



London Street

United Reformed Church

BASINGSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE RG21 7NU

and

TADLEY (OLD MEETING) URC



Focus
May, 2018

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - www.basingstokeurc.org.uk

MINISTER:

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CHURCH SECRETARY:

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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:

Revd Kay Blackwell

Church Secretary:

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View from the manse:

'Then he [Jesus] said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)

Jesus was always journeying and rarely staying. He did not have a place to call his own, a bed in a private room to crawl into at the end of a long day. In his three years of ministry he lived unattached to the stuff we often weigh ourselves down with. His story then speaks into the lives of the street homeless, refugees and asylum seekers who are also forced to live with the minimum. His ministry was largely focussed around the disenfranchised, those on the edge or outside of community who failed to meet the social demands of lifestyle, in love to prostitutes, a foreign woman of dubious character, many disabled people, widowed women, a bleeding woman, an adulterous woman, sick or dead people, mentally unwell people, demon-possessed people, Gentiles (that is non-Jews) and children. Many of these encounters were with people that were regarded as ceremonially 'unclean', that is people unable to worship in the temple, and by associating with them Jesus would be rendered 'unclean'. So what Jesus did set him up on a collision course with the religious authorities. How could this preacher be of God if he was so ready to become unclean? But Jesus came to bring about a revolution, a revolution of love. His actions and words shone God's light and love brightly into the world, which revealed more clearly where the darkest shadows were, in people's hearts. Jesus journeyed on knowing that his journey's end would be painful and humiliating and hard but that it would not be the real end. Despite physical appearances, the victory would be God's. The resurrection would start the process of a new creation, which would, in turn, bring about Jesus' eternal reign of love and transformation.

The disciples struggled with the transformation of their roles as disciples when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. Though transformation is change, and change is never easy for us to cope with or understand, without the Holy Spirit the task of the great commission was simply beyond the disciples' means. They were, as we are, handed the revolutionary baton of faith and which can feel like a daunting responsibility. The Holy Spirit is like the breath of God within us and around us. The Holy Spirit guides, that would make them acceptable and spiritually clean in the eyes of the religious leaders of the day. He ate with tax collectors and chose to reach out, teaches, reassures, strengthens, energises and encourages us to be God's love where he sends us. The Holy Spirit starts our transformation into becoming more Christ-like in order for us to reflect his light and his love into the world. This is part of our journey as Christians, to grow in faith and allow ourselves to trust in and listen more to the Holy

Spirit working in us. The more we trust and tune in, the more we grow and become fruitful for God.

Well you could say *'well of course Jesus only lived out this ministry for three years, we have a whole lifetime ...70,80,90, even 100 years in which to remain faithful and that's much harder!'* Well yes it is, but that's why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit. Spirit led prayer, Scripture study and fellowship helps to keep us going. But I was challenged recently to consider the biblical pattern of the 'Jubilee year', every seven years taking time out to rest and be renewed and restored. But we must also take the Sabbath day of rest seriously (Yes, I am preaching to myself here!). One day out of seven to rest in God's love and just find that peace and joy in His presence by just being.

I am constantly challenged by the very radical ministry of Christ. I am constantly trying to resist the human urge to get comfy, settled and secure. That is not what Jesus did, that is not what he calls us to do. When I became a Christian, God set my heart on fire, he gave me an urgency and job to do. Life on earth IS finite. I long and pray to see God's Kingdom come to Tadley, to Basingstoke, to the UK and to the world.

Today as I write this, President Putin and President Trump are politically gesturing and ranting at one another. There are wars and rumours of wars. These are frightening times when evil seems to be escalating. But as disciples, we hold within us the most powerful of weapons against evil: the power of Jesus Christ, the power of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. We must pray, pray like never before that 'Thy Kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. The archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Wellby, is calling the worldwide church to prayer for eleven days, from Ascension to Pentecost (10th-20th May) based on that very prayer that Jesus taught us. Let us too pray earnestly and urgently then in this time. If you Google 'Thy Kingdom come' 2018 you will find many personal resources to guide you in prayer. Prayer can feel like carrying the cross, it is hard at times, looks fruitless at times, feels hopeless at times but it is through faithfulness in prayer, as we see in the old Testament, that battles have been fought and won.

Yours in Christ
Kay

Don't forget the Life explored course (from Session 4) on Thursday evenings at 6.30pm at London Street URC until 24th May. This includes a light supper, a film and discussion groups. This course is **open to all** but please fill out a registration form to facilitate catering.

CIRCLE OF PRAYER:



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

Short Term: Tish Catterall; David Corfield; Gill Craft; Aubrey Dommett (granddaughter of Beverley Cantwell); Sally Friday; the family of Beryl Gazard; Christine and Ron Holt; Claire Macro; Sandra Marut; Doina Rasnita; Christine Williams.

Long Term: Annette Bowers (daughter of Sheila Munro); Beverley Cantwell; Christine and Eric Clucas and grandson, Colm McCulloch; Penny Dilley; Gus and Noorie Khatkur; Ron and Rosemary Martin; Maggie Morgans and family; Sheila Munro; Patterson family; Molly Shaw; Betty Shipway; Fay Spurr; Frank Tovey; Les and Iris Wenham; Sarah Williams and her daughter, Katherine Witts.

Congratulations to Juliet (daughter of the late Roy and Hilda Houston) on the birth of a daughter on 18th March. Boudica Elizabeth Stewart is a sister for Callie. Juliet now lives in Australia.

Thanks: Christine Williams sends thanks to all at London Street for all the messages of support and prayers during her hospital procedure. She also sends her thanks for the flowers that were given after the service on Sunday, 15th April. With best wishes to all.

Postage Stamp collection: Please note that Les Wenham will cease to collect these stamps, with immediate effect.

