



FOCUS

December 2022



The Three Wise Men by Daniel

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 article is written by Joy Williams.



John 14:27

***Peace** I leave with you; my **peace** I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

Before London St. URC was redeveloped in the 1990s there was a room called the parlour. We never ate there that I can remember. It was the special room. The place where the deacons/elders held their monthly meetings and where other important decisions were made. It was also the place where the youth department of junior church met on Sunday mornings. It had twelve dining chairs and a carver surrounding a long table with beautifully carved and shapely legs on castors plus a few, cream coloured, wicker armchairs. This table was always covered with a blue cloth which had tassels hanging down. One could only imagine what a fantastic table top this cloth was protecting! One day I was there in the room when the cloth was removed and it was a revelation! Far from being the beautifully polished top I expected it was dried out, cracked and rough old kitchen type top that the cloth had been concealing rather than protecting. I don't know how old the table is but it will have been present through many decades of meetings, no doubt surviving some quite heated ones and some quite dull ones; some where the Holy Spirit moved powerfully and freely among all who were present and others where the meeting was so full of self-opinionated people that he left very quickly, but mostly, I suspect, there has been a mixture of the two reflecting the church as a whole in this place at any given time. This set me thinking along the lines of: Is this what Jesus wants for his bride, the church, today? Do we even think of ourselves as his bride? Are we really preparing ourselves for his coming or are we doing what we usually do or what the world wants or expects us to do, or thinks is acceptable for the church to do, or flying a kite for something that we like and are comfortable with or the reverse absolutely refusing to get

involved with something because it's not '**our thing**'?

Luke-warmness is not acceptable to the Lord as the words to the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:14 strongly point out. Neither are the compromises made by the other churches listed in chapters 2 & 3. The cloth is off the table! The Lord sees us as we really are both individually and collectively as a church. He has plans for us that will bless us not harm us and bring his Kingdom closer but we must wait on him and go with his flow as we live our ordinary lives. It is meeting with Him living in us that will make the lasting difference in others people's lives. We are called to a way of life that because Christ lives is in us through the Holy Spirit we reveal him to others all the time. A few moments of **peace** with Jesus - listening to Him, **our hands off** is all he asks. Then **Go**. Jesus said "I am with you always, to the end of the age".

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I confess that too often I am more concerned with my plans than with yours and that mine don't always gel with yours.

Please forgive me and help me to see what you are doing and the part that I can play in it.

Fill me with the peace of your presence and give me the reassurance that I can do it even if it is a bit scary or boring,

Amen.

THE NOTICEBOARD

Information, updates, tips and more.



Happy Birthday to the following
members of our church family:

Ruth Nicholson

Amos Grant

Eco Tip

God's Gift -- Our World

The Environment -- Our Responsibility



You can remove odours and creases from knitwear and formal wear by steaming them. When having a hot shower, hang them as close as you can without them getting wet.

Don't forget, you can help London Street care for our earth by recycling the following items in the provided containers:

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

Sunday Tea Rota

Our fellowship after worship is very important!

If you would like to join the Sunday tea rota for after worship refreshments, please let Jenny know as soon as possible.

Thank you.



Calling All Bakers!

Memory Tree needs you!

Our guests at Memory Tree love having cake on a Wednesday morning.

If you could help by joining the rota to provide cake on a regular basis please let Jenny know.

You would only have to bake once every 6/7 weeks!



Thank you for supporting Mercy Ships!

The retiring collection for Mercy Ships on 30th October raised £160. This does not include the contributions made online.

Church Flowers



If you would like to celebrate an anniversary or birthday by donating the flowers on the first Sunday of the month in 2023, please contact Liz Lindsay (details in the Church Directory). You do not need to arrange the flowers, unless you wish to, as we have a Flower Committee who can arrange them for you.

Can you help the following petition reach its goal of 10,000 signatures?



The International Liberty Association, a charity that promotes human rights in Iran and supports victims of human rights abuses there has organised an on-line petition that you may like to sign. This is addressed to the Rt Hon James Cleverly, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs urging the British Government to do all it can to stop these abuses there.

<https://iliberty.org.uk/petition-to-support-human-rights-in-iran/>

John Hollands

Carol Service

Friday 16th December at
6:30pm. Organist: Peter Dixon.

All are invited. Bible readings,
carols and candles!!!

Followed by mince pies,
shortbread, sausage rolls and
mulled wine.

If you would like to help with a reading or in the preparation of
food, please speak with Owen.



The cost of living crisis has
caused usage of foodbanks,
nationally, to increase by 52%
compared to 2019 with
donations failing to keep up
with demand. Can you help?

