

**BEXLEY UNITED  
REFORMED  
CHURCH**



**SPRING  
MARCH 2024**

**50p**

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Disclaimer

This Magazine is published by Bexley United Reformed Church but the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Church.

Deadline for the next Magazine will be Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
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<p><b>BEXLEY URC CHURCH HALL &amp; RUXLEY ROOM</b></p>
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<p>Junction Bexley High Street and Hurst Road Facilities include a Stage and a Fitted Kitchen Reasonable rates include Heating and Lighting</p>
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<p>Inquiries to: Letting Secretary 07702 185702 <a href="mailto:elliestocker@talktalk.net">elliestocker@talktalk.net</a></p>
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**Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal,**  
**Minister's Pastoral Letter for March**

As we enter Lent, it is worth remembering the significance of this time in the Christian year. We are in the 40 days leading up to Easter and the celebration of the Resurrection. While the ancient Church and the Middle Ages saw Lent as a time of fasting and penitence, the Protestant tradition sees it more as a time of meditation and reflection. Today, only a small minority of Christians are really aware of this tradition. In a way, by setting aside a time in the year to reflect deeply on our lives, our society and our faith, we also show that it is important for reflection to be part of our lives in general – not just 40 days a year.

We live in a fast-moving world. Not only do things change quickly, but these changes tend to accelerate. The problem with this speed is that it probably leaves no time for reflection. When we browse social networks, we find short video content that has only a few seconds to appeal to us so that we watch it in full. If they succeed, they can get their message across. However, it is doubtful whether their message will make us grow, become freer or better. It's more likely that they want to sell us something or influence our opinions. In any case, this runs counter to real reflection, precious time for ourselves to question ourselves deeply and find peace. This deep reflection is more easily achieved by reading a poetic or philosophical text, listening to a lecture or a speech in which a thought has time to develop and a series of arguments are presented without interruption. We then have time to form our own ideas and integrate a thought into our personal history. This concentrated, attentive reflection is a remedy for the hustle and bustle of the world. It undoubtedly calms the anxiety from which many of us suffer.

The Gospel of Mark tells us that “Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him” (Mk 1:13). We do not know if Jesus took

scrolls of the Bible with him to read during this time in the wilderness. He certainly knew all the Psalms by heart and must have meditated on the history of his people, thinking that “they are like sheep without a shepherd” (Mk 1:13). We can do the same: open our Bible and read a Psalm, our favourite or any other Psalm. Surely there is one that suits our mood.

And now, in this Lent of 2024, as every year, our church, together with others in our neighbourhood, is organising a weekly Lenten course on Tuesdays from 10.30 to 12.00 in the church. We will be able to meet and meditate together. (see below)

I wish you and your families all the best for this lent and Easter.

*Rev. Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal.*

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& Geddes Place URC  
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# Lenten Scripture Courses

**Bexley United Reformed Church Tuesdays 10.30am - 12 noon**

Tuesday 20th February	Take temptation seriously
Tuesday 27th February	A step into the unknown
Tuesday 5th March	Come and see
Tuesday 12th March	The power of an eye-opening story.
Tuesday 19th March	Grief, a common human experience



### **Services for March 2024 at 10.30am except when stated**

	<b><u>Minister</u></b>	<b><u>Elder</u></b>
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	John Twidale	Philip
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Philip Shepherd	Ann
	Communion	
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Rev. Rodolph Blanchard-Kowal	Keith
	Easter Egg Parade Service	
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March	Martin Leonard	Tony
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	Maundy Service at Geddes Place 7.30pm for 7.45pm	
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	John Twidale	
	Good Friday Service	Mavis
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Rev. Rodolph Blanchard-Kowal	Philip
	Easter Sunday Service	

### **Communion Fund**

The Communion Fund is for those who are known to us who are in need. Gifts may be placed in the box near the entrance of the church on any Sunday whether or not there is a Communion Service.