Prayer Focus:

2 Kings 22: 1-2 and Jeremiah 1: 1-10

When Josiah's dad was killed he found himself, at eight years old, the new king of Judah, surrounded by people who were only too pleased to direct him and take over. It was not an envious position to be in. Josiah was determined not to follow in his father's footsteps and looked back to his ancestor King David and decided to try to follow in his footsteps, a lonely road.

Somewhere around the same time The Lord spoke to a young Jeremiah who was from a priestly family and told him that he wanted him to be the prophet to the nations. Apparently not the career that Jeremiah had been thinking of. The Lord said he would give him the words to say, not a gift he was aware of until he started speaking.

Both lads found themselves in positions not of their choosing, both young in an unfriendly world and both, possibly unwillingly, but obediently wanting to do what The Lord wanted of them - lonely positions. But The Lord knew they needed the mutual support and friendship of each other and so he called them both before they knew of each other. The care of a good father?

We are all 'called' to follow our Lord and he may well ask us to move outside our comfort zone but he will also provide the support, words and anything else we need.

Prayer – Lord, lead and guide those you have called,
I know you are in charge.
And I thank you for your love, care and provision to each one of us.

Please pray for:

- Those who are called to lead the nations that they may serve with integrity and wisdom
- Those who are called to lead the church at any level, that they may they may seek the Lord and be true to him.
- For our young people that they may find that firm foundation in Christ.
- Those who are without a home and those that are on their way back to a fulfilled life.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

If you attended the ACM on 15th April, you would have heard me speak about the General Data Protection Regulation.

What is it?

On Friday 25th May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation will come into force. The GDPR is EU legislation that will apply to all (current) member states and as such it will replace the UK's Data Protection Act. Following the UK's vote to leave the EU the Government has confirmed the GDPR will apply to the UK and that organisations need to ensure compliance.

How is it different to the Data Protection Act?

A lot of the legislation around the GDPR is the same, or similar, to the current Data Protection Act. The GDPR enhances some of the existing rights of individuals and provides some important new rights. These are the right:

- to be informed;
- of access;
- to rectification;
- to erasure;
- to restrict processing;
- to data portability; and
- to object to processing.

What does this mean for me at London Street?

The eldership of London Street complies with its obligations under the GDPR by keeping personal data up to date; by storing and destroying it securely; by not collecting or retaining excessive amounts of data; by protecting personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorised access and disclosure and by ensuring that appropriate technical measures are in place to protect personal data.

We use personal data for the following purposes:

- to administer membership records;
- to maintain our financial accounts and records (including the processing of gift aid);
- to provide news and information about events, activities and services at the church;
- to fundraise and promote the interests of the church;
- to manage employees and volunteers;
- to enable the church to provide voluntary services for the benefit of the public in our local community; and

- to provide contact details of officers and others with specific responsibilities (eg DBS signatories) to the synod office and Church House. This enables the synod and national administration of the United Reformed Church.

Your personal data will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be shared with other members of the church in order to carry out a service to other church members or for purposes connected with the church. We will only share your data with third parties with your consent.

Unless subject to an exemption under the GDPR, you have the following rights with respect to your personal data:

- the right to request a copy of the personal data which London Street holds about you (a Subject Access Request or 'SAR');
- the right to request that the eldership of London Street corrects any personal data if it is found to be inaccurate or out of date;
- the right to request your personal data is erased where it is no longer necessary for London Street to retain such data;
- the right to withdraw your consent to the processing at any time;
- the right to request that the data controller provide you with your personal data and where possible, to transmit that data directly to another data controller;
- the right, where there is a dispute in relation to the accuracy or processing of your personal data, to request a restriction is placed on further processing;
- the right to object to the processing of personal data;
- the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office.

The elders do however wish to collect and process data which goes beyond the scope of that provided by the GDPR for which we require your express permission to do so. It is in relation to the processing of your personal data for compiling the Church Directory each year. The good news is that we will only need your authority once and not every year. Further information on this will follow in the Autumn.

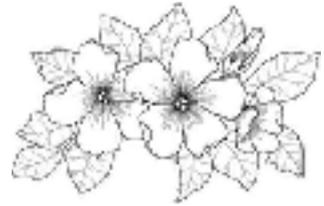
And finally

Every United Reformed Church is required to issue a Privacy Statement which must be accessible to all members of the congregation. The one for London Street can be found on the church notice board.

Owen.

Flower Rota - May:

- 6th Owen Collins
- 13th Victoria Paice
- 20th Jean Holton
- 27th Friendship Hour



Daily Bible Readings for May:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1st	66	Matthew	19	16th	Romans	2
2nd	105:1-11	"	20	17th	"	3
3rd	34:1-10	"	21	18th	40:1-8	4
4th	67	"	22	19th	71:1-13	Reflection
5th	143	Reflection		20th	148	"
6th	34:11-22	"		21st	40:9-17	Romans
7th	68:1-10	Matthew	23	22nd	71:14-24	"
8th	144	"	24	23rd	149	"
9th	36:5-12	"	25	24th	41	"
10th	68:28-35	"	26	25th	72	"
11th	145	"	27	26th	150	Reflection
12th	38	Reflection		27th	1	"
13th	69	"		28th	108	Romans
14th	146	Matthew	28	29th	2	"
15th	107	Romans	1	30th	42	"
				31st	73:21-28	"



Niamh Harriman, 10 years on 13 May
Isabel Stanley, 7 years on 24 May



A big fundraising event being held at London Street URC. A 'Conservatory' supper club with entertainment! You pay a set fee per head and have a lovely sociable evening with good and tasty vegetarian home-cooked food. If you are not vegetarian you may

well be surprised at just how delicious vegetarian food can be! The food will be locally and ethically sourced. There will be good food, good entertainment and good company and we will also be raising some much-needed funds for the growing mission and life of London Street URC! Save the date (23rd June); tell your friends and details will follow.

