



FOCUS

March 2025

Includes London Street's Church
Secretary Report for 2024



London Street United Reformed Church

Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 7NU

Tadley (Old Meeting) United Reformed Church

Malthouse Ln, Hants, RG26 3NY

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

This month's thought is taken from the URC Prayer Handbook for 2025 and is by Becky Lynch.



Lent, a period to set time apart to consider Jesus and what he means to our lives and our relationship with him

Free our hearts

Romans 10 : 8b -13

As we enter into the season of Lent,
we confess to you our troubles, that we may find joy
and lightness of heart through your steadfast love.
In you we find strength to acknowledge all that tempts us,
we find protection to open our hearts wholly and
truthfully
so we may receive forgiveness.

As we embark on the journey to free our hearts
from the burden and worry, we ask that you may help us
to find
joy in all things, in all our daily wins no matter how small.
We pray that our hearts and minds remain steadfast,
that we may spread your love with our words and actions.

In this time of reflection and rebirth, we take time
to deepen our understanding of ourselves
and of your gift, Jesus Christ.

As we follow Jesus through his suffering and death,
may we look towards the joy of his resurrection,
the joy his presence brings.

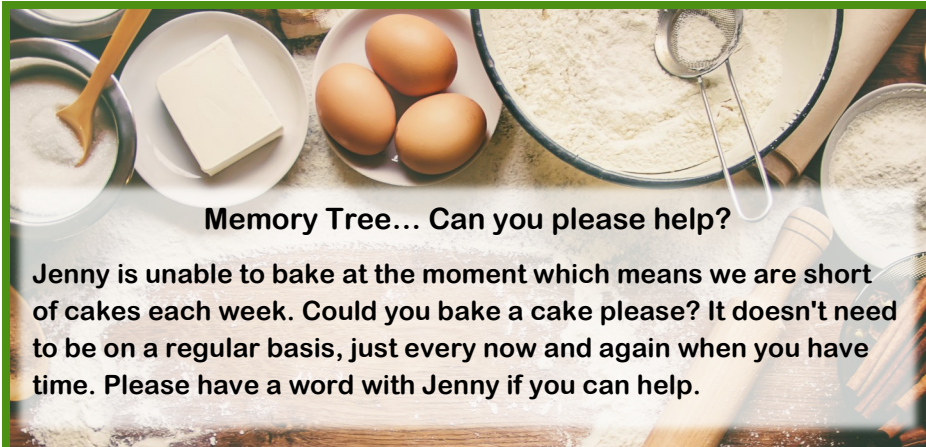
May we be transformed into people who let hope
and peace
fill our hearts, so that our souls are comforted in times
of trial.

We pray for guidance and mercy, for strength and
forgiveness.

May our lives be forever filled with joy in your name, Lord.

THE NOTICEBOARD

Information, updates, tips, and more.



Memory Tree... Can you please help?

Jenny is unable to bake at the moment which means we are short of cakes each week. Could you bake a cake please? It doesn't need to be on a regular basis, just every now and again when you have time. Please have a word with Jenny if you can help.

FOCUS: Next Issue

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Focus magazine. If you would like to contribute to the April magazine, please contact the editor by **20th of March**.



Church Flowers

The Flower Committee would like to thank Julie & David Bath for donating and arranging the March flowers to celebrate their wedding anniversary.

Vase of Flowers

For 2025 we have decided to have a vase of flowers on Communion Sunday or another date (other than the first Sunday) for a specific anniversary or remembrance. Please let Liz Lindsay know of your request. Thank you.

Re-Cycle Plus

Milk Bottle Tops

I have just picked up the bottle tops from the 'Re-Cycle Plus' at church and nearly all of them are UN-COLOURED ones!

Did you know that you can recycle the **un-coloured tops**, back on the milk bottles, in your green recycle bin?

So remember:

- 1 - Wash the bottle and the top
- 2 - Crush the bottle
- 3 - Screw the top back on the bottle
- 4 - Recycle in your Green bin

But still bring the coloured ones into church.

Thank you,

Alison Jamieson

P.S. If this does me out of a job, I shall be very pleased!

Eco Tip

God's Gift -- Our World

The Environment -- Our Responsibility



Going to a wedding this year? Don't use confetti, use flower petals instead, alternatively use rice which will be cleared up by birds.

Don't forget, you can recycle the following items at London Street:

Empty Printer Cartridges, Aluminium Containers and Foil, Batteries, and Plastic Milk Bottle Tops.

Lent Study Group

This will take place each Thursday evening during Lent, beginning on March 6th. We will begin with a simple meal beginning at 6:30pm. We will be following the 'Holy Habits' Lent Course. You would be very welcome to join us.

Please let Jenny McCloy know if you are interested.



Church Fellowship Lunch

Do join us for lunch at Gabardines Sunday March 16th at 12:15pm. This proved to be very successful in February so we plan to meet again in March. If you would like to come please let me know so I can book places.

Thank you
Gill Miller



A Baptism at London Street

Rachan Preeth Biyyani is to be baptised on Mothering Sunday, March 30th when our worship will be led by Rev. Helen Everard, the minister from Fleet URC. Do come and share in this special celebration.



