



FOCUS

May 2023



London Street United Reformed Church

Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 7NU

Tadley (Old Meeting) United Reformed Church

Malthouse Ln, Hants, RG26 3NY

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

This month Alison Jamieson looks at Mark 15: 24-27.



There have been so many changes in the last few years and now, on May 6th, our new King, Charles 3rd, will be crowned with a lot of pomp and serious promise making in Westminster Abbey. We will see the occasion on TV and in the papers, but it is unlikely many of us will meet him during his reign. I wonder what we expect of him? He has quite a tough example to follow with 'Our Queen'. Only time will tell.

I am writing this just after Easter, when we sang 'Lives again our glorious King, where, O death is now thy sting?' Yes, we have another King, who proclaimed such a different kingdom from that of any earthly powers that they decided he had to die, he was too dangerous.

Tyler Staton's comment about the Mark reading is:

"I am struck by the word 'with' in this passage... And with him they crucified two robbers. With – If there's a word to sum up the life of Jesus that has to be it. At his birth, they called him Immanuel,

God with us....

Born with us

Walked with us

Talked with us

Lived with us

Suffered (and suffers) with us."

In the Luke account of the crucifixion, there is an account of a conversation between one of the robbers and Jesus. In the pain, suffering and humiliation they are both experiencing, the robber asks Jesus if he will remember him when he comes into his Kingdom and Jesus promises him that he will be with Jesus in Paradise.

Whatever we think of heads of state, be they monarchs or presidents they are only human. Our other king, Jesus, has entered into the lives

of ordinary folk and brought hope, healing, and new life following his death and resurrection and he now reigns forever, not remote but ever present.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus,

I admit that I do not always understand you and your ways of doing things. But I think you can see how messy life, my life, can be and I ask for your help.

Thank you that you have promised that you will never leave me or forsake me.

Amen

THE NOTICEBOARD

Information, updates, tips and more.



FOCUS: Next Issue

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Focus magazine. If you would like to contribute to the June magazine, please contact the editor by **15th of May**.

Eco Tip

God's Gift -- Our World

The Environment -- Our Responsibility



Don't bring plants or animals home from your holidays - releasing non-native species into the environment can be disastrous as they may carry disease or come to dominate local species.

Don't forget, you can recycle the following items at London Street:

Empty Printer Cartridges, Aluminium Containers and Foil, Batteries, Plastic Milk Bottle Tops, and Empty Medicine Blister Packets.

Can you help to make sure that no one in our local community goes hungry?



Items needed:

Fruit Juice (Long Life), Long Life Milk (UHT), Powdered Milk, Evaporated Milk, Instant Mash, Peanut Butter, Tinned Meat (Except Corned Beef), Puddings/Deserts (Hot Puddings/Instant Whips/Jelly/Etc.), Crisps/Savoury Snacks, Custard, Cleaning Sprays, Bleach/Loo Cleaner, Washing Tablets (Clothes), Sweet Spreads, Hair Shampoo/Conditioner, Dog Food, Razors (Men's & Ladies'), Toilet Paper, Nappies Size 5.

Please **do not** give Kitchen Towels, Non-Dairy Milk, Crackers/Biscuits, Baby Food, Cold/Hot Cereal, Tea/Coffee, Tinned Rice Pudding, Tinned Beans, Pasta, Rice, or Tinned Soup as these are already in surplus.

Donations can be left at London Street URC in the container provided. For up to date lists, or to find other donation points, go to:

<https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



We want to say a huge **THANK YOU** for raising funds for Julian House, Big Basingstoke Sleep Out. Thank you everyone who sponsored Evie. The total raised was £435.

Blessings,

Leng, Chris & Evie Ayland



(Editor's Note: In addition, a further £75 was given at the retiring collection on the 26th March. This does not include any online donations made separately.)