Snippets from the Church Meeting:

Thanks were expressed for the two Gift Sunday collections which amounted to £14,481 (plus Gift Aid) and for the £209+ raised at the recent Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy Sale. The next sale is on 12th May.

The Church Secretary's Report can be seen on pages 13-23 and the elections of Church Officers and Church appointments were passed unanimously with thanks for their services.

There was an overview of the Church Accounts for 2017 and it is hoped these will be available for the next Church Meeting on 27th June.

Christian Aid Week - 13th to 20th May

Christian Aid is an international development organisation that insists the world can and must be changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty and inequality. All over the country, during Christian Aid week, hundreds of people are planning to hold a Christian Aid lunch or breakfast. I'm delighted to say that at London Street, we are doing both.

Alison Jamieson and the World Mission Group are organising a simple lunch after service on Sunday 13th May. The week after on Sunday 20th May, Carol Scott and the Junior Church are organising a 'Big Brekkie' at 8.00am for an 8.30 start.

Time to celebrate and support the work of Christian Aid; Crisis work; social justice campaigns; and projects working with local partners to address local poverty.

How...?

- help with door to door collections.
Please contact Ian Scott to know more:
Tel 01256 478100
- Use gift envelopes for yourself or friends and family, available from the church.
- Celebrate at the service on 13th May 10.30 - speaker Katie Roberts, organiser for the SW region of Christian Aid. Followed by a Soup and Cheese Lunch.
- Junior Church Christian Aid Breakfast on Sunday 20th May – 8am for 8.30. All welcome. Please let Carol Scott know if you are coming for catering purposes. Tel 01256 478100.

Explore Churches:

Churches in the Wessex Synod were invited before Christmas to provide historical details of their churches. Jean Holton and Owen Collins worked on this before Christmas and our church page is now published live on the website for the National Churches Trust. Please have a look - www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore-churches/london-street-united-reformed-church

Elders Training Day:

Elders training day led by Revd Mary Thomas. The day is open to both serving and non-serving Elders and we shall be considering the 4 dimensions of church growth. Meeting at the Immanuel Centre, Tadley URC on Saturday 19th May, the day will start at 9.30am and finish at 4.00pm. Tea and coffee, Danish pastries for breakfast and soup and bread for lunch will be provided. Please speak to Kay or Owen if interested in attending.

Lending Library:

Lending library at London Street - Run by Chris Ayland, the lending library is up and running to raise funds for London Street. The library will be available on the Saturdays when we have our coffee mornings and bring and buy sale, and every Sunday after the service. If you have any books or DVD's suitable for the library please bring them in and hand them to Chris. For each book you borrow there will be a charge of 50p and DVDs 75p. You can purchase them if you wish - 75p for a paperback and £1 for a hardback and £1 for a DVD. These are minimum charges/prices and if you wish to pay more please do!

Joint social event:

Old meeting/London Street - Joint social event. This year we are not having a Garden Party, instead we are having a family BBQ at the Immanuel Centre, Tadley URC on Sunday 15th July starting at 1.00pm. Tickets are priced at £5 per adult and £2.50 per child and will be available from mid May. When purchasing please let Owen know if you require a lift from London Street or can provide a lift. Cars may be parked at the Methodist Church opposite Old Meeting. Thanks, Owen.

Synod Vocations day: Do you ever feel you want to offer more at London Street, but don't know what or where or how? If so, then a meeting at Fleet URC will provide a day of exploration of several vocations, hearing from people, each telling the story of their journey and calling. There will be time for questions and time for worship and prayer. Through all this we hope and pray that people will be challenged and released to pursue new areas of service.

Date: Saturday 29th September 2018.

Location: Fleet URC, 25 Kings Road, Fleet, Hants, GU51 3AF.

Time: 10am - 2pm.

A sandwich lunch will be provided. To book your place, please contact development@urcwessex.org.uk or phone 023 8067 4513.

CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2017

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ and the Father are One and that He is also the only begotten Son of God. These passages are an indication that God regards Jesus as a family member. As Christians, we too are members of this family and our home is here at London Street. A fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ, a spiritual family encompassing a number of very caring and friendly people - a comment made to me on many an occasion on Sunday mornings from visitors.

While Jesus Christ is referred to as the only begotten Son of God, believers are referred to as children born into God's family who need to grow and mature in our faith. Looking back over 2017, central to our spiritual growth has been our minister, Revd Kay Blackwell. I am, therefore, starting my report by expressing, on behalf of everyone here at London Street, a big thank you for all that you do Kay. The majority of what we do as a family is primarily down to Kay together with the leadership and support of the elders. Kay works extremely hard and it is not uncommon for her to work long hours even on a Monday which is supposed to be her day off. If you can picture for a moment a caring parent of a large family, that is exactly what Kay is in bringing leadership, guidance, compassion and love to all here at London Street and to Christ's family in Basingstoke. It's only right that I also thank Andrew, Kay's husband, for the support he gives to Kay in her work.

In every family there is a mix of generations. There are 5 groups in which we can find the younger members of our family – Little Angels, Junior Church, Messy Church, the Youth Café and the 8th Basingstoke Scouts Group.

Despite a dip in numbers at the recommencement of Little Angels in September, Anne Davey, in her report, states that numbers grew again in the Autumn. Over 2017 the children have enjoyed art work and enthusiastic singing sessions led by Kay, as well as celebrating Easter and Christmas with services in the sanctuary. Thanks go to the leaders Anne and Kay, and helpers Leng and Chris Ayland, Louise Waller, Alison Jamieson, Sara and Jo.

