



London Street

United Reformed Church

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



FOCUS

November, 2022

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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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: Vacancy

Church Secretary: Paul Gross
22 Pelican Road, Pamber Heath RG26 3EN
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Treasurer: Mark Ward
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From our Interim Minister:

I often wonder how many of these introductory messages I have and will end up writing for church magazines. It would be wonderful to have a standard format, but the truth is that each and every single church is so different, and you'll all want to know different things about me which can only be found out by having conversations as the weeks and months unfold. I'll start with the basics...

I'm Josh and I have been commissioned by the synod and by you to spend a year (initially) working amongst you as your interim minister. Quite what this means, no one is yet absolutely sure! I'm married to Hannah, and we have two children – Isla, who is five and Joel who has just turned three. Hannah works as a teaching assistant in the world's smallest school (not actually proven but I have a hunch – do ask her about it) and I, am also minister to Petersfield and Liss United Reformed Church who became one church on two sites just before I arrived in post. I had been working alongside a new church plant in Bordon, about ten miles away from Petersfield. When I arrived, I had 25% of my time to give to this project but really, they were already very well scoped and had a further 150% of ministry from the Anglican church who had provided a full-time vicar and the Methodist church who were funding a 50% deacon to the role. There was a long and complicated situation in which the church plant and the established church in the town were being brought back together to be one church in Bordon again and for a brief time, I was the only man standing and so I felt my ministry to that group of people was useful in helping them to deal with all that was changing for them. When things settled down though, and a new 150% of ministry came to the town, I felt and synod conquered, that my 25% of ministry could be better used to serve elsewhere.

Now obviously, 25% of my time is nowhere near the equivalent of having a full-time minister of your own. I'm sure you are all aware of the current situation regarding the deployment of ministry in Wessex Synod and I recognise that this will have its frustrations for many of you. 25% roughly equates to one day a week and one Sunday a month. Until Christmas, I shall be with you every Monday and will be in and around the church if anyone would value a conversation. From the 7th of November, you'll be aware that we are running an alpha course and I shall be involved in this but from about 10am-11.15, I am around and then again from about

3-4.30pm. Timings might change slightly in the New Year as currently, we are trying to maintain a fine balancing act of childcare and both Hannah and I needing to work. This will become easier in January as Joel will start to get his hours at pre-school funded and it won't need to be quite the precision balancing act that it currently is for us, allowing a greater deal of flexibility!

So, although I won't be able to do all the things that your previous ministers might have done, I will do what I can to help London Street to grow and to develop its mission strategy over the next twelve months or so. I have spent the past few weeks, having conversations with the eldership as the church's leadership team to try and establish some common missional aims as well as just getting to know them. I'd be delighted to hear your views on what is important to you as well, do grab me for a chat. Once I have gotten to know you all a little better and seen how things are currently working, I'll be trying to work alongside the elders and the church wider, to put things in place for us to both grow outwards and to grow together. Conversation is one of my favourite things about ministry, I love to hear people's stories and although I'm not around a huge amount, I want you to feel like you can come to me and the eldership to share what is going on for you in your lives. Each one of us is on a journey of faith and thankfully, we do not walk the road alone. God has blessed us with brothers and sisters to come alongside us, to help build us up and to encourage us in our walk with Jesus. I want to encourage you and I hope you'll want to encourage me as well and so, for the next year or however long we are together, let's communicate well and look for opportunities to build one another up, not knock down, knowing that we are all striving to see Christ's Kingdom established in our small corner of this world.

Your brother in Christ,
Josh.

Thought for the month:

Life to the full?

John 10 : 9-10

Life is often described as a journey full of experiences, some common to all and others unique to us as individuals. Choices are made; there are chance meetings that have lifelong consequences. We follow the activities that interest us and the people who we feel comfortable with. We put effort into the activities that we want to get better at. And out of this comes, we hope, a mature, well rounded, balanced person surrounded by loving family and friends and the knowledge of a reasonably 'successful' life. Well that's what most people would hope for isn't it? And nothing wrong with that.

For the Christian it could look like that too except, we have been called to a more exciting journey into the unknown. In our calling and acceptance we have committed ourselves to be Jesus' disciples. To be willing to say 'yes' to going where he sends us, mixing with people he brings to us, acknowledging and living in beliefs and views that a large part of the population would find difficult and never to experience Retirement! Yet as we commit to follow Him he has promised us life in all its fullness. There is so much more to learn and experience in our life with Him. We may not feel we are up to this but as he has promised he will meet our needs on a daily basis. There is so much more to the Christian life than the ordinary secular life, as many Christians can bear witness to. So courage; let us take each day as it comes and keep close to Him.

PS Even better if we do this together to encourage and support each other.