*Philip Shepherd*

### **Family News** – on our prayer calendar for March are:-

Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Ellie Stocker, Francis Christou
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Christine Cornish, Lucy & Chris Reynolds & Rosie
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Uniformed Organisations
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March	Helen & Mike North
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Peter & Patricia Linder

Please also remember in your prayers – David Jackson & Family, Lorraine Gow, Alan and Jan Kienlen and our housebound members and friends at this time.

### **Pause for Thought for March**

Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Keith	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March	Essie
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Suzanne	Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	Bee
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Parade Service	Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Mavis

### **Flowers for March**

Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Elizabeth Whorlow	Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	George Dimond
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Val Howe	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March	Easter
	(Mothering Sunday)	Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Easter

### **Church Events**

#### **TABLE TOP SALE**

**SATURDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH**  
**10.00am – 12noon**

**Free Admission**

**Light Refreshments**

#### **QUIZ NIGHT**

**SATURDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MARCH**  
**7.00pm – 9.30pm**

**Tickets: £8.00**

**Incl. Supper**

**Jacket Potato with  
Fillings & Gateaux**

**Tickets are available  
from Social Committee**

#### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT**

**GOLDEN GIRLS CHOIR**

**SUNDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH**  
**3.00pm – 4.30pm**

**All Welcome**



## **Letter from a Non-Serving Elder**

### **Lent**

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke tell the story of the temptation of Jesus. Lent is the commemoration of the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert and resisting the temptations by Satan, before taking up his ministry. The first temptation was the challenge from Satan to prove he was the son of God by turning stones into bread. The second was again a challenge to prove he was God's son, by throwing himself off the highest point of the Temple in Jerusalem, and letting God's angels hold him up. For the third temptation, Satan attempted bribery and offered all the kingdoms in the world to Jesus if Jesus would kneel down and worship him.

This year Lent begins on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February and ends on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> of March. Traditionally, especially in the Catholic Church, it was the time to follow the 3 rules of Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving. Thus, Friday became the day to eat fish rather than meat. Giving up alcohol, for those who like their beer, wine or spirits, may be doubly difficult as Lent follows the fairly recent tradition of a dry January!

In the Protestant Churches it is still traditional to choose abstinence in Lent. Many people abstain from drinking alcohol, eating meat or sweets but latterly many have taken a more positive approach. Instead of giving a thing up, they have decided to do more of something new. The latter can take the form of setting aside specific times to pray and choosing particular items for prayer. Others have decided to spend more time in reading their Bible. Some will take the opportunity to go on a retreat or spending time to meditate.

If you take the giving up approach it is very easy to lapse. However, if you chose to do something positive, it is in my view at least, more likely to be lasting and beneficial.

*John Johnstone*

**Prayer for Bangladesh** *by the Revd Margaret Nilanjana Ali*

Dear God

We pray for Bangladesh, a country that is bursting at the seams with more than 169 million people crammed within its borders. We continue to remember Bangladesh in our prayers fervently.

Because of its location between the foothills of the Himalayas to the north and the Bay of Bengal to the south, Bangladesh is prone to natural disasters. Monsoon flooding is almost an annual event, and storms and cyclones routinely make life miserable for the people of this country. Corruption is endemic and deeply rooted, so we pray for just, transparent and effective governance.

We pray for the binding of the powers of darkness operating in religious, social and ethnic realms. We pray that constitutional freedom allowing all to practise and propagate their own religions might be maintained. Amen

**Easter Eggs**

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March lead by our Minister and the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Ranger Guides and their leaders and members and friends of the church, Easter Eggs will be donated to bring love and joy to disabled children and children in hospital at Easter.

This is an annual event for our Church and the eggs will be distributed by the Elders to Demelza House in Eltham for children with special needs, and to the Children's Wards at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Darenth Hospital. The staff on these wards are always so grateful for these gifts and if there are sufficient eggs, some will be taken to the Paediatric Clinics at the hospitals to be given to children who may have to have unpleasant but necessary examinations or treatments, as a reward for being so brave and good!