The Top of Town Messy Church, which is run ecumenically with All Saints, sees many of those from Little Angels coming along. Ian McCloy, in his report on Messy Church, states that each session has a biblical theme, with craft activities aimed at different levels and age groups. Parents, grandparents and carers are encouraged to join in the craft activities with

the children. Each activity is linked to the biblical theme and aims to stimulate discussion of the theme and help children to understand it. After the crafts, everyone goes into church for story time, singing and prayers, again linked with the theme. The session closes with the children, adults and leaders sharing in a meal together and, where possible, the menu is again linked to the theme. The numbers attending remain high with new families coming along in response to the banner placed outside the church. As with many of the activities we run at church, additional volunteers are always welcome.

Although we don't have many families with youngsters at London Street attending service on a Sunday morning, Carol Scott reports that Junior Church has continued to flourish over 2017. Embracing the children as part of Christ's family, Kay spoke to the children about the Last Supper and the service of Holy Communion and, as a consequence, they now return to the service to celebrate communion with the remainder of the church family. As well as Carol, thanks go to Jenny McCloy, Anne Davey, Joyce Cook, Tony Patterson, Margaret Carrick Smith, Leng Ayland, Alison Jamieson, Chris Holt, and David and Julie Bath, for all the help given on a Sunday morning with the children. Again additional helpers and leaders are always welcome.

Over 2017 Penny Dilley reports that well over 500 young people attended the Youth Café, many of whom are regular attenders. In July they said goodbye to what has been their most regular group of year 11's as they moved onto sixth form college, but since September they have welcomed a growing group of year 8's and a large group of college aged youngsters. We are grateful to Penny and John Eves for their leadership of the Youth Café.

The 8th Basingstoke Scouts Group continue to meet regularly on a Tuesday evening and we are grateful to Gill Craft for her leadership.

A focus group of representatives from London Street, Carol Scott, Jenny McCloy, Anne Davey, Joyce Cook, Bram Corn and Kay meet to ensure that the children's groups are happy and we are meeting their needs. One important aspect of the group is to ensure that the Safeguarding Policy of London Street is current and relevant. The policy is reviewed annually by the elders and special thanks must go to Margaret Carrick Smith for her expertise in making the requisite changes each year.

Friendship Hour started as a Club for young mums during the time of Revd David Welbrock on a Thursday afternoon as it was half day closing in Basingstoke. Less frantic in their activities than the scout group, Friendship Hour have matured over the years, becoming a group for the

senior members of our family. Joyce Cook as chair reports that during the summer the group celebrated their 50th birthday. But with a decline in numbers as more became housebound or moved into a nursing home, coupled with the deaths of Pam, their Treasurer, and Michael, the tea boy, the decision was made just recently in 2018 to close the group. Thanks go to Eileen Poulter who has been such a valiant helper with most of the rôles of Friendship Hour since she joined over 20 years ago, and to Joyce as chair.

Staying with our older generation, Joan Mussellwhite reports that the 3C's continue to enjoy meeting on the third Wednesday of each month in Oasis for Coffee, Company and a Chat, and all are welcome.

Isobel Martin reports that the craft club continued to grow over 2017. Meeting on a weekly basis throughout the year with family members from the local community joining as well as those from the congregation. In August Alison Jamieson made a lovely window display of the items made by members of the craft club including, blankets, pictures, cards and a variety of other knitted and crocheted items. Grateful thanks to the craft club for donating £200 to church funds as well as supplying the Christingles for the Christmas Eve service.

The Memory Tree, for those with dementia and their carers, continues to flourish. In September 2017 they celebrated their 3rd birthday. In her report, Jenny McCloy expresses thanks to the faithful team of volunteers from London Street who come every week, Kay, Isobel Martin, Joyce Cook, Sandra Marut, Claire Macro and Ian McCloy and Jenny of course; then we have friends of Claire who come along from the Alzheimer's Society. The volunteers are supported by a team of ladies who regularly bake cakes; Alison Jamieson, Margaret Carrick Smith, Julia Burrows, Louise Waller, Jenny McCloy and Joan Mussellwhite. If anybody would like to join this rota of bakers please have a word with Jenny.

It's heartening to hear that the family of Memory Tree extend beyond the current clientele with dementia, as they welcome a number of people who have been full time carers in the past but whose partners have either died or who are now in permanent residential care. These friends enjoy the company shared within the group and the support they gain from people in similar circumstances to their own.

In August everyone enjoyed another outing on the Watercress Line, starting with a coach ride to Alresford followed by a ride to Alton on the steam train during which lunch was served. The day finished with a quick visit to The Avenue Garden Centre in Lasham on the way home.

To celebrate their 3rd birthday, Memory Tree welcomed small animals (and their handler) from the charity 'Animal Touch' which is based at Miller's Ark in Up Nateley. Guests enjoyed this morning, especially one lady with dementia who really misses having an animal of her own. Memory Tree bought an imitation cat which actually 'breathes/purrs' so she can stroke it all morning. During August, Memory Tree welcomed Revd Clare Downing, our Synod Moderator, to the group. She was interested to see how the group works. As a result of this visit, a few of the volunteers and a carer, were invited to run a workshop at the October Wessex Synod at Camberley. About 30 people attended this workshop and Kay, Joyce, Jenny and Mary (one of the carers) described how Memory Tree was run. Many of those listening were keen to start their own versions in their churches, recognising how great is the need for this kind of support. A family born at London Street and now extending out into the Wessex Synod.

If you are interested in seeing what happens in Memory Tree, Jenny invites all to come along on any Wednesday morning and experience and enjoy the warm, fun filled atmosphere in the group, not forgetting of course that all important slice of cake and cup of tea. As one of the carers says frequently: *'I don't know what I would do if I couldn't come here on a Wednesday'*.