Dear Lord Jesus we ask for forgiveness where we have failed you. We do desire to follow you day by day, for you have the words of life and truth and wholeness. We ask that you will give us seeing eyes and hearing ears that we may be attentive to your voice and a willing spirit to follow your call. And we ask that you will be patient as we can be slow to learn. Amen



Circle of Prayer

Please remember the following in your prayers:

London Street - Beverley Cantwell and family; Christine Clucas; Kay Cook; Sandy and Liz Lindsay; Stan and Sandra Marut; Maggie Morgans and family; Betty Shipway; the Patterson family; Isobel Martin and Doina Rasnita.

The family and friends of Christine Holt who died on 5th October and of Jean Holton who died on 7th October. London Street has benefitted greatly from their contributions in the Junior Church and as Church Archivist respectively. There will be Thanksgiving Services held at London Street on 11th November at 11.30am for Chris and on 25th November at 3.00pm for Jean.

—oOo—

Tadley Old Meeting prayer list: Christine Weaver; Linda Hicks; Sam Hicks.



Lucas Stanley (14) on the 2nd
Ethan Honeyball (14) on the 24th



Church Flowers – If you would like to celebrate an anniversary or birthday by donating the flowers on the first Sunday of the month in 2023, please contact Liz Lindsay (details in the Church Directory).

You do not need to arrange the flowers, unless you wish to, as we have a Flower Committee who can arrange them for you.

Daily Bible Readings for November:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
1 st	77:1-15	Reflection		16 th 95	1 Thessalonians 2
2 nd	93	John 13		17 th 119:49-64	" 3
3 rd	77:16-20	" 14		18 th 15	" 4
4 th	118:15-29	" 15		19 th 119:65-80	" 5
5 th	9:1-16	" 16		20 th 16	2 Thessalonians. 1
6 th	119:1-16	" 17		21 st 50:1-15	Reflection
7 th	79	Reflection		22 nd 82	"
8 th	48	"		23 rd 96	2 Thessalonians. 2
9 th	80	John 18		24 th 119:81-96	" 3
10 th	94:12-23	" 19		25 th 17	2 Peter 1
11 th	119:17-32	" 20		26 th 119:97-112	" 2
12 th	12	" 21		27 th 18:1-19	" 3
13 th	119:33-48.	1 Thessalonians 1		28 th 51:1-13	Reflection
14 th	13.	Reflection		29 th 84	"
15 th	81:1-10	"		30 th 97	Jude 1

Ffaldy y Brenin

ECO TIP:

Save energy when cooking by using a pressure cooker, a slow cooker or microwave. When using the oven always use it for multiple items and afterwards leave the oven door open to allow the residual heat to heat up the rooms.

FOCUS –

The next issue of FOCUS will cover December and January, 2023. Please let Matthew Dumbleton have any articles and/or letters for inclusion no later than **SUNDAY, 13th NOVEMBER.**



NOT EVERYONE CAN READ THIS

If you can read this, you have a strange mind too. I couldn't believe that I could actually understand what I was reading. The phenomenal power of the human mind, according to a researcher at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be in the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without a problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole. Amazing huh? Yeah and I always thought spelling was important! If you can read this **SHARE IT**

Can you read this?
Only 55 people out of 100 can.



7.

Alpha Course

Rev'd Josh Thomas is to lead an Alpha Course at London Street starting Monday 7th November for 10 sessions.

Each session will last about 90 minutes and will start at 1.00pm (NOT MIDDAY AS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED) with the provision of a light lunch - homemade soup and bread.

Every participant will be given an Alpha Guest Manual. This serves as a guide through the talks and illustrates key points, as well as providing space for notes and questions.

If you want to know more about the Alpha Course please have a word with Josh.

8.

Our Mission outside

London Street URC's café was set up over twenty years ago. to bless the local community. But alongside what you would expect café to offer, the manager and team soon began working with local supermarkets, to collect food waste destined for landfill, offering it to anyone who wanted it. They also prepared food boxes, for those in need. By Spring 2020 this work had grown and the charity, 'The Community Food Link, (CFL) established, to coordinate collection from supermarkets, with delivery through local churches. Little did they realise then, how this work would grow or how important it would become.

At the end of 2019 after losing my job, I volunteered in the café and youth café a couple of days a week. Though this time was challenging for me financially, it gave me the opportunity to take stock to discern where God was leading me. I realised how unhappy I had been in my work. My busy, 40-hour week had meant I was neglecting my spiritual life and church commitments. The daily rhythm of the café beginning with team prayer and a bible reading, often ending with prayers over the conversations we had had during the day, reignited my faith.

With lockdown, this work became vital. When the café doors closed, we offered meals on wheels and CFL moved into our basement. With collections from at least three supermarkets daily distributing to five hubs, offering food to those in need or concerned about the impact of food waste in landfill.

As I served in this context, with prayer part of my day together with our minister's inspiring 'Take-Time' Zoom sessions. I found 'myself praying and studying the bible regularly and feeling 'like me for the first time in years.

