



London Street

United Reformed Church

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



**Focus
November, 2019**

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - www.basingstokeurc.org.uk

MINISTER:

Revd Kay Blackwell (Day off - Monday)
6 Camberry Close
Basingstoke RG21 3AG
Tel: Vestry - 01256 242152
Mobile - 07582 056286
e.mail - revkblackwell@gmail.com

CHURCH SECRETARY:

Mr Owen Collins
15 Cyprus Road
Hatch Warren
Basingstoke RG22 4UY
Tel: 01256 477425
e.mail - secretary@basingstokeurc.org.uk

TREASURER:

Karen Bell
47 Tobago Close, Popley,
Basingstoke RG24 9PX
e.mail - lsurctreasurer@yahoo.com

HALL LETTING:

Mrs Joy Williams
9 Montague Place
Basingstoke RG21 3DS
Tel: 01256 326746
e.mail - joyamwilliams@gmail.com

FOCUS:

Mrs Christine Robertson
1208 Skyline Plaza, Alencon Link,
Basingstoke RG21 7AZ
Tel: 01256 869968
e.mail: christina774robertson@btinternet.com

Tadley (Old Meeting) URC

10.00am Prayer Time followed by Worship at 10.30 every Sunday
"TASTE" Youth Event at 7pm at the Point (behind Community Centre)

Minister:

Revd Kay Blackwell

Church Secretary:

Paul Gross
22 Pelican Road, Pamber Heath RG26 3EN
Tel: 0118 970 0809
e.mail: paulgross3107@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Mark Ward
10 Hartleys, Silchester, Reading RG7 2QE
e.mail: mandjward@hotmail.co.uk



“This is amazing,” Moses said to himself. “Why isn’t that bush burning up? I must go see it.”

When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

“Here I am!” Moses replied.

“Do not come any closer,” the LORD warned. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.” (Exodus 3:3-5)

As I tried to tie up many loose ends before Andrew and I set off to China, the final job I had to do was to send the order of service for the Tadley service I would do on my return. I selected Exodus 3 and the calling of Moses from the burning bush. As we set off on our journey, I realised, with a chuckle, that the travel tour company we were going with was called Exodus! I started my journal pondering whether this trip would bring me to any burning bush moments!

Why China? I have always been fascinated with Chinese art and I wanted to learn more about a culture that felt so very different from our own. In that sense this was a real exodus into strange and foreign lands. Andrew too was fascinated by Chinese history but also had a personal quest to see some of the places that his father had lived in previously. As his father trained for the diplomatic service, his first posting had been to China in the 1930s, so, while we travelled he was

able to read his father's memoirs of living in a very different, late colonial and pre-communist, China.

So our intrepid journey commenced in Beijing, and with a Chinese tour guide and 14 other English tourists in our group we spent 19 days travelling 7000km across three of the four Chinese provinces and ending up in Shanghai, from where we flew back home. Every morning we were up between 5.30 and 6am for a full day of sightseeing or travelling. The whole experience felt like a sensual overload with sights, sounds, colours and smells that just felt so different. Surprisingly, people would stare at our group.... white foreigners in their midst. Folk would often surreptitiously take pictures of us westerners, or ask to be in a selfie with us. Our tour guide said that even though she had been a tour guide for ten years she also still found the look of westerners very strange (we all look the same apparently!). It is an experience to feel like the 'other', the odd ones out in a foreign land.

We saw during our travels the forbidden city (but only at a distance), the great wall, the terracotta army and pandas. We travelled down the Yangtze and saw the biggest dam in the world. Andrew went up the 2nd tallest tower in the world (I ducked out of that one!). We visited the largest city in China (30 million population), a city that none of us had even heard of! We saw the largest outdoor Buddha and largest interior Buddha in the world. We saw many temples, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and even Chinese Muslim. We went for 10km bike ride through amazing countryside in searing 37degree heat. We had a Chinese cookery class, and a Chinese painting class. Of course, we experienced a lot of Chinese food too (we won't be ordering a Chinese takeaway for a while!).

When I look back at my journal, it was just a daily whirlwind of new experiences.

So what did I learn from all this. Much as I enjoyed China, it is still a communist state. Everywhere we went ID photos or fingerprints were taken. You just know that if you were to step out of line at any time it would not be missed. For a communist state it is now very capitalist in style. Everything seemed to be about more building, more power, bigger networks of transport and communication and more world influence. President Xi Jinping is set on China being a world player on a frightening scale. They jokingly told us that the national bird of China is the Crane (the metal not feathered variety). The building projects are vast and happening across the country at an alarming rate. In 40 years, it has gone from being a country socially and economically on its knees. The cultural revolution was toxic and devastating as it tore apart

families by turning children against their parents, killing the educated cultured in the communities, and destroyed so much of their ancient cultural heritage. Forty years ago, still within living memory, many in China were starving. Now they are clearly very proud of their prosperity. Now they worry about food waste in the restaurants as so many in the cities eat out most of the time.

