



London Street

United Reformed Church

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



FOCUS
October, 2019

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - www.basingstokeurc.org.uk

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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)

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View from the Manse:



“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

(Matthew 5:3-8)

Last week I visited the real ‘Hogwarts’, that dining hall of Harry Potter fame. It is the location of some of the Harry Potter filming, so apparently now a ‘must see’ item on the Chinese tourist trail (they arrived in constant flow!). But I was not on the tourist trail, I was part of the Festival of preaching being held at Christchurch college in Oxford. I was, for two days, closeted within these walls of privilege and sacred learning. On the first night after a high church evensong service, we were treated to a gala dinner in the great ‘Hogwarts’ dining hall (pictured above). As we sat and feasted the great and the good of the past peered down upon us from the walls in their elaborate gilt-edged frames. With the exception of the portrait of Queen Elizabeth the second and a solitary female professor (the latter displayed at low level and by the exit door!) all were portraits of white middle aged to elderly men of power and influence. Around me sat many white male Bishops and many white male vicars but also a large numbers of learned women many of whom held the title of ‘Reverend’. I have to say that the representation of ethnic diversity in this group of theologians was still sadly lacking! It was a real eyeopener to the body of the ‘institution’ lagging so far behind the cultural shift of intelligent and inspiring women in leadership and of ethnic diversity. Some are thankfully now Bishops and

certainly professors but more need to be displayed on some important institutional walls, I think! The powerful institutions of this nation have some serious catching up to do! Being in such locations of historical privilege alongside an expectation of academic excellence I find rather uncomfortable and challenging. Much to my surprise the Festival of preaching was, almost without exception, an Anglican affair. I felt like a cheeky gate crasher turning up at a private party. People were as welcoming as possible, even as folk discovered that I didn't have a parish, didn't work with a Bishop and wasn't a vicar. One Bishop, with his colleague, very kindly even brought me a drink (out of pity because I was alone, I think!). I felt seriously like a fish out of water. But I was here to learn more about the craft of preaching that my denomination holds so dear. I knew that some of the speakers were excellent and I long to find challenging and fresh approaches to preaching. I resist the urge for the sermon to become the bit in a service when many settle deeper into the support of their chair and have a snooze until the next hymn. I love sermons that challenge, that leave you disturbed. Illustrations that stick in your head, phrases that wind through your memories like strips of poetry. Sermons that link our Bibles and our faith to real stuff happening in our lives and our world today (messy and uncomfortable though it may be at times). Sermons that both challenge prejudices, even if unseen, and love as Jesus showed us to do. In other words, sermons that make congregations think, and not just think 'nice sermon reverend' and forget. We should all enter into worship expecting God to turn up and transformation to happen.

It must be daunting to preach to a lecture hall full of professional preachers (they know that their audience will be scrutinising every word!). But we were presented with lectures and sermons that made us all think long and hard. On one day I met a lady who had sat next to me at the gala dinner on the first night. She told me that by lunchtime on the first day she had to withdraw and go to bed, missing the afternoon seminars, because she felt like she had already been metaphorically fed three enormous fillet steaks and her head was spinning. She needed to digest what she had heard!

I too still need to digest and reflect on that head spinning few days. What did I learn? Well too much to even outline here. But I came away encouraged that sermons can be injected with much creativity and playfulness. I have always struggled with the three point sermon formula.....it just doesn't fit me so it probably doesn't fit some of you either. Jesus was an amazing story teller, he told stories that challenged and turned people's perceptions upside-down. Story telling is a craft to be honed and practised. We all have stories to tell, we need to learn how to tell them well. We need to see Jesus in the midst of the ordinariness and the messiness of life. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for*

righteousness, for they will be filled.” Our nation politically and economically groans with uncertainty at the moment. Mental health illness seems to have become an epidemic (especially amongst the young), and yet the mental health support agencies are being cut at an alarming rate. Homelessness, hunger and poverty also are increasing. Churches apparently need to fill the ever-widening gaps in the social care for so many parts of our communities. This is the time for preaching, prayer and worship to get real and to get honest. Churches must never be allowed to become ivory towers of theory and theology that don’t practically reach out to the least, the lost and the broken where we are.

