



London Street

United Reformed Church

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

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



Focus
December, 2021

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Thought for the Month

Advent The Great Promise!

Few Passages in the Old Testament are better known and loved than the opening verses of Isaiah Chapter 9. The idea of a great light shining on those who walked in darkness is a wonderful, evocative picture, which continues to resonate with us today. And yet, how far do we believe it can be realised in our own experience?

Do you remember the carol which speaks of a bright light shining on the shepherds in the Nativity story?

While shepherds watched their flocks by night
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

Have you ever wondered why God chose to give this wonderful news to the shepherds first? They were, after all, seen as being in the lower order of society at the time! I believe that God was making a statement, I think he was saying that rank does not matter, all are equal---it's what's in your heart that counts. If we truly believe this we are left with a responsibility and a duty to offer his love and care to all:

'Do not be afraid, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be for ALL people.'

Christmas brings more people through our church doors than at any other time. A time for us to show our love for Jesus and to highlight our willingness to share his care and compassion with all with whom we come into contact. Our chance to bring 'light' into people's darkness!

Christmas is not just a cosy festival to brighten up the winter months; or increasingly a time to cover the outside of your house in lights (bringing light into the darkness!!), it's not just a marketing opportunity for retailers or a story of elves and Santa for children. Although if you were to wander around many a garden centre's Christmas display you would find it hard to find any reference to God's amazing gift to the world. Christmas is for us, the great promise of God to the world, the secret of the universe and the meaning of life, the promise of God's gift of himself in his only son.

This Advent season, as you await and prepare for the gift of Jesus to the world, listen to God's powerful voice whispering to you through familiar Nativity stories and carols. Do you hear the world creating, life transforming Word promising to bring light out of darkness?

'We hear the Christmas angels
Their great glad tidings tell:
O Come to us, abide with us.
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Love and Peace at Christmas.....Ian McCloy

Thank you:

I would like to record my very grateful thanks for the beautiful gift of flowers that were delivered to my home after I came home from hospital. I was also pleased to receive so many get well cards from our friends in the church family. A big thank you to you all for your kind thoughts and prayers.

With many Blessings to you all,
From Rob Williams.

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David and Julie Bath, Melanie and Tim would like to thank all those who helped us in the preparation before and on the day of Darrell's funeral; Owen organised stewards on the door, helpers in the kitchen, putting out cakes and dispensing tea and coffee and also arranging for the flowers to be displayed and Tony who organised all the graphics on the screens which were flawless. Thank you so much for all your help.

We would also like to thank the members of the congregation for supporting us in prayer and on the day, helping us get through a difficult time.

We received from one of Darrell's band members, whilst having tea afterwards, a folder in which he had written a list of Christmas songs he was going to record. The most moving words on the front of the folder, written by Darrell, were "Darrell loves Jesus
Jesus loves Darrell'

This was a real comfort to us as a family.

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Circle of Prayer



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

London Street: Beverley Cantwell; Ian and Jenny McCloy and family; David and Julie Bath; Claire Macro; Keng and Rita and family; Christine Clucas and family; Hyacinth Ridguard; Betty Shipway; Maggie Morgans and family; the Patterson family; Victoria Paice and family; Kay Cook; and Jo Tremarco, Tom and Melanie; Lou and David Waller.



Dick Davey, 88 years on 11 December
Ruby Honeyball-Todd, 2 years on 7th December
Ruth Nicholson, 7 years on 17th December
Amos Grant, 6 years on 25 December

Baptism:

It was a pleasure to welcome Ruby Iris Honeyball-Todd into the church family on the occasion of her baptism on 21st November.

Christmas Window Sills Decoration

Please sign up to decorate a Church window sill on Saturday 4th December between 10.30am and 12 noon.

Thank you very much.

Flower Team

Church Flowers 2022:

The Flower Committee will be arranging flowers on the first Sunday of each month during 2022.

If you wish to celebrate a special anniversary please let Liz Lindsay know – a_elindsay@btinternet.com

Flower Team

Eco Tip:

Use it up, wear it out;
Make it do, or do without.



Stepwise is making a difference!

What is Stepwise?

Stepwise is an integral part of *Walking the Way – living the life of Jesus today*, the United Reformed Church's focus on whole-life discipleship and mission.

Wessex Synod is delighted that Stepwise is now part of the life of the Synod with people having completed the first stream, while others are just about to start. A Synod Stepwise Advocacy Group has been formed and they have been working hard to make sure that all the procedures are put in place to ensure that Stepwise has been able to happen through the last 18 months.

Stepwise is a programme of learning and discipleship development for everyone – including you! – whether you are exploring and enriching your personal faith life, discerning where God's call on your life may be leading, preparing for a new direction, or developing a specific role within your community or church.

One key aspect is that, as a Stepwise participant, your group will have a facilitator and you will also have a mentor who will be with you throughout your Stepwise stream. The Synod Advocacy Group is ensuring safe recruitment and orientation of voluntary facilitators and mentors.