Happy Birthday to the following members of our church family:

Lizzy Payne

Sylvia Reynolds

Joyce Cook

Rachan Preeth

Derek Anthony

And a belated Happy Birthday and apologies to someone we missed out last month:

Rob Williams



An Invitation to Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunrise Service with Breakfast (Posters Pages 8-9)

We would love for you all to come and join us on Maundy Thursday at Tadley United Reformed Church at 7pm for a short, quiet, reflective service of remembering as we recall the events of the day of the last supper and look ahead, with both sadness and hope, towards the cross. Then on Easter morning lets gather early at 6am, Tadley Skate Park (Tadley Common Road, Silchester Road, Tadley RG26 3PX) to welcome in with thankfulness the amazing events of Easter Day when our Saviour Jesus rose from the grave bringing to fulfilment the amazing promises of our Lord and God. After this short early Easter service join us for coffee and tea followed by a full cooked breakfast, cereals and toast etc! It would help if you can let us know for catering purposes if you hope to join us (just send a quick email to tadleyurc@gmail.com). We will be finished in time for us all to be back at London Street for the 10:30am Easter Day service! What great opportunities to worship, and to worship together!

Love in Christ

Your Friends at Tadley URC



Maundy
Thursday
Service
17th April
7.00pm
at Tadley
URC

A reflective service remembering
Christ's last supper with His disciples.

*"A new command I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you must love one
another."*

For more details Paul Gross/Penny O'bee contact@tadleyurc.com

Easter Day
Sunrise Service
20th April 6am, Tadley

He has risen!

Join us at Tadley Skate Park for a short reflective service of songs and readings as the dawn breaks and the sun rises...

8am breakfast at Tadley URC follows. Please RSVP

*Further details Paul Gross or Penny O'Bee
contact@tadleyurc.com*



Can you help to make sure that no one in our local community goes hungry?



Items **urgently** needed: UHT Fruit Juice, Female Deodorant, Hair Conditioner, Hot/Cold Desserts (e.g. Jelly, Sponge Pudding, Angel Delight), Household Cleaning Products and Washing Up Liquid, Pet Food, Savoury Spreads (e.g. Marmite).

Items needed: Coffee, Cooking Sauces, Custard, Powdered Milk, Rice Pudding, Squash, Sweet Spreads (Jam, Marmalade etc.), Tinned Fruit, Tinned Meat (e.g. Chilli, Stewing Steak, Ham), Tinned Soup, Tinned Spaghetti/Ravioli, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Veg, UHT Milk.

Please **do not** give Baby Food, Hot/Cold Cereal, Nappies, Non-Dairy Milk, Pasta, Pulses, Rice, Sanitary Pads, Tinned Beans, as these are already in surplus.

Donations can be left at London Street URC in the container provided. For up to date lists, or to find other donation points, go to:

<https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/givehelp/food/>

Or download the BankTheFood app from the Apple App/Google Play store and select Basingstoke Foodbank.



A Quiet Thought...

We know nothing of tomorrow; our business is to be good and happy today.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT

Church Secretary's report for the year ending December 2024

As Church Secretary for 2024, this is my report of the events and activities during that year, celebrating what God has done with us here at London St. and presenting a challenge to prayer and action for the future.

Basingstoke URC registered as a Charity (number 1130801) with the Charity Commission in July 2009. We are known as London Street (Basingstoke) United Reformed Church and we take our structure, governance and management from the Scheme of Union of the URC which is set out in a document known as 'The Manual'. Our objective as a Charity is the advancement of the Christian faith for the benefit of the public in accordance with the Scheme of Union. We achieve that through our activities and facilities offered to the community by our building.

Church Meeting

The Church Meeting of the local church shall consist of those persons who have been admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the URC and whose names are included in the membership roll of such local church. (Item 2(1) of the Manual)

Church Meeting of London St. met on 6 occasions during 2024. Our quorum for the year was set at 11, down from 12 in 2023. (Numbers in brackets refer to the number of members in attendance.)

February (34) Having spent the beginning of 2024 recuperating at home, I was absent from the first meeting of the year. The meeting stood in silence as we remembered the passing of Isobel Martin. Members were then informed of a Thanksgiving Service for the life of Eileen Poulter, a former member here at London St.

It was agreed that the practice of taking a retiring collection once a month in support of Commitment for Life and the Town Centre Chaplaincy should be resumed.

The meeting was informed by Revd Josh Thomas that we would have a Fellowship Tour of the building, the first for 6 years, for the

congregation in April; and that London St. would host the Induction Service of the new Wessex Synod Moderator.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council are to use our premises as a Polling Station; and the 1st Basingstoke Scouts, due to the closure of Trinity Methodist Church, were to meet at London St. from 19th February.

The meeting concluded with Josh reporting that his appointment as Interim Minister would end on 31st December 2024.

April (38) Tony Patterson gave an update on the electrical work undertaken since the flood in the Concourse; and Josh gave an update about the Wessex Big Day Out.

Following a recent survey of the building by both our fire risk assessor and subsequently endorsed by the Synod, Tony reported that there was a safety risk in continuing to use the front rows of the gallery and steps were required to avoid any incident occurring.

It was agreed that Maxine Perkins should be baptised; and Maxine and Ravindar and Vijaya Biyyani be brought into membership.

Josh spoke about the Away Day for serving elders and the Finance Committee; and also reported that Revd Denis Smith has been welcomed as an organist who has agreed to come and play, normally on the first Sunday of the month.

May (16) At our May meeting I commenced with an update on finances. Grateful for the input provided by Alex Macro who had devoted considerable time to working on the accounts for 2023.

