



London Street

United Reformed Church

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



Focus
November, 2021

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Membership and Eldership

I'm beginning this article for Focus sitting in the vestry in front of my laptop with a coffee. It's 7.45am on a Monday morning and very quiet apart from Lou cleaning the floor in the kitchen.

I've just opened my inbox, but rather than deal with my emails, I feel called to write an article on matters that I'm currently engaged in.

The first is membership; membership of the United Reformed Church. A person within the congregation approached me after the service conducted by Joy enquiring about becoming a member.

The URC is a Christian church in the Reformed tradition. This acknowledges that the Church, as a community, saved by God's grace, should always be open to learn and to change as it seeks to follow Christ and his ministry in a changing world. The URC resulted from a union of the Presbyterian Church in England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales in 1972, with the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ in 1981, and with the Congregational Union of Scotland in 2000. The URC believes strongly in our unity with other Christians and seeks to bring all Christians together.

Becoming a church member means becoming a recognised part of the world-wide family of Christians. This is a community of people who believe in God. Being part of this family encourages us in our faith as we work together to show God's love and mercy to the world. The URC welcomes all to attend its worship and other activities, and all who attend are part of the community and life of the church. Becoming a member of the URC enables you to take part in the life of the whole Church, including its decision-making bodies.

Acknowledging Christ as the head of the Church, the URC makes its decisions corporately when its members meet formally in councils. There are three different levels of decision making in the URC. These consist of the local Church Meeting; the Synod, which brings together representatives of local churches in a geographical area; and the General Assembly, representing the whole of the Church in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The congregations, as we do here at London Street, hold Church Meetings which are open to all, but at which only church members may vote. As a member here at London Street, you are encouraged to share in the life of the church. Most do this by participating in weekly worship, attending Church Meetings, contributing financially to the work of the church, and taking part in its activities.

If you feel you might want to become a member of London Street, and would like to know more, have a word with either myself, a serving elder or Jenny McCloy. We will be only too happy to advise you and guide you through the process. Jenny and I will be starting a membership course shortly.

This leads me quite nicely onto my second matter which is Eldership. I have recently asked the serving Elders to contact those who have been validly nominated to consider election as to whether they wish to accept nomination.

In the URC, the eldership of a local congregation is a significant ministry – the Elders share responsibility, with the Minister of Word and Sacraments, for the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The Elders’ meeting is intended to be a distinctive and vital part of every URC congregation – with the Elders collectively possessing the abilities, skills and spiritual gifts of leadership. At its best, the Elders’ meeting is at the heart of every local congregation, providing impetus and positive influence on the mission, witness and service of the church. In short, Elders play an essential role in enabling the congregation to live fruitful lives as God’s people.

Eldership is, without doubt, challenging and over the years the role of Elder has changed significantly. When I became an Elder I don’t believe the term ‘safeguarding’ existed and I certainly knew nothing about the financial responsibilities of the local church and what it meant to be a ‘trustee’! Challenging – yes; fulfilling – certainly, with the potential to make significant, creative and exciting contributions not only to the life of London Street, but our local community and of course the wider URC. Eldership is not a rite of passage having served the church as a member. It is a privilege and a responsibility, a calling and as I mentioned, deeply fulfilling.

At the last church meeting I touched upon the changes within the URC as to the role of Ministers of Word and Sacrament. The Synod has invited all churches to respond to its changing context and what it means for local churches. What will it mean for London Street? One thing is certain.

During our vacancy and during this period of consultation and beyond, the role of elders will change. It has to. The Elders have always played a key part in the leadership at London Street. It has to respond to the needs and circumstances we now find ourselves in.

The most common practice in the URC and which we follow at London Street, is for a three-year term of service, renewable by agreement of the Church Meeting and the Elder taking a mandatory sabbatical of at least a year after six years of service.

As I draft this article I don't know who has accepted nomination. By the time you read this you will shortly receive your ballot form for those who have accepted nomination. They will have accepted nomination as a call to eldership.