If you would like to contribute to this project your support would be much appreciated. Eggs can be brought to the Church before hand and left with any of the leaders of Church activities (see weekly programme in Newsletter).

Thank you. *Mavis Wilson*



# Duckhouse Crafting



## CRAFT WORKSHOP

This is a full day craft workshop from 10am until 4pm.  
We will be making 4 projects using different materials  
and techniques.

Location - Bexley United Reformed Church Hall, Hurst  
Road, Bexley, Kent DA5 3JN (Parking available).

Date - Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024

(15 places available)

Cost - £10.00 (All materials will be supplied)

To book a place contact Penny –  
[duckhousecrafting@gmail.com](mailto:duckhousecrafting@gmail.com) 07415 138284

(Please ensure you bring a packed lunch – tea/coffee and cake will be  
provided)



**Bexley**  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# Weekly Programme

## Sunday

Worship Service 10.30am (C)

Afternoon Concert (once a month) 3pm-4.30pm (C)

## Monday

Exercise Classes (over 50s) 10am-11am (H)  
(School Term Time only)

Afternoon Teas 2pm-4pm (C)

## Tuesday

Whist Drive 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 2pm-4pm (H)

Knit and Natter 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday 1pm-3pm (H)

## Wednesday

Singing for Fun 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday  
1.30pm – 2.30pm (H)

## Thursday

Exercise Classes (over 50s) 10am-11am  
(School Term Time only) (H)

(C) in the Church      (H) in the Hall

# All Welcome





Meeting weekly in Church Hall during term time as well as  
enjoying  
outdoor activities

Mondays

4.30-5.30pm Rainbows  
5.45-7.00pm Brownies  
8.00-9.30pm Rangers

Wednesdays

7.30-9pm Guides

Our uniformed groups join the congregation for five parade services each year : Harvest Thanksgiving, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Gift Service, Renewal of Promises and Easter gifts (eggs)

**Children are Welcome**

At present we do not have a Junior Church BUT for Young Children we do have a well equipped children's corner in the church where parents are welcome to supervise their little ones whilst being able to participate in worship.

Bexley United Reformed Church complies with The United Reformed Church Good Practice Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Young People in the Church.

Some useful contact numbers

Age UK - 0800 6781174 - provide information and advice that covers every facet of later life.

Bexley Borough Neighbourhood Watch - 020 8284 5537

Bexley Council - 020 8303 7777 Out of hours service 020 8303 7171

Bexley Crime Hotline - 0208284 9234 - report crimes confidentially and anonymously.

Bexley Voluntary Service Council – 01322 431765 – signposts elderly residents in Bexley to the right support services:

Bexley Borough Pensioner's Forum – 01322 527097 – is a non party-political equal opportunity organisation. Their principal aim is to promote the welfare and interests of pensioners in Bexley Borough.

Contact the Elderly – 0800 716 543 – companionship for older people suffering from loneliness and social isolation.

Crimestoppers – 0800 555111

Crossroads Care South East London – 01322 336086/341983 – provide a variety of services to carers of Children, Adults and Older vulnerable people with a diverse range of care and support needs across the London Boroughs of Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham. Email: [info@ccsel.org](mailto:info@ccsel.org)

Darent Valley Hospital, Darenth – 01322 428100

Evergreen Care Bexley – 01322 431 765 – seek to serve the older vulnerable adults in our community by improving their circumstances through advocacy, friendship and practical support.

London Dial-a-Ride – 0343 222 7777 – a door to door multi-occupancy transport service for people with disabilities who cannot use public transport. It can be used for journeys such as shopping, visits to friends, appointments, and going out at night.

London Fire Brigade – general enquiries 020 8555 1200  
Emergency calls **only** 999

Metropolitan Police – general enquiries 101. Emergency calls **only** 999

National Rail Travel – 03457 484950

Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich – 020 8836 6000

Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup – 020 8302 2678

Samaritans – 116 123

Silverline – 0800 4 70 80 90 – is the only confidential, 24 hour, free helpline for older people across the UK open every day and night of the year.