**Wessex Summer Camps are open
for bookings!**

**Do you know a child aged 7–12 or a
young person aged 11–17?**

**Please consider passing on
information about the Wessex Synod
Summer Camps.**



**This year the Children's Camp will take place at Oakwood Activity
Centre in Wokingham and is extended by an extra 24 hours of fun, 30th
May – 2nd June 2023.**

**It's a great event for children to have fun with others through a mixed
programme of worship, activities, and workshops. The children will be
enjoying many of the activities that the site offers including kiwi flying,
bouldering, low ropes, bush craft and mountain boarding. Workshops
will be creative and very interactive, with a mix of arts, crafts, music,
outdoor games, sports and much more! Children will be staying in the
Lodge which has rooms that sleep up to 6, in three bunk beds – and
every room has ensuite facilities!**

We will be exploring the URC theme of 'Love is...'

**More than hearts and squishy stuff. Thinking about what Jesus' love
actually looked like.**

**The Youth Camp will take place at an exciting new venue, The G.B
Outdoor Centre in Hook.**

14th – 16th July 2023.

It's a great event for young people to come together, relax, make new

friends and explore a Bible based theme through a varied programme of worship, outdoor activities and workshops. The venue offers many of the favourite activities, high and low ropes courses, bouldering, archery, and campfire cooking. New to this year are laser tag and a host of resident animals, big and small. We will be following the URC theme of 'Love is...', focusing on how far God went to show the extent of His love for us. There will be group time to explore the theme creatively, and there will also be plenty of time for games and challenges. There are opportunities for young people to get involved with leading aspects of worship and music. Young people will be staying in 'tepee' style bell tents, each with 6 camp beds, and decking.

Check out the website for more details:

<https://www.urcwessex.org.uk/wsc23/>



Calling All Bakers!
Memory Tree needs you!

Our guests at Memory Tree love having cake on a Wednesday morning.

If you could help by joining the rota to provide cake on a regular basis please let Jenny know.

You would only have to bake once every 6/7 weeks!



Church Away Day with Petersfield URC



Revd Josh Thomas is organising an Away Day for the congregations of Petersfield and London Street URCs to which Old Meeting is also welcome.

It is scheduled for Saturday 30th September at Ditcham Park School from 10.00am until 4.00pm. The main sessions of the day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, will be led by Jo Patterson a Church Related Community Worker based in Peckham. She will focus in a fun way on mission work within the community. Ruth White and her team have been booked to run the children's events.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided, but please bring your own picnic lunch. There will be free time in the afternoon for you to enjoy a walk in the countryside surrounding the school.

There is a sub-committee comprising of representatives of both churches planning the event and further details will follow in due course.

Whilst some will wish to make their own way, a coach will be available to take you to Ditcham Park, leaving Basingstoke at 8.45am and returning by 5.15pm. At this stage to help with planning the event, if you are interested in attending please let me know by Sunday 2nd July.

Thank you,

Owen Collins

EXPLORING PSALM 139

Jenny McCloy reimagines one of her favourite psalms.

Some years ago, I went on an Elders' Away Day from our previous church in Stockport.

We were lucky enough to be very close to the High Peak Area of Derbyshire and our 'Away Day' was held in Whaley Hall which is in a small town called Whaley Bridge, which is known as the Gateway to the Peak District. You may remember hearing of this town in 2019 when the 1500 people living there were abruptly ordered from their homes over fears that a badly damaged dam on the Toddbrook Reservoir was about to burst and flood their homes. Fortunately, temporary repairs made it safe for residents to return to their homes a week later. The project to effect permanent repairs should be completed by 2024!

Whaley Hall is very close to the reservoir, actually situated on Reservoir Road. It is a place of worship, based on The Community of the King of Love, and a Conference and Retreat Centre. You may also have heard of Father Jamie, a Priest running the Retreat Centre, he had bought a painting in an antique shop for £400 in 1992, and it had hung on the wall in Whaley Hall (I must have seen it!!) collecting dust ever since. Then he decided to take it to The Antiques Roadshow in 2014, to have it valued. Eventually it was proved to be an original Van Dyck and was valued by experts at £400,000! Sadly it failed to attract even one bid at Christie's Auction House. It eventually sold for an undisclosed sum to a private collector and is now on loan to a museum in Belgium. Father Jamie used the money to restore the bells at Whaley Hall!