What is a Stepwise Stream? Stepwise has five streams: Faith Filled Life, Faith Filled Worship, Faith Fuelled Leadership, Faith Filled Confidence and Faith Filled Community. Everyone starts with Faith Filled Life, and then after that depends on you! You don't have to follow any set path through it.

Stepwise is open to anyone who is keen to reflect on and develop their Christian faith. If you're ready to be stimulated and challenged – and want to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others – then Stepwise could be just what you're looking for.

Stepwise is learner orientated and designed to draw on the strengths and to address the needs of individual learners, in the context of their communities and churches. The programme emphasises the vital

importance of people learning from their daily lives, wherever and whoever God calls them to be.

There are different start times, so there should be a group that is convenient for you – either online or in person.

This is what you need to know

- All participants wanting to engage in the Stepwise programme will have to begin with completing Faith Filled Life
- If you want to participate in Faith Filled Life, go to our Synod website and fill in an application form, and send this to Ruth Heine, development@urcwessex.org.uk
You will then be contacted by a member of the Synod Advocacy Group.
- Synod will identify where the learning Hubs will be located within the Synod, and what online offering there may be.
- Groups will be formed logically for participants and will be registered with Synod. This will connect you for your login for your online learning.
- You will have a mentor throughout Stepwise, and if you are unable to identify one from your church, you will be given help to find one.

If you want to know any more about this, please contact Mary Thomas dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk or Ray Stanyon

URC's 50th Anniversary

Free tickets are now available for the United Reformed Church's (URC's) 50th Anniversary Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving taking place on Saturday 1 October 2022, at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, London, where the Uniting Assembly of the United Reformed Church took place in 1972.

The day starts at United Reformed Church House at 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT with an Open Church House event, packed full of jubilee related talks and activities, as well as to meet the team that work at the office. There will be a Walk to Westminster with a guided tour before gathering for the service that starts at 2.30pm.

The intergenerational thanksgiving service is free and open to all in the URC. To ensure adequate provision is made, tickets for under 5s, 5-11s, 11-18s, and wheelchair users are available.

Book your tickets through the Eventbrite booking system at bit.ly/urc50.

Daily Bible Readings for December:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1 st	119:113-128	Revelation	1	16 th	56	Revelation. 12
2 nd	18:20-30	"	2	17 th	23/24	" 13
3 rd	119:129-144	"	3	18 th	87	Reflection
4 th	18:31-42	Reflection		19 th	100/101	"
5 th	52	"		20 th	124/125.	Revelation 14
6 th	119:145-160.	Revelation	4	21 st	25:1-10	" 15
7 th	85	"	5	22 nd	126/127	" 16
8 th	98	"	6	23 rd	25:11-22	" 17
9 th	119:161-176	"	7	24 th	57	" 18
10 th	19	"	8	25 th	102:1-17	Reflection
11 th	54	Reflection		26 th	128/129	"
12 th	86	"		27 th	26	Revelation 19
13 th	121/122	Revelation	9	28 th	130/131	" 20
14 th	99	"	10	29 th	27	" 21
15 th	20	"	11	30 th	60	" 22
				31 st	89:1-13	Rejoice!

Ffald-y-Brenin

Tips for December - Lights On and Lights Off !

1. It is 6.30pm and suddenly with no warning we have a power cut. All the surrounding houses have also lost power, so it is total darkness – not even a streetlight is on.

**DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR TORCH IS? DOES IT WORK?
ARE THE BATTERIES FLAT?**

This happened to us at Berry Court and the power was off for two hours. So, your plan for December - check you have a working torch, and it is placed in a spot where you can find it easily.

Remember, if the lights go out you are in total darkness. Be careful.

2. A short break away does us all good but beware! Visiting family in Southampton I left my car in the multi-storey car park for three days. Quite safe and reasonable charges for overnight parking. All went well until time to return home. The tip is – if you are going to be leaving your car parked for any length of time I suggest you check that no interior lights have been left on!

Three days with an interior light left on had flattened the battery and involved a large fee from roadside repair to remedy the problem.

Please check – lights out!

Gill Miller

Thoughts on Pastoral Care at London Street

We can all feel lonely from time to time although these feelings are a very personal thing and can be very different for each person. We can feel that loneliness, especially, when our need for rewarding social contact and relationships is not met. Many people can confuse the act of loneliness with being alone. This is not always the case.

Many choose to live alone and live happily with little or no contact with other people while others may find this a great struggle.

You may have a great circle of friends or work mates, be in a relationship, or have loving family members but still feel lonely, not understood, or really cared for.

Sometimes just a phone call can make a difference. Just to know that for a moment in a busy world someone stopped and thought of you.

As we enter this period of vacancy caring for each other is more important than ever. How valuable it is to know that we are cared for and loved as part of God's great family?

To be accepted, regardless of our position or standing in life. To be loved and accepted regardless of our gender, sexuality, age, colour or even depth of religious belief. Surely this is what makes us a caring, loving church?