This is probably one of the most important Elders' election we have had for some time with changes not just at London Street but within the wider URC. As a key part of the leadership team here at London Street, they will play a pivotal role. Without doubt it will be challenging but with a combination of the right skills, the eldership team will be able to rise to these challenges and make significant, creative and exciting contributions to the life of London Street.

So who do you see as being called to carry out these functions? You are being asked to consider prayerfully who God is seeking to join the current eldership team. When praying you are not seeking to find an individual who is gifted in all the functions of eldership. This is collective work. However, all serving elders are expected to have integrity, a commitment to prayer, ability to keep confidential information confidential; listening and communication skills and a willingness to be supportive of colleagues.

Blessings, Owen

Hospital Chaplaincy:

The Chaplaincy Department at Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with hospitals in Andover, Basingstoke and Winchester, is offering a Free Chaplaincy Volunteers Training Course. This is for anyone interested in exploring HealthCare Chaplaincy. A certificate will be issued upon completion of the course and there is no obligation to volunteer.

If interested please let Owen know and he will send you further details.

A Thought for the Month

John chapter 14. *Jesus said: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me I go to prepare a place for you The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

Recently an official NHS envelope like the ones you receive after tests or telling you that an appointment has been made dropped on my door mat. I wasn't expecting anything like that, I had had my booster and flu jab so the only thing I could think of was that something had shown up on my last CT scan taken in July and they were just getting around to telling me. As I opened it my heart did flutter a bit, although I didn't think there was a problem, and found an invitation from the psychiatry dept. to take part in a survey. The reason being that just over five years ago I had undergone major surgery for the removal of a malignant tumour on my colon and they wanted to know how I had been affected, mentally, by the possibility of the cancer returning. Well, my heart did flutter as I opened the letter, so obviously I am aware of the possibility and, doing the survey, which was mainly to discover how much the possibility worried me, did increase that awareness but thankfully I do not worry about it. The fact is that right from the time I was diagnosed I haven't been worried. It truly was and is a peace that is beyond human understanding for which I am so grateful. Surrendering everything to the Lord Jesus in faith and trust is the key. The Holy Spirit has come to us as promised and He makes it possible for us to take our feet off the bottom of the pool and to trust in God's love for each one of us, personally, whatever happens.

Much blessing, Joy

Eco Tip:

Make sure that you're getting the full benefit of the energy in your lamps by wiping dust off lighting fixtures and bulbs every few months.



Circle of Prayer

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

London Street: Rob Williams; Beverley Cantwell; Ian and Jenny McCloy and family; David and Julie Bath; Claire Macro; Keng and Rita and family; Christine Glucas and family; Hyacinth Ridguard; Betty Shipway; Maggie Morgans and family; the family of Phyllis Birchmore; Gill Craft; the Patterson family.

Tadley: Christine Weaver; Martin; Kerry; Oliver, Linda and Sam; Rachel Eaves; Philip Ward.

Please also pray for Peter Pay known to many from the Synod.



Lucas Stanley, 14 years on 2 November
Ethan Honeyball, 14 years on 24 November

10.30 Rota for November:

	Preacher	Musician.	Duty Elder	Steward
7 th	David Grant	Ian Rees	Alison Jamieson	Wai Leng Ayland
14 th	Rev Mike Burrell	Alex Macro	Alison Jamieson	Liz & Sandy Lindsay
21 st	Rev Howard Sharp	Peter Dixon	Joy Williams	Christine Holt
28 th	Junior Church	Mark Best	Joy Williams	Ian Scott

Christian Crackers:

“Despite inflation the wages of sin remain the same”

“More sinners wanted for the choir”

On an Estate Agent’s board outside a redundant church:

“For Sale - Suitable for conversion”

Bible Readings for November:

