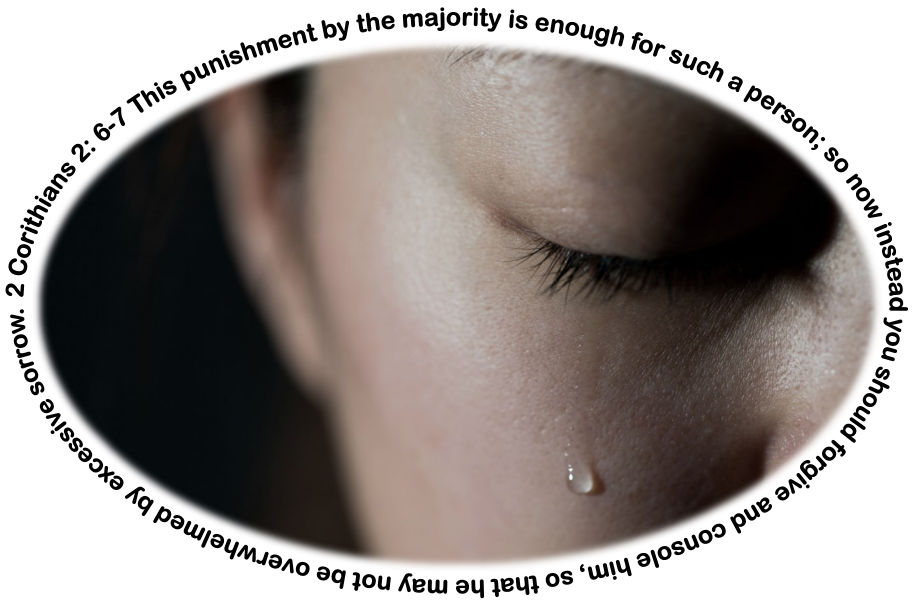




FOCUS

March 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 Peter Bentall discusses forgiveness and its place in our collective conscience.



Many politicians these days seem to be banging on about upholding traditional 'British values' against a sea of 'woke' and urging everyone to 'do the right thing', whatever that means!

Most of us would almost certainly take that to mean having the basic Christian teachings of Jesus (shared by many other faiths), expounded in the Gospels. One fundamental tenet is 'forgiveness' - Jesus came to earth to die for our sins and thereby enabled us to obtain God's forgiveness and open our way into His kingdom through the sacrifice He made (which is what our journey through Lent is all about).

So, a 15-year-old girl, Shamima Begum, ten years ago, somehow (independently?) reaches the conclusion that she and two friends should travel to join Islamic State in order to help bring about a revolution, by whatever violent and barbaric means necessary. The girls' role, to be forced wives/mothers/slaves, if not active participants.

She is married, has three children who all die, her friends are killed, IS is defeated, and she has to spend years in a remote Kurdish detention camp. Our government strips her of her citizenship, thus leaving her stateless, and she has just lost an appeal to have it restored.

Many of us will have had 15-year-old children and even grandchildren, what if any of them, making a very serious mistake in their lives at 15, was branded for life and simply cast aside, helpless and hopeless!?

Does not Jesus' 'Parable of the Prodigal...' (Luke 15: 11-31) apply exactly to this situation? Is not unconditional forgiveness one of those core 'British values' they go on about based on that teaching? Certainly, our government doesn't seem to think so. Do we?

THE NOTICEBOARD

Information, updates, tips and more.



Church Flowers

Thank you to David & Julie Bath who have donated flowers for March to mark their 62nd Wedding Anniversary. Congratulations!

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



Items **urgently** needed: Custard, Hair Conditioner, Savoury Snacks/ Crisps, Squash, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Tomatoes.

Items needed: Cat Food, Cooking Sauces, Deodorant, Hot/Cold Desserts (Not Rice Pudding), Long Life Fruit Juice, Loo Roll, Nappies (Size 5 & Above), Savoury Crackers, Savoury Spreads (Marmite, Peanut Butter, Meat Paste etc.), Sweet Spreads (Jam, Marmalade etc.), Tinned Meat (e.g. Chilli, Stewing Steak, Ham), Tinned Ravioli, Tinned Veg., Toothpaste, and UHT Milk.