As I left the Holy and learned halls of Christchurch college in Oxford, my head spinning with high ideals and clever words, I was swiftly brought back to earth as I walked the streets of the city back to the station. Many areas of pavement had been taken over by an alternative cardboard city. One was even cleverly constructed into a two-room affair with a mattressed inner bedroom and outer porch containing table and chairs! *“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.....”* I felt a little ashamed of where I had come from. It is good, and sometimes necessary, to withdraw from the world in order to be spiritually fed and challenged, but as Christians we must continue to roll up our sleeves and deal with the physical as well as spiritual mess of life in this world. I’m not sure who this quote comes from.....so if you know please enlighten me (it is possibly Leslie Newbiggin), but, on my return I read and made a note of this statement *‘some live so much in the actual that they can’t see the ideal, but some live so much in the ideal that they are no earthly good!’*. It’s a tricky balance to maintain, but it is a bridge that Jesus came to build for us, a bridge between the heavenly and the earthly. Sometimes it is right, just for a little while, to be closeted away in our Christian communities of fellowship and love, but only in order to equip us to then go out and be Christlike disciples, who display the attitudes of Christ in the midst of a broken world.

Yours in Christ, Kay

Welcome

It was a joy and a delight on Sunday, 15th September to welcome the following friends into membership at London Street:

Adam and Kyla Payne on re-affirmation of faith and Lizzie and Molly Payne, Jo Tremarco and David Waller on profession of faith.



CIRCLE OF PRAYER:

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

Short Term: Barbara Banbury and sons Richard, Michael and Paul; Phyllis Birchmore; Debbie and John Brannam (daughter and son-in-law of Jean Young); Kay Cook; John Haynes; Lilian Meredith and family; Edmund Shaw; Betty Shipway.

Long Term: Beverley Cantwell; David and Tish Catterall; Christine Clucas; Aubrey Dommett (granddaughter of Beverley Cantwell); Penny Dilley; Carys Haywood and family; Claire Macro; Ron and Rosemary Martin; Maggie Morgans and family; Patterson family; Hyacinth Ridguard; Joyce Smith; Fay Spurr; Jo and Steve Tremarco; Matt Wise and family (wife Tiff and daughters Elsie and Amelie).

Prayer Focus

I have always liked hymns and songs. As a small child they were the only part of the service that I enjoyed and as I pestered my parents to sing a wide variety of them every night before I went to sleep, I learnt a lot of different ones. I liked the catchy tunes and the slightly scary ones best. Woe-betide Mum or Dad if they got the words wrong even if I didn't understand what they meant! The important thing to me now is that they stuck and snippets of those old ones continue to come to mind and over the years so many more have been added. Scripture songs are an easy and enjoyable way to remember Bible verses and anointed hymn writers express the deepest longings of our hearts in worship, praise and prayer often so much better than we, ourselves, can. We sing hymns every Sunday but how much time do we have to think about the words we are singing before we are on to the next line or verse? Very little to really take in their meaning and we are missing out on a lot of good stuff! Perhaps the answer is not to sing more slowly but to use a hymn book other than on a Sunday, it can be a very helpful tool in our quiet time with the Lord.

One of my favourite prayer hymns was written by John Hunter, No. 493 in "Rejoice and Sing"

"Dear Master in whose life I see all that I would but fail to be,
Let thy clear light for ever shine, to shame and guide this heart of mine.
Though what I dream and what I do in my weak days are always two,
Help me, oppressed by things undone, O thou whose dreams and deeds were one."

Prayer Focus

- Ask God to comfort those who find their lives torn apart by grief, loss, fear and trauma in many parts of the world.
- Ask God to give courage to church leaders seeking to bring Christ's presence and hope in the midst of suffering.
- Ask God to give clarity and wisdom to government and non-governmental agencies, blessing and supporting their efforts to bring justice, reconciliation and aid.

