



London Street

United Reformed Church

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



FOCUS
October, 2017

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - www.basingstokeurc.org.uk

MINISTER:

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

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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 Community
Centre)

Minister:

Revd Kay Blackwell

Church Secretary:

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View from the manse:

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.'

(Hebrews 13:2)

I'm writing this 'view from the manse' having just read a rather uncomfortable review on worship at London Street written by a mystery worshipper and placed on the 'Ship of Fools' website. The 'Ship of Fools' sends out volunteer mystery worshippers worldwide to anonymously take part in an act of worship of a church and then write a brief report on what they found. Their mission statement includes this statement:

"Our aim is to help Christians be self-critical and honest about the failings of Christianity, as we believe honesty can only strengthen faith."

Simon Jenkins (Ship of Fools website).

Ours is the 3,218th mystery worshipper report to be posted and the only church in Basingstoke to have been visited to date.

So how did we fare? Well, not too bad, but could do better! I have to admit that when I first read the report I inwardly groaned at many points. I even felt myself bristle at one or two statements that I felt were unjust. I have to admit that the urge to want a right to reply or the opportunity to justify the contexts of things that were done in the service were strong. It felt like we have been very coldly (or is that just objectively?) assessed. But the more I have reflected on the report, the more I have come to terms with the fact that we must learn from this and move on. The fact is, visitors to our churches will rarely give us a second chance. How we welcome people, how we guide them clearly through the service and how we serve them coffee afterwards really matters to the first time visitors. Every part of what we do matters. The behaviour of each one of us matters. The minister's opportunity to influence a visitor's experience is minimal compared to those who greet them at the door, sit next to, or near them, during the service or serve them teas and coffees afterwards.

This reminds me, and should remind us all, that every act of worship should be the very best we can offer. Also, wherever and whenever we offer hospitality as Christians, it should also be the best we can do 'for, by

so doing, some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it' (Hebrews 13:2). Our mystery worshipper was not an angel, but her report may well be read by many thousands of people.

The mystery worshipper at London Street commented on the '*wonderful welcome given by the lady on the door*' as being the part of the service that was most like being in heaven! She also described London Street as '*a church with a great presence in the community that is clearly making a difference, particularly to the lives of vulnerable people*'. So, well done you wonderful London Street folk! But let us all be reminded of how we are seen by visitors, how our actions and words are being constantly assessed by others. We must treat all folk, both inside and outside the church, as being special to God, God's precious children.

Your Sister in Christ, Kay

(The full Mystery Worshipper's report is on the 'Ship of Fools' website dated 6th August 2017.)

—oOo—

Here is part of the more detailed analysis being done on the results of the listening phase of the Who Cares? mission. A full report will be available in the Churches soon. Please prayerfully consider how we may respond more effectively to these hurts in our community.

What Hurts You the Most?

Who Cares? Hampshire Findings
September 2017

The 'Who Cares?' mission across Hampshire involved 59 churches asking the question 'What hurts you the most?'

They showed their local communities that they care for them by stepping outside of their church buildings, engaging with friends, families and neighbours, and finding out what really hurts the people around them. The churches found that most of the hurts were linked to 'Negative Emotions', 'Relationships' and 'Family'. The churches are now using what they have found out to respond to the needs of their local community and bring Jesus' love and hope to other people.



Why did we do Who Cares?

In June and July 2017, 59 Hampshire churches from different backgrounds and denominations came together to ask their friends, families and communities one question: 'What Hurts You the Most?'. The churches wanted to understand themselves and the communities around them, to enable them to respond more fully and sensitively and demonstrate that they do indeed care.

What did we do?

We began the first phase of the Who Cares? mission with 'Listening'. During the 'Listening Phase' church members took the question cards and asked people to take part in the one question, anonymous survey. The question was asked in many different contexts; including within church, schools, coffee shops, supermarkets, fetes and local events, to name just a few. The responses were placed in envelopes and only seen by the people recording the responses on the computer. Once the information was entered onto the computer the cards were destroyed to ensure anonymity. The responses were allocated categories and sub-categories so they could be analysed. The main categories were: 'Death', 'Relationships', 'Family', 'Physical Suffering', 'Money', 'Negative emotions', 'Loneliness', 'Injustice' and 'Other'.