I summarised the lengthy briefing paper on the subject of changes to the formula used in determining the Ministry and Mission contributions for churches in the Wessex Synod. I concluded that the new formula figure for London St. resulted in a slightly higher contribution but it would be for the Elders to decide on the level of contribution which would be offered for 2025. Staying with financial matters, I reported that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport were offering grants under their Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme to cover the VAT on repairs over £1,000 to Listed Buildings used as places of worship. Having assembled the requisite information for the completion of the

application form, if successful, approximately £8,500 worth of VAT would be recovered.

With a proposal coming from Matthew Dumbleton as editor of Focus, the meeting agreed to purchase material suitable for children from the UK's leading resource for church magazines, news-sheets, and websites, "Parish Pump Ltd.", for inclusion in Focus.

I then turned my attention to our Constitution by reporting a proposed change to Clause 21(c) concerning the election of Elders. The proposal was posted on the Church noticeboard and brought to the September Church Meeting for decision.

July (31) I once again started the meeting by reporting on financial matters. Our application for a VAT refund on electrical work was approved by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and a refund of £8,515.81 had been received. Alex was thanked for drawing the attention of the Finance Committee to the possibility of such a refund.

Following research undertaken by Alison Jamieson, I reported that as a consequence of a generous donation from a member of the congregation an additional 108 mugs and 27 dessert bowls were purchased. Thank you Alison.

Following research undertaken by Peter Burrows, I reported that there were funds available that the church as a charity could apply for and Peter had agreed to be the key person in seeking out and applying for grants. Thank you Peter.

I invited the meeting to recommend the following into membership: Nicola Hamilton on transfer from Fleet; Peter Burrows on transfer from the Church of England; Nicola Walden on profession of faith; Eric Elong Ebolo and Emelda Woutou Njiki on transfer from the Presbyterian Church in Belgium.; and at the same time the baptism of Nicola Walden and Aiden and Ava, (children of Eric and Emelda) would take place.

With the resignation of Jenny McCloy and Carol Scott as Junior Church Leaders, Liz Foster was appointed as a Church Officer to the position of Junior Church Leader to take effect from 1st September 2024. Jenny and Carol were thanked for their work and Liz for taking

on this important role.

I finished by reporting on the closure of the gallery following a request by our insurance company that simply putting in place warning notices was considered inadequate. Given the time it would take to resolve the matter, Josh and I made the decision to close the gallery to all users.

September (29) Tony reported on the work he had done to prevent use of the first row of the gallery. The insurers accepted this solution and the gallery reopened. We are grateful to Tony for his solution as it had saved the church a considerable amount of money.

Thank you to Maggie Morgans for hosting the garden party and to all who helped with catering, organising furniture and other tasks related to the party.

The change to our Constitution was agreed with no objections.

Julia Burrows as Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on a review of the church's utility suppliers undertaken by the Finance Committee. Following this electricity had been switched from EDF to British Gas and gas from Utility Warehouse also to British Gas. The new tariffs represented a considerable reduction on the previous ones. In addition, a refund for over-payment had been obtained from Utility Warehouse, and an application for a refund of overpaid VAT on electricity over four years had been made. Thank you Julia.

Margaret Carrick Smith and I had visited Woking URC to learn more about their solar panel installation. In the light of our findings, the Elders had agreed to ask the Synod Property Officer to arrange for a feasibility study, which could be paid for by the Synod, in order to determine what would be possible at London St., the likely costs and payback.

Having referred to the crisis in Myanmar prior to the service on 25th August, it was agreed that we would have a retiring collection on Sunday 20th October when the Moderator of the Wessex Synod, the Revd Michael Hopkins would be leading worship. It was agreed that London St. would match donations received from the congregation in the retiring collection, subject to a maximum of £500.

On the following Sunday, 27th October, the service will be led by Revd

Mike Burrell and will include the baptism of Harley James Honeyball-Todd, son of Samantha and Ray, and grandson of May Honeyball.

Josh spoke about the Tearfund big quiz evening on Saturday 16th November at 7pm he would be hosting for both London St. and Petersfield URCS.

Tony and I had attended the induction of Revd Kay Blackwell (a former Minister here at London St.) as Special Category Minister at St. Cuthbert's URC, Holy Island, which took place on Saturday 31st August at Wooler URC. Kay and Andrew Blackwell were both very well and had sent their greetings to everyone at London St. They would be delighted to see anyone from the church who visited Holy Island. Kay had mentioned that if a small group from the church wished, they could go to Holy Island to stay; there was accommodation and she would lead a study day or days.

I finished the meeting by reporting that for health reasons I would be stepping down as Church Secretary at the end of 2024. Gill Miller had volunteered to take the role, with this appointment being brought to the next Church Meeting for a decision.

November (41) As always, the November meeting focused on the election of Elders. All those standing had been validly elected to serve from January 2025 to December 2027: Margaret Carrick Smith, Joyce Cook, Matthew Dumbleton, Liz Foster, Jenny McCloy, Maggie Morgans and Tony Patterson.

Thanks were given to Jenny McCloy who was willing once again to continue as the church's Synod representative for 2025.

