



# London Street

## United Reformed Church

BASINGSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE RG21 7NU

and

**TADLEY (OLD MEETING) URC**



### Focus

December, 2017/January, 2018

# CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tel: 01256 477070

Website - [www.basingstokeurc.org.uk](http://www.basingstokeurc.org.uk)

## **MINISTER:**

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

## **CHURCH SECRETARY:**

Mr Owen Collins  
15 Cyprus Road  
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## **TREASURER:**

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## **HALL LETTING:**

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## **FOCUS:**

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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:**

Paul Gross  
22 Pelican Road, Pamber Heath RG26 3EN  
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### **Treasurer:**

Mark Ward  
10 Hartleys, Silchester, Reading RG7 2QE  
e.mail: [mandjward@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mandjward@hotmail.co.uk)

## View from the manse:

We have a God who seems to work most powerfully in the unexpected interruptions of life; those apparently chance encounters, those surprising unscheduled moments. Such events can often feel inconvenient at the time but they will also generally be life changing.

So there I was out in the garden, just hanging out my washing. Life was busy and full. I had a husband, three children who were then aged from fifteen years old down to eight years old, a Labrador to exercise, a home to keep, an ageing mother to look after, a small business to run and a busy part-time job as a children's and family worker in the church. Hanging out the washing was a rushed task that I was carrying out between things, as usual. Yet I remember that day as if it was yesterday. As I was doing this fairly mundane task in the ordinariness of a full life, I was chatting with God, which was how I did a lot of prayer in those days. I was praising and thanking God for the exciting growth there had been in the children's work project which was being funded by a five year grant. I asked God what God would like me to do next, what plans would there be for the work and also for me. Then I asked if God would want me to train for the ministry. Suddenly the ordinary became extraordinary. I felt like I had been struck with a bolt of lightning. The energy surged from the top of my head to the tip of my toes. I had never felt before such a powerful sense of Holy Spirit power. Did I, like Mary, fall to my knees and say *'I am your servant Lord, let it be with me according to your word'*? To my shame, no I didn't. I said 'No way Lord, that is just too complicated, it is an unfair request, I am just too busy and not even a little bit ready or able for such a journey.....surely there are people better qualified and more able to do such a task than I?' I furtively looked around me, I think I was worried that someone might have seen the lightning hit me or the shame of my unfaithful response. But over the next two to three years God called me back again and again to that idle question in the garden and reminded me that just trust and faithfulness was what was required of me, not my ability or diary availability. This whole journey would not be in my strength or at my convenience, but by God's grace alone.

A young girl was going about her usual daily household tasks. Her life was planned out for her. She lived in a small village not far from Galilee. Of course these were difficult times in many ways. Israel was an occupied territory. It was a country under the grip of mighty Roman power. Mary was betrothed to be married, this was a legally binding contract approved by the two families involved. It was considered by the village as a good match. Her husband to be had favourable standing in the community. He was a skilled craftsman, a carpenter. This was a profitable and secure trade.

This would be needed as the demands of Roman taxes were high. Her unsurprising life was taking the normal and expected path; a path that had and would be journeyed by her siblings, her cousins and all the other young women in the village. She had been taught by her mother how to cook, to keep house, to tend to the needs of a future husband and to raise her future children. All this would happen in the village where she had been born and raised herself, surrounded by her family, relatives and friends. I wonder if Mary was chatting with God while she went about her daily tasks? We are not privy to the prayers and internal dialogue with God that may have been happening in her heart and mind that day. Did she ask God about the future? Did she ponder how it would feel to have the new responsibility of being a wife and one day being a mother herself? I wonder if she felt ready for the move away from her parents' home? Then, on that very ordinary day everything changed.....

'God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David..... and (he) said, "Greetings, favoured woman! The Lord is with you!" How terrifying! I wonder if Mary looked around furtively at this stage to see if anyone else could see and hear this heavenly being too?

"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favour with God! <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!..... The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."

This news not only interrupted Mary's life plans, it would turn them upside-down, put her very life at risk. If found to be pregnant before her marriage she would be shamed before her family and the whole village, she would be stoned to death. What was at stake for her was far higher than for me, yet her answer was .....

"I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true."

(excerpts from Luke 1: 26-38 NLT).

Faithfulness is rarely convenient. It rarely fits in with our life plans, our opinion of our own abilities or readiness to serve. But when God calls on your life that is when trust and faith are really stretched and grow. As Jesus grew and began to minister to the world in a very dangerous and radical way, lives were transformed in unexpected ways. I am sure Mary reflected upon that first call to faithfulness to which her answer was 'yes'. Had she fully understood what that 'yes' would mean? Who knows? But after the

birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, after the shepherds had visited and the wise men from the East came to bear homage to the new king Jesus bearing extravagant gifts, Luke tells us that Mary ‘treasured all these things in her heart’ (Luke 2: 51). What an extraordinary journey God took her on!