China is a place of huge contradictions. On my return home, my latest Christianity magazine had an article in it about the continued, even escalated, persecution of Christians in China. Xi Jinping seems to be tightening his control on different ethnic and religious groups. Pictures have been taken of huge 'correction' or is that 'concentration' camps. There are reports of Muslim children that have been removed from the family home and taken into vast orphanages. Business men arrested and imprisoned without trial or just 'disappeared' by the authorities. So, what did I think of China? I am left with very mixed feelings. It was amazing and disturbing at the same time. President Xi Jinping is not a benevolent leader but a dictator. Whilst the majority of the Chinese population call him their 'father', others are silenced and crushed for posing any perceived threat to the state. I wonder what the future may hold for China as the people are dazzled and hypnotised by Western capitalism. Are they selling their souls in their desire to become more like us? I value our freedom of press, our ability to peacefully protest, our culture of religious freedom. We have the freedom to pray so let us pray for the Christians and Muslims in China whose freedom to worship and live out their faith are being systematically removed. These are human rights issues that all the world needs to open its eyes to.

Yours in Christ, Kay



CIRCLE OF PRAYER:

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

Short Term: Barbara Banbury; Phyllis Birchmore; Kay Cook; Lilian Meredith and family; Eileen Poulter; Edmund Shaw; Betty Shipway.

Long Term: Beverley Cantwell and family; Christine Clucas; Penny Dilley; Claire Macro; Ron and Rosemary Martin; Maggie Morgans and family; Gillian and Tony Patterson and family; Hyacinth Ridguard; Joyce Smith; Fay Spurr; Jo and Steve Tremarco.

Prayer Focus

Acts 2 : 4 – 47

..... All who believed were together and had all things in common; and distributed the proceeds to all as they had need. Day by day, as they spent much time in the Temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

Back in the 50s and 60s my brother, sister and I were dragged off every year on 'the Sunday for Christian Unity' to a service in another denomination; Methodists, C of E, Quaker, Baptists and others. I quite enjoyed the variety though the C of E with all the liturgy lost me a little and the Quakers were a bit odd but it was very peaceful. My dad was very keen on ecumenism and I thought it made sense, though quite how it would work I couldn't think. Well soon after the URC was formed which I thought was a start.

Tonight I have been at Sarum Hill Methodists for a One Church Basingstoke celebration of all the churches in the town working together. Now I know the answer to this ecumenism. This gathering of Christians from many ways of worshipping but of one mind and heart working to serve their Lord Jesus Christ and the community they live in, in so many ways across the town. The stories we heard from some of the leaders were heart-warming and humbling. So many people giving of their time to bring help and support to folk in need from our community. We often think it is normal to help yet there are many folk and indeed the authorities also who think it is amazing that we should do this. It is together that we will help to bring God's Kingdom in in this place, each person contributing to the whole as they are able, whatever their gifting.

Focus for Prayer

Please pray for the following initiatives: the leaders, the volunteers, the things they need and those they help. And thank God for the way lives have been changed through their work.

- The Street Pastors – Caring, listening, and helping those after a night out.
- The Dwelling Place – Accommodation for those who have been homeless where they can have space, time and support to work through the complexities of their lives and to find a way forward to a new settled life.

- Foodbank – Emergency food and support for local people in crisis.
- Money Life Line – Help and advice for people coping with debt.
- Cedar Tree Counselling – For help with minor or major concerns in people’s lives.
- The Besom in Basingstoke – A bridge from those who want to give practical items, household or otherwise, to those in need.
- Hampshire Hospital Chaplaincy Team – Supporting patients, relatives and staff.
- Open The Book – Bringing the Bible to every child in every primary school in a very lively way.
- The Safe – A place to be a family – Support for parents, dads, grandparents and carers looking after children with mental health issues. Help with baby clothing and equipment - good quality recycling.

Recycle Christmas Decorations Workshop for the church

Saturday 16th November

10am – 12 noon (may be afternoon too)

Use and recycle materials to make a nativity scene, a star covered wreath, candles or perhaps a nativity figure.

Watch out for more information!

—oOo—

Gift Service:

Led by Revd Julian Macro, our Gift Service will be held on Sunday 1st December at 10.30am. Please bring to the service any appropriate gifts of toys and toiletries. Last year the gifts were distributed to the Women's Refuge and to teenagers moving from full-time to independent care.

CHRISTINE ROBERTSON INTERVIEWS CAROL SCOTT, ELDER

Christine - Thank you Carol 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?

Carol - I have gone to church ever since I can remember; Sunday School, Brownies and Guides. I was 13 when I was confirmed in Rochester Cathedral and my faith continues to grow.