Daily Bible Readings for October:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		
1 st	40:9-17	1 John	3	16 th	4	John	2
2 nd	71:14-24	"	4	17 th	43	"	3
3 rd	149	"	5	18 th	74:12-23	"	4
4 th	41	2 John	1	19 th	91	Reflection	
5 th	72	Reflection		20 th	113	"	
6 th	150	"		21 st	5	John	5
7 th	1	3 John	1	22 nd	115	"	6
8 th	108	1 Peter	1	23 rd	6	"	7
9 th	2	"	2	24 th	46	"	8
10 th	42	"	3	25 th	75	"	9
11 th	73:21-28	"	4	26 th	92	Reflection	
12 th	90	Reflection		27 th	116	"	
13 th	111	"		28 th	7:1-11	John	10
14 th	3	1 Peter	5	29 th	117:118:1-14	"	11
15 th	112	John	1	30 th	18	"	12
				31 st	47	"	13

Ffald-y-Brenin

Les Wenham writes:

My thanks to all who took part in the competition I have been running for the past three to four months in aid of the ALZHEIMERS SOCIETY. I ran this in memory of my wife IRIS, who passed away after suffering from it. So far it has raised £25. As promised, here are the 38 answers to the story. I wonder how many of you got them all right:

1 Brighton; 2 Orient; 3 Hull; 4 Leeds; 5 Millwall; 6 Crewe; 7 Celtic; 8 Wrexham; 9 Clyde; 10 Stoke; 11 Hearts; 12 Stirling; 13 Reading; 14 Coventry; 15 Arsenal; 16 Motherwell; 17 Forfar; 18 Ayr; 19 Chester; 20 Leyton; 21 Southend; 22 Bury; 23 Rangers; 24 Lincoln; 25 Alloa; 26 Blackpool; 27 Huddersfield; 28 Preston; 29 Queen of the South; 30 Crystal Palace; 31 Wallsall; 32 Newcastle; 33 Villa; 34 Luton; 35 Halifax 36 Dundee; 37 Chelsea; 38 Oldham.



Flowers Rota - October

6th Pat Oakley
13th Margaret Carrick-Smith
20th Karen Bell
27th Jean Young



Esther McElvenny, 18 years on 26 October



The Table Top Sale and Coffee

Morning on 7th September raised £159.15. Thanks to everyone who provided items for sale, cake to go with the coffee and thanks to those who came and supported the stall holders. A similar sale is planned for **16th November**. Please put the date in your diary.

Your support is very much appreciated.

Local Artist Gallery Evenings at LivingStones Christian Centre, 277 Fleet Road, Fleet, GU51 3BT

LivingStones will be hosting three Gallery Evenings on Friday 20th September, Friday 4th October and Friday 18th October, 6.30pm - 8.30pm. Come and view the beautiful artwork on display and meet the artists who produced it. Refreshments will be served and the shop will be open for you to make any purchase. We look forward to welcoming you to these evenings. If you can't make any of the evenings, why not pop in during our opening hours and take a look. For more information contact Pippa or Sue on 01252 616038.

What has happened to the 24/7 prayer room?

As you may well know, as part of the 'Try Prayer' initiative, the old crèche room at the top of the stairs to the Wessex Hall was made into a small, comfortable prayer room, available for prayer at any time of the day or night. It has a range of resources in the way of bibles, different books on prayer, pens and paper for putting down thoughts and writing prayers, not to mention access to hot drinks to help us settle and concentrate on the reason we are there. It came into use in early June, initially for a week and quite a number of us booked in and spent time there and found it a helpful and positive experience.

Since then, over the summer, some people have asked if it is still in use. Yes, it is still available and will be for the next couple of months. As the Night Shelter will be open from the beginning of December to the end of February and the prayer room is the space usually used as a bedroom for our lady guests, it will not be available as a 24/7 prayer room during this period but in March it will revert back to being a space for prayer.

Prayer is still important and the prayer room is an easy place to use and to set aside a length of time dedicated to this, free from all the distractions we so often find at home. The resources are still there. Feel free to just drop in for a period if you are passing or, alternatively, book some time in the booking diary that you will find in the prayer room. Some have found it a useful space for small group prayer gatherings too.

So over to you.

2020 Diary and Prayer Fellowship Handbook

Jenny McCloy is taking orders for the URC Diary and Prayer Fellowship Handbook, details of costs/colours are on the order form which is on the noticeboard for you to sign if you wish, or please ask me for more information. The closing date for orders is October 20th.



OWEN INTERVIEWS CHRISTINE ROBERTSON, OUR EDITOR OF FOCUS

Owen – Thank you Christine for agreeing to be interviewed as we get to know a little more about members of our congregation. So, how long have you been a Christian?

Christine – You are welcome. Perhaps I can answer your question by giving you an overview of some of the major things which have affected my pilgrimage and to acknowledge God's continuous intervention, love, care and support, as you too have experienced. The problem is that we don't always recognise God's intervention at the time or have patience to await the outcome of our prayers.