The CFL got to the stage where volunteers cars were not enough to collect the volume of food coming in out, so we prayed. Then we received a grant covering the full cost of a refrigerated van. However, by the end of 2021 one van was not enough. We prayed again and a supermarket offered us one of their refrigerated delivery vans, even adding the CFL and sponsors liveries free of charge!

As we approached autumn 2020, with Covid still rife, we realised running night shelters that winter would be impossible. Though most of the homeless had some sort of night accommodation, many had nowhere to go during the day. The local Debenhams had shut their restaurant with no

plans to re-open it and gave CFL the dried goods and packaging left in their larder. Using this plus bulk food, we had received we decided to start a hot food table outside the front of church.

The table offers a hot takeaway meal, the opportunity to talk to and be prayed for if desired. It took people a while to understand we do not ask for anything in return. But by the Christmas 2020, we had around twenty plus people coming every day. From the homeless, to local business owners, families struggling financially to those simply passing, who were lonely or simply appreciative of a chat over a hot soup.

Two years later, we are still going four days a week. Not just with those who came during lockdown. Now we have college students and those returning to town after working from home. We start each lunch time session with team prayer, and after the table has closed, we share a meal together.

During 2021 we had so much food coming to CFL we created a weekend hub. I started standing outside our church on Saturdays with a table and crates of fruit and veg, like a market stall holder calling “Stop! Free supermarket food! Save this fruit and veg from going to landfill! By the autumn of 2021 we realised we needed to do more.

Now every Saturday, we have a team serving about twenty crates of food, to around forty households. Giving us the opportunity to support those in need practically, as well as spiritually. We often have conversations about life and why we are there.

Although I am now employed, I have been able to share with others how invaluable the café team and CFL’s prayer and support were for me. Hopefully reassuring them it is good to ask for help, stressing Christ’s compassion is there for all. That Jesus’ ministry was not only based in places of worship, he also went outside, where the people were. Although we do need to spend time within our congregations, this whole experience challenged me personally, about what is important in my life.

Karen Bell

Karen Bell is a member of London Street URC Basingstoke and Clerk to the Wessex Synod.

Our Mission - Growing Together.

Arising from our Church Meeting on 21st September, there was a strong desire to see activities that bring everyone closer. This included bible studies, prayer groups, social groups involving the opening of the cafe on Wednesdays as a start, and general social events. Such aims are great, but they require a lot of hard work and organisation that can not be left to just the Elders, or those who are already heavily committed either in church or in their life outside church. We therefore need volunteers. Firstly as a working group to consider what can be achieved, and secondly volunteers to run the events. Offers please in the first instance to me. Thanks, Owen.

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS AND MEETINGS (all at Old Meeting, Tadley unless otherwise stated) **SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10.30am**

November

Sun 6 th	10.30	Mark Ward
Sun 13 th		No service at Old Meeting
Sun 20 th	10.30	Ed Vassie
Sun 27 th		No service at Old Meeting

REGULAR Weekly EVENTS AT TADLEY:

- Monday evening - Cell group - contact Mark Ward or Paul Gross
- Tuesday evening - joint prayer time with St Paul's - contact Penny O'Bee
- Wednesday evening - prayer - 7pm via Zoom - contact Mark Ward
- Friday afternoon - Men's Shed - contact Paul Gross
(2pm once a fortnight)
- Saturday afternoon - Ladies Cell group - contact Penny O'Bee

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS AND MEETINGS

(all at London Street, unless otherwise stated)

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10.30am

<i>Mondays:</i>	10.15am	Craft Group
<i>Tuesdays:</i>	10.15am	Little Angels
	5.30pm	Beavers) IN TERM TIME
	6.30pm	Cubs) in the Hook Room
	7.30pm	Scouts) in the Wessex Hall
<i>Wednesdays:</i>	10.15am	3Cs (Coffee, Chat and Company on the 3rd Wednesday of each month})
	10.30am	Memory Tree Social Club
	-12 noon	
	12.15pm	Lunchtime Prayers

Diary - November, 2022

(at London Street, unless otherwise stated)

Sun	6 th	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast in the Hook Room
		10.30am	Worship, led by Karen Smith
Fri	11 th	11.30am	Thanksgiving Service for Christine Holt
Sun	13 th	10.30am	Remembrance Sunday, Worship, led by Vivien Gerhold

Deadline for articles for December FOCUS

Wed.	16 th	10.15am	3Cs
Sun	20 th	10.30am	Worship, led by Peter Bentall followed by shared lunch at 12.15pm and Church Meeting at 1.15pm in the Hook Room
Fri	25 th	3.00pm	Thanksgiving Service for Jean Holton
Sun	27 th	10.30am	Worship, led by Revd Josh Thomas

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]