Items needed:

Long Life UHT Milk, Powdered/Dried Milk, Tinned Tomatoes,
Tinned Spaghetti/Ravioli, Tinned Fruit, Long Life Fruit Juice,
Christmas Desserts / Puddings, Christmas Treats (Crisps,
Sweets, Chocolate etc), Nappies (Size 4 Only), Toilet Rolls,
Cleaning Products.

Please **do not** give cereals or pasta as they are currently
overstocked.

This information was accurate at time of writing, but for an up
to date version go to the link below. Donations can be left at
London Street URC in the container provided, or at other
locations listed at: [https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/give-
help/donate-food/](https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/)

FOCUS: Next Issue

A special thank you to Christine Robertson for all her hard work over many years editing Focus magazine, and for her continued support.

Thank you also to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Focus magazine, especially the children, who have really brightened up this issue with their wonderful artwork.

If you would like to contribute to the January magazine, please contact the editor by **11th of December**.

THE PRAYER CIRCLE

Please remember the following people in your prayers...

Beverley Cantwell

Joyce Cook

Kay Cook

Clare Macro

Alison Jamieson

Doina Rasnita

Janet Parr

Gill Miller and family

The Patterson family

The family of Chris Holt

The family of Jean Holton

The family of John Eves

The family of Carol Tooke

Our Iranian family recently transferred to Luton

Christine Weaver

Linda Hicks

Seb and Dorcas Allwright

CHURCH MEETING REPORT

Key points from the November church meeting, from Owen Collins

Church Directory:

We would normally have the new church directories ready for distribution by the beginning of January. Both Tony and I have been dealing with more pressing matters consequently this will be delayed until February.

Pastoral Care At London Street:

If you cast your minds back to our church meeting in November 2021, church members agreed to a change in our pastoral care. The change would be reviewed after 3 months and Gill Miller spoke about that review at our meeting in July. This was to be followed by a more comprehensive review in the Autumn. That review hasn't taken place. Partly because of the impending appointment of Josh and partly the busyness of the pastoral care team in the run up to Advent and Christmas and the time needed to do a befitting review. I have agreed with the pastoral care team that the review should be postponed until the New Year. In the meantime the care team are there for you. Any pastoral needs big or small please contact them: Gill Miller, Alison Jamieson, Jenny McCloy, Ian McCloy and Rob Williams.

Our Mission:

At our church meeting in September, our mission for serving the community and serving each other was agreed. Shortly after the meeting I sent out an email seeking volunteers to take forward our mission. Three people responded, but these are folk who already do a lot for the church and I'm reluctant to ask them to take on more. Even so 3 volunteers are insufficient to take on the recommendations made by church meeting. So unless we have hands on support for the recommendations made then nothing is going to happen in the immediate future. Some suggestions were made at the November church meeting which I will consider with Elders' meeting. I also circulated an email seeking help in the kitchen and food table during the week. Our Iranian lads help on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

They have been a great asset, so much so that without them the kitchen wouldn't function. As line manager for Carol Tooke the kitchen supervisor, I made the decision that due to the lack of help in the kitchen on a Friday we would close the kitchen and therefore food table on a Friday until further notice. If you can help in the kitchen or on the food table please have a word with myself or Joy Williams.

Refreshments After Sunday Service:

We also require more volunteers to help serve refreshments in the concourse after morning worship. The more volunteers we have, the greater the spread of responsibility. If volunteers are not forthcoming then refreshments will not always be served. If you can help please contact Ian or Jenny McCloy.

Information About Worship over Advent, Christmas and into the New Year:

Sunday 4th December: Gift Sunday led by Revd Mike Burrell. Church Meeting in November agreed that we should provide gifts to the Women's Refuge. Leng Ayland has advised that they would prefer primarily to receive gifts of cosmetics and toiletries for the ladies. There are 17 adults. There are 14 children and 5 babies. Of the 14 children, 6 are girls and 8 boys. They range in age from 3 to 10. The staff want to put together a Christmas box for each family, toiletries for the ladies and for the older children, sachets of hot chocolate drink, small packs of crayons and appropriate small toys.

Sunday 11th December: Festival service led by 8th Basingstoke Scouts. The Scouts too would very much like to contribute gifts. I have agreed with Gill Craft that we will also have the opportunity to donate gifts for the Women's Refuge at the festival service on the 11th.