Owen – That sounds like a plan Christine. You were born in Scotland and at some point travelled south of the border.

Christine – Yes, I was born in Markinch in the Kingdom of Fife (now a suburb of Glenrothes and only noted for Haig's Whisky Distillery!) and I was baptised and attended the Church of Scotland for as long as I can remember. My father was not a churchgoer (possibly because he was a Saddler in the army and fought in the trenches in the First World War) but my mother took me to church every Sunday and I became a Sunday School Teacher after I was confirmed at the age of 16. As a youngster, my ambition was to become a cookery or needlework teacher so I studied domestic science in the hope of going on to teacher-training college. However, my father had to take early retirement following a stroke and I realised my parents would not be able to support me through college so I left High School and went to a Secretarial College and evening classes to embark on an office career.

Owen – Any regrets?

Christine – Just one. I never had the opportunity to learn a foreign language

Owen – So what was your next major change?

Christine – Meeting Gordon who became my husband. Gordon was a banker and moved to the TSB in Reading in 1956, a year before we married. Before that, the only time I left Scotland was to spend short school holidays with an aunt in Lancashire, so it was a great relief to find a large number of Scots at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Reading where Gordon was already well established as Assistant Treasurer!

Owen – How long did you worship at St. Andrew's?

Christine – It became our spiritual home for 40 years despite Gordon's job as a bank manager taking him out of Berkshire into Hampshire and Surrey.

Owen – So how was your faith when you first moved to Reading?

Christine – Nothing unusual to this point and I doubt I ever credited God with any decisions we made, but during the first 10 years of marriage I did experience 6 late miscarriages and, by late, I mean at 5 or 6 months. But, the bright light in the middle was a baby girl weighing just 11lb and 15oz who managed to stay with me for 7 months. It is by God's grace and the skill of the doctors and nurses at that time (1962) that she survived. She is now married and I have two lovely granddaughters. Looking back now my sin was that I was stubbornly putting God to the test because there appeared to be no medical or health reason for these miscarriages and I was determined to have a baby.

Owen – You have two daughters though don't you?

Christine – Yes. Another significant bright light during those 10 years was the adoption of our younger daughter who came into our family at just 10 days old. The year prior to final ratification of the adoption by the Court was as hard as the times after each miscarriage because we were told not to get too attached to the baby in case the birth mother changed her mind. How can you not get attached? I do believe now that God's hand was in all of these circumstances for the working of His purpose. I just didn't realise it at the time.

Owen – You were still attending St. Andrew's at the founding of the URC?

Christine – Yes, and a year later I became an elder and in 1976 I was appointed Joint Church Secretary and served for 20 years, representing St. Andrew's on District and Synod committees. During this time there were many upheavals but I can pinpoint exactly when God set me on my particular path. You may not believe it Owen, but I am basically a shy person but I am also stubborn or, as my mother often said, 'a thrawn lassie'. These two characteristics don't always sit together easily. It was during a District Council meeting that I was completely taken aback when, during a quinquennial report on St. Andrew's, I found myself on my feet to complain bitterly that my congregation was described as 'Ethnic' given the word could mean 'gentiles' or 'heathen'. That was just too much!

Owen – What was the outcome?

Christine – Not what you would expect. Two months later I had a 'phone call from the then chair of the District Executive Committee asking me to allow my name to go forward as the next District President. My immediate reaction was to say - 'Peter, you've rung the wrong number, you've got the wrong person'. He assured me he had not made a mistake and would I think about it prayerfully and he would ring again in a few days.

Owen – That was a big District if I remember correctly.

Christine – It certainly was. It had 48 churches spread between Banbury in the North to Newbury in the South; Oxford in the West to Windsor in the East and included two university towns.

Owen – So what was your decision?

Christine – I did pray earnestly about it and the same questions kept arising: is this what God wants me to do? If the Executive Committee think I can do it, has God led them to that decision? I accepted, in faith, and spent one year as president elect, the next year as president and the third year as past President.

Owen – And was it the right decision?

Christine – Now, God had to be walking with me because it was not the disaster I thought it would be or embarrassing because the very next year I was appointed District Secretary and this followed me into East Sussex when we moved to Eastbourne and I became Sussex East District Secretary until it's demise in 2007. So you see, God was talking to me through someone else.