The Community Café at London Street comprises both Oasis and the Youth Café. We have heard from Penny through her report about the Youth Café, let us now turn our attention to Oasis. As with the Youth Café, Oasis is run by an ecumenical team under the administration of London Street, as such it is underwritten by this church. There are 9 different churches represented by volunteers across both cafes. Six members from a staff team of 21 are from London Street.

The Oasis café is struggling as the top of town becomes less populated and viable due to the closure of key businesses. Penny and her team though maintained their usual rhythm of offers throughout 2017, including the Soup Festival and Christmas lunches.

In addition to providing 25 to 30 evening meals every Thursday and Friday evenings during January and February and again in December 2017 for the Night Shelter, the cafe served 130 Christmas lunches which were enjoyed by various different groups, including the macular degenerative group, Memory Tree, and Hillstead Court, as well as local families and individuals.

During 2017 Oasis had two work experience students. One of them, Miss M, came for 3 months and benefited greatly. She developed from a shy

young lady not in employment or education, into a college student who is now doing well.

Our Oasis family extends well into the community. Penny reports that they now collect food from Marks and Spencer four days a week and redistribute it through toddler groups and six families weekly, as well as Camrose and the Night Shelter.

Finally in her report, Penny makes mention of two additional items. Firstly the commissioning services led by Kay Blackwell and John Eves at the beginning of each school term held here at London Street. Open to the public, these services provide the opportunity to reflect on the work of the cafés and give thanks to God for all He has done and to pray for the coming term's work and the staff. Secondly the ever presence of the Holy Spirit as several members of the café team become more integrated into church life and consequently growing spiritually.

Our support of the wider family extends beyond Oasis. Jean Holton our archivist reports that among the flurry of queries received during 2017 there was one from a gentlemen in Australia whose ancestors had connections with London Street. The surname in question was Caston and Jean was able to tell him that the booklet issued at the time of London Street's 200th anniversary referred to the purchase of the site in 1800 from Hugh Jones builder; and Moses Caston gentleman; and that various historical documents containing the name Caston, including Thomas and George who were ironmongers and also trustees of this church. The name Caston is still carried on in Basingstoke today by Caston's car park and Caston's alley, although Castons Road disappeared in the 1960's redevelopment of the town.

Towards the end of 2017 I was asked by the Synod to complete a questionnaire for a project being undertaken by the URC's representative on the Board of Trustees of the Churches Visitors' and Tourism Association (CVTA) established by the Church of England some years ago. Passing it to Jean she was able to provide information about London Street and that can now be found on the National Churches Trust website at www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore-churches/london-street-united-reformed-church

Thank you Jean for all the work that you do.

Purchasing goods through Traidcraft is of course an excellent way of financially supporting our bigger family overseas. It makes a huge difference to suppliers who are able, with access to training and a wider market, to work themselves out of poverty. John and Margaret Carrick Smith run the Traidcraft stall here at London Street and they report that in

2017 they sold nearly £1,500 worth of items from the stall and orders from church folk. They are grateful to all who make buying fair trade goods part of their lives and to Tony and Gillian Patterson who have willingly run the stall when John and Margaret are away.

The sales from the stall are only a part of the total turnover as London Street, Oasis and Old Meeting buy through us and with other sales made outside those mentioned, the total reached just over £2,400. This is a good figure although 12.5% down on 2016.

Thank you John and Margaret.

Staying with our family further afield, Alison Jamieson in her report for the World Mission Group reports that 2017 has run a familiar course where various groups have brought us up to date with their work enabling London Street to focus our thoughts, giving and prayers but there have also been some highlights and additions. The year started in February with the Fairtrade Fortnight when there was a display of products in the window and we had a manned Traidcraft stall in the Oasis Café for three days, which provided a number of sales and an opportunity to talk to people about fair trade. In March, Trevor Roff from Open Doors, the group that works to support the persecuted church around the world, came and spoke to us about the 'One Million Voices of Hope' petition which promotes the involvement of the local Christian community in Syria and Iraq to have a significant role in reconciling and rebuilding their communities and promoting equal legal rights and dignified living conditions for all.

In mid-May John Ledger, from the Mission Aviation Fellowship spoke at a morning service about the wonderfully supportive work of that organisation making it possible to get aid, medical treatment and the gospel to many inaccessible and remote parts of the world.

Christian Aid Week was as usual promoted; despite the rain some did the door to door collecting, others took envelopes and filled them. The main event was the concert initiated and organised by Owen and given in aid of Christian Aid by the Male Voice Choir, Berkshire Brass and our very own Peter Dixon on the organ. It was a very enjoyable event and raised over £1,500. The total raised that week was over £2,200; more than double on the previous year. A big thank you to all. I would like to add my own thanks to Maggie Morgans who contributed to the musical pieces chosen and the selling of the tickets for the concert, and to the members of London Street for contributing fruit juice and biscuits as refreshments for the interval, and on the day of the concert the stewards who welcomed people.

We had a couple of retiring collections in response to crisis appeals; in March for East Africa, where conflict has compounded the effects of

drought; in September a joint one for Bangladesh, coping with increased monsoon flooding and the influx of refugees from Myanmar and the hurricane-hit islands of the Caribbean.

Our giving through the monthly Communion Sunday retiring collection for Commitment to Life and the Town Centre Chaplains has raised over £1,000 for each charity. In July Kay led a service with the theme *Go blue for loo day*, highlighting the issues of many in desperate poverty to have access to a proper latrine, clean water and the information they need to be healthy. With £240 raised we were able to twin with a toilet block in Guatemala.

Our last event of 2017 in September was to welcome back Mark Warner of the Sailors Society who brought us up to speed on their very valuable work.

Thank you to Alison and the World Mission Group for your invaluable work in raising awareness of those less fortunate than ourselves.

