



# FOCUS

July 2026



Matthew 20: 26

*... “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant,”*

**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, Peter Bentall discusses our need for leaders.



Hebrews 13: 7 & 17

*(7) Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you... imitate their faith.*

*(17) Obey your leaders and submit to their authority, they keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work may be a joy and not a burden.*

The writer acknowledges the workload of those in Christian leadership in those early days (not much change there!) Those leaders have been chosen not for reasons of power or prestige but to lead a fellowship in the Christian way of increasing faith.

The writer of Hebrews in this concluding chapter lists some exhortations for the way the hearers should lead their daily lives:

'love one another', 'don't forget strangers', 'remember prisoners', 'honour marriage', 'don't be misled by strange teaching', 'offer continual sacrifice of praise to God', 'remember your leaders'.

These are guidelines for Christian living that have not changed down the ages.

What the writer wrote to the Hebrews can be contrasted with what Paul wrote to the Romans in chapter 13 and which raises a few more questions about obeying 'authorities'. Paul is writing to Christians in Rome in about 57 AD in the days of some pretty ruthless Roman Emperors, a few years before the Jewish revolt of 66AD, and his advice appears to be clearly, 'keep your head down', 'obey the rules'.

Ch 13 verses 1 and 2 'submit to the governing authorities... the authorities that exist have been established by God... he who rebels against authority rebels against what God has instituted'.

The key difference between the two letters is that one is talking about obeying 'leaders' and the other is about 'authorities/rulers'. That difference reminds us of the very early days of the history of Israel.

The nation emerged from the long period of slavery in Egypt, where they had greatly increased in number, under the 'leadership' of Moses. Following him, once they reached the Promised Land, that leadership continued under Joshua, a number of Judges and to the prophet Samuel. The emphasis was on leading not ruling because God was still the ultimate authority.

The crunch came when the people said to Samuel that they wanted a king like all the surrounding tribes had. Samuel tried to argue them out of the idea listing all the disadvantages and changes there would be to their way of life (which all came true), but to no avail.

From then on, apart from a few very notable exceptions, the kings were a disaster, splitting the nation into two kingdoms with the northern one eventually disappearing altogether.

During the kingdom periods many Prophets were sent by God to try to bring the people back into the Covenant relationship and one common theme of their messages was for the 'rulers' to act like shepherds (leaders).

We still may wrestle a bit with Paul's statement that all 'authorities' are God established, given the current state of the world, but there is a clear message. We need more 'leaders' and fewer 'rulers'.

## The Noticeboard

Information, tips, updates, and more...



### Church Flowers

The Flower Committee would like to thank Elspeth Anthony for donating & arranging July Church flowers, in celebration of Elspeth & Derek's wedding anniversary.

If you wish to celebrate an important occasion by donating the Church flowers, please contact Liz Lindsay.

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



Items **urgently** needed: Fruit Juice, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Pasta, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Veg, UHT Milk, Loo Roll.

Items needed: Hot/Cold Desserts (e.g. Jelly, Sponge Pudding, Angel Delight), Rice Pudding, Tinned Meat (e.g. Chilli, Stewing Steak, Ham), Nappies (Size 5-8), Squash, Marmite, Coffee, Shampoo, Deodorant, Crackers, Custard, Hair Conditioner, Cooking Sauce, Powdered Milk, Pet Food, Household Cleaning Products & Washing Up Liquid, Jam, Tuna, Tampons.

Please **do not** give Shower Gel & Soap, Baby Food, Hot/Cold Cereal, Nappies (Size 0-4), Non-Dairy Milk, Pasta, Pulses, Rice, Sanitary Pads, or 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.



The latest Foodbytes magazine can be found by following this link: <https://cms.trussell.org.uk/sites/default/files/2026-05/Summer%2026%20Foodbytes.pdf>

**Happy Birthday** to the following members of our church family:

Joan Musselwhite

Aiden Paul (Bato Elong)

Shirley Craft

If you know someone who is 80+ that would like their birthday added to the list in Focus, please let Jenny McCloy or the Editor know.

# Messages of Thanks!

The Scott family (Ian, Carol, Emily, Lucy and Charlotte), would like to thank the congregation for all your prayers and thoughts, during Charlottes surgery and follow ups. It's been a rollercoaster of a time for us all.



We would like to thank everyone who came to our cousin's funeral. Thank you so much for your support. We would also like to thank all the people who gave up their time to help on the day and waited for us to get back from the crematorium. It made a very sad day easier.