May we have a faith as strong and humble as Mary’s. A faith willing to say ‘yes’ even when it may look just too complicated or even risky, and humble enough not to try to fit that ‘yes’ into ‘when it fits in my diary’ or ‘only when I feel ready’.

May I wish you all an extraordinary Christmas this year, filled with the wonder and peace of our Lord. May Christ reveal to us new and exciting projects in the coming new year and may we be willing and faithful enough to say ‘yes’.

Yours in Christ  
Kay

## Prayers for others and ourselves

During the morning service we have become familiar with members of the congregation leading the prayers for others and ourselves. Kay and the Elders would be delighted to welcome more members to lead the prayers. You don’t have to do it on your own. For example, it would be wonderful to see a family taking part or a couple.

If you would like to be included on the rota, then speak with Owen. Want to know more before making a decision? Have a word with Kay. Thank you.

—oOo—

## White goods:

The Pages bungalows are currently being refurbished. Over a period of 12 months we shall have a number of white goods: washing machine; fridge/freezer; cooker available. There is no cost but if you would like to make a donation to the Pages Charity that would be welcome. The buyer would be responsible for collection. If you want to know more have a word with Liz Lindsay or me. Thank you. *Owen*

## Prayer Focus:

**Matthew 11 vv 28 & 29** : *Jesus said “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light.”*

This edition of Focus covers two time periods. The busy weeks leading up to Christmas and the Day itself, followed by the period afterwards when the decorations are put away and we think about, and maybe do, the things we said we would do ‘after Christmas when we had more time’! Of course we never do have ‘more time’. We allow outside pressures and our own personal inclinations to dictate how we use time and often these ways are not in line with what God is asking of us and we become stressed. There is a big difference between getting stressed or nervous about something new that is stretching us or for an exam which really matters and living in a permanent state of stress. Medication can help the symptoms but if you go back to the same situation, all you have had is a holiday from it until things build up again.

I went to the Christian Resources Exhibition at Sandown Park in October and, as you do, browsed the stalls, talked to a few stall holders and picked up various leaflets. At the last minute a man waved some headphones at me and asked if I was used to meditating and, if not, had I five minutes to try a simple one. There were a couple of others sitting comfortably so, with my headphones in hand, I joined them. I listened to instructions on how to relax, a short Gospel passage and suggestions for getting into the story through the different characters. It was good and I’ve tried it a few times since. It is available on the internet at <http://taketime.org.uk/> and there are four session lengths to choose from.

Jesus said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light” because, like the experienced ox paired with a weaker or wilful one, He shares life’s burdens and keeps us from wandering off track. Our life with Christ Jesus should not be a burden of laws that need to be kept but a life lived in a close relationship with Him. God is love. The Beatles sang “All you need is love.” They weren’t far wrong!



### Focus for Prayer

- **God’s Peace** – in our hearts, in our homes, in our country, in the world.
- **God’s Provision** – for those in need, the Food Banks, our church.
- **God’s Love** – for those who feel unloved will find the love they need’

# CIRCLE OF PRAYER:



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

**Short Term:** Tish Catterall; Aubrey Dommett (granddaughter of Beverley Cantwell); family and friends of Doreen Dudman; Sally Friday; Karen Gorf; Christine and Ron Holt; Claire Macro; Ian and Jenny McCloy and family; Graham Owen, Doina Rasnita; Louise Waller.

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



*Emma Bentall, 16 years on 9 December*  
*Dick Davey, 84 years on 11 December*  
*Amos Grant, 2 years old on 25 December*  
*Barbara Taylor, 95 years on 27 December*  
*Amelia Ann Green, 7 years on 19 January*

# Night Light Winter Shelter

Please note this will be running every Thursday and Friday at London Street between 1<sup>st</sup> Dec. and 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. (please do not enter the building whilst this is running unless you are a Night Shelter volunteer).



# Flower Rota -

## December:

3<sup>rd</sup> Christmas/Advent  
 10<sup>th</sup> “  
 17<sup>th</sup> “  
 24<sup>th</sup> “

## January:

7<sup>th</sup> Christmas Decorations  
 14<sup>th</sup> Christine Holt  
 21<sup>st</sup> Ian Scott  
 28<sup>th</sup> Kay Cook

We have a few spare dates for 2018. If you would like to sponsor the flowers on a Sunday, which are then delivered to Church people who are ill or celebrating, please get in touch with Liz Lindsay (01256 363685).