Back to the Away Day!

In the afternoon session we were challenged to use the time in silent, individual meditation. I found myself drawn to The Book of Psalms, Psalm 139 in particular. After reading it several times, I decided to rewrite the psalm in my own words, but following the theme of Psalm 139, which has always been a favourite of mine. Recently, I came across my effort and thought I would share it:

After Psalm 139

You're here within me
I feel you
You're part of my being
You touch me.

I can manage alone
I think so
Without you I'm strong
Am I?

I've tried to escape you
Why would I?
Where would I go
To lose you?

The grains on the beach
I count them
Your love shown to me
It can't be

I'd hide in my life-style
Where can I?
I'll be busy with things
So many.

Take flight away
Long Haul
Come down to earth
You're still there

My thoughts are all mine
Are they?
My body is mine
But you made me.

I cannot escape
Why would I?
When all that I need
Is in you.

I breathe and I move
You know it
I speak and I shout
You hear it.

You're here within me
You touch me
You're the source of my being
I feel you!

Wherever I go
You're leading;
Wherever I hide
You'll find

COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

Jean Young shares a recipe from 'Persiana, Recipes from the Middle East and beyond' by Sabrina Ghayour.

SHIRAZI SALAD

Serves: 2-3



A refreshing, vegetarian recipe which takes its name from the city of Shiraz in Iran which is eaten as an accompaniment to many meals or as a light meal with focaccia or crusty bread.

INGREDIENTS:

Half a large cucumber.

4 or 5 cherry tomatoes or tomatoes of your choice.

Half a red onion.

Salt and pepper.

Juice of one small lemon or half a large one.

1 heaped teaspoon sumac. (Available in Herbs and Spice Aisle in supermarkets.)

Pomegranate seeds 100g.

METHOD:

1. Slice cucumber lengthways into 4 strips, and de-seed, then chop into small dice.
2. Cut tomatoes into quarters or halves depending on size, de-seed and dice.
3. Peel the onion, cut into halves so that you have half-moon shapes, then finely dice.
4. Mix all together in a bowl and drizzle with some olive oil.
5. Season with salt, pepper, the lemon juice and sprinkle with the sumac. Gently mix together.
6. Add the pomegranate seeds and stir. Pop into the refrigerator for about 20 minutes as it is best served chilled.

THE KING OF KINGS

With the approaching coronation, Revd. Josh Thomas discusses the limitations of earthly kings.



This month we see a new King coronated. As I shared a few weeks ago in church, I still struggle to get my head around the fact that King Charles is no longer the Prince of Wales but now I really must start getting used to the sound of the name King Charles...

Our faith has an interesting heritage when it comes to the appointment of a new king, let's just say, it didn't always quite turn out as planned for God's people. The books of 1 and 2 Kings were written to show what happens when people lose sight of God and turn their attention to earthly rulers instead.

As King David approaches death, he anoints his son Solomon to reign as king. Solomon starts off well enough asking the Lord for wisdom, but soon he disobeys God by worshipping foreign gods, accumulating a vast amount of wealth and conscripting fellow Israelites into slavery. All of this is in direct defiance of God's word and because of this, after his death, the Lord took the kingdom away from his son and this causes the people of Israel to divide into two separate nations, the northern kingdom of Israel and Judah to the south. Both of these kingdoms descend into idolatry although strangely, Judah sometimes stumble across a good king like Jehoshaphat, Joash and Amaziah. Israel, however, never have a godly ruler and they become more and more like the nations that they were before arriving in the promised land.

Elijah and Elisha as prophets are at the heart of the story, they are zealous for the Lord and perform many miracles, proving the power of

God over the false gods that are being worshipped by the people. Sadly, their prophetic word is mostly ignored by the people and God has to teach them a lesson by allowing two enemy nations to invade the land.