- David and Julie Bath



Following my recent accident and hospital treatment, I would like to thank all of my friends who supported me with love, prayers, and visits. What a great church family we have in London Street.

I hadn't realised how many of you know one of my many weaknesses... Mars bars! Twenty-four of them. How I enjoyed one after each intensive session of physiotherapy.

As many of you may already know, University Hospital Southampton (UHS), is the major trauma hospital in this part of Hampshire. I benefited from a culture of great teamwork made up of a wide range of Consultants, Nurses, Health Care Assistants from the following countries: Portugal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Bangladesh, Sweden, Ireland, and China to name a few, I am indebted to them all. Where would we be without immigrants training and working in the N.H.S?

It is great to be home again and settling into a new routine. Special words for Tony Patterson for his great kindness in loaning me a wheelchair and bringing me to church. What a joy to be in the sanctuary again and enjoy Sunday Services; thank you for your friendship, Tony.

-Jean Young

# Reformed

Reforming, Reviving, Reporting, Resourcing

Reform magazine has been renamed to 'Reformed' for obvious reasons. Its name was changed in April 2026 to avoid confusion with a right-wing populist political party with a similar name.

It is the magazine of the URC - Reforming, Reviving, Resourcing and Reporting.

Reformed is a fresh and challenging URC magazine exploring theology, ethics, personal spirituality and Christian perspectives on social and current affairs. It is published 8 times a year and is for people who enjoy reading about Christian ideas from a range of viewpoints. It features writing from journalists, academics, politicians, campaigners, scientists and religious leaders.

I am prepared to coordinate the purchase and distribution of the editions of this magazine. It is possible to buy a hard copy or a digital copy.

It costs:

£29-50pa for the hard copy. These would be delivered to me, and I would distribute them every 6 weeks.

or

£18 pa for the digital copy which would be sent to your tablet, smartphone and computer. This subscription would give you access to digital back copies!

I have ordered sample copies for you to see which should arrive soon if you want to check before you subscribe. Or you can obtain more information on the URC's website: <https://urc.org.uk/reformed-magazine/>

Have a word with me if you would like more information.

-Jenny McCloy

## Christian Aid 2026

I am delighted to report that this year's donations have exceeded the total for 2025 and proves the value of having a simple soup meal. No soup meal was provided in 2025.

2025 Total value of donations:

£364.00 (Gift Aid £76.75 total of £440.75).

2026 Total value of donations:

£745.00 (Gift Aid £140.00 total of £885.00).



May I thank Liz Foster for the preparation of the soups and for the members of the congregation who served the soup on the day. Thank you.

-Ian Scott

## Eco Tip

God's Gift -- Our World

The Environment -- Our Responsibility

On average we eat more meat than is ideal for our bodies and not enough vegetables. Switch this around and you will also be saving some greenhouse gases (and money).



Don't forget, you can recycle the following items at London Street:  
Empty Printer Cartridges, Aluminium Containers and Foil, and Batteries.

## Angels

Due to the success of the Angels, we have started knitting ones for this year.

They are quick and easy to knit; I have the pattern if anyone wants to join knitting them.

Or come along on a Monday morning to Craft Group!!!

God bless, Carol Scott





# Venezuela Earthquake Appeal

On 24 June, powerful back-to-back earthquakes struck Venezuela. Entire neighbourhoods have been devastated. Families have lost loved ones, homes and the sense of safety and security they once knew.

**We need your help** to support the rescue effort and those affected by this crisis.

**On the 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> of July, London St. URC**  
will be collecting for this appeal.

**Please donate if you can!**

Or, if you prefer to give directly (with gift aid) you can do so here:

<https://give.christianaid.org.uk/donate/CAM-012722>

**We also ask you to pray with us:**

Loving God, When the earth trembles and homes fall to dust, hold our hearts, God. When grief shakes families to the core, hold our hearts, God. Send our hands and feet to help however we can. Our sisters and brothers in Venezuela live this now. God of love and mercy, may we match your love in the way we respond - now. Amen

# CAFE

# Church



LONDON STREET  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

SUNDAY  
JULY  
12<sup>TH</sup>  
10:30 AM

God Is  
Always  
With You



COFFEE



CONVERSATION



COMMUNITY



GOD'S LOVE

Good conversation, great coffee, crafts, real community and God's love for all.

## Thank you from Memory Tree

To those members of the church family who supported our Coffee Morning at Memory Tree either in person, with baking or with donations.