Owen – So, by listening, even through the actions of others if not direct, He will not let you go where He doesn't want you to go?

Christine – Correct.

Owen – So what happened next?

Christine – My mother in law came to live with us which gave me the opportunity to return to work as she was at home when the children came home from school. Until this point all my secretarial experience had been in Chartered Accountants' offices so I made a change and I spent 18 years in the National Institute for Research in Dairying in Shinfield. This became the Food Research Institute and I became the Personal Assistant and Senior Personal Secretary to the Director. This brought certain perks like being the first to try out the new electric typewriters, word processors and even a typesetting machine. I hadn't forgotten my first love of cooking and sewing so I went to evening classes and gained a City and Guilds Certificate in cooking. Following on from that Gordon and I decided to put in an offer for a B&B property in Reading. The offer was accepted and I resigned from the Institute. We commissioned the Berkshire Fire Officer to undertake a survey on the property and advise on fire escapes, etc. When he approached the vendor to gain access she told him she had changed her mind and wasn't going to sell after all. Fortunately my job had not been filled so I was able to return and continue there even after we moved to Bramley when Gordon was appointed Branch Manager of the TSB in Wote Street.

Owen – Did God have something else in mind for you?

Christine – He certainly did. I became Warden of the Synod's Church-based hall of residence for overseas students in Reading. One of our churches in Reading had been closed and our minister at St. Andrew's was chaplain at the University. He saw a great need for overseas students to be able to remain in Hall during the University vacations and Trinity Hall was the result. This was a great time in our lives. Every time I hear of names like Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, Hong Kong, Beijing and Egypt, a student's name comes back to me and I wonder what has happened to them. The majority of students from Africa and Hong Kong were Christians and had biblical names which made life easy. There was one lad from Ethiopia whose name was OkOk Ojulo. We nicknamed him Okay Okay! He was 7'6" tall. He gathered together old bibles and hymn books and a keyboard and had them shipped back to Ethiopia to start his own church. I'm not sure how the bibles and hymn books, written in English, went down or, indeed, how he managed to work an electric keyboard but his enthusiasm was inspiring. Being so tall was a great help in putting up and taking down Christmas decorations but our main problem was providing him with sleeping accommodation. Most beds were fitted into a recess so he ended up sleeping on the floor with a mattress.

Owen – So how come you moved to Basingstoke?

Christine – We left Reading at Easter 1997 following Gordon's major heart surgery and re-located to Eastbourne and we attended St. Andrew's URC in Eastbourne. Gordon died in 2006 just one month after we had moved into a new flat. It never felt like home and I didn't want to make a rash decision about moving so, after prayerful thought, and with family in Basingstoke and Andover, it was time to put family first before other commitments, including the church, so I moved to Basingstoke on 1st July 2010.

Owen – And you came to London St. and are now editor of Focus, our church magazine.

Christine - Age and minor concerns about my health stops me from getting actively involved at London St. and I don't like going out at night. I was a serving Elder at London St. for a short while but when Neil Davis (former editor of Focus) passed away in 2015 I felt a commitment to take on that rôle having been responsible for the church magazine in St Andrew's Reading and in Eastbourne. I enjoy it and it is good to have Dick Davey as proof-reader and I am really grateful to him for his help.

Owen - How is your faith now Christine? Still growing?

Christine – I still strongly believe. Yes, I question when things go wrong but my faith has never wavered. If I need to share a concern then I do. It's good to question and share and I get comfort from friends at London St. I daily praise God and thank Him for a wonderful marriage, a wonderful

family, life-long friendships, for steering me through the dark times and enabling me to cope with ever changing circumstances.

Owen – Is there anything you would like to see changed or you're not happy with at London St.?

Christine – I get frustrated when we have lists of duties, for example, door stewards, and people don't turn up or don't arrange a swap with others. There is no excuse unless through sudden illness or an emergency.

Owen – I would agree with that. Thank you, Christine. One final question. Is there anything that members perhaps don't know about you and would be surprised to learn?

Christine – I have appeared as a defendant at Reading Crown Court, accused of dangerous driving. My first inclination when I received the summons was just to plead guilty as there was no way I was going to Court. However, given the circumstances surrounding the incident, Gordon persuaded me to consult an AA solicitor. He, in turn, persuaded me to go to Court and face the charge rather than lose my licence because he was able to prove that my car was stationary at the time (the other driver had stated that I was reversing the car out into the main road but damage caused to both cars proved otherwise), that the other driver misread the situation and was exceeding the 50mph speed limit imposed at that time. Even though I was found Not Guilty, I would not want to go through that experience again. The dock was a very lonely place to be!