Please **do not** give Baby Food, Hand Soap, Hot/Cold Cereal, Men's Shampoo, Nappies Size 4 & Below, Non-Dairy Milk, Pasta, Pet Food, Pulses, Rice, Sanitary Pads, Tinned Beans, Tinned Rice Pudding, or Tinned Soup, 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/give-help/donate-food/>



Happy Birthday to the following members of our church family:

Jason Dudley

Lizzy Payne

Sylvia Reynolds

Joyce Cook

Rachan Preeth



Church Decorations

**The Church will be open on Saturday
30th March 10:30am-12:30pm for
people to decorate the window sills
for Easter.**

Eco Tip

God's Gift -- Our World

The Environment -- Our Responsibility



Save packaging from cheese so that your next purchase can be double wrapped. Don't store cheese in only one wrap as it won't be completely covered and the exposed areas will go dry and stale.

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.



A New Arrival!

Annmarie and Rosie Smith Browne are delighted to announce that they have welcomed baby Bailey into their family. Their son is just over a year old.

Bible Readings by Young People on a Sunday

It is a joy and blessing to see more of our young people read the Scriptures on a Sunday morning. At a recent meeting of Junior Church leaders and helpers, it was agreed unanimously that the congregation applauding the young people when they have finished reading the bible, is inappropriate. This agreement was endorsed by Elders' Meeting. Please remember that whoever is reading they are doing so as an integral part of our act of worship and we should be respectful of that fact by not applauding.

Thank you. Owen.

Use of the Gallery

We have recently been inspected by an insurance surveyor.



He expressed concern about the use of the gallery. Building regulations and guidance pertaining to regulations continually change. We have been notified that the gallery rail is too low and we should have in place signs warning of the steep stairs to the gallery from the foyer as well as the low rail. The Synod has confirmed what we have been told by the surveyor.

We will be asking the Synod what action we need to take in order to comply with the regulations. In the meantime, can I ask that you be careful when using the stairs and you do not sit in the front row of the gallery.

Thank you.

Owen

A FELLOWSHIP TOUR OF LONDON STREET URC

Josh and the Elders are inviting all members of the congregation to come along to the church on Saturday April 20th at 2.30pm for fellowship, a tour of the building and finishing with tea and cake.

The idea behind having a Fellowship, Tour and Tea at London St. is twofold. Sunday after morning worship is not always ideal to spend time together in a social setting. This is particularly true for Josh as he only preaches at London St. once a month. This time together on a Saturday would be an ideal opportunity to meet together; for Josh to get to know you better and for you to get to know one another better. It is also an opportunity for you all to take a tour of the building and we can explain what goes on in each of the rooms during the week.

London Street church offers a focus for us to be a Christian witness in the centre of Basingstoke and meet the challenges of those in our community, in particular those less fortunate than ourselves. You will be surprised at how our buildings are currently used in meeting some of the demands we currently face.

The afternoon will commence at 2.30pm when we gather in the concourse for the beginning of our tour of the building. We shall finish the tour in the church sanctuary when Josh will lead us in a short period of prayer. We shall then return to the concourse for tea and cake finishing at approximately 4.30pm.

For those of you who have joined the church from 2018 onwards when we had our last Fellowship Tour, you will receive a personal invitation from Josh. For the remainder of the congregation please take this as an open invitation for you to attend. Either way please RSVP to me by no later than Sunday April 7th.

Thank you.

Blessings Owen



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**.

Retiring Collections to support Commitment for Life and Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy

Before Covid, the congregation was provided with an opportunity once a month to support 'Commitment for Life' and a local charity. The opportunity was a retiring collection which we would have after our communion service.

What is Commitment for Life?

Commitment for Life is the URC's global justice programme. It encourages each local congregation, to make global justice a core foundation of its mission. They support the local congregations by offering resources to facilitate prayer, advocacy, and effective action for the most vulnerable people in the world. Commitment for Life works through recognised charities, particularly Christian Aid and Global Justice.

Is London Street a member?

Yes. There are three regions that a local congregation can support. We support, through Christian Aid, all three: Bangladesh; Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory; and Zimbabwe. Each church appoints a Commitment for Life link person. Through that link person, each church receives regular mailings throughout the year. This will include news about your region, posters and leaflets, opportunities to give, worship resources, latest information on campaigns, and ideas for prayer, services, and action. Our link person is currently Alison Jamieson.

Giving

There are several ways that churches can support people through Commitment for Life. In addition to prayer, financial contributions play a crucial role in supporting the most vulnerable people in the regions mentioned. At London Street we have envelopes labelled 'Commitment for Life' that you can use and place them in the offertory plate on any Sunday or you can make a retiring donation on a communion Sunday. If the latter, Gift Aid is added by the church. Gift Aid through an individual's envelope is added if you have granted permission for the church to claim Gift Aid on your donation. It is this 'Giving' that we would like to recommence. Of the donations provided, 75% is to support Christian Aid partners in the three regions, 5% goes to Global Justice Now to support its work against poverty, and 20% is

retained to cover education, grants, administration, and advocacy. The Wessex Synod matches the contributions to Commitment for Life made by churches in the synod.