Friday 16th December: Carol Service at 6.30pm. Organist: Peter Dixon. Bible readings, carols and candles!! Followed by mince pies, shortbread, sausage rolls and mulled wine. During the rendition of the nativity, candles depicting persons within the narrative will be lit. We will need at least 4 people to help with the candles and others to read and prepare the food. If you can help please contact me. Tadley will also be holding a carol service and that will take place at Old Meeting on either Thursday 22nd or Friday 23rd and all from London Street are

invited. I will circulate further details in due course.

Sunday 1st January: There will be no morning worship at London Street. However the sanctuary will be open from 10.30am for private prayer.

Retiring collection:

We shall have a retiring collection once again at the carol service and on Christmas Day. Following a recommendation from Elders' Meeting, church meeting agreed that we support a national charity which would be Crisis, the charity supporting those who are homeless; and a local charity which would be Basingstoke Young Carers, a charity supporting youngsters who find themselves as carers for their parents.

Decorations:

If you would like to decorate a window sill in the sanctuary for Christmas, please put your name down on the list on the church notice board. The sanctuary will be open at 10.00am on Saturday 3rd December for you to come in and decorate your window sill.

Advent Take Time Meditation:

Alison and Joy will be running an Advent Take Time meditation over four weeks. It will start on Monday 28th November on Zoom at 7.30pm. Speak with Alison and Joy for further information.

January Church Meeting:

Our next church meeting will take place on Sunday 22nd January 2023 at midday following morning worship. Please note that there will be no meal provided before the meeting.

REMEMBRANCE DAY POEM

November 11th may have gone by but the message lives on in this lovely poem from a member of our youth church.

Lest we Forget the day
The poppies grew an
Hour before lunch-time. After
All the crime, Slavery and
Pain OF those days now we
Have the Freedom to play. But
We Can't Forget to Pray
For their souls too important
to be burnt in Fire and
Lumps OF COAL.



the poppies poem



Daniel



OUR IRANIAN FRIENDS

An update on our friends now in Luton, by Jenny McCloy



Since about May/June of this year we have been blessed by having a group of Iranian Asylum seekers worshipping with us at London St. They have quickly become part of our church family. You will often be served by Raya, Mateen, Ali and Hamid, with tea and coffee after worship. They have also been cooking for the Food Table several days each week, in fact, without them there have been times when the Food Table would have had to close. These four lads live in the Apollo Hotel which seems to be a sort of semi-permanent place to live whilst Asylum applications are processed.

However, another larger group of lads had started to attend church regularly. They lived in The Crowne Plaza Hotel, which appears to be a more transitional place. It seems that the residents of this hotel can be moved at a moment's notice, without warning. This happened to 8 lads who had been regular attenders at London St. On November 1st at 10pm 'our' 8 lads were moved to Luton. They were placed in ex student accommodation, which had been empty for over 2 years, it was closed when 'lock-down' began. The fridges contained two year old food and consequently 2 year old mould! The bedrooms and bathrooms hadn't been cleaned for over 2 years and they too were covered in black mould. The local authority in Luton had no idea they were to receive these lads, so no provision had been made for them. They had no clothes, toiletries or food. Each guy was given £5 per day to spend on food. They had to queue up outside to receive this allowance, whatever the weather.

We were able to contact the local MP and the vicar of a local church who is running a 'drop in centre' for Asylum seekers close to the guys' accommodation. Maybe as a result of this, the mouldy fridges were removed and new ones brought in. The guys themselves set to, to clean the bathrooms, bedrooms and kitchens.

On November 10th Owen, Ian and I drove to Luton with a car packed with gifts from London Street church family. We went to the church where the drop in centre is held and met with the vicar, Rev David. The

lads were waiting for us outside the church and seemed delighted to see us, they all wanted big hugs! The vicar assured us that our lads would be welcome to call in and avail themselves of all the advice that is available there, including registering with a GP, so that they could get medical help, which is important for several of them.

We then took them to a Chinese restaurant for lunch. They served a buffet---all you can eat!! So the guys were able to pile up their plates.

We then went into the shopping centre to sort out a few things, including buying a road atlas, the guys had no idea where they were, or indeed where Basingstoke is! They are just dropped at accommodation and they have no idea where they are in the UK!

Then we came to the hard part when we had to leave. It had been an emotional day and we all found it extremely hard to leave them behind in such awful circumstances. We assured them that we would come back to see them in the New Year, but that must seem a lifetime away.

We are still in frequent contact with the guys, it is good for them to have somebody to whom they can talk, even if it is only via WhatsApp or email, we are still able to give them advice and support. It is difficult for them to be in touch with their families at home in Iran, as the Internet is often disconnected, so, added to their poor conditions here, they are anxious about family ---some of them have left wives and young children behind in Iran, in the midst of the violence and protests.