There have been some times past when some members have felt isolated or possibly forgotten whilst the busy world passes them by.

Since we returned to worship at London Street a group of serving and non-serving elders have been in discussion to decide how best to care for each other as we go forward in our journey. These plans have been discussed by Elders' Meeting and, on recommendation, accepted at the recent church meeting.

To enable us to enfold every member into the flock of Christ at London Street we have, therefore, made some changes to our pastoral care. The details of this will be sent to you all individually.

The agreed changes include the formation of a Pastoral Team who will oversee and support the pastoral care given. Each member of the congregation is asked to play their part in helping form a pastoral care chain to encompass all and in doing so this will help us to move forward showing the love and concern for every member of our church family.

By embracing these changes, we can move forward in the knowledge that everyone feels cared for and important in our fellowship life.

Gill Miller

London St URC Christmas Party

Saturday, 11th December 3-30pm-6pm

Please could I ask donations of food to be brought to the party? There is a list on the board at church for guidance

For anyone bringing children please may I ask you to contact me as soon as possible for some important information?

Our Carol Service will begin at 6-30pm, and you are very welcome to stay. This service will conclude with mince pies and mulled wine.

So a great start to our Christmas celebration.

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With Christmas and other people in mind:

How do you gift-wrap love? The nearest you will ever get to that is what Mary did when the Christ child was born - she 'wrapped' him in swaddling clothes.
Ian Gregory

True friendships are lasting because true love is eternal. A friendship in which heart speaks to heart is a gift from God and no gift that comes from God is temporary or occasional.
Henry Neuwen

Let us remember that the Christmas heart is a giving heart, a wide-open heart that thinks of others first. The birth of the baby Jesus stands as the most significant event in all history, because it has meant the pouring into a sick world of the healing medicine of love which has transformed all manner of hearts for almost 2000 years....Underneath all the bulging bundles is this beating Christmas heart.
Helen Keller

A cheerful giver does not count the cost of what he gives. His heart is set on pleasing and cheering him to whom the gift is given. *Julian of Norwich*



Climate Change, What to do?

PRAY for leaders in government and commerce to think green.

REPAIR REUSE REDUCE
RECYCLE REFILL RENEWABLE
GREEN UP UPCYCLE SWITCH

HOME	LIVING	GREENING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switch off lights when not needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycle batteries at Chineham Tesco or church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plant a tree/s in your garden or via a charity like Woodland Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure light bulbs are energy saving type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycle medication blister pkts at Superdrug or at church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start/use a compost bin, and pass on the compost to friends if you're not going to use it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check for thickness of roof insulation (250-300mm, ensure ventilation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycle plastic veg/ fruit containers, yoghurt pots (not suitable for green bins) at Hatchwarren Sainsburys or church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install a water butt to save water for watering your garden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get a Smart meter –tells you what you are using and how much it is costing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycle via collection points in car parks (details to come), clothing, small electrical items, shoes, foil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use grey water (from kitchen or bathroom) to water flower beds and trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put an extra layer on rather than turn the heat up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use non plastic wrapping paper this Christmas & recycle cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycle green waste at the dump or domestic collections, share it with a neighbour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turn down the heating by 1 degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only buy the food you will use to avoid waste and buy seasonal food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grow fruit and veg, even in tubs on a balcony
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switch utility to a renewable supplier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switch to an electric or hybrid car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make a space for wild life in your garden, don't be too tidy!

Speak Up! Share your tips with friends, families, retailer and me (Alison Jamieson) via email, I can then pass it on to the church.

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS AND MEETINGS

(all at London Street, unless otherwise stated)

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10.30am

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

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

Diary - December 2021

(at London Street, unless otherwise stated)

Sun 5 th	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast in the Hook Room
	10.30am	Worship led by Revd Howard Sharp
Sat 11 th	3.30pm-6.00pm	Christmas Party
	6.30pm	Carol Service
Sun 12 th	10.30am	Worship led by The 8 th Basingstoke Scouts

Deadline for articles for January FOCUS

Wed. 15 th	10.15am	3Cs
Fri. 17 th	7.30pm	Sounds of Hope Singers - Nine Lessons and Carols. All are invited.
Sun. 19 th	10.30am	Worship, including Holy Communion, led by Revd Julian Macro
Fri. 24 th	6.30pm	Christmas Eve service led by the Hub Church to which members of London Street are invited.
Sat 25 th	10.00am	Christmas Day Worship led by Sarah Williams and Valerie Dickinson
Sun. 26 th	NO SERVICE	

TADLEY SERVICES:

Dec. 5 th	10.30am - joining with Mortimer West End Chapel
12 th	10.30am - Visiting Preacher - Ed Vassie
19 th	10.30am - Christmas card making, mince pies and coffee in Immanuel Centre
24 th	4.40pm - Crib Service at St Paul's Tadley
25 th	4.30pm - Joining with Tadley Community Church at the Link
26 th	No Service

Regular Weekly events -

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

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

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