Christine - You were not born in Basingstoke so what brought you here?

Carol - No, I was born and grew up in Crayford in Kent. When I left school my first job was with the National Westminster Bank. In 1974 I moved to Chelsea to begin three years of training to be a nurse and there I met Ian. We moved to Basingstoke in 1978 because housing was cheaper here and I continued my nursing career in Basingstoke Hospital until I retired in 2015.

I enjoyed the 'ups and downs' of nursing and the National Health Service has changed considerably with nurses having more responsibilities, partly due to less interaction of medical staff with patients and higher expectations of relatives.

Christine - During a busy career you still had to raise a family.

Carol - Yes, Ian and I were married forty years ago and have three daughters, Emily, Lucy and Charlotte and two grandchildren, Imogen and Oliver.

Christine - You were brought up in the Church of England, how did you become a member at London Street?

Carol - Ian was brought up in the URC, and wanted to continue in Basingstoke.

Christine - You, too, are now an ordained Elder in London Street. Is this your first term of office?

Carol - Yes, I did not feel able to make the commitment before because of the demands of shift work.

Christine - I understand that feeling but what about all the other commitments you have at London Street?

Carol - Yes, I have always had obligations here. In 1982, along with Ann Collins, I started the Mother and Toddler group at London Street, now known as 'Little Angels'. I continue this interest through Messy Church where we are always in need of more help, even with the clearing up after the event. I have been involved with Junior Church for five years and, here again, we desperately need more leaders. I love doing things with the children.

I also help with the Night Shelter which, very sadly, is to continue for a fourth year. I say 'very sadly' because, in Basingstoke, we still have many homeless people; I am the person in charge of Copyright for London Street, involving every Order of Service and event we do within the church services.

Christine - Is there anything at London Street that you would like to see changed or you are unhappy about?

Carol - London Street is a very happy church, with lots going on, sometimes I feel that it would be good to have more people on a Sunday morning.

Christine - Do you find any time for leisure activities?

Carol - Yes, I love travelling, one of the most memorable trips being our honeymoon from Los Angeles to San Francisco on Greyhound Coaches; I go to the Craft meetings for fellowship and I love knitting, especially for Imogen and Oliver; I play bowls

at Basingstoke Town during the summer months and Short Mat Bowls at Howard Park in South Ham. I would like to have more time for gardening and, of course, there are always family needs. Reading is my chill-out activity!

Christine - Is there anything members might be surprised to learn?

Carol - When I was small we lived round the corner from Elton John's aunty and he used to come visiting and played the piano. Aunty was a bit dubious about his playing and didn't seem to foresee his potential!

Christine - Thank you Carol for sharing your life's journey this far. May your continuing journey be smooth under God's guidance and protection.

—oOo—



Flowers Rota - November

3 rd	Joyce Cook
10 th	REMEMBRANCE
17 th	Owen Collins
24 th	Julia Burrows



Lucas Stanley, 11 years on 2 November
Ethan Honeyball, 11 years on 24 November

Daily Bible Readings for November:

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

Ffald-y-Brenin

Congratulations and Best Wishes

to Ted and Isobel Martin who celebrated their 55th Wedding Anniversary on 10th October.

Eco Tip:

Your one cat might not have much of an environmental impact, but if it produced even a couple of litters, it could end up at the head of a family tree of thousands, which would make a severe dent in the local population of small creatures. Do the responsible thing; get your cat neutered.

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

Sacrifice: A month for especially remembering sacrifices. Back in the fifteenth century, in a tiny village near Nuremberg, lived a family with 18 children. In order merely to keep food on the table for this mob, the father and head of the household, a goldsmith by profession, worked almost 18 hours a day at his trade and any other chore he could find in the neighbourhood.

Despite their seemingly hopeless condition, two of Albrecht Dürer the Elder's children had a dream. They both wanted to pursue their talent for art, but they knew full well that their father would never be financially able to send either of them to Nuremberg to study at the academy.

After many long discussions at night in their crowded bed the two boys finally worked out a pact. They would toss a coin. The loser would go down into the nearby mines and with his earnings, support his brother while he attended the academy. Then, when the brother who won the toss had completed his studies, in four years, he would support the other brother, either with sales of his artwork or, if necessary, also by labouring in the mines.

They tossed a coin on Sunday morning after church. Albrecht Dürer won the toss and went off to Nuremberg.

Albert went down the dangerous mines and, for the next four years financed his brother, whose work at the academy was almost a sensation. Albrecht's etchings, his woodcuts and his oils were far better than those of most of his professors, and by the time he graduated he was beginning to earn considerable fees for his commissioned works.