What did we find?

We received 11,798 responses to the question 'What hurts you the most?'. These responses were then categorised into one of the 8 main categories.

Death included hurts such as death of family and friends, fear of death, abortion and death of people around the world.

Relationships included friendships, romantic relationships, lies and betrayal, arguments, rejection, bullying, selfishness, unkindness and seeing loved ones in pain.

Family included hurts such as family death, family illness, parenting, money related problems, time and work-life balance, marriage, absence of family, broken relationships and family members hurting.

Physical Suffering included illness, physical injury, fear of illness, being a carer, additional needs such as disability or learning difficulties, NHS, addiction, pain and suffering, ageing and tiredness.

Money included family, housing, poverty, bills and living costs, work and income, debt, food and retirement.

Negative Emotions included mental health, fear and anxiety, stress, age, work and time, addiction, lack of support, family, sadness, anger, pressure and love and hate.

Loneliness included loneliness caused by death, illness, family, age, friendship, living alone and lack of a partner.

Injustice included suffering, war, terrorism, homelessness, poverty, crime, politics, local issues, inequality, natural disasters.

Other included responses which didn't fit into any of the above categories.

Where there was crossover between the categories in the responses, the responses were allocated more than one category. In total we made 15,123 categorisations.

Overall Data

The largest areas of hurt were Negative Emotions, Family and Relationships. 19.77% of the overall number of categorisations were Negative Emotions, 18.26% were Family and 16.89% were Relationships. The smallest areas of hurt were Loneliness at 4.54% and Money at 5.4%.

What Hurts You the Most? – Who Cares? Hampshire Findings September 2017

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CIRCLE OF PRAYER:

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

Short Term: Tish Catterall; Owen Collins and family; Sally Friday; Karen Gorf; Christine and Ron Holt; Sonja Knoll and family; Claire Macro; Pam Ralph; Doina Rasnita; Hyacinth Ridguard; family of Helen Rolton; Mary Silver.

Long Term: Annette Bowers (daughter of Sheila Munro); Beverley Cantwell and her daughter, Caroline; Christine and Eric Clucas and their grandson, Colm McCulloch; Ron and Rosemary Martin; Maggie Morgans and family; Patterson family; Molly Shaw; Fay Spurr; Suzanne Tolley; Les and Iris Wenham; Sarah Williams and her daughter, Katherine Witts.

Prayer Focus:

2 Kings, Ch5

A young girl's comment and its far reaching outcome.

She had been wrenched from her home never to see her family again, sent to be a slave with no rights and not a promising future yet she responded to her captor and his wife with concern and faith. Her input in the story takes up two verses yet her influence had a major impact and brought glory to God. Her story has been told many times over in the following centuries.

This familiar story reminds me of something I read in a book called 'The Shack', a novel; A man called Mack has a great sadness in his life and through various circumstances he meets with God; Father, Jesus and The Holy Spirit. I hasten to say there are no flowing white beards and Hollywood doesn't get a look in. Through conversations with them all he finds some understanding about his situation and healing for his hurting heart and a greater insight into who God is and his relationship with his creation.

One conversation with the Holy Spirit, named 'Sarayu' in the book, said a lot to me about Naaman's slave girl. I hope you find this helpful. The change in type is there to highlight what is being said and I have left out some of the chat so as not to make this too long.

Sarayu said 'For something to move from death to life you must introduce something living and moving into the mix. To move from something that is only a noun to something dynamic and unpredictable, to something living and present tense, is to move from law to grace. May I give you a couple of examples?