Local Charity

The local charity we have supported previously through our retiring collection has been the Town Chaplaincy. Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy has a team of trained chaplains to provide support to people in the workplace. They are not paid by the employer, and anything discussed will remain confidential. Chaplains have been designated to visit places on a regular basis within the town centre and they have been selected and trained to be good listeners and are available to talk with colleagues and customers alike. Examples of the places they visit include: the shops, cafes and offices in the town centre, the Magistrates Court, and the bus station. They are careful not to interrupt work, but for longer conversations it can easily be arranged for an individual to speak to a Chaplain privately. The Town Chaplaincy team is there for everyone, whether an individual has faith in God or no faith at all. All the Chaplains are committed Christians, they are there to support everyone, to listen to whatever a person may want to talk about and to respond with the love of God.

February Church Meeting

Following a discussion at our last Church Meeting, it was overwhelmingly carried that Communion Offerings be collected monthly in support of Commitment for Life and the Town Centre Chaplaincy. It will be the responsibility of the 2nd Elder on duty to arrange for two collectors, one at each end of the church. The collections will commence after the Communion Service on 3rd March and on every Communion Sunday thereafter.

Collectors

If you would like to help on a Communion Sunday after each service, please let me know and I will provide the Elders with a list of helpers.

Thank you. Owen.

THE DOCTORS' ORCHESTRA

2024

14th ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CONCERT IN AID OF FREEDOM FROM TORTURE

Rossini, *Overture to The Barber of Seville*

Beethoven, *Symphony No. 8*

Brahms, *Piano concerto No. 2*

Ronan Magill, Piano

Stephen Brearley, Conductor

Monday 18th March 2024 at 7.30pm

Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace

London SW1X 9DQ

(nearest tube: Sloane Square)

Tickets: £39, £29, £19

Live streaming options available

Box office: cadoganhall.com

or call 020 7730 4500

**FREEDOM
FROM
TORTURE**
EMPOWERING
SURVIVORS.
REBUILDING
LIVES

You're invited to this event!

Join us to watch the 2024
Changemakers Conference.

Christian Aid's Annual Supporter Conference
This year the conference is being held at St James,
Piccadilly and livestreamed around England and
Wales.

We will be watching together and encourage you
to join us.

It will include:

- Presentations from Christian Aid's CEO, Patrick Watt and from Philip Galgollo, country director in Burundi.
- An introduction to Christian Aid Week 2024
- Updates on humanitarian emergencies



When: 2 March 2024, 10.30am - 1.30pm

Where: Woking URC, White Rose Lane, Woking GU22 7HA

RSVP: register online at caid.org.uk/conference



Christian Aid is a key member of ACT Alliance. Eng and Wales charity no. 1105851. Scot charity no. SC039150. Company no. 5171525. The Christian Aid name and logo are trademarks of Christian Aid. © Christian Aid 22/1/2024 - 10:43:54.

COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

This month we have three recipes from the URC recipe booklet 'Walking towards Easter together'.

EASTER BISCUITS



INGREDIENTS:

100g unsalted butter

75g caster sugar

1 egg, separated

Grated zest of a lemon

200g plain flour

50g currants

1 to 2 tbsp milk

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C. Beat sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add egg yolk and lemon zest, sift in the flour and mix well. Stir in the currants and then add just enough milk so that you can form into a ball of soft dough.
2. Knead the dough on a floured surface for a few minutes. Then roll it out until it is 5mm thick. Using a 6cm cutter cut into 24 rounds. Place into a baking tray lined with baking paper and bake in the oven for 8 minutes. Meanwhile beat the egg white, using a fork.
3. Take the partly baked biscuits out of the oven and brush the tops with egg white, sprinkle with caster sugar then return to the oven for a further 5 minutes.
4. Leave to cool on the tray for a few minutes before putting on a wide cooling rack.

SHREDDED WHEAT CROWN OF THORNS

INGREDIENTS:

Shredded Wheat

Milk chocolate, melted



METHOD:

1. Crumble shredded wheat, try to keep it in as long strands as possible.
2. Mix in the melted chocolate, making sure all strands are coated.
3. On a piece of baking parchment, arrangements an upside down ramekin dish to create a crown of thorns, leave to set.