Because David had a heart for the Lord, his son, Solomon was able to lead Israel into a great new age. His reign was marked with prosperity, health, and wisdom, but something went wrong. He allowed his gaze to shift and began to be influenced by ungodly people, he started disobeying the word of the Lord and this led to the downfall of an entire nation. Yet another example of Israel getting things wrong, it would have been so easy for God to give up on them, but that isn't how God works is it? God still offers mercy and hope to His people.

As citizens of this land, we of course must show respect and honour to our new monarch, but in amongst all the pomp and ceremony of the next few weeks, I want to urge you to keep your eyes fixed on our true King, our risen Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. Where earthly rulers are subject to human failings, our King in heaven will always be a strong and stable foundation for us to build our lives on. So let us enjoy everything that is going to happen this month, but let us always remember to worship the King of kings.

GOODBYE TO TRAIDCRAFT

John Carrick Smith shares his report to Church Meeting, as the Traidcraft stall, sadly, prepares to close after many successful years.

It is with sadness that I report to Church Meeting that Traidcraft plc went into administration at the end of January this year and, after 41 years working for trade justice, is no longer trading.

There has been a Traidcraft stall at London Street for most of that time (since 1986) and Margaret and I have run it since 1987. That's 36 years - and almost to the day!

In that time we have sold over £110,000 worth of goods through the stall although not all of it at London Street having held events at other churches and in people's homes.

There have been many achievements made during Traidcraft's lifetime that are to be celebrated, but also there is still much work to be done to achieve global trade justice. When we started few people outside churches had heard of Fair Trade, now you will have seen that many retailers stock Fair Trade items. I encourage those of you with Internet access to look at some of the websites on the fair-trade suppliers document Owen circulated for us.

Thank you to London Street URC for initially providing the capital for buying stock for the stall (long since paid back I hasten to add) and, after the refurbishment of the church buildings, for providing an on-site storage facility. It was a relief that we didn't need to find space at home for all the stock and lug boxes to and fro each week as we had been doing.

Thank you too to those who have bought from the stall, you have made our efforts worthwhile. I'm afraid the stock available now is very, very limited, and when we deem that the time is right we'll close the stall.

But with your help **WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE**. Yes, it is sad that Traidcraft plc has gone but there are other businesses who have picked up the baton. Please keep looking for the Fair-Trade logo and keep fighting poverty through trade.

The charitable work of Traidcraft carries on. The charitable arm of the organisation was separated from the trading company some years ago and is now called "Transform Trade" having previously been named "Traidcraft Exchange". So the training and campaigning work etc. goes on and deserves our support.

Over the years the trading surplus from the stall has been used to make donations to Traidcraft Exchange and also this church. And when the stall has been finally sorted out, we will bring a proposal to Church Meeting on the dispersal of the balance of funds remaining in the account.

[UPDATE: After Church Meeting we received information from Transform Trade that a benefactor was doubling all donations made

before the end of April. With the agreement of the Church Secretary the total funds of £1,271.68 have been sent to Transform Trade to take advantage of this.]

We've enjoyed doing it. We've learnt a lot about international trade and the morally repugnant behaviour of some businesses. We've enjoyed handling some lovely items - and have bought quite a few too. We've enjoyed food (especially chocolate) that has been wonderfully tasty. We've learnt about the skill and determination of individuals, in the UK and the global south, who wouldn't accept the status quo and through their efforts have changed it. We've enjoyed a couple of Traidcraft Reps' Conferences and meeting staff at local events. We've been blessed by the support we've received from many people, but after 36 years we're relieved in some ways to be letting it go.

A heartfelt "Thank You" from us both.

THE PRAYER CIRCLE

Please remember the following people in your prayers...

Carys Haywood

Shirley Craft

Eric and Christine Clucas

Stan and Sandra Marut

Archie, grandson of Chris Jones

Doina Rasnita

Tony Chan

Claire Macro

Beverley Cantwell

Liz Lindsay and family

The Patterson family

Christine Weaver

Karen Jones

Linda Hicks

Joyce Cook

DAILY BIBLE READINGS



This month's assigned readings.