'Let's use your words: **responsibility and expectation**. Before your words became nouns, they were first my words, nouns with movement and experience buried inside of them; **the ability to respond** and **expectancy**. My words are **alive and dynamic – full of life and possibility**; yours are **dead, full of law and fear and judgment**. That is why you won't find the word responsibility in the scripture.

'Religion must use law to empower itself and control the people who they need in order to survive. I give you an ability to respond and your response is to be free to love and serve in every situation, and therefore each moment is different and unique and wonderful.

Because I am your ability to respond. I have to be present in you. If I simply gave you a responsibility, I would not have to be with you at all. It would now be a task to be performed, an obligation to be met, something to fail.

‘Let’s use the example of friendship and how removing the element of life from a noun can drastically alter a relationship. Mack, **if you and I are friends, there is an expectancy that exists within our relationship. When we see each other or apart, there is expectancy of being together, of laughter and talking. That expectancy has no concrete definition; it is alive and dynamic and everything that emerges from our being together is a unique gift shared by no one else.** But what happens if I change that ‘expectancy’ to an ‘**expectation**’ – **spoken or unspoken? Suddenly, Law has entered into our relationship. You are now expected to perform in a way that meets my expectations. Our living friendship rapidly deteriorates into a dead thing with rules and requirements.** It is no longer about you and me, but about what friends are supposed to do, or the responsibilities of a good friend.

‘Or,’ noted Mack, **‘the responsibilities of a husband, or a father, or employee.** Or whatever. I get the picture. **I would much rather live in expectancy’.**

From: ‘The Shack’ by Wm Paul Young, Pages 204-205

I have a feeling that that little girl, who changed Naaman’s life, was responding in love to the Holy Spirit’s promptings and not living out the expectations of her particular situation.

Prayer Loving and gracious Lord we can see how attractive, positive, affirming and creative relationships can be, no matter how close or how transitory they are. We have experienced the happiness and healing that can come out of such relationships. We know that with our best intentions we so easily botch things, please we need your help and life please give us the courage to let you in. Amen.

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: Thank you:
: Thank you all for your prayers and messages of support for me
: and family following the death of my father. Much appreciated.
: Blessings, Owen.
:

Flower Rota - October



1 st	Harvest
8 th	Pat Oakley
15 th	Wedding
22 nd	Karen Bell
29 th	Mrs J. Smith

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

Iris Wenham, 86 years on 7 October
Beryl Gazard, 90 years on 19 October
Jamie Richards, 17 years on 20 October
Grace Springthorpe, 94 years on 23 October
Esther McElvenny, 16 years on 26 October
Vernon Blight, 90 years on 28 October



URC Music Day 2017

A celebration of the music of the Reformation at Hungerford URC on Saturday, 21st October from 9.45am to 5.00pm. A wonderful opportunity to learn, improve and perform a small and perfectly formed piece: Bach's Cantata 180 "O soul, adorn thyself with gladness".

For further details and booking form, contact Owen.

Daily Bible Readings for October:

	<u>Psalms</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalms</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1 st		Reflection		17 th 63	John	2
2 nd	133/134	1 John	3	18 th 140	"	3
3 rd	30	"	4	19 th 33:1-12	"	4
4 th	61	"	5	20 th 65	"	5
5 th	89:14-29	2 John	1	21 st 141	Reflection	
6 th	103	3 John	1	22 nd	"	
7 th	135	Reflection		23 rd 33:13-22	John	6
8 th		"		24 th 66	"	7
9 th	31:1-10	1 Peter	1	25 th 105:1-11	"	8
10 th	138	"	2	26 th 34:1-10	"	9
11 th	31:11-24	"	3	27 th 67	"	10
12 th	62	"	4	28 th 143	Reflection	
13 th	104:24-35	"	5	29 th	"	
14 th	139	Reflection		30 th 34:11-22	John	11
15 th		"		31 st 68:1010	"	12
16 th	32	John	1			

CHARITIES CHRISTMAS CARD SALE

SATURDAY 7th OCTOBER

9.30am — 2.30pm

Buy some cards and help to continue the good work of all these excellent causes. The sale will be held in the concourse of the Church where there will be a wide selection of Charity Christmas cards and small gifts available for you to view and buy, thereby supporting the various charities present. Attending will be: St Michael's Hospice, RNLI, Christian Aid and Traidcraft, Holdsworth Hospital in South India, Wessex Cancer Trust, Sebastian Action, WWF and Parkinsons Disease Association.