In discussing financial matters, I spoke of the "headlines" of the 2023 Accounts. During 2023 the church had been fortunate to receive a legacy of £357,878. Whilst a blessing I stressed that it did not mean our finances were sound because the reality was the opposite. Without the legacy, 2023 showed a deficit of just over £56,000. The deficit in 2022 was £11,000. The cost of running the church increased each year, and the deficits in the accounts showed that this was not matched by a similar increase in income. If nothing was done to rectify this, and the deficits were covered by the legacy, then it was clear that in 6 years or sooner there would be no money left. In response to this,

the Trustees would explore ways of decreasing expenditure, and also ways of increasing income.

Thanks were expressed to May Honeyball who had taken the lead in revising the church's Safeguarding Policy.

Church Officers are appointed by Church Meeting, following a recommendation from the Elders. Whilst this normally took place at the Annual Church Meeting in March or April, as I intended to step down as Church Secretary at the end of December, I had sought the approval of the Elders in October to bring to Church Meeting the name of Gill Miller to take on this role. All Elders had indicated their agreement to this proposal. Members were invited to appoint Gill Miller as Church Secretary effective from 1st January 2025. This was carried.

Church Members

As at 1st January 2024, our membership stood at 72. We gained 8 by welcoming Maxine Perkins, Ravindar Biyyani, Vijaya Biyyani, Nicola Hamilton, Peter Burrows, Nicola Walden, Eric Elong Ebolo and Emelda Woutou Njiki into membership, but over the course of 2024 we lost our dear friend Isobel Martin. In addition Rosemary Martin moved away from Basingstoke. Taken together with the movement of some members to our associate list, the number of active members by 31st December 2024 increased to 77.

Elders' Meeting

The Elders' Meeting of the local church shall consist of the minister and the elders elected by the Church Meeting. (Item 2(2) of the Manual)

Elders' Meeting of London St. comprised of 10 serving elders in addition to the church officers and our Interim Minister. They met on 11 occasions during 2024. Attendance: Owen Collins (Church Secretary) (10), Karen Bell (Church Treasurer) (0), Leng Ayland (9), Margaret Carrick Smith (11), Joyce Cook (8), Alison Jamieson (11), Ian McCloy (9), Jenny McCloy (10), Gill Miller (8), Kengjisu Moavu (3), Tony Patterson (10), and Ian Scott (9). (Numbers in brackets refer to the number of meetings attended from 11.)

January The elders considered a number of items as always. They included a review of the events over Advent and Christmas; a review of Communion offerings; the enhancement of the new fire alarm system and emergency lighting; the need for additional helpers in Junior Church; new lettings; the appointment of a Finance Committee for 2024 and their terms of reference; and to hold a Fellowship Tour of the church premises.

February In February the meeting commenced with a time of silence in remembrance of Isobel Martin. The elders considered the arrangements for the Fellowship Tour in April; and the need to consider a replacement for Karen Bell as Church Treasurer. With the increased cost of renewing the contract for the main church printer, alternatives were considered; and the elders were reminded of the need for all to attend a Safeguarding Course.

March The bulk of the meeting centred around our finances. This included a discussion on the paper from the Wessex Synod on the review of changes to the formula used in determining the Ministry and Mission contributions. The arrangements for the Induction Service of our new Moderator were finalised.

April In April Josh updated the meeting on arrangements for the Away Day for elders and members of the Finance Committee; and the Wessex Big Day Out. An agreement was reached on switching our contract for a printer to a new provider. Once again the bulk of the meeting focused on the need for a new Treasurer and the Accounts for 2023.

May Elders' Meeting considered a proposal brought by Margaret to amend Clause 21(c). The changes were agreed but would need to go Church Meeting for approval. I brought two proposals to the meeting from Matthew Dumbleton. From a safeguarding perspective he proposed stripping out the contact details and names of children that appear in Focus when a copy is published on the website; and for the church to purchase a resource called Parish Pump Ltd which is the UK's leading resource for church magazines, news-sheets, and websites, particularly for children. Training on the use of the fire extinguishers and the appointment of fire safety officers was discussed with no consensus reached.

June Work started on revising a number of policies. Alison Jamieson reported that new crockery had been purchased for the kitchen.

July Consideration was given to finding an alternative utility supplier. Arrangements were made to deep clean the kitchen during the summer break and also to clean the dais carpet. Arrangements for the Elders' election were discussed as well as events and services for Harvest and then Advent and Christmas.

September Having received no comments from the congregation, it was agreed that the proposal to amend Clause 21(c) of our Constitution would now be put to the September Church Meeting for approval. A discussion took place centred around the meeting that Margaret and I had with Woking URC regarding the installation of solar panels. It was agreed to hold a retiring collection on Sunday 20th October for the Christians in Myanmar. Tony presented the Health and Safety Policy for approval. I reported that once again the Night Light Winter Shelter would be running between the beginning of December and the end of February. It was agreed that we could provide the requisite accommodation on a Thursday evening for the three months but in doing so a charge should be made to contribute to, or cover, the cost of utilities.

October October saw once again financial affairs taking centre stage. The 2023 Accounts were agreed just requiring Karen Bell's signature prior to submission to the Charity Commission. With the 2023 Accounts having been completed and signed off, it was agreed that Keng would now take over as Church Treasurer. Arrangements for the Elders' Election were finalised.

November I outlined a problem with the organ brought to my attention by Alex. Occasionally when switched on it would trip the power supply into the sanctuary. The circuit breakers, fitted under the gallery stairs, were all replaced by GU Solutions after we commissioned them to do a lot of work after the flood. We had GU Solutions come in twice to investigate. The issue was resolved at no additional cost to the church. Two policies, one for Safeguarding and one for Food Hygiene were agreed.