		Psalm	New Testament	
Mon	1 st	77:1-15	John	12
Tue	2 nd	93	"	13
Wed	3 rd	77:16-20	"	14
Thu	4 th	118:15-29	"	15
Fri	5 th	9:1-116	"	16
Sat	6 th	119:1-16	Reflection	
Sun	7 th	79	"	
Mon	8 th	48	John	17
Tue	9 th	80	"	18
Wed	10 th	94:12-23	"	19
Thu	11 th	119:17-32	"	20
Fri	12 th	12	"	21
Sat	13 th	119:33-48	Reflection	
Sun	14 th	13	"	
Mon	15 th	81:1-10	1 Thessalonians	1
Tue	16 th	95	"	2
Wed	17 th	119:49-64	"	3
Thu	18 th	15	"	4
Fri	19 th	119:65-80	"	5
Sat	20 th	16	Reflection	
Sun	21 st	50:1-15	"	
Mon	22 nd	82	2 Thessalonians	1
Tue	23 rd	96	"	2
Wed	24 th	119:81-96	"	3
Thu	25 th	17	2 Peter	1
Fri	26 th	119:97-112	"	2
Sat	27 th	18:1-19	Reflection	
Sun	28 th	51:1-13	"	
Mon	29 th	84	2 Peter	3
Tue	30 th	97	Jude	1

Ffald-y-Brenin

Oh Dear

Arriving at church to attend a wedding, a lady in a large hat was tackled by the usher: 'Are you a friend of the groom?' 'Certainly not' she replied, 'I'm the bride's mother'.

TRADCRAFT AT LONDON STREET

Thanks to all those who have responded to our request for views and ideas about the resumption of Traidcraft stalls after worship. Thanks too to those who bought from us when we opened the stall for the first time since March 2020. We almost sold out of chocolate, but don't worry, we have restocked!

We plan to run the stall on the first Sunday of each month, and may additionally do so on other weeks when we are there. Remember that you can order goods through us, either by sending us an email or by giving us a hard copy of the order on a Sunday. If you do it that way, there will be no postage charge. Of course, if you prefer, you can order direct from Traidcraft at Traidcraftshop.co.uk.

Thanks again. All your purchases help some of the world's poorest people to earn a decent income with dignity.

Margaret and John Carrick Smith

For your Diary and Action:

– A Christmas Celebration

I would like us, as a church fellowship, to meet, relax, and enjoy some festive fun before Christmas.

I am therefore planning to arrange a Christmas Party for both adults and children on Saturday 11th December. Following the party London St URC will be holding its Christmas Carol Service and you will be invited to join with us at this worship.

Please bring your children, grandchildren, friends, and family. There will be no charge for the party, but you will be asked, later, to bring items of food to share. A visit from Father Christmas is also expected.

The party will commence at 3.30pm with the Carol Service following at 6.30pm

– Church Meeting 21st November 1.15pm

Please attend this important meeting to discuss the work and plans involved at London St URC.

A fellowship lunch will be served after the morning worship, and all are welcome to attend. We shall serve a one course meal of Shepherd's Pie. A vegetarian option will be available.

Please add your name to the list on the church notice board if you would like to join us for the meal.

Gill Miller

CAROL SERVICE ON 11th DECEMBER

London Street URC has always enjoyed singing especially at the Carols For All evenings. I wonder how many of you come along and at the end of the service think "I enjoyed that but my favourite was missing".

This year we are very lucky that Peter Dixon is coming to play the organ for us.

This is where your choice comes in. Near the end of October a form will be given to you to enter your three favourite carols that you would like to be included. Do not worry whether or not they are in the hymn book as I am sure we will find the words and music amongst our collection or on line. Perhaps you might like to add a reason why that carol is special to you.

These forms will come back to me near the end of November and we can collate the answers. Obviously the aim is to get a good balance of the whole story of Christmas with your choice.

So whichever Carols (Christmas Songs) are selected you will have had a chance of your favourite being one of those we sing if you fill in and return the form.

I aim to distribute the form by the end of October with a return deadline of 22nd November.

Joyce Cook.

War and Peace



1. War is not a new thing
It's been here from the start
When Cain slew brother Abel
And their lives were torn apart.

2. Brother still fights brother
And nations go to war,
It seems these things will never end
Perhaps we need to ask 'what for?'

3. Man has chosen his own path
Where might and power tell
But God desires a better way
Where harmony and peace can dwell.

4. And so a time will come at last
When all man's rule will cease
Emmanuel will come to reign
Our Lord and Saviour, Prince of Peace.