When the young artist returned to his village, the Dürer family held a festive dinner on their lawn to celebrate Albrecht's triumphant homecoming. After a long and memorable meal, punctuated with music and laughter, Albrecht rose from his position at the head of the table to drink a toast to his beloved brother for the years of sacrifice that had enabled Albrecht to

fulfil his ambition. His closing words were, “And now Albert, blessed brother of mine, now it is your turn. Now you can go to Nuremberg to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you.”

All heads turned in eager expectation to the far end of the table where Albert sat, tears streaming down his pale face, shaking his lowered head from side to side while he sobbed and repeated, over and over “No..no..no..no.”

Finally, Albert rose and wiped the tears from his cheeks. He glanced down the long table at the faces he loved and then, holding his hands close to his right cheek, he said softly “No brother, I cannot go to Nuremberg. It is too late for me. Look... look what four years in the mines have done to my hands! The bones in every finger have been smashed at least once and, lately I have been suffering from arthritis so badly in my right hand that I cannot even hold a glass to return your toast, much less paint delicate lines on parchment or canvas with pen and brush. No, brother... for me it is too late.”

More than 450 years have passed. By now Albrecht Dürer’s hundreds of masterful portraits, pen and silver-point sketches, watercolours, charcoals, woodcuts and copper engravings hang in every great museum in the world, but the odds are great that you, like most people, are familiar with only one of Albrecht Dürer’s works. More than merely being familiar with it, you may very well have a reproduction hanging in your home or office.

One day, to pay homage to Albert for all that he had sacrificed, Albrecht Dürer painstakingly drew his brother’s abused hands with palms together and thin fingers stretched skywards. He called his powerful drawing simply “Hands”, but the entire world almost immediately opened their hearts to his great masterpiece and renamed his tribute of love “The Praying Hands”.



From *A Bucket of Surprises*, J. John and Mark Stibbe,
Monarch Books.

Breaking down Barriers:

It was 30 years ago this month, on 9th November 1989 that the fall of the Berlin Wall began. Over two million people from East Berlin visited the West in a celebration described as 'the greatest street party in the history of the world.' However, we are still living with walls, thinking of those dividing Gaza and Palestine from Israel. It's a strong human instinct to build walls to separate us from those we view as different and threatening.

Paul writes of how the death of Jesus has broken down the barrier between Jew and Gentile: 'His purpose was to create in Himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility.' (Ephesians 2:15-16).

Jesus is still in the business in breaking down the barriers between people of different gender, age, race and language, to bring them together in His church: 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28).

We can easily put up barriers with others, when we make assumptions about them, forgetting that they may be thinking the same things about us. We may want to avoid making ourselves vulnerable or appear needy. Yet Jesus can break down our defences and enable us to live openly and honestly with others. As His church, He invites us to be a community of risk takers, i.e. those who trust each other, handle our weaknesses and fears, and who encourage one another's strengths and gifts.

'A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian.' (Pope Francis).

from Parish Pump

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

Diary - November, 2019

London Street, unless otherwise stated

Fri	1 st	10.00am	Elders' Away Day at Immanuel Centre, Tadley
		- 4.00pm.	
Sat.	2 nd	12.30pm.	Messy Church Training
Sun	3 rd	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast
		10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister
Wed	6 th	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Sun	10 th	10.30am	Remembrance Sunday Worship – led by Revd Adam Payne

Deadline for contributions to December/January FOCUS

Fri	15 th	12.30pm	Messy Church Planning meeting
Sat	16 th	10.00am	Recycling Christmas Decorations Workshop
		10.00am.	Table Top Sale and Coffee Morning
Sun	17 th	10.30am	Worship – including Holy Communion
Wed	20 th	10.15am	3Cs (Coffee, Chat, Company) in the Oasis Café, all welcome
Sun	24 th	10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister followed by lunch, Church meeting and election of Elders
Sat.	30 th	3.30pm	Top of Town Messy Church

Diary: November, 2019 Services at Old Meeting, Tadley

Preachers

3 rd	Mark Ward
10 th	Kay Blackwell
17 th	Brenda Baldwin
24 th	Adam Payne

Welcome

Ena and George
Mandy and Dave
Ladies Cell
Julie and Mark

Regular Events and Meetings

(at London Street unless otherwise stated)

The Sanctuary is open for prayers every weekday from 9.30 to 10am and again from 12.15 to 12.30pm

Mondays:

10am-1.30pm OASIS Café in the Concourse (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 Youth Café for secondary school and
Term Time college students

Tuesdays:

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

Wednesdays:

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 Youth Café for secondary school and
Term Time college students

Thursdays:

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

Fridays:

8-9.30pm TGIF Youth Club at **Christ Church, Chineham**

London Street URC, Basingstoke seeks to ensure that all content and information published in this issue of FOCUS is current and accurate. The information included does not in any way constitute legal or professional advice and the church cannot be held liable for actions arising from its use.

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