December Elders in waiting recently elected: Matthew Dumbleton; Liz Foster and Maggie Morgans were invited to join the meeting. Tony

reported that the six-monthly service of the fire alarm system had been completed and we had been issued with the appropriate certification. Rotas and guidance notes were provided to the Elders as well as a schedule for Elders' Meetings and Church Meetings in 2025.

Matters pertaining to Gift Aid were discussed and the email account for the Church Treasurer had been transferred to Keng with the account for the Church Secretary awaiting transfer to Gill in the last week of December. Josh was thanked for his contribution to London St. as Interim Minister and myself as Church Secretary.

Trustees

The serving Elders at London St. are appointed as Trustees of the London Street (Basingstoke) United Reformed Church Charity. The role, responsibilities and training of Trustees is dictated by the Charity Commission:

Charity Trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of a Charity. Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a Charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well run, and meeting the needs to which it has been set up.

The Trustees here at London St. have paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

The Basis of Union states that the functions of Church Meeting and Elders' Meeting (Trustees) (as Interim Minister Revd Josh Thomas is not considered as a Trustee) collectively share the duties and responsibilities outlined for the Elders' Meeting along with accepting the ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the Charity as laid down by the Charity Commission. The general control and management of the administration of the Charity is further exercised by representative Elders being members of the Church's' four main committees:

- Finance – managing all the day to day financial responsibilities and the preparation of the accounts. Thank you to Julia Burrows as Chair and Alex Macro undertaking a lot of the work normally undertaken by Karen Bell during her absence on health grounds;

•Property – managing the maintenance of the Church (the Church building is vested in The United Reformed Church (Wessex) Trust Limited as trustees and held for the benefit of London St. in accordance with the trusts applicable to URC properties). Thank you to Tony Patterson in particular as well as Joy Williams, Rob Williams, Chris Ayland and David Waller;

•Children and Youth Work – instituting and overseeing the work with children and young people. Thank you to Carol Scott and Jenny McCloy (to August) and Liz Foster (from September) as Junior Church leaders, and to Gill Craft as leader of the 8th Basingstoke Scouts;

•Mission – ensuring that the Church demonstrates its concern for the local community and the world. Thank you to Alison Jamieson who chairs the World Mission Group.

Not all serving Elders have undergone formal training for their duties specifically as Trustees, other than to acquaint themselves with their responsibilities when required to do so, for example in connection with the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and health and safety generally. Those nominated to serve as Elders are now required to declare their intention to undertake such training as dictated by the General Assembly Executive and it is incumbent on those already serving to do the same.

Disclosure and Barring Service, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, and GDPR

On-line Disclosure and Barring Service is administered by myself and Joy Williams for those at London St. who will work with children, young persons and vulnerable adults. All serving Elders are required to be DBS checked and in accordance with policy set by the URC, every 5 years.

In relation to safeguarding, all Trustees are required to undertake formal safeguarding training every 3 years and some attended courses during the year via Zoom. There were no safeguarding incidents to report to the Charity Commission in 2024.

The Safeguarding Policy drafted by the URC has been adopted by London St. with modifications implemented to reflect the nature of our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It's important

that we provide a caring and safe environment, not just on a Sunday morning for our church family, but during the week too with all those we meet at activities such as Memory Tree and of course during pastoral visits. This structured approach helps us to achieve that. Thank you to May Honeyball, Joyce Cook and more recently Alastair Cox as our safeguarding co-ordinators.

Through Elders' Meeting, as Church Secretary I ensure that the Church complies with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

An overview of the Church's life and work during the year

Worship, prayer and study

Our average attendance remains fairly constant at 60. We are grateful to all our visiting preachers, including Peter Bentall and Joy Williams our two lay preachers. Thank you to Alison Jamieson and Joy Williams for organising and running Take Time meditation and bible study on Zoom. Thank you also to Josh as our Interim Minister and to Jenny McCloy and Alison Jamieson in putting together the preaching rota for Sunday worship; to Tony Patterson, John Carrick Smith and Matthew Dumbleton for the PowerPoint on a Sunday morning and Alex Macro in organising our audio rota.

Children and Young People

Thank you to Carol Scott, Jenny McCloy and Liz Foster who organise worship for Junior Church and to the adults who support them. Thank you to Gill Craft and Annmarie Smith Browne for leading the 8th Basingstoke Scouts.

Archivist

We have yet to find a replacement for Jean Holton as Archivist, but thank you to John Hollands who has been sorting out the archives for the last 12 months.

Community Work

We continued to serve the community here in Basingstoke. During the week on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday lunch times, we ran our hot food table utilizing food from the supermarkets and serving it to those in need who came to the table. On a Saturday at lunchtime we open our food table to distribute food from the supermarkets. Thank you to

Carol Tooke our Kitchen Supervisor and the volunteers who help in the kitchen; to Joy Williams who organises the rota of volunteers for the table and those who help; to Alison Jamieson, Karen Bell and Leng Ayland and volunteers for helping on a Saturday.

The Memory Tree Social Club meets every week on a Wednesday in the Hook Room from 10.30am to 12.00pm. It is an opportunity for people diagnosed with Alzheimer's and other types of dementia and their carers, to relax, enjoy themselves and make new friends. We have a wonderful team of volunteers who look after our visitors with love, kindness and laughter. We have an average of 25-30 visitors every week, and their feedback is that we provide a unique and special place where they can relax and talk to other carers and people with dementia. Thank you to Jenny and Ian McCloy, Ted Martin, Joyce Cook and the volunteers who bake cakes for Memory Tree. We remember of course Isobel Martin who served regularly as a volunteer for many years.