Here is an extract from a message I received from Vahid the other day:

‘To us, you and the whole church of Basingstoke are the best of friends and remembering all the moments we spent together and your kindness and goodness lighten our hearts.

We thank you and all our friends for making us happy even in your absence with your memories’.

We often feel helpless, but you can be assured that all the gifts you donated have brought comfort to these young guys in desperate circumstances. Also, remember prayer is a powerful tool, so please continue to hold them all and others in similar circumstances, in your prayers. Thank you.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

This month's assigned readings.



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

EVENT DIARYS

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	
	1pm	Alpha Course	In the Hook Room. Not running on 26th Dec & 2nd Jan.
Tuesdays	10:15am	Little Angels	In the Wessex Hall.
	2:30pm	Take Time Meditation	On Zoom. Contact Church Secretary for password.
	5:45pm	Beavers	In Term Time.
	6:45pm	Cubs	
	7:45pm	Scouts	
Wednesdays	10:15am	3Cs Coffee, Chat and Company	3rd Wednesday of the Month Only (21st).
	10:15am	Memory Tree Social Club	
	12:15pm	Lunchtime Prayers	

Other Events

Sun 4th	8:30am	Prayer Breakfast	In the Hook Room.
Wed 7th	7:30pm	Elders' Meeting	On Zoom.
Thurs 15th	7:30pm	Worship Sub-Committee Meeting	In the Hook Room.
Fri 16th	6:30pm	Carol Service	

December Worship Diary

4th	Gift Sunday Led by Revd. Mike Burrell; Musician: Alex Macro; Duty Elder: Joy Williams.
11th	Parade Service Led by 8th Basingstoke Scouts; Musician: Mark Best; Duty Elder: Keng Moavu.
18th	Communion Service Led by Revd. Julian Macro; Musician: Peter Dixon; Duty Elder: Margaret Carrick Smith.
25th	Christmas Day Led by Karen Bell & Tony Patterson.

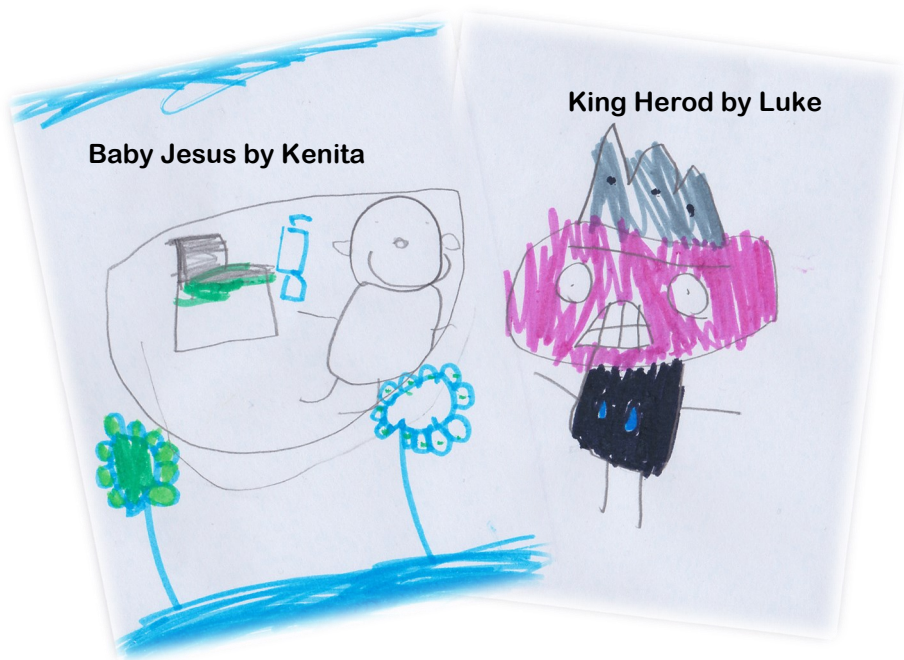
At Tadley (Old Meeting) URC:
(unless otherwise specified)

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 Afternoon	Men's Shed	2pm, once a fortnight. Contact Paul Gross.

December Worship Diary

4th	Led by Christine Watson. After the service and refreshments, there will be a church meeting with a bring and share lunch.
11th	Led by Karen Jones, (usual time) in the Immanuel Centre. A time of Christmas glass crafts and mince pies.
18th	Led by Mark Ward. This will be a Communion service.
25th	No service at Old Meeting.



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.

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