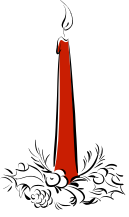
Thank you.

## Daily Bible Readings for December:

	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>		<u>Psalm</u>	<u>New Testament</u>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	3	Revelation	2	17 <sup>th</sup>	Reflection	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	112	Reflection		18 <sup>th</sup>	7:1-11	Revelation 13
3 <sup>rd</sup>		“		19 <sup>th</sup>	117/118:1-14	“ 14
4 <sup>th</sup>	4	Revelation	3	20 <sup>th</sup>	8	“ 15
5 <sup>th</sup>	43	“	4	21 <sup>st</sup>	47	“ 16
6 <sup>th</sup>	74:12-23	“	5	22 <sup>nd</sup>	77:1-14	“ 17
7 <sup>th</sup>	91	“	6	23 <sup>rd</sup>	93	Reflection
8 <sup>th</sup>	113	“	7	24 <sup>th</sup>		“
9 <sup>th</sup>	5	Reflection		25 <sup>th</sup>	118:15-2	Revelation 18
10 <sup>th</sup>		“		26 <sup>th</sup>	9:1-16	“ 19
11 <sup>th</sup>	115	Revelation	8	27 <sup>th</sup>	119:1-16	“ 20
12 <sup>th</sup>	6	“	9	28 <sup>th</sup>	79	“ 21
13 <sup>th</sup>	46	“	10	29 <sup>th</sup>	48	“ 22
14 <sup>th</sup>	75	“	11	30 <sup>th</sup>	80	Reflection
15 <sup>th</sup>	92	“	12	31 <sup>st</sup>		Rejoice
16 <sup>th</sup>	116	Reflection				

You are free to choose, but the choices you make today will determine what you will have, be, and do in the tomorrows of your





***CAROLS  
with  
HARPS***



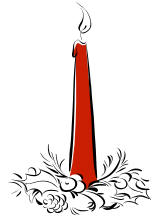
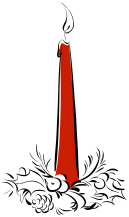
*Played by Wessex Harpers  
Saturday 2nd December  
Starting at 2.30 pm*

*Immanuel Centre  
United Reformed Church  
Main Road*

*TADLEY RG26 3NY  
Everyone welcome*

*Entrance and  
refreshments free*

*Come and join us to sing some  
traditional carols*



*Voluntary donations in aid of  
St Michael's Hospice  
Reg. Charity No. 1002856*

# **CONSTANCE COLTMAN**

## **100 YEARS**

### **SINCE THE FIRST WOMAN WAS ORDAINED**

This year the United Reformed Church celebrates the centenary of its first ordained female minister. One hundred years ago, Constance Coltman blazed a trail as the first woman to be ordained into a British mainstream Christian denomination.

Constance, who was a suffragist and pacifist as well as a dissenter, had been brought up as a Presbyterian but met resistance from the Presbyterian Church in England when exploring her vocation, so applied to the Congregational foundation of Mansfield College, Oxford. Dr Selbie, the principal, saw God at work in her and admitted her to the ministerial training course in 1913.

There was no certainty that she would be ordained after the three-year course because the denomination had no agreed policy on the question but Constance was persistent and, on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1917, she was ordained alongside her fiancé, Claud, into the ministry of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. They married the following day.

The couple served together in the East End during the First World War and then in Kilburn, Oxford, Wolverhampton and Haverhill.

They had three children and Constance managed to combine marriage, motherhood and ministry. She also wrote a regular column of spiritual advice for *The Sunday at Home* journal, was active within the Fellowship of Reconciliation and a founder member of Christian CND. She died in 1969.

Constance gives us an amazing example of pioneering ministry, founded above all on a sense of a call from God that ultimately overcame every obstacle.

# Reminders:

## Day of Prayer for London Street:

**Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December  
10am to 4pm**

This is an important day for every single one of us who think of this church as 'their' church. Please come along – it really matters. Spend as long or as short a time as you are able to focus on our Mission Vision and to seek God for the Provision. A prayer guide will be available to help you on the day and there will also be a short period of led prayer every hour (see page 10 of the November FOCUS).

## Christmas Day Lunch 2017

**'One Church' in partnership with the Basingstoke Food Bank invites you to join us for a Traditional Christmas Day Lunch from 12.30 pm to 4.00 pm.**

If you are alone for Christmas, or unable to cater for yourself come and share Christmas Day with us in a relaxed and family environment at London Street United Reformed Church in Basingstoke, RG21 7NU

Invitation/registration form available from  
Joy Williams, the Lunch Administrator.  
and

**Volunteer Helpers are also needed**

Please contact Joy Williams if you can help in any way as you will need to complete a volunteer's form.