The Craft Club met every Monday morning in the Concourse. The Club grew out of the interest expressed by a few of the carers who come to Memory Tree. They were interested in learning a new craft and it was easier to do this at a dedicated time and place rather than taking time away from the normal activities on a Wednesday morning at the Memory Tree. Isobel Martin was the driving force behind the group which began in September 2015 and she is missed. The members cover a wide spectrum of crafts and are happy to share news, patterns and skills. It is interesting to note that the Club continues to welcome people who don't have any other connection with London St.. Thank you to Carol Scott for running the Club.

Pastoral Care

Our objective as a Charity cannot be achieved if we don't look after one another. Knowing Jesus and making Jesus known is perhaps a key foundation stone of our church family. By His love and care for us we reach out to one another and in the wider community through our words and actions. It may be in a practical way by shopping or giving a lift for a medical appointment or to worship on a Sunday. It may be by listening or encouraging with a comforting word, smile or hug or praying for one another. We are thankful to God for His love shown to

so many during the last 12 months.

Thank you to Josh and members of the pastoral care team; Gill Miller, Alison Jamieson, Jenny and Ian McCloy, and Rob Williams.

Premises

The building continued to be maintained, and lettings managed.

My prolonged absence from Church continued for the first two months of 2024. Prior to my absence I was very much taking the lead in co-ordinating what needed to be done in repairing the damage as a consequence of the flood we had in June 2023. I'd like to convey my thanks to Joy, Margaret and Gill for helping in my absence but my biggest thanks go to Tony who has done a considerable amount of work in contacting contractors and co-ordinating what needed to be done and drafting requisite paperwork.

As for the day to day maintenance, thank you once again to Joy, Rob, Chris, David and Tony; to Lou Waller and Leng Ayland for cleaning the premises; and to Tony once for overseeing the lettings.

I'd like to return briefly to the works undertaken following the flood. The financial cost of putting right the damage caused by the flood has been huge. I'm sure that Keng as our Church Treasurer will cover this in some detail when he presents his report, but if we are to keep the bulk of the legacy we received in 2023 for future mission and maintenance we must consider ways of raising additional funds. We simply cannot sustain our spend at current rates with or without the legacy.

Thank you

Thanks go to all who contribute to the life of London St. week by week through faithful witness serving God in many ways. In addition to those I have already named, there are the stewards and greeters supporting the second elder on a Sunday morning; those who arrange flowers organised by Liz Lindsay; those who serve refreshments after worship organised by Jenny and Ian McCloy; those who clean the communion glasses organised by Elspeth Anthony; our musicians Peter Dixon, Alex Macro, Mark Best, Denis Smith and Joyce Cook; those who count the offertory organised by Julia Burrows; our Worship Group: myself, Jenny McCloy, Alison Jamieson, Tony Patterson, Lou Waller, Joyce

Cook and Rita Kahdoh; Matthew Dumbleton as editor of Focus, those who contribute the Thought for the Month, and Ali Grant who distributes Focus by post; John Hollands who has helped as archivist; Alison Jamieson for our shop window and also co-ordinator of the Foodbank; Emily Scott for our Facebook 'window'; our audio rota organised by Alex Macro; Tony Patterson, John Carrick Smith and Matthew Dumbleton for the PowerPoint on a Sunday morning; Gill Miller and Alison Jamieson for organising our fellowship meals; Margaret Carrick Smith and Liz Lindsay for drafting the minutes of Church Meeting and Tony Patterson for the minutes of Elders' Meeting; to Gill Miller for organising our fellowship meals on a Sunday. Apologies to anyone who I might have missed.

In concluding my report, my personal thanks. Having spent the last four months of 2023 and the beginning of 2024 either in hospital or recuperating at home, I would like to express my thanks to the congregation for your love and prayers and practical support. Thank you in particular to Alison and Jenny for taking on the task of securing preachers and musicians for Sunday Worship; and to Tony who has done a considerable amount of work, particularly in maintaining the momentum of ensuring that work proceeds on projects relating to the damage caused by the flood. I am particularly grateful to Margaret for taking on the role of Church Secretary and also to Josh for co-ordinating everything.

Looking back over the last ten years as Church Secretary, when asked to consider this role I had a couple of meetings with Revd Kay Blackwell before accepting the call to serve. I felt called to focus on the 'church' aspects of the job, in many ways a continuation of the work that Joy had done. However, I was well aware that no two people will work in the same way. Six months into the job I began to feel more at ease with my responsibilities in serving the Lord within the community, the wider church and of course London St. as I slipped into my 'secretarial' role.

That being said, I never really had a clearly defined role and certainly was never given a job specification. After lockdown, Kay was called to a new pastorate and my focus changed. I found myself taking on much more of a 'secretarial' role - as church administrator, pulpit supply officer, and anything really that needed to be done. It ended up being

virtually a full time job!

When taking on the role, I brought together my life skills as a career Civil Servant, school governor, Justice of the Peace, Chair of Pages Charity, father, grandfather and husband. And of course I had learnt a lot from my late wife Ann, in her role as a Non-Stipendiary Minister here in Basingstoke. In doing so I trust that over the last ten years, as a congregation you have found this beneficial in supporting London St.