We raised £250 for the Alzheimer's Society's Forget Me Not Appeal. A great result! We will keep the fund open until June 28th, if anybody else would like to donate.

Members of the Church family are welcome to drop in for a visit on any Wednesday morning between 10:30 and 12. You would be assured of a warm welcome, and CAKE!!

On July 29th we are expecting Luke Murphy MP to visit us. During August we will have a visit from a lady, Pauline, who will teach us some paper crafts.

We are planning a visit to the Anvil Pantomime, Beauty and the Beast, in December. -Jenny McCloy



## Hooray for Summer Holidays!

We wish all our Junior Church children a happy summer holiday as they come to the end of another school year. Some will be moving from Infant to Junior School and also Daniel, Aime and Imogen will be moving into secondary school, exciting times for everyone! We hope they can enjoy a relaxing holiday before these new challenges.



## Following a Dream

Ian McCloy writes about his less than straight forward journey into teaching, and the support that inspired it.



It seems quite strange to be writing about one's dream coming true, especially when, at the beginning of my adult journey, I didn't possess one.

I left school in July 1958 at the age of 15, without a single qualification of any kind. This was in the days when teenagers could only seek further education if their parents signed forms giving their permission for them to do so. Unfortunately, my parents required me to seek employment, hence I began a 16-year-long painting and decorating adventure!

All was about to change however, when I began seeing Jenny, who, as many of you know, was a Primary School teacher. Almost from the beginning of our relationship I became involved in Jenny's (school!!) extra-curricular activities, the beginning of my dream!

One of these events involved taking 40 children to the Isle of Wight, from Manchester by train, Jenny, 2 of her colleagues and I. It was shortly after this trip that I first said to Jenny that I would have loved to have been a teacher. Her reaction was wonderfully supportive when she said: 'So, why not?' I reminded her of my total lack of qualifications, but she said you could study as a mature student. So, I began a 2-year

journey to gain qualifications for Teacher Training College, which at that time involved gaining 5 GCEs, including Maths and English, which I achieved using Night School classes and Correspondence courses. I was sometimes in classes with 16-year-old students studying for re-takes! This culminated in my entering a Mature Students' Teacher Training College in the centre of Manchester... back in the classroom after an absence of 16 years. All students in this College had left successful careers to train for a new one.

Frighteningly, the week before we were to sit our final exams, local authorities nationally notified colleges to inform students that they would not be employing any new staff for the foreseeable future. In those days, students could only apply for teaching posts from their local sponsors i.e. their local Council who had provided their grant. Mine was £900 per year!!

The end of a dream!! This meant I would be going back to painting and decorating. I was unemployed for almost 6 months, when lo and behold, out of the blue, I had a wonderful Christmas present, I was offered a teaching post a week before Christmas 1977.

As a Christian my faith supported me through difficult days during my journey to achieve my dream. I was also supported by Jenny's unstinting belief in me ----that I could achieve that dream.

We believe as Christians that 'nothing is impossible' with God.

Luke 1: 37 *'For nothing will be impossible with God'.*

Matthew 19: 26 *'But Jesus looked at them and said, for mortals it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.'*

### A New Series... 'Following a Dream'

We hope you have enjoyed reading the first two articles in this series and learning more about some of our church friends. If you have a similar story of a fulfilled dream and you would like to share it then please send it to the editor or Jenny McCloy. We can't wait to hear more of your stories and learn more about each other!

## The Prayer Circle



Please remember the following people in your prayers...

Our Iranian friends, anxious about friends and family in Iran

The Scott family, especially their daughter, Charlotte

Barbara Banbury and David Corfield

The Patterson family, especially Tony

Rob Williams, after his major surgery in June

Lizzy Payne, exploring her calling, at Wessex Synod's Mission House

Louise & David Waller

Peter & Ruth Bentall

Christine & Eric Clucas

Bev Harris and Dom

Hyacinth Ridguard

Stan & Sandra Marut

Karen Bell

Doina Rasnita

Jean Young

Jenny McCloy

Joyce Cook

Joan Mussellwhite

Jason Dudley

Sheila Munro

Claire Macro

Gill Vickery

Dick & Anne Davey

Stephen's father

John's daughter

Mark Ward's brother and family

Elaine & Brian Cole's family

The young people from the Hub Church on their Brazilian adventure,  
and safe return in the Autumn (to tell us all about it!)

## Daily Bible Readings



This month's assigned readings.

