until 24 th April
		7.30pm	Lent Study Group at the Manse
Sun	9 th	10.30am	Palm Sunday Worship – led by The Minister
Thu	13 th	7.30pm	Maundy Thursday meeting at Old Meeting, Tadley
Sun	16 th	5.45am	Easter Sunday Dawn Service at Tadley Skate Park followed by breakfast in the Immanuel Centre at 8am
		10.30am	Easter Sunday Worship, including Holy Communion at London Street
			(joint with Tadley)
Mon	17 th	NO CRAFT GROUP MEETING
Sun	23 rd	10.30am	Worship – led by Mark Ward
Mon	24 th	3-5.30pm	Youth Café re-opens
Thu	27 th		Friendship Hour – Mystery Tour
Sat	29 th		Elders' Away Day at St Leonard's, Oakley
Sun	30 th	10.30am	Worship – led by Revd John Whitton



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• **LOOKING FORWARD -**

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• **A DATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S DIARY**

• The Revd Julian Macro, who was minister of the Basingstoke

• Group from 1977 to 1996, was ordained in September 1968. Next

• year, therefore, marks the 50th anniversary of his ordination and

• plans are being made for a celebration, including a service,

• followed by refreshments, to take place in London Street Church on

• the afternoon of Saturday, 8th September 2018. All three pastorates

• of which Julian was minister (Bourne End, Reading and

• Basingstoke & Tadley) will be involved. More details will be given

• much nearer the time, but you are invited to note the date now.

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Tadley Dates for April:

Preachers:

- Sun 2nd – Revd Kay Blackwell
9th – Derek Clarke
Thu 13th 7.30pm – **Maundy Thursday** service at
Old Meeting – Revd Kay Blackwell
Fri 14th 9.30am – **Good Friday Walk of Witness** –
walk from Tadley Common
Methodist Church, ending at
St Paul's with a service at 11am.

There will also be a '**Prayer Labyrinth**' from 11am to 4pm at the Immanuel Centre, suitable particularly for families. Drinks and refreshments will be available.

- Sun 16th 5.45am **Easter Sunday Dawn Service** at Tadley Skate Park followed by a hearty breakfast in the Immanuel Centre at 8am.



- Sun 23rd – Rob and Jan Lloyd
Sun 30th – TBC

Climb Every Mountain....

We've climbed some mountains in our life,
With loss and cancer, stroke and strife.
Suppose it's part of life's rich pattern,
With God's help we'll make love happen.
So, coming down the other side,
Welcome the good times with faithful pride.
Mountains high, some mountains low,
At times we don't know where to go
But, with God's help from above,
We'll get there with our Church's love.

George (Tadley)

ARTICLES FOR INCLUSION IN THE MAY ISSUE OF FOCUS SHOULD BE WITH CHRISTINE ROBERTSON BY EASTER SUNDAY, 16TH APRIL

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 Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and 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 Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and college students
5.45pm	(BEAVER SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Colony
7pm	(CUB SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Pack
7pm	(SCOUTS — 8 th 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 Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and 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 Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and college students

Fridays:

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