Normally a church secretary will work alongside the Minister. For the last 4 years, maybe more if you consider the periods we were in lockdown, that hasn't happened and I have very much been the primary contact here at London St. I have often dealt with matters that would have normally been dealt with by the Minister. Having said that it has been a joy and blessing to have the support of Revd Josh Thomas as our Interim Minister for the last two years. Thank you Josh.

Yes, I have been frustrated and challenged on a number of occasions. And yes, I have made mistakes. But looking back, prayer and a desire to do what is right for this Church have supported me. Overall I have enjoyed my time as Church Secretary, and despite the heavy burden at times, I will miss it.

Gill Miller now takes on the mantle of Church Secretary. As well as offering practical support if able to do so, please remember Gill in your prayers. Thank you Gill for accepting the call to take on this important role.

I conclude my report with a prayer:

Thank you Lord for our church here at London Street, and for those who have worshipped in it over the years and for those who serve it today. May we continue to know your presence here Lord and open our hearts and minds to all that you have given us and may you in return graciously accept all that we have to offer you. Support and guide us all as we take the light of your Spirit thereby illuminating the path to Christ so that others too become your sunbeams. We ask for this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OWEN COLLINS, CHURCH SECRETARY

MARCH 2025

THE PRAYER CIRCLE

Please remember the following people in your prayers...

Elspeth Anthony

Louise & David Waller

Joan Musselwhite

Mrs Noorie Khatkur

Dick & Anne Davey

Christine & Eric Clucas

Carys Haywood

Barbara Banbury and David Corfield

Marguerite Hurford and her son Michael

Alison and David

Bev Harris and Dom

Claire Macro

Stan & Sandra Marut

Hyacinth Ridguard

Ruth Bentall

Owen Collins and family

The Patterson family

Chris Jones' grandson, Archie

Maggie & Richard Morgans

Gill Vickery

Mark Ward's mother

Paul Gross's mother

Brian and Elaine Cole, their daughter Zoe and family



DAILY BIBLE READINGS



This month's assigned readings.

	Psalm	New Testament		Psalm	New Testament
1st	30: 1-5	Mark 8: 1-21	17th	35: 1-10	Mark 16
2nd	30: 6-12	Mark 8: 22 - 9: 1	18th	35: 11-18	Luke 1: 1-25
3rd	23	Mark 9: 2-29	19th	35: 19-28	Luke 1: 26-38
4th	31: 1-5	Mark 9: 30-50	20th	36: 1-6	Luke 1: 39-56
5th	31: 6-14	Mark 10: 1-31	21st	36: 7-12	Luke 1: 57-80
6th	31: 14-18	Mark 10: 32-52	22nd	37: 1-6	Luke 2: 1-21
7th	31: 19-24	Mark 11: 1-33	23rd	37: 7-11	Luke 2: 22-40
8th	32: 1-7	Mark 12: 1-27	24th	37: 12-20	Luke 2: 41-52
9th	32: 8-11	Mark 12: 28-44	25th	37: 21-26	Luke 3: 1-20
10th	33: 1-5	Mark 13: 1-19	26th	37: 27-33	Luke 3: 21-37
11th	33: 6-9	Mark 13: 20-37	27th	37: 34-40	Luke 4: 1-13
12th	33: 10-15	Mark 14: 1-31	28th	23	Luke 4: 14-30
13th	33: 16-22	Mark 14: 32-52	29th	38: 1-8, 21-22	Luke 4: 31-44
14th	34: 1-7	Mark 14: 53-72	30th	38: 9-16, 21-22	Luke 5: 1-16
15th	34: 8-14	Mark 15: 1-32	31st	38: 17-22	Luke 5: 17-39
16th	34: 15-22	Mark 15: 33-47			

EVENT DIARIES



What's on this month at London St. & Old Meeting URCs.

At London Street URC (unless otherwise specified):

Regular Events

Sunday Worship 10:30am			
Mondays	10:15am	Craft Group	
Tuesdays	5:45-6:45pm	Beavers	In Term Time. All in the Den except Scouts who meet in the Wessex Hall.
	7-8:30pm	Cubs	
	7-9pm	Scouts	
Wednesdays	10:15am	Memory Tree Social Club	
	12:15pm	Lunchtime Prayers	
Thursdays	7:15-9:15pm	Explorers	In Term Time. In the Den.

March Worship Diary

2nd	Led by Junior Church; Musician: Mark Best.
9th	Led by The Worship Group; Musician: Revd. Denis Smith.
16th	Led by 8th Basingstoke Scouts; Musician: Mark Best.
23rd	Led by Revd. Mike Burrell; Musician: Peter Dixon.
30th	Led by Revd. Helen Everard; Musician: Mark Best;

Duty Elder for the month: Ian Scott (except for the 30th)

Next Church Meeting (Annual Church Meeting):

6th April (Sunday) at 1:15pm

At Tadley (Old Meeting) URC (unless otherwise specified):