All families have good times and bad times. As a family we were saddened by the passing of many dear friends: Donna Stewart, Marion Willie, Marian Kenward; Helen Rolton and Pam Ralph. I must also record the passing of Morris Baker who died in November 2016, news of which I received too late to include in my report for 2016. It was also a sad occasion when we said farewell to Sonja Knoll and her children Max and Johanna as they moved to Durham. It was a time of joy though when we celebrated the wedding of David Waller and Louise Holmes in the summer followed in the autumn with the wedding of Lee Grant and Alison Honeyball.

Families try to support each other through difficult times and at London Street we do that in many ways. The sending of flowers, and our thanks go to Liz Lindsay for organising the flower rota, visits by Kay and the elders, but most importantly through prayer. We continue throughout the week with a focus on our rhythm of daily prayer using the prayers and cycle of psalm readings from Ffald-y-Brenin as our framework. Those not able to engage in prayer here at London Street being encouraged to use the Ffald-y-Brenin prayer leaflets at home. As part of our commitment to grow spiritually and prayerfully; the prayer group has met every Wednesday lunchtime throughout the year and on the first Sunday of each month we have a prayer breakfast. We also supported those at Christmas by hosting a meal on Christmas Day for those who would have otherwise been on their own, and our thanks go to Joy Williams for taking a key role in organising that.

It can be difficult to keep in touch with our own families at times but we all recognise the importance of keeping each other informed. Reading Focus our church magazine each month is one way and we are grateful to Christine Robertson the editor and to Joan Beattie who each month will forward copies to our friends now living away from Basingstoke. Another way is through reading the magazine of the URC, Reform, and thanks to John and Elaine Coakes for ordering and distributing copies each month.

Church meeting not only provides information but deals with the business matters of London Street for which members are responsible. During 2017 we had 6 meetings with the primary topics of discussion being the Night Shelter and the Who Cares? Mission, two very important projects we were involved in. Other items discussed included plans to repave London Street outside the church, knitting fruit and vegetables for the Greenbelt festival, Eco Church, the introduction of a Facebook page, our garden party held at the home of Jeffrey and Maggie Morgans, an art exhibition connected to biblical themes which ran for two weeks in September, a series of talks led by Roland Pletts on the prophetic works connected with the Jewish Festivals, and various policies including the acceptance of delegated authority from the URC Wessex Trust to casually hire and let our premises.

Being a member of a family brings responsibilities and being a member of London Street is no different. We have the Finance Committee chaired by Alex Macro and as a committee they will report to the Trustees, that is the serving eldership, with both bringing recommendations to church meeting. Thank you to Alex, Karen our Treasurer and members of the committee, Joy Williams, Ian Scott, Julia Burrows, Julie Bath as well as myself and Kay.

Led by Joy Williams we have the Buildings and Fabric Group. The main occupation of the Buildings Focus Group, has been the Church drains. We have had to deal with a number of blockages on the first floor and several at the point where our sewer flows into the main sewer in May Place - the main cause being paper hand towels being flushed down the toilets. Some blockages we have been able to clear ourselves thanks to Rob Williams and Bram Corn but others have required professional expertise and equipment which has been a drain financially. The decision has been taken to use towels to be changed daily until we can afford electric hand dryers. Some small necessary repairs have been done at the Manse but the bathroom ceiling still needs re-boarding following the leak of several years ago. The only major work in 2017 was the fitting of new cabinets under the hatch in the ground floor kitchen – the cost shared between the café and the church.

A vital source of income, particularly at present, is the lettings. Once again our premises are used constantly throughout the year. We owe an

enormous debt of gratitude to Peter Bentall who has been our lettings secretary for over 10 years. Thank you Peter for all you have done. A big thank you to our cleaners Graham, Roy and Sharon. Sharon was recruited in December to replace Graham who retired because of ill-health. Our thanks to Ian Scott, line manager for the cleaners. When it comes to our shop window and decorating the church, thank you to Alison Jamieson, and for the contribution made by Ian McCloy and Chris Ayland.

Probably the group with the greatest responsibility is the eldership. At the beginning of 2017 we had 11 serving elders: Leng Ayland, Margaret Carrick Smith, Joyce Cook, Anne Davey, May Honeyball, Alison Jamieson, Liz Lindsay, Ian McCloy, Jenny McCloy, Ian Scott, and Rob Williams. In addition we had 4 non-serving elders with a pastoral group each: Chris Ayland, Isobel Martin, Gill Craft and Maggie Morgans. During 2017 there have been 11 elders' meetings and 2 extra-ordinary meetings. Every member of the congregation has been remembered by the elders in prayer in our devotionals. Items for discussion have been many and include those previously mentioned earlier in this report when I covered church meeting.

Morning worship on a Sunday is the key to our Church family. We are richly blessed to have Kay preaching on most Sundays and we are grateful also to our visiting preachers and thanks must go to Mark Best for organising the preaching rota. Thank you also to our musicians throughout 2017 – Mark Best, Peter Dixon, Ian Rees, Maggie Morgans, Alex Macro and David Shaw, with occasional input from Joyce Cook and the digital hymnal, and of course Kay and Andrew. Sunday worship though is more than just the ministry of word and sacrament. There are many who work before and after the service and I'd like to thank all of them. There is Rob Williams who ensures that the heating is on if we need it, and Carol Scott as performing and copyright co-ordinator. So what was the most recorded and consequently popular hymn for 2017? It was number 620 – *For the healing of the nations*. We also have the drivers who give lifts to those who need one, the greeters at the door organised by Jean Holton, the stewards organised by Joyce Cook, the sound system organised by Alex Macro, the bible readers organised by Joy Williams, the flowers organised by Liz Lindsay and her team, the provision of teas and coffees organised by Ian and Jenny McCloy, the Traidcraft stall run by John and Margaret Carrick Smith, the ladies who wash and return the communion glasses, the counting of the offertory organised by the Finance Committee, the distribution of taped services by Alison Jamieson, our Junior Church staff and helpers, myself in co-ordinating and printing the diary and order of service and finally the duty elders.