HOT CROSS BUNS



INGREDIENTS:

500g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting

75g caster sugar

2 tsp mixed spice powder

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 lemon, finely grated zest only

10g salt

10g fast-action dried yeast

40g butter

300ml milk

1 egg, beaten

200g sultanas

50g finely chopped mixed candied peel

Oil, for greasing

(For the topping)

75g plain flour

2 tbsp golden syrup or apricot jam, for glazing

METHOD:

1. Mix the flour, sugar, spices, and lemon zest together in a large bowl. Then add the salt and yeast, placing them on opposite sides of the bowl.

2. Melt the butter, either in a pan or in the microwave. Similarly warm the milk in a separate pan until it is lukewarm. Add the butter and half

the tepid milk to the dry ingredients. Stir in the butter, milk and the egg, first with a spoon and then with your hands, drawing the dry ingredients in from the side of the bowl. As you begin to draw the mixture together, gradually add more warm milk (you may well not need all of it) until the mixture holds together as a sticky but pliable dough. Add the dried fruit and candied peel and knead them into the ball of dough until they are incorporated into it.

3. Lightly flour a solid work surface and tip your ball of dough out onto it. Lightly knead by hand for about ten minutes, until it forms a smooth ball which bounces back when pressed, and looks smooth. This stage can also be done in a food processor using a dough hook if you prefer.

4. Place the dough in a bowl which has been coated with a layer of vegetable oil, cover with cling film, and leave to rest in a warm place for an hour to an hour and a half, until it is about twice the original size.

5. Put the ball of dough on to a floured surface and divide into twelve balls. Line one to two baking trays with paper, and place the balls on the tray, placing them fairly close together and flattening them slightly.

6. Cover, but don't wrap, the baking trays in oiled cling film or with a clean tea towel. Leave for another hour, until the buns have doubled in size.

7. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 7.

8. To make the cross on top of the buns, mix the flour together with 100ml water to make a paste and spoon it into an icing bag. If you add the water slowly, you can judge the thickness of the paste.

9. When the buns have risen, pipe a cross on each bun. Bake for 15-20 minutes until pale golden-brown.

10. Melt the golden syrup or apricot jam in a pan. Use this to brush over the warm buns to create a glaze, before putting them on a cooling rack to cool.

THE PRAYER CIRCLE

Please remember the following people in your prayers...

John Coakes

Beverly Harris

Ted and the family of Isobel Martin

All our Iranian friends on the barge, in new accommodation, and/or facing interviews regarding

Carys Haywood

Hyacinth Ridguard

Owen Collins

Joyce Cook

Mark & Chris Best

Doina Rasnita

Beverley Cantwell and her daughter Abbie

David Corfield

Barbara Banbury

Eric & Christine Clucas

Maxine Perkins

Claire Macro

Stan & Sandra Marut

Joan Musselwhite

Gill & David Vickery

David Vickery's grandson

Zoe and her family

David Bennett and his mother

Maggie Morgans & Richard

The Patterson 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	3Cs Coffee, Chat and Company	3rd Wednesday of the Month Only (20th).
	10:15am	Memory Tree Social Club	
	12:15pm	Lunchtime Prayers	

March Worship Diary

3rd	Includes Holy Communion and Induction of Elders. Led by Revd. Josh Thomas; Musician: Dennis Smith; Duty Elder: Ian Scott.
10th	Led by Mark Ward; Musician: Mark Best; Duty Elder: Ian Scott.
17th	Led by Revd. Mike Burrell; Musician: Peter Dixon; Duty Elder: Ian Scott.

24th	Palm Sunday Led by Revd. Julian Macro; Musician: Alex Macro; Duty Elder: Ian Scott.
31st	Easter Sunday and Communion Led by Ruth White and Peter Bentall; Musician: Mark Best; Duty Elder: Ian Scott.

Next Church Meeting (Annual Church Meeting):

April 7th (Sunday), Time tbc (this will follow a fellowship lunch)

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
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.

March Worship Diary

3rd	Led by Karen Jones and John Featherstone.
10th	No Service at Old Meeting.
17th	Led by Christine Watson.
24th	Communion Service. Led by Mark Ward.
31st	Easter Sunday Dawn Service, held at the skate park (time tbc), followed by breakfast at the Immanuel Centre at 8am.

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
Registered Charity London Street (Basingstoke) United Reformed
Church Charity [reg. no. 1130801]