2020 Church Directory:

I will shortly be starting work on compiling the church directory for 2020. If anyone has any changes they wish to make please let me have them by 17th November. Thank you. Owen.

Would YOU like to be a 'Greeter'?
During November I will be compiling the 2020 Rota of Greeters.



Do YOU feel you could serve the Church in this way by giving a warm and friendly welcome to members of the congregation as they arrive for worship? If so, please have a word with me at Church or give me a ring on 01256 322301, and I will be pleased to give you more information about the duties involved.

Many thanks.

Jean Holton

LISBETH DEE PRATT. A GOOD FRIEND TO MANY OF US AT LONDON STREET.

I realised, looking around Church on the day we were told of Lis having died, that to many of you this was just a name. However, for those of you who receive Focus online or by post I am sure she is very much a person you remember from the 70s up to the 90s at London Street.

We met at London Street and with children of similar ages we had a lot in common. Lis was Canadian, married to an Englishman, Colin, and they had 2 children Colleen and Nigel. They arrived in Basingstoke and I remember being in Worting Farm Shop and hearing a lady asking which variety of bananas were on sale. I recognised that it was the new lady at London Street and we both laughed as the farm man said he could say where they were from but not which variety. She explained then that she had just returned from 3 years in Jamaica.

One of the photo's {on next page} was taken in 1988 in the New Market Square (now part of Festival Place). Each year there was a Charity Market and London Street had won the shield for the best stall with our home made cakes and produce. Who else recalls those early mornings dashing from London Street with the shopping trolleys full of cakes down to load the stall? The other one was in 29 Pages the night before I left to live in Cyprus.

Lis was keen on Flower Arranging which she learnt from Barbara Dixon. A skill she continued with all her life. She became an Elder, and later a Trustee of Pages Bungalows. When my mother moved to Basingstoke Lis mentioned that she was jealous as her mother was, of course, still in Canada. I suggested we shared Mum. Lis was a terrific help to my mother Rene Stevens, when I moved to Cyprus. Keeping an eye on her and making sure I knew how things were.

When she moved to Fareham her flower arranging skills were not needed until a few years ago. She was asked if anyone could help do a pedestal and she immediately volunteered. The result was extremely well received.

Since her move to Wickham, Fareham in 1999 she has remained in touch, particularly with Joan Mussellwhite and me. She and Colin had a great love of MG cars and the Transport days at Basingstoke would quite often see Lis back at London Street. On one occasion I remember her arriving with her black Labrador who sat quietly the whole service.

We have shared several holidays and one was when she and Colin came over to Cyprus in 1998. Colin died about ten years ago and my sympathy goes very much to Colleen and Nigel.

She is now at peace.

Joyce Cook



Grant awarded for research into Messy Churches

The Church of England is to fund new research to help deepen the faith of families and children attending 'Messy Churches' – non-traditional church gatherings that attract tens of thousands of worshippers across the country.

A grant of £100,000 has been awarded to the Church of England's Evangelism and Discipleship Team to study deepening the discipleship of Messy Church congregations. The study will be focused on Messy Churches in Bristol, Durham and Hereford dioceses.

The Messy Church movement was set up by the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) 15 years ago, offering mainly families and children food, activities such as arts, crafts and sports and worship. The movement has spread across the world, with churches meeting on Saturdays and weekdays as well as Sundays.

Insights from the work will be used to help inform the ongoing work of developing new forms of church gatherings – known as 'Fresh Expressions' – in the Church of England.

A recent Church of England background paper found that 50,000 people

attend 2,000 Messy Churches in Anglican churches who do not normally engage with their church.

The Church Army published research earlier this year showing that one in five – or 21% - of Messy Churches had held baptisms and 13% reported child or adult confirmations.

Lucy Moore, Messy Church Founder and team leader, said: “We’re looking forward to working together with the pioneering teams in each diocese to find out what approaches make the most difference in coming closer to Christ, walking in his way and growing the kingdom of heaven.

“It’s an unmissable opportunity for local teams to benefit from expert advice and take part in something of international significance.”