As a church family we don't just meet on a Sunday for worship. I've already mentioned the daily rhythm of prayer, but in addition to that Kay organised and led groups to enhance our spiritual growth. We had the Lent House groups using study material based on the film *Chocolat* and in December we looked at the *Wisdom House* highlighting our personal strengths and the power of friendship.

As children of God, what do we inherit? According to the Gospel of Matthew, nothing less than the kingdom of God. The letter of Paul to the Ephesians tells us that believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. These spiritual blessings are infinite, eternal, and reside in Christ, and by God's grace we are given these blessings as His children.

Last year has seen the family of London Street inherit many less fortunate than ourselves. Through the leadership of Kay we have taken a proactive role in the Who Cares? Mission and the Night Shelter. The Night Shelter for 2016/17 was a pilot scheme which proved to be very successful. Engaging with 30 homeless people over a period of 3 months, half of those were rehoused. A civic reception was held on 2nd March 2017 to thank all involved in the project. We opened our doors once again for the winter of 2017/18 with Kay this time as one of the leaders of the project and Carol Scott as co-ordinator at London Street. On the very point of caring for those less fortunate than ourselves I want to draw your attention to one person of interest that visited London Street in August - the Mystery Worshipper. Quoting Kay now in her View from the Manse in the October Focus, *The mystery worshipper at London Street commented on the 'wonderful welcome given by the lady on the door' as being the part of the service that was most like being in heaven. She also described London Street as 'a church with a great presence in the community that is clearly making a difference, particularly to the lives of vulnerable people'.*

As earthly children we eventually inherit what our parents or relatives leave behind for us after their death. That's not quite so straight forward in God's case. We are experiencing financial difficulties at London Street and we do have to be careful how we spend our money which isn't easy at times, but in God's case, as a family of believers, we are already reaping the rewards of our inheritance by having peace with Him through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. With the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which empowers us to live for Him in the present, we can through collective prayer, such as the Day of Prayer on 2nd December organised for us by Joy and Kay, come through this difficult period we are experiencing.

Being a part of the family of God is the greatest blessing bestowed upon believers and one that should drive us to our knees in humble adoration. There is no need to go to the extreme I witnessed once when I saw Kay on

her knees, surrounded by towels trying to stem a water leak we had on the 1st floor. But, seriously, we can never do anything to deserve that greatest blessing for it is His gift of love, mercy, and grace to us, yet, we are called to become sons and daughters of the Living God. May we all respond in faith to His invitation!

That concludes my report for 2017. Thank you.

A powerful biblical outdoor drama you won't want to miss!!

Watch as hundreds of actors bring the story of Jesus to life in an open-air epic production set in stunning Surrey countryside. Follow over 100 actors in full costume moving through the beautiful grounds of the Wintershall estate with its lakes and ancient woodland re-enacting the remarkable events of Jesus' life.

Young and old from all walks of life will be mesmerised as the story unfolds across three captivating acts from 10.00am to 3.30pm.

Kay is organising a party to see this drama.

Tickets will be limited. When?: Friday 22nd June; Cost to drama: Adult £20.00, Senior (65+) £18.00; Child (18 and below) £9.50. In addition there will be the coach fare from Basingstoke costing £10.00 (the coach will leave Tadley at 7.30am, then from the Leisure Park at 8.00am).

For further information please speak to Kay. In the meantime if you want to know more go to: www.wintershall-estate.com

Basingstoke Choral Society Concert: At the Anvil Theatre on Saturday 9th June.

To mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, the Choral Society, along with the Southampton Philharmonic Choir, are singing Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem". This was composed for the consecration of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral after the Second World War. Britten puts to music the words of the Latin Requiem Mass and the poetry of Wilfred Owen to give the message of the futility of war and of the need for peace. Over the year it will be sung many times across the country.

A message from Derek and Gerry Wensley:

Derek has preached at London Street on a number of occasions.

Re: Creation - the Oratorio by Guildford composers David Perkins and Derek Wensley. A re-telling of the Bible story for the 21st Century in modern, dignified English with 5 soloists and a 30 voice Choir at The Millmead Centre, Guildford Baptist Church on Saturday 5th May at 7.30pm. Admission is free. No tickets, no advance booking. All welcome.

My Encounter with 'An Angel'?

I (Ena at Tadley) just want to share the experience I had recently....

George and I have recently moved house to Newbury. It has been very stressful as we sold our home on the day it was put on the market and we were moving into a Churchill Retirement Apartment just a couple of weeks later!

We have had to really get rid of a lot of items and put just as much into storage until we decide what to do for the best.

To get to my 'encounter' story... The day before we moved, we went into Basingstoke and I sat outside Boots while George popped into the bank.

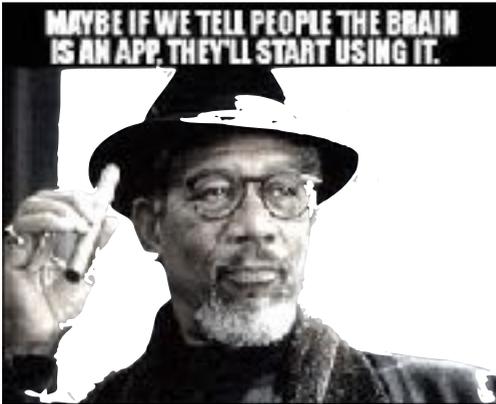
While I was sitting on the bench making a phone call, I noticed this very scruffy chap, with a bag on his back coming towards me! I thought he was either going to ask me for money or to use my phone!