By Megan Carter

Hello from the "Sounds of Hope Singers"

My name is Peter Saint and I founded this group back in 2013 and now we reside in your lovely church. So who and what is "Sounds of Hope Singers", I hear you ask? Well I am glad you did.

We are a group of singers from different churches in and around the Basingstoke area with an aim of spreading the good news of God's love to the lovely people of Basingstoke through music and song. We built the group of singers over the years and, before the lockdown, we visited care homes and local prison to share our faith with others. We have found that music can have more impact than the spoken word and for some people music unlock them from their conditions, that are locking their memories. We have also held traditional Christmas and Easter services and also been involved with singing in the Malls.

Now the lockdown has been lifted we are starting to get back together again after 18 months to see what God has in store for us. We sing in the traditional way in parts and sing both traditional and contemporary Christian music and use some secular music where there is a suitable message. We have a wide range of both singing and reading music abilities and so are open for anyone who loves to sing the good news.

We are hoping to hold a traditional service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" on Friday 17th December, so why not put the date in your diary and come along and join us and bring your friends!

We have a great time of fun, rehearsing together each Monday evening and there is a great sense of community and we would love others to join us and help us with our aim. Why not come along one evening and give it a try, have a taster before you join, all are welcome.

We rehearse from 7:30 to 9:30 with a refreshment break half way through the evening. If you don't read music, no problem, we can help with some audio tracks to help you learn your part, plus those around you will help.

We welcome any Christian, so please do share this with others who might be interested. If someone would like to join who is not a Christian, that would be great too, they may even find God!!

Just a quick word on the COVID precautions, we have the front doors open during rehearsals to allow fresh air into the church, and the church is large enough to practice social distancing as each individual desires.

Thank you for allowing us to use your lovely church and we look forward to see what God has for us in the future.

God Bless, Peter Saint.

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>	5.30pm	Beavers) IN TERM TIME
	6.30pm	Cubs) all in the Wessex Hall
	7.30pm	Scouts)
	9.00pm	Night Time Prayers on Zoom*
<i>Wednesdays:</i>	10.15am	3Cs (Coffee, Chat and Company on the 3rd Wednesday of each month)
	10.30am-12 noon	Memory Tree Social Club
	12.15pm	Lunchtime Prayers
	3.00pm	Well-being on Zoom*
<i>Thursdays:</i>	5.30pm	Midweek Prayers on Zoom*

*Zoom invite code can be found on the church website www.basingstokeurc.org.uk

Diary - November, 2021

(at London Street, unless otherwise stated)

Tue 2 nd	14.30pm	Funeral Service for Phyllis Birchmore
Sun 7 th	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast in the Hook Room
	10.30am	Worship led by David Grant
Sun 14 th	10.30am	Remembrance Sunday - Worship led by Revd Mike Burrell
Deadline for articles for December FOCUS		
Wed. 17 th	10.15am	3Cs
Sun 21 st	10.30am	Worship led by Revd Howard Sharp. Service includes the Baptism of Ruby Iris Honeyball-Todd and Holy Communion
	12.15pm	Fellowship Meal followed at 1.15pm by Church Meeting
Sun 28 th	10.30am	Worship led by Junior Church

TADLEY SERVICES:

- Nov. 7th - joining with St Paul's church Tadley
- 14th - joining with London St URC (Remembrance Sunday)
- 21st - Karen Jones - 'Advent Glass' workshop (Old Meeting church)
- 28th - Rob and Jan Lloyd.

Regular Weekly events -

- Monday afternoon - Ladies Cell Zoom meeting (contact Penny O'Bee)
- Monday 7.30 pm - evening Cell group Zoom (contact Mark Ward)
- Tuesday 7pm - Prayer meeting on Zoom (St Paul's and Tadley URC) (Penny O'Bee)
- Wednesday 7pm - Prayer meeting on Zoom (Tadley URC) (Mark Ward)
- Thursday 10-12 noon - Little Angels toddler group in Immanuel Centre (contact Ena Menarry)
- Friday 2-3 pm - Men's Shed at Immanuel Centre (alternate weeks) (Paul Gross)

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]