	Psalm	New Testament		Psalm	New
1st	52: 6-9	Luke 20: 1-26	17th	60: 5-12	John 3: 22-36
2nd	53	Luke 20: 27 - 21: 4	18th	61	John 4: 1-26
3rd	54	Luke 21: 5-19	19th	62: 1-8	John 4: 27-42
4th	55: 1-8	Luke 21: 20-38	20th	62: 9-12	John 5: 1-23
5th	55: 9-15	Luke 22: 1-30	21st	63: 1-5	John 5: 24-47
6th	55: 16-23	Luke 22: 31-53	22nd	63: 6-11	John 6: 1-24
7th	56: 1-7	Luke 22: 54-71	23rd	64: 1-6	John 6: 25-47
8th	56: 8-13	Luke 23: 1-25	24th	64: 7-10	John 6: 48-71
9th	57: 1-6	Luke 23: 26-49	25th	65: 1-8	John 7: 1-24
10th	57: 7-11	Luke 23: 50 - 24: 12	26th	65: 9-13	John 7: 25-53
11th	58: 1-5	Luke 24: 13-35	27th	66: 1-7	John 8: 1-30
12th	58: 6-11	Luke 24: 36-53	28th	66: 8-15	John 8: 31-59
13th	59: 1-8	John 1: 1-28	29th	66:16-20	John 9: 1-17
14th	59: 9-13	John 1: 29-51	30th	67	John 9: 18-41
15th	59: 14-17	John 2	31st	73: 21-28	John 10: 1-21
16th	60: 1-4	John 3: 1-21			

EVENT DIARIES



What's on this month at London St. & Old Meeting URCs.

At London Street URC (unless otherwise specified):

Regular Events

Sunday Worship 10:30am			
Mondays	10:15am	Craft Group	
	7:30pm	Take Time Meditation (Exploring Mark's Gospel)	On Zoom. Contact Church Secretary for password.
Tuesdays	2:30pm	Take Time Meditation (Exploring Luke's Gospel)	On Zoom. Contact Church Secretary for password.
	5:45-6:45pm	Beavers	In Term Time.
	7-8:30pm	Cubs	All in the Den except Scouts who meet in the Wessex Hall.
	7-9pm	Scouts	
Wednesdays	10:15am	3Cs Coffee, Chat and Company	3rd Wednesday of the Month Only (17th).
	10:15am	Memory Tree Social Club	
	12:15pm	Lunchtime Prayers	

Other Events

Wed 3rd	7:30pm	Elders' Meeting	On Zoom.
Sun 7th	8:30am	Prayer Breakfast	In the Hook Room.

May Worship Diary

7th	Led by Revd. Josh Thomas; Musician: Mark Best; Duty Elder: Kengjise Moavu.
14th	Parade Service Led by 8th Basingstoke Scouts; Musician: Mark Best; Duty Elder: Kengjise Moavu.
21st	Includes Holy Communion Led by Peter Bentall; Musician: Peter Dixon; Duty Elder: Kengjise Moavu.
28th	Led by John Sinclair; Musician: Mark Best; Duty Elder: Kengjise Moavu.

At Tadley (Old Meeting) URC (unless otherwise specified):

Regular Events

Sunday Worship 10:30am		
Monday Afternoons	Ladies' Cell Group	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Monday Evenings	Cell Group	Contact Mark Ward or Paul Gross.
Tuesday Evenings	Joint Prayer Time with St Paul's	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Wednesday Evenings	Prayer via Zoom	Contact Mark Ward.
Friday Afternoon	Men's Shed	2pm, once a fortnight. Contact Paul Gross.

May Worship Diary

7th	CTAT Coronation Celebration Service, 11am at Tadley Green
14th	TBC.
21st	Led by Mark Ward.
28th	No service at Old Meeting.

London Street United Reformed Church

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.

London Street United Reformed Church is a working name of Registered Charity London Street (Basingstoke) United Reformed Church Charity [reg. no. 1130801]