He bent his head towards me and I noticed his piercing blue eyes. He then said to me, "God is looking after you"!

I just said, "Thank you" and I looked towards where he went, thinking he would be stopping and saying things to other people but he had disappeared!

So... I wondered if God knew how stressed we were and He sent a messenger to let us know that we were in His care.

What do you think?



*I wonder if
common sense
will ever make
a comeback.*



Seven Deadly Sins:

'Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Science without humanity
Knowledge without character
Politics without principle
Commerce without morality
Worship without sacrifice.'

Mahatma Gandhi

Three Sisters

Three elderly sisters, ages 92, 94 and 96, shared a house together. One evening, the 96 year old sister went upstairs to take a bath. As she put her foot into the tub, she paused. Then she yelled down to the other two sisters and asked "Was I getting in the tub or out?"

"You darn fool," said the 94 year old. "I'll come up and see." When she got half way up the stairs she paused. "Was I going up the stairs or down?"

The 92 year old sister was sitting at the kitchen table drinking a cup of tea and thought, "I hope I never get that forgetful, knock on wood." She shook her head and called out "I'll be up to help you both as soon as I see who is at the door."

Alpha at Old Meeting URC will be joining with the Main Road Methodist Church to run an Alpha on Tuesday evenings.

ALL WELCOME.



Alpha Programme – Tuesday evenings 7.15-9.15pm (inc. meal)

Guide to timings 7.15-7.30 – registration,
7.30-8.00 – meal, 8.00-9.15 – DVD talk and group discussion.

- 1st May – IMMANUEL CENTRE, URC** (*no Kay*) – ‘Why did Jesus die?’
8th May – MAIN ROAD METHODIST CHURCH – ‘How can I have faith?’
15th May – IMMANUEL CENTRE, URC – ‘Why and how should I pray?’
22nd May – MAIN ROAD METHODIST CHURCH (*no Ruth*) – ‘Why should I read the Bible?’
5th June – IMMANUEL CENTRE, URC – ‘How does God guide us?’
8th June – SATURDAY AWAY DAY – SILCHESTER METHODIST CHURCH 10am-4pm (Reading RG7 2NY) – ‘Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do?’
12th June – IMMANUEL CENTRE, URC – ‘How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?’
19th June – MAIN ROAD METHODIST CHURCH – ‘How can I make the most of the rest of my life?’
26th June – IMMANUEL CENTRE, URC – ‘How can I resist evil?’
3rd July – MAIN ROAD METHODIST CHURCH (*no Ruth*) – ‘Why & how should I tell others?’
10th July – IMMANUEL CENTRE, URC – ‘Does God heal today?’
17th July – MAIN ROAD METHODIST CHURCH – ‘What about the Church?’

Venues:

IMMANUEL CENTRE, Old Meeting URC, Tadley, RG26 3NL

MAIN ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, 4 Main Road, Tadley, RG26 3NL

Contacts: Revd Kay Blackwell (URC) – email:

revkblackwell@gmail.com Mobile: 07582056286

Revd Ruth Midcalf (Methodist) – email:

ruth.midcalf@methodist.org.uk Tel: 0118 9700139

Sunday Services at Old Meeting, Tadley

May

	<u>Preachers</u>	<u>Welcome</u>
6th	TBC	Ena and George
13th	Revd Kay Blackwell	Mandy and Dave
20th	Derek Clarke	Ladies Cell
27th	Philip Jones	Elaine and Brian
June	3rd Penny O’Bee	

May Diary

at London Street, unless otherwise stated

Wed 2 nd	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thu 3 rd	7.00pm	'Life Explored' Course Session 4
Sun 6 th	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast
	10.30am	Worship – led by The Minister
	12.30pm	Membership Class
	-2.00pm	
Wed 11 th	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Thu 10 th	7.00pm	'Life Explored' Session 5
Sat 12 th	10.00am	Coffee morning and 'Bring and Buy' Sale
	-12 noon	
	3.30pm	Top of Town Messy Church
Sun 13 th		CHRISTIAN AID WEEK UNTIL 19 th MAY
	10.30am	Worship – led by Katie Roberts (Christian Aid) and followed by CHRISTIAN AID LUNCH
		DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE FOCUS
Wed 16 th	10.15am	3C's (Coffee, Chat, Company) in the Oasis Café – All welcome
Thu 17 th	7.00pm	'Life Explored' Course Session 6
Sat 19 th	9.30am	Training day for London Street and Tadley
	-4.00pm	Elders led by Revd Mary Thomas at Immanuel Centre, Tadley
Sun 20 th	8.00am	JUNIOR CHURCH BREAKFAST – All welcome
	for 8.30	
	10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister and including Holy Communion
Thu. 24 th	7.00pm	'Life Explored' Course Session 7
Sun 27 th	10.30am	Worship – led by Mr Peter Pay
Mon 28 th		Oasis Café closed for Bank Holiday and Youth Café closed for half term
Wed 30 th		Minister on annual leave for 3 days

ECO TIP

Dodgy chemicals in the bathroom? Clear the limescale with white vinegar (distilled malt vinegar, about £3.40/5 litres), just splash about a third of a cupful down the loo, leave overnight, then brush it off.

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

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
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

Tuesdays:

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse
10am-12 noon	'LITTLE ANGELS' pre-school Club (Term time)
3-5.30pm in Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and college students
5.45pm	(BEAVER SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Colony
7pm	(CUB SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Pack
7pm	(SCOUTS — 8 th Basingstoke Troop
7-8.00pm	PRAYER MEETING at Tadley URC or St Paul's

Wednesdays:

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse
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

Thursdays:

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse
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
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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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