Email: [joyamwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:joyamwilliams@gmail.com) Tel 01256 326746

(see page 11 of the November FOCUS)



Thursday 21st December



3.30pm gathering at

St. Paul's Church, The Green in Tadley

4.15pm lantern procession commences



From there to the

Immanuel Centre garden at Old Meeting URC (off Malthouse Lane)

To see from 4.30pm the



'Millers ark' living nativity animals

And hear the true story of Christmas

With readings and carols

Accompanied by Tadley Concert Brass



Followed by warm spiced punch or hot chocolate and mince pies

Event ends 6pm, is open to all and is free



*Come and put the  
Christ back into  
Christmas!*



# Piece of Cake!

Sometimes we wonder “what did I do to deserve this?” or “why did God have to do this to me?” Here is a wonderful explanation! A daughter is telling her mother how everything is going wrong. She is failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away.

Meanwhile her mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and her daughter says “absolutely, Mum, I love your cake”. “Here, have some cooking oil” her mother offers.

“Yuck” says her daughter.

“How about a couple of raw eggs?”

“Gross, Mum!”

“Would you like some flour then or maybe baking soda?”

“Mum, these are all yucky!”



To which the mother replies: “Yes, all these things seem bad all by themselves but, when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake! God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!”

“God is crazy about you. He sends you flowers every Spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He’ll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe and He chose your heart. I hope your day is a ‘piece of cake!’.”

*Author unknown*

# December Diary

at London Street, unless otherwise stated

1<sup>st</sup> Dec – 28<sup>th</sup> Jan

Night Light Winter Shelter every Thursday  
and Friday (see page 7)

Sat	2 <sup>nd</sup>	10am-4pm	Day of Prayer for London Street URC
Sun	3 <sup>rd</sup>	8.30am	Prayer Breakfast – Leader TBC
		10.30am	Worship – led by Peter Bentall
Wed	6 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Elders' Meeting
Sun	10 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister and including Parade and Gift Service
Sat	16 <sup>th</sup>	5.00pm	Tea followed by Carols for All at
		6.30pm	
Sun	17 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Worship, including Holy Communion – led by the Minister
Sun	24 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister
Mon	25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Christmas Day worship – led by the Minister
Sun	31 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Worship – led by Joy Williams



## January Diary

Sun	7 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Holy Communion and Induction of Elders – led by the Minister
Fri	12 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Messy Church Planning
Sun	14 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Worship – led by Melanie Townsend
		7.30pm	Café Commissioning Service
Sun	21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Worship – led by the Minister
		4.00pm	One Church Basingstoke – Tea followed by
		6.30pm	Unity Service

### Deadline for February FOCUS

Sat	27 <sup>th</sup>		Top of Town Messy Church
Sun	28 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Worship – led by Peter Bentall

# Services at Old Meeting, Tadley

## December

## Welcome and Coffee Rota

Sun	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Revd Kay Blackwell	Ena and George
Sun	10 <sup>th</sup>	Derek Clark	Mandy and Dave
Sun	17 <sup>th</sup>	Peter Bentall	Ladies Cell
Sun	24 <sup>th</sup>	am With London Street pm Carol Service	
Sun	31 <sup>st</sup>	Reflections/Worship Service	TBC

## January

## Welcome and Coffee Rota

Sun	7 <sup>th</sup>	TBC	Ena and George
Sun	14 <sup>th</sup>	Revd Kay Blackwell	Mandy and Dave
Sun	21 <sup>st</sup>	Rob and Jan Lloyd	Ladies Cell
Sun	28 <sup>th</sup>	TBC	Elaine and Brian

## February

Sun	4 <sup>th</sup>	Andy Mahers
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## 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 <sup>th</sup> Basingstoke Colony
7pm	(CUB SCOUTS — 8 <sup>th</sup> Basingstoke Pack
7pm	(SCOUTS — 8 <sup>th</sup> Basingstoke Troop
7-8.00pm	PRAYER MEETING at <b>Tadley URC or St Paul's</b>

### *Wednesdays:*

10am-1.30pm	OASIS Café in the Concourse
10.30-12 noon	MEMORY TREE SOCIAL CLUB
10.15-11.30am	<b>3Cs on 3rd Wednesday of each month</b>
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
2.30-3.30pm	FRIENDSHIP HOUR — <b>Last Thursday of each month</b>
3-6pm in Term Time	Youth Café for secondary school and college students

### *Fridays:*

8-9.30pm	TGIF Youth Club at <b>Christ Church, Chineham</b>
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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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