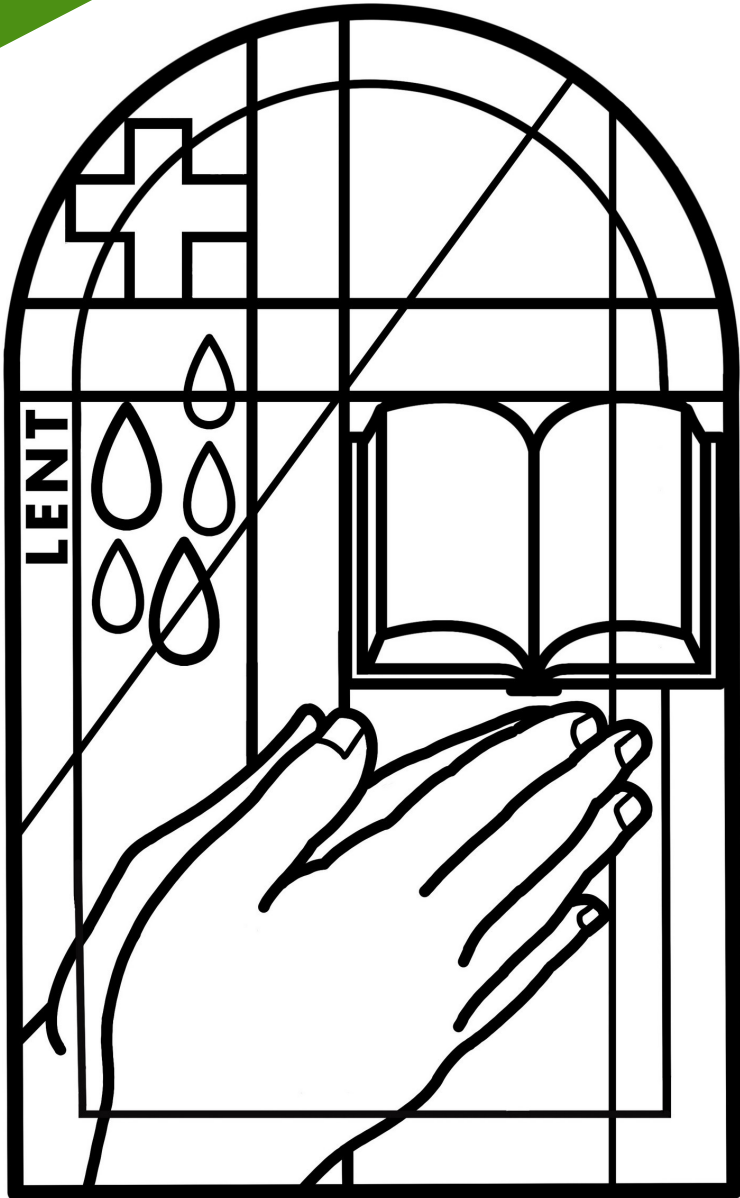
Regular Events

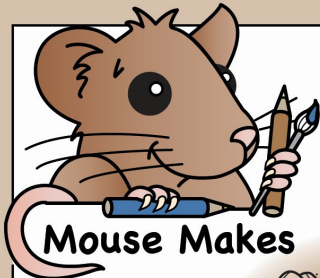
Sunday Worship 10:30am		
Monday Afternoons	Ladies' Cell Group	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Monday Evenings	Cell Group	Contact Mark Ward or Paul Gross.
Tuesday Evenings	Joint Prayer Time with St Paul's	Contact Penny O'Bee.
Wednesday Evenings	Prayer via Zoom	Contact Mark Ward.
Friday Afternoons	Men's Shed	2pm, once a fortnight. Contact Paul Gross.
Saturday Mornings	Ladies' Breakfast & Talk	10am, 2nd Saturday of each month. Everyone welcome.
	Men's Breakfast & Talk	10am, 4th Saturday of each month. Everyone welcome.

March Worship Diary

2nd	Children's Service Led by Mark Ward.
9th	Led by Ed Vassie.
16th	Led by Philip Jones.
23rd	No service at Old Meeting
30th	Led by Karen Jones and John Featherstone.

Colour In!





THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After Jesus was baptised who led him into the wilderness?

Luke 4:1



For how many days was Jesus tempted by the devil?

Luke 4:2

What did the devil tempt Jesus to turn a stone into?

Luke 4:3

What happened after the temptation of Jesus?
see Luke 4:14-15

Who did Jesus say you should ONLY worship and serve?

Luke 4:8



READ
the story in
Luke 4:1-13



Jesus said not to put the Lord your God to the...

Luke 4:12



- JESUS • LED
- WILDERNESS
- DESERT
- TEMPTATIONS
- DAYS • DEVIL
- HUNGRY • SON
- STONE • ROCK
- KINGDOMS
- WORLD • GLORY
- WRITTEN
- SCRIPTURE
- WORSHIP • ONLY
- SERVE • LORD
- JERUSALEM
- HIGH • TEMPLE
- THROW • DOWN
- JUMP • ANGELS
- HANDS • HOLD
- LIFT • FOOT

R W O R S H I P H A N D S D
 L I F T W P A H D J U M P A
 E L O R D K I O E D O S E Y
 D D O A N G E L S E K T M S
 F E H U N G R Y E B R O C K
 O R E J E S U S R Y O N L Y
 R N S S C R I P T U R E U H
 T E M P T A T I O N S G T S
 Y S T D S J E R U S A L E M
 B S H O E H K I N G D O M S
 R F R W R I T T E N E R P O
 E O O N V G G O C E V Y L N
 A O W V E H O L D K I W E
 D T E S T V D W O R L D



Mar25@deborah.noble • parishpump.co.uk

Find the words from the questions too!



London Street

United Reformed Church

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