Heather Cracknell, The Church of England’s Head of Development for Fresh Expressions, said: “Messy Church has proved an excellent way to strengthen parish mission by reaching those that traditional church finds it hard to connect with.

“It is also a great way for people who wouldn’t call themselves pioneers to start something new, with confidence in the materials they can draw on and the supportive community they can be part of. And how encouraging the research findings are: so many people discovering faith with their families.”

Tim Ling, Church Army’s Director of Learning and Development, said: “We are excited to be partnering with the Church of England and BRF on this important project, which builds on the outcomes of our previous Playfully Serious research.

“The action research process we are facilitating will help local Messy Church leaders consider how best to deepen discipleship and generate valuable new insights for the wider Church.”

From Parish Pump News

ECO TIP

Just finished some washing? Don't automatically put it in the dryer - take advantage of the free wind and solar power by investing in a linen line.

**God's Gift – Our World
Our Environment – Our Responsibility**

Nigel Beeton writes: 'Some people can be inconsiderate, especially when behind the wheel of a car, but we know that when in trouble we often see the very best of our fellow human beings. Yet sometimes we can be with angels and completely fail to recognise them. So if you feel God prompting you to help someone, best to respond. You may be walking the path of an angel...'

Heaven's Messengers of Love

Do we know them when we see them?
Heaven's messengers of love?
Who are there just when we need them,
Sent to help by God above.
Those who help us just by staying,
Those who sit and hold our hand,
Those who hold us up by praying,
Those who simply understand.

When the seas of life are storming
When we're overwhelmed by pain
We don't notice them transforming
We don't feel their love sustain.
When we feel our woes confounding
When we're stifled by the strain
We don't see our friends surrounding
Standing by us in the rain.

Yet, despite our bitter blindness
God is there, and always sends
Human angels, who with kindness
Are our true and faithful friends,
Till the time when, sunshine glowing
Come the rainbow and the dove
And the afterlight is showing
Heaven's messengers of love.

*By Nigel Beeton
PP Prayers & Poems Oct19*

Diary - October, 2019

London Street, unless otherwise stated

Sun.	6 th	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast
		10.30am	Worship – led by Revd Adam Payne
Tue.	8 th	7.30pm	Night Shelter training for returning volunteers at Sarum Hill
Wed.	9 th	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thu.	10 th	7.30pm	House Group at 33 Amport Road, Sherfield Park
Sun.	13 th	10.30am	Worship – led by Melanie Townsend
			Deadline for contributions to November FOCUS
Tue.	15 th	7.30pm	Night Shelter training for new volunteers at Sarum Hill
Wed.	16 th	10.15am	3Cs (Coffee, Chat, Company) in the Oasis Café, all welcome
Sun.	20 th	10.30am	Worship, including Holy Communion – led by the Minister
		12.15pm	Organ recital by Peter Dixon followed at
		1.00pm	by Fellowship Lunch
Thu.	24 th	7.30pm	House Group at 33 Amport Road, Sherfield Park
Sun.	27 th		British Summer Time ends
		10.30am	Worship – Revd Jonathan Clark
Mon.	28 th		Youth Café closed for half term
Tue.	29 th		Minister, reading week until 1 st November

Diary

October, 2019 Services at Old Meeting, Tadley

Preachers

6 th	Rob and Jan Lloyd
13 th	Kay Blackwell
20 th	Scott Wheeler
27 th	Adam Payne

Welcome

Ena and George
Mandy and Dave
Ladies Cell
Elaine and Brian

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

Monday's:

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse (Term Time)
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

Tuesday's:

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse (Term Time)	
10am-12 noon	'LITTLE ANGELS' pre-school Club (Term time)	
3-5.30pm in Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and college students	
6.00pm	(BEAVER SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Colony)	
7pm	(CUB SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Pack)	Term
7pm	(SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Troop)	Time
7-8.00pm	PRAYER MEETING at Tadley URC or St Paul's	

Wednesday's:

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse (Term Time)
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

Thursday's:

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse (Term Time)
9.30-11.30am	TADLEY LITTLE ANGELS in the Immanuel Centre
10-11.30am	CCBBies Parent and Toddler Group at Christ Church, Chineham
3-6pm in Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and college students

Friday's:

8-9.30pm	TGIF Youth Club at Christ Church, Chineham
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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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London Street (Basingstoke) United Reformed Church Charity [reg. no.1130801]