	Psalm	New Testament		Psalm	New Testament
1st	78: 17-25	Acts 7: 30-60	17th	84: 8-12	Acts 17: 16-34
2nd	78: 26-39	Acts 8: 1-25	18th	85: 1-7	Acts 18
3rd	78: 40-52	Acts 8: 26-40	19th	85: 8-13	Acts 19: 1-22
4th	78: 53-68	Acts 9: 1-31	20th	86: 1-7	Acts 19: 23-41
5th	78: 69-72	Acts 9: 32-43	21st	86: 8-13	Acts 20: 1-12
6th	79: 1-8	Acts 10: 1-23a	22nd	86: 14-17	Acts 20: 13-38
7th	79: 9-13	Acts 10: 23b-48	23rd	87	Acts 21: 1-16
8th	23	Acts 11	24th	88: 1-9	Acts 21: 17-36
9th	80: 1-7	Acts 12: 1-24	25th	88: 10-13	Acts 21: 37 – 22: 29
10th	80: 8-15	Acts 12: 25 – 13: 25	26th	88: 13-18	Acts 22: 30 – 23: 22
11th	80: 16-19	Acts 13: 26-52	27th	23	Acts 23: 23-35
12th	81: 1-7	Acts 14	28th	89: 1-8	Acts 24
13th	81: 8-16	Acts 15: 1-29	29th	89: 9-13	Acts 25: 1-22
14th	82	Acts 15: 30 – 16: 15	30th	89: 14-18	Acts 25: 23 – 26: 11
15th	83	Acts 16: 16-40	31st	89: 19-29	Acts 26: 12-32
16th	84: 1-7	Acts 17: 1-15			

## Event Diaries



What's on this month at London Street & Old Meeting URCS.

At London Street URC (unless otherwise stated):

### Regular Events

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

### July Worship Diary

5th	Led by Ruth White; Musician: Mark Best.
12th	Café Church Led by Gill Miller; Musician: Revd. Denis Smith.
19th	Led by Revd. Mike Burrell; Musician: Mark Best.

<b>26th</b>	<b>Service includes Holy Communion Led by Worship Group; Musician: Peter Dixon.</b>
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**Duty Elder for the month: Maggie Morgans.**

**Next Church Meeting:**

**July 13th (Monday) at 7:30pm (in the Hook Room)**

**At Tadley (Old Meeting) URC (unless otherwise stated):**

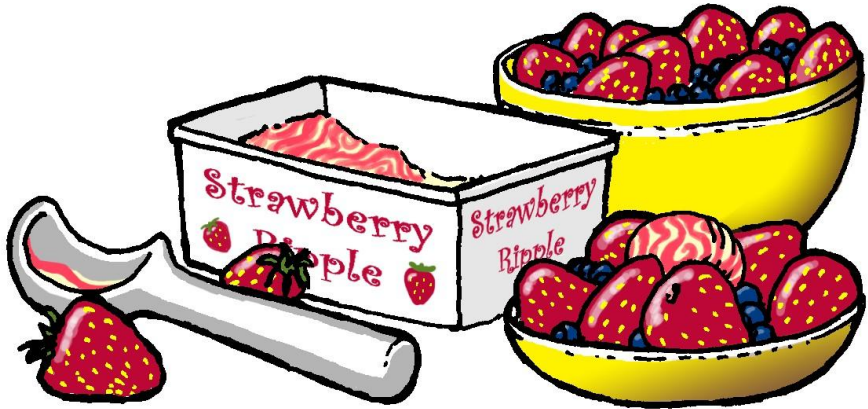
<b>Sunday Worship 10:30am</b>		
<b>Monday Afternoons</b>	<b>Ladies' Cell Group</b>	<b>Contact Penny O'Bee.</b>
<b>Monday Evenings</b>	<b>Cell Group</b>	<b>Contact Mark Ward or Paul Gross.</b>
<b>Tuesday Evenings</b>	<b>Joint Prayer Time with St Paul's</b>	<b>Contact Penny O'Bee.</b>
<b>Wednesday Evenings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

## July Worship Diary

5th	'Alive' Children and families Service. Led by Mark Ward.
12th	Led by Ed Vassie.
19th	Led by TBA.
26th	Led by Philip Jones.







*Next Issue...*

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Focus magazine. If you would like to contribute to the August magazine, please contact the editor by 18th of July.

# London Street United Reformed Church

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.

London Street United Reformed Church is a working name of  
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Church Charity [reg. no. 1130801]