The Mayor and Mayoress will be visiting the Sale at 11am.

Refreshments and light lunches will be on sale which will cover the expenses of the day.

The Church has very kindly supported this annual sale for many years so please come along with your friends, enjoy a cup of coffee.

Elspeth Anthony

Fun Quiz Night !



**Saturday 11th
Nov 7.30pm**

Tadley United Reformed
Church, Immanuel Centre,
Main Road, Tadley,
RG26 3NY

**Teams of 4-6
£6/head
Children £3**

Cheese Board included,
bring drinks & nibbles

**Raising
funds for
children's
work in the
UK & Africa**

For further information:

George & Ena: 01256 850285
georgeandena@gmail.com
Mark & Julie: 0118 9701125
mandjward@hotmail.co.uk

We will need to know numbers so that we have some idea of how much Cheese board etc. will be needed.

Afternoon Drive

Every year on the second Saturday in September the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Historic Churches' Sponsored Ride & Stride is held. Originally 'ride' meant cycle but it can equally mean in a car and so, over the past few years, our church has not only been open for others to visit but some of us have obtained sponsors and set off into the Hampshire countryside in cars. This year eight of our congregation, in two cars with over £200 in sponsorship, decided to go east.



Our first port of call was All Saints, Tunworth, and along the quiet lane leading to it a deer crossed in front of my car and a red kite suddenly took off from a tree in the hedgerow. A nature trip as well, we thought. The sun was shining when we parked outside the old rectory and walked along the beech-lined path to the little church. One of our number was particularly concerned for brides and pall bearers using this path but that is part of living in the country I suppose - the bride wearing wellies under her gown comes to mind. Services are held every week and there was a lovely warm atmosphere in the building. The lady who arrived to do the flowers was very friendly and informative. While we were looking round it began to pour with rain so, having left our umbrellas in the car, we chatted with her a little longer.

The lanes were now awash and the views a little misty but we took the narrow lane towards Weston Patrick. For quite a distance we chased a partridge and her large brood of 'teenagers' along the road until, at last, they realised that flying up onto the bank was a good idea. St Lawrence Church was not open to us as there had been a local wedding but it is an attractive church outside with a short, almost Tyrolean, steeple.

The next church on the list was St Andrew's, South Warnborough. En route the sun came out again. It lit up the gold of the wet stubble in the harvested fields and, backed by some of the blackest storm clouds I have ever seen, made an absolutely stunning picture. Arriving at the church and trying, unsuccessfully, to avoid being splashed by passing cars, we walked up the path to the door and had something of a surprise. As the door opened the lights suddenly came on automatically! Hopefully they turn off the same way. Alison's group arrived after us and was welcomed by one of the parishioners who plied them with drinks and biscuits and then showed them round this beautifully renovated and extended building. She also enthusiastically told them of some of the things the church is doing.

Together with the Poacher Inn, the church is clearly the centre of village life. While inside, those black clouds arrived, the thunder rolled and rain pelted down again but we were in the dry and there was plenty to see including a beautifully worked, framed tapestry of the village. Next, along narrow lanes that had become small rivers, my group arrived at All Saints, Long Sutton and parked in the village hall car park opposite. Seeing no 'Ride and Stride' poster we asked a lady walking by if the church was open and she said "Oh, I'm not sure - even if it isn't I've got a key so I'll let you in". It was unlocked and, again, very much open for business with lots going on. It has a startlingly new red tiled roof and freshly rendered outside walls.

My group was ready for a cup of tea by this time and we decided to head for Odiham and All Saints Church where we met up with Alison's group again. This church struck us as being so much bigger than the others. It, too, has had major work done, especially to the floor, and there is a small exhibition about what was found underneath. The more modern stained glass windows are striking and the organ is huge. One person commented that it almost seemed like a concert hall. There is one of the few remaining hudds, similar to sentry boxes, standing at the back of the church. It did not look as if it had been outside recently so, presumably, those currently officiating at graveside committals make do with an umbrella when it rains! Such is progress.

Having enjoyed each other's company, seen many new things and talked with several interesting people, my group found Fountain's Café, had that cup of tea/coffee we had been longing for and headed home leaving St. Stephen, Up Nately, St. Mary, Mapledurwell and St. Swithun, Nately Scures for another day.

Thank you so much for sponsoring us so generously – London Street will receive its share in due course and the Trust will continue to help in keeping these and other historic churches that are still very much a part of their communities, in good repair.

Joy Williams



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• Can you help? •

• Do you have a secure garage or lock-up that could be used •

• temporarily to store some bits and pieces? If so, please have a •

• word with Owen. Thank you. •

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Drop-in Youth Café for Secondary School and College Students

Monday to Thursday 3 to 5.30pm

The new school year has started and the Youth Café is back in business again. Numbers enjoying the games and refreshments offered over the summer term were higher than in previous summers and this was encouraging for the adult helpers. It also spanned the 'asking' phase of the Who Cares? Survey. Twenty of the young people were willing to answer the question 'What hurts the most?' and some conversations were started. These showed that even a basic knowledge of the concept of 'God' and the Bible was often lacking.

During August Kay Blackwell, John Eves and others have been searching for really basic course material. This was extremely difficult to find as all the well-known ones assume some knowledge of God and the Bible. Eventually they found some produced by the Children's Society which seems to be suitable. It deals with issues raised during the listening phase of Who Cares? such as relationships and identity. It is proposed to begin six weekly sessions in the Hook Room for any of the young people interested from Tuesday 3rd October with a break for half term. Pool and table tennis etc. will be available as usual.

Please pray:

- That the regulars from last year will continue to use the café and will encourage the year 7s and others to step over the threshold.
- For those who will be leading the course and that there will be a good take up among the young people.
- For additional volunteer helpers willing to spare an afternoon on a regular basis.



October Diary

at London Street, unless otherwise stated

Sun	1 st	10.30am	Prayer Breakfast – leader TBC Harvest Thanksgiving and Parade Service
Wed	4 th	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Sun	8 th	10.30am	Worship led by Vivien Gerhold
Sat	14 th		Wedding of Lee Grant and Alison Honeyball
		10.00am	Mental Health Awareness Day - 'Reducing the Stigma'
Sun	15 th	10.30am	Worship, including Holy Communion – led by The Minister
Wed	19 th	10.15am	3Cs in the Oasis Café - all welcome
Sun	22 nd	10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister
Thu	28 th	2.30pm	Friendship Hour – all welcome
Sun	29 th		British Summer Time ends
		10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister

Services at Old Meeting, Tadley

October

Welcome and Coffee Rota

Sun	1 st	Andy Dickens	Ena and George
Sun	8 th	Revd Kay Blackwell	Mandy and Dave
Sun	15 th	Brian Baldwin	Ladies Cell
Sun	22 nd	Paul Young	Janet and Paul
Sun	29 th	TBC	Open to Offers

Deadline

for November issue of FOCUS is **Sunday, 15th October**

It's that time of the year again!!

Would you like to order a copy of the Prayer Fellowship Handbook for 2018 ('...on eagles' wings')? This would cost £6.50 with a small contribution towards postage, depending on the number of books ordered. If so, please sign the list on the noticeboard by October 29th. We are unsure at the time of printing 'Focus' whether or not a URC Diary is being produced for 2018. Further information about this will appear in the diary. Please speak to Jenny for